

MOTORING



Fletch heading for Cruise In

By SANDRA HUNTER

Little wonder that Aroha Cruise In organiser Sara Matafeo-Ross is excited.

Matafeo-Ross had her fingers crossed for weeks waiting for confirmation that Fletch from the television programme *Classic Restos* would be at this year's event.

A Sydney-sider whose programme screens all over Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Britain, Fletch brings his enthusiasm for classic cars to small screens in countless homes.

After weeks of negotiation, Matafeo-Ross has just heard that Fletch will be in Te Aroha over the October 3-5 weekend to film events at the Aroha Cruise In and said the small screen exposure will put the popular annual celebration of classic cars, bikes and hot rods well and truly on the map.

"The Cruise In already brings an extra 3000 people to Te Aroha," she said.

"It's the single biggest event in the town's calendar."

This October's event will be the sixth Cruise-In, the second organised by the business association and Matafeo-Ross declared herself more than happy with last year's event which saw 300

entrants.

The organisations that provide manpower - St John, Te Aroha Volunteer Fire Brigade, Lions, Rotary and Westpac, on behalf of the air ambulance - did well out of the gold coin donations, while merchandise sold briskly.

This year's event will have a swap meet for the first time and Matafeo-Ross believes this will attract even more visitors, as will the New Zealand Motor Caravan Association Rally planned in Te Aroha that weekend.

The information highway is also spreading the word - the Cruise In has its own website, plus more than 400 Facebook friends.

Visitors can vote in the people's choice award section and this year, the prize will bring the winner back to Te Aroha for a luxury weekend with plenty of pampering thrown in.

While organising the Cruise In is taking up plenty of Matafeo-Ross's time, she relishes the preparations.

"I love the challenge - making sure I've covered all the bases," she said. "It's important that everything is lined up and ready to go."

"It's all about getting numbers to Te Aroha and ensuring that everyone has a good time."

Go to cruisein.co.nz.



In style: Sarah Matafeo-Ross models this year's Aroha Cruise In shirt.

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