

Cyndie Allemann

Racing diary

"My story
in words
and images"

Dreaming of Japan

Episode 2012.01



Monday, 2012-02-06

Tokyo, Japan: first taste of Japan and racing sim

Cyndie Allemann is fearless and used to changes. She has raced on legendary and daunting tracks such as Indianapolis, Le Mans and Spa. She has raced openwheel and GT cars, and is a regular racer on monster shifter karts that have a higher power-to-weight ratio than Formula One cars.



But the test she was about to take in the Hitotsuyama Racing Audi R8 LMS Super GT car was a totally different story: the kind of opportunity that can transform into something huge, in a country such as Japan. She was also about to base-jump into a totally new world: new team, new car, new track, new people, and above all, a totally new and different culture.

Even with this pressure (and not mention a 12-hour flight from Zürich), she still looked quite relaxed upon her arrival at Narita Airport in Tokyo. As a matter of fact, an impromptu photoshoot at the airport left many passersby wondering if she was a supermodel at work. It was then out of the airport, and off to the Tokyo for her first contact with Japan. And immediately at work on the Base Performance race simulator in downtown Tokyo.

"In my dreams about Japan, I must admit that I was expecting something different, especially regarding the landscape I was surprised to realize that it feels like Europe, in many ways. Obviously, downtown Tokyo is very impressive with its lights and many tall buildings. Now, I would like to see more of the Japanese countryside and all its authentic and traditional lifestyle, which does contribute for Japan's beauty. Otherwise, Japanese are very friendly and want to laugh all the time, with a great sense of humor."



Tuesday, 2012-02-07

Tokyo and Shizuoka, Japan: lost in Ginza, first meeting with the team

After a (short) first night in a posh hotel and a nice Japanese breakfast (and not to mention a crash course in using chopsticks), Cyndie allowed herself an hour or two for a visit of downtown Tokyo. As the sophisticated European woman that she is, Cyndie particularly enjoyed her visit of Ginza, one of the most luxurious shopping area in the world. A very quick visit, but she will be back often.



In the afternoon, things got more serious with the first meeting with the Hitotsuyama Racing team members at their shop in Shizuoka, almost across the road from Fuji Speedway. Cyndie was able to deal with the huge pressure by doing what she enjoys best (other than actually racing): technical talk with engineers, data analysis, seat fitting, etc. Cyndie the femme fatale all of a sudden morphed into Cyndie the race car driver.

That first meeting continued in the evening with a dinner in Shizuoka with the Hitotsuyama Racing team owners. The atmosphere was quite relaxed and everyone made Cyndie feel accepted as part of the team already. A very good first contact, but the next day would no doubt be even more important...

"A Japan-based racing program is totally unexpected for me. It really came as something new and challenging. It will be an awesome experience, and at a personal level, an incredible occasion to become a better person, to discover a new country and a new culture. I've slowly started to pick up some Japanese words. I think 2012 will be a very gratifying year, for my personal development. On the second day, I met the whole team and they are an amazing group of people, with very cool personalities. They really want to work with me to win races together."

Wednesday, 2012-02-08
Fuji Speedway, Japan: the big day

Wednesday was show time. The kind of day that can take a career to an entirely new level. The team was there for Cyndie but it was clear that she would have to prove herself on track. In that sense, just about everyone was watching her, scrutinizing her every move. It takes an amazing power to deal with that kind of pressure. But Cyndie is always up for the challenge, ready both mentally and physically.



It was a cold day and cold track, and worst of all, only two short test sessions to 'be' fast. The morning session went well, and after a lunch break spent analyzing data, looking at the on-board videos and talking with teammates (Akihiro Tsuzuki and Michael Kim) and race engineers, she knew what she had to do. Cyndie was absolutely brilliant in the afternoon session and after a mere 10 laps, she was already on pace with the fastest lap set on that day. From this point on, it was more than enough for team owner Mikio Hitotsuyama to confirm Cyndie as his driver for 2012. She will be a pioneer (as she has often been) as the first foreign female driver to compete in the competitive Super GT series. The nine races of the season will no doubt bring more emotions for her, the team and fans around the world. Stay tuned!

"The test went pretty well: it was a first experience for me with the Audi R8 LMS and on a totally new track for me, and I must admit I didn't have much track time to adapt to all those new changes. I think I did the job right for a first time, it was a very positive. The important thing was to realize that we can work together with the Hitotsuyama Racing team members and the communication went super smoothly. Also, my teammate Akihiro Tsuzuki seems like a super nice person and I really think we can work well together."



Credits and notes

Text

Cyndie Allemann and Eric Gilbert

Photos

Eric Gilbert

Additional content available

Media outlets wishing to obtain text in .doc format and photos in high resolution .jpeg format to publish on their platform are welcome to send their request to:

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Media requests

Other media requests should be forwarded to:

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About Cyndie Allemann

A World class driver, top athlete and brand ambassador. Always a fan favorite, whether in Europe, in the USA and soon in Japan, 25 years old Cyndie Allemann was literally born for speed.

Her 18-year racing career has seen her compete at the highest levels in many different series and tracks around the World: karting (winning the European junior title when she was only thirteen), open-wheel (EuroF3, Indy Lights, etc.), GT (FIA-GT1 World Championship) and endurance racing (GT1 podium at Spa in the Le Mans Series, 24 Hours of Le Mans, etc.)

For more info on Cyndie or to follow her, visit her web site and her facebook fan page at:

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