

Driver Profile



Driver: Emma Gilmour
Country: New Zealand
Co-Driver: Rhianon Smyth
Country: Australia
Team: Motor Image Racing Team



Photo – Geoff Ridder

Emma Gilmour will take her long-held international rally driving ambitions to a new level this year, as she steps up to become team mate to current title holder Cody Crocker in the 2009 Asia-Pacific Rally Championship. The 29-year-old New Zealander, who was born and bred in Dunedin, but is now based in Hamilton, will contest a full Asia-Pacific championship programme of six rallies for the Singapore-based Motor Image Racing Team.

Gilmour and Crocker will each be driving the latest MY09 Subaru Impreza WRX STI Production Class rally cars in the Asia-Pacific series. Their campaign will open with Australia's Rally Queensland in early-May. It will continue with the New Zealand, Japanese, Malaysian, and Indonesian rounds of the series before wrapping up in China in November. In between her Asia-Pacific Championship commitments, Gilmour will contest the 2009 New Zealand Rally Championship, with details of that programme to be released shortly.

"People who have followed my career will know that stepping up to this level of competition for a full championship is truly a dream come true," says Gilmour. "Being able to do so with the team that has won the Asia-Pacific series for the past two years, and as team mate to the driver who has won the series for the past three years, is going to make a big difference." "Cody has already played a part in my career, helping me out with testing back in the days when I was just starting out on the New Zealand championship scene, and when he was already Australia's champion driver. Now his experience of the Asia-Pacific series is going to be of huge value as I prepare for rallying in conditions vastly different to what I am used to in New Zealand."

That said, Gilmour has experienced some of the conditions she will face in the Asia-Pacific series, having previously competed in Australia and Japan. She has also gained recent experience of the types of road she will rally on in the South East Asian rounds of the series, having just completed a major test session with her new team in Malaysia. That session was used to fine-tune the handling and performance of the team's new cars, which have been prepared with the support of Subaru Technia International (STI) in Japan, and Possum Bourne Motorsport in New Zealand.

"The new car feels awesome, and being able to compare my times against Cody's at the test has been both helpful and encouraging." As well as joining a new team, Gilmour will have a new co-driver for 2009 in the form of fellow Australian Rhianon Smyth, a professional co-driver and physical education teacher.

“I will be the first female driver to contest the Asia-Pacific series, and with Rhianon as co-driver we will also be the first all-female crew,” says Gilmour. “Both those factors are important for the profile of the team.”

Gilmour’s full 2009 Asia-Pacific Championship comprises the following events:

Rally Queensland (Australia), 9-10 May
Rally Whangarei (New Zealand), 5-7 June
Rally Hokkaido (Japan), 11-12 July
Malaysian Rally (Malaysia), 15-16 August
Rally Indonesia (Indonesia), 3-4 October
China Rally (China), 14-15 November

For further information, contact Emma Gilmour on 021 520 122.