

Cyndie Allemann



Racing diary

"My story
in words
and images"

Back in
Japan:
a summer
tale

Episode 2012.07

**Saturday, 2012-07-21. Suzuka City, Japan.
Meeting a legend: Suzuka Circuit.**

For her return back in Japan in more than two months (since the race at Fuji Speedway in early May) Cyndie has a one-day meeting with a legend: Suzuka Circuit. Many historical battles have been won and lost on this track as well as many Formula One world championships. The most spectacular episodes of the legendary Senna-Prost war were raced at Suzuka. On her way to Suzuka, in the Tokyo to Nagoya Shinkansen, Cyndie is thinking about all those battles and how hard this circuit will be to tackle. She spends her time on the way to Suzuka to finalize the analysis of the track, checking data, track layout and videos.



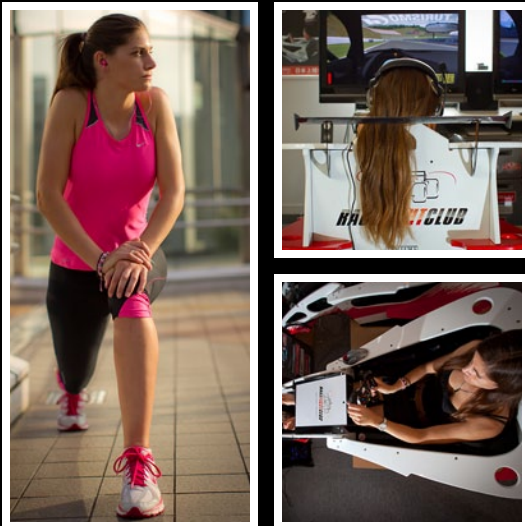
Obviously, she is going there for a single-day test to prepare for the Super GT feature race of the season: the famed Suzuka 1000 km. And as it has been the case for most of her on-track presence in Japan this year, rain is a factor. She is getting used to ever-changing weather conditions, but still, this additional challenge does not help learning a new track, especially one like Suzuka. However, Cyndie enjoys those challenging conditions and rain could not deter her enthusiasm to push the limits on such a historical (and fast) track.

"Suzuka is a very impressive track. One can tell that it was built some time ago, being fairly narrow but very fast with many sweeping sequences. Finding a good rhythm there is not always easy. It was my first day ever at Suzuka and I was there to learn the track, but the weather conditions didn't come as a great help. I could do four laps in the morning session, to discover the track and find my landmarks. In the afternoon, I did about ten laps, but with the ever-changing conditions, it was difficult to see my real progression and the grip level."



Monday, 2012-07-23 and Tuesday, 2012-07-24. Tokyo, Japan.
Business meetings, fitness and racing sim on the agenda.

Right after the test day at Suzuka, Cyndie goes back to Tokyo for a full week, before heading out to Sugo on Friday. What could have been a week of relaxation and hanging out at the hotel pool turned out to be a busy week with constant meetings and different items to do. Early in the week, Cyndie has a few business meetings planned, trying to get a few sponsorship and partnership deals going. And still early in the week, she pays a visit to the Race Fight Club racing simulator in Shibuya, in preparation for the Sugo round. The Super GT series only has two-hour practice sessions on Saturday, which is a huge handicap for a rookie driver such as Cyndie. Getting some virtual lap times on a high-end racing sim is definitely a good and productive idea.



And parallel to all this, Cyndie maximizes her week in Tokyo to push her physical preparation even more than usual. Already a fitness addict, she is more than aware that her training program has to be adapted for the hot and humid Japanese summer races ahead. More endurance workout is on the program and Cyndie makes a good use of the (fairly small) training center at her hotel in Shiodome as well as the area around for her outside routine.

"Before Sugo, I had the chance to spend a week in Tokyo. In addition to going over the track data, the first thing on my list was to go to a racing simulator, in order to learn and memorize Sugo. The racing sim is critical for a rookie driver like me. It may not be exactly like in a real race car, but we can still get a good feeling of an on-track experience. Also this week, I took some time to do even more sports and push my physical training. I have slightly modified my workout program since Sepang. For one thing, my cardiorespiratory endurance training is now longer."



Wednesday, 2012-07-25. Tokyo, Japan.
From Tokyo with love: being a tourist.

By Wednesday, after being in Japan for more than five days, Cyndie finally has some time to really experiment the best and most exotic of what Tokyo has to offer. She has been to a few places in Tokyo in the past few months, but nothing quite compares to a tourist run on a hot summer afternoon. The whole day starts in Shibuya, most likely the trendiest area in Tokyo and one of the fashion centers in the world, especially for young people. Before the craziness of the Shibuya Crossing, Cyndie takes a nice walk on a quiet street, discovering small specialty shops, one of them being an amazing candy factory.



Further down the hill, things get really hectic as Cyndie approaches the legendary Shibuya Crossing. A visit to the Shibuya 109 store gives her the chance to get a crash course in Gyarū fashion. Finally, a cool reflexology session completes this afternoon in Shibuya. Later in the afternoon, Cyndie has to cut short her visit and head to the Roppongi district for a cocktail. There, she finds another trendy area, but in a more international sort of way. Another area, another place that catches her attention, but for different reasons than Shibuya. Both areas are now on Cyndie's list of places to come back.

"I took the one-week opportunity I had in Tokyo to do some tourism. Obviously, one area of Tokyo that totally fascinated me is Shibuya. Shopping, the crowd in the streets, lot of young people: the atmosphere in Shibuya is just incredible and I immediately fell in love with it. I really found myself in shopping heaven, which made my girlie side happy. I spent a whole afternoon in Shibuya and loved every minute of it. I'll come back for sure. Otherwise, I also liked Roppongi, with its international restaurants and its 'euro-feel' - a good area to go if I ever miss my European roots."



Friday, 2012-07-27. Murata and Sendai, Japan.
Lost in translation: into Cyndie's mind.

History has shown that minorities have always had to overcome adversities against the majorities. But in this long and sometimes painful process of questioning and proving themselves, members of those minorities usually come out stronger and better than the 'rest'. Professional athletes are minorities and are a special breed of human beings. Race car drivers are minorities inside the communities of athletes and are therefore even more special. Female race car drivers represent an even more special case: minorities inside a minority, inside another minority. It is very hard to find a more specific kind of minority.



Having to prove themselves to the majority around them that they belong to their sport will be a constant struggle throughout their whole career and therefore, they will sometimes go through times of questioning. Cyndie is no different and for many different reasons, a 'time of questioning' can describe the way she feels in her mind when she arrives at Sportsland Sugo, on Friday afternoon. However, she is an exceptionally strong athlete and the rest of the weekend will demonstrate how quickly she can overcome those situations.

"Once again, I am discovering a new circuit this weekend in Sugo. I had a taste of it on the racing sim last week, and it seemed to me that it is a fairly short track with 3.7 km, with a lot of second and third gear corners. The Super GT format, with only one practice session on Saturday morning, makes it really hard for a rookie driver like me to really learn a new track. Studying data and practicing on the racing sim are important, but communicating with my technical team is also critical. In the midst of everything, I'm trying to focus really hard on the weekend ahead, on Friday."



Saturday, 2012-07-28. Murata and Sendai, Japan.
Back where she belongs: on the track.

Saturday morning, the weather is hot and humid at Sugo, but Cyndie does not mind that much: she can finally do what she enjoys the most, that is drive a race car and push it to its limits. Of course, she has to do it on yet one more track to learn on the fly, but what she discovers at Sportsland Sugo is an old school type of track, very short with sweeping sections and plenty of elevation changes. In other words, it has many characteristic to please the kart racer (and Swiss girl) in Cyndie. Her car still needs a lot of setup work though, even after the qualifying session. But Cyndie definitely starts to feel good here and pushes more and more.



After a quick qualifying session, there is more work to do with a technical meeting and pit stop practice. The never ending quest to find the right setup has been long on Saturday and it is with a certain hope that Cyndie leaves the track on Saturday night. She will have to wait until the morning to see if her recommended changes will be positive, but in the meantime, she feels good and treat herself to a nice dinner with friends, at an Italian restaurant found in Sendai. There is quite nothing like Italian cuisine to make Cyndie happy.

Cyndie Allemann Racing Diary

"During this practice session, I drove about 45 minutes, which was enough for me to learn the track. I really liked the circuit. However, we didn't have enough grip so we had to make the necessary adjustments on the car. But personally, I felt good with my own driving. For qualifying, we ran out of time to properly work on the car, and as a consequence, we qualified only 20th. My teammate qualified the car, since he knew the track better than me. After qualifying, we realized that our car was not quite at the top and that we still had to work on the setup."



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Sunday, 2012-07-29. Murata, Japan.
Fast morning, short afternoon.

Up early on Sunday morning, Cyndie and her team have to beat the traffic to be at the track on time for the warmup session. A good initiative because a massive flow of Super GT fans hits the local roads heading to Sugo. The morning starts well for the Swiss star as she quickly realizes that the setup changes done to her #21 Zent Audi are positive. By mid-session, she gets in the car, after her teammate. As she flies around the track, she definitely feels that she has a better car and allows herself to push more to find the real limits of her car. The results is a string of fast laps, one of them being more than 0.5 seconds faster than any of her teammates.



The pre-race pitwalk brings even more positive vibes in Cyndie as she is (once again), one of the top most popular drivers with fans. However, the race proves to be disappointing as she does not even get to compete: electrical issues force her teammate Aki to retire shortly before her own stint. A downer, for sure as they were heading for a top-10 finish. It has been a difficult weekend, but car performance improved quite a bit on Sunday and team spirit was also on the rise. Things definitely look good for the next race at Suzuka.

"During the morning warmup, we focused on the setup to make sure the car was competitive for the race. We really made major changes on the car and that turned out to be positive because our fastest time was fairly OK compared with our competitors and that gave us high hopes for the race. My teammate Aki took the start and had a very nice progression up to the 13th place so it was looking good for us for a top-10. Unfortunately, 45 minutes into the race, the car stopped and we had to retire. Therefore, I didn't even have the chance to drive during the race."



Credits and notes

Text

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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:

ericg@motorsport.com

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, 26 years old Cyndie Allemann was literally born for speed.

Her 19-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.). In 2012, she will compete in the Japan Super GT series with the Hitotsuyama Racing Audi R8 LMS.

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

www.cyndieallemann.ch

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