

INAUGURAL SPIRITED WOMEN'S ADVENTURE RACE AN AMAZING SUCCESS



The first edition of the Spirited Women's Adventure Race in Rotorua went off with a bang at the weekend, with 116 teams and 464 competitors from around the country taking part in the race.

There were three distances – long, medium and short, and four different categories – open, veterans, corporate and junior. The women ran, stand up paddle boarded, kayaked, trekked, mountain biked and regained, plus were even involved in mystery activity challenges, including a tree walk, shooting and rock climbing.

The 116 teams raced through beautiful scenery including Lake Okareka, the Blue Lake, Whakarewarewa Forest, the Redwoods and the Government Gardens.

Event director Neil Gellatly and his wife Katrine, of Dare2Sweat Events, came up with the Spirited Women's concept and Neil says it's the biggest women's adventure to have run in the North Island.

"As well as being the biggest of its kind in the North Island, our event is also the largest stand up paddleboard event in New Zealand, even bigger than the stand up paddleboard nationals. We hired 192 stand-up paddleboards for the race."

The finish line was located at the Brew Craft Beer Bar on Eat Street, and as well as gathering support crews, four wine glasses with a bottle of bubbles, awaited every team on their arrival.

Rain played its part throughout the day, but it didn't deter any of the teams, who all managed to cross the finish line with big smiles on their faces.

Teams of all different ages and abilities took part in the Spirited Women's Adventure Race. 4 Tararua Trampers, a veteran's team from the Palmerston North Tramping Club, enjoyed every minute of the course.

"We had such a great time and we had no point where anyone really wanted to give up so that was good. We worked pretty well as a team and the weather was



Credits to Digby Shaw, Jason Beacham & Johny Cook

awesome, the rain made it fun. Some of the mountain bike controls were really hard, but we got there in the end. It was a really well organised event."

Sumner Mums made the big trip up from Christchurch for the short course race. They said it was an incredible experience and nice to have a well-deserved break from their families.

"It was amazing to race in places we have never seen before, it was a wicked event. We would definitely do it again. It was a lot more full on than what we were expecting for the short course, but still great nonetheless. Some of us have never been to Rotorua before so that was sensational running through the almost lunar landscapes. It was great to be able to challenge ourselves and do something different."

The Flocking Flamingos were inspiring, completing the veteran women's short course race. They loved the day, even the rain, and they couldn't get enough of the beautiful views.

"It was really nice that we could all do this together and we had a great team supporting us right throughout the day. We have all had breast cancer so we are raising money for PincandSteel. We have raised about \$500, we know it's not a lot but every bit counts. We will certainly be back to do it again and we have already had friends who have said they will give it a go next time."

For Estrogen Express the Spirited Women's Adventure Race was everything and more than they expected. It was better than they could have imagined, but harder. They competed in the open women's short course race and they know each other because all of their kids got to the same pre-school in Lake Okareka.

"We honestly had so much fun. We didn't mind the rain, although the heavy stuff wasn't that great. The bubbles at the end was good but the best part about the day was the friendship and not only within our team but with all the teams. Everything was done in good spirits; we all helped each other along the way. Everyone was so helpful and we were all telling everyone where all the checkpoints were, so everyone got along very well."

It wasn't just about the race either; the whole weekend was filled up with activities for all of the Spirited Women's teams. On the Friday afternoon some of the teams took part in a yoga session and on Sunday competitors went to the Hot Pools at the Blue Baths to try and heal some of those sore muscles. They then had a sit down buffet breakfast, before attending the awards ceremony at the Sir Howard Morrison Performing Arts Centre, where place getters received jewellery and artwork among other things.

The Awards Ceremony provided some laughs, where plenty of stories were told about experiences some of the teams had.



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3 Kumara and a Kokonati, from Auckland, were in the medium open women's course. They were the last to cross the finish line, just after 11pm, but they were still smiling. They only learned how to use a map on the Thursday before the race and they had never mountain biked before, so the fact they finished was an achievement in itself.

Gellatly said overall the whole event was a huge success.

"I've had incredibly positive feedback. These ladies loved it, the words I have heard have been mind-blowing and I have never had so much praise and seen so much joy out of finishes before."

Dare2Sweat Events are keen to have the Spirited Women's Adventure Race in Taupo next year, and Gellatly made that announcement during the Awards Ceremony.

"We are looking at keeping it close to home for the first few years to increase numbers. Having it smack bang in the middle of the North Island is perfect as it helps us pull entrants from all around and also makes it logistically easier for us to organise".

He says he would love to double numbers for next year's event.

"We sort of have this target of 1,200 women, but if we could get 900 next year and then sell out from the following year then we would be thrilled."

For further information please contact:
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OVERALL RESULTS - Short Course

Place	Bib	Team Name	Category	Time
1	43	Moas	Open Women	4:25:03
2	54	Are we there yet?	Open Women	4:33:52
3	39	Patrique	Open Women	4:42:14

OVERALL RESULTS - Medium Course

Place	Bib	Team Name	Category	Time
1	65	James Kueglar Coaching	Open Women	6:27:13
2	13	Twisted Camels	Open Women	6:27:43
3	27	We Can Do This!	Veteran Women	7:22:05

OVERALL RESULTS - Long Course

Place	Bib	Team Name	Category	Time
1	113	Nippy Pipi's	Open Women	7:36:35
2	53	Team Expedio GOT	Veteran Women	8:15:26
3	78	Team Shocker Girls	Open Women	8:34:27



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