

Media release - Century-old bike takes on Le Race

Andy Beale is the living proof that anyone can compete in Le Race, from Christchurch to Akaroa, even on the most weird and wonderful bicycles.

Beale has been a long supporter of Le Race and obsessed with historic bikes after winning the Vintage section of the race on an old Raleigh 20 "ladies shopping" bike, four years ago. This year, Beale will be pushing the boundaries even further by taking on Dyers Pass and the Hill Top on a 100-year-old bike from The Somme Cycle Works in Ashburton.

To add to the already impressive challenge on a modern bike, the vintage wheels in question were built as a track bike, with no brakes and only has one gear.

"I had to put some brakes on the bike and had to set the one gear so I can get up the hills," laughs Beale. "It means that I will lose a bit of speed on the flat, but that's just the way it is," says Beale who found out he will have to pedal hard on a recent training ride to Little River, reaching a cadence of over 200rpm at one stage.

Beale is lovingly restoring the rusted bicycle which was built somewhere between 1916 and 1921 by famous bike builder L.S. Hopkins, originally with wooden wheel rims. "But the frame and the fork are definitely still the original parts."

Beale, who is reluctant to share exactly how many historic and newer bicycles he has in his shed, says he is bracing for some funny looks from the rest of field.

"When I raced that old Raleigh bike in 2015 a lot of other riders on expensive new bikes were not happy being passed by an old ladies shopping bike," laughs the 48-year-old, who says he still managed to reach 90kmh on the steepest downhill parts on his vintage bike to win that category in three and a half hours in 2015, "and I hope this year I can do a similar time."

In the Masters 45-54 category, Beale will also be one of the main contenders for the Enviromation Cup which is calculated on both finishing time and age of the rider.

Anyone else interested in joining Andy and the rest of the field on March 23, can go to www.lerace.co.nz to sign up. **For more information or interview request please contact Coen Lammers on 021-730239**

[Le Race](#)

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