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Racetrack in inner Auckland

By John Thornton

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High performance engines will be revving in downtown Auckland this weekend. **John Thornton** reports.

The sleepy precinct of a Fanshawe St car park is being transformed into a motoring extravaganza this weekend as the Audi ArenA1 rolls into town on November 19.

Audi plans to completely renovate the car park across the road from the culinary fiesta

Taste Auckland at Victoria Park. The overhaul of the block between Fanshawe and Gaunt streets will showcase the car maker's latest model, the Audi A1. There will be an open-air racetrack between two indoor 'pods'; an interactive motoring experience for VIP guests to appreciate the technological features of the car and participate in stunt test drives.

Despite the loss of around 200 parking spaces, local businesses are largely supportive of the three-day event.

"The parking's a nightmare down here anyway. It's a joke," says Dean Andrew of fishing goods store Top Catch. "It might bring a few more people," he adds, remaining upbeat to the prospect of the car park's temporary overhaul.

"It can only be good for business," reiterates Jess of Ocean Hunter, a block away from the parking lot. "As long as they don't close the roads or cause congestion it can only be good for us." No roads will be closed and parking will be available on roadsides around the car park throughout the weekend.

The car park itself is between the industrial hub of the Viaduct Harbour, with its horizon-engulfing skyscrapers, and more modest businesses selling marine and fishing equipment, meaning few local residents will be affected.

Take a look

ArenA1 is at 125 Fanshawe St and open to the public during the following times:

Friday, November 19, 1pm-7pm

Saturday, November 20, 10am-7.30pm

Sunday, November 21, 10am-6pm

For more information, see www.audi.co.nz/ArenA1

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By John Thornton



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