



# GT NEWS

NEWSLETTER nr 5 - 16th MARCH 2007

## AND THEY'RE OFF !

The cars will soon be loaded into the plane, and will set off for Zhuhai, China, where the first event of the 2007 season will take place. The first in a new era of two-hour races, with two obligatory pit stops including driver change - ten years after the first FIA GT race took place in 1997.

The entry grid for this first race is impressive, and with so many top driver line-ups in GT1 and GT2, it is extremely difficult to predict the eventual winner. Five former Champions are in contention in GT1 : Bartels and Biagi in the Vitaphone Maserati, going for its third consecutive title, Bertolini in the Playteam Maserati, Bouchut in the All-Inkl.com Lamborghini Murciélago, and Wendlinger in the Jetalliance Racing Aston Martin. In GT2, double Champion Stéphane Ortelli will be in the AF Corse Motorola Ferrari 430 GT2 - and GT3 Champion Sean Edwards in the Tech9 Porsche 997 GT2.

With six Maserati MC12, five Aston Martin DBR9, three Corvettes and two Lamborghinis lining up in GT1 in China, and more cars due to join the grid in Silverstone, the GT1 category looks delivering a fantastic competition in 2007.

As for GT2, the eternal Porsche vs Ferrari battle is set to continue, with the new Porsche 997 competing officially for the first time in Zhuhai. As for the drivers, they include some of the most impressive line-ups seen to date. Not forgetting the valliant Gillet Vertigo, entered in G2, not eligible for points but a vital part of the grid.

This will be the fourth time the FIA GT Championship has visited Zhuhai. The track is popular with many of the drivers, as are the large crowds of friendly, interested spectators. In 1999, a Chrysler Viper won in Zhuhai, Karl Wendlinger at the wheel. In 2004, it was the Maserati MC12, with Andrea Bertolini one of the drivers. And then in 2005, the Corvette C5 was victorious, Hezemans, Kumpen and Longin at the wheel. Five drivers who will be looking to add a second win to their tally, and to start of the season in the best possible way. It's a long way from Zhuhai to Zolder, in October, when the Championship will draw to a close. But as the past has frequently shown, the results of the first race can so often shape the whole season...



### Zhuhai International Circuit (People's Republic of China)

Web site : [www.zic.com.cn](http://www.zic.com.cn)

email : [zic@zic.com.cn](mailto:zic@zic.com.cn)

Circuit length : 4300 m

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FIA GT statistics - 2005

Pole position 1:30.661 - Christophe Bouchut, Aston Martin DBR9

Winners : Kumpen/Longin/Hezemans

- Corvette C5 - 110 laps in 3 hours

GT2 pole 1:35.462 - Marc Lieb, Porsche

996 GT3 RSR

Winners: Lieb/Rockenfeller- Porsche 996



## WHAT THE DRIVERS THINK

*"The Zhuhai race is extraordinary for a number of reasons. First of all, it's a long, enriching journey, with the unavoidable visit to Hong Kong, a fascinating city full of colour and history. Then the ferry to Zhuhai, after which everything is different and new. As for the track, I like it, although the layout is not among my favourites. But the braking at the end of the straight is good, as well as the fast corner before it. The rather abrasive track is hard on the tyres. It can be very humid, which is hard on the driver. I set pole position the last time the FIA GT visited Zhuhai, and I'd like to do as well this year !"*

Christophe Bouchut, All-Inkl.com Lamborghini Murciélago



For more information on the teams,  
drivers and everything about the  
FIA GT Championship,  
please visit :  
[www.fiagt.com](http://www.fiagt.com)



## ROUND 1 - CARS AND DRIVERS

So who will be lining up on the grid for the first round of 2007? There have rarely been so many questions at this stage of the season, with barely any line-ups remaining from the previous season.

Starting off with the 2006-winning car, there will be a grand total of five Maserati MC12 cars - the most ever seen in the FIA GT Championship.

Vitaphone Racing Team is determined to defend its titles, and with four top drivers and new tyre partner Michelin, they will be out to impress. Newcomers Scuderia Playteam Sarafree showed their abilities in Mugello last year, and with 2006 Champion Bertolini and runner-up Andrea Piccini sharing a car, the sky's the limit for the all-Italian outfit. Last but definitely not least, JMB Racing is back with the Maserati they took to second in the 2005 season, with experienced British sportscar drivers Joe Macari and Ben Aucott at the wheel.

Next, the Aston Martin contingent. Aston Martin Racing BMS has led both official test sessions this season, with their experienced line-up of Davies/Babini. However, newcomers Mondini/Monfardini should not be discounted. The last time BMS fielded two youngsters straight out of single-seaters, it was Bobbi and Biagi -and they went on to win the title.

Jetalliance Racing, formerly known as Race Alliance, is keen to carry on the good work and steady progress from 2007, with Wendlinger/Sharp a duo to watch. And although Barwell Motorsport, with Jonny Kane and Jonny Cocker, are new to GT1, they are proven race winners in all other categories.

The three Corvettes on the grid include two C6 R cars and one C5. PK Carsport is entering the tried and tested C5 for Belcar Champions Longin and Kumpen. Carsport Holland, with support from Phoenix, will run a C6 for Hezemans and Deletraz. And PSI Experience, pole-setter and second at the Paul Ricard last year, enter a C6 for leading driver Philipp Peter and British GT runner-up Luke Hines.

Last but definitely not least, the two Lamborghini Murciélago cars entered by All-Inkl.com Racing. Four extremely strong drivers, Bouchut, Kox, Menten and Mücke - and a car in constant progress. It must be a case of when, not if, it claims a podium finish.

In GT2, the Zhuhai grid is evenly matched between Ferrari and Porsche. Defending Champions AF Corse Motorola have four top drivers, Vilander, Müller, Bruni and Ortelli. But they will face a battle from their 2006 rivals Scuderia Ecosse, retaining Niarchos, Kirkaldy and Mullen and adding Czech superstar Tomas Enge. Can the Scottish team keep up their 100% pole position record?

As for the Porsches, three new 997 cars will be joined by one 996 RSR. Ebimotors is back, with a car for Emanuele Busnelli and young Italian star Marcello Zani. BMS Scuderia Italia enters one car for Emmanuel Collard and Matteo Lucelli. GT3 Champions Tech9 Motorsport move up to GT2 with Sean Edwards and Leo Machitski - both GT3 Champions in 2006. And Team Felbermayr Proton is back, with a 996 for the most frequent FIA GT driver Gerold Ried, sharing the car with fellow German Marc Basseng.

The sole car in G2 is, once again, the Belgian Racing Gillet Vertigo, with Bas Leinders and Renaud Kuppens once more at the wheel.

The grid will consist of 24 cars, and 48 drivers, representing sixteen different nationalities - including, for the first time, the Republic of San Marino!



## HANDICAP WEIGHTS ROUND 1 - ZHUHAI

The only handicap weights carried for the first round are those awarded by the GT Bureau of the FIA.

Decisions taken in 2005 and 2006, carried over to 2007, mean that the five Maserati MC12 will all carry 25 kg penalty weight. Furthermore, the wing is maintained at 1419 mm.

A new decision for 2007 authorised the Lamborghini Murciélago to run with a restrictor of 32 mm instead of 31.2 mm.

Cars in the GT2 category which have two drivers considered as professionals will also have to carry additional weight.

The CVs of all the drivers have been submitted to the GT Bureau, and a decision will be given next week concerning which cars will have to carry the ballast.

The weight concerned is calculated to be equivalent to half a second a lap, over the circuits visited during the season. During 2007, this was calculated to be 28 kg.

## **BARTELS AND VITAPHONE RACING DETERMINED TO DEFEND THEIR TITLES**

Michael Bartels has announced that Vitaphone Racing fully intends to defend their titles in the GT1 category - including aiming for three-in-a-row in the Teams title, which it won in 2005 and 2006.

The German team will enter two Maserati MC 12 cars, shod this year with Michelin tyres. "It will not be easy to achieve our goals," Bartels admitted. "The competition will be even stronger this year."

Bartels will be supported by 2003 FIA GT Champion Thomas Biagi, who has one of the most impressive records of consistency in the Championship - out of 32 appearances, the 30-year-old Italian has finished on the podium 20 times, and claimed a total of nine wins.

As for the nr 2 Maserati MC 12, one of the drivers will be Miguel Ramos, who drove the nr 22 Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9 in 2006. His team-mate is likely to be Christian Montanari, of the Republic of San Marino. Montanari has been racing in the World Series by Renault in recent years, although he had a taste of endurance racing at Daytona earlier this year. He was also a familiar figure in the Super Racing Weekend paddocks in 2004, when he was a race winner in the Formula Renault V6 Eurocup. Interestingly, he will be up against two of his rivals from that season : Ryan Sharp, now racing for Jetalliance Racing, and Giorgio Mondini, racing for Aston Martin Racing BMS.

"To defend the title, we need two strong cars," team manager Rafael Calafell explained. "I believe we have also found a new strong partner in the shape of French tyre supplier Michelin."

The Vitaphone Racing Team and Bartels will be aiming not just for one, but for two hat-Tricks this year : three in a row in the Teams Championship, but also in the 24 Hours of Spa, where their Maserati MC 12 has been victorious over the last two seasons. No team has managed this triple feat in either areas to date.

"It is a big pleasure for me to drive the number one car," Thomas Biagi explained. "When I won the title in 2003, I never got to race the number one, as I missed the 2004 season. But I came back in 2005, and I hope to be here a long, long time." Biagi is also happy to be sharing the car with Michael Bartels. "When I drove with Matteo Bobbi, he was like my younger brother, and we got on very well. With Michael, it's different - as if he was my older brother. He has taught me a lot since I joined Vitaphone."

Thomas is also looking forward to starting the season, and to seeing how the new regulations work. "Many things are new this season, with the two-hour races, and many other changes. It's not easy to predict who will be fastest. There will be a lot of competition, and we will have to work hard - but I know that Michael and I will be very strong."



**MICHAEL BARTELS - GER - 39**  
4 pole positions -16 podiums - 8 wins  
2006 GT1 DRIVERS CHAMPION  
Raced for Zakspeed in 1998, then with Vitaphone from 2004 onwards. Claimed first-ever win for the Saleen



**THOMAS BIAGI - ITA - 30**  
9 wins - 20 podiums  
2003 GT1 DRIVERS CHAMPION  
Raced with BMS Scuderia Italia in 2003, with Vitaphone in 2005 & 2006



**MIGUEL RAMOS - POR - 35**  
Raced Saleens in 2003 & 2004 for Graham Nash and RML, then an Aston Martin DBR9 for BMS in 2006.



**CHRISTIAN MONTANARI - RSM - 25**  
2005 & 2006 : World Series by Renault (7th and 8th respectively)  
2004 : Formula Renault V6 Eurocup (2 wins)

## AF CORSE MOTOROLA DEFENDS ITS TITLE

2006 Champions AF Corse, to be known as AF Corse Motorola for the 2007 season, will be returning to defend their title with two Ferrari 430 GT2 cars and four top drivers ! For 2007, the nr 50 Ferrari 430 GT2 will be driven by Toni Vilander and Dirk Müller, while the nr 51 car will be in the hands of Gianmaria Bruni and Stephane Ortelli.

Returning to the team after racing for them at the 24 Hours of Spa is Stéphane Ortelli. The driver from Monaco, double FIA N-GT Champion in 2002 and 2003, said he was very pleased to be back in the Championship after two years away. 36 years old, Ortelli has an exceptional record in the Championship. He has been on the podium more often than any other driver, with 35 podiums in all classes. He has 15 wins, including the overall victory in the 2003 Proximus 24 Hours of Spa, in a GT2 car. He also shares the lead for the number of pole positions (all classes) with Christophe Bouchut, at 11 to date.

Toni Vilander also has experience with the team, having raced for them in the final round of 2006, where he finished second with eventual Champion Jaime Melo. The Finnish driver, 26 years old, won the Italian GT Championship with Scuderia Playteam Sarafree last year. He raced in Mugello with Playteam's Maserati MC 12, and qualified third, leading the race for the first hour.

New to the FIA GT Championship, but a familiar face in the Super Racing Weekend paddocks, is Dirk Müller. The German driver competed with success in the FIA European and World Touring Car Championships for BMW, finishing second in both 2004 and 2005. This year marks a return to his endurance roots, as Müller won the Porsche Carrera Cup in 1998, the GT class of the ALMS in 2000 and has known endurance success, including the 2004 edition of the 24 Hours of the Nürburgring. "This is where I started, really," Muller said. "I grew up in long-distance races. For me right now, I've been made very welcome in AF Corse Motorola. I already feel as if I've been here for a couple of years. To be behind the wheel of a Ferrari makes me really proud – it's every boy's dream. The level of the car is really high. The category is going to be very tough this year, and I'm really looking forward to it."

The fourth member of the squad is new to GT racing, but has plenty of top-level experience behind the wheel. Gianmaria Bruni, 25 years old from Italy, has had an impressive career in single-seaters, up to and including Formula One, having driven for Minardi in 2004. For the last two years he has had a successful career in GP2.

After Monza, the team had a shakedown for their new car at a wet Mugello circuit, with the second car being delivered in time to catch the plane for Zhuhai.

## JONATHAN COCKER FINALIST FOR MSA BRITISH RACE ELITE PROGRAMME



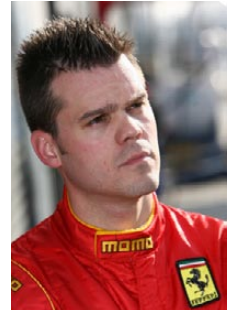
Barwell Motorsport's Jonathan Cocker, who will make his GT1 debut in Zhuhai, has been named as one of the 20 finalists for the Motor Sport Association's new British Race Elite programme. David Brabham was one of those with the task of selecting the 20 drivers, aged between 16 and 25, who would go through to the next stage. "We tried to cover as many racing categories as possible, bearing in mind that this is a 'Race Elite' programme and not just a single-seater programme," Brabham said. The twenty selected drivers will now have to go through a rigorous interview programme. The final judging will take place on April 5th, to make the final selection of six drivers who will become the first members of the MSA British Elite programme.



STEPHANE ORTELLI (MON) - 36  
15 wins, 11 poles  
35 podiums  
Champion in 2002 and 2003. Overall winner 24 Hours of Spa 2003

DIRK MÜLLER (GER) - 31  
1st ALMS GT '00  
2nd, FIA ETCC '04  
2nd FIA WTCC '05

1st FIA GT season



TONI VILANDER (FIN) - 26

2006 Italian GT Champion  
2nd GT2 Dubai 2006

GIANMARIA BRUNI (ITA) - 25

GP2 in 2005 & 2006  
F1 (Minardi) 2004



## BUSY SEASON FOR PK CARSPORT



Monday night saw the PK Carsport season officially get underway in the Versuz discothèque in Hasselt. Drivers Anthony Kumpen and Bert Longin will be driving the team's Corvette C5-R in the FIA GT Championship, as well as racing a Corvette Z06 in the Belcar.

"Due to the change of the regulations we had no choice and we had to go from three to two drivers" said Anthony Kumpen. "Initially we had the intention to use two cars. One for Bert and myself and another car for Mike Hezemans and a second driver. During his search for that second driver, Hezemans met Deletraz, who had already signed a contract with Phoenix and Mike Hezemans did the same. It is a pity because I have driven with Mike for the past 7 years, and we have now become in fact competitors. But the bond with Hezemans remains, which is also obvious in the name PK Carsport."

After difficult starts to the season in 2005 and 2006, this year Kumpen and Longin want to be ready from the first race. "Two years ago it took a while before we got used to the Corvette C5-R and last year we experienced the same with the C6-R" says Bert Longin. "Before we really knew the car, some races had already gone. This year we are driving the C5-R, a car that no longer has any secrets for us, the team or the engineers. This is a big advantage. And we do not worry about the competitiveness. We will be ready in China next week."

On Tuesday, one day after the presentation, the C5-R was tested on the Nürburgring in Germany. "It was a very positive test" says Anthony Kumpen. We tested all afternoon and we are particularly satisfied. The advantage compared to previous year is that two can drive more than three. The communication with the engineer went more easily. This afternoon was one of most constructive of the past years."

Bert Longin fully agrees with his team mate. "We can start the new season with a good feeling. The car was driving perfectly. The team has done a great job and clicks well. That is extremely important and an essential trump card. Today Phoenix Racing also has been testing and both cars are very close to each other. Next weekend we will know more, for the first race in China. Tuesday, we get on the plane."



ANTHONY  
KUMPEN  
Belgium  
Age : 28

FIA GT Career  
1 pole  
4 wins  
16 podiums



BERT  
LONGIN  
Belgium  
Age : 41

FIA GT Career  
3 wins  
11 podiums



## FIRST TEST FOR TOMAS ENGE WITH SCUDERIA ECOSSE



After a successful test in Monza, the Scuderia Ecosse team were out on track a little closer to home, taking advantage of being based near to Knockhill Circuit. Tomas Enge, Tim Mullen and Andrew Kirkaldy were on driving duty; this was Tomas' first run with the team so a chance for everyone to get acquainted.

The serious business of the day was to test various Pirelli tyres that had been sent over from Italy. The test was hugely positive as, even though the team was running a 2006-spec Ferrari 430, all three drivers recorded times under Knockhill's current GT2 lap record, despite the typically harsh weather conditions.

"It was important for us to give Tomas a good run in the car before we head off to China," said Team Principal Stewart Roden. "Not so much to get him used to the car – he was immediately on the pace - but to start the relationship with the team. Tomas settled in quickly and we all thoroughly enjoyed our day with him. We got through a good dry tyre test programme and also ran on some Pirelli wets that we were very satisfied with. Everything is falling into place now and we're all fully motivated for the tough season ahead of us." Next up for the team is the shakedown of its new Ferrari 430 at Fiorano on 12 March.

## RACEALLIANCE BECOMES JETALLIANCE RACING AND ENTERS TWO ASTON MARTIN DBR9 CARS



Starting with the 2007 season, the team formerly known as Racealliance will be renamed Jetalliance Racing. This is due to the new majority shareholder, the Jetalliance Group. The Austrian Aston Martin Importer Karner Holding remains a partner with a strategic 10% share. Katharina Lichtner-Hoyer, sister of majority

shareholder Lukas Lichtner-Hoyer, has been named as CEO. She will be in charge of the marketing, customer relations and hospitality department. The remaining technical responsibility has been distributed among the race engineers and the work-shop manager. The team has also moved its workshop to Austria. From now on all operations will be conducted in Oeynhausen, approximately 25 km south of Vienna. "An Austrian team simply belongs in Austria. Now we can really offer our customers and fans an authentic "touch & feel",” Lukas Lichtner-Hoyer explained. For the 2007 season, Jetalliance Racing will enter two Aston Martin DBR9 cars in the FIA GT Championship. "2006 was our first learning year. The basic idea is to carry on with what proved to be good and develop new concepts for what could have gone better. Therefore we have kept almost the entire crew of mechanics, despite having moved the workshop 500 miles from the Nuerburgring to Vienna. The technical department will be led by Swiss Othmar Welti, who had been our data recording engineer at a few race meetings last year. As a team, we are aiming to fight for the team title in the GT1 class, bearing in mind, that a title would allow us to enter a car in the 24 Hours of Le Mans," Lichtner-Hoyer continued. The "flagship" nr 33 car will be driven by Karl Wendlinger, as in 2006. His team-mate will be young British driver Ryan Sharp. "We have made good progress in learning to understand the characteristics of the car better during our test days in Valencia and Monza. I think that we will go well prepared into the new season," Wendlinger said. As for Ryan Sharp, he is looking forward to his first season in GT racing : "In just the short time that I have worked with Jetalliance Racing, I have seen their level of professionalism. I'm proud to be part of this team, especially alongside Karl. The first miles with the car have been quite a task, the adaption from single seaters is pretty big. I'll try to reach the limit of the car step by step." The second car will be shared by Lukas Lichtner-Hoyer and Robert Lechner. "I'm happy that Robert is joining me in the team's second Aston," Lichtner-Hoyer explained. "Within the GT1 field, it is very important for a novice like me to have a professional race driver as a backbone." As for Robert, who started the season with the team last year, this is a second try : "Unfortunately I didn't get a lot of miles to drive last year. The prospects for this year look a lot better and I'll try my best to do my part to reach the aims of the team."

## THE RETURN OF THE STORM ?

Following a recent decision by the FIA, the Lister Storm GT is now eligible to compete for a further two years in the FIA GT Championship. A statement from Lister Racing explained : "Looking at the times set at the recent test in Monza, and comparing them with Tom Coronel's times in the Storm, set two years' ago in similar conditions, the car will still be very competitive with the right driver and tyre combination. The latest specification Storm has been rebuilt as new with the addition of carbon brakes and traction control. No racing programme has been put together as yet but we are considering all possibilities."



### CAR 33 : KARL WENDLINGER

Age 38 - Austria

After a long single-seater career culminating in F1, Karl Wendlinger moved to touring cars and then to GT racing. He won the FIA GT Championship in 1999. 10 wins - 26 podiums - 3 poles

### RYAN SHARP

Age 27 - Great Britain

Runner-up in the 2004 Formula Renault V6 Eurocup. Raced in GP2 in 2005 with DPR, then in the 2006 FIA WTCC. First season in GT racing.



### CAR 36 : ROBERT LECHNER

Age 29 - Austria

Robert Lechner, older brother of multiple pole-setter Walter, drove a Ferrari 575 Maranello for JMB in 2004, a Saleen S7 for Konrad in 2005 and did two races with Race Alliance in 2006. He has claimed one podium, in 2004.

### LUKAS LICHTNER-HOYER

Age 44 - Austria

Not only a driver, but the majority shareholder of the team. Lukas shared a Porsche 996 in 2006 with Thomas Gruber, in the GT2 category.



## TESTING IN NOGARO : ASTON MARTIN BMS FASTEST

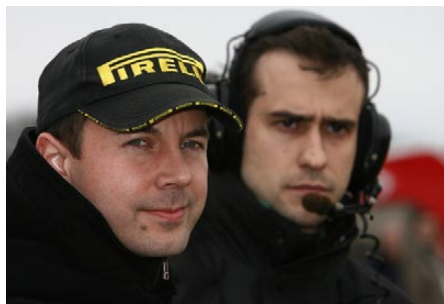
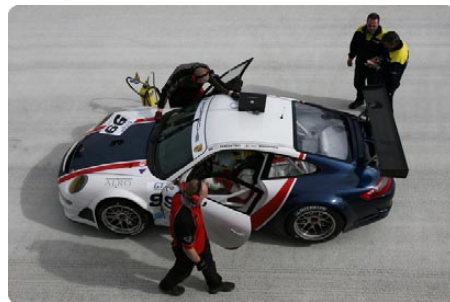
Before travelling to Zhuhai for the first round of the 2007 FIA GT Championship, a number of teams travelled to Nogaro (France) for two days of testing, alongside the FIA GT3 European Championship and the French FFSA GT Championship. The FIA GT Championship will be back in Nogaro at the end of September, for the 9th round of the season.

In GT1, BMS Scuderia Italia was present with both Aston Martin DBR9 cars. Jamie Davies and Fabio Babini shared the nr 23, with Giorgio Mondini and Ferdinando Monfardini in the nr 22. Philipp Peter was testing the PSI Experience Corvette C6.R, and Peter Kuterman and Dirk Waijbergen were driving the nr 15 JMB Racing Maserati MC12. Most of the drivers had to get used to this track, as Jamie Davies explained: "I had not been here since 1999. I don't really remember the track... and with this new building I really don't recognize anything!"

The nr 23 Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9 set the fastest time with a lap of 1'24.764, ahead of the nr 19 PSI Experience Corvette C6.R driven by Philipp Peter:

In GT2, the nr 97 BMS Scuderia Italia Porsche 997 GT3 RSR of Emmanuel Collard and Matteo Malucelli was the fastest, ahead of the Tech9 Porsche 997 GT3 RSR, driven by Leo Machitski and Sean Edwards.

Rain hit the second day of testing, and the BMS Scuderia Italia Porsche 997 RSR showed its efficiency in the wettest second session, setting a faster time than both the Aston Martin Racing BMS DBR9 cars. PSI Experience tested another driver in the morning : Luke Hines., runner-up in the 2006 British GT Championship.



			Day 1			Day 2			
			Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Fastest
23	Aston Martin BMS	Aston Martin DBR9	01:26.990	01:26.422	01:24.764	01:31.147	01:40.112	1:41.346	01:24.764
19	PSI Experience	Corvette C6	01:28.377	01:26.382	01:24.924	01:33.150			01:24.924
22	Aston Martin BMS	Aston Martin DBR9	01:29.833	01:27.510	01:26.593	01:33.019	01:39.772	1:42.013	01:26.593
97	BMS Scuderia Italia	Porsche 997 GT2	01:30.207	01:28.557	01:29.032	01:32.271	01:39.430	1:41.178	01:28.557
15	JMB Racing	Maserati MC 12		01:32.461	01:29.681	01:39.743	01:41.927	1:44.416	01:29.681
99	TEch9 Motorsport	Porsche 997 GT2	01:30.974	01:35.939	01:29.720	01:36.253			01:29.720
70	JMB Racing	Ferrari 350		01:37.211	01:35.259	01:46.732	01:48.913		01:35.259

## **BMS NEW BOYS : FERDINANDO MONFARDINI AND GIORGIO MONDINI**



*Aston Martin Racing BMS has signed up two exciting young drivers, fresh from single-seaters, to drive the nr 22 Aston Martin DBR9. We spoke to them in Nogaro ...*

*Ferdinando, this season is going to be your first season in the FIA GT Championship, what did you do before?*

FM : "I raced in F3000 in 2004, then I did two years in GP2, one of the greatest single-seater series. Single-seater cars are really different from GT cars. First of all they are single make Championships; I have always done Championships with only one make of tyres and one type of car! The cars are also very different, and in the FIA GT Championship you have to work more on the cars to find the performance, the set-up is very important in order to have a good car."

*Why did you choose the FIA GT Championship?*

FM : "In GP2, if you are supported by a manufacturer or a big sponsor, who is involved in Formula One, you can drive a better car, in a top team. If not... it is much more difficult for you! So I decided to go to GT racing, because if I want to carry on racing, and to be a professional racing driver, it is the only way. "

*What do you think about GT racing so far?*

FM : "The FIA GT Championship is very strong, with a lot of professional drivers, top cars, top teams, and strong manufacturers like Aston Martin. I have to change my way of driving, from short races against your competitors, where you have to push from the start to the finish, to endurance racing with a co-driver. The races are much more strategic, you really need to race with your head. It is new for me to work with a team-mate, in a real association, and not for myself alone. My motivation is very strong this year, and I'm convinced that is a good point in order to get good results in this Championship."

*Giorgio, where did you race before?*

GM : "I started my career in 2001 in the Formula Renault Eurocup, where I also raced in 2002. In 2003 I started in the Formula Renault V6, and I won the Championship in 2004. Then in 2005 I raced in the World Series by Renault; in the middle of the 2005 season I switched to GP2, where I also raced in 2006. On the same time I was a test driver in Formula One for Midland F1. It was very interesting to drive a Formula One, I learned a lot and I understood a lot of different things. I did about 5000 kilometers in the Midland F1."

*What is your program this season?*

GM : "I'm going to do the FIA GT Championship with the BMS Scuderia Italia Aston Martin DBR9, and I'm planned to test again in Formula One. I have one more test with Midland F1, and if I do well in the FIA GT Championship, I will test more."

*Why did you choose the FIA GT Championship?*

GM : "I know this Championship quite well, as Stephane Ratel is a great friend. Then when I was racing in Formula Renault Eurocup it was in the same meetings as the FIA GT Championship, so I was able to see how good this Championship is. I was looking for a Championship with very professional team, close to what I have known in single-seater series. With a lot of professional teams and manufacturers involved in this Championship, the FIA GT Championship was the best solution. BMS is a good choice, very professional. We are supported by Pirelli, and I'm sure that we can do something great."

*Two young drivers in the same cars, with not a lot of experience in GT Racing... it is going to be a learning season for you?*

GM : "We need time... we need to get used to the car, but it is going to be interesting. There are a lot of drivers with a strong experience in this Championship, but we will work to be on their level very fast. I did around 40 laps in Monza, 40 laps in Nogaro... then we are going straight to the first race in Zhuhai! We have to work by ourselves and we are going to discover several points in Zhuhai. The team, Aston Martin Racing BMS Suderia Italia, is going to help us a lot, and Jamie Davies and Fabio Babini are also a big reference for us. With them we are going to learn quickly."

*What was your first feeling with this car?*

GM : "Before first getting in the car, I thought there would be a big difference between a single seater car and our Aston Martin... but in fact there are fewer differences than we could have imagined. In fact, when we get used to the car, the only big difference is the weight! The engine, the brakes, the body... it is a really good package."



## FIA GT3 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP NOGARO : TESTING CONTINUES

Over two days, a number of FIA GT3 European Championship teams were in Nogaro for the second official test session: Tech9 Motorsport was present with one Porsche 997 Cup, BMS Scuderia Italia with two Aston Martin DBRS9, JMB with one Ferrari 430 GT3 and Apex Motorsport with the new Jaguar XKR GT3.

For Tech9, BMS and JMB, those test sessions were a good opportunity to try out several new drivers. Andy Wallace was working on the development of the Apex Motorsport Jaguar XKR GT3 : “This is going to be a really nice car. It looks great from the outside, and if you look inside, it is really well prepared” declared Andy Wallace. “I don’t think we’ve done more than 100 kilometres of testing so far. We had a small suspension problem in Monza, which is now perfect. Today we had a small problem with the exhaust. We are still working hard, and we are going to be ready for Silverstone. I’ll be there to see the first race of this car.”

Christophe Bouchut was also present to carry on with the work of balancing the performance of the cars with the FIA Bureau. “We worked well the first day, but with the rain on the second day it was more difficult to get the necessary information. I set the fastest time with the Ferrari 430 GT3, with a lap of 1:31.542, but I was not able to test the Porsche in the same conditions. We have one more official test session to confirm what we think and to test the new cars” explained Christophe Bouchut.

The next official session for the GT3 cars will be in Adria, on April 11th.



			Day 1			Day 2			Fastest
			Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	
116	JMB Racing	Ferrari 430 GT3	01:34.961	01:31.542		01:44.171	01:47.428	01:49.266	<b>01:31.542</b>
123	BMS Scuderia Italia	Aston Martin DBRS9	01:35.105	01:33.936	01:45.760	01:45.423	01:47.906	01:46.268	<b>01:33.936</b>
1	Tech9	Porsche 997 GT3	01:34.633	01:36.405	01:43.826	01:46.691	01:50.485	01:47.220	<b>01:34.633</b>
55	Racing for Belgium	Aston Martin DBRS9	01:37.232	01:35.083		01:46.257	01:47.690	01:53.169	<b>01:35.083</b>
122	BMS Scuderia Italia	Aston Martin DBRS9		01:35.988	01:48.094	01:46.319		01:47.293	<b>01:35.988</b>
46	Apex Motorsport	Jaguar XKR		01:39.689	01:49.460	01:49.323	01:56.097	01:56.904	<b>01:39.689</b>

## MORGAN AERO 8 FOR THE FIA GT3 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP



Team AutoGT Racing France launched the new Morgan Aero 8 in Paris this week, with the goal of taking part in the FIA GT3 European Championship with three cars. Former Formula One driver, Jacques Laffite should race with his daughter Margot. Margot Laffite is used to racing on ice, in the Andros Trophy, but this will be her first full season on tarmac ! Frédéric Makowiecki, Georges-Alexandre Sturdza, Frédéric Oneil and Jean-François le Roch plan to drive the others cars.

In charge of the development of the Morgan, Jean-Pierre Jabouille is very confident about this new project: "We have been seduced by the FIA GT3 European Championship. The regula-

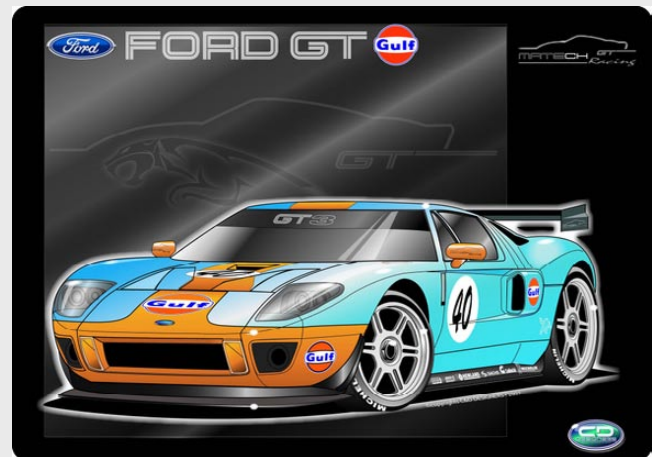
tions are well balanced and well done. Our French team will be supported by a Swiss bank, and we will race with a British car! Rather unusual..."

Before taking part in the 2007 season of the FIA GT3 European Championship, which starts on May 5th at Silverstone, the Morgan Aero 8 will have to be homologated, and its performance balanced with the rest of the competing cars. All driver pairings are subject to the approval of the GT Bureau

## MATECH RACING ANNOUNCES FORD GT TO ENTER FIA GT3

Matech Racing has announced their plans to enter three Ford GT cars in the 2007 season of the FIA GT3 European Championship. This project is in the hands of Martin Bartek, owner of the Matech Concepts Company, located in Switzerland. The Swiss team has called on Christian Schumacher, of Belgium, to prepare the Ford GT cars for their homologation with the FIA. Andreas Hainke, who worked with Race Alliance last year in the FIA GT Championship, has also joined the technical team, and will be heading up the management and organisation of Matech Racing.

"Technically, in its original state the car is rather extraordinary," an enthusiastic Christian Schumacher remarked. "Nevertheless to make this into a racing beast there is a fair amount of work involved, and especially since we are starting out with a road going version. In fact the Racing adaptation promises to be a real jewel, simple and yet sophisticated. I'm already convinced that this Ford GT will be highly competitive..."



Even though Ford is not officially involved in the GT3 adventure, which remains a 100% private operation, Christian Schumacher and the entire Matech Racing team will nevertheless try to receive some assistance from Ford Motorsport Europe in the field of the car's homologation. Meanwhile, work has started on the four chassis, and very shortly a prototype will take to the track for an initial evaluation of this Ford GT.

Stephane Ratel, Chairman of SRO Motorsports Group, promoter of the FIA GT3 European Championship, is delighted by the news of the Ford GT. "It is what I would call a new cult model, and in addition a new make showing an interest for the GT3 regulations", Ratel commented.

## TELEVISION TIMES FOR ZHUHAI

As well as the extensive regular coverage of the FIA GT Championship around the world, the first round of the 2007 season, taking place in Zhuhai, in the People's Republic of China, will see exceptional coverage on national TV. The race will be covered live on Zhuhai TV Two, covering the Zhuhai area and seen by 1.5 million people, on the Guangzhou TV Competition Channel, in Guangzhou (10 million), the Guangdong TV Satellite Channel (Guangdong Province, 110 million) and on the Guangdong TV Satellite Channel (covering north to Russia, west to Africa, eastern Europe, south to southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, with up to 2 billion potential viewers).

Although not many of the European channels will cover the race live, due to the time differences, times of the delayed programmes will be available shortly and will be posted on the FIA GT website as soon as possible.

COUNTRY	CHANNEL	PROGRAMME	FIA GT Qualifying	FIA GT Race
Asia	ESPN STAR	26' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
Austria	DSF	Full race	x	25/03/07 1300-1500
Austria	Premiere	Full race	times not confirmed	25/03/07 0725-0945
Australia	FOX	26' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
Belgium	RTL Club	26' Highlight	x	01/04/07 2230-2300
Belgium	RTBF	5' Highlight	x	25/03/07 1800 and 2300
Belgium (Wallonia)	Sport +	52' Highlight	x	28/03/07 2230-2330
China	Zhuhai TV 2	Full race & Qualif	24/03/07 1625-1700	25/03/07 1330-1600
China	Guangzhou TV Competition	Full race & Qualif	24/03/07 1625-1700	25/03/07 1330-1600
China	Guangdong TV Sports	Full race & Qualif	24/03/07 1625-1700	25/03/07 1330-1600
China	Guangdong TV Satellite	Full race & Qualif	24/03/07 1625-1700	25/03/07 1330-1600
Czech Republic	CT4	52' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
France	Sport +	52' Highlight	x	28/03/07 2230-2330
Germany	DSF	Full race	x	25/03/07 1300-1500
Germany	Premiere	Full race & Qualif	times not confirmed	25/03/07 0725-0945
India	Zee	52' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
Italy	Nuvolari	52' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
Italy	Sky Sports Extra	Full race	x	times not confirmed
Luxemburg	RTL Club	26' Highlight	x	01/04/07 2230-2300
Luxemburg	RTBF	5' Highlight	x	25/03/07 1800 and 2300
Middle east	Al Jazeera Sport	Full race	x	times not confirmed
Middle east	ART	Full race	x	times not confirmed
Netherlands	Sport 1	Full race Live	x	25/03/07 0200-0400 cet
Portugal	Sport TV	Full race	x	times not confirmed
Russia	7TV	Full race	x	times not confirmed
Slovakia	Slovak TV 4	26' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
Switzerland (French)	Sport +	52' Highlight	x	28/03/07 2230-2330
Switzerland (German)	DSF	Full race	x	25/03/07 1300-1500
Switzerland (German)	Premiere	Full race	times not confirmed	25/03/07 0725-0945
Switzerland (Italian)	Nuvolari	52' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
Switzerland (Italian)	Sky Sports Extra	Full race	x	times not confirmed
South America	Speed SA	52' Highlight	x	4 weeks after the race
United Kingdom	Sky Sports 3	52' Highlight	x	29/03/07 220-2300
United Kingdom	Men & Motors	Full race	times not confirmed	times not confirmed
United Kingdom	Channel 4	26' Highlight	x	times not confirmed
USA	Speed	52' Highlight	x	times not confirmed

# FIA GT CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 1 : ZHUHAI (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA) PRACTICAL INFORMATION



## TIMETABLE IN BRIEF

Saturday March 24th		
09.00 - 10.20	FIA GT Championship	Free Practice 1
10.35 - 11.05	Formula Geely Race	Qualifying
11.20 - 11.50	Asian Supercar Challenge	Qualifying
12.10 - 13.30	FIA GT Championship	Free Practice 2
13.50 - 14.20	Pan Delta Touring Car	Qualifying
14.40 - 15.10	Asian Supercar Challenge	Race 1
15.30 - 16.00	Pan Delta Lotus Challenge Series	Race 1
16.25 - 17.00	FIA GT Championship	Qualifying Practice
17.10	Qualifying Press Conference	
Sunday March 25th		
08.40 - 08.55	Pan Delta Lotus Challenge Series	Warm-up
09.00 - 09.30	FIA GT Championship	Warm-up
09.50 - 10.20	Pan Delta Touring Car	Race
10.40 - 11.10	Asian Supercar Challenge	Race 2
11.30 - 12.00	Pan Delta Lotus Challenge Series	Race 2
12.00 - 13.20	Opening Ceremony, pit walk, Four Wheels Drift Demonstration, Hot Laps and Motorbike Stunt Show	
13.30 - 15.30	FIA GT Championship	Race
15.50	Race Press Conference	
16.00 - 16.30	Formula Geely	Race

## MEDIA INFORMATION

Located on the left-hand side of the ZIC main gate.

March 23rd	08:00	- 18:00
March 24th	08:00	- 18:00
March 25th	08:00	- 12:00

## MEDIA CENTRE

Located in room 213B on the second floor of the office building. The media reception is just outside the Media Centre. Lockers are available; a deposit of 100 RMB is payable

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Wired and wireless internet connections are available, free of charge. Telephones and fax machines are available at Media Reception for international, domestic calls or faxes. The media receptionist will have details of the charges.

## FOOD AND DRINK

The media canteen is in room 202. Journalists can collect lunch coupons at the accreditation centre. Water is available in the media centre.