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Motorsport

Audi hunt down records with TDI Power in USA

- **Revolutionary Diesel still unbeaten**
- **Last race of year for the Audi R10 TDI**
- **American Le Mans Series finale at Laguna Seca**

Audi has already won every title in the LM P1 class of the world's most popular sportscar series going into the American Le Mans Series finale at Laguna Seca (California) on 21 October. The last race of the year for the Audi Sport North America team is nevertheless of great importance once again. The new Audi R10 TDI could actually achieve something that no other Le Mans Prototype has managed before: to win every race that it has contested in a single season – and this in the revolutionary Diesel sportscar's début season.

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The Audi R10 TDI has lined-up seven times on the grid since its debut in March 2006 and has taken the chequered flag on each occasion – powerful proof of the efficiency and reliability of Audi TDI Power from which more and more Audi customers' benefit: More than half of all new Audis sold are already equipped with TDI engines with the tendency set to increase. The image of diesel engines in the USA has also started to change since the R10 TDI began its winning streak. The American fans speak of the "whispering revolution" because the powerful 650 hp V12-engine can hardly be heard.

The R10 TDI's successful debut season now closes at one of America's most picturesque circuits. Laguna Seca has achieved global fame through its spiralling "Cork Screw" section. However, the majority of the other corners around the "rollercoaster" track are also very challenging. Adding to this are the permanently changing weather conditions: In the morning Laguna Seca is often misty and cold, in the afternoon sunny and warm. Furthermore, fine sand from the nearby Pacific is constantly blown across the tarmac.

It is not only for this reason that the Audi drivers face an uphill struggle. In view of the steeply rising and falling sections, vehicle weight plays an even more important

role at Laguna Seca than at previous races. The petrol powered LM P1 vehicles are allowed – in contrast to the 24 Hours of Le Mans – to compete with 65 kilograms less weight than the R10 TDI. Even the significantly lighter prototypes of the smaller LM P2 class will have a good chance of overall victory at Laguna Seca.

That's why fans can eagerly look forward to a particularly exciting season ending sportscar race, which runs for four hours into evening dusk. Practice at Laguna Seca starts on Thursday. Qualifying is held on Friday afternoon, and the race starts on Saturday at 2:45 p.m. local time (11:45 p.m. German time). Dindo Capello/Allan McNish (Italy/Scotland) and Frank Biela/Emanuele Pirro (Germany/Italy) go record hunting for Audi. The R10 TDI with start number 1 has a 3,000 mile trip behind it: It drove through Manhattan on the opening of the Audi Forum New York City.

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Quotes before the race at Laguna Seca

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): "We want to round off this extremely successful season with another good result for the Audi R10 TDI. It will, however, be extremely tough for us: We saw in Road Atlanta just how fast the petrol-powered LM P1 Prototypes, which weigh 65 kilograms less, are. At Laguna Seca the difference in weight should be even more noticeable."

Frank Biela (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Laguna Seca is an interesting track with a great reputation. There are many fantastic circuits in America but Laguna Seca is something very unique. It cuts a 'rollercoaster' ride through the countryside and then there is obviously the famous 'Cork Screw'. We've had a lot of great races at Laguna Seca. This year it is our last chance of bringing home a good result."

Emanuele Pirro (Audi R10 TDI #1): "Laguna Seca is fantastic. There are two reasons why I'm looking forward to this race in particular: Firstly, we had a lot of bad luck at Road Atlanta and secondly with the many good races this year in America and the win at Le Mans we've had a great season, which we want to end in the best possible fashion. I'm curious to see just how good the R10 TDI will be at Laguna Seca. The circuit's tarmac is smoother than at any other track in the series."

Dindo Capello (Audi R10 TDI #2): “Laguna Seca is a legendary race track. The ‘Cork Screw’ is famous throughout the world. But this is not the only tricky section. There are many corners where you can win or lose a couple of tenths. You need a lot of mechanical grip at Laguna Seca and plenty of downforce to be quick. It will be extremely difficult for us to be at the front in Qualifying because our competitors are allowed to compete with so much less weight. Luckily however, the race is four hours long. I hope that the reliability of our R10 TDI will play a starring role.”

Allan McNish (Audi R10 TDI #2): “I’ve always enjoyed racing at Laguna Seca. The circuit is fast and flowing. In addition to the ‘Cork Screw’ there is a whole host of corners that run into one another. The circuit has been re-surfaced. The Audi R8 was always good on ‘green’, new tarmac which shouldn’t be any different with the R10 TDI. Even though the Creation, Zytek and Lola will make life difficult for us, Dindo (Capello) and I want to end this fantastic year on the top step of the podium.”

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Dave Maraj (Team Director Team Audi Sport North America): “Laguna Seca is one of the most picturesque circuits on the American Le Mans Series calendar and the conclusion of a fantastic year for us. Audi has demonstrated with the R10 TDI just what state-of-the-art diesel engines can do. But we are under no illusion about how tough the last race will be. It is a very difficult track for our cars and the competition will be very strong.”

The schedule at Laguna Seca

Thursday, 19 October

16:40 – 17:10	Test (LM P1 / P2)
17:10 – 18:10	Test (all classes)
18:10 – 18:40	Test (LM GT1 / GT2)

Friday, 20 October

09:50 – 10:50	Free Practice
13:40 – 14:40	Free Practice
14:50 – 15:10	Qualifying (LM GT1 / GT2)
15:20 – 15:40	Qualifying (LM P1 / P2)

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Saturday, 21 October

10:20 – 10:45	Warm-up
14:45 – 18:45	Race (4 hours)

Live timing and scoring and circuit commentary at: www.americanlemans.com

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