

Works comeback in the DTM and high-calibre customer sport

Audi motorsport 2004

Audi positions itself as the most sporting manufacturer in the premium segment and has the perfect basis for this: motorsport. Since Audi revolutionised rally sport at the beginning of the 1980s with the quattro drive, AUDI AG underlines that the company slogan "Vorsprung durch Technik" is to be taken literally with their exceptional motorsport successes.

From the track to production line

Most recent example: FSI technology played a decisive role in the historical AUDI AG hat-trick at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. After surviving the acid test on the race track, Audi became the first automobile manufacturer announcing to switch to direct fuel injection for its entire petrol engine range thereby bringing the customers the same advantages as with the Audi R8 racing sports car: more dynamic for a simultaneous reduction in fuel consumption.

Audi R8: the car to beat

The superior Audi FSI technology is one reason why the Audi R8, even in its fifth sports prototype season, is still the car to beat. Importer teams from the USA, Great Britain and Japan compete with the powerful 550 hp sport prototype in the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), the newly established European Le Mans Endurance Series (LMES) and at the 24 Hour race at Le Mans. The driving squad of Audi customer teams Champion, Goh and Veloqx could hardly be of higher calibre: Included in the Le Mans line up are four ex-Formula 1 drivers, eight Le Mans winners and six of this year's nine Audi works drivers.

Factory comeback in the DTM

After a year characterised by customer sport, AUDI AG commits itself once again on a factory basis for the 2004 season: Six newly developed Audi A4 DTM cars contest the DTM (German Touring Car Masters), Europe's most popular touring car race series. The driver line up of the two works teams, Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline and Audi Sport Infineon Team Joest, consists of seasoned campaigners Christian Abt, Frank Biela, Tom Kristensen, Emanuele Pirro and the two promising fast youngsters Mattias Ekström und Martin Tomczyk.

With the DTM comeback, AUDI AG picks up the threads of its successful tradition in touring car sport. From the off in 1990 and 1991 Audi won the DTM championship twice in succession with the V8 quattro. The Audi A4 quattro was the world's most successful super touring car between 1995 and 1999.

Two 24 Hour races on one weekend

A particular highlight in the motorsport calendar will be the second weekend in June: On June 12/13, Audi teams simultaneously contest both the 24 Hour races at Le Mans and around the Nürburgring. Four Audi R8 prototypes, entered by the Audi customer teams of Audi Sport Japan Team Goh, Audi Sport UK Team Veloqx and Team ADT Champion Racing, will compete at Le Mans. Infineon Team Abt Sportsline, with support from quattro GmbH the sporting subsidiary of Audi, assumes responsibility for the entry of both Abt-Audi TT-R touring cars on the Nürburgring-Nordschleife.

Title defence in Sweden and North America

In addition, Audi importers are also involved in the Swedish Touring Car Championship (STCC) and in the SPEED GT World Challenge in 2004. Audi starts as defending champion in both series. Team KMS Motorsport lines up with two front-wheel drive Audi A4 STCC cars, and in the American SPEED GT World Challenge the Audi Certified Champion RS 6 Team competes with two all-wheel driven Audi RS 6 Competition saloons.

Success is a commitment

For the Audi customer and factory teams the exceptional AUDI AG motorsport successes are also a commitment. "Audi does not compete just to make up the numbers," says Audi Motorsport chief Dr Wolfgang Ullrich. "As far as our DTM comeback is concerned we want to be capable of winning immediately to enable us to compete for the title. The goals of our Audi customers are of a comparatively high level. The Audi Sport customer sport department gives them the necessary support to be successful."

High demand for Audi know-how

Audi expertise in the fields of vehicle and drive train dynamics is also used increasingly by the Audi brand group and the other motorsport departments of the Volkswagen Group. In the 2004 season, SEAT is again involved in international touring car racing and Lamborghini develops a race version of the Murciélago super sports car for customer teams.