

Spa-Francorchamps, 14 May 2005

Motorsport

Spa-Francorchamps as seen by Tom Kristensen

- **DTM debut in the Ardennes**
- **The unique feeling inside famous “Eau Rouge”**
- **Best overtaking opportunity when braking for “La Source”**

Spa-Francorchamps is one of the world's most fascinating circuits. Eau Rouge, Blanchimont, La Source – these names accelerate the heartbeat of motor racing fans and racers alike. Audi driver Tom Kristensen comments on the 6.976-kilometre race track.

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The DTM is making its Spa debut this weekend. What makes this circuit so fascinating?

Tom Kristensen: “Spa-Francorchamps is a fascinating circuit in every respect. It is a combination of different types of circuits, it is situated amidst a fantastic landscape and, on top of that, it has a long and exciting tradition. The changes between extremely fast and very slow stretches are unique.”

How does it feel to be driving through the famous “Eau Rouge” in the Audi A4 DTM at more than 200 kph ?

Tom Kristensen: “‘Eau Rouge’ is flat out, that's for sure, but you've got to be concentrating one hundred percent every second. Before the uphill climb, the compression presses you into your seat with brutal force and then you see nothing but asphalt in front of you. It's a real thrill.”

What are the key points for you at Spa-Francorchamps?

Tom Kristensen: “Important – most of all – is ‘Eau Rouge’. Here, you have to take every kph you can with you on the uphill climb, otherwise you'll lose an enormous amount of time. The most difficult part – from my perspective – is the complete second sector where the chase for the crucial tenths will be decided. In the first and third sector minor mistakes don't have such a dramatic effect.”

Where do you see the best opportunities for overtaking?

Tom Kristensen: "Because of the permanent alternation between slow and quick stretches, Spa offers a lot of opportunities for making mistakes, which others can quickly take advantage of. A good opportunity for overtaking probably exists in the 'Les Combes' combination following the long straight. The best point, no doubt, is when braking to enter 'La Source'."

The start-finish straight is immediately followed by the "La Source hairpin".

What are you expecting will happen in the first few metres after the start?

Tom Kristensen: "I think that after the first turn many drivers will have some traces of paint from their competitors' livery on their cars ... the field will be extremely tight after the first few metres from accelerating after the start – some light touching is practically inevitable in these conditions. What's important is that all of us are very careful, because even the smallest mistake in this turn can cause a lot of cars to get entangled. In any event, the fans are in for one of the most thrilling starts on this year's calendar."

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Spa-Francorchamps (based on the data recording of the Audi A4 DTM)

