

**24H
SERIES**

POWERED BY **HANKOOK**

**Willi / Ebimotors,
one year on**
Back where it all began
in Mugello

#ThisIs24HSERIES
Behind the scenes of a
new documentary

INSIDE.
The new Ginetta G56
V8 power for new generation

 **HANKOOK**

12H MUGELLO



**24H
SERIES**

POWERED BY **HANKOOK**



24H DUBAI
13-14-15 JANUARY 2022



12H HOCKENHEIMRING
13-14-15 MAY 2022



6H ABU DHABI
21-22 JANUARY 2022



24H PORTIMAO
8-9-10 JULY 2022



12H MUGELLO
25-26 MARCH 2022



24H BARCELONA
9-10-11 SEPTEMBER 2022



12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS
22-23-24 APRIL 2022



24H SEBRING
18-19-20 NOVEMBER 2022



ventus S1 evo Z

Maximum performance with proven motorsport technology



**Electrified
Hankook**

It is a pleasure to extend my personal welcome, as well as that of everyone at the Autodromo Internazionale del Mugello, to CREVENTIC and all of our competitors for the Hankook 12H MUGELLO, one of our most important annual events.

The Hankook 12H MUGELLO is the inaugural race on our 2022 sporting calendar and we couldn't ask for a better starting point. There is a lot of expectation in fact for this eighth edition at the Tuscan track with more than 50 entries from over 35 different teams representing 16 different nations.

The Mugello Circuit has hosted a round of the 24H SERIES powered by Hankook every year bar one since 2014. Since its debut, a lot has been done at Mugello to further improve the security and the safety standards on-track. Year after year, the Mugello Circuit has also become the benchmark in terms of environmental sustainability, having been the first racetrack in the world awarded ISO 20121 certification, the international standard for the sustainable events management, and recognised as the greenest circuit worldwide according to recent research presented by Enovation Consulting and SportHub.

Following tradition, there has always been a special connection between CREVENTIC and the Mugello Circuit. The proximity of Florence adds an additional touch of charm to the Hankook 12H MUGELLO, providing the motorsports international event with a touristic and cultural dimension that encourages competitors and their families to explore the region. ■

Paolo Poli
Mugello Circuit CEO



FOLLOW 24H SERIES

24hseries.com

f t i /24hseries

#24HSERIES #thisisendurance

LIVE BROADCAST

HANKOOK 12H MUGELLO

ON 24HSERIES.COM WITH COMMENTARY FROM RADIO LE MANS

Friday 25 March	16:40 - 17:10	FX2 Series - Race 1
	17:15 - 18:40	12H MUGELLO - Qualifying GT and TCE
Saturday 26 March	08:55 - 09:30	ATCC - Race 1
	09:35 - 10:10	FX1 & F2000 Series - Race 1
	10:15 - 10:50	FX Pro Series - Race 1
	10:55 - 11:30	FX2 Series - Race 2
	11:35 - 12:10	Speed Euro Series - Race 1
	12:30 - 18:45	12H MUGELLO - Race Part 1
Sunday 27 March	08:30 - 16:00	12H MUGELLO - Race Part 2
	16:05 - 16:40	ATCC - Race 2
	16:45 - 17:20	FX1 & F2000 Series - Race 2
	17:25 - 18:00	FX Pro Series - Race 2
	18:05 - 18:40	Speed Euro Series - Race 2

Broadcasting time is local time

TEAM CREVENTIC



Gerrie Willems
Technical Coordinator
willems@creventic.com



Helen Roukens
Team Relations
roukens@creventic.com



Peter Freij
Operational Manager
freij@creventic.com



Ole Dörlemann
Sporting Coordinator
dorlemann@creventic.com



Orry Lichtenberg
Sales - Team Relations
lichtenberg@creventic.com



Robin Custers
Sales - Team Relations
custers@creventic.com



Rick Voesten
Event Manager
teams@creventic.com



David Vink
Event Manager
lichtenberg@creventic.com



Rick Hubers
Bookkeeper
bookkeeping@creventic.com



James Gent
Editor-at-large
gent@creventic.com

CREVENTIC

Zandstraat 11
6591 DA Gennep
The Netherlands
T. +31 485 471166
E. info@creventic.com

Benvenuto!

After a one-month break, and a sensational start to the year in Dubai, the 24H SERIES is back for its first European round of 2022.

And it could only be at Mugello!

Opened in 1974, and boasting the same technical layout that flows as beautifully through the Scarperia topography as it did half a century ago, the Autodromo Internazionale del Mugello has hosted CREVENTIC's European season opener since the inaugural 12H MUGELLO in 2014, failing to do so on only two occasions in that time.

During its CREVENTIC tenure, Mugello has witnessed the maiden wins of V8 Racing and 24H SERIES powerhouse Herberth Motorsport, produced the series' closest GT finish to-date – a microscopic 5.4 seconds between Ferrari's AF Corse and then-reigning 24H DUBAI winner Stadler Motorsport – and, rather fittingly, drew a 'challenging' year to a close as the championship finale in 2020. There's been no shortage of history making moments at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO down the years.

This year's eighth edition looks set to be no different, with more than a dozen reigning and former series champions alike already signed up to continue the title chase. Among the most notable will be reigning Overall GT and Overall TCE Teams' champions ST Racing and Autorama Motorsport by Wolf-Power Racing respectively, and inaugural 24H SERIES Continents champion Herberth Motorsport, which took its third win at the event last year.

Alongside this, Ginetta's brand-new V8-powered G56 GT4, which made its debut in Dubai (page 52), is back for another bite at the endurance racing cherry in Mugello, while Bentley's Continental GT3 (page 33w) is set to make its 24H SERIES debut at the very capable hands of BoDa by Bas Koeten Racing. There will be no shortage of stories to tell in Tuscany.

Among the biggest will be that of Will Motorsport by Ebimotors. The Romanian-Italian outfit made its collaborative 24H SERIES debut at last year's Hankook 24H DUBAI, and comes 'full circle' (page 10) having been crowned 991-class champion in 2021. After a difficult start to the year in Dubai, Team 'Willi' and Enrico Borghi's eponymous outfit will be looking for a strong weekend 'at home'. As, no doubt, will all of our championship contenders.

Ahead of the green flag drop on Saturday, we want to wish all of our competitors the very best of luck for an exciting race, and, as always, we'd like to thank all of our fans, sponsors and partners, as well as the management team and all of the marshalls at the Autodromo Internazionale del Mugello for their continued support of this illustrious event. ■



GET ON THE
ROAD WITH
**MORE CHOICES
AND SAVINGS.**

CONTENTS

24H SERIES has partnered with two global car hire providers so members can benefit from savings at 9,100 locations worldwide.

- Save up to 10% on car rentals globally
- Compare rates from two recognised providers - Enterprise Rent-A-Car® and National Car Rental®
- Choose a vehicle to suit your trip
- Join The Emerald Club® for speed and convenience at locations across the globe

Book today at partners.rentalcar.com/24hseriesoffer

+ THE COMBINED POWER OF



Welcome. Mugello Circuit **03**

Follow Us Live broadcast schedule **04**

Welcome. CREVENTIC **05**

Time schedule **09**

Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors. One Year On **10**

Ebimotors on... Mugello **14**

Mugello Circuit. Track layout **15**

24H SERIES powered by Hankook Calendar 2022 **18**

WHY you should race on Spa **20**

Entry list Hankook 12H MUGELLO 2022 **26**

BENTLEY makes its debut in 24H SERIES **33**

34 Behind Garage Doors - Column Joe Bradley

36 SUPPORT RACE. FX Racing

38 Postcard from DUBAI

40 SNAPSHOT! 6H ABU DHABI

43 STANDINGS. 24H SERIES

46 Behind the Scenes, #Thisis24HSERIES documentary

48 Who am i? Rob Huff

52 INSIDE. Ginetta G56 (CWS, 478)



*Terms and conditions apply. See website for details. National, National Car Rental, Emerald Club and the flag are trademarks of Vanguard Trademark Holdings, USA LLC. Enterprise and the "e" logo are trademarks of Enterprise Holdings, Inc. ©2019 Enterprise Holdings, Inc. K02325 1219. CB

Hankook 12H MUGELLO 2022

TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 2022

19:30 - 21:00 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Access to Paddock and Pit Boxes (Wednesday test teams only)

WEDNESDAY, 23 MARCH 2022

09:00 - 13:00 Creventic Track Days Track Day Session 1
 14:00 - 18:00 Creventic Track Days Track Day Session 2
 17:00 - 20:00 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Regular access to paddock and pit boxes
 17:00 - 20:00 Support Series Access to Support Paddocks
 18:15 - 19:30 All Series Track Walk

THURSDAY, 24 MARCH 2022

09:00 - 10:00 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Rent a Car Ride
 10:30 - 13:30 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Unofficial Private Test 1
 14:30 - 17:30 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Unofficial Private Test 2
 17:40 - 18:00 Support Series: Formula and Thunder cars Practice Session
 18:10 - 18:30 Support Series: Touring Cars Practice Session

FRIDAY, 25 MARCH 2022

09:00 - 09:20 FX1 & F2000 Series / FX2 Series Free Practice 1
 09:30 - 09:50 ATCC Free Practice 1
 10:00 - 10:20 FX Pro Series Free Practice 1
 10:30 - 10:50 Speed Euroseries Free Practice 1
 11:00 - 11:20 FX1 & F2000 Series / FX2 Series Free Practice 2
 11:30 - 11:50 ATCC Free Practice 2
 12:00 - 12:20 FX Pro Series Free Practice 2
 12:30 - 12:50 Speed Euroseries Free Practice 2
 13:25 - 14:25 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Free Practice
 14:35 - 14:55 FX1 & F2000 Series / FX2 Series Qualifying
 15:05 - 15:25 ATCC Qualifying
 15:35 - 15:55 FX Pro Series Qualifying
 16:05 - 16:25 Speed Euroseries Qualifying
 16:45 - 17:05 **FX2 Series** Race 1
 17:15 - 17:55 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Qualifying Sessions - Classes TC, TCX, TCR and GT4
 18:00 - 18:40 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Qualifying Sessions - Classes GT3, GTX, 991 and 992

SATURDAY, 26 MARCH 2022

09:00 - 09:20 **ATCC** Race 1
 09:40 - 10:05 **FX1 & F2000 Series** Race 1
 10:20 - 10:40 **FX Pro Series** Race 1
 11:00 - 11:20 **FX2 Series** Race 2
 11:40 - 12:00 **Speed Euroseries** Race 1
 13:00 - 18:30 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Race Part 1 - Hankook 12H MUGELLO 2022

SUNDAY, 27 MARCH 2022

09:00 - 15:30 **24H SERIES powered by Hankook** Race Part 2 - Hankook 12H MUGELLO 2022
 16:10 - 16:30 **ATCC** Race 2
 16:50 - 17:15 **FX1 & F2000 Series** Race 2
 17:30 - 17:50 **FX Pro Series** Race 2
 18:10 - 18:30 **Speed Euroseries** Race 2



your
**media
 production**
 partner+

+tv production +live streaming +virtual reality

The faces behind the 24H SERIES live stream

Meet 0221 Mediagroup, the broadcasting partner of the 24H SERIES for over 10 years.

Together with the 24H SERIES we have evolved and have grown into experts of live motorsport coverage. Grown into experts of the racetrack, but in a completely different way than each driver and team member knows it.

It all started with one race a year, the 24H DUBAI, and the moment CREVENTIC added more races and the 24H SERIES grew; our partnership began. Our coverage expanded over the years and we proudly added 'F1 quality' RF Onboard cameras to our specialties.

Together with Radio Show Limited we are making sure the world can follow LIVE what is happening on track.

You can not only find us at the race-tracks but also at festivals, concerts, sport events like basketball or rowing and other exciting public events. Besides these events we also cover studio productions and green screen production which includes virtual reality and digital worlds.

We offer the complete package and will make each production a success, small or big. Are you looking for a solution to reach an audience (fans, customers, partners, employees)?

Reach out to us, maybe we can help.

But first: we race.

We wish everyone an exciting and fun race, hoping that this is the start of a good season.

Stay safe!



www.0221mediagroup.com

TIME SCHEDULE

12H MUGELLO 202112th overall and 1st in class 991
Broggi - Nicolae - de Castro

Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors. ONE YEAR ON

Heading into the 2021 24H SERIES season,

Italy's Ebimotors and Romania's Willi Motorsport had just one goal: make the finish.

One year later, the collaboration returns to the Hankook 12H MUGELLO with another, loftier goal in-mind: to win.

On the 24H SERIES' last visit to Tuscany, Italy's Ebimotors and Romania's Willi Motorsport entered a 12-hour endurance event collectively for the first time. And won. Now, one year on, the alliance returns to the Hankook 12H MUGELLO as reigning champions.

Admittedly, for Como-based Ebimotors, championship success is nothing new. Italy's first official Porsche motorsport facility has been a category frontrunner in Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup, the FIA GT Championship, and most recently the FIA World Endurance Championship since opening in 1998, and was the team to beat in Carrera Cup Italia from 2008 onwards. In 2018, its inaugural 24H SERIES season no less, Enrico Borghi's eponymous team walked away with three class victories and the 991-class championship. They can, demonstrably, get the job done.

Granted, Willi Motorsport is no stranger to championship success either. The team has collected multiple title honours on a national level in its native Romania, most notably in the Romanian Endurance Championship in which the Bucharest-based outfit brought home title honours four years in a row. Nevertheless, Sergiu Nicolae, a defending 991-class champion alongside long-standing teammates Fabrizio Broggi and Sabino de Castro, is fully aware how difficult defending their newly won 24H SERIES titles will be in 2022 with his family team...

"It's going to be tough, but our goal this year is to win," Sergiu explains to CREVENTIC, valiantly fending off a rather nasty cold he's picked up during the week. "We want to win at Mugello again in particular. And Spa-Francorchamps. It's an amazing tracks, and it would give us a lot of momentum for the rest of the season. But winning an endurance race is never easy!"

Indeed, Willi / Ebimotors' title defence didn't get off the best of starts at the season-opening Hankook 24H DUBAI (an event at which, admittedly, neither team had previously competed). Niggling gearbox problems during free practice led to the transmission being replaced in its entirety ahead of qualifying, and though at one stage the #955 Porsche 991-II Cup was leading its class by just over two minutes, the gremlin returned during the third hour, losing the team more than 70 minutes and 27 laps in the garage.

Only gearbox issues (ironically) for long-time leader Red Ant Racing allowed Willi Motorsport to recover to 2nd in-class, albeit 64 laps adrift of eventual winner NKPP by Bas Koeten Racing courtesy of a suspension-breaking clash with a TCR backmarker three hours from home.

That the next step of the 2022 season takes the Willi-Ebi alliance to Mugello though could be the ace in the hole that gets the team's title defence back on-track. Sergiu is a keen fan of the Tuscan Autodromo after all, which just

so happens to be home turf for team partner Ebimotors as well as the site of Willi Motorsport's maiden podium AND maiden win in the 24H SERIES.

"It's an amazing track, especially the Arrabbiata 1 and 2," Sergiu continue. "Really amazing! With the Toyota" – more on that in a second – "it was flat. But in the Porsche Cup, you really need to commit to those corners in particular. It's very rewarding!"

That Tuscany was also the circuit chosen for Willi Motorsport's 24H SERIES debut back in 2017 is similarly prophetic, considering how much the team has evolved since then. On that occasion, the then-named 'Endurance Team Romania' boasted a five-driver line-up, with Sergiu and Fabrizio joined by Romanian contemporaries Mihai Costin, Stefan Unchiasu and Viorel Nicolae. Their charge, competing in the series' pseudo-entry level 'A2' class, was a Toyota GT86 CS-V3, and was supported by both Toyota Bucharest North and MotorPark Romania itself.



That the 12H MUGELLO was the team's first 'true' endurance race, running almost six times longer than any of its drivers, none of whom had previously raced at Mugello, had experienced before, made the learning curve that much steeper. As indeed did the Romanian tricolour on the Toyota's bonnet, a near-constant reminder that 'ETR' was representing its country at an international level.

Despite this, the team finished an impressive 3rd in-class first time out having befallen no major incidents: debris that briefly blocked one brake disc was dislodged after a couple of laps, and a 14-second penalty, served when the Toyota exceeded the speed limit during an early Code 60, was a mistake that wasn't repeated.

"Honestly, we didn't hope to finish on the podium. We'd done the Romanian Endurance Series before that, but two hours is not really an 'endurance' race. So our main goal was just to finish. So it was a big, BIG bonus for us to finish on the podium. I have a lot of very good memories from that weekend."

The only significant gripes were the quintet's consistency – lap times during the first half of the race ranged from 2m 14s to nearly 2m 30s – and, in fairness, the Toyota's lack of pace: Sergiu's 2m 14.655s fastest lap was a full SIX seconds slower than that of category winner Team Eva Solo/K-Rejser's Peugeot RCZ: "the

podium was important for us too because we were there with, what felt like, the heaviest car on the grid. It was 300kg over the minimum weight!"

Save two further outings in 2018 at Navarra and Barcelona – both with an interim Ginetta G55 – Endurance Team Romania would not begin its first full 24H SERIES campaign until 2021, whereupon things had changed significantly.

Now, 'Willi Motorsport' – "Willi" is a nickname for my father, Viorel, which we used at the beginning, but it really stuck!" – the more experienced driver line-up now boasted Italian GT Sprint class champion Sabino de Castro alongside Fabrizio and Sergiu, the latter of whom by now had won another national title in Romania.

Gone also was the Toyota, as in its place stepped a brand-new Porsche 991-II Cup boasting a more vibrant, almost psychedelic colour scheme...

"The Toyota was quite a simple car, and it was really just to help give us more experience of endurance racing. It was a very well-balanced car, very good in the corners, but it had only 200hp, so it was quite slow on the straights and on the exit of the corners. That was a big problem.

"So at the end of 2020, we got our new car. We

discussed, after the season in Romania, which car to buy, and a friend of ours in Romania had a 991, the first generation GT3 Cup. We liked the car a lot and felt there was a lot of potential, so in the end it was an easy decision."

More significant than even this though, a new working relationship with 2018 class champions Ebimotors had also been confirmed.

"We've known the guys at Ebimotors for a long time now because we stayed – in Navarra I think it was – in the same pit box with them in 2018. So when we bought our Porsche, we decided to talk with them to see if we could do something together. It was just a good fit, and we started working together two months before Mugello last year.

"Ebimotors has helped us so much with their experience, because they know the car, they know the best setups... they just know EVERYTHING about the Porsche, and that can only be a good thing for us." ▶

12H HOCKENHEIMRING 202111th overall and 4th in class 991
Broggi - Sergiu - de Castro**24H BARCELONA 2021**8th overall and 1st in class 991
Broggi - Sergiu - de Castro



12H HUNGARY 2021
5th overall and 1st in class 991
Broggi - Nicolae - de Castro

Once again, despite the newly acquired experience, the learning curve was high. Still, as they had done four years earlier at the same venue, Fabrizio and Sergiu, now with Sabino alongside and Enrico Borghi's encyclopaedic knowledge of the Porsche working away in the background, rose to the occasion. Sabino fell just 0.3s shy of class pole position during qualifying, a personal best for Viorel Nicolae's family team. Thereafter, bar a mild brush early on with JR Motorsport's BMW M3, the team put nary a wheel wrong, waltzing to its maiden class win, three laps clear.

That 'Romania's' first 24H SERIES win had come at Mugello, site of Endurance Team Romania's first race five years earlier, and in Ebimotors' back yard no less, seemed particular fitting: "we couldn't have asked for a better place to take our first win!"

Next time out at the Hockenheimring, the team looked set to continue its newly-discovered form. From 3rd on the category grid (just 0.4s off pole this time), the #955 Porsche hit the front after three hours and had soon built a two-lap lead.

Fate had other plans this time, however. Heading into the overnight intervention, Sergiu, Fabrizio and Sabino were already one lap down thanks to unfortunately timed Code 60s and a careless penalty picked up for speeding. A podium still looked likely until a recurrent brake problem struck just 90 minutes from home, the 12 minutes lost rectifying the issue dropping Willi-Ebimotors to 4th at the flag.

"We were focused at Hockenheim and we wanted to win that race. But we had a strange problem with the brakes: all the teams changed brakes only one time; we changed two times at the front and once at the rear! Basically, it had been damp on the Saturday morning, but we hadn't looked at the ABS properly and had forgotten to switch the settings back. So, yeah, a driver mistake.

"It was almost funny, looking back: we have two engineers – one Romanian, one Italian – and we could hear them speaking to each other: "who wants to tell them that we're not on the podium?!" They waited until the finish before they told us we weren't on the podium!"

As a safeguard, Ebimotors conducted a full strip down of the Porsche ahead of the next round at Barcelona, a precautionary measure that arguably fostered the team's most commanding performance of the year. Sergiu secured the family team's first category pole position that weekend, and the #955 sailed to its second class win, 19 laps clear of its nearest competitor, after leading the class for 23 of the 24 completed hours.

"Barcelona was the only race where we didn't have problems. We knew it was important to stay on the track, and not to push too hard in the beginning. We managed the tyres, we managed the brakes... we basically did everything we could to stay out of the garage! We'd learnt a lot from those 12-hour races.

"Originally, we wanted to compete in two, three races, maximum. Mugello, Hockenheim, Barcelona. But then we went to Mugello, and we won. And we went to Barcelona, and we won! After that, we looked at the calendar and thought, 'we could be champions this year'..."

With renewed focus, Willi Motorsport took an easy win as the sole 991 entrant at the Hankook 12H HUNGARORING, which meant the title could now be won or lost at the final round of the season at the Sebring International Raceway in Florida. A track neither

Willi Motorsport nor Ebimotors had competed at before, and an event where pre-race preparation was made even more difficult by, extraordinarily, a hurricane, which delayed delivery of both Porsche and equipment by several days.

Were that not enough, heavy rain on Saturday evening and Sunday morning – the latter of which led to a brief red flag period as standing water was removed from Sebring's infamously slippery start-finish straight, meant finishing, let alone winning, was by no means a foregone conclusion.

In the end, consistent and cautious running and a gearbox issue that ended up delaying nearest rival RPM Racing meant Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors took its fourth class win in five outings at Sebring. Remarkably, such was the attrition rate among the GT3 runners, the alliance's "impeccable race" was good enough to secure not just a 991-class title five years in the making, but also the final spot on the overall podium at Sebring.

The perfect culmination of a season that had delivered far more than even Willi Motorsport had expected...

"That entire season, we showed how competitive we can be with Ebimotors. We tried every time to win every race. Sometimes we hit technical problems, but that's motorsport. But we proved we could win, and that meant a lot to all of us. Now we want to do it again. Maybe there's a little bit more pressure on us, because we are the champions, but we want to win – we need to win – again this year."

Clearly neither Romania nor Italy isn't ready to give up the gold just yet... ■

Check out the full feature on [24series.com](https://www.24series.com)

Under the Lid Sergiu Nicolae

The reigning 991-class champion was a national karting champion in 2005 and 2006 before making the switch to cars in 2012, starting with the Autoslalom National Championship and, later, the Romanian Endurance Series. Since 2017, Sergiu and his family teams have been regulars in the 24H SERIES.

Name?

"My name is Sergiu Nicolae."

Age? You can lie about that if you want...

"I'm 28 years old."

Where and when was your first ever car race, and how old were you?

"My first ever car race was in Romania in 2015, and it was an Autoslalom.* And I was 18 at the time."

* Sergiu competed in Romania's Campionatul Național de Autoslalom (the Autoslalom National Championship) between 2012 and 2015, winning the title in 2013.

What is the best moment of your racing career so far?

"My best moment was last year in Mugello. It was my first race victory in the 24H SERIES!"

Apart from the Nürburgring, which is your favourite circuit and why?

"Well my favourite IS the Nordschleife, but I also like [the Autodromo Inter Mugello and also the Oschersleben is a nice track. I love technical tracks."

Describe the strangest thing that's ever happened to you at a motor race...

"[Pause] Probably the [Hankook] 12H HOCKENHEIMRING last year. After 10 laps, the car didn't have any traction and there was so much understeer, we couldn't go any faster. After 10 laps, it just wasn't normal to be like this."

Describe your helmet design to us, and what it signifies...

"I don't actually have one. I need to make one either this year or next year. I'm not sure what the design will be though, so I'll have to think about that..."



What is your greatest strength?

"[Pause] Probably, my greatest strength, I can go to a new track, and within 10 laps, I am faster than others because I can adjust to these [circuits] and the cars quickly."

If Hollywood made a movie about you, which actor would play you and why?

"[Loong pause]... I'm really not sure..."
How about George Clooney? Leonardo DiCaprio? Tom Cruise? Brad Pitt?
"Oh, Brad Pitt!"

What would you like to achieve before retiring?

"I want to win many titles. As many as I can."

Tell us a random fact about yourself that your fans might not know...

"I get angry very, very fast behind the wheel. But, strangely, I think this helps me drive faster. So the team usually encourages this!"

Finally, what do you enjoy most about competing in the 24H SERIES?

"It's a very nice place to be. I enjoy [the series] because I can be on the track for a long time, and I can battle with the fastest drivers. Hopefully, after Covid, we will have more cars in our class in the fight too."

Sergiu Nicolae was speaking with Mart Boksem and James Gent at the 2021 Hankook 12H HOCKENHEIMRING. Images courtesy of Petr Frýba.

Enrico Borghi... on Mugello

Alongside the first class win for Willi Motorsport, last year's Hankook 12H MUGELLO also marked the first time former 991-class champion Ebimotors had landed the top step of a 24H SERIES podium in four years.

To do so in Mugello, the team's home circuit, was a fitting tribute. Ahead of this year's event, CREVENTIC caught up with team founder Enrico Borghi to discuss the team's new working relationship, the secrets to victory, and the allure of Tuscany.

Enrico, during that first race weekend together in Mugello, how much did Ebimotors need to adapt to working with Willi Motorsport?

"We were immediately in-tune. Excellent synergy, respecting our own role without stepping on any toes. The technical preparation of the car is performed by Ebimotors in our garage in Cermenate, while the car strategy/management is managed by both teams: Enrico Borghi, Willi Nicolae, and our race engineer."

Mugello has been on the 24H SERIES calendar since 2014. What is it about the Autodromo that you think interests teams and drivers so much?

"Mugello is one of the most beautiful circuits in Europe, and you particularly feel that when you're on-track. It is also situated in an amazing and very charming region."

Last year, Ebimotors actually ran two cars at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO: an entry with Willi Motorsport (955), and a standalone Porsche for 'Ebimotors' (973). Did this create an inter-team rivalry in the garage?! Or do you always want both cars to finish?

"Definitely no rivalry. Mugello is our home circuit and we receive a lot of requests to take compete there, so the focus on the cars, as well as on our clients, is always the same: may the best win!"

The Willi Motorsport/Ebimotors entry (955) had a flawless run in Mugello last year. The standalone Ebimotors Porsche (973) had a couple of on-track incidents but still finished 4th in-class. Just how important is it to stay out of trouble during an endurance race?

"It's an essential aspect. In endurance races, we need to try to predict and manage any potential collision, or overtaking opportunity, as best we can. This is most important when a driver starts feeling tired, or during a night stint when there is poor visibility. Strategy, concentration and driving consistently are the key features to doing well."

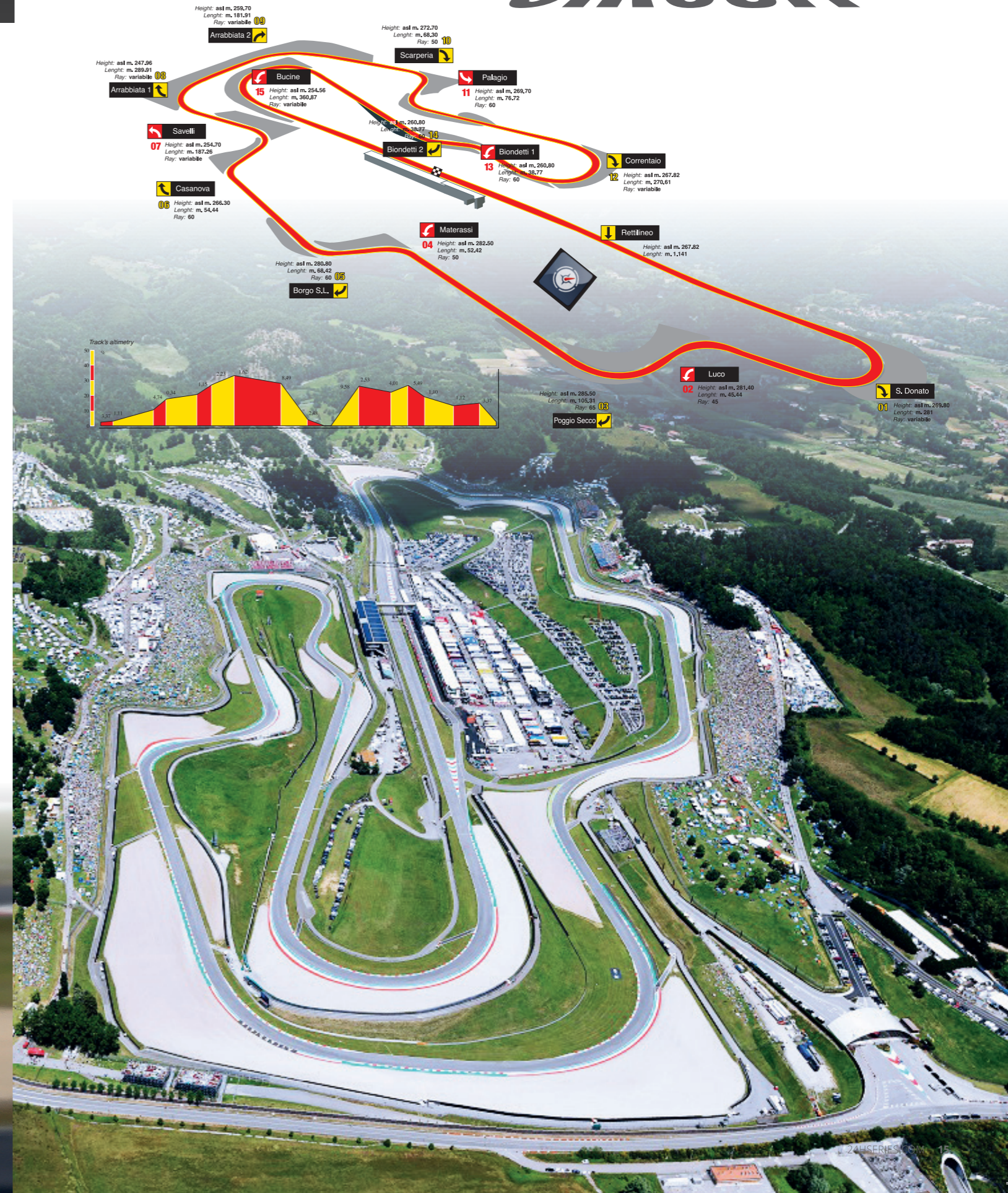
In 2018, Ebimotors won its first race in the 24H SERIES. In 2021, Ebimotors won its first race in the 24H SERIES with Willi Motorsport! Even though Ebimotors clearly knows how to win a race, did it surprise you how quickly that first win arrived?


"Winning a race is never easy, but we showed up with a top car and a well-balanced crew, so all it takes to be good. This allowed us to start on the right foot, but you can never lower your guard."

How difficult do you think it will be to defend your 24H SERIES title in 2022, given how competitive the 991 class is?

"New year, new adventure! We are taking a great deal of responsibility and humility into this 2022 season to defend our title. We will knuckle down, and we are looking forward to testing ourselves against rivals, new and old, on-track once again this year in the 24H SERIES."

THE TRACK **mugello** CIRCUIT





“That the 12H MUGELLO was the team’s first ‘true’ endurance race, running almost six times longer than any of its drivers had experienced before, made the learning curve that much steeper.”

Willi Motorsport, One Year On... (page 10)

CALENDAR 2022

24H SERIES E-SPORTS 2021/2022 SEASON

 **PRE-QUALIFYING DONINGTON PARK**
18-19 SEPTEMBER 2021

 **6H HOCKENHEIM**
17 OCTOBER 2021

 **6H SEBRING**
21 NOVEMBER 2021

 **6H RED BULL RING**
16 JANUARY 2022

 **6H MONZA**
13 FEBRUARY 2022

 **6H BARCELONA**
13 MARCH 2022

 **12H SPA**
17 APRIL 2022

24H SERIES EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

R1  **12H MUGELLO**
25-26 MARCH 2022


R2  **12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS**
22-23-24 APRIL 2022

R3  **12H HOCKENHEIMRING**
13-14-15 MAY 2022

R4  **24H PORTIMAO**
8-9-10 JULY 2022

R5  **24H BARCELONA** Trofeo Fermi Velez
9-10-11 SEPTEMBER 2022

24H SERIES CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE CONTINENTS

R1  **24H DUBAI**
13-14-15 JANUARY 2022

R2  **RESULT OF THE BEST EUROPE RACE**

R3  **24H SEBRING**
18-19-20 NOVEMBER 2022

24H SERIES SINGLE EVENT

SINGLE EVENT  **6H ABU DHABI**
21-22 JANUARY 2022

24H SERIES
POWERED BY 

WHY

YOU SHOULD RACE AT SPA

On 22-23-24 April, the Hankook 12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS makes its return to the 24H SERIES calendar as the third championship round of the season. Interested in going? Here's a few reasons why we think you should...

There's history. And lots of it!

Among the reasons why Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps is one of the most respected circuits in the world is because it also happens to be among the oldest motor racing circuits in the world, with a lineage that dates back more than a century to 1921. Admittedly there's been a few changes since then...

Inaugurated in 1921 to indulge a heightened interest in motor racing sweeping the Ardennes region after the first World War, the original Spa-Francorchamps stretched a colossal 14.9 km from La Source through Burnenville and Malmedy to Stavelot and back to La Source. Both very high speed and inconsistent – weather patterns would differ depending on which part of the course drivers were on – Spa V1 proved so daunting, only one entry was registered for the first race! 23 motorbikes eventually got the ball rolling later that year, the Royal Automobile Club of Belgium hosting its first 'Belgian GP' one year later in 1922 and the first 24 Hours of Francorchamps in 1924.

A connecting road by-passing Virage de Ancienne Douane led to the circuit's first 'major' change – and the creation of a corner called Raidillon – in 1939, though the onset of World War II and heavy artillery damage meant racing would not return to the Ardennes until lengthy repairs had been completed in 1949. And even then, it would take another 21 years and a harrowing number of tragedies on the circuit before the 7.004km layout revered the world over today was opened in 1979.

Seriously, do yourself a favour and visit the Racetrack Museum and/or the Abbey of Stavelot. We've barely scratched the surface...

There will be competition. And lots of it!

Spa just lends itself so beautifully to racing, right? One of the most mesmerizing sights in motorsport is the arcing sweep through Eau Rouge and Raidillon, and up along the Kemmel Straight before the anchors are thrown out hard heading into Les Combes. Not to mention YouTube's myriad clips of side-by-side action into and out of Le Chicane.

It's worth bearing in mind though that, while these legendary stretches of asphalt are often synonymous with world sports cars and Formula 1, the 2022 Hankook 12H SPA will not be the first time CREVENTIC has hosted an official endurance event at Belgium's most famous racetrack.

In 2017, Spa-Francorchamps became the 14th different venue to host an official 24H SERIES event with CREVENTIC's traditional family friendly atmosphere thrown in for good measure. It was enough to entice close to 50 different entries representing more than a dozen nationalities and 13 manufacturers to compete across five different classes. So diverse was the depth of competition that KTM, Mercedes and SEAT each spent time in the overall lead, while 1st and 2nd were eventually split by just 20s at the flag. ▶



Few events demonstrate the Hankook 12H SPA's competitive nature though more than the 2019 edition, at which the battle for victory between Scuderia Praha and Herberth Motorsport was decided on the penultimate lap, with the two separated by only seven seconds.

Circuit management is currently updating spectator facilities and run-off areas.

In October 2020, in an effort to 'modernize' the home of the Belgian Grand Prix, management at the Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps announced an €80million renovation project that would see the return of gravel traps to select corners, the redesign of run-off areas, and an overhaul of the circuit's aging grandstands. All in an effort to improve safety and increase seating capacity without threatening that hallowed 7.004km track length.

Yes, circuit management was adamant that, while the project would feature a significant and sweeping refurbishment, the track layout itself would not be touched because, believe it or not, vocal members of the online community probably would have had a few words to say about that.

While not a specific reason to visit the Hankook 12H SPA in and of itself, a project with heady investment behind it that guarantees competitors can continue enjoying Spa's vaunted Grand Prix layout and with safer run-off must, at the very least, be an intriguing prospect to many aspiring racers with the Ardennes on their bucket list, right?

There's more to Spa-Francorchamps than the race circuit...

"Ce n'est pas possible!"

Actually, yes. Among the many reasons why Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps remains such a popular attraction is, alongside a timeless track layout, its frequency to popular tourist destinations. Just under 15 minutes to the west for example lies Malmedy, home to some of the region's more flamboyant restaurants and bars whilst at the same time a hub for lovers of 18th century architecture, especially

the old town square. Further north lies the tranquil town of Spa itself, once the most esteemed health resort of its time for monarchs and noble men and women alike during its heyday in the 16th century. A history the town still celebrates proudly as the modern Les Thermal de Spa complex attests.

Head north-east, and you hit Liège, the most economically prosperous city in the Wallonia region and still a fascination for travelers despite its industrial city gravitas: that a city once at the heart of Belgium's burgeoning coal and steel industries could also offer a hive of fabulous restaurants is worth the day trip alone. Tip the compass south-east towards Durbuy and horticultural fans may get a kick out of the Topiary Park, the 'old town' and its quant medieval buildings, and the Chateau de Petite Somme.

Those keen to ditch the foldout mattress in the paddock for room service and a comfortable bed can also take advantage of CREVENTIC's new partnership with Revolugo, a relationship that sources the finest accommodation, offers competitive rates for 24H SERIES competitor, AND allows you to book everything online at the same time via 24hseries.com.

If you've not quite got your motorsport fix though, large swathes of the original 1921 Spa-Francorchamps circuit still exist as public roads to this day.

It doesn't always rain at Spa

Some of the most era-defining images from Spa-Francorchamps – Michael Schumacher's comeback win in 1995; the start-line smash in 1998; the heavy rains that befell the Spa 24 Hours in 2021 – are seared into collective consciousness, due in no small part to the mountainous nature of the Ardennes itself.

However, did you know that temperatures, far from raining all the time, temperatures at Spa-Francorchamps rose to 20 degrees on CREVENTIC's last trip to Spa in April 2019...

...well WE think it's a compelling argument! ■



Cell: +420 724 728 478
Phone: +420 244 463 151

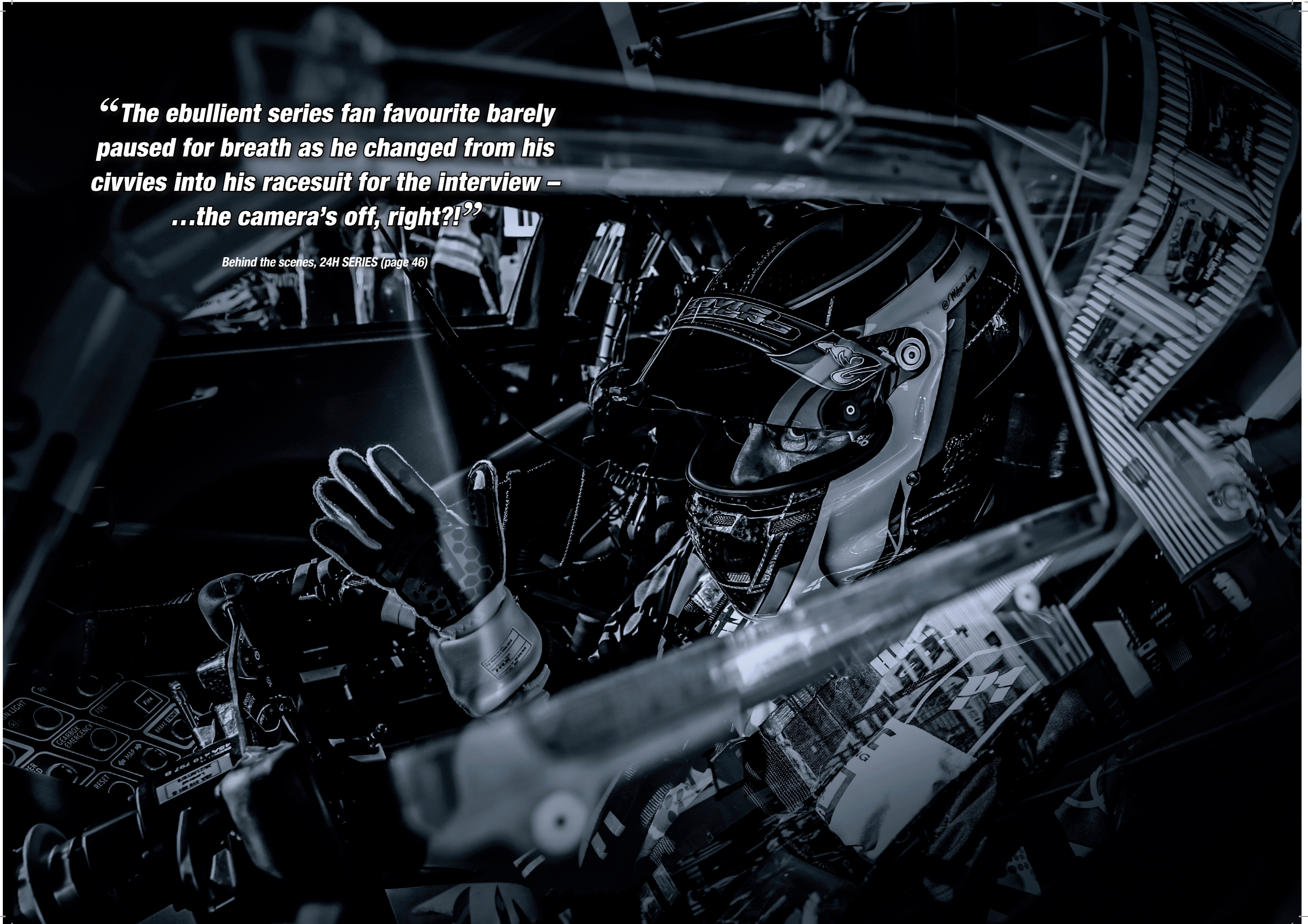
E-mail: info@caseliner.com
Web: www.caseliner.com

@caseliner
@caseliner.eu



“The ebullient series fan favourite barely paused for breath as he changed from his civvies into his racesuit for the interview – ...the camera’s off, right?!”

Behind the scenes, 24H SERIES (page 46)



ENTRY LIST

12H MUGELLO



Phoenix Racing



18

Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@phoenixracing_

Michael Doppelmayr AUT
Pierre Kaffer GER
Elia Erhart GER
Swen Herberger GER

GT3 PRO/AM

Herberth Motorsport



91

Porsche 911 GT3 R (991 II)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@carcollectionmotorsport

Daniel Allemann SUI
Ralf Bohn GER
Alfred Renauer GER
Robert Renauer GER

GT3 PRO/AM

ST Racing



1

BMW M4 GT3
6 Cylinders - 3000cc
@samanthataracing

Samantha Tan CAN
Bryson Morris USA
Nick Wittmer CAN

GT3 AM

JR Motorsport



2

BMW M6 GT3
8 Cylinders - 4400cc
@jrmotorsport_bmw

Ted van Vliet NED
Ruud Olij NED

GT3 AM

BoDa by Bas Koeten Racing



6

Bentley Continental GT3
8 Cylinders - 4000cc
@baskoetenracing

Bob Herber NED
Marcel van Berlo NED

GT3 AM

Landgraf Motorsport



25

Mercedes-AMG GT3
8 Cylinders - 6200cc
@landgraf_group

Alexander Hrachowina AUT
Martin Konrad AUT
Bernd Schneider GER

GT3 AM

Sainteloc Racing



26

Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@sainteloc_racing

Olivier Esteves FRA
Christian Kelders LUX
Simon Gachet FRA
Pierre-Yves Paque BEL

GT3 AM

MP Racing



58

Mercedes-AMG GT3
8 Cylinders - 6200cc

Thomas Gostner ITA
David Gostner ITA
Corinna Gostner ITA
Giorgio Sernagiotto ITA

GT3 AM

JUTA Racing Junior



72

Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO I
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@juta_racing

Audrius Navickas LTU
Aurimas Jablonskis LTU
Ignas Gelzinis LTU

GT3 AM

CP Racing



85

Mercedes-AMG GT3
8 Cylinders - 6200cc

Charles Putman USA
Charles Espenlaub USA
Joe Foster USA

GT3 AM

Kessel Racing



8

Ferrari 488 GT3
8 Cylinders - 3900cc

L.M.D.V. ITA
Marco Frezza ITA
David Fumanelli ITA
Alessandro Cutrera ITA
Marco Talarico ITA

GT3

Car Collection Motorsport





34

Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO II
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@carcollectionmotorsport



GT3

Earl Bamber Motorsport




61 


Porsche 911 GT3 R (991 I)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@earlbammotorsport

Adrian D'Silva  MAS
Matthew Payne  NZL




GT3

JUTA Racing




71 


Audi R8 LMS GT3 EVO I
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@juta_racing

Julius Adomavičius  LTU
Andrius Gelžinis  LTU
Jonas Gelžinis  LTU




GT3

Vortex V8




701 


Vortex 1.0
8 Cylinders - 6200cc
@vortexsas_officiel

Lionel Amrouche  FRA
Philippe Bonnel  FRA
Sebastien Lajoux  FRA





GTX

Orchid Racing Team




917 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@orchidracingteam_official

Loic Villiger  SUI
Frank Villiger  SUI
Laurent Misbach  FRA
Fabio Spirgi  SUI



992 AM

HRT Performance




928 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@hrt_performance

Gijs Bessem  NED
Harry Hilders  NED



992 AM

Speed Lover




979 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@speedloverracingteam

Kevin Veltman  NED
Remon Vos  NED




992 AM

Vortex V8




702 


Vortex 1.0
8 Cylinders - 6200cc
@vortexsas_officiel

Patrick Brochier  FRA
Gilles Courtois  FRA
Nicolas Nobs  SUI




GTX

Vortex V8




703 


Vortex 1.0
8 Cylinders - 6200cc
@vortexsas_officiel

Christophe Decultot  FRA
Pierre Fontaine  FRA
Philippe Gruau  FRA



GTX

Leipert Motorsport




710 


Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@leipertmotorsport

Jean-Francois Brunot  USA
Kerong Li  CHN




GTX

HRT Performance




929 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@hrt_performance

Gustav Bergström  SWE
Johan Kristoffersson  SWE
Ole Veiby  NOR




992

E2P Racing




910 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (991 Gen II)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@e2p_escuela_de_pilotos

Pablo Burguera  ESP
Manuel Cintrano  ESP
Javier Morcillo  ESP




991

Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors




955 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (991 Gen II)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@willi_motorsport

Fabrizio Broggi  ITA
Sergiu Nicolae  ROU
Sabino de Castro  ITA




991

RD Signs - Siauliai racing team




720 


Lamborghini Huracán Super Trofeo
10 Cylinders - 5200cc
@rdsignsracingteam

Audrius Butkevicius  LTU
Nicola Michelon  ITA
Paulius Paskevicius  LTU




GTX

Red Ant Racing




903 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@redant_racing

Ayrton Redant  BEL
Bert Redant  BEL
Yannick Redant  BEL



992 AM

Red Ant Racing




904 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@redant_racing

Philippe Wils  BEL
Kurt Hensen  BEL





992 AM

EBIMOTORS




973 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (991 Gen II)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@ebimotors

Paolo Venerosi  ITA
Gianluca Giorgi  ITA
Gianluigi Piccioli  ITA
Spezz  ITA





991

Orchid Racing Team




417 


Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 CS MR
6 Cylinders - 3800cc
@orchidracingteam_official

Antonio Garzon  ESP
Stefan Chaligne  FRA
Antoine Leclerc  FRA
Alexandre Mottet  SUI




GT4

Team ACP-Tangerine Associates




421 


BMW M4 GT4
6 Cylinders - 3000cc
@team_acp_racing

Catesby Jones  USA
Wim Spinoy  BEL
Ken Goldberg  USA




GT4

Red Camel-Jordans.nl




909 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@redcamelracing

Ivo Breukers  NED
Luc Breukers  NED
Rik Breukers  NED





992 AM

Porsche Lorient Racing




911 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@porschelorientracing

Frédéric Ancel  FRA
Pascal Gibon  FRA
Ludovic Loeul  FRA
Hervé Tremblay  FRA





992 AM

Porsche Lorient Racing




912 


Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
6 Cylinders - 4000cc
@porschelorientracing

Philippe Polette  FRA
Frederic Lelievre  FRA
Jean-François Demorge  FRA
Gilles Blasco  FRA

992 AM

CWS Engineering





478 

Ginetta G56 GT4
8 Cylinders - 6200cc
@colin_white_78





GT4

Holmgaard Motorsport




102 


Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR DSG
4 Cylinders - 2000cc
@holmgaardmotorsport

Magnus Holmgaard  DEN
Jonas Holmgaard  DEN
Roy Edland  NOR
Martin Vedel  DEN





TCR

NOKER racing team



104 

Volkswagen Golf GTI TCR SEQ
4 Cylinders - 2000cc

Kestutis Stasionis  LTU
Sten-Dorian Piirimägi  EST
Jonas Karklys  LTU
Antti Rammo  EST

TCR

VCO

VIRTUAL COMPETITION ORGANISATION



POWERED BY US

The fascination of the 24H SERIES doesn't end when the chequered flag comes out. It's taken to the next level in the virtual world. In the 24H SERIES ESPORTS powered by VCO.

WE ARE THE VIRTUAL COMPETITION ORGANISATION. TAKING ESPORTS RACING TO THE NEXT LEVEL.



WWW.VCO-ESPORTS.COM

Wolf-Power Racing

116

Audi RS3 LMS TCR
4 Cylinders - 2000cc
@wolfpowerracing

Jasmin Preisig SUI
Marcus Menden GER

TCR

BBR

159

Cupra Leon Competición TCR
4 Cylinders - 2000cc
@monlau_motul

Anusorn Asiralertsiri THA
Kantadhee Kusiri THA
Kantasak Kusiri THA
Tanart Sathienthirakul THA

TCR

AC Motorsport

188

Audi RS3 LMS DSG
4 Cylinders - 2000cc
@acmotorsport_team

Stephane Perrin FRA
Mathieu Detry BEL
Ivars Vallers FRA

TCR

Valluga

205

Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 CS
6 Cylinders - 3800cc
@thevallugaconcerge

Bradley Ellis ENG
Leo Loucas CYP
Rhea Loucas CYP
Charles Hollings ENG

TCX

SK Racing

215

Ligier JS2 R
6 Cylinders - 3700cc
@skrracing60

Franck Eburderie FRA
Franco Lemma FRA
Jérôme Dacosta FRA
Franck Lavergne FRA

TCX

CWS Engineering

278

Ginetta G55
6 Cylinders - 3700cc
@colin_white_78

TCX

Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport

331

BMW M2 CS Racing (365HP)
6 Cylinders - 3000cc
@bonk_motorsport

Rainer Partl GER
Hermann Bock GER
Martin Kroll SUI
Michael Bonk GER

TC

Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport

332

BMW M2 CS Racing (365HP)
6 Cylinders - 3000cc
@bonk_motorsport

Michael Mayer GER
Rainer Partl GER
Hermann Bock GER
Volker Piepmeyer GER

TC

Hofor Racing by Bonk Motorsport

369

BMW M240i Racing Cup
6 Cylinders - 3000cc
@bonk_motorsport

Axel Burghardt GER
Jürgen Meyer GER
Volker Piepmeyer GER
Martin Kroll SUI
Michael Bonk GER

TC

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR THE UP TO DATE ENTRY LIST



SPEEDCOM™ COMMUNICATIONS

CRYSTAL CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS
EVERY TURN, EVERY LAP,
EVERY TRACK.

MOTOTRBO™ DIGITAL



MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS

AND NOW ALSO...



hola@bellracingstore.es



europe@speedcomracing.com

+ 34 - 93 688 25 13

BENTLEY'S CONTINENTAL GT3 MAKES ITS 24H SERIES DEBUT IN MUGELLO

Bentley's flagship race car – the second generation Continental GT3 – will make its 24H SERIES debut at the Hankook 12H MUGELLO having been registered for the event by BoDa by Bas Koeten Racing.

Bentley's Continental GT3 is set to make its 24H SERIES debut at this weekend's Hankook 12H MUGELLO in an entry run by series staple Bas Koeten Racing.

Registered as 'BoDa by Bas Koeten Racing' in Mugello, this will mark the first time Bentley's Continental GT3 has competed in an official 24H SERIES event, and, simultaneously, the first time Bas Koeten Racing will run in the 24H SERIES' GT3 class.

"Since the very beginning Bas Koeten Racing has been involved in the 24H SERIES," Jelle Koeten explains. "It could well be that we hold the record for the number of cars entered under our flag in the series over the past 15 years. With the Bentley Continental GT3 we now have a first and we are very proud of it!"

Bas Koeten Racing, which took 991-class victory at this year's season-opening Hankook 24H DUBAI, has also confirmed Bob Herber and Marcel van Berlo on its driver lineup. Herber, also part of Bas Koeten's winning line-up in Dubai, has competed regularly in the 24H SERIES since 2015 and has taken class wins in both '991' and 'SP3-GT4' with Bas Koeten and JR Motorsport. The Dutchman is also the new owner of the Bentley.

"For many years, I've [competed in] the Supercar Challenge and the 24H SERIES," Bob Herber continues. "At the beginning of this year, I came into contact with M-Sport, the manufacturer of the Bentley cars. I secured not

one, but two GT3 Gen2s, including the car that won the 2020 Bathurst 12 Hours.

"The car has the same power as the Lamborghini Supertrofeo in which I've raced in the Supercar Challenge in recent years, but has much better aerodynamics and a more advanced braking system. People think that the Bentley is a heavy car, but the opposite is true. At the [Hankook] 12H MUGELLO, we will test how the car performs in an endurance race."

van Berlo meanwhile most recently took class victory with Bas Koeten at the 2021 Hankook 12H HOCKENHEIMRING, one year on from securing overall victory with the team at the inaugural 2020 edition of the event. The Dutchman has also competed in the 24H SERIES since 2018 with Speedlover, Munckhof Racing, and with sons Kay and Glenn as part of Van Berlo Racing.

With the first generation having already racked up 120 podiums – including 45 wins – across 538 races worldwide, Bentley unveiled an updated Continental GT3 in 2017. Like the road-going model, the GT3 now featured more aerodynamic bodywork, bespoke suspension and braking systems, a twin-turbo V8 – complete with redesign dry sump – producing "in excess of 550hp", and "a race-ready weight of significantly less than 1300kg." The second gen GT3 was the pillar of a Bentley racing program "larger than ever before" in 2020, which also included victory at that year's Bathurst 12 Hours. ■



Behind Garage Doors

with Joe Bradley



Ahead of the first European round of the 2022 24H SERIES season, Joe takes a look back at the surprisingly rich heritage of the Mugello circuit.

Tuscany in late March is a very pleasant place to find oneself. The weather is usually sunny and warm, reminding us all that summer is just around the corner.

Add in the fact that we are at The Mugello Circuit, or to give the place its full title, the 'Autodromo Internazionale del Mugello', and we have the icing for an already very rich cake.

The track length is 5.245km in length, has 15 turns and a 1.141km long start-finish straight, which is very long and brutal if you happen to be a crankshaft spinning along inside a race engine. It's also perhaps the only place you can breathe on what is a very physical race track.

People have been racing in this area of Italy for over a hundred years. In 1922 they competed on a 40-mile (around 64km) temporary road course. The race took 5 hours, 46 minutes and 7.2 seconds, and was won by Alfieri Maserati in an Isotta-Fraschini. The fastest lap was 53m 44.2s, set by a driver named Masetti. I can't find records to establish whether this was Giulio or his younger brother Carlo, both of whom were noblemen and lived in Castello di Uzzano, a palace in Greve, Chianti owned by the Masetti di Bagnano family since 1644, and very able racing drivers to boot.

The current track however is a very different challenge to the one drivers encountered 100 years ago. Built in 1974 it ran its first event on June 23rd, a day also famous for being my birthday. It has six left hand turns and nine right hand turns. It is a very flowing circuit, a layout where a driver can get into a rhythm as the car flows between the sweeps and contours. It is also a circuit where, if that rhythm gets out of sync, you can easily get

things all wrong and end up in one of the many unforgiving gravel traps.

Arguably one of the most challenging sections of race track anywhere in the world is here at Mugello. The Arrabbiata twins will present our 24H SERIES competitors with quite the dilemma. For one it is very, very fast and takes a lot of, let's say 'courage', to optimise them. It also requires massive consideration to be given to that left front tyre. Drivers will have to choose between leaning on it or implementing a little tyre management. Especially the front wheel drive TCR class runners, who are not just asking that left front tyre to turn the car but also to power the car through the corners as well.

“ In 1922, they competed on a 40-mile temporary road course. The race took 5 hours, 46 minutes and 7.2 seconds. ”

12 hours is a long race anywhere but at Mugello there will be challenges coming at our teams from all areas. Brakes and gearboxes take a hammering slowing down off the long pit straight into the first turn. Drivers take a battering through those long sweeping sections and the seemingly constant change of direction. Drivers will certainly be feeling it in their arms toward the end of race stints.

So Mugello in summary: hard on cars, and hard on drivers. Which is exactly what Endurance racing is all about! ■

stand21[®]

Racerwear



WORLD SPECIALIST IN CUSTOM RACING SAFETY GEAR FROM HEAD TO TOE



YOUR SAFETY, OUR PRIORITY!

HEAT STRESS CONTROL

SUFFERING FROM THE HEAT IN YOUR CAR? WE HAVE SOLUTIONS!



IVOS Global AIR FORCE helmet



FHR Ultimate -The lightest one-



Racing Suits with exclusive breathable fabric



Underwear with exclusive breathable fabric



The most comfortable outside seams gloves



Extremely light and breathable shoes

stand21[®] RACING SERVICE

STAND 21 is at your side in the 24H of Dubai's paddock.

Mr Olivier BÉROUD
Phone : +33 (0) 608 581 825
Email : oberoud@stand21.fr

www.stand21.com

FIND STAND 21 RACEWEAR ON

Stand 21 Headquarters - 12, rue des Novalles - 21240 DIJON/TALANT
Phone : +33 (0) 380 539 770 - Fax : +33 (0) 380 539 230 - Mobile : +33 (0) 608 581 825 - oberoud@stand21.fr

WE STAND FOR SAFETY AND QUALITY!

MASTER X RACING WEEKEND



Formula X Racing Weekend

This weekend, Mugello hosts the first round of the season for the Formula X Italian Series, ready to support the 24H SERIES with each of its spectacular categories.

Formula X has established itself as the most followed Italian championship on the web, thanks to a racing format that presents different types of cars, innovative communication, and fun and unpredictable races.

The very fast single-seaters of the FX1 championship promise a spectacular and balanced battle between the Formula 3-derived cars. The same goes for the FX2 grid, where Formula Renault and Formula Abarth cars will challenge for both overall honours and for the FX2000 and FX2 Light Trophies.

Mugello will also see the long-awaited debut of the new FX Pro Series, at the heart of which is the new Tatuus T014 sports prototype, while the FX ATCC championship will see GT and 'Turismo' cars go head-to-head on a grid that's set to feature up to 40 entries.

All this will be accompanied by a lively and dynamic paddock, where there will be fan-dedicated activities and plenty of opportunities for interviews with the drivers. All races will be broadcast live on TV and across the Formula X Italian Series' official social channels.

After Mugello, the Formula X Racing Weekend season will continue touring many of Italy's most famous racing facilities, from Monza to Vallelunga, including Misano, Varano de Melegari, Modena and Magione. On top of that, the series will also hold a Croatian round at the Automotodrom Grobnik.

The show, on and off the track, is guaranteed! ■



POSTCARD FROM...



2022 Hankook 24H DUBAI

MS7 by WRT got its 2022 season off to a commanding start with victory at the 17th Hankook 24H DUBAI. Though the battle remained wide open thanks to early Code 60s and split fuel strategies, the sheer pace of the second evolution Audi R8 LMS as the race progressed into the night meant the fight soon came down to polesitter MS7 by WRT and WRT's standalone sister entry. Even so, a flawless run thereafter all but assured a WRT 1-2 at the flag, the evos leading 511 of the completed 596 laps.

The result marked the third outright win for an Audi R8 at the Hankook 24H DUBAI, and, courtesy of MS7 and Mohammed Bin Saud Al Saud, the first time Saudi Arabia was represented on the top step of the podium since 2018. Axcil Jefferies also became the latest two-time event winner, the Zimbabwean having also taken victory with GPX Racing in 2021.

SPS automotive's 'SunEnergy1' Mercedes-AMG GT3 sealed the final podium spot, a place that had looked set to go to the Haupt Racing Team before a splash-and-dash for fuel with just four laps from left the eponymous outfit of three-time Hankook 24H DUBAI winner Hubert Haupt just eight seconds short.

Impressively, SPS also claimed 2nd in GT3-AM with Reema Juffali, Saudi Arabia's first female racing driver, on her endurance racing debut. Just ahead, and having led outright at one stage, CP Racing took GT3-AM honours while the final class podium spot, fittingly, went to former event winner Car Collection Motorsport, Audi's second Dubai winner in 2019. Series fan favourite Gustav Edelhoff thus brought his 24-hour racing career to a close on the podium.

After taking TCX class victory at last year's event, PK Carsport successfully stepped up to the GTX category for 2022, winning with its newly-acquired GT2-spec Audi R8 LMS after fuel pressure problems beset nearest rival Leipert Motorsport. Two places further back on the road, NKPP Racing by Bas Koeten Racing took its second consecutive 991-class win at the Hankook 24H DUBAI after long-time leader, and series debutant, Red Ant Racing suffered terminal transmission woes at half-distance.

In the newly-established 992 classes, Team GP-Elite secured a hard-earned 1-2 finish in 992-PRO ahead of series regular Red Camel-Jordans.nl. A storming run from HRT Performance meanwhile saw the German team secure three of the top four finishes in 992-AM, Red Ant Racing conquering its 991 issues to claim the 992-AM runners-up spot. Dragon Racing's Mercedes-AMG meanwhile took a commanding win in GT4, the Dubai team's second win in three years its home circuit.

Across in TCE, BBR became the first Thai team to take victory in the 24H SERIES with a faultless run with its CUPRA TCR, albeit one aided by shock absorber failure that cost former TCE event winner AC Motorsport eight laps. TCE polesitter Les Deux Arbres took a decisive win in the TCX class, though fellow front row starter LAMERA GT fared less well, driveshaft failure eventually dropping the Luxembourg team to 7th. ■

PODIUM 24H DUBAI OVERALL

- #7 MS7 by WRT
Audi R8 LMS GT3
- #31 WRT
Audi R8 LMS GT3
- #75 SunEnergy1 by SPS automotive performance
Mercedes-AMG GT3

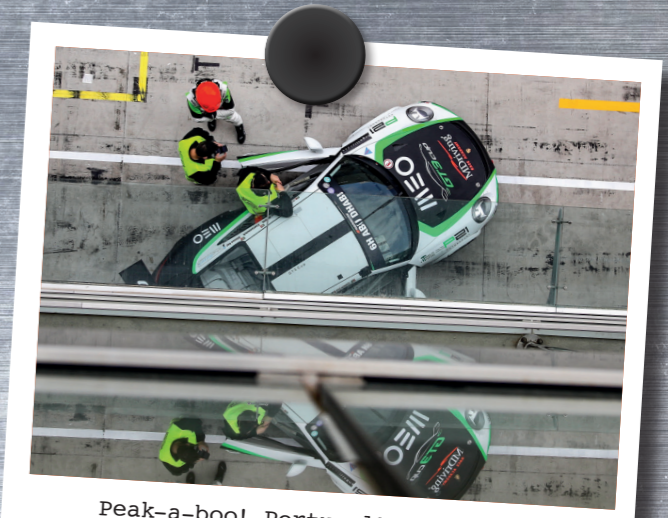
CLASS WINNERS 24H DUBAI

- GT3 #7 MS7 by WRT
Audi R8 LMS GT3
- GT3-PRO/AM #19 MP Motorsport
Mercedes-AMG GT3
- GT3-AM #85 CP Racing
Mercedes-AMG GT3
- 992-PRO #934 Team GP-Elite
Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
- 992-AM #929 HRT Performance
Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (992)
- 991 #991 NKPP Racing by Bas Koeten Racing
Porsche 911 GT3 Cup (991 Gen II)
- GTX #704 PK Carsport
Audi GT2
- GT4 #408 Dragon Racing
Mercedes-AMG GT4
- TCR #159 BBR
Cupra TCR DSG
- TCX #202 Les Deux Arbres
Ligier JS2 R

SNAPSHOT 6H ABU DHABI



Like father, like daughter! After dedicating the last two years to law school, Stéphane Kox is back on-track with father Peter. The pair secured the final step on the GT3 podium in Abu Dhabi.



Peak-a-boo! Portugal's P21 had a character-building start to its 24H SERIES campaign in Abu Dhabi.



on Motorsport's 488 GT3 made an impressive 24H SERIES debut with pole position and victory at the Hankook 6H ABU DHABI



"Are you sure this fits?" Miroslav Konopka helps son, and ARC Bratislava teammate, Matej with some last minute adjustments. Miro also received a Code 60 caution flag from CREVENTIC in Abu Dhabi to celebrate his 60th birthday.



One week on from its win in Dubai, the Les Deux Arbres Ligier JS2 R flashes past one of the most famous buildings in the world – Yas Marina's Viceroy Hotel – en-route to its second UAE win of the month.



That... probably won't buff out. The Sally Racing Team CUPRA TCR ends its day in the wall with 991-class podium contender ID Racing just moments before the chequered flag is set to be waved.



Where better for RABDAN Racing, based and launched in Abu Dhabi in December 2021, to take its first 24H SERIES podium than at the Yas Marina Circuit?



Brutally, having shadowed eventual winner Baron Motorsport during the opening stages, LP Racing's race last just 48 laps before suffering suspension failure



Although Zengő Motorsport's ninth start at the Hankook 24H DUBAI lasted just 69 laps due to gearbox problems, the CUPRA fared much better in Abu Dhabi, finishing 2nd in TCR behind AC Motorsport.

READ MORE!



smokebuddy®

Personal Air Filter



Blow Smoke In

Ideal for: **Dorms, Home, Office, Travel**

Long Lasting, High Quality. Smoke Anything Anywhere.

Eliminates Second Hand Smoke and Odors.

Clean Air Out



The Smokebuddy Family

@mr_smokebuddy

www.smokebuddy.com

20% OFF WITH CODE: SB22

STANDINGS

24H SERIES

POWERED BY HANKOOK

CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE CONTINENTS

DUBAI - BEST EU RACE - SEBRING

GT3

1	7	MS7 by WRT	30
2	31	WRT	29
3	4	Abu Dhabi Racing by HRT	25

GTX

1	704	PK Carsport	27
2	710	Leipert Motorsport	23
3	701	Vortex V8	17

GT3-AM

1	85	CP Racing	29
2	20	SPS automotive performance	26
3	34	Car Collection Motorsport	23

GT4

1	408	Dragon Racing	30
2	423	Heart of Racing Team	29
3	429	Century Motorsport	25

GT3-PRO/AM

1	19	MP Motorsport	29
2	93	DUWO Racing by Herberth Motorsport	25
3	27	Team Joos Sportwagenteknik	24

TCR

1	159	BBR	28
2	188	AC Motorsport	27
3	112	Autorama Motorsport by Wolf-Power Racing	23

991

1	991	NKPP Racing by Bas Koeten Racing	26
2	955	Willi Motorsport by Ebimotors	21
3	903	Red Ant Racing	20

TCX

1	202	Les Deux Arbres	30
2	255	COGEMO/TLRT	29
3	208	Yeeti Racing	25

992

1	929	HRT Performance	29
2	934	Team GP-Elite	28
3	933	Team GP-Elite	27

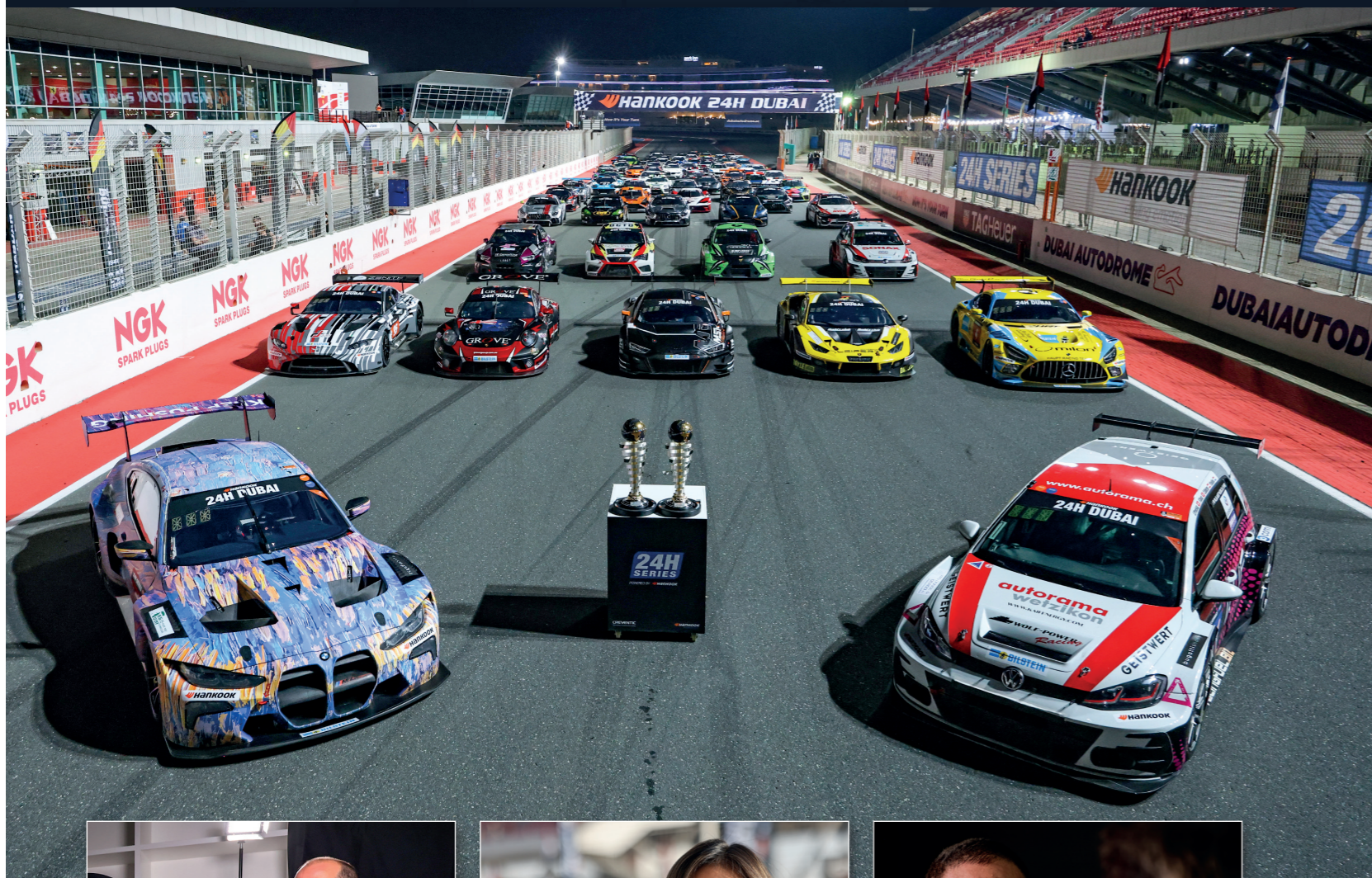
FULL TEAM AND DRIVER STANDINGS AVAILABLE AT 24HSERIES.COM/STANDINGS



bugattishoes

#ThisIs24HSERIES. Behind the Scenes

In preparation for two documentaries CREVENTIC is currently filming – one on the 24H SERIES as a whole, the other more specifically on the Hankook 24H DUBAI – we spoke with myriad drivers, team bosses and series personnel at the Dubai Autodrome for their individual insights. But what happens behind the scenes?



“This is quite the setup you guys have here!”

Our makeshift studio – a not-quite finished suite overlooking the Dubai Autodrome start-finish straight – has clearly impressed Jeroen Bleekemolen. So much so that, like Alfred Renauer before him, the Dutchman takes a few moments before his interview to check out the view and take a few smartphone images of the flurry of headlights flashing past.

Daan, our camera operator and director, is happy to wait, as it gives him the opportunity to double-double check his lights, the blackout curtain pinned to the wall that acts as our backdrop, and the collapsible reflector inelegantly propped up on one of three chairs we hiked across from the paddock earlier that day.

Truth be told, I'm also happy for this short break to run through my questions again. Jeroen is a three-time winner of the Hankook 24H DUBAI – there's only two other men on the planet that can also make that claim! – and he's only missed the race once since 2008. He's going to have some great stories to tell.

He won't be the last either.

Sami Moutran, our first interviewee of the weekend, enjoyed talking about the 24H SERIES immensely at what has effectively been his home endurance for more than a decade. JM Littman, the ebullient series fan favourite barely paused for breath as he changed from his civvies into his racesuit for the interview – *“...the camera's off, right?!”* – and Gregg Gorski was so enthusiastic, his paddock 'entourage' had somehow doubled by the time we got to the studio.

It's an overwhelmingly positive response that, earlier, Daan, B-roll operator Martijn and I felt sure had collapsed before our eyes. The afternoon prior, our original shooting location – one of two offices attached to the Autodrome's Tech Bay at the start of the pitlane – had just been repossessed for scrutineering. A more pressing concern for the biggest 24-hour in the region than our little film, granted, but it still left us with only two, rather dismal options: a corner of the Autodrome's dining area, where the clamour of several hundred knives and forks was only slightly drowned out by myriad V8s and flat-sixes screaming down the main start-finish straight, or a storage closet off VIP suite 1. And even then we'd have had to work around the bank of modems taking up two-thirds of the floor space. Mercifully, a pleading email sent to the Autodrome's dutiful management team eventually lands us the last suite available above the main grandstand.

Done with his pics, Jeroen takes a seat in 'the chair' as Daan and I have now dubbed it, the Dutchman only slightly deterred by the surprisingly strong arc light stage left as he adjusts the microphone chord under his shirt (he's a PRO, no need to worry). Just as we're about to start, there's a soft tap at the door followed moments later by documentary producer Robin: *“sorry to interrupt, but Gustav Edelhoff's going to be in the car next and wondered if he could do his sit-down sooner. Also, radiolemans is wondering if we're still on for 6.15.”*

Jeroen's interview is now left in Robin's capable hands as I dash down the corridor to double check on radiolemans's progress – Eve, the appointed 'responsible adult', assures me that, once John Hindhaugh and Phil Anson hand over to London at 6pm, they'll be happy to talk – before making

my way back over to the paddock to re-arrange timing with Gustav. Heading into the lift, I almost clatter into Patrick, one of CREVENTIC's photographers for the weekend, who, as it happens, does have a couple of minutes to get some behind the scenes images. Just don't trip over the cable when you go in or we'll fuse the lightbox again...

Passing pit box 2B, I spot Stéphane Perrin: *“After your stint?...okay, how about 8.30?... cool, I'll come back and meet you here.”*

Actually, while I'm here, I'd better check in with Jean-Francois Brunot – Leipter Motorsport, 1C – to see if tomorrow at 11am still works. And Saif Alamer should be out of the car by now, so maybe I can grab a quick word at the RABDAN garage too.

Heading back to the studio, I almost trip over ST Racing team boss Ben Distaulo, who, as luck would have it, has a bit of time and is happy to 'do his bit to camera'. Conversation on the way to the studio covers a range of topics: *“no, apparently Jeroen doesn't get jetlagged anymore...”*

Robin's already been and gone as she also has a few final details for the podium to hammer out – she'll step back in again for Samantha Tan, Kim Holmgaard and Jasmin Preisig when I turn my attention to the post-qualifying press release – but a wry smile tells me that Daan is happy with Jeroen's animated footage. Cue microphone fumbling again as Ben gets himself ready in the chair. Oh, by the way, Mirko Bortolotti's on standby pretty much for the whole race, so we'll need to do a candid piece with him at the Barwell garage. No, it's fine, there's a 'artistic' tyre stack we could use as the backdrop, and...

“...did Robin take the laptop with her...?”

“...okay, sorry Ben, we're going to wing this one a bit.”

And so it continues, both late into the night and early the next morning, empty water bottles building up in our designated 'storage area' – the suite's not-quite-finished bathroom – as drivers and team bosses kindly dedicate their time and thoughts for the documentary. Khaled Al Qubaisi is finally tracked down early on Sunday morning and relives his finest moments at his home race, swiftly followed by Reema Juffali, Saudi Arabia's first female racing driver, who's more than happy to talk about her first endurance race.

Sadly, some drivers we can't quite manage to get into the chair. Rob Huff seemed keen enough but we could never nail down a time. Hubert Haupt had two Mercedes to worry about, so that was always going to be difficult. And we somehow lost Shane Lewis altogether between CP Racing's garage in pit box 1B and the CREVENTIC welcome centre (sorry Shane!). That a piece of loose tape meant our black backdrop ended up falling on Car Collection team manager Denis Ferleman during his interview was a little embarrassing too.

Still, give or take some re-scheduling and a heart-stopping moment when we think the 'studio' has lost power (turns out our adapter has shifted slightly in the socket when we adjust the lighting rig), shooting has gone pretty well, and we're left with almost seven hours of footage for our documentaries.

Keen to see the finished result? Keep checking our official YouTube channel for #ThisIs24HSERIES in the coming weeks. ■



**René said to me and Marc,
“do you fancy doing the 24H DUBAI?”
It was amazing because he brought
two cars, sponsored the whole thing,
and just let us get on with it!**

WHO AM I? ROB HUFF

In 2022, eight years after he came close to winning the Hankook 24H DUBAI on his endurance racing debut, 2012 World Touring Car Champion Rob Huff returned to the event for another crack at victory. It's the latest instalment in a long, incredibly illustrious motorsport career that, amazingly, was never really part of 'the plan'...

"I don't come from a 'motorsport' family, so there wasn't really a plan. For us, it was just a case of a family enjoying motorsport."

It's an intriguing, if slightly surreal, start to CREVENTIC's interview with Rob Huff, one of the most experienced touring car drivers on the planet today, and, quite incredibly, still Britain's most recent World Champion in a touring car since securing the crown 10 years ago. To say nothing of the TCR competition, both national and international, exploratory GT outings, and Goodwood Revival races of which he's been at the forefront since then.

And yet, as he speaks with CREVENTIC between stints at the 2022 Hankook 24H DUBAI, 'Huffy', as his international fanbase knows him, freely admits that the career path he has followed for close to three decades could so easily have stalled before it had even started...

"My father was a chartered surveyor in the UK," Rob continues, "and all my studies were towards that environment: to go into the family business. We never set out to become a professional driver until... probably the first time I was paid to drive in 2004. Until that happened, I never realized it could be a career. It was obviously a dream, for me and my father, to be a successful race driver, but the plan was to enjoy time together and have fun as a family."

'We' rather than 'I' will prove a recurrent theme throughout this story. While the 2012 WTCC champion has more than earned the right to brag unashamedly, he attributes most of his accomplishments to Team Huffy, a tight nit group that incorporates mum

Kate, sister Francesca, and significantly, father Peter. Indeed, it was a young Rob's trips with 'Huff Daddy', as Peter affectionately became known in the years that followed, to a local indoor kart track that got the motorsport ball rolling...

"We started karting when I was 12 years old, but it was just my father and myself in endurance karting. But then the motorsport avenue started opening for me, and the idea of going into the family business went out of the window because motorsport was much more fun!"

At 16, Rob entered, and won, a 60-minute 'Iron Man' go-kart race, and at 18, he came out on-top of a three-day knockout tournament to secure a scholarship with Jim Russell for 1999. One year later, Rob had stepped out of karts and into Formula Vauxhall single seaters. And won the title first time out!

The prize money didn't last long though, and while Rob made the step up to Formula Renault 2.0 for 2001 with Scorpio Motorsport – alongside his new duties as a race instructor at Brands Hatch – by mid-season, the financial well had been tapped dry. Salvation this time came courtesy of elder sister Francesca, who discovered an advert for 'bearacingdriver.com' in the back of Autocar magazine. Once again, against hundreds of other aspiring British youngsters, Rob came out on top. Cue Team Huff's first year of saloon car racing in 2002, this time in the Renault Clio Cup with the learned Tim Sugden.

A more savvy Rob and Peter by now though had realized the only way to succeed was to follow the money, and come season's end, Huffy entered the

newly-established SEAT Cupra Challenge for 2003, backed up by family savings and sponsorship deals with the local SEAT dealership and a Cambridgeshire haulage company.

But that was it. Win the title, and Team Huff was guaranteed a paid drive for 2004, with SEAT, in the UK's biggest motorsport program, the British Touring Car Championship. Don't, and the dream was probably over...

"We didn't have 'motorsport money', and it was a case of begging, stealing and borrowing from people. Obviously I knew the prize at the end of the Cupra Challenge was to become a works touring car driver, and, yeah, I knew that year it was everything. That was the big chance. The Cupra Challenge was my only opportunity to really step up, so the pressure was on."

Once again, Team Huffy delivered. After a season-long rivalry with future three-time BTCC champion Gordon Shedden, three wins from 10 starts was enough to secure Rob the inaugural SEAT Cupra championship and his BTCC seat for 2004, incredibly, just four years on from his first-ever car race.

One tough opening at Thruxton aside, a maiden podium at round two at Brands Hatch (his years as an instructor clearly paid off...), two race wins and consistent points-paying finishes were enough to secure Rob seventh in the BTCC standings in his maiden year. Not bad for a rookie, particularly one teamed alongside one of the series' most infamous competitors... 🏁





"Before I got the BTCC drive, I'd only done one year in Clio Cup and one year in the Cupra. And in those championships, I had no teammates. Then my first teammate was Jason Plato. He's a double champion. The king! And he's a tough guy. Really tough, in the car and out. But as a teammate, he was on my side, and I learnt a lot from him."

A championship assault looked on the cards for 2005: "to arrive in the BTCC is one thing but to stay is another level entirely. You need to be in the right place at the right time, and that year, we were." Ironically though, a one-off guest appearance at Silverstone in 2017 aside, Rob's BTCC career ultimately went no further as he was immediately moved up to the World Touring Car Championship for 2005 as part of a brand-new program with Chevrolet.

If learning a host of circuits he'd never been to before wasn't enough, Rob's teammates for his first international year of racing were former DTM champion (and Formula 1 podium finisher) Nicola Larina, and two-time BTCC champion, Alain Menu. Not that this bothered him...

"I was very lucky. For me, at 24 years old, being a baby, it was amazing to learn from these guys and see their input into how to develop a touring car and what sort of feedback engineers want from a driver. Remember, with the Chevrolet Lacetti, we were starting from zero, and for me, as a young driver, it's

one thing getting into a car that is already fast and handles well, it's another thing to be part of the development from zero and take it to a winning car. So, yeah, there was pressure, but as a young driver, it was a really amazing four years."

Come the end of 2008, Rob already had four wins on his WTCC tally and was up to 3rd in the standings in the swansong year for the Lacetti, RML's focus thereafter turning to, what would become, the all-conquering Cruze. More significantly though, in 2010, Rob and Menu were joined by 2008 WTCC champion Yvan Muller, whose immediate form was devastating: the Frenchman won on his Chevrolet debut in Cortiba and finished a further 13 times on the podium that year to secure his second WTCC crown on the bounce, the first of three he'd win between 2010 and 2013.

Muller's crushing form could easily have sunk a lesser competitor. And yet, like Plato before him, Muller's 'difficulty' was just what a still young Rob Huff needed to raise his game...

"I knew Yvan had a bit of a reputation for being quite difficult – Yvan and Jason fought like dogs in the BTCC – but when you start and you have these guys as your teammates, life is never going to be tougher! To experience the hardest thing first prepares you for anything and everything, and if you go in at the deep end and survive, only good things will come."

Undeniably in the deep end, Rob went on to finish just three points shy of eventual champion Muller in 2011. One year later, Rob had already taken five wins and a further 10 podiums, and was on top in the standings heading into the 2012 season finale at Macau.

"I knew, going to Macau, that I was strong there. It's my favourite track, but also the hardest track because it's so easy to make a mistake and destroy everything."

In the first race, the title already looked to be in the bag. Polesitter Rob, despite being jumped at the start by Muller, sat comfortably in 2nd – more than enough to secure the title with a race to spare – only to spring a very late braking move back past Muller on lap four. "That's a true move of a champion, right there" spoke Eurosport commentator, and fellow SEAT Cupra Champion, Harry Vaulkhard.

Half a lap later, an oversteer-y moment sent the Chevrolet with the Union Jack on its roof into the barriers, snapping the left rear suspension in the process.

The champion elect was out, and could do nothing to stop his main rivals finishing 1st and 2nd.

"That meant in the second race, we were starting 9th. And that was tough. On the third lap, I was still in 9th place, and I really had to talk to myself because I basically forgot how to drive. I was shaking and it was horrible. It's a moment I never want to experience again!"

While Menu had already disappeared into the lead, a more composed-but-still-fuming Rob was attempting to pass Muller for 5th as the field entered lap four. The opportunity presented itself when Muller inadvertently tagged the back of 4th-placed Alex MacDowall, sending the independent Chevy heavily into the wall and opening the door for Rob to slip past both of them. Moments later, Norbert Micheliz and future TCR SPA 500 winner Pepe Oriola tangled on the same straight whilst battling for 2nd, with Rob once again the beneficiary.

"The race finished under the safety car with only two laps left. So I knew, when the chequered flag came out, that it would be okay."

18 November 2012. Rob Huff is crowned the World Touring Car Champion.

"I had one year with SEAT in the UK and eight years with Chevrolet, all run by [Ray Mallock Ltd]. The final goal was to win the championship. So those Chevrolet years were very, very special. Something that, in touring cars, you probably don't get to experience for a second time. I mean, RML took a big gamble with me. I was a no-name driver, and they already had two very experienced drivers signed. To be able to reward them eight years later with a World Championship, I hope, showed them that they made a good decision in 2005 when they contacted me.

"But, wow! That was a scary weekend. I think I slept for about a week afterwards!"

Sadly, Team Huff's time on top of the world didn't last long. Chevrolet had already confirmed mid-way through 2012 that its works outfit would be pulled for 2013, leaving the reigning World Champion without a drive. Keen to defend his crown, but unwilling to sign with a WTCC minnow, Huff made the bold decision to join All-Inkl.com Münnich Motorsport for 2013: the reigning GT1 World Champion, yes, but a WTCC newcomer, nonetheless.

Progress was slow-going however, Rob taking just two wins and three podiums en-route to a respectable but disappointing 4th in the standings. Keen to be at the sharp end again, and aware how significant a manufacturer works deal is to WTCC glory, Rob was on the move again for 2014, signing a two-year deal with new arrival, Lada Sport.

Before bidding adieu to All-Inkl.com though, there was another, unexpected challenge to take on: the 2014 Hankook 24H DUBAI.

"That was an amazing experience! To race a Mercedes SLS [AMG GT3], a top car, and to do it with All-Inkl, who were the GT1 world champions in 2012... that's how I met them actually, at the award ceremony in Istanbul, and that's how we got talking about racing in 2013. But René [Münnich], the boss, said to me and Marc later that year, "do you fancy doing the 24 hours?" It was amazing because he brought two cars, sponsored the whole thing, and just let us get on with it!

"We only qualified 14th, I think" – you're too modest Rob, it was actually 12th... – "but after three hours, we were in the top three. We stayed in the top three the whole time, and eventually we finished 2nd in my first 'proper' GT experience. I was a little disappointed we didn't win, because we were pretty close, but it was a tough race because René didn't want to drive too much. Marc and I did about 10 hours each, I think!"

Back on the WTCC stages, a brutally uncompetitive Lada saw Rob jump ship to championship contender Honda for 2016, Rob immediately re-confirming his race-winning form by taking victory at the Paul Ricard season opener. This however would stand as Team Huff's sole win of 2016 and one of only six podiums with Honda. Despite talking up his chances of a second WTCC crown in 2017, Rob made the shock announcement in January that he was reuniting with Münnich Motorsport for 2017, the latter now in possession of a works-developed Citroën C-Elysée that had just sealed its third consecutive WTCC crown in 2016. Once again, the championship-potential of the Citroën failed to materialise, and a frustrated Rob faded to 7th in the standings with just one win all season.

Even so, that win, in Macau, stands as a highlight for Rob. It was his 29th in the WTCC, a record bettered only by Muller. More so than that, it was his ninth win around the streets of Gia, easing him one ahead of

British Superbike race winner Michael 'The Blade' Rutter. A dream end to what had been, in his own words, a "crappy" 2017, and a record he'd go on to extend to 10 wins in 2020.

Asked why Macau suits him? If only he knew...

"I have no idea! I wish I could sell the secret, I could make a lot of money! I think... I've always been very strong on street circuits, and Macau in particular. It's just always been a circuit I've bonded with very well. You need to have huge respect there, which means maybe I push a little more than other drivers dare to, or maybe I'm a little more precise. I don't know. It just seems, when the pressure's on and I need to make a lap, it seems to happen."

It's been a long time since his World Championship win, but Rob is still magnanimous. Statically, he's entered more WTCC races than any other driver, won with more manufacturers than any other WTCC/WTCR driver, has started a new adventure as a team owner/manager, and proved his endurance racing pace can be as devastating as his GT pace was impressive 15 years ago.

All in all, not bad for a young man from Cambridge whose plans didn't involve motorsport. Not bad at all. ■

[Check out the full feature on 24hseries.com](https://www.24hseries.com)



INSIDE THE NEW Ginetta G56 GT4



Ginetta has been among the most respected marques in the 24H SERIES for more than a decade, securing multiple class championships – drivers and teams alike – and more than 20 class victories to-date with the ‘G50’ and ‘G55’ generations of its venerable sports car, and alongside esteemed outfits like Nova Race, Optimum Motorsport, Century Motorsport, the NM Racing Team, and, in particular, CWS Engineering.

Indeed, since CWS’ debut in the 24H SERIES in 2015, Ginetta has been a constant presence on the 24H SERIES grid ever since.

No real surprise then that the British team was the first to experience Ginetta’s newest generation sports car in real world endurance competition, CWS having entered a G56 GT4 at the 2022 Hankook 24H DUBAI for team owner Colin White, Ginetta factory driver Mike Simpson, former IndyCar driver James Jakes, and Lawrence Tomlinson, chairman of Ginetta since 2005. More than that though, Lawrence is also a former class winner of both the 24 Hours of Le Mans (2006) and the 24H SILVERSTONE (2010) with his eponymous Team LNT, and, prior to a brief hiatus from racing, claimed PFV championship honours in V de V. He even competed at the inaugural Hankook 3X3H DUBAI aboard a Graff-entered G57 P2 in 2017.

Who better then to run us through the new Ginetta G56 GT4 and the challenges that await it?

Lawrence, Dubai was your first race since 2017, and your first race in something other than an LMP2 or LMP3 prototype since the 24H DUBAI in 2014. How long did it take for you to get up to speed with the G56?

“The Ginetta G56 GT4 is super easy and fun to drive. I’ve been doing a lot of the development and testing work at Ginetta with Mike Simpson so getting back into the saddle was easy, although I’m not getting any younger!”

The main difference is the G56’s new V8 engine. What benefits do you think the V8 will offer compared with the G55’s V6?

“The V6 has been a great unit for Ginetta over the last 15 years but as the GT4 class has grown, with the other cars becoming much heavier and more powerful, we wanted to add more power. The weight of our V8 is the same as the V6 but has a much lower CofG [centre of gravity], so it’s a win win.

“Getting the car fully GT4 homologated and in a position where it can be competitive for the next seven years necessitated the huge upgrade. It’s also really fun to drive!” ▶

G56

‘an exciting new chapter for Ginetta’

Ginetta’s workhorse since its launch in 2011 was always going to be a tough act to follow for the “new challenger”, the G56.

In the British GT Championship alone – a regular arena for the Yorkshire-based carmaker – the G55 racked up seven GT4 drivers’ championships between 2008 and 2017 and, together with its G50 predecessor, 75 GT4-class victories, making Ginetta the series’ second most successful marque behind only Porsche. Across in the 24H SERIES, the G55 was undefeated in its first four SP3-class outings at the Hankook 24H DUBAI between 2015 and 2018, and took additional category wins en-route to four Teams’ class titles in 2017 (Optimum Motorsport, twice), 2018 (Perfection Racing Europe and CWS Engineering), and 2021 (CWS again).

In short, by the time the silks had been pulled from the G56 one year ago this month, its forerunner already had “more than 100 race victories across almost every continent of the world” to its name. Failure, clearly, was not an option, and is among the reasons why development of the G56 has been taken so seriously.

Granted, visually, there’s little to choose between the still-active-but-outgoing G55 and the new G56, save some funky tinted headlights covers on the launch model and slightly wider front wheels for improved manoeuvrability. Plus, a brand-new £150,000 price tag.

Beneath the fiberglass bodywork though, there’s an upgraded ‘T45’ tubular chassis complete with carbon fibre side impact, as well as high performance suspension and uprights derived from Ginetta’s LMP3 prototype (the official specsheet rather charmingly refers to this as ‘LMP3 Corner Technology’). The brake pads remain the same size – six-piston, 378mm at the front; four-piston monoblock, 330mm at the rear – but are now supplied by UK specialist Alcon. Fuel cell capacity has also increased from 107 litres to 130 litres, and the rear-mounted six-speed sequential transmission is now built by Xtrac in contrast to the Hewland example in the G55.

And therein lies the biggest difference, for mated to the transmission is not the Ford-sourced 3.7-litre V6 used by the G55 but a new, 6.2-litre V8 built by Ginetta itself. While the V8’s bulk means the scales can tip 1,250kg (some belt-tightening will drop this back down to 1,085kg as required), power has been given a sizeable heft from 380bhp to 500bhp, the extra grunt also upping the top speed to an impressive 165mph (just over 265kph).

This is not the first time Ginetta has opted for V8 firepower either. The Akula supercar, the marque’s “British Pagani” unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show in 2019, featured a 6.0-litre naturally-aspirated V8 that produced 600bhp, while the G55 GT3 that landed in the British GT Championship for 2012 boasted a 550bhp, 4.35-litre Ginetta-built V8. An upgraded model, co-developed with Century Motorsport, made its series debut in 2017, now boasting a beefier ‘LS3’ V8 from a Chevrolet Corvette. The short-lived G50Z GT3, powered by a Zytec V8, even competed at the 2010 24H DUBAI with Craft Racing. G56: “an exciting new chapter for Ginetta”



Aside from the engine, what other key updates has the G56 received over the G55, and what was the main objective behind these upgrades?

"The car looks similar to the G55 but is very different under the skin. It has our G58/LMP3 uprights, hubs and driveshafts that are driven through a rear-mounted X-Trac gearbox/diff unit. The cooling system and air conditioning are also new. It is a true 24-hour car and will be current for many, many years."

The Ginetta G55 was launched in 2011, but won its latest British GT title in 2017 and its class at the 24H DUBAI as late as 2018. Had the G55 run its course, or is there still potential?

"The G55 has been a fabulously successful GT car and one of the most winning GT4 cars ever (see overleaf). It lives on as our G56GTA car, a car that brings new drivers into our Ginetta academy, the G55 is fully supported by Ginetta but no new cars are being produced."

The G56 underwent extensive testing before its debut. Could you give us an idea what was involved with this testing program...

"The car's testing [focused on] all-round reliability and performance of the new drivetrain for sprint races and shorter races under three hours. The car's endurance debut was in Dubai, and we learnt a lot from that. But it's never easy doing your development in public."

Interestingly, the G56 made its 24-hour debut after it spent a year competing in British GT. Why that way round when lessons learnt at last year's 24H DUBAI could have been put towards the 2021 British GT campaign?

"With the pandemic we never really had the certainty to test or race outside the UK. The [Hankook 24H DUBAI] was the first real chance to get the car into a proper 24-hour race."

As a driver, and as Ginetta's chairman, what do you personally learn about the G56 this weekend that perhaps the engineers and mechanics do not?

"Firstly, I am an engineer and all the other jobs come second! The car was designed with me leading the team. Whilst the engineers do a great job, there is no substitute for the race track to learn. We then feedback all this data to the factory, so it is a constant learning loop."

One of the main issues the G56 struggled with in Dubai was overheating, for both the car and the drivers. Was that to be expected of an endurance race in the Middle East, or is this something that Ginetta needs to investigate moving forward?

"The car ran well and we led the GT4 category with Mike Simpson, but we suffered contact early in the race and a few more times during the night. We lost an engine drive belt which destroyed the air conditioning belt, and this was the cause of our drivers getting too hot. The engine and drive train stayed really cool during the whole event but we have some improvements coming to keep both the driver cooler and better protect the engine belts."

As a debut race, the 24H DUBAI was always going to be tough for the G56. Did you have any expectations coming into this development race, and despite the difficulties, were they met?

"We always come to win and the G56, like its predecessors, will win many, many races. There were a few small issues and some contact that denied us the opportunity, but it was a fabulous debut for the car. I'd suggest one of the most rewarding cars on the grid for any driver."

Given their collective knowledge of Ginetta, was there a better team to oversee the G56's first endurance race than CWS and Colin White?

"Ginetta and CWS are joined at the hip! It was a big rush for Ginetta to get the car to Colin and on to a ship, and we all jumped in to help get the car on track. I personally brought 96kg of parts in my suitcases. Thank you British Airways!"

"We would have loved to win with Collin first time out but it was a big ask with the timescale and with all the niggles of a very new product first time out, despite it outwardly looking very similar. I look forward to doing more races during the season. The calendar and tracks visited look amazing."

Despite setting one of the fastest GT4-category laps during qualifying, and having climbed as high as 3rd in-class during the opening two hours, overheating issues meant the G56 GT4 was already well down the order by half-distance. Though CWS' #478 entry did cross the line, too much time had been lost for the Ginetta to be classified. ■



ventus S1evo Z

Maximum performance with proven motorsport technology

Electrified Hankook



www.hankooktire.com



NEXT RACE

 **HANKOOK**

12H SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS



 **HANKOOK**



SPEEDCOM
COMMUNICATIONS

MOTORTREND
ON DEMAND

bugattishoes

stand21
Sponsor

THE COMBINED POWER OF
enterprise **National**

W RACING PROJECT
HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT



DAD
DRY ICE TECHNOLOGY

TREES.ORG
FOR THE FUTURE

SONIC
equipment

libe
LUBRICANTS

panta
RACING FUEL

JG
JAMES GENT

CASELINER
MOTORSPORT PIT EQUIPMENT

VEB
VIRTUAL COMPETITION ORGANIZATION

LUMIRANK
LED POSITION SYSTEM

Broadcast by **0221**
mediagroup

Commentary by **radiolemans.com**