

CLASSIC DRIVER

Home win for Ferrari at Monza



The Ferrari 550 Maranello, driven by Portugal's Pedro Lamy and the Italo-Swiss driver Gabriele Gardel won the first round of this season's FIA GT championship at Monza. The car crossed the finish line ahead of four Maserati MC12s.

The second Larbre Competition 550 Maranello, crewed by Bryner/Calderari/Zacchia also finished well up the order, in sixth place. The two Ferrari 575 GTC Evoluzione 2005 (above photo) were making their race debut in the Italian G.P.C. Sport team colours, but unfortunately their race was compromised after collisions with other competitors.

Maserati cruised to the top of the FIA GT Constructors' championship after a tough, gripping race with four cars finishing in the top five. Both teams - Vitaphone and JMB - saw their cars cross the finish line at the end of a race that saw them come close to victory. Philippe Peter's MC12 led early on while the black and green Vitaphone Racing Team's MC12s challenged for the win right until the last.

Philippe Peter began in pole position and from there he commanded the opening stages of the race majestically. He drove two stints without changing the tyres. Behind him came the cars driven by Michael Bartels and Fabio Babini, who later moved up to second spot. Andrea Bertolini was harassing Lamy and Bouchut's 550 Maranellos.



Babini/Biagi's chances of victory were dimmed after Thomas Biagi overshot his pit-lane area when making a stop. Even Babini's magnificent comeback could not make up the twenty seconds lost. The Italian duo had to be happy with third place at the end but they did set the race's quickest lap time.

Michael Bartels had replaced Timo Scheider in the driving seat and held the lead until a few laps from the end when Lamy overtook him. The car did not have the best set up after an early clash altered the steering's geometry. This meant that the German could not offer up much resistance. In any case, the team did well. Both pairings made the podium and Vitaphone Racing Team is at the top of the team championship.

The next round of the international Gran Turismo series takes place at Magny-Cours (France) over the weekend of 1st May.

Text/Photos: Ferrari Maserati SpA

Editor's note: *The British round of the FIA GT Championship will be at Silverstone on May 15th. This will of course be the eagerly awaited European debut of the Aston Martin DBR9.*

*The race will be run as the **Royal Automobile Club Tourist Trophy** - celebrating its centenary. To mark this important event, Aston owners are being encouraged to come to the event in their own vehicles. The Aston Martin team has won the coveted Tourist Trophy three times, taking the prize in 1953, 1958 and 1959. A special car park has been created exclusively for spectators arriving in Aston Martin motor cars, bringing fans together to cheer on their favourite team.*

□
Photo: Aston Martin Racing

More details can be found on www.tourist-trophy100.co.uk, and tickets can be bought online from www.silverstone-circuit.co.uk or by calling 08704 588200. Special advance ticket prices can save you time and money on the day. The three-hour race begins at 10:15am.

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