

CLASSIC DRIVER

FIA GT at Magny Cours



Maserati won at Magny Cours with the MC12 monopolising the top three podium positions. This expected and well deserved result is a reward for all the hard work carried out by the teams and drivers. The JMB Racing car driven by Andrea Bertolini and Karl Wendlinger took the chequered flag. It was followed home by the Vitaphone Racing Team GT crew of Michael Bartels and Timo Scheider. Behind them came their team mates Fabio Babini and Thomas Biagi. The other MC12 with Philippe Peter/Chris Buncombe/Roman Rusinov on board for JMB Racing crossed the line in seventh.

The Magny Cours win is also an Italian success with three cars and three drivers making the podium. Maserati now enjoys a clear lead in the Constructors' Cup. The team classification sees the Vitaphone Racing Team up front with the Bartels/Scheider crew heading the drivers' table.

From his spot on the front row of the grid, Andrea Bertolini held the lead for sixteen laps. There then developed a duel with Bouchut and Babini which saw Babini win out. Babini led the race for twenty laps before the entry of the safety car and the subsequent round of pit stops. His adversaries took advantage of this episode to make early stops and so cancel the lead Babini had built up.

So it was Michael Bartels' turn to head the pack. He was tailed by Karl Wendlinger, Bertolini's substitute. The two put on a great spectacle until lap 71 when both pulled into the pits for a change of driver. The Bertolini/Wendlinger car was faultless, while Bartels/Scheider had a problem restarting their MC12 and lost around twenty seconds. Biagi, who had worked to close the gap to the leaders during his stint, also pitted.

Now the race order was clear: Bertolini led by a healthy margin from Scheider and Babini, who had taken Biagi's place. Ten minutes from the end of the three hour race, and with his tyres and brakes worn down, Bertolini left the track. However, he managed to maintain control of the car and keep his lead. Scheider was now closer to him and though he pushed hard he could not catch the leading man. Third across the line was Babini, while Peter/Rusinov/Buncombe, fourth for long periods of the race, slipped back down the field after making an additional pit stop. Andrea Bertolini set the fastest lap time during the race.



In the second leg of the Italian GT Championship, Piergiuseppe Perazzini and Gabriele Matteuzzi (above), on the Racing Box MC12 won the race and finished 2nd in the first one. Andrea Palma in the Trofeo Light scored a first place in his category in race 1 while in race 2 Aguas, Zampaloni, Corradi and Baso took the top four places in their category with their Trofeo Light.

Words/Photos; Maserati Corse

Editor's note: *The next (British) round of the FIA GT Championship will be at Silverstone on May 15th; **Royal Automobile Club Tourist Trophy**. This will of course be the eagerly awaited European debut of the Aston Martin DBR9.*

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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