

CLASSIC DRIVER

Maserati at the 24 hours of Nürburgring



Maserati will enter two cars under the "Maserati R&D Factory Team" banner at the forthcoming 24 Hours of Nürburgring event. Both will be versions of the company's performance coupe the GranSport, a "Trofeo" will be similar to ones entered in the Trofeo Maserati Audemars Piguet Europe, while the "Laboratorio" is specially prepared for the event.

The official Maserati Corse driver Andrea Bertolini, Michael Bartels, Eric Van de Poele and Gianni Giudici (well known gentleman driver with experience in various categories) will share the drive in the GranSport "Laboratorio". In the GranSport "Trofeo" will be ex-F1 driver Jacques Laffite, American journalist Patrick Hong and English journalist Richard Meaden. Along with them will, once again, be Gianni Giudici (at Nürburgring it is possible to race in two cars).

The "Laboratorio" car is based on the GranSport GT3 and features technical evolutions developed by the "Maserati R&D Factory Team", headed by Giorgio Ascanelli. These developments will be put to a very tough test in 24 Hours of Nürburgring.

Very small modifications have been made to the GranSport Trofeo car to prepare it for an endurance race, such as strengthening the suspension and adapting the fuel supply and refuelling systems.

Both GranSports will be equipped with Pirelli tyres. Maserati and Pirelli renewed their partnership agreement for the next two seasons just a few weeks ago.

Claudio Berro, Director of Maserati Corse, stated that: "The setting up of the "R&D Factory Team" is proof that Maserati is trying to test in race conditions the most innovative technologies to be applied on future models."

"The GranSport Laboratorio – commented Maserati's technical director, Giorgio Ascanelli - "was developed using the GranSport GT3 as a base. Some changes have been made to bring it into line with DMSB-24 Hours of Nürburgring regulations. It was created in just a few months thanks to the cutting edge planning system and the vast experience gained in GT competition. The GranSport Trofeo, on the other hand, is very close to the standard model and in such a kind of race it will go through a tough challenge. However, this is what Maserati is looking for."

Maserati scored some memorable long-distance racing victories at the Nürburgring in the '50s and '60s, including wins in the 1,000 kms for Sir Stirling Moss in 1956, (Moss-Behra-Taruffi-Schell Maserati 300S) and 1960 (Moss-Gurney Maserati 'Birdcage' Type 61). Americans Masten Gregory and 'Lucky' Casner won in 1961 driving a CAMORADI Maserati 'Birdcage' Type 61 in the famous US colours of white with a blue stripe.

The 24 Hours of Nürburgring will take place on 17/18 June.

*Text - Classic Driver
Photos - Maserati*

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