

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## Five Questions For: Lamborghini CEO Stephan Winkelmann



**Lamborghini recently announced an Asian version of the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo championship for 2012. With new road cars on the horizon, the raging bull promises even more surprises in the coming year. Classic Driver caught up with CEO Stephan Winkelmann recently in Barcelona to discuss the future of the brand.**

***Mr Winkelmann, company founder Ferruccio Lamborghini believed it was unnecessary for Lamborghini to compete in sports car racing. What has changed since then?***

First of all, for a brand, having a global presence is now a necessity. In addition, there are so many parallels between road-going supercars and GT racing that we see it as very important to bring both the Lamborghini brand in general, and customer models in particular, to the track.

Also, one should remember the potential for road car development that can take place preparing cars for the track. The best example of this is the new Lamborghini Gallardo Super Trofeo Stradale, which benefits from the lightweight techniques used in the Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo series. This will continue in future models.

***How important is carbonfibre as a lightweight material in racing?***

This of course depends on the costs. We are not in Formula 1: but we do have customers in the sport, and we want them to stay. We have done a lot of the initial testing and engineering work for GT cars, which are then further developed by racing teams. Thus, we have about 60 cars across the world in various GT series.



***From 2012, a Lamborghini Blancpain Super Trofeo series will also be held in Asia. How important is this market for Lamborghini?***

As we said six years ago, we want to divide the world into thirds in terms of our presence – America, Europe and Asia. Back then, the cars we sold in Asia were recorded under ‘others’. Today, more than 33 per cent of our production is delivered there. So our commitment to the Asian market has paid off. But we didn’t expect it to happen so quickly. Especially in China, where the market has exploded since 2010 - and there is much potential: taking the numbers in the U.S. as a model, it is likely that the Chinese supercar market will grow fivefold.

***Will Lamborghini cars be adapted to suit these markets - and what role can the Volkswagen Group play?***

What we do not want to do is to regionalise our cars – we intend to develop global products. We are planning a third series, although it’s not yet decided yet in which market segment. But of course it must fit with the brand. Next year you will learn more. In any case, it will need to be in higher production numbers than the Gallardo and the Aventador. When opportunities present themselves within the group, we will certainly be taking them.



***Back to motorsport. Here in Barcelona we have seen you on the racing simulator - and were quite impressed. When will we see you as a driver in the Super Trofeo?***

I lost a very good friend in racing a few years ago, and I have always sworn that none of my employees from the upper level of management will participate in races – so of course this also applies to me. I have, however, acquired a racing license and we also spend a lot of time driving on the test track. Our Chief Test Driver Giorgio Sanna competes in the Super Trofeo but, as I said, Lamborghini employees aren't allowed to compete in racing.

Interview: [Jan Baedeker](#)

Photos: Lamborghini/Nanette Schärf

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