
Audi R18 e-tron quattro diesel-hybrid Le Mans car

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Yet again, motorsport is to pioneer new technology that will later be seen in the cars on our roads. The latest Audi Le Mans car is the world's first LMP1 racer to combine a TDI engine with a hybrid system, while Audi's renowned 'quattro' 4-wheel drive returns to the race track - with a difference.

The new Audi R18 e-tron quattro - which makes its race debut on May 5 in the 6-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps, and will appear again at the Le Mans 24 Hours on June 16/17 - unites two technologies. On the Audi R18 e-tron quattro, kinetic energy is recovered from the front axle during braking, and fed as electric current into a flywheel accumulator before being sent back to the front wheels to help acceleration at speeds above 120km/h. Meanwhile, the 510HP V6 TDI transmits its power to the rear wheels. These two systems working together creates the drive principle behind the new e-tron quattro. The result is already being tested for future use in production cars.



According to Audi's Head of Motorsport, Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich, "TFSI, TDI and quattro are three excellent examples of how motorsport has stimulated production development. A similar tendency is apparent with the e-tron quattro: we test a completely new technology on the race track before it's

introduced to the Audi production line.”

At Le Mans 2012, Audi Sport Team Joest will field two R18 e-tron quattros and two R18 ultra prototypes (an evolution of last year's Le Mans-winning car, and the lightest Le Mans prototype that Audi Sport has ever built). The hybrid cars will be driven by last year's winning trio Marcel Fässler (CH), André Lotterer (D) and Benoît Tréluyer (F), as well as Dindo Capello (I), Tom Kristensen (DK) and Allan McNish (GB), who boast a total of 13 Le Mans wins between them. New signing Loïc Duval (F) starts together with Timo Bernhard (D) and Romain Dumas (F) in an R18 ultra as do Marco Bonanomi (I), Oliver Jarvis (GB) and Mike Rockenfeller (D).



Photos: Audi

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