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Motorsport

Audi A4 DTM makes Le Mans race début

- **DTM races in France on 15 October**
- **Bugatti Circuit hosts DTM's first visit to legendary venue**
- **Audi driver Tom Kristensen is Le Mans record winner**

The Audi "factory" team competes for a second time at Le Mans this year: Following the historical triumph with the R10 TDI diesel sports car at the 24 Hour race in June, the Audi A4 DTM now celebrates its Le Mans début. From 13 to 15 October, the most popular international touring car series makes its first appearance ever at one of the world's most historical circuits.

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Audi has inscribed its name in both the French town's and motorsport's history books with six victories in the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Le Mans is also something very special for Tom Kristensen who is the only Audi driver who can still steal the DTM title from championship leader Bernd Schneider: As seven-time winner of the "24 Heures", the Audi factory driver is the most successful driver in Le Mans history. Furthermore, he won the 1000-kilometre race around the Bugatti Circuit at Le Mans with the Audi R8 at the end of 2003.

The DTM races on the 4.180-kilometre Bugatti circuit configuration. The permanent track, which also hosts the French Motorcycle Grand Prix, uses the start-finish straight of the legendary 24 Hour circuit. The DTM cars also speed through the world-famous Dunlop Curve. The chicane leading to the start and finish line is also a part of both circuit layouts.

Le Mans is like a second home to Tom Kristensen. Every June, tens-of-thousands of Danish fans make the pilgrimage to Le Mans to cheer on their fellow countryman. Since toppling Jacky Ickx from his throne, the Dane and new "King of Le Mans" with seven wins, is also an absolute superstar in France.

Kristensen is the only one of the 20 DTM drivers to have driven a DTM car twice at Le Mans: The Dane presented his Siemens Audi A4 DTM to the spectators just before the start of this year's 24 Hour race in June. Kristensen chauffeured

journalists around the Bugatti Circuit in the Audi A4 DTM during a PR event at the end of September.

After an unfortunate race at Barcelona where Kristensen was the only driver of the latest Audi A4 DTM to leave without scoring points, he still has a slim title chance: The Dane must finish no lower than second if he wants to carry the fight to the finale at Hockenheim on 29 October.

The aim is clear: Audi wants to add a DTM victory to its winning streak at Le Mans and become the first manufacturer this season to win three successive DTM races.

“Das Erste” broadcasts Saturday’s qualifying (14 October) from 2:00 p.m. and the race “live” from Le Mans on Sunday (15 October) from 1:45 p.m.

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Quotes before the race at Le Mans

Dr Wolfgang Ullrich (Head of Audi Motorsport): “We are very pleased that we managed to take the DTM to Le Mans. Audi has a special relationship with this track. However, we race on the Bugatti Circuit, of which only a small part is used during the 24 Hours. It is, however, our aim to add a DTM victory to the many wins we have already achieved at Le Mans.”

Martin Tomczyk

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #4

“One name in particular springs to mind with Le Mans: Tom Kristensen. I don’t actually know the circuit, but it isn’t usually a problem for me. I want to continue where I left off at the last race and score as many points as possible again. It goes without saying that we’ll do everything possible to take the title fight all the way to Hockenheim.”

Mattias Ekström

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Red Bull Audi A4 DTM #5

“Le Mans is Tom Kristensen’s and Audi’s stomping ground. I hope that Tom will show me the quickest line around the circuit. I’m looking forward to the race, know that we have a good car and hope that I will finally have some luck.”

Heinz-Harald Frentzen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Audi A4 DTM #6

“Le Mans is yet another new race. It’ll be interesting since the majority of the drivers don’t know the circuit. Le Mans is not only a historical racing circuit for Audi. It has a big history. I think that the Bugatti Circuit is perfect for a sprint race and an excellent track for the DTM.”

Tom Kristensen

Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline, Siemens Audi A4 DTM #7

“I know the Bugatti Circuit from a race with the Audi R8, but it’s the unique Le Mans feeling with which I am more familiar. The town and entire region supports the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the world’s greatest race. To come to Le Mans with the DTM is something very special. I’m convinced that it’ll be a fantastic weekend.”

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Christian Abt, Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Playboy Audi A4 DTM #12

“Le Mans is a new challenge. The circuit only follows part of the track used during the 24 Hour race and is new to almost everybody. Most of the drivers have to start from zero.”

Pierre Kaffer

Audi Sport Team Phoenix, Castrol Audi A4 DTM #14

“I have very fond memories of Le Mans from 2004 with the R8 sportscar. Le Mans is always worth a visit. I hope that I have a little more luck than in Barcelona and survive the first lap with my car intact.”

Frank Stippler

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, S line Audi A4 DTM #15

“Le Mans is new to the bulk of the DTM drivers. We’ll just have to wait and see who gets to grips with the circuit there. Unfortunately we aren’t driving on the long circuit. Nevertheless, Le Mans has a great reputation. Audi has been very successful there. I hope we will be as well.”

Timo Scheider

Audi Sport Team Rosberg, Gebrauchtwagen:plus Audi A4 DTM #16

“Le Mans is unexplored territory for me. I’m looking forward to the race because it will be a new experience for the team and for me as driver. I also think that the circuit layout could suit our Audi A4.”

Vanina Ickx

Futurecom TME, Original Zubehör Audi A4 DTM #20

“I’m very happy to be coming to France with the DTM. It’s long overdue that this racing series gains more recognition abroad and in France. There are plenty of race fans in France and Le Mans. I’m convinced that they’ll adore the show we put on.”

Nicolas Kiesa

Futurecom TME, Futurecom Audi A4 DTM #19

“I know Le Mans from the 24-hour race. The Bugatti Circuit is, however, new to me. I’ll need five or six laps to familiarise myself with the track. We had a fast car at both Zandvoort and Barcelona, which should also be the case at Le Mans.”

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Hans-Jürgen Abt (Team Director Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline): “Le Mans is a very special circuit for Audi. After six victories in the 24-hour race we’ll attempt to score the first DTM win for Audi at Le Mans. I firmly believe that Le Mans is a ‘home track’ for Audi, which is why we are expected to deliver a top performance.”

Ernst Moser (Team Director Audi Sport Team Phoenix): “Le Mans means a big history and many Audi victories. We’ll try to ride this wave and find, for this circuit that nobody knows, a good basic set-up to enable us to finally score points again.”

Arno Zensen (Team Director Audi Sport Team Rosberg): “At Zandvoort I was satisfied with Timo (Scheider) and at Barcelona with ‘Stippi’. Now I’m looking forward to Le Mans in the hope that we can get both cars in the points there, which is possible and definitely our next target.”

Facts about the DTM race at Le Mans

Every winner in Le Mans

The DTM starts for the first time in Le Mans

Circuit length

4.180 km

Race distance

39 laps = 163.020 km

Points standings DTM 2006

Drivers		Teams	
1 Schneider	62	1 Vodafone/Salzgitter AMG Mercedes	82
2 Kristensen	44	2 Audi Sport Team Abt	68
3 Spengler	43	3 DaimlerChrysler Bank AMG Mercedes	60
4 Tomczyk	33	4 Audi Sport Team Abt Sportsline	54
5 Frentzen	24	5 stern/Easy Rent AMG Mercedes	23
6 Ekström	21	6 Audi Sport Team Rosberg	11
7 Green	20	7 TV-Spielfilm/TrekStor AMG Mercedes	9
8 Häkkinen	17	8 Audi Sport Team Phoenix	5

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www.audi-motorsport.info (accreditation required)