

Communication Motorsport

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That's how a DTM champion says "thank you"

- **Mattias Ekström invites team-mates to Sweden**
- **Audi drivers experienced three days of action on ice and snow**
- **"Thank you" for support in the DTM title fight**

Ingolstadt/Kall – Some people send flowers, others a write a thank you note – but whenever DTM champion Mattias Ekström expresses his appreciation to his team-mates for their support on his way to the title win, this involves some really hard action: for three days, the Audi stars let off steam in Sweden with snowmobiles, Audi RS 4 cars and quads, or they relaxed in the wooden "hot pot" with a cold beer.

The idea for this weekend experience in his native Sweden occurred to Mattias Ekström immediately after the finale of the last season where he secured his second DTM title in some nail-biting duels. "My driver colleagues proved to be true team players all year long and fought for Audi and me. Quite frankly, without them, we wouldn't have clinched this exploit," says Ekström, adding – with a smile, "I kept telling the boys: 'when you help a Swede, this won't go unrewarded'."

Now, Ekström delivered on his promise: for Tom Kristensen, Timo Scheider, Martin Tomczyk and company, he organised an action-packed programme in Kall, a place in the middle of nowhere in Sweden near the Norwegian border. The area was perfect for Ekström's purposes. "There is an abundance of nature for snowmobile or quad excursions, and we also had a frozen lake for quick drifts



with the Audi RS 4 or the S3,” reports the 29-year-old DTM champion. For contrast, the host would invite his team-mates for a refreshing dip in the one-degree-cold fjord waters in the morning. In the evening he would serve cans of chilled Swedish beer while his guests relaxed in the wooden “hot pot” discussing the activities of the day.

“Actually, we’d been wanting to party a bit in the nearest town, but then, all of us seemed to be a little too tired for some reason,” grins Ekström. Instead, the squad enjoyed Swedish specialities like fillet of venison with cranberries and some hours of “chilling out” away from the hustle and bustle of the race track. “We had some great days that forged even closer ties between us,” says Timo Scheider, who put himself at Ekström’s service more than once during the last season. “Although being a team player is natural for us as members of the Audi family, Mattias’s splendid idea clearly underlines that team-work is recognised and appreciated in our squad. In our team, everyone can rely on everyone else to back them up.”

The Audi drivers wouldn’t mind at all if the idea of a “thank you weekend” hosted by the champion were to become a nice tradition. Denmark, Rosenheim in Bavaria, France or Switzerland – all of these locations are possible venues, but the drivers have not yet agreed which one it will be. After all, every one of them would love to be the hosting champion about the same time next year ...

Photographs and information can be obtained at www.audi-motorsport.info