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Motorsport

USA premiere for Audi R10 in Los Angeles

- **Presentation at Los Angeles Auto Show**
- **Race debut in the USA on 18 March**
- **Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen confirmed as driver**

The Audi R10 celebrated its premiere in the USA two-and-a-half months before its race debut in Sebring (Florida) on 18 March. The first sportscar in history with a diesel power unit, which aims for overall victory at the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans, was one of the attractions during the “Audi Designers’ Tuesday”. Head of Audi Motorsport Dr Wolfgang Ullrich and Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen unveiled the R10, which is powered by a 650 hp V12 TDI-engine, to the prominent people gathered among the 350 guests invited before the opening of the Los Angeles Motor Show.

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“Audi tries to do something with the R10 which no other manufacturer has attempted in motorsport,” explained Dr Ullrich during an interview with presenter Désriée Nosbusch. “The diesel project is the greatest challenge ever to have been given to Audi Sport.”

Tom Kristensen, who was recently voted as “Sports Personality of the Year” in his homeland Denmark for the second time, is the first of a total of six drivers, who will compete in Sebring and Le Mans with the Audi R10, to be confirmed. The 38-year old celebrated his seventh victory in the 24 Hours of Le Mans in June 2005 and is, as a result, the most successful Le Mans driver in its history.

“It was very important for us to be able to continue this long and successful partnership, particularly in such a demanding project,” said Dr Ullrich. “The R10 project is a very special challenge for which the best drivers are required – and Tom is without a shadow of a doubt one of the world’s best.”

The Dane has been driving for Audi since the 2000 season. He celebrated five of his seven Le Mans victories at the wheel of the R10 predecessor, the R8. In 2002 Kristensen won the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) with the R8. Furthermore,

since the beginning of the 2004 season, the Dane has been competing for Audi in the DTM, in which he finished third overall in 2005.

“I’m absolutely delighted to be a part of this fantastic team again,” explained Tom Kristensen in Los Angeles. “We won everything there was to win with the R8. This era has come to a close. Now it’s a question of turning the new R10 into a winning car. Because we are dealing with a completely new vehicle concept, everybody in the team must give their maximum. As a racing driver you can’t wish for anything better than to be involved in such a project from the very beginning.”

The R10 was flown back to Germany immediately after the presentation at the Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. An intensive test programme is scheduled before the first race at Sebring.

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