



BMW Motorsport

**Back in the cockpit: Alessandro Zanardi to compete in his first race in the BMW M6 GT3 in Mugello.**

Munich (DE), 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The mission Rio de Janeiro is completed, and now it is time for Alessandro Zanardi (IT) to return to the race cockpit. From 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October, the BMW works driver and BMW Brand Ambassador will compete in the season finale of the 2016 Italian GT Championship in Mugello (IT). Zanardi will race a BMW M6 GT3 entered by BMW Team Italia and ROAL Motorsport and specially modified by BMW Motorsport.

Zanardi's last race to date was the "Spa 24 Hours" (BE) in July 2015, when he shared the cockpit of a BMW Z4 GT3 with Timo Glock (DE) and Bruno Spengler (CA). After that race, the Italian fully focussed on preparing for his para-cycling competitions in Rio de Janeiro (BR). With great success: just two weeks ago, in the middle of September, Zanardi won two gold medals and one silver medal.

Now, Zanardi, BMW Motorsport and ROAL Motorsport are reunited on the racetrack – with another special project. It will be the first time that Zanardi will race the BMW M6 GT3, the successor to the BMW Z4 GT3, that has been in action on racetracks worldwide since the beginning of this season. BMW Motorsport has many years of experience in modifying BMW race cars for Zanardi's special needs, and currently the engineers are working on adapting a BMW M6 GT3, which will be run in Mugello by ROAL Motorsport. Zanardi's participation in the Italian GT Championship finale will be a triple anniversary celebration: just one week after this, on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, the BMW works driver will celebrate his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. In addition, BMW Italy is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of BMW.

"It is great to see Alex back in the cockpit after he had fully focused on para-cycling for one year," said BMW Motorsport Director Jens Marquardt. "We followed his races in Rio de Janeiro full of excitement – and I have to say that, once more, he proved what an outstanding athlete he is. Alex tackled his mission Rio de Janeiro with determination, passion and professionalism, and this commitment was rewarded with two gold and one silver medal. We really have to say: hats off! But now we are happy to have Alex back in our BMW racing family and in a BMW race car. It is a first for him to compete in our new BMW M6 GT3, and I am sure he will really enjoy taking it onto the track. Based on the experiences of all these years working with Alex, our engineers developed the special modifications for the BMW M6 GT3. We are looking forward to see him racing in Mugello – when celebrating his and BMW's special birthdays."

"I always say that my life is a never ending privilege of being able to do so many things, and this season is a classic example," said Zanardi. "Preparing for Rio de Janeiro, approaching my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, not only being able to run competitively, but winning what I won is exceptional. But on top of this I will once more enjoy the privilege of indulging in my primary passion, being behind the wheel of a great race car. Since I saw the beautiful BMW M6 GT3 in the workshop in Munich I have dreamt about driving it. And now BMW is granting me the possibility to do so on one of my favourite circuits, Mugello. Therefore, thank you to everyone in Munich who made themselves available to work on this project, thank you to BMW Italy for thinking about this opportunity and I also want to thank all the people in the Italian GT Championship, who are welcoming me into their field. So I am very, very happy and I can't wait to grab the steering wheel and drive to the best of my abilities."

Zanardi will test the modified BMW M6 GT3 together with ROAL Motorsport and BMW Motorsport on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> October in Mugello.



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