



**TWO MEN
WITH THE
SAME
MISSION**

WIN!



Q&A MARO ENGEL & EDOARDO MORTARA
FIA GT WORLD CUP RACERS

Two men with the same mission – Win!

RENATO MARQUES

AFTER several successful campaigns in previous editions, German Maro Engle and Swiss national Edoardo Mortara gear up once more for this year's Macau FIA GT World Cup with one thing on their minds, to regain the title won in 2015 and 2017, respectively.

To learn more of their ambitions and feelings about the Macau racing event, the Times spoke with the two Mercedes-AMG Team racers in an exclusive interview ahead of this year's event.

Macau Daily Times (MDT) - How long have you been racing in Macau?

Maro Engel (ME) - My first race here was in 2006 during the Formula 3 Grand Prix. This year will be my eighth time racing in Macau and my seventh time in the GT race.

Edoardo Mortara (EM) - My first race in Macau was in 2007, the Formula 3 Grand Prix. Since then, I have been racing here every year, so this year will be my 13th start.

MDT - How did the Macau GP impact your racing career?

ME - Winning the Macau GT Cup and the FIA GT World Cup was for sure one of the

highlights of my career so far.

The victories in 2014 and 2015 were unforgettable moments for me. But I also like to think back to some other strong performances with the podiums in 2016, 2017 and 2018. In the end, it has always been a very special race for me.

EM - The Macau GP was very important for my career. Winning six times on one of the toughest racetracks around the world improved my reputation as a racing driver and it opened many doors for me.

Nowadays, the Macau GP is still a very important moment for me. If it wasn't that important for me, I would have stopped racing here four or five years ago.

MDT - Mercedes has been one of the most successful cars in the FIA GT World Cup with several victories and podiums achieved. Last year BMW took the title, what can you do to take it back this year?

ME - We are a hundred percent motivated to take back the title. I believe we have all the ingredients to do that.

The Mercedes-AMG GT3 is a very strong car, and [we also have] strong teams backing us, in my case the GruppeM Team.

Personally, I feel ready. The

race has been very close for the last three years, and I will give it everything to take back the title, that's the aim.

EM - I think that we have a competitive car, a very good line-up and I hope that we can go for the overall victory. But this doesn't depend only on the driver. We need good teamwork and (of course) a bit of luck.

MDT - What are the sections of the Guia Circuit that you like the most?

ME - To be honest, the whole racetrack is phenomenal. There is no other place like this in the world. It's unique. It just feels incredible to drive on this track, especially with a car like the Mercedes-AMG GT3.

For sure, the fast section at the bottom is amazing, but I also really enjoy the top of the mountain with the flowing corners, which are tight together and then the following section to the Solitude Esses - it is also very special.

EM - The section that I like the most is the mountain part. There are a lot of medium-speed corners where you have to drive very precisely and accurately. As a driver, you can make the difference in this section, especially if you feel confident with the car. I've always been quite good there.

MDT - Who is going to win in Macau this year?

ME - Hopefully me. (laughs).

EM - If I knew it [in advance], I would place a bet on it (smile). I hope that it will be me. But it will be a tough competition.

If you take a look at the entry list, you see that there are a lot of very good drivers competing in Macau this year. Let's see.

MDT - Having raced in Macau for some years and with several visits, what part of the city attracts you the most and why?

ME - It is incredible to see how Macau has developed over the years since I started racing here for the first time, especially how Taipa has developed. It's an area that I enjoy visiting. There are lots of great dining opportunities, a lot of new hotels and restaurants.

But I also really like the old-traditional area of Macau [historical center] by the Ruins of Saint Paul's. It's a special feeling to go there and I try to pay a visit there every year whenever I'm in Macau.

EM - Normally, you don't have much time during the race weekend to visit many parts of the city.

I have been to the old-traditional part, but also the

new areas. I enjoyed both.

There are some good restaurants and places to relax after the race.

MDT - From all the tracks you ever raced in, which one is your favorite?

ME - Macau is definitely on the top of that list. But there are two other tracks in the world that I would rate equally: the legendary Nurburgring-Nordschleife, which is also an incredible track and Australia's Bathurst. Together with Macau, these three tracks are by far the best in the world for me. I love racing on them.

EM - My favorite track is Macau [Guia Circuit]. As a racing driver, you normally intend to pick the one where you are the most competitive and Macau is the one where I am the most competitive. Additionally, it is also the track where you have the most fun. The track is very challenging and it's one of the few tracks in the world where you can make a difference as a driver if you feel confident.

It's something special.

The fifth FIA GT World Cup begins on November 14 at 12:35 pm for the first free practice session with the 18-lap race scheduled for November 17 at around the same time.

RENATO MARQUES

WITH only two events to be raced this year, the FIA World Touring Car Cup (WTCR) Championship arrives in Macau for its final stop before the season finale is adjourned to Malaysia's Sepang Circuit in mid-December.

Replaced by Malaysia this year as the grand finale of the worldwide racing championship, Macau will still have an important role in defining this year's champion with only two events to go. The standings show a gap of just six points between the first placed Esteban Guerrieri and the first runner-up, Norbert Michelisz.

But that is not all. In

a championship that hosts three races for each event and with so many points to be played and distributed, virtually anyone placed in the Top15 at the moment can dream of being the 2019 Champion of this series.

Those placed higher in the table, besides those previously mentioned, are names such as Thed Björk, Yvan Muller, Mikel Azcona, Nestor Girolami and reigning champion Gabriele Tarquini.

In this sense, the Guia race can play an important role in these two things: either to help to definitely split the field, narrowing the gap between those fighting for the title in Malaysia or, make the championship more

competitive by adding names to the title contenders.

In both cases, this will be a race series that any racing fan will not want to miss.

As we have seen before on many occasions Macau can be ruthless to any small driving mistake or mechanical failure. Races here are basically time attack events where instead of the usual rubbing of side mirrors and door-to-door races we see in other circuits, here we have rubbing stone-walls and the losing of side mirrors on the Armco barriers.

A LINE-UP FULL OF GUIA EXPERTS

If we want to get a better forecast on

Will Macau define the 2019?

RENATO MARQUES



Tiago Monteiro





Maro Engel



Edoardo Mortara

2019 WTCR Champion?



E. Guerrieri



Ted Bjork



Norbert Michelisz



Yvan Muller

who could make a difference in the races, searching for the “Guia Circuit expert drivers,” is a useless task especially when it comes to WTCR as all the top drivers have extensive experience on the circuit and almost all of them have won it at least once.

Still, we can anticipate that some names who have, for various reasons, been pushed further down in the standings table will have a little more spotlight in Macau. Among these, we certainly note the return of the Portuguese Tiago Monteiro after a very long and complex accident recovery and, of course, the expert of the experts in Macau, British racer Rob

Huff, currently placing 12th position in the championship but to whom a victory in Macau could represent a major leap up the standings.

Huff is the man who holds the record for the most victories on the Guia Circuit (nine) and he will be making use of all his experience to boost his championship position while setting another record-breaking result for the history books.

SIX WILDCARDS, ONLY ONE MACAU RACER

As on previous occasions, the Guia race is also a stage for local and regional racers to try to show their skills racing side-by-side with the best in this

category.

This year is no exception and the WTCR line-up grows significantly to a total of 32-cars on track with the presence of six wildcard racers.

Contrary to other editions, the only representative of Macau in this race will be Billy Lo, who made his WTCR debut last year.

Lo will be joined by Hong Kong-based drivers James Tang, Kwai Wah Wong, Arthur Law and Terence Tse as wildcard racers nominated by the Automobile General Association Macao-China.

Hong Kong's Jim Ka To also joins this group after participating in the previous racing event at Japan's Suzuka Circuit last month.

RENATO MARQUES

THE 53rd Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix has yet to begin but there have been some important names dropping out of the competition at the last-minute.

First, British rider Danny Webb, who finished fourth place last year, announced his withdrawal from the race after parting ways with his team. A day later, all-time favorite Martin Jessop, third place finisher last year and six times podium finisher in the Guia Race, said that he would not return to the Macau race.

Although some important names will not be participating, the field still looks strong with the return of 2013 winner Ian Hutchinson who is making his comeback after being away from the race for a few years due to several severe injuries.

The 16-time Isle of Man TT winner returns aboard a BMW from Team Milwaukee with SMT, and as always, would be a name to consider among the front-runners.

Returning to the track and expected to take the lead are three-time race winner Peter Hickman and eight-time winner Michael Rutter.

After a fantastic year with so many achievements, Hickman

HICKMAN AIMING TO EQUAL EASTON'S FOUR WINS

RENATO MARQUES



aims to equal Stuart Easton's score of four wins in Macau, moving into the Legends Hall of Fame together with names such as Rutter and Ron Haslam.

Aiming to expand his incomparable record, the eight-time

winner will bring the very special two-wheel machine Honda RC213V to Macau for the second consecutive year.

As last year, Hickman will be riding a Smiths-prepared BMW, which has brought him victories

at both the Isle of Man TT and North West 200 this year, as well as placing him sixth overall in the British Superbike Championship.

Another top contender looking for a chance to get to the front to reach a podium is Horst Saiger,

who will be returning to Macau for the 12th time in a Yamaha R1.

With the same aim in mind, another veteran of Macau, Gary Johnson, racing consistently at the top, will be making his attempt in Macau on a BMW HP4 Carbon machine, hoping to be even faster than last year, when he was fifth overall.

Eyes are also on another Johnson, this time David. The Australian will be filling the seat left by Jessop on the PBM Ducati and pairing with the experience of his teammate John McGuinness aiming to reach further ahead than the seventh position last year.

Returning after last year's scary debut will also be the Spaniard Raul Torras, fully recovered; Torras hopes to bring his Kawasaki ZX10-RR for a lot more laps this year, hoping to keep the flames going from the exhaust pipe.

With all these participants, the Motorcycle GP has the hallmarks of being a very interesting race and will remain as a program highlight for many more good years.

AD

NOVEMBER 14 - 17

14th of November (Thursday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
7:30 ~ 8:30 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 53rd Edition - Free Practice
9:00 ~ 9:45 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR - Free Practice 1
10:05 ~ 10:45 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 1
11:00 ~ 11:30 Suncity Group Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Free Practice
11:45 ~ 12:15 FOOD4U Macau Touring Car Cup - Free Practice
12:35 ~ 13:05 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 1
13:40 ~ 14:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR - Free Practice 2
14:30 ~ 15:10 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 1
16:05 ~ 16:50 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 53rd Edition - Qualifying
18:00 ~ ** Circuit Opened

16th of November (Saturday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
7:10 ~ 7:50 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
8:00 ~ 8:40 Special Event
9:00 ~ 10:00 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualification Race - 10 laps
10:25 ~ 11:25 FOOD4U Macau Touring Car Cup - 12 laps
11:50 ~ 12:10 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 53rd Edition - Warm Up
13:05 ~ 14:05 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualification Race - 12 laps
14:30 ~ 15:20 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR Race 1 - 8 laps
15:55 ~ 16:55 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 53rd Edition - 12 laps
18:00 ~ ** Circuit Opened

15th of November (Friday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
7:30 ~ 8:15 Suncity Group Macau Motorcycle Grand Prix - 53rd Edition - Qualifying
8:50 ~ 9:30 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR - Qualifying
9:50 ~ 10:20 Suncity Group Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Qualifying
10:40 ~ 11:10 FOOD4U Macau Touring Car Cup - Qualifying
11:30 ~ 12:10 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Free Practice 2
12:30 ~ 13:00 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Free Practice 2
13:35 ~ 14:50 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR - Q1, Q2, Q3
15:10 ~ 15:50 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - Qualifying 2
16:10 ~ 16:40 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - Qualifying
18:30 ~ ** Circuit Opened

17th of November (Sunday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
7:10 ~ 7:50 Safety, Rescue and Extrication Cars - Testing laps
8:20 ~ 9:10 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR Race 2 - 8 laps
9:35 ~ 10:35 Suncity Group Greater Bay Area GT Cup - 12 laps
11:00 ~ 12:00 Suncity Group Macau Guia Race - FIA WTCR Race 3 - 11 laps
12:25 ~ 13:40 SJM Macau GT Cup - FIA GT World Cup - 18 laps
14:00 ~ 14:35 Special Event
15:10 ~ 15:20 Lion Dance
15:30 ~ 16:30 Suncity Group Formula 3 Macau Grand Prix - FIA F3 World Cup - 15 laps
18:00 ~ ** Circuit Opened