

**66**  
GRAND  
PRIX  
MACAU



**ROOKIE  
VERSCHOOR  
SURPRISES AND  
WINS IN MACAU**



# GT WORLD CUP: MARCIELLO REGAINS TITLE FOR MERCEDES

RENATO MARQUES

ITALIAN racer Raffaele Marciello claimed victory in the FIA GT World Cup, one of the main events of the 66th Macau Grand Prix. Marciello fought hard with the Porsches Laurens Vanthoor and Earl Bamber during the entire race to retrieve the title for Mercedes-AMG they had lost last year to BMW.

Starting from the pole position, Marciello made a clean start, as Vanthoor was faster off the line to steal the second position from his ROWE Racing teammate Bamber.

From then on, Vanthoor tried to pass Marciello on several occasions but the Italian held his position firmly and even created some gap in the lead.

A safety car intervened after sixth-placed Kevin Estre hit the wall at high speed at the Mandarin's bend, and brought everyone back into play.

Estre's contact left his Porsche 911 GT3 R severely damaged, which stopped on track a few meters ahead, losing several parts in between the location of impact and the



stopping location.

After the car was successfully removed, the thrill restarted with the reigning champion Augusto Farfus in the BMW M6 taking the opportunity to leap forward, passing Bamber and moving into the third position on the run to Lisboa.

Bamber responded instantly and with Vanthoor running slightly wide at Lisboa and holding Farfus in the process, Bamber went from fourth to second in a

flash, starting to put pressure on the race leader Marciello.

Lapping almost six-tenths of a second faster than Marciello and running virtually glued to him, Bamber eventually made a mistake at the Police bend, running a little too wide and hitting the barrier slightly, losing a wing mirror and some time in the process.

Until the end of the race, the Italian kept holding his position with all his means under pres-

sure from Bamber who, on the last lap, slightly clipped the back of Marciello's car on the slow turn of the hairpin. Luckily for Marciello, the contact was not enough to take him off his rails and he made it to the checkered flag first. With the finish line on sight, Bamber purposely slowed down to let Vanthoor pass and take the second position at the flag in a gentlemen's agreement they admitted to having had before to contribute to the team's

attempt on title, playing two against one on Marciello.

The strategy did make Marciello pull out all his weapons but in the end, he still got to be the final race winner.

After the podium ceremony, Marciello said, "I would like to thank GruppeM Racing for the amazing car and also Mercedes AMG. Porsche has been really close the whole weekend so I am really happy that we finally won! I have always been really close to winning this race from Formula 3 when I was on pole and last year in GT, but Macau is always Macau and it's really special to make it all perfect and finally I did. It is just an amazing feeling – to win this, it also means I can be regarded as one of the best!"

Acknowledging the team's strategy Vanthoor explained, "Pre-race we had a meeting and we decided a Porsche has to win and it doesn't matter which one. I got a better start than Earl [Bamber] and I was following Raffaele in the beginning. I tried to get by at the start, and again at the restart. We had really good pace but at one point I made a mistake and we decided as well we would let Earl [Bamber] give it a try. I know him very well, he's been my teammate all year and if there is one guy that can make a gap – it's him! So it was worth giving him a try too but it wasn't our day."



## Tse wins first edition of GBA GT4 Cup

RENATO MARQUES

MACAU'S Kevin Tse took a brilliant pole-to-flag win at yesterday's season finale of the first Greater Bay Area (GBA) GT Cup for GT4 specifications cars.

Tse took advantage of his leading position granted by the best time in the qualifying session and never let it go over the 12-lap race.

Although the Macau driver never lost his leading position, he was

under constant pressure from his teammate, Hong Kong's Philip Kadoorie, who drove a Mercedes-AMG from Team TRC.

Finishing third was one of the two Taiwanese drivers in this category, Chang Wei Chung in an Aston Martin Vantage, although Chang never manage to get too close from the Mercedes-AMG, finishing almost two seconds away from Tse.

Chang's battle was, in fact, to secure his third position, as following

closely and waiting for the chance to overtake him was Lei Kit Meng in the Ginetta G55.

Closing the top 5 of this race was another Macau racer, Chan Hei in a BMW M4 who also finished very close to Lei. This trio made for what was possibly the most interesting battle of a race that was overall an interesting and positive addition to the Grand Prix program, replacing the previous single-brand race that was significantly less interesting to follow.

## MACAU TOURING CAR: PAUL POON'S EIGHTH WIN

RENATO MARQUES

HONG Kong's Paul Poon took his eighth Macau-win in a pole-to-flag victory on Saturday.

In a race with a few incidents and laps behind the safety car, Poon and fellow Hong Kong driver Alexander Fung made it a 1-2 finish for Hong Kong and the Suncity Racing Team, taking their Peugeot RCZ to the first and second place of the podium.

Crossing the line behind them in the same racing class and in the third position was Macau driver Chan Weng Tong in a Chevrolet Cruze.

In the other class races which were held concurrently - the over 1950cc - the winner was Macanese Filipe Souza in an Audi RS3 TCR, followed by Kevin Leong and Luciano Castilho Lameiras, both in the Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution 9.



It was a race where drivers were in positions granted in the qualifying session. Trying to avoid unnecessary contacts that could jeopardize their race, Poon was only briefly challenged by his teammate Fung before he took advantage of the open track to gain a two-second advantage.

After four laps behind the safety car, de Souza attempted to pass Fung but without success.

After another safety car and with only two laps remaining, de Souza tried to pass Fung one more time but was unsuccessful.

There was no more time to race as a new safety car was deployed after Lui Man Kit stopped his Mini Cooper S at Moorish Hill on the last lap, leading to a slow speed crossing the line and an easy win for Poon, who took both the overall and the 1.6T class wins.

RENATO MARQUES

**Y**OUNG Dutchman Richard Verschoor attained an outstanding victory at the 66th Macau Grand Prix, winning the most-wanted race of the weekend and becoming the new FIA F3 World Cup champion.

In an outstanding performance, Verschoor took the opportunity of a race restart after a safety car period to pass the pole-sitter Juri Vips, who had made a clean getaway from the line and was keeping the race at his pace until that moment.

Vips was also benefiting from the misfortune of the 2019 FIA Formula 3 Champion, Robert Shwartzman, who started poorly and was involved in the middle of the pack into Lisboa in the first run.

The front-row starter, Shwartzman, got a touch in his right front wing with Christian Lundgaard who came out from third in the grid and immediately tried to put pressure on Shwartzman.

Although the encounter was not that strong, it immediately caused a tire puncture and failure, ending the Russian's race right at the Lisboa buffer zone on the opening lap.

Starting from fourth on the grid, Verschoor took advantage of the moment between Shwartzman and Lundgaard to gain two places by keeping an inside line from Mandarin bend and into Lisboa.

Vips was leading and Verschoor was following him as closely as he could, until Ferdinand



## F3: Rookie Verschoor surprises and wins in Macau

Habsburg hit the barriers hard with his car through the Solitude Esses area, requiring the immediate deployment of the safety car.

At the restart, Verschoor saw a chance that he could not miss and launched an immediate and successful attack on the Estonian, under braking into the Lisboa bend with five laps (out of 15) to go.

Meanwhile, American driver Logan Sargeant also managed to pass Lundgaard to take third place overall.

From there on and until the checkered flag, Verschoor tried to manage Vips pressure since

he was very close and running faster than him, although the time and distance were never close enough to allow Vips to attempt the overtake.

After the front trio came Lundgaard, crossing the line in fourth, ahead of Alessio Lorandi who closed the top 5.

Callum Hogg, Liam Lawson, Marcus Armstrong, David Beckmann, and Frederick Vesti, completed the top 10.

At the end of the race and after the podium ceremony Verschoor said, "To be honest, I am not believing the feeling yet! It hasn't sunk in that I have just won the Macau Grand

Prix! It was a really busy race and I was under a lot of pressure. I had to concentrate so much towards the end, and I am still recovering a bit. Both the team and myself are maybe not as experienced yet or consistently at the same level as some of the other guys, so this is a huge result for the team, myself and everyone involved. I would like to thank everyone at MP Motorsport." He further expressed his desire to return to Macau, a circuit that he said he had immediately fallen in love with.

At the same opportunity, Vips said, "I am feeling a little

disappointed because I feel that I have had the perfect weekend – minus the safety car restart. I don't really know what happened there. I knew I had something on my tires, which was maybe some debris. I felt, going into the last two corners, my tires were far from ready and Richard got close to me and passed me. I kept Richard under pressure during the middle sector, but in the last two corners, the balance difference was too big to get a good exit and take advantage of the DRS [Drag Reduction System that allows cars to go faster on overtake situations]."

## WTCR: Muller gets double win in Macau

RENATO MARQUES

**F**RENCHMAN Yvan Muller scored two wins out of the three races this weekend in Macau for Cyan Racing - Lynk & Co.

With the wins, Muller bagged significant points which will make a four-sided battle for the final races and may be a title decider at the season finale, taking place at Malaysia's Sepang International Circuit next month.

Also battling for the title will be Hyundai's Norbert Michelisz, Honda's Esteban Guerrieri and Lynk & Co's Thed Björk.

With the results obtained in the Macau round, the quartet is now separated by a maximum of 28 points.

Muller won the first two



races of the weekend. On Saturday, he beat Michelisz and Kevin Ceccon in the Alfa Romeo, who placed second and third respectively. On Sunday morning, he beat teammate Björk, who was first runner-up, and Ceccon who had two third places.

The three-time world champion, veteran racer Andy Priaulx, scored his first WTCR – FIA World Touring Car Cup win in Macau, after defeating fellow Briton Rob Huff in a tense and unpredictable race.

Priaulx had a strong

start and overtook pole-sitter Huff, taking the lead off the line and managing to hold the quartet behind him for all 11 laps, securing his first WTCR race victory.

In the process, Huff missed the chance to achieve his 10th Macau

race win.

After the race, Huff commented on the start saying, "It was a normal start – I've always struggled to get the [Volkswagen] Golf off the line. It is what it is. We were down on the straights as always. But it was a good race and to be beaten by Andy, I don't mind really. It's always enjoyable to race with him."

As the season finale is approaching, the title race has tightened up further as points leader Michelisz finished 12th position while his closest rival Guerrieri closed the race two places ahead in 10th. Muller, who had won the first two races, closed the day in the sixth position.

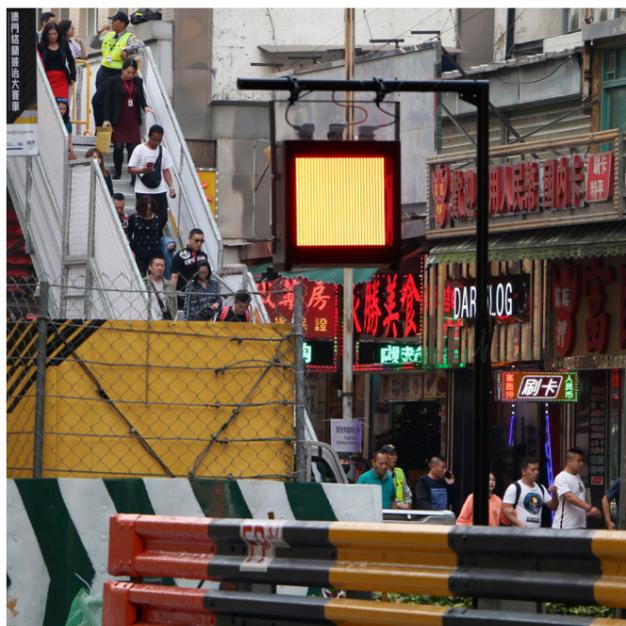
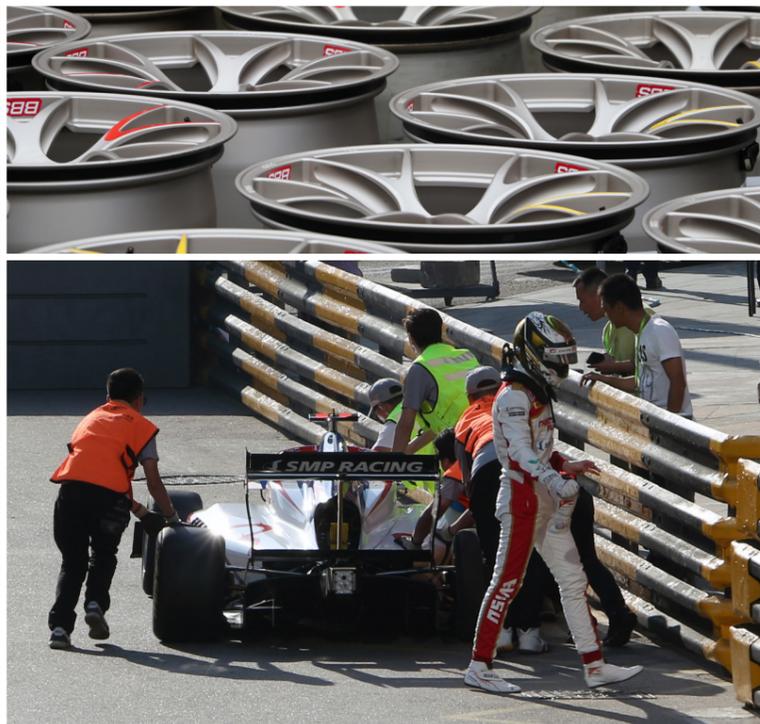
Closing the podium of the final race of the day was another Frenchman, Jean-Karl Vernay in the Audi RS 3 LMS who tried to take advantage of the

grid positioning to push himself to the front as much as possible, pressuring Huff lap after lap on the braking area at the Lisboa bend.

At the end of the race, Priaulx recalled his past victories and luck which he had always received from Macau, dedicating the victory to his daughter Daniella.

"I still have my Buddha with me in my wash bag from 2005. I can't wear it anymore for the races because you are not allowed to wear necklaces or anything, but today I have two lucky charms: I have the Buddha with me and it's my daughter's 16th birthday. Every year I miss her birthday. She was born when I was racing in Macau, she came a month early and today's her 16th birthday, so that was a special win for her," Priaulx said.

# 66th Macau Grand Prix



## WINNERS

**FIA F3 WORLD CUP**  
Richard Verschoor (NLD)

**FIA WORLD GT CUP**  
Raffaele Marciello (ITA)

**FIA WTCR**  
Race 1: Yvan Muller (FRA)  
Race 2: Yvan Muller (FRA)  
Race 3: Andy Priaulx (GBR)

**MOTORCYCLE GP**  
Michael Rutter (GBR)

**GREATER BAY AREA GT CUP**  
Kevin Tse (MAC)

**MACAU TOURING CAR CUP**  
Paul Poon (HKG)

## SPECTATORS:

Official figures: 86,000 (14-17/11)

