

68

GRAND PRIX MACAU

Times

SUPPLEMENT

FRI 19.11.2021



MACAU GT CUP HOME-GROWN TALENT



RENATO MARQUES

RENATO MARQUES

GUIA RACE: TCR ASIA CHAMPION TO BE CROWNED IN MACAU

RENATO MARQUES

THIS year, for its milestone 50th edition, the Guia Race will serve as the season finale of the TCR Asia championship.

With most of the championship secondary positions already settled, the Macau race will decide who is crowned champion this year.

In contention for the title are two teammates from Shell Teamwork Motorsport Lynk & Co, Zhang Zhendong and Ma Qinghua.

Zhang leads the driver's classification with a total of 213 points, an advantage of 22 points over Ma. With 50 points on the table in Macau, the final win could go to any of the drivers.

Pressure is certainly on Ma's camp, as he is forced to risk everything on the first of the two rounds in the streets of Macau. He needs to both win and count on a mistake from Zhang to take the championship decision for the final 12-lap race on Sunday November 21 — otherwise Zhang will

be crowned after the Saturday's eight-lap Race 1.

The highly popular Guia Race is, together with the Macau Touring Car Cup, one of the races that features a large number of contestants listed to start, this time with 30.

Among them are some very experienced Guia racers, who could also complicate the math for Zhang and Ma, — especially Hong Kong's Sunny Wong. Like the first two, Wong will be at the wheel of a Lynk & Co 03.

However, let us not forget that there are other big names on the grid such as Andy Yan, three-time Chinese Touring Car champion and winner of the 2017 TCR China. Yan will be racing in a Honda Civic Type R from Team TRC.

Lots of eyes will also be on Hong Kong driver Lo Sze Ho. Lo finished third last year ahead of Macau's Filipe Souza, and proved to be very competitive with his fast pace around the Guia circuit.

This year Lo enters with nothing less than Hyun-

dai i30 N signed in by the Z-Challenger Racing Team. No one could forget the success of this racing car winning the World Touring Car Cup drivers' championship at the Italian Gabriele Tarquini in 2018, then at the Macau season finale of WTCR, and then onto the Hungarian Norbert Michelisz the following year.

And let's not discount the expertise of local driver Souza in his Audi RS3 LMS! He has already proven that he will be ready to take advantage of any mistakes, and any opportunities to climb to the top.

In a circuit like Macau, where overtaking is almost impossible except when braking into Lisboa Bend, the 25-minute qualifying session that will take place between 3:10 p.m. and 3:35 p.m. on Friday will be decisive in determining the outcome of this race. Whoever manages to be the fastest on one lap around the track on the very first day will have a significant advantage in this year's championship.

OFF-TRACK

GP Museum is back after four years of renovation

RENATO MARQUES

HOME of the Macau Grand Prix, the fully revamped Macau Grand Prix Museum was officially inaugurated on June 1.

This will be the first time that the museum's doors will be open to the public during the actual Grand Prix since 2016.

The museum temporarily closed to undergo renovation on July 1, 2017. It reopened to public visits, despite some works still being outstanding, in June this year, four years after the closure.

During the opening ceremony, the director of the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO), Maria Helena

de Senna Fernandes, highlighted the fact that the new GP Museum is not just an ordinary museum, but one that merges and integrates history, sports, science, technology, culture, and creativity under the same roof, in addition to providing a physical environment designed to facilitate access for visitors with special needs.

Fernandes noted that after the revamp, the museum area is now six times larger than before and can deliver an inclusive experience combining educational entertainment, leisure, and learning, also highlighting its qualities for "tourism plus sports synergy."

In the museum, vi-

sitors can re-live the history of the event and see some of the cars and bikes that were part of the Grand Prix's almost seven decades.

Taking up four levels, the experience starts at the basement level dedicated mostly to the Guia Race and the Macau GT Cup, alongside a screening room.

Moving up, visitors can experience the circuit of Guia and the gift shop located on the ground floor.

On the first floor, a walk-through history awaits with the early days of the GP and a special section fully dedicated to the "Queen" of Macau races, the Formula 3 (F3).

However, talking

about F3 is impossible without mentioning the first winner of this race back in 1983, the Brazilian Ayrton Senna da Senna, to whom the museum now dedicates a new mural artwork by Portuguese artist Vhils.

The second and last floor, is where the motorcycles reign, from historic winners to the centerpiece of the exhibition; a completely deconstructed motorcycle which allows visitors to understand the complexity of all its parts.

On the final floor, visitors can also find a Moto Virtual Reality Race Experience as well as a trophy showcase.

Currently screening at the basement level screening-room is the

short film "The Legend of the Macau Grand Prix" which was officially selected as one of six nominees in the "Best Event Film" category at the International Motor Film Awards last year.

Directed by local filmmaker Sérgio Basto Perez, the film is a journey through the history of the Macau Grand Prix event, guided by the voices of drivers and riders from different generations.

Screenings take place twice daily from Monday to Friday (except Tuesday) at noon and 4 p.m. The screening frequency will be increased on the weekends to four daily screenings — at 11 a.m., noon, 4 p.m., and 5 p.m.

RENATO MARQUES



RENATO MARQUES

Macau GT Cup: Continuing the legacy with home-grown talent

SINCE its beginning in 2008, the Macau GT Cup rapidly became one of the most iconic races in the Macau Grand Prix program. Boosted by the promotion from the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) to World GT Cup in 2015, the event gained huge momentum, attracting the world's best GT racers and car manufacturers.

Since 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Macau GT Cup took a few steps back in its development. While waiting for better times to return, it supported itself through home-grown talent, which the event helped to create and nurture.

The Macau race was undoubtedly responsible for the growth of several GT Championships, namely the GT World Challenge Asia and China GT Championship, which can now support the Macau event in difficult times.

With that said, it is now time for drivers and teams across China to shine in one of the best racing stages of all Asia, the Guia circuit.

Last year, Chinese driver Ye Hongli put in an impressive performance to claim the win. Although Ye's pace was truly impressive, the Toro Racing driver also found unexpected help from a penalty handed by the Stewards to one of the most experienced racers in GT in Guia circuit, Hong

Kong's Darryl O'Young. Until the penalty given during the Qualification race, O'Young had set the best times on the track.

This year, the duel continues with the return of Ye and O'Young, and while O'Young is staying behind the wheel of a Mercedes-AMG GT3 Evo, Ye has made a strategic change to a Porsche 911 GT3 R.

Also returning to Macau is another experienced Guia racer, Hong Kong's Marchy Lee, who this year traded the Audi R8 LMS GT3 for an Aston Martin Vantage GT3 from Uno Racing Team.

This year also marks the return of the 100-year-old British manufacturer of luxury sports cars and grand tourers to the streets of Macau, since Aston Martin's last appearance in 2015.

A second Aston Martin Vantage will be raced this year by last year's winner of the Greater Bay Area GT Cup, David Pun who hopes to count on his years of experience to continue to shine.

Ready to make life difficult to Ye, O'Young, Lee and Pun is Mainland driver Chen Wei An who will bring again his Audi R8 LMS to the track. Chen is

aiming to continue his great performance from last year when he won second place in the Qualification Race and third place in the final race.

Eyes are also on Ye's teammate, Min Heng, in a Toro Racing Mercedes-AMG. Min has already proven with a fourth and fifth place in, respectively, the Qualification and Final Race. Thus, he is aiming high, and he has the skills to do even better. The car, one of the most successful models on this circuit is also an advantage for Min.

Viewers should also be on the lookout for Swiss racer and Porsche expert, Alexandre Imperatori.

Imperatori has returned to Macau systematically for over a decade and he has extensive experience of both the circuit and the Porsche 911 GT3 R that he is racing this year. If the weekend starts well for him, we will certainly be battling for a Top 5 position.

Macau GT Cup cars go out on track on Friday from 11:20 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. for the Free Practice session, returning later on the same day from 3:55 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. for the Qualifying race, a session not to be missed.



GBA GT CUP POTENTIAL IN STAND-BY

RENATO MARQUES

CREATED in 2019 in line with the central government's new initiative to integrate areas within China's southeastern cities and regions, including nine Mainland cities and the two special regions of Macau and Hong Kong collectively known as the Greater Bay Area (GBA), the GBA GT Cup has quickly developed into an attractive competition. The Cup successfully took advantage of this policy until the Covid-19 pandemic came, and brought the competition to a standstill.

The race, a GT trophy for cars under GT4 specifications, reduced in scale last year. A further dip is expected this year with most of the drivers struggling to find enough support to participate in the event, and without any single races completed over the course of the full year prior.

Still, it will likely be one of the more eclectic competitions in terms of the number of car manufacturers involved (seven), this year featuring Ginetta, BMW, Lotus, McLaren, Audi, Mercedes-Benz, and Porsche.

This is also one of the events featuring a more diverse background drivers, with participants from Macau, Hong Kong, different provinces from the Mainland, and Taiwan.

Unfortunately, this year's field includes only 20 drivers,

RENATO MARQUES



RENATO MARQUES



almost a-third less than in its first edition and one fewer than last year's edition. This outcome, according to several racers interviewed by the Times, is not so bad. They admitted to some significant difficulties in partici-

pating and, in some cases, only made their decision to enter in the last few days before the deadline for submission.

Of those that did manage to join, the focus will go to some of last year's highly ranked drivers,

including Taiwan's Chang Chien Shang, who finished second in 2020 in the unusual-looking KTM X-Bow.

This year, Chang is returning, running different machinery — he has traded in the KTM for a

BMW M4 from Harmony Racing.

Finishing in the fourth position last year, local experienced driver Lui Man Kit will take a fresh attempt in the same car as in 2020. The Ginetta G55 showed great potential, and Lui has an added chance of reaching the podium as his teammate from last year, Lei Kit Meng, will be joining the F4 race.

Lui will be also teaming with Dicky Cheung, who will be driving a similar car and using his experience from last year to do better than an eighth place finish.

There are two more contenders working hard to gain a podium position, both at the wheel of two BMW M4.

Hong Kong's Evan Mak from Toro Racing Team and local driver Nicholas Lai from Son Veng Racing Team will hit the track hard for the first lap of the Guia circuit — crucial to starting on the first lines of the grid and to taking on any opportunities that arise.

Last year's winner David Pun and his Mercedes-AMG showed incredible dominance, doing a pole-to-flag race. However, Pun will not be taking part in this race, as he has moved up into the Macau GT Cup race. This is expected to boost opportunities and competition for the final win in this category.

If there is a race this year where the final result could truly come out of nowhere, this is the one.

AD

19th of November (Friday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
 6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
 8:00 ~ 8:25 Wynn Macau Challenge Cup - Free Practice Edition - Qualifying
 8:40 ~ 9:05 Melco Macau Touring Car Cup - Free Practice
 9:20 ~ 09:45 MGM Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Free Practice
 10:00 ~ 10:25 SJM Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Free Practice
 10:40 ~ 11:05 Galaxy Entertainment Macau Guia Race - Free Practice
 11:20 ~ 11:45 Sands China Macau GT Cup - Free Practice
 12:10 ~ 12:35 Wynn Macau Challenge Cup - Qualifying
 12:55 ~ 13:20 Melco Macau Touring Car Cup - Qualifying
 13:40 ~ 14:05 MGM Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Qualifying
 14:25 ~ 14:55 SJM Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Qualifying
 15:10 ~ 15:35 Galaxy Entertainment Macau Guia Race - Qualifying
 15:55 ~ 16:20 Sands China Macau GT Cup - Qualifying
 18:00 ~ ** Circuit Opened

20th of November (Saturday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
 6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
 7:45 ~ 8:00 Wynn Macau Challenge Cup - Warm Up
 8:15 ~ 8:30 Melco Macau Touring Car Cup - Warm Up
 8:45 ~ 9:00 MGM Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Warm Up
 9:25 ~ 9:55 Wynn Macau Challenge Cup - Race 1 - 8 laps
 10:20 ~ 10:50 Melco Macau Touring Car Cup - Race 1 - 8 laps
 11:15 ~ 11:45 MGM Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Race 1 - 8 laps
 12:20 ~ 12:35 SJM Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Warm Up
 12:50 ~ 13:05 Galaxy Entertainment Macau Guia Race - Warm Up
 13:20 ~ 13:35 Sands China Macau GT Cup - Warm Up
 14:00 ~ 14:30 SJM Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Race 1 - 8 laps
 14:55 ~ 15:25 Galaxy Entertainment Macau Guia Race - Race 1 - 8 laps
 15:50 ~ 16:20 Sands China Macau GT Cup - Race 1 - 8 laps
 18:00 ** Circuit Opened

21st of November (Sunday)

6:00 Circuit Closed
 6:30 ~ 7:00 Circuit Inspection
 8:30 ~ 9:10 Wynn Macau Challenge Cup - Race 2 - 12 laps
 9:35 ~ 10:15 Melco Macau Touring Car Cup - Race 2 - 12 laps
 10:40 ~ 11:20 MGM Greater Bay Area GT Cup - Race 2 - 12 laps
 12:05 ~ 12:45 Galaxy Entertainment Macau Guia Race - Race 2 - 12 laps
 13:10 ~ 13:50 Sands China Macau GT Cup - Race 2 - 12 laps
 14:00 ~ 14:35 Special Event
 15:10 ~ 15:20 Lion Dance
 15:30 ~ 16:10 SJM Formula 4 Macau Grand Prix - Race 2 - 12 laps
 18:00 ** Circuit Opened