



BMW Motorsport

**Fantastic debut in the BMW M6 GT3: Alessandro Zanardi races to victory in Mugello.**

Mugello (IT), 16<sup>th</sup> October 2016. The emotions were overwhelming when Alessandro Zanardi (IT) crossed the finish line in Mugello (IT) as the winner. On his debut weekend in the new BMW M6 GT3, the BMW works driver and BMW brand ambassador was victorious in the final race of the 2016 Italian GT Championship. After finishing Saturday's race in sixth position, he raced onto the top step of the podium in Sunday's encounter, celebrated by the fans and all the teams in the paddock.

After a break of over a year and after winning two gold and one silver medal in the para-cycling competitions on Rio de Janeiro (BR), Mugello marked the comeback in the racing cockpit for Zanardi. His BMW M6 GT3 in the Italian GT Championship season finale was entered by BMW Team Italia and ROAL Motorsport, and was specially modified by BMW Motorsport.

Zanardi had qualified third on the grid for Sunday's race, but was promoted to second place after a competitor's car was damaged in an accident on Saturday and could not take part in the second race. The Italian was third after the opening lap, but when the pit stop window opened he took the lead. And when he returned to the track after his mandatory pit stop he was still leading the field. Zanardi opened up a gap of several seconds and raced to his first ever win in the BMW M6 GT3.

"There are no words to describe what I feel. Today I saw the sun setting and it never looked that beautiful. What a year, not only what a day. Once more I enjoyed beautiful moments in Rio de Janeiro, and now just jumping into this beautiful car was amazing," Zanardi enthused. "But to win the race is something else. I did not have the start I wanted, but I had a great car underneath me. So I knew it was just a question of putting in some good laps as soon as the guys in front of me pitted, and that is what I did. So when I came back on the circuit I found myself with a very comfortable lead, and I had the speed to stay away from the guys behind me and finish with the victory. It is unbelievable. I want to thank all the guys in Munich, who did an amazing effort in getting this beautiful BMW M6 GT3 ready for me with everything I needed, thanks to BMW Italia and to ROAL Motorsport for setting the car up and making it ready for me in a magnificent way. And I also want to send my congratulations to the BMW family in Hockenheim, and especially to Marco Wittmann for winning the DTM title. He is an amazing and super fast young driver. He and the whole BMW DTM team with all the drivers can be proud of what they did this season."

Zanardi's participation in the Italian GT Championship finale was a triple anniversary celebration: next weekend, 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 the BMW Group. The car featured a special livery, honouring these anniversaries, as well as the gold and silver medals Zanardi won in Rio de Janeiro in September.

**Press contact:**

Jörg Kottmeier, Phone.: +49 (0) 170 566 6112, [joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de](mailto:joerg.kottmeier@bmw.de)  
Danilo Coglianese, Phone: +49 (0) 176 601 72405, [danilo.coglianese@bmw.de](mailto:danilo.coglianese@bmw.de)  
Ingo Lehbrink, Phone: +49 (0) 176 203 40224, [ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de](mailto:ingo.lehbrink@bmw.de)

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