



BMW Motorsport

**Alessandro Zanardi finishes his debut race in the BMW M6 GT3 in a strong sixth position.**

Mugello (IT), 15<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Alessandro Zanardi (IT) is back in the race cockpit. This weekend, the 49-year old BMW works driver and BMW brand ambassador is competing in his first ever races in the new BMW M6 GT3. Zanardi is competing in the season finale of the Italian GT Championship in Mugello (IT). The car is entered by BMW Team Italia and ROAL Motorsport and was specially modified by BMW Motorsport.

Despite the fact that he had not raced for over a year in order to fully focus on para-cycling, and that Mugello marks his debut in the BMW M6 GT3, Zanardi was again fast from the word go. After claiming third position in Friday's first free practice session, the Italian qualified eighth on the grid for Saturday's race and secured P3 on the second row for Sunday's encounter. Saturday's race was held over 48 minutes, and included a mandatory pit stop. The final stages especially became pretty hectic, but Zanardi called on all his experience and brought his BMW M6 GT3 home in a strong sixth place.

"It is an unbelievable feeling to be back behind the wheel – and to race this beautiful BMW M6 GT3," said Zanardi. "The car is fantastic. It is a very powerful machine and like a rocket down the straight – and it handles as well as I remember from the BMW Z4 GT3. After not having raced for more than one year, I had no difficulties at all in getting up to speed. My first race in the BMW M6 GT3 was very competitive. Finishing in sixth position is certainly a very good result. I have to admit that in the early stages of the race I did not have exactly the feeling in the car that I was hoping for. Probably we did not get the tyre pressures completely right. But towards the end I was one of the fastest cars out there. So this for sure is very encouraging and I am certain we can do even better than P6. That is the plan for tomorrow, when I will start from third on the grid."

Zanardi's participation in the Italian GT Championship finale will be 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 features a special livery, honouring these anniversaries as well as the gold and silver medals Zanardi has won in Rio de Janeiro in September.

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