



Media Information

DTM

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Alessandro Zanardi on his guest start in the DTM: “Fifth place feels like a gold medal.”

- An interview with Alessandro Zanardi after his guest start in the DTM at Misano.
- Zanardi: “It is magic to know that so many people identify to such a degree with what I do.”
- Laps, kilometres, braking manoeuvres, braking force expended: facts and figures on Zanardi’s Misano race weekend.

Misano. Alessandro Zanardi (ITA) came through his much-anticipated guest start at the Misano (ITA) DTM weekend with flying colours. The Italian finished a sensational fifth in the Sunday race. In an interview, Zanardi looks back at this very special weekend and describes his experiences of the BMW family, the DTM paddock and his enthusiastic fans – and looks ahead to his planned start at the 24 Hours of Daytona (USA) in January 2019.

Alessandro, please describe your guest start in the DTM in three words.

Alessandro Zanardi: “Tingly, exciting, emotional. I leave Misano with a big smile on my face.”

What was your first thought when you crossed the finish line in fifth place in only your second DTM race on Sunday?

Zanardi: “At first I thought it was a joke when my engineer told me my position over the radio. I did not expect that. And it is also too much when you look at my performance from a neutral point of view. I was very optimistic after my tests, but after the first session, in which I was a distant last, I feared that my fate this weekend may be to drive around well off the back of the field. The problem was that the ever-changing conditions did not allow me to continuously build on my experience from session to session. Every time I took to the track, everything was different to the

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previous time. With that in mind, fifth place, together with good, competitive lap times, is obviously fantastic. It feels like a gold medal.”

What did you enjoy most?

Zanardi: “The time spent with all the people who helped me to make this weekend at Misano possible.”

What was the biggest challenge?

Zanardi: “Keeping the BMW M4 DTM on the track (laughs). However, I did manage to do that. I have won many races over the course of my career and believe that I still have what it takes to push a car like the BMW M4 DTM to the limit. However, I simply lacked DTM experience compared to the other drivers.”

How were you received by the BMW and DTM families?

Zanardi: “I was received very well by the DTM family and felt very welcome at Misano. I am very grateful for that! As far as my BMW family, and my team in particular, is concerned, they gave me the feeling – and I could see it in their eyes too – that they felt good about their job and that I was exactly the man they wanted to have in their car. The goal was not to win the race, it was all about making the most of my opportunity and getting the best out of the car. Everyone in the team identified with that goal – that was priceless for me. I will always carry that feeling with me. The weekend was absolutely amazing.”

And you were given an enthusiastic welcome by the Italian fans.

Zanardi: “Let's put it this way, I believe I have been involved in a fair few romantic stories in my life, which ultimately had the happy ending that people hoped for. I have managed a few things that people perhaps did not believe I was capable of physically. On a day like this, you stand in front of the mirror in the evening and remember everything you have experienced over the many years. It is magic to know that so many people identify to such a degree with what I do. It makes me incredibly proud.”

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Looking at all the onboard footage, it was impressive to see just how much you were doing with your hands at the same time.

Zanardi: "That is true, it was quite acrobatic really (laughs). However, I don't have any alternative these days, so I adapted to it quickly. Once you have accepted the task, some things are not actually as difficult as you initially imagined they may be. I worked meticulously with the engineers in Munich to find the best possible solution for me, and I think we came up with an outstanding system. We have taken a huge step forward and established an excellent basis for my planned start at the 24 Hours of Daytona in 2019. I believe that if I was to face the challenge of driving 24 hours in a row, I could do it with this system – from a purely physical perspective. I am sure I would not exactly be as fresh as a daisy afterwards, but it would be possible (laughs). Thank you to everyone involved for their interest and ambition to make me an even better racing driver. I can't wait to continue preparations for Daytona."

Alessandro Zanardi – Facts and figures from the DTM race weekend.

Session	Laps	Km	Braking manoeuvres	Brake force expended (in kilograms)	Average force expended per braking manoeuvre (in kilograms)
FP1	16	68	230	15.872	69
FP2	12	51	271	9.153	34
Q1	10	42	176	6.944	39
Race 1	31	131	509	26.625	52
FP3	16	68	236	13.829	59
Q2	12	51	194	7.164	37
Race 2	32	135	501	23.065	46
Total	129	546	2,117	102,652	48

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