



Media Information  
Alessandro Zanardi  
1<sup>st</sup> April 2020

### **Alessandro Zanardi: “There are aspects that we can use as a starting point for a better life for every one of us”.**

- **Staying positive in difficult times: an interview with Alessandro Zanardi.**
- **The BMW works driver and brand ambassador speaks about the current corona situation and how he always manages to cope with crises.**
- **Zanardi: “People are re-discovering the sense of community and friendship”.**

**Munich. World-wide, societies are facing a difficult and challenging situation, not only because in many areas life has come to a halt at the moment and people are urged to stay at home to prevent the spread of the corona virus, but also as the current situation causes sorrow and grief for many people. Someone who has experience with difficult situations is BMW works driver and brand ambassador Alessandro Zanardi (ITA).**

With his positive attitude, he inspires people all around the world, also in crises like the current one. In an interview, Zanardi speaks about staying at his home in Northern Italy, about his daily routines and about the positives that can help him in difficult times.

### **Alessandro, geographically you are in the centre of the virus crisis in Italy. First and foremost: how are you and your family?**

Alessandro Zanardi: “We are all well. We of course feel the consequences of what is happening but for sure our thoughts and prayers go to all the people and all the families fighting the virus much more directly, in all the hospitals with all the supporting people, the nurses, the doctors and so on. We feel that we are very lucky. We have a house, I have all my training equipment here, we are healthy – therefore we are not suffering more than it is reasonable to feel like you are suffering.”



### **Can you describe your daily life at the moment?**

Zanardi: “Personally, as someone who still has sporting objectives in front of me, I can focus much more on my training. For sure I would have never ever wished for something like this to happen but in everything there are always different aspects and not everything is always negative as not everything is always positive. But for me one positive aspect is that the phone is not ringing much, that nobody is asking me to go anywhere so I have much more time to assess to my priorities in the order I want. I wake up in the morning and I say: okay, this is the time of the day when I will be training. So I plan my day around my sporting programmes and of course I am working a lot with the computer, I am staying connected on a professional level by sending emails, preparing stuff. And until recently, all preparations were also with regard to the most important objective of the year which would have been Tokyo. Of course now I have to reconsider everything but the way I am it won't be difficult to find a new objective to chase. I can focus on different projects and I have many.”

### **But one of your goals and projects is now Tokyo 2021?**

Zanardi: “Well, of course at my age from a sporting point of view every year is like a dog's year, it's like seven years. If it was almost kind of a miracle for me to aim to go to Tokyo approaching my 54<sup>th</sup> birthday, it will be even harder to do it one year later when I will be approaching my 55<sup>th</sup> birthday. But for sure I can tell you that regarding my intentions, I am perfect. Regarding turning my intentions into achievements, time will tell, we will see.”

### **So let's get back to the current situation: is it a challenge to deal with isolation?**

Zanardi: “I have to say that I have total trust in the scientists who are studying the problem and we have to believe in them; we have to help in the best way we can which now is staying at home, trying to avoid spreading the virus. Because now we are learning that the number of people infected is probably ten times higher than the one we were thinking just a few days ago. This is because we did not test the total population. And there are a lot of people probably being infected without knowing it because they don't have any symptoms. This of course creates a lot of concerns and the only way you can avoid bad consequences is to make sure that everybody stays home that the virus is not spread even more. On the other hand, in the majority of the cases, we do have the resources inside our body to fight the virus and to win this battle like we do with other viral infections. So we have to wait, we have to trust the people who are right now fighting the illness from the front row of the battle and just



obey to the rules that every government is sending out to the population – it's as simple as that.”

**You've been a fighter all your life and especially after your accident. Nowadays you are an inspiration for many people. From your experience, is there anything you want to tell your fellow Italians and the rest of the world in these difficult times?**

Zanardi: “First of all I have to say that the fact that I had to fight some difficult situations over the course of my life does not mean that I am enjoying this type of fight (laughs). I would rather avoid problems. But for sure, whenever you overcome a problem in your life it's an experience for which you have to develop new tools. And once the experience is behind you, these tools can possibly stay in your repertoire to overcome other problems which you inevitably have to face during the journey of your life. And I can tell that people are already different, I can tell that people are re-discovering the sense of community, the sense of friendships, the sense of needing each other in order to really complete themselves. Because we are nothing if we cannot express our emotions. So it's not so much up to people like me to send out a particular message but the real hope is that people will be more talented from now on in looking for that type of inspiration, listening, leaning on others and allowing others to help them. Because that's what we are, and we are nothing without this all. So this is the only positive aspect of what is happening and we have to make sure that this experience will teach everyone a good lesson and we will leave this all behind us with better instruments to proceed in our life and to live a better one.”

**Does your positive attitude towards life help in such difficult times?**

Zanardi: “It's difficult for me to say because as I said at the beginning I know that I am someone who has the privilege of having a house, I have my wooden house in the garden where I keep all my training equipment, I have a great, healthy family surrounding me, we are watching a lot of movies, I have plenty of things to do. So the discomfort I am experiencing these days is very, very small in comparison to what other people are experiencing. But at the same time, what I can tell you is that the common point with what is happening these days from a personal point of view and what happened to me another period in my life is the capability in having an interest in the positive aspects that you can always find in everything. And that is what led me to turn what had happened to me into a great opportunity. When I lost my legs, even before I could discover where to search and what to find, I was very confident that I would find something positive in what happened. And I did. And with what I did in my life I guess I proved that that concept is always true. So right now from my small



miseries I can tell you that the positive aspect is the fact that the phone is not ringing much, I don't have to travel – these are very slowed-down days. And in the busy life like the one I normally live I am kind of enjoying the quiet phase I am going through. But I am sure there are much better aspects which, if we are curious enough, which we can collect, which we can keep or use as a starting point to build a better life for everyone of us. The important thing right now is not to panic, is not to take our own decisions without the right information. The important thing is to act like a community, it is to really follow the instructions we are receiving and if the biggest down point is that we have to stay at home for another month, another two months, you'll name it – we have to learn to cope with it. The sun will rise sooner or later and there will be time to do other things. But for now it's important that we put this enemy behind us in the right way.”

### **Facts about Alessandro Zanardi.**

Date of birth: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1966

Place of birth: Bologna (IT)

Marital status: Married to Daniela, one son: Niccóló

### **Career in racing.**

2019	24 Hours of Daytona in the BMW M8 GTE, SUPER GT x DTM Dream Race at Fuji in the BMW M4 DTM
2018	DTM guest appearance in the BMW M4 DTM: fifth place in Sunday's race at Misano
2016	Debut in the BMW M6 GT3: Victory at the final round of the Italian GT Championship at Mugello
2015	24h Spa-Francorchamps with Timo Glock and Bruno Spengler with the BMW Z4 GT3
2014	Blancpain Sprint Series with the BMW Z4 GT3
2005 - 2009	FIA World Touring Car Championship WTCC with BMW (four wins)
2004	FIA European Touring Car Championship ETCC with BMW
2003	Comeback as a racing driver with BMW in the FIA European Touring Car Championship ETCC
2001	CART Championship, severe accident on 15 <sup>th</sup> September at Lausitzring, loses both legs



1999	Formula One
1997 - 1998	CART World Series (2 x Champion)
1996	IndyCar World Series
1991 - 1994	Formula One

**Main successes as para-athlete.**

2019	Para-cycling World Championship: 2 gold medals, 1 silver medal
2018	Para-cycling World Championship: 1 silver medal, 1 bronze medal, long distance triathlon at Cervia with a new world record of 8:26:06 hours
2017	Para-cycling World Championship: 2 gold medals, 1 silver medal
2016	Paralympic Games Rio de Janeiro: 2 gold medals, 1 silver medal
2015	Para-cycling World Championship: 3 gold medals, long distance triathlon in Hawaii in 09:40:37 hours
2014	Para-cycling World Championship: 2 gold medals, long distance triathlon in Hawaii in 9:47:14 hours
2013	Para-cycling World Championship: 3 gold medals
2012	Paralympic Games London: 2 gold medals, 1 silver medal

**Note to editors:**

We are aware of the current difficult situation. Despite this, however, we have decided to provide you with regular media information in the coming weeks and months. We will report on our BMW works drivers on the sim racing scene and we will also provide you with interviews and background stories, particularly dealing with technology topics within BMW Group Motorsport.



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