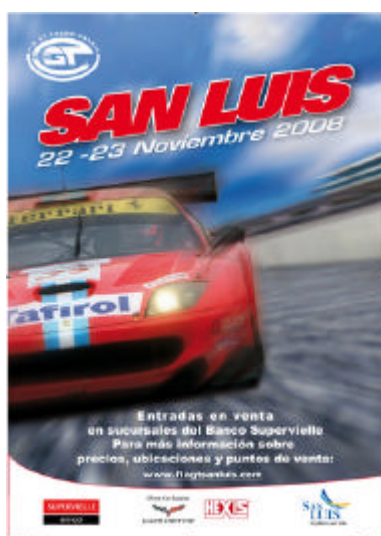


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Oggetto: FIA GT CHAMPIONSHIP - R10 SAN LUIS - PREVIEW



A new destination. A new circuit. And a wonderful backdrop for the season finale ! The 2008 FIA GT Championship is heading further south than ever before, for its first-ever race in the southern hemisphere. Argentina will host the tenth round of 2008 at the exciting new circuit at Potrero de los Funes, in the Province of San Luis.

It has been a long journey, in all senses of the word. For all those working on the magnificent circuit with its brand-new infrastructures. For the cars and equipment, which left Europe immediately after Zolder to cross the Atlantic Ocean. And for the teams and drivers competing in the 2008 season, who have been battling it out on the track since the Royal Automobile Club Tourist Trophy, at Silverstone back in May. A final two-hour race will finally see the 2008 GT1 Drivers Champions crowned, joining AF Corse's Gianmaria Bruni and Toni Vilander, who secured the GT2 titles at Nogaro.

The 'Lago Potrero de los Funes' circuit, a semi-permanent circuit 14 km from San Luis, is 6.27 km long, making it the second-longest track on the FIA GT calendar, after Spa-Francorchamps. Circumnavigating a volcanic lake, climbing up and down the hillside, it should be a roller-coaster ride for the cars and drivers taking part, many of whom will be visiting Argentina for the first time.

The GT1 category will see the Vitaphone and Phoenix Carsport teams up against each other, as they have been all season. With Vitaphone claiming the GT1 Teams title in Zolder, Hezemans and Gollin still have a slender chance of taking the ultimate crown. But they need to win – and with 90 kg in the car, it will not be easy. As for Bartels and Bertolini, the 2006 Champions also have a heavy car – but as long as they finish 6th, they are guaranteed another trip to the FIA Gala Prize-Giving in Monaco. But there will be plenty of other cars looking to finish the season on a high point – so will it be an Aston Martin, a Corvette, a Maserati or a Saleen which will become the first name on the circuit's record books ?



With one of the best-ever line-ups, the GT2 category has been amazing in 2008. But AF Corse's duo of Bruni and Vilander put in a near-faultless performance, leading since the first round in Silverstone. The new Champions will be heavily laden for San Luis, with a total of 110 kg in the car, but are sure to be looking to claim a sixth win of the season... However, they will face plenty of opposition, especially with battle raging for second place in the GT2 Teams Championship between BMS Scuderia Italia, Prospeed Competition and CR Scuderia. Last but not least, Belgian Racing's Gillet Vertigo will be looking to finish the season with

a good result on a circuit apparently not dissimilar to its home track of Spa.

This race will also see a record number of Argentine drivers taking part, with a grand total of eight in five different cars. ACA Argentina will field a second



Ferrari 550 Maranello, with all four drivers who have competed this year entered : Esteban Tuero, Gaston Mazzacane, José Maria Lopez and Martin Basso. Argentine Touring Car driver Christian Ledesma joins SRT's Corvette C6R. In GT2, José Manuel Balbiani will be in the nr 78 BMS Scuderia Italia Ferrari, while Luis Perez-Companc and Matias Russo will share the nr 95 Advanced Engineering Pecom Racing Team Ferrari as they have all year.

The race weekend will be a busy one, as the FIA GT Championship will share the event with the extremely popular national touring car Championship, TC2000, as well as with the Formula Renault 1.6 series and the Historic Touring Car series. And the final round of the 2008 'Run for the Earth' initiative will take the form of a pedal-boat race across the lake !

The season may be drawing to a close, but to look back over some photographic memories of 2008, visit the FIA GT website, where many of the top photographers have uploaded their best pictures of the year. [Choose your favorite](#) in order to help us vote our 'photo of the year'. The [Newsletter](#) is now on line, with [interesting facts](#) about the upcoming race, [quotes from the drivers](#) and a long interview with Championship contender [Mike Hezemans](#). The provisional detailed timetable, provisional entry list and documents with other useful information are also available for download.



The [containers](#) have arrived at the circuit after the long trip across the Atlantic; the finishing touches have been made to the track, and everything is in place for a great weekend in the sunshine !

See you all in Argentina !

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