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SALEEN S7R TOPS NEW MASERATIS, FERRARIS AND LAMBORGHINIS AT IMOLA

American Manufacturer Spoils Italians Debut on Their Home Turf

IMOLA, Italy, Sept. 10, 2004 – The big story of round eight of the FIA GT Championship at Imola this week was supposed to be the heralded debut of the Maserati MC 12s. And while the new kids on the block looked very promising by finishing second and third, it was the more experienced team of Uwe Alzen and Michael Bartels that drove their Vitaphone Saleen S7R to victory in Italy, their third win of the season. The trio were the only cars to finish on the lead lap of the three-hour sprint race. All three were also shod with the same Pirelli P Zero racing slicks.

Saleen S7Rs dominated qualifying as well, placing five cars in the top ten; while the Maserati could muster only an eighth and twelfth, respectively.

Alzen and Bartels had qualified third best but drove their usual strong race to earn their third victory after having won earlier this season at Magny-Cours (France) and Brno (Czech Republic). Double stinting their tires allowed the Vitaphone Racing team to remain at the front virtually throughout the race, finishing with a 43-second advantage over the second-place Maserati.

“Because we were able to double stint our tires, providing optimal grip and performance for as many as 65 laps, we were able to stay ahead of the Maseratis, especially in the final laps,” explained Alzen. The inherent power of the 600+ horsepower Saleen S7R was also evident, particularly in the last stint, as the Saleen pulled away from the Maseratis on fresh tires.

The Saleen S7R’s performance is really no surprise to the racing world. In the first two years after its debut at Sebring in 2001, Saleen S7Rs won 48 poles, set 50 fastest laps and topped the podium 37 times in 72 races, winning seven GT Championships! No other marque racing with independent (non-factory) teams can make that claim.

The Saleen S7, America’s supercar, debuted on August 19, 2001 at the Monterey Historic Races in Laguna Seca, California and has been recognized by numerous automotive magazines as the fastest production car in the world.