

Maranello Motorsport



458 Smashes Lap Record at Mountain Test

Australia may well have its answer to who to watch come February's Bathurst 12 Hour as the international field gains momentum for what is expected to be an epic year for the event.

In this weekend's first test of Maranello Motorsport's 2011 Ferrari 458 Italia GT3 endurance weapon, two highly regarded names in motor sport are again on everyone's lips. Maranello Motorsport and Allan Simonsen, who piloted the 458 around the Mount Panorama circuit in a blitzing time of 2:04.9560 to smash the lap record and set Maranello in the sights of their competitors.

Having delivered the car just one week ago, the Maranello Motorsport team continues to develop and impress with the support of title sponsor Il Bello Rosso along for the ride once more. The crew took only days to have the latest 458 locked and loaded, ready for its introduction to Australia and the country's racing mecca, the place they call 'The Mountain'.

Impressing straight out of the box, the 458's opening laps of the 6.2km circuit edged close to record times, the Il Bello Rosso team staying true to the guidelines of the Michelotto manufacturers, hitting the mark and impressing among others Maranello Managing Director, Mark Coffey who explained,

"The 458 is a great car. It's worth the wait and really is amazing how the time we spent at the factory with Michelotto has paid off with the car so quick and stable so quickly.

"It's terrific to not need months to dial it in. There'd been a lot of people with stopwatches around the track and to now have confirmation of the new record during the team's first test is very exciting so we're looking forward to the racing."

With half of the driver lineup on hand to complete the opening test, Simonsen was joined by regular Maranello endurance driver Peter Edwards who also took to the new machine with ease, putting in the fast times and feeling settled in the new chassis.

As the lap count continued, the Il Bello Rosso crew made minimal setup changes to the Italian horse, having proven from the outset that the factory format was suited to the conditions, the team needing waste no time to learn the 458 from scratch, setup being so close to ideal direct from its Michelotto home.

Having experienced the 458 in his international racing commitments, Simonsen was thrilled with the race package of the Maranello Motorsport entry, saying,

"This car is damn fast! Given this is our first test, it's certainly nice to break the lap record finally and we did it in style.

"From the first laps at Bathurst the car was very quick, given it has a great setup baseline from running in Europe this year so we knew we'd be able to work from where they'd left off.

"The power and the chassis are so complementary and I'm feeling really comfortable in the car and with the team.

"These new generation cars are all going to have a fast pace, and there's no doubt the (Bathurst) 12 Hour is going to be very fast and incredibly competitive – it's an event I'm definitely looking forward to on the calendar."

Having recently announced that Maranello and Michelotto would join forces in the Australian GT series, the Il Bello Rosso team are committed to not just growing their race program, but ensuring that their stable of Ferraris will be at the forefront of the field, no matter the place, no matter the category, Maranello Motorsport will be the ones to watch.