



ASTON MARTIN

Aston Martin Vantage GT8 returns to the Green Hell

- **Vantage GT8 to compete for top honours in close-to production SP8 class**
- **Experienced driver line-up includes FIA WEC Aston Martin Racing works drivers Darren Turner and Nicki Thiim**
- **Aston Martin Nürburgring Test Centre enters additional V12 Vantage in SP8 class**

10 May 2017, Gaydon: British luxury brand Aston Martin is set to return to contest the ADAC Zurich Nürburgring 24-hours (N24) for the 12th year.

The close to production specification Aston Martin Vantage GT8 that performed so well in last year's N24, will again be tested to the absolute limit later this month when it competes on the infamous Nordschleife circuit, seeking the SP8 class win it almost claimed in 2016.

In preparation for the challenge ahead, the Vantage GT8 participated in the recent 24h qualification race, held over 6 hours, where it took class victory in commanding style. Not only did the exclusive sports car show scintillating pace in its own class, but it showed its potential to challenge all but the highly modified specialist GT3 machinery for overall position in the 200-plus field.

Exploiting the #7 Vantage GT8's pace at the Nürburgring 24 will be Aston Martin Racing's works drivers Darren Turner (GB) and Nicki Thiim (DN). The FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) regulars will be joined by Aston Martin N24 regular Peter Cate (GB) and Markus Lungstrass (D), who competed earlier this year alongside Darren Turner at the Bathurst 12 Hours in the very same car.

The British manufacturer has some unfinished business at the Nürburgring, particularly with the Vantage GT8, which led the SP8 class for much of last year's event before an unfortunate incident ended their hopes of victory. The 150-unit limited edition Aston Martin Vantage GT8, inspired by the V8 Vantage GTE cars that compete in the global WEC endurance series, was launched in 2016 and engineered by the in-house Advanced Operations team who will be racing the car at this year's N24.

David King, President of Aston Martin Racing and Chief Special Operations Officer, said, "It's

difficult to convey what a challenge it is to complete at a 24 hour race anywhere, but especially on the unique Nordschleife. We already carry out vehicle testing at the Nürburgring but that doesn't take place with over 200 cars on the track at the same time as you.

"The GT8 performed very well at last year's Nürburgring 24 Hours," continued King. "Ultimately the car crashed out in challenging conditions but it was leading its class and running like clockwork at the time so I have high expectations of a top result this time out."

Since its first competitive outing in 2016, the Aston Martin Vantage GT8 has been used to help develop NEXCEL's active oil management oil system. The revolutionary system is a sealed oil cell containing both the engine oil and an oil filter, which can be replaced in just 90-seconds. Testing the system in the harsh environment of the race track - whether at the Nürburgring Nordschleife or Mount Panorama in Australia – has provided valuable product development data.

For racing drivers, the Nordschleife is legendary and the 24-hour race remains one of the biggest tests of skill and bravery in modern racing. Aston Martin Racing's works driver, Darren Turner, raced the Vantage GT8 at the Nürburgring last year, in the Bathurst 12-Hour in February and in the recent qualifying race on the Nordschleife.

"The Nürburgring 24 Hours is one of the highlights of the year for me," said Turner. "I enjoy 24-hour races anyway but the added challenges of the Nordschleife makes it a very special event, especially as the performance differences between the classes make every lap eventful. Last year we were strong but we were unable to make it to the line so our priority this year is to run for the full 24 hours to show what the GT8 can do and hopefully to win! It's a fantastic car, which feels very at home on the Nordschleife. We won the qualifying race so we're feeling confident of a good result in the 24-hours."

In addition to Aston Martin's factory effort, the marque's Nürburgring Test Centre will also take on the 24-hour challenge with a single V12 Vantage effort, also competing in the SP8 class.

Piloting the #49 V12 Vantage will be Jürgen Kroner (D), Dr. Tony Richards (NZ), David Thilenius (USA) and Test Centre Director Wolfgang Schuhbauer (D).

Also running under the Aston Martin umbrella will be the #70 Vantage GT4 entered by Aston Martin St. Gallen's race team R-Motorsport and piloted by Andreas Baenziger (CH), Florian Kamelger (I), Peter Leemhuis (AUS) and Markus Lungstrass (D).

The Nürburgring 24 Hours begins at 15:30 CET on Saturday 27 May.

- Ends -

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