

Audi achieves record victory at Le Mans with new technology

- **First Le Mans exploit with Variable Turbine Geometry (VTG)**
- **New distance record thanks to efficiency and reliability**
- **All three Audi R15 TDI cars in top three places**

Ingolstadt/Le Mans, June 13, 2010 – For the ninth time Audi has won the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans and thus equalized Ferrari’s position in the roll of honor in the French endurance classic. Only Porsche’s track record reflects more victories.

At the 78th edition of the race, efficiency and reliability were the decisive factors yet again – both are special fortes of the Audi brand which has a reputation of developing highly efficient automobiles. The three Audi R15 TDI cars of Audi Sport Team Joest ran without the slightest technical problems over the entire distance and occupied the top three places after the fastest Le Mans race of all time. After 2000, 2002 and 2004, Audi thus managed to achieve a one-two-three triumph at Le Mans for the fourth time.

“Everyone at Audi can be proud of this historic exploit. Reliability, efficiency and sustainability are particularly important topics for car manufacturers today. And these are exactly the areas in which we have demonstrated our expertise this weekend,” commented Audi Chairman Rupert Stadler, who witnessed the captivating race live on location. “It was one of the most thrilling races in Le Mans history, a do-or-die battle. This one-two-three victory is the fourth 1-2-3 for Audi at Le Mans and no doubt the most valuable victory claimed after the fiercest battle in our company’s history. I express my thanks and great respect to the entire squad. They have performed an incredible and flawless feat of energy. Peugeot was a formidable rival who required us to give everything. We express our respect to the French squad for this.”

“After taking third place last year, it was our declared aim to bring the Le Mans trophy back to Ingolstadt and Neckarsulm, and we managed to do this in an



impressive way,” said Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich. “I’m incredibly proud of this squad and sincerely thank the entire team and everyone who has contributed to this achievement.”

The ninth triumph – in total – of the brand at Le Mans was also made possible by a technology which Audi Sport developed for racing during the past three years in strict secrecy: the V10 TDI engine of the Audi R15 TDI with an approximate power output of 440 kW has a turbo-charger with Variable Turbine Geometry (VTG).

VTG turbo-chargers are standard with Audi TDI engines in production vehicles. Their use at Le Mans helps the Audi engineers to continue to develop the technology for smaller, highly efficient turbo engines to be used in the future. “At Le Mans we’re dealing with temperatures above 1,000 degrees centigrade which have not been encountered with production engines so far,” explains Ulrich Baretzky, Head of Engine Development at Audi Sport. “As a result of downsizing, production development will enter into similar temperature ranges. This makes VTG another good example of how the technology transfer between motorsport and the production side of the house works at Audi.”

In 2010 the demands made on diesel engines were particularly high due to the restrictions imposed by the regulations. “Squeezing higher output out of the engines without sacrificing reliability posed a great challenge which our team mastered in an outstanding manner,” said Head of Audi Motorsport Dr. Wolfgang Ullrich after the race. “We did not use the full potential of the V10 TDI engine this year in order to be absolutely on the safe side. That’s why it was clear to us even before the race that we wouldn’t have the fastest car – but a very reliable and efficient one. The development objective of the R15 plus was 20 percent higher efficiency. We managed to achieve this. We’ve been working very hard for this exploit over the past few months. This makes this success, which was enabled by a perfect team performance as well, even more rewarding.”

The victorious Audi R15 TDI with Timo Bernhard (Germany), Romain Dumas (France) and Mike Rockenfeller (Germany) completed a total of 397 laps in the 24 hours. With the covered distance of 5,410 kilometers, the trio broke the 1971 record set by Dr. Helmut Marko and Gijs van Lennep in the Porsche 917 that was considered unbeatable because the Hunaudières straight at that time had no chicanes – another demonstration of the performance capabilities of Audi TDI technology.

Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller drove an absolutely flawless race on their way to their first Le Mans victory and the new historic record. Except for a slow puncture shortly before the end of the race and a right-hand mirror that

had come off, the race went without the slightest problems for the winners. Second place was taken by Marcel Fässler, André Lotterer and Benoît Treluyer on whose R15 TDI the front bodywork had to be changed twice after contact with the track barriers.

The 2008 winners, Dindo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish, who were the best-placed Audi team in the early phase, were struck by major misfortune. Le Mans record winner Tom Kristensen had to evade a slow GT2 vehicle on Saturday night and slid backwards against the track barrier of the Porsche corners in the process. With fast lap times, Capello, Kristensen and McNish pushed back into the group of the front runners and in the end were rewarded with a podium result.

