

SPECIAL FAREWELL PLANNED FOR GIL DE FERRAN AT MAZDA RACEWAY LAGUNA SECA

de Ferran To Be Grand Marshall of the Monterey Sports Car Championships

MONTEREY, Calif., (September 29, 2009) – Two-time IndyCar Champion and 2003 Indianapolis 500 winner Gil de Ferran is preparing for a very special send-off when the Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca venue in California hosts the final round of the 2009 American Le Mans Series on October 10 as the main feature of its Monterey Sports Car Championships event. The 41-year-old Brazilian announced recently that he will retire from professional driving at the end of this year's American Le Mans season, though he will continue as President of de Ferran Motorsports, the front-running team he established in 2008.

To mark his final race, de Ferran has been appointed Grand Marshal at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca and will be supporting various high-profile pre-event activities as well as giving the famous ‘start your engines’ command.

Adding to the sense of occasion, the team is preparing a very special livery for his final race. In deference to motor sport legend Jim Hall – the man who gave de Ferran his first drive in IndyCars – the No. 66 XM Radio de Ferran Motorsports Acura ARX-02a will feature the famous white color scheme as displayed by Hall’s revolutionary Chaparral sportscars during the Sixties and Seventies.

de Ferran comments: “It’s going to be an emotional occasion and a great honor to be Grand Marshal. Along with Roger Penske and Jackie Stewart, Jim Hall has been one of the three greatest mentors during my career. Interestingly, I won my first IndyCar race with Jim at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca in 1995 and enjoyed two successful seasons racing for him when I first came to America. And it’s in respect of what Jim did for me that since we established de Ferran Motorsports our Acuras have been running the same number 66 that he used on so many of his iconic Chaparrals. Now we are going one step further by recreating the famous Chaparral livery for my final race in California.”

Hall himself will be present at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca together with two of his celebrated Chaparral sportscars, plus the yellow Pennzoil IndyCar which de Ferran drove to his milestone maiden victory at the same circuit in 1995. All three cars will be on public display throughout and performing demonstration laps during the event.

“It’s very nice that Gil has chosen to honor me in some way at what’s obviously a very special event for him,” says Hall. “We certainly had a good run with him for a couple of years and I really enjoyed watching his career develop thereafter. It gave me a lot of satisfaction seeing him do so well.

“He kindly gives me a lot of credit for the part I played in boosting his career along but Gil did it for himself – he’s the guy with the talent and the skill plus the work ethic

needed to succeed. I give him at least 99 per cent of the credit but I greatly appreciate the fact that he's thankful for the part I played in his career."

de Ferran's racing career began in 1982 and he has won titles in many of the series in which he competed including the British Formula Three Championship in 1992 and two IndyCar crowns with the Penske Honda Team in 2000 and 2001. After a short sojourn away from driving he returned to competitive action at the start of 2008 after founding his own de Ferran Motorsports organization with support from Acura.

Displaying his skills both as a driver and team leader, de Ferran once again has risen to the top. He and his co-driver Simon Pagenaud enjoyed immediate success when competing in the LMP2 class of the 2008 ALMS championship. Now, having graduated to the premier LMP1 category for 2009, they have posted more outright victories and pole positions than any of their rivals.

de Ferran adds: "It would be great to go out on a big high but whatever happens on the track it's going to be a memorable weekend for all of us."

Editor's note: Race car driver Jim Hall founded Chaparral Cars in the early Sixties and is hailed as one of motor sport's greatest innovators. With spoilers, high wings and other technical advances, his Chaparral sportscars – always painted white and often running the number 66 – were pioneers in aerodynamics and they forever changed the face of race car design. In later years Hall switched to open-wheelers winning the Indianapolis 500 first as a constructor with Chaparral and then as an entrant. In 1995 he invited Gil de Ferran to race for his team. de Ferran won the 'Rookie of the Year' award in his debut season scoring his first maiden win in the final round of the year at Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca. Building on this success, de Ferran was a consistent front-runner the following year winning at Cleveland to give Hall, who retired from the sport at the end of the 1996 campaign, a final victory.

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca was established in 1957. The world-renowned raceway has been operated since its inception by the Sports Car Racing Association of the Monterey Peninsula (SCRAMP), a not-for-profit 501C(4) corporation. Each race season, SCRAMP donates its net proceeds to the volunteer groups that help put on the races.

Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca's world-class 2009 racing schedule includes the Monterey Sports Car Championships featuring the American Le Mans Series October 9-11.

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