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Kelvin van der Linde: Aiming for title number two

- The 2014 champion wants to win the ADAC GT Masters title for a second time
- The South African will drive an Audi fielded by series newcomers HCB-Rutronik Racing

Munich: Audi driver Kelvin van der Linde (22, ZA, HCB-Rutronik Racing) has signed with new team HCB-Rutronik Racing for the 2019 ADAC GT Masters. In this interview, the 2014 champion tells us why he considers himself and new co-driver Patric Niederhauser (27, CH) to be genuine title contenders and what makes the new Audi R8 LMS better than its predecessor. Van der Linde will make a first public appearance with his new team next week (8th/9th April) in the official preseason tests at Oschersleben. The circuit will also be hosting the opening fixture of the Super Sports Car League on the weekend of 26th - 28th April. The races will be broadcast live and in full length by SPORT1.

Kelvin van der Linde was an unknown rookie in 2014 when he and partner René Rast won the ADAC GT Masters title at the first attempt. There had never before been a champion as young as the then 18-year-old. In the years since, he has established himself as one of the absolute top contestants in the series. Last year, the Audi Sport driver partnered by his brother Sheldon missed out on title number two by the slender margin of one point. For the new campaign, the South African has now signed with series newcomers HCB-Rutronik Racing.

How did the switch to HCB-Rutronik Racing come about?

Van der Linde: “I have known the team for a long time because I worked for their event department. We have built up a good relationship. The programme that HCB-Rutronik Racing have mapped out for themselves is very interesting, so I wanted to be a part of it.”

The ADAC GT Masters is one of the toughest racing series around. How quickly do you think HCB-Rutronik Racing will settle in?

“The Audi R8 LMS is a car which quickly puts even a new team in contention for race wins. For example, I managed to do that in 2017 with Aust Motorsport. In Patric Niederhauser, I have an excellent team-mate this year, so I expect to be challenging for top positions again at an early stage.”

How do you see your role in the team, taking into account your experience and previous successes?

“I am now into my sixth year in the ADAC GT Masters, so I obviously know how the series works and what it takes to win. I supported the team during their winter testing, which has hopefully paid off. I was also involved in the selection of the other drivers. I think that, together, we’ve made a good choice.”

Carrie Schreiner driving for HCB-Rutronik Racing will be the only woman in the 2019 ADAC GT Masters line-up. How do you see her chances in her debut season?

“Carrie is an ambitious young driver who is destined for a great future in motorsport. She has developed immensely during the winter test drives. I think she will post some good results.”

MEDIA INFORMATION

For you as a driver, what are the biggest differences between the Evo version of the Audi R8 LMS and last year's model?

“The looks of the new R8 LMS are similar to those of the new R8 production model. But above all, the new car is easy on the tyres. We will benefit from that in the ADAC GT Masters, as only one set of tyres is allowed in the race.”

In Patric Niederhauser you have a new team-mate. How well do you know him, and how highly do you rate him?

“I know Patric from the 2017 season when we were team-mates at Aust Motorsport. I have rated him highly ever since and always wanted to team up with him. That opportunity has now arrived. He is very fast, very astute and has already acquired a lot of experience in motorsport. I think we will make a good team.”

What are your objectives for the season?

“My objective is very clear: last year we missed out on the title by one point. So you could say we have some unfinished business.”

ADAC GT Masters race calendar for 2019 *

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|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 26/04/19 – 28/04/19 | Motorsport Arena Oschersleben |
| 17/05/19 – 19/05/19 | Autodrom Most (CZ) |
| 07/06/19 – 09/06/19 | Red Bull Ring (A) |
| 09/08/19 – 11/08/19 | Circuit Zandvoort (NL) |
| 16/08/19 – 18/08/19 | Nürburgring |
| 13/09/19 – 15/09/19 | Hockenheimring Baden-Württemberg |
| 27/09/19 – 29/09/19 | Sachsenring |

* subject to change

Further information can be found at www.adac.de/gt-masters

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