

Gianmaria Bruni on the 911 RSR

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The #912 Porsche RSR that Gianmaria Bruni will share with Laurens Vanthoor

There was great excitement in Porsche circles around the world, when it was announced earlier this year that the Italian Ferrari driver, Gianmaria Bruni, had split from his AF Corse Ferrari team and was to join the Porsche GTE ranks. His contract precluded him from racing for an opposition team inside six months, and so he has been limited to testing the 911 RSR. Bruni will join Porsche in the USA in its challenge for honours in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship.

“I was very impressed with the team’s professionalism,” said Gianmaria Bruni. The Italian has waited a long time for this opportunity, but on 2 July in Watkins Glen in the American state of New York, he will contest his first race for Porsche with the 911 RSR in the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

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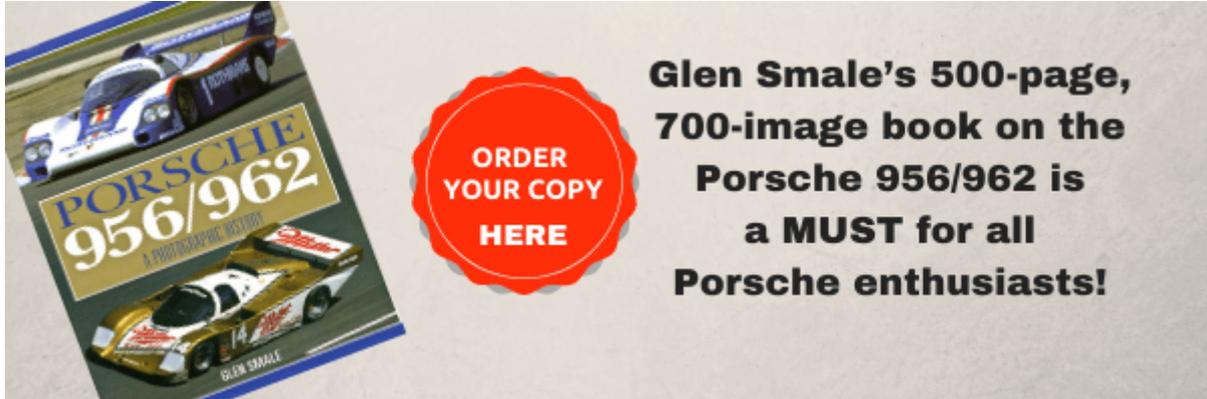
“It’s a big challenge for me to switch in the middle of the season to such a strongly supported series like the IMSA SportsCar Championship with a new car,” said the new Porsche works driver in an interview. After securing victories and titles for Ferrari over the past years, he now joins forces with his Belgian works driver teammate Laurens Vanthoor to tackle North America’s premier sports car championship for Porsche. “There are many things I’ll have to get used to, but I’m very grateful for this chance and I’ll do everything to achieve successes with Porsche as soon as possible.”

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Gianmaria, up until now you’ve only tested the new 911 RSR. How much are you looking forward to your maiden race with Porsche?

“I’m very excited of course. Although I’ve never competed on the very demanding Watkins Glen racetrack, I’m very pleased that we finally get to race with Porsche.”

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You could test the 911 RSR at Road America. What was the main focus of this?

“For me it was important to gather as much information as possible and to see how the car responds under different conditions - for example with worn and fresh tyres, in low and high track temperatures. The insights I gained during this short time were very informative.”

What was your first impression of the new 911 RSR?

“My first encounter with the 911 RSR was very impressive. Even before you climb into the cockpit, you can see just how much potential the car has. However, the handling is completely different to the cars I’ve driven in the past. In this respect, it will take me a while to familiarise myself with the 911 RSR so that I’m really fast. But for a racing driver there’s no better challenge.”

Have you been able to settle in to the Porsche GT Team?

“The reception was fantastic. When I got onto the plane in the USA I didn’t really know what was coming, but my expectations were exceeded. I’ve received a very warm welcome from everyone and I immediately felt at home. Although I’ve only experienced the team during the short tests at Road America, I was very impressed by the professional way the guys worked there. And my new teammate Laurens and I clicked immediately, so this makes me all the more excited for the first race at Watkins Glen and for the rest of the season.”

What are your goals?

“It’s been seven years since I contested a full season in the USA. The races there have their own rules, they’re difficult to gauge. The many safety car phases can turn everything upside down at any time. Until you’ve crossed the finish line, you can never know where you’ll end up. This is completely different to, say, the WEC, but it’s still a wonderful challenge. My goal for the rest of the season is to learn as much as possible about the new 911 RSR so that I can go for the championship title well prepared with Porsche in 2018, regardless of the race series. I’m already looking forward to this.”

There will be many Porsche enthusiasts eagerly watching to see how Porsche’s latest recruit fares in the RSR. Not that Bruni will need much introduction to the cut and thrust of international sports car racing, what with the list of victories on his CV. These include: victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours (2014/GTE-Pro), victory in the Sports Car World Endurance Championship WEC (2013, 2014/GTE-Pro) as well as winning the title in the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup (2011, 2012) and the GT Open (2012). He also won the Sebring 12 Hours in 2010 (GT), and outright victory at the 24 Hours of Spa in 2015. Enough said...!

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