

February 18, 2010

Emirati advisor lives the motor sport dream thanks to “arrive and drive” racing

### **New Porsche series builds fast track from office to race circuit**

**Abu Dhabi.** What started as a normal working day for Khaled Al Qubaisi today will be rounded off by high speed laps around the spectacular Yas Marina Circuit in a state-of-the-art racing car.

For Al Qubaisi, an acquisitions advisor with Mubadala Development Company in Abu Dhabi, the world of Formula One racing is miles apart from his own ambitions, having taken up competitive motor sport only last summer.

But the launch of a new racing concept in the region has given the 34-year-old Emirati the chance to drive at a highly professional level without losing time at work, and more UAE enthusiasts could now follow him from the office to the race track.

The “arrive and drive” nature of the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East opens up a thrilling new world of race action for people like Al Qubaisi, whose daily routines means they have a limited amount of time to devote to their passion for motor sport.

They can now head straight from the office to the circuit, swap their kandura or business suit and briefcase for race overalls and helmet, step into a perfectly prepared Porsche GT3 Cup car, and be an active part of an exciting regional motor sport series.

“It’s a fantastic experience,” said Al Qubaisi, who can’t wait to get back behind the wheel at the Yas Marina Circuit, home of the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix, when the Porsche series makes its second visit there in a fortnight this weekend.



“I’m a busy person and don’t have much time to spend at the race track. When I heard Porsche were introducing this new concept here and I saw it was set up to accommodate people like me, I knew it was a unique opportunity.”

Others enjoying the “arrive and drive” experience, despite hectic business schedules, include Fawaz Al Gosaibi, president of one of Saudi Arabia’s largest logistics and distribution companies, and Bandar Alesayi, who currently holds third place in the championship while running a major automotive business in Jeddah.

Now at the half way point, the 12-round series was introduced in December by Porsche Middle East in conjunction with Austrian-based motor sport specialists, Lechner Racing.

“It’s designed to identify top Arab and local-based talent in the region and become a platform for entry into the world of international GT and sports car racing,” said Walter Lechner, who once drove Porsches at Le Mans, and now runs the GT3 Cup series to a very high professional level using his own team of mechanics and racing experts.

“Motor racing is not cheap, and to take part in this series you have to invest in a brand new Porsche GT3 Cup car to begin with. So it’s for people who are serious about racing and who may not have much spare time.”

The present grid line-up includes Saudi Arabian princes, cousins and team-mates, Abdulaziz and Khalid Al Faisal, currently lying first and second in the championship.

“We’ve launched the series at a time when motor sport in the region is enjoying enormous popularity,” said Deesch Papke, Managing Director, Porsche Middle East & Africa. “It’s created a lot of interest, both within the region and overseas. A few more places on the starting grid are still available, and we’d like them to go to Emiratis or other nationals from the Middle East.”



Ahead of the latest race weekend in Abu Dhabi, Bahrain's Sheikh Salman bin Rashid al Khalifa summed up the excitement felt by all the drivers about the series.

"It's unique, and it works particularly well at Yas Marina Circuit," said Sheikh Salman. "The hotel is right there at the track so I just get up and race." The series also takes in the international circuits in Bahrain and Reem outside Riyadh and could expand next year.

Caption: Khaled Al Qubaisi – taking the fast-track from office to race track at Yas Marina Circuit.

**ENDS**

Note: For more information and images on the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Middle East please visit [www.gt3cupchallenge-me.com](http://www.gt3cupchallenge-me.com) or contact Total Communications, Tony Lewis/Ahmad Huzayen, Tel: + 971 4 336 9909, Fax: + 971 4 336 9905, E-mail: [tony@totalcompr.ae](mailto:tony@totalcompr.ae) / [ahmad@totalcompr.ae](mailto:ahmad@totalcompr.ae).

For additional information on Porsche, please visit the website [www.porsche.com](http://www.porsche.com) or contact Anja Wood, Tel: +9714-2991 699, Fax: +9714-2991 789, e-mail: [wood@porsche-me.ae](mailto:wood@porsche-me.ae).

