

HEADLINE:

Ford hopes new GT will help history repeat at Le Mans.

U.S. auto giant Ford is aiming to repeat its famous win at the Le Mans 24 Hour race with a new GT challenger

SHOWS: GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, (MARCH 1, 2016) (GIMS - ACCESS ALL):

1. VARIOUS OF FORD GT RACECAR AND FORD GT ROADCAR

2. SOUNDBITE (English) RAJ NAIR, FORD EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, GLOBAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, SAYING:

"This year in particular is very special for us because it's the 50th anniversary of when we won a Le Mans in 1966, actually came in 1-2-3 that year with the GT40, and our heritage is important to us as a company so to honour that 50th anniversary it seemed the best way to do that was to do another GT and to take it racing back at Le Mans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the win."

3. FORD GT DRIVER STEFAN MUCKE LOOKING AT GT RACE CAR

4. SOUNDBITE (English) STEFAN MUCKE, FORD GT RACING DRIVER, SAYING:

"There's no question for me there's so much history behind that when I grew up as a child of course you've racing blood in you and you know about the history about Ford and Le Mans and being part of that is like a dream come true."

5. FORD GT DRIVER STEFAN MUCKE LOOKING AT GT RACE CAR

6. SOUNDBITE (English) RAJ NAIR, FORD EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, GLOBAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, SAYING:

"I think the team's done a great job particularly at the front of the vehicle with the nostrils, it really evokes the GT40 and the 2005 GT, the overall silhouette of the car, the high point at the top of the wind shield and then sloping back from that the haunches are also very evocative of the original vehicle but you can see the aerodynamic treatment particularly at the rear and the way we've created the tunnels between the engine and the rear tyres, it almost looks like a prototype car."

7. SOUNDBITE (English) STEFAN MUCKE, FORD GT RACING DRIVER, SAYING:

"You immediately feel confident in the car it's quite, not easy to drive, but the handling is very neutral so it's very balanced and so the engineers did a great job in all the parts, aerodynamics, weight distribution and also the engine."

8. VARIOUS DETAIL SHOTS OF FORD GT RACE CAR

9. SOUNDBITE (English) RAJ NAIR, FORD EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER, GLOBAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, SAYING:

"The GT classes are very attractive to us know because it's much more connected to the production vehicle that you'll actually see on the road. A lot of the technologies that you'll actually see in the vehicle will see their way into mainstream vehicles, like the EcoBoost technology and the light-weighting of the vehicle. Even some aspects of the aerodynamic tools we're using. And that isn't always the case in the prototype category, you can't necessarily relate it to what's in the showroom and so it makes the GT a very attractive class to us right now."

10. VARIOUS DETAIL SHOTS OF FORD GT ROAD CAR

11. SOUNDBITE: STEFAN MUCKE, FORD GT RACING DRIVER, SAYING (English):

"It's not an endurance race, it's a sprint race over 24 hours and there's no time for relaxing. It's a 100 percent fight all race through and of course you need luck. And

Ford is coming with four cars to Le Mans which is a great effort to put into the series and surely we're here to try to win races."

12. MUCKE LOOKING AT FORD GT RACE CAR

STORY: Ford is aiming to win the Le Mans 24 Hours race on the 50th anniversary of its famous victory at the French classic.

This year a pair of Ford GTs will compete in the LMGTE Pro category of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

In 1966 the original Ford GT40 took victory at Le Mans in the hands of New Zealanders Bruce McLaren and Chris Amon,

For the renewed attack the legendary U.S. team Ganassi will run Ford's team.

The cars are being driven by British racers Andy Priaulx, Marino Franchitti, France's Olivier Pla and Germany's Stefan Mucke.

"It's not an endurance race, it's a sprint race over 24 hours and there's no time for relaxing," said Mucke of Le Mans.

"It's a 100 percent fight all race through and of course you need luck."

The team's GT racer is based on the road car of the same name, which itself takes styling cues from the famous GT40.

Only 250 of the road-going versions will be built.

Raj Nair, who is Ford's executive vice president and chief technical officer of global product development, explains: "I think the team's done a great job particularly at the front of the vehicle with the nostrils, it really evokes the GT40," he said.

Nair added Ford was attracted to the WEC's LMGTE category over the top prototype class.

"The GT classes are very attractive to us now because it's much more connected to the production vehicle that you'll actually see on the road," he said. "A lot of the technologies that you'll actually see in the vehicle will see their way into mainstream vehicles, like the EcoBoost technology and the light-weighting of the vehicle."

The GT is powered by Ford's EcoBoost 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6.

To win Le Mans the car will need to beat heavyweight competition in the form of Ferrari, Porsche, Aston Martin and Chevrolet Corvette.

Stefan Mucke left the Aston Martin factory team to join Ford, citing the American company's racing heritage as a major factor.

"There's no question for me there's so much history behind that when I grew up as a child of course you've racing blood in you and you know about the history about Ford and Le Mans and being part of that is like a dream come true," he said.

The Ford GT makes its first FIA World Endurance Championship start at Silverstone in the UK on April 17, before racing at Le Mans on June 18-19.