

SA GT Challenge kicks off 25 February

The South African GT Challenge kicks off at Phakisa on 25 February 2017, with several sensational new cars set to join the action.



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The all-new SA GT Challenge will run over seven rounds across the country for the first time in a 2017 roadshow alongside the South African Endurance Championship, starting with the February races in Welkom. The big news, however, is the arrival of several new GT3 machines to race here.

"We are delighted with the response to the South African GT Challenge," says series boss Charl Arangies. "We will have several cars racing in SA for the first time in Welkom and there are many others on the water and ready to come to SA over the next few months to join the first official South African GT3 series."

Newcomers

Top of the list of newcomers is a Ferrari 458 Italia GT3 set to join the ranks of several other Ferrari F430s and 360 Stradales on track. The new car, which is similar to the machine David Perel raced in the Blancpain series last year, will be driven by Cape Town driver Marcel Angel at Phakisa and will join a fleet of Ferrari F430s including Jaki Scheckter in a Pablo Clark version, Craig Jarvis, Willem van der Westhuizen and Loris Chiappa's Morris Cranes car.

The Daytona Group's McLaren 650S is another star attraction, possibly driven by Leeroy Poulter once again, while Jason Campos will be out in the Campos Transport BMW M3 GT to pick up where those two left off last time out. It is understood that Campos will step up into another McLaren a little later in the season, vacating that BMW seat to brother Keegan.



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All of the above will, however, have to first beat the Lamborghinis in GT3, following SA Endurance champion Simon Murray's recent form in his recently acquired Gallardo, while Charl Aranges can be expected to deliver a formidable challenge in his Stradale Gallardo LP520 and Oliver Dalais' Bailey GT will add to the spice.

Biggest news on the Lamborghini front, however, is the imminent arrival of Greg Parton's Dizit Huracán GT3 machine - it is not likely to arrive in time for Phakisa, but expect it for round 2 at Killarney in Cape Town in April, by when there is every likelihood that a BMW Z4 GT3, an Audi R8 LMS and a Dodge Viper will also have joined the SA GT Challenge GT3 ranks.

Interest in the new GT4 class

There is also much interest in the new GT4 class, where several Porsches including Tania du Toit will take on a gang of Ferraris, including Andre van der Merwe's 360, Peter Zeelie's Lotus Elise, Harry Aranges' Ford Mustang FR500c GT4 and Johan Hattingh in a Nissan 350Z among several other entries expected for Phakisa.

"The response to the new South African GT proves the need for dedicated championship catering for GT3 racing supercars and run to the same rules as the world's leading GT3 series," says Aranges.

All SA GT3 Challenge races will be live streamed.