

Marsh and O'Young Team Up for Le Mans

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([PRWEB](#)) June 2, 2005 -- Hong Kong drivers Matthew Marsh and Darryl O'Young are teaming up to fly the baubinia flag for the SAR's pioneering Le Mans team.

Marsh, the reigning Porsche Infineon Carrera Cup Asia champion, and O'Young, one of his rivals in the series, are to be co-drivers on the Hong Kong team aiming to take part in the world's greatest sports car race - the Le Mans 24 Hours.

And making it a true Hong Kong 'dream team' will be recently retired SAR racing legend Charles Kwan Siu Cheung, who has agreed to act as an official adviser to the project.

'This is a dream come true. I'm still pinching myself,' said Canadian-born Chinese driver O'Young. 'Since I was young Le Mans has always been the peak of sports car racing, so to land this project is the culmination of everything I've been aiming for in my racing career.'

'At 25, I feel I'm always learning but I'm ready for the challenge and this is a fantastic opportunity. I've learned so much from racing in the Carrera Cup last season and this season and it's really prepared me for this chance.'

O'Young, the son of a Hong Kong mother and a father from Guangdong province who was raised in Hong Kong, was born in Vancouver and began karting at the age of eight. He moved to the SAR at the beginning of last year to start competing in the Carrera Cup. He added: 'I've done a 24-hour race and a 12-hour race in California. They were club-level events but they gave me good experience to prepare for this.'

Marsh, who has been spearheading the ambitious project, was delighted to secure O'Young's services. 'It's fantastic news that Darryl has joined the project,' he said. 'I know from competing against him in the Carrera Cup that he is an extremely talented driver who has plenty of experience racing Porsches.'

'Just as importantly, Darryl is a team player, someone who will put the needs of the team ahead of the individual. Right from the start of our discussions he has been very enthusiastic about the Le Mans campaign and is keen to be part of Hong Kong motor racing history.'

The Hong Kong team, Noble Group-GruppeM Racing, has been further boosted by the news that former Carrera Cup champion Kwan has agreed to be an adviser.

Kwan, 41, who retired from competitive racing last November after 20 years in the sport, said: 'It's a great project, one that will raise the profile of motor racing in Hong Kong.'

'Matthew and Darryl know I have plenty of experience, especially having been involved in endurance racing in Japan, so that's why they've asked me to be an adviser. They've been putting a lot of time and effort into this and I'm happy to help.'

Marsh said Kwan's support would be invaluable. "Charles brings vast knowledge and experience to the setup," he said. "He will be advising us on a wide range of subjects from endurance driving skills to technical issues. He's fully supportive of the Le Mans campaign and it's a huge boost for the team to have him involved."

Marsh and O'Young will be driving a Porsche GT3 RSR with a distinctive yellow, white and red livery that features a large baehinia on the roof. It will be the first time ever that a car owned and sponsored by SAR companies and piloted by Hong Kong drivers has gone wheel to wheel with the world's best at Le Mans.

The road to Le Mans will begin with four races this year in the Le Mans Endurance Series (LMES) in Europe. Each event is 1,000km and lasts about six hours, followed by a trip to the 12 Hours of Sebring race in Florida next March. Good results in those five outings will be enough to secure an invitation to the Le Mans 24 Hours in June 2006.

A two-man driving team is enough for the LMES, but a third driver will be required for Sebring and Le Mans. "Sebring is more than nine months away, so we have plenty of time to select the third driver," said British-born Marsh, 36, who has lived in Hong Kong for 14 years.

The Le Mans project has been made possible by the support and enthusiasm of two Hong Kong companies: Noble Group and the William E Connor Group, and GruppeM Racing, the UK-based outfit that is one of only two teams worldwide to carry Porsche factory supported status.

"Hong Kong could not ask for a better driving team than Matthew and Darryl," said GruppeM owner Kenny Chen, a Chinese property developer who has lived in the UK for the past 18 years. "They are both experienced Porsche drivers with the talent and technical know-how needed to race at the highest level. We're really looking forward to working with them."

Noble Group-GruppeM Racing will begin their campaign at Monza, Italy, on July 10, the first of the four LMES races. Other events will be at Silverstone in August, Germany's famous Nurburgring in September and Istanbul, Turkey, in November.

The team's Porsche has already been delivered to the UK and Marsh and O'Young expect to begin testing at Silverstone in mid to late June.

"All the pieces in the project are coming together nicely," added Marsh. "We worked long and hard to put the sponsorship package in place and now, with Darryl on board, Charles joining as an adviser and the car delivered, we are ready to go racing. We'll be going all out to make a strong debut at Monza."

Released by Two Up Front, the official media relations partner of Noble Group-GruppeM Racing.

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