



PRESS RELEASE

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RENAULT TO CELEBRATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS MEMORABLE LE MANS VICTORY BY CONTESTING THE 2008 LE MANS CLASSIC

Sunday June 11, 1978: victory for Renault Alpine in the Le Mans 24 Hours

Four Renault Alpines were entered for the race: three A442s and a single A443. These four machines shared a certain number of improvements, although it was decided to run different final drive ratios, turbo boost pressures and aerodynamic specifications. The strategy paid off handsomely: following a strong start from the A443, the principal strength of which was its sheer speed, the A442B profited from its endurance ability to collect victory after spending a full 23 hours and 24 minutes on the track, and a total of just 36 minutes in the pits. It was a genuine team win which paved the way for Renault's full commitment to Formula 1.

The Le Mans 24 Hours race is a unique litmus test for any car manufacturer. Endurance is the key, and the winning car is often the one which spends the least time in the pits over the 24-hour period. Victory in this prestigious competition is an ideal means for carmakers to forge a reputation for performance and reliability. In Renault's case, it was a mandatory step before focusing its energy solely on motor racing's premier category, Formula 1, which promotes the international awareness of a brand.

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the legendary 1978 race, Renault will be present at the 2008 Le Mans Classic with the four cars that fired the imagination of the spectators who attended the 1978 Le Mans 24 Hours.

Driven by Jean Ragnotti and Alain Serpaggi, **the A443 will contest the Le Mans Classic on Grid 6** which means that it will line up against the likes of the Ferrari 512 BBLM, the Porsche 935 and 911 RS, the BMW M1 and 3.5CSL and the Ford Capri 2600 RS.

The A442 will take part in the **Le Mans Heritage concours**, while Jean-Pierre Jaussaud, one of the two winning drivers in 1978, will lead the anniversary parade at its wheel.

The other two A442s will be on display at the Renault Collectors enclosure which this year features some 250 vehicles.

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The A443 in brief**The A442 in brief**

Engine	V6 24V Turbo Injection	V6 24V Turbo
Cubic capacity (cc)	2,138	1,997
Maximum power	530hp at 9,900rpm	500hp at 9,900rpm
Transmission	Rear-wheel drive	Rear-wheel drive
Gearbox	Five-speed Hewland box	Five-speed Hewland box
Length/Width (cm)	496/184	480/184
Weight (kg)	761	715
Top speed	Approx. 375kph	Approx 350kph
100kph standing start	Approx. 3.3s	Approx 3.5s

The A443: the latest addition to the Alpine armada

The A443 was a descendant of the A441 and was the longer sister (by 16cm) of the A442s which were entered for the 1978 Le Mans 24 Hours. It boasted some 30 additional horsepower and was more stable, faster and more fuel efficient than the A442.

With the exception of a certain number of minor modifications, such as the new fuel tanks squeezed in its shell, the specification of the A443 is the same as it was in 1978. Its 'vintage' steeringwheel, small 14-inch front wheels and 15-inch rear wheels serve as impressive reminders of the A443's purposeful design. It was both robust and, despite the lack of power steering, extremely responsive. The brushes which run along its flanks and which come into contact with the ground ensured outstanding cornering stability, even at very high speeds.

The special character of the A443 was further highlighted by its remarkably powerful yet flexible Renault Gordini engine which delivered some 30 extra horsepower compared with the two-litre V6 powerplant of the A442s.

The Le Mans Classic is a biennial event first organised in 2002 following a desire to reproduce the passion and magic that were the hallmarks of the Le Mans 24 Hours from the early 20th Century until the late 1970s. The full 13.6km track is used, with 18 races organised over a period of 24 hours. Some 400 cars actually compete, while 6,000 club cars can be admired by the 70,000-plus spectators. To be eligible, cars must have either actually contested the Le Mans 24 Hours between 1923 and 1979, or else be the same model.

The 2008 event takes place over the weekend of July 11-13 and, in keeping with previous years, will seek to recreate a full-scale look back at more than half a century of Le Mans 24 Hours excitement.

Renault's participation in the 2008 Le Mans Classic

The three A442s and the A443 will be joined by more than 250 classic Renaults, ranging from 4CVs to Alpine A110s, R8 and R12 Gordinis, Dauphines and Spiders, as well as more recent models from the sports range such as the Mégane RS.

Seven nations will be represented in the Renault Collectors' enclosure, namely Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Spain and Switzerland.

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