

The Efficient Car Guide

A guide to fuel efficient cars, and prototypes being designed, built or proposed.

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Friday, 7 December 2012

Responsible Racing - 700BHP Electric GT car



The 700BHP 6 speed Electric Quimera GT

Responsible & Racing – it still sounds weird 15 minutes after I've first heard it! These are two words which have seldom been paired, but Quimera are deadly serious about putting together the first all electric World Championship.

Six different classes, including bikes & drift cars will compete in cities across the globe with the hope of pushing the pace of technological change and promoting sustainable products and lifestyles.

Javier de Rocafort's Quimera company, based in Barcelona, have developed a 700 Brake horsepower GT car fitted with a six speed sequential Hewland gearbox which, on the face of it, would seem to be a rather sticky dollop of excess as its electric motor produces a massive 1100nm of torque! (almost double the Dodge Viper's lusty V10) However it appears that the addition of a gearbox brings another dimension to the electric car experience, the familiarity and control of a well-timed downshift, using the braking effect of the motor perhaps? Or just the ability to pull off some pretty effortless donuts?! Mr de Rocafort isn't expanding on this just yet...

The Quimera isn't the only car being readied for 'production' however, Ross Brawn has designed an F3 style car – called Formula EC – which has spent two and half years in development with the Segula Automotive team, better known for their involvement with the electric Andros Trophy cars. The Formula EC's aim has been to give Formula 3 equivalent performance with electric propulsion and the series was already scheduled to kick-off in 2014 before Responsible Racing came along. In addition, the spectacle will be enhanced further by the TTXGP bikes which have been around since their inaugural race at the Isle of Man TT in 2009, and which, earlier this year, lapped the TT course at an average of just over 104 MPH in the hands of TT winner Michael Rutter - to give some perspective the lap record for the 37.75mile mountain course stands at 131.578 MPH.

The series line-up being proposed by Quimera will include classes for:

- GT Cars – approx 700BHP
- Touring Cars - approx 400BHP
- F1 Style cars - approx 500BHP
- F3 Style cars - approx 285BHP
- Le-mans style - approx 520BHP
- Drift Cars - approx 220BHP
- Motorcycles

It's anticipated that the series will be toured around the worlds city centres, Rio and Monaco, just two of the big names being speculated upon, all racing will take place on one day, and it's hoped a start date sometime in 2014 - which just happens to coincide with the biggest shake up in Formula-one's rules, arguably since the last turbo era of the late 70's/early 80's. And although one particular rule change has been delayed – the regs initially required F1 cars run 'electric-only' in the pitlane at GP's – it marks a step-change in the direction the higher echelons of the sport are taking.

It's a clever idea, putting all these fledgling series together to showcase them on a single day in their natural habitat – city streets – it will show off their strengths, and as anybody involved in Motorsport will tell you, racing DOES improve the breed, pushing technology faster than it's natural pace, which bodes well for the future of Motor-racing in particular and autonomous transportation in general.

So it's come to the point where it has to be said – There's an elephant in the room! Electricity currently needs to be stored in either capacitors or batteries, and neither of these is capable of holding a charge for very long! The proposal for these series is that they will race for 20 minutes then take a pit-stop to change cars, whilst the other car is re-charged. And they are HEAVY.

Is this a serious threat to the mainly petrol-engined Motorsport formula's we all know and love? Maybe it is – I know I'm not on my own when I declare my undying love for the petrol engine – it's various eclectic sounds, smells and complexities are evocative of race-meetings past and present, where the sun shone and a V8 bark made the ground shake beneath one's feet or a throaty four let out it's blood-curdling howl! They sound alive, a beast waiting to be unleashed! Somehow the high-pitched whine of an electric motor (even when coupled with a straight-cut Hewland sequential gearbox) and a smell of overheating hair-dryer just doesn't do it for me..... My feeling is that it will be sometime before the Nissan Leaf is mixing it with the SaxMAX crew, what do you think?

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