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SRT® Viper GTS-R Unveiled; Set for Return to American Le Mans Series

New two-car SRT Motorsports team plans on-track debut in summer 2012

April 3, 2012, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The street legal 2013 SRT® Viper unveiled to the world today at the New York International Auto Show isn't the only high-performance snake making a triumphant return in 2012.

The purpose-built, non-street legal and competition-ready SRT Viper GTS-R also was revealed as part of the Chrysler Group's announcement that a factory-backed SRT Viper Racing team will return to the American Le Mans Series (ALMS) in 2012.

"Racing has been a significant part of the illustrious history of Viper not only with wins on the track, but also in the continued development of the street cars – and our new 2013 SRT Viper models are proof of those lessons learned," said Ralph Gilles, President and CEO – Street and Racing Technology Brand and Motorsports, Chrysler Group LLC. "Now with our new team and the launch of the GTS-R, we're excited and proud to begin writing more chapters in the racing history of the Viper later this summer."

SRT Motorsports has partnered with Riley Technologies, based in Mooresville, N.C., on the design-and-build process of the new SRT Viper GTS-R.

Two identical SRT Viper GTS-Rs will compete in the production-based GT class in the series. Four drivers currently are signed to drive including Dominik Farnbacher, from Ansbach, Germany; Marc Goossens from Geel, Belgium; Ryan Hunter-Reay from Dallas and Kuno Wittmer from Montreal. Additional driver and team announcements will be forthcoming.

Both Viper GTS-Rs will race on the proven Michelin GT tires extending the successful technical partnership.

Scott Atherton, President and CEO of the American Le Mans Series, hails the SRT Viper's return to the Series as one of 2012's top announcements.

"I don't think it's possible to overstate the significance of the SRT Viper returning to the top level of professional sports car racing," Atherton said. "The Chrysler Group has a long, storied and very successful history of competing with the American Le Mans Series. The fact that they're coming back concurrently with the introduction of the new production car and doing it simultaneously, we would be hard-pressed to come up with a better-case scenario. What a great way for SRT Viper to come back to racing."

All ALMS teams compete in the prestigious MICHELIN® GREEN X® Challenge. Entering its fourth season, the program objectively ranks the competing cars in terms of their environmental footprint, their energy efficiency and speed on the racetrack. A separate, season-long award is given by the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and SAE International, acknowledging the vehicle manufacturer and its technology contribution to improving efficiency and reducing environmental impacts of racing. The scoring system for the program was developed by series officials and the U.S. Department of Energy, and it is based on a combination of on-track performance and energy consumption. The LMP and GT teams that win MICHELIN GREEN X Challenge championship will earn an entry to the 2013 24 Hours of Le Mans.

"We often say it's clean, fast and efficient," Bob Larsen, president of Obotech and a contractor for the U.S. Department of Energy, said. "There's a lot of science that goes into the actual scoring, a very thorough and technically rigorous way to factor in the environmental footprint. We look at each car's average speed and the distance that they travel and we adjust their amount of fuel that they would have had to burn in order to go as fast and as far as the leader, and that gives us an equitable basis for comparing the performance of the vehicles."

Viper racing heritage

The Viper has enjoyed a successful racing heritage that began in 1996 with the first Dodge Viper racing entry, the original GTS-R, which earned five international GT championships and the 1997-1999 FIA GT championships. It also posted an amazing overall win at the Rolex 24 Hours of Daytona in 2000 – the first for a production-based American car.

Viper finished one-two at the 24 Hours of Le Mans in GTS class in three consecutive years - 1998–2000 - and also captured GTS class, and driver's championships in the American Le Mans Series in 1999 along with the Series class, manufacturer's and driver's championships in 2000.

The Dodge Viper Competition Coupe, introduced in 2003, delivered the next chapter of that history with its coupe-shaped carbon/Kevlar body and a track-ready chassis, based on the Dodge Viper SRT10®. The Viper Competition Coupe continued the on-track prowess by capturing the 2004 SCCA Speed World Challenge GT title, championships in Formula D Drifting series in 2004 and 2006 and the British GT Championship in 2007 and 2008.

In 2010, the Dodge Viper Cup Series was founded using the limited-edition Dodge Viper ACR-X spec series cars. Now in its third year, the series has been renamed the SRT Viper Cup Series.

Driver biographies

Dominik Farnbacher

- Born Sept. 26, 1984, in Ansbach, Germany, where he currently resides
- Competed in 2012 Rolex 24 at Daytona with TRG Motorsports
- Has seven career starts in the Rolex 24 at Daytona (2009-2012, 2005-2007)
- Won 2005 Rolex 24 at Daytona GT class alongside co-drivers Wolf Henzler, Shawn Price and Pierre Ehret
- Grew up in an auto racing family watching father Horst Farnbacher compete in Europe
- Is a four-time winner in the ALMS' GT class
- On Sept. 14, 2011, Farnbacher established a new production-car lap record at the famous Nurburging Nordschleife by covering the 12.9-mile course in 7:12.13 seconds in a Dodge Viper ACR – shattering the previous lap record by more than two seconds

Marc Goossens

- Born Nov. 30, 1969, in Geel, Belgium
- Has 11 starts in the 24 Hours of Le Mans (1996-2003, 2008, 2010-2011)
- Competed in Formula 3000 from 1994 to 1996 and part-time in the series from 1999 through 2001
- Won 24 Hours of Zolder four times (1997, 1998, 2005 and 2007) with co-drivers Vincent Dupont and Anthony Kumpen. The event is yearly sports car and touring car endurance race held at Circuit Zolder in Belgium
- Competed in FIA GT series from 2002 through 2005
- Scored a ninth-place finish in first NASCAR Nationwide Series start at Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez in Mexico City in 2006 driving for Robert Yates Racing
- Made his NASCAR Sprint Cup Series debut at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International in 2006

Ryan Hunter-Reay

- Born Dec. 17, 1980 in Dallas and resides in Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Drives for Andretti Autosport in the IZOD IndyCar Series
- Has competed full-time in the IndyCar Series since 2008
- Most recent IndyCar Series victory came in 2011 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway
- Won IndyCar Rookie of the Year in 2007 (despite a limited schedule) and captured the same honor in the 2008 Indianapolis 500
- Secured first career victory at Surfers Paradise, Australia in 2003, becoming first American rookie in more than 20 years to win a Champ Car race

- Has four starts in ALMS, all in the 12 Hours of Sebring, with one win in 2011 in the LMP2 Class
- Has 16 previous starts in the Grand-Am Rolex Sports Car Series where he scored one win and three podium finishes. Victory came in 2007 at Miller Motorsports Park in Toole, Utah where he teamed with Jim Matthews and Marc Goossens to score the victory
- Has six starts in the Rolex 24 at Daytona, all coming in the last six consecutive races. His best finish came in 2010 when he placed third
- Competed in the Toyota Atlantic Series in 2002 where he won three races and led the series in laps led and poles
- Was the 1999 Skip Barber Formula Dodge National Champion

Kuno Wittmer

- Born Sept. 6, 1982, in Pointe Claire, Canada
- In 2000, he became the youngest driver to compete in the Toyota Atlantic Championship when he was just 17 years old
- Scored six victories while competing in the SCCA World Challenge GT class in the United States from 2008-2010
- Broke the timed single-lap record at Miller Motorsports Park, Tooele, Utah, in a 2010 Dodge Viper ACR on April 11, 2011. Wittmer ran a record lap of 1:59.995 (91.444 mph average), eclipsing the 2-minute mark for the first time in a production car on the 3.048-mile road course and shattering the previous track record by close to 4 full seconds. Wittmer has also driven the same Dodge Viper ACR to single-lap production car records at Daytona International Speedway, Daytona Beach, Fla.; Gingerman Raceway in South Haven, Mich.; Monticello Motor Club, Monticello, N.Y.; New Jersey Motorsports Park, Millville, N.J.; Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wis.; Texas World Speedway, College Station, Texas and Virginia International Raceway, Alton, Va.

About SRT Motorsports

The engineering expertise within SRT extends well beyond our street vehicles. It is a little known fact, but technical support for the Chrysler Group's motorsports programs is provided
by the astute engineers at SRT. Lessons learned on the track directly translate to improved vehicles for our customers. SRT Motorsports is expanding its racing presence this year, so follow us throughout the 2012 season for more news from pit lane.

About SRT

The Chrysler Group's Street and Racing Technology (SRT) brand uses a successful product development formula featuring five proven hallmarks: awe-inspiring powertrains; outstanding ride, handling and capability; benchmark braking; aggressive and functional exteriors and
race-inspired and high-performance interiors to remain true to its performance roots.

The expansion of the SRT vehicle lineup in the 2012 model year features four new products that are world-class performance contenders and bring the latest in safety technologies and creature comforts. These products include the Chrysler 300 SRT8®, Dodge Challenger SRT8 392, Dodge Charger SRT8 and Jeep Grand Cherokee SRT8.

Making its highly anticipated return to the high-performance sports car market in late 2012 is the new 2013 SRT Viper and SRT Viper GTS. The SRT flagship performance machines arrive with more power and performance, superior craftsmanship, new technologies and creature comforts.

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