



Media Information

DTM

27th August 2019

Happy Birthday: BMW M Motorsport congratulates Gerhard Berger on his 60th birthday.

- **ITR chairman Gerhard Berger celebrates special birthday.**
- **Jens Marquardt: “Gerhard Berger and BMW have a shared, successful past”.**
- **Philipp Eng: “Gerhard is an absolute legend”.**

Munich. BMW M Motorsport and the BMW DTM family send their best wishes on a notable birthday: DTM boss Gerhard Berger (AUT) turns 60 today. Since the start of his long career, the former Formula 1 driver and present ITR chairman has always enjoyed a close relationship with BMW.

Berger contested his first Formula 1 race at the Österreichring (AUT) in 1984 – in an ATS-BMW. With Schnitzer Motorsport he enjoyed success in the European Touring Car Championship, and celebrated victory at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps (BEL) with Roberto Ravaglia (ITA) and Marc Surer (SUI) in the BMW 635 CSi in 1985. That year also saw the Austrian drive his first full Formula 1 season in the Arrows with a BMW turbo engine. Berger’s first victory in Formula 1 followed in 1986, winning the Mexico Grand Prix in the BMW turbo-driven Benetton.

After he ended his Formula 1 career in 1997, Berger started a new chapter with BMW and became BMW Motorsport Director in 1998. He held that role until 2003. Together with the dual leadership with BMW Motorsport Director Dr. Mario Theissen, he prepared BMW’s return to Formula 1. It was in that era that BMW also celebrated the overall win for the BMW V12 LMR at the 24 Hours of Le Mans (FRA) in 1999. As ITR chairman, Berger has been directing the DTM’s destiny since 2017.

Best wishes on Gerhard Berger’s 60th birthday.

Jens Marquardt (BMW Group Motorsport Director): “Congratulations Gerhard on your sixtieth, on behalf of the entire BMW Motorsport family! Gerhard Berger and BMW have a shared, successful past. It started in the 1980s, when Gerhard

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celebrated his first successes in racing and embarked on his impressive Formula 1 career with BMW turbo power. He went on to become BMW Motorsport Director, which makes him one of my predecessors. His tenure included the unforgettable Le Mans victory of 1999. We are delighted to be able to continue working with Gerhard in the DTM. He has made the DTM international within a very short time, by bringing Aston Martin to the series as a manufacturer and drawing up a calendar with half of the races in other European countries. And with his input into the regulations, Gerhard has ensured spectacular races and spectator proximity. He really is a fantastic person, and not just as a racing driver, but in everything that he takes on. I wish Gerhard health and fitness on his 60th birthday – that is the most important thing. That he maintains his drive, continues to challenge us in terms of a better DTM and stays who he is – a great guy...”

Bart Mampaey (Team Principal BMW Team RBM): “I was 16 years old when Gerhard won the 24-hour race of Spa-Francorchamps with Charly Lamm’s team. It was after the Juma Racing era, my father’s team, which celebrated a lot of success in this race at that time. I also still remember the BMW 635 CSi really well, with which we won at Spa in 1983. We were always embroiled in a ‘duel’ with Schnitzer, and Gerhard competed for the team in 1984, alongside Roberto Ravaglia and Manfred Winkelhock. I still remember that Gerhard was incredibly fast in the winning year of 1985. It’s not a surprise given that he confirmed his skills later on by making it to the top of Formula 1, where he drove for teams like Ferrari and McLaren. I have a lot of respect for his career as a racing driver, and for everything else he has achieved, for what he represents as a person. After his active career, he enjoyed success not only in various roles in motorsport, but also as an entrepreneur. Then he joined the DTM, at a time not easy for the series, and set the course for a successful future. A very happy birthday to you Gerhard Berger!”

Stefan Reinhold (Team Principal BMW Team RMG): “Firstly, congratulations on your special birthday. As a former fan, I naturally have huge respect for Gerhard. I have known him since he started out as a racing driver and am very impressed with what he has done for the DTM so far. It’s a lot of fun with him, and you can tell that he really is a full-blooded racer. And that is exactly the type of person we need in the DTM.”

Marco Wittmann: “I’d like to wish Gerhard all the best on his special birthday. I first got to know him personally through the DTM, but of course I know everything that

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he did and achieved before that. He has definitely brought a breath of fresh air to the DTM, implemented a lot of innovations, like the turbo engines and Aston Martin joining the series. But he has also done a lot for the fans, for example, the Fan Area or the Fan Base in the paddock. A lot has happened. The series is being made more international. Overall, he has invested a great deal of time and effort. I hope that he stays with us in the DTM for a long time and continues to move it forward.”

Philipp Eng: “Gerhard is an absolute legend in Austria, and not just from a sporting perspective. Anyone who thinks of Austria automatically thinks of Gerhard Berger and Niki Lauda. He has achieved an incredible amount in his life so far, and I feel that he is the right man to steer the big ship that is the DTM. All the changes to the regulations that he initiated, such as no tyre blankets, radio ban or Indy restart have borne fruit. I am happy that I know him, because he is a really laid back guy, a real Austrian. I wish Gerhard Berger all the best on his birthday, particularly health and a long life in which he celebrates many more notable birthdays. I would also like to wish him success in everything that he does. He is involved in a really wide range of activities, not only in the DTM. I wish him all the best with these.”

Bruno Spengler: “Gerhard Berger is a very special person for whom I have a great deal of respect. As a child I always watched him on TV with my dad when he was in Formula 1. The fact that he is now the DTM boss makes us drivers really happy and we are very proud of that. He has made a difference in the DTM, triggered a lot of new things, new regulations, new cars. He is very dynamic and is a wonderful fit for the DTM. We are all really pleased that he is involved. Gerhard, I wish you a very happy birthday from the bottom of my heart.”

Timo Glock: “I wish Gerhard Berger all the best on his birthday, good health and continued creativity, which he has. Gerhard is a person to whom you have always looked up – whether as a Formula 1 driver, team principal or now as the DTM boss. He is an absolutely fantastic person, and I am pleased that he has taken the reins of the DTM. The direction in which he has taken the series is very positive, particularly as far as the regulations are concerned. I think that the sport has become significantly better in recent years. I hope that Gerhard continues to have lots of great ideas and keeps on steering the DTM in the right direction.”

Sheldon van der Linde: “All the best to the boss of the DTM, Gerhard Berger, on his 60th birthday. I think that he is the right man for this job, and all I can say is that I

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am very proud to be able to drive in a series in which Gerhard Berger has so much involvement. He is a real legend and has already done an incredible amount to keep driving the series forward. I am excited to see how things progress.”

Joel Eriksson: “I would like to wish Gerhard Berger all the best on his special birthday. What he has done for the DTM and the championship is incredible. He does a tremendous amount to establish the DTM as one of the most successful race series in the world. I am very happy and incredibly proud to be part of this family. On that note: a very happy birthday.”

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