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4th May 2017 - Italian GT Championship, Round 2 - Misano (I)

VSR headed to **Misano** for the second round of the **Italian Super GT Cup** heading the Championship with the all Italian pair of Cazzaniga and D'Amico. The entire weekend was conducted under flawless summer skies and Sospiri's team was quickly up to speed, dominating the first qualifying session which saw Cazzaniga take a convincing pole position with a margin of nearly one second over the rest of the field. The fight for the second front row place was contested hotly by the other two VSR Lamborghinis with Finland's Vainio coming out on top, beating Chinese driver Liang by just 0.032 seconds.

Saturday's race got underway an hour before sunset and Cazzaniga quickly took command, leading the field with team-mate Vainio close behind him. Liang lost places to Durante and Benvenuti but was back up to 4<sup>th</sup> when the safety car neutralised the race on lap three to recover Kasai's Lamborghini. At the restart Liang slipped past Benvenuti and the VSR cars were once more running nose to tail in the top three positions. When the pit window opened Liang was the first to stop, handing over to Ortiz. Durante pulled into the pits on the same lap and gave his car to Bonacini. After serving an additional five second handicap Ortiz exited pit lane with Bonacini right behind him and the pair commenced an enthralling battle which would last until the chequered flag. A lap later Cazzaniga handed the race lead to his co-driver D'Amico and on lap fourteen Vainio became the last VSR driver to stop. Tujula, who had to serve a fifteen second handicap, slipped down to 5<sup>th</sup> and then lost another position when he was tipped into a spin by an over-ambitious De Marchi who was later served a Drive Through penalty. Undeterred Tujula was the quickest driver on

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more experienced Desideri to take a well-deserved 1<sup>st</sup> place finish. Ortiz held off Bonacini, taking 2<sup>nd</sup> place by just half a second from the Italian driver whilst up front D'Amico had an untroubled run to the chequered flag.

D'Amico repeated his partner's qualifying success by taking pole for Sunday's race with a half second advantage over Basz and Demarchi. Ortiz and Tujula made row three theirs and were less than a second off the pace despite never having seen the Misano circuit before Friday's free practice sessions. At the start D'Amico lost out to Basz and Desideri whilst Tujula got the better of Ortiz. The top six ran nose to tail for the first ten laps, with just three seconds separating 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> and the only change in the order was when D'Amico was passed by Demarchi. Three laps later the pit window opened and VSR called D'Amico in to hand his Huracan over to Cazzaniga. After Saturday's success the pair had a fifteen second handicap and when a lap later Tujula stopped to give his car to Vainio the Finnish pair moved ahead. As Vainio exited the pits the safety car was brought out when Demarchi crashed heavily and Ortiz nipped into pit-lane and managed to make his stop and handover to Liang before the safety car came around. When the track went green again there were just twelve minutes left to run and Liang was running third just behind the two Antonelli cars who at the restart passed the safety car by mistake and were awarded twenty-five second penalties. Their error left the way clear for Liang to lead home the second VSR 1-2-3 of the season.

As the teams head to Monza in a fortnight's time Cazzaniga-D'Amico continue to lead the Championship by a slender margin of just three points from Liang-Ortiz with Tujula-Vainio a further seven points behind.

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