

HERE IT BELONGS, UNUSUAL?

FEATURE Porsche unveiled its all-new LMP2 racer last week. By GARY WATKINS

support that comes with ownership of one of the Stuttgart sportscar builder's racing machines. That will change when the LMP2 goes on sale in time for the 2007 season.

Porsche, or rather its US arm, has decided to tap into those ambitions. Porsche North America commissioned its parent company to produce the LMP2 prototype. Why it has been left to one of the marque's national divisions to push through the design and build of its first true racer since the 911 GT1-98 has never been explained, but it does prove what many of us have suspected for a long time: the big cheeses in Porsche NA care more about motorsport than their superiors over in Germany.

Motorsport is an integral part of the marketing strategy of Porsche NA, which backs programmes in both the ALMS, Grand-Am and even the SPEED World Challenge GT series. You'll see press ads in US newspapers and car magazines boasting of the racing pedigree of its road cars with a regularity not witnessed in Europe these days. And its commitment to the ALMS has been unstinting since the series was established in 1999.

Despite the enthusiasm for racing, Porsche NA doesn't seem keen for the media to talk to its charismatic competitions boss, Uwe Brettel, for many the architect of the LMP2 programme. Instead, enquiries are directed through its long-serving press manager Bob Carlsson who, like most senior executives within the company, is a motorsport nut. →

Main: It's wraps off Porsche's first factory-backed sports racer for seven years

Far left: Ex-Audi R8 aero wizard Michael Pfadenhauer has helped style the all-new LMP2 prototype



Above: The LMP2 car will take on rival entries from Lola, Courage and Lucchini

Left: Porsche's last factory effort yielded victory at Le Mans in 1998

