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[The 2012 Le Mans 24 Hours: Audi to the fore \(once again\)](#)

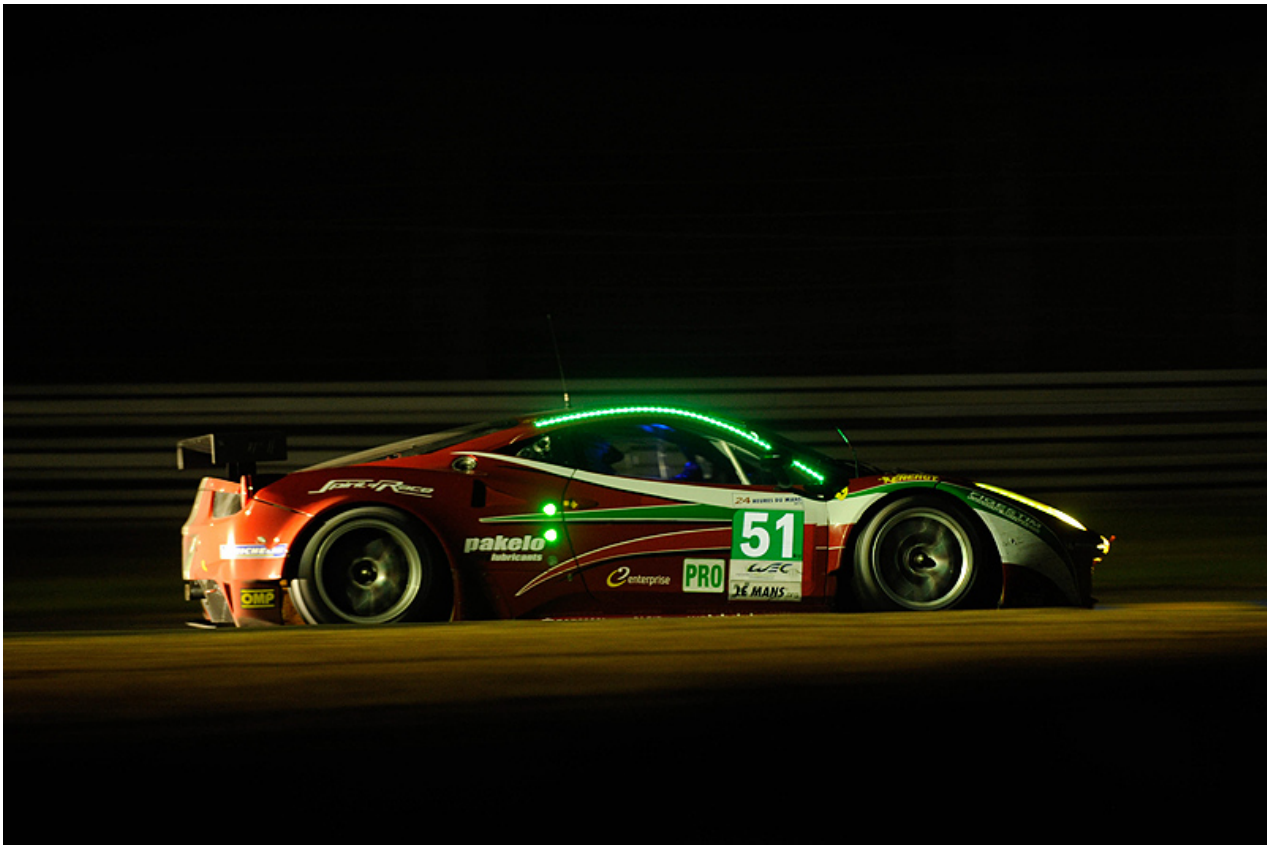
Lead

To no one's great surprise, Audi completed another walkover of the French classic. This year, though, 240,000 spectators witnessed the very first victory by a hybrid, as the winning car combined diesel power for the rear wheels with electric for the front.

The #1 R18 e-tron quattro, driven by Marcel Fässler, André Lotterer and Benoît Tréluyer had been on pole position and was followed over the line by its sister hybrid car of Dindo Capello/Tom Kristensen/Allan McNish. Third was the all-diesel factory Audi of Marco Bonanomi/Oliver Jarvis/Mike Rockenfeller. The remaining Audi finished fifth.

In Peugeot's absence, it was down to hybrid cars from Toyota to challenge for overall victory. Despite showing great pace in the early stages of the race, both cars were out by halfway: Anthony Davidson suffered a horrific accident, luckily with none-too-serious consequences for the driver.





The innovative – and frankly weird – Nissan DeltaWing, with its 300bhp, 1.6-litre engine and 4in-wide front tyres, was going well when unnecessarily pushed off the road by one of the factory Toyotas.

In the GT classes it was a straightforward battle between Ferrari and Corvette, with two plucky Gulf-sponsored Aston Martin V8 Vantages running strongly despite being outnumbered by Italian, German and American GTs. In LMGTE Pro, the #51 AF Corse Ferrari 458 Italia of Giancarlo Fisichella, Gianmaria Bruni and Toni Vilander once again took the class win, followed by another 458 Italia and the hard-charging #97 Aston Martin Racing V8 Vantage of Darren Turner, Stefan Mucke and Adrian Fernandez.

The #50 Larbre Competition Chevrolet Corvette of Pedro Lamy, Julien Canal and Patrick Bornhauser won the LMGTE Am category, despite a race-long battle with first the #67 IMSA Performance Matmut Porsche and then the #57 Krohn Racing Ferrari.

Photos: ACO/Nikon - Audi - Aston Martin Racing

Gallery

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