

Race Report: 10th May, 2026

2026 Italian GT Endurance Championship, Round 1 – Misano

Near miss for VSR in Endurance opener

A podium finish for Liberati, Michelotto and Zanon as well as a points finish for Bowen, Cook and Salmenautio were on the cards for the VSR Lamborghinis until the final minutes of the Misano race in which a record breaking fifty-three cars were entered.



#63 – Alex Bown, Hugo Cook and Jesse Salmenautio (photo by Fotospeedy)

Fifty-three cars on track meant chaotic free practice sessions, full course yellows and serious traffic issues for all the drivers. Qualifying opened with two red flags in the first session making it extremely difficult for the drivers out in Q1 to set a representative time. The following sessions were uninterrupted and the stand-out VSR performance came from Michelotto who was fourth fastest in his session despite being on used tyres. For Sunday afternoon's three hour race the 66 lined up on row three and the 63 on row eight. Rain started just as the cars went to the grid and the race started with three laps behind the Safety Car. It was a first wet race start for teenager Bowen at the wheel of the 63 and he hung on to sixteenth. Ahead Zanon ran confidently in seventh after losing just one place to Petrov until just before the first pit window when a spinning backmarker allowed the Ferrari duo of Medler and Rackstraw to sneak past. Zanon pitted for Michelotto on lap fifteen and three laps later Bowen handed the 63 over to Salmenautio just as the window closed. This coincided with a Full Course Yellow to cover a significant accident on the start finish straight which was followed by a Safety

Car period. Michelotto was ninth and Salmenautio eleventh at the restart and there were ten minutes to go until the second pit window. Michelotto was quick to rocket up to sixth as Salmenautio gained two places at the restart. Two laps later and Michelotto was fourth and Salmenautio eighth. As the pit window opened Michelotto passed Balzan for third. Salmenautio was the first of the VSR cars to pit, boxing for Cook. Liberati took over from Michelotto at the end of the window, the 66 having jumped the AKM Mercedes to move into second. Cook held sixth and was chasing down the BMW of Villadsen as Liberati gradually eroded the gap to the leading Audi. On lap thirty-seven Cook took fifth from the BMW and, the fastest man on the track in the wet, set his sights on Medler in fourth.



#66 – Edoardo Liberati, Mattia Michelotto and Ignazio Zanon (photo by Fotospeedy)

In the third driver change both cars took on new wet tyres, Salmenautio taking over from Cook in the 63 and a lap later Zanon jumping into the 66. At the one hundred minute, point-scoring mark, Zanon held third and Salmenautio, who had just set the fastest lap of the race, was sixth. A lap later the Fin passed Perel for fifth but earned a drive through penalty for the pass which dropped the car to eighth. Zanon maintained third place until the lap the pit window opened when Balzan fought his way past. For the penultimate stints Michelotto in the 66 and Bowen in the 63 both took on slicks. Michelotto was quickly up to speed, passing Ferrari's Mercedes and putting the 66 back into third place. On lap sixty-four the Safety Car was deployed to retrieve various cars which had fallen foul of the still slippery track. As light rain started once more, several cars pitted to retake rain tyres but the VSR cars stayed out. Racing resumed eight minutes before the final pit window. Michelotto in third was chasing down the leaders and, setting the fastest lap of the race, reeled them in. On lap seventy-one he passed Medler for second and a lap later was right behind Frassinetti when the pit window opened. Contact between Bowen and Duran resulted in a Full Course Yellow before Michelotto could make the pass for the lead. Bowen pitted immediately for Cook and Michelotto followed him in. Liberati took over the 63 and, when racing resumed, the

battle for the lead with the Audi of Aka. At the restart the two touched, Aka slipping down to fifth and Liberati to second as the Safety Car was once more called on to track. When racing went green Liberati set the fastest lap before pitting for a drive through penalty and rejoining just in front of the sister car with Cook onboard. The pair took the chequered flag just outside the top ten.

2026 Italian GT Endurance Championship

Misano: 9-10 May

Monza: 20-21 June

Imola: 5-6 September

Mugello: 30 October – 1 November

Social Media Links

VSR website [VSR](#)

VSR instagram [VSR](#)

Lamborghini Squadra Corse website [Lamborghini Squadra Corse](#)

Lamborghini Squadra Corse instagram [Lamborghini Squadra Corse](#)

Italian GT website [Italian GT](#)

Italian GT instagram [Italian GT](#)

Alex Bowen instagram [Bowen](#)

Hugo Cook instagram [Cook](#)

Jesse Salmenautio instagram [Salmenautio](#)

Loris Spinelli instagram [Spinelli](#)

Edoardo Liberati instagram [Liberati](#)

Mattia Michelotto instagram [Mattia Michelotto](#)

Ignazio Zanon instagram [Ignazio Zanon](#)

END