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Special trophy at the "Golden helmet" awards for Audi works driver Emanuele Pirro

Audi works driver Emanuele Pirro has been awarded the "casco d'oro speciale" during a big television gala at Bologna on Saturday. "Casco d'oro" is an annual award introduced in 1966 by specialist magazine "Autosprint", Italy's leading motorsport magazine. The organisers explained that Pirro and Audi had been unbeatable at Le Mans, and the Audi works driver has "already become a legend" thanks to his hat-trick in the 24 Hour race. For his second places in the Le Mans 24 Hour race and the American Le Mans Series (ALMS), Pirro's teammate Rinaldo Capello was awarded the special trophy "Italia che vince", reserved for Italian race drivers who have been successful in international motorsport series.

„The 'casco d'oro speciale' is not awarded to a driver every year. That's why I am very surprised to receive this award and makes me very happy. It shows how popular the 24 Hour race is in Italy and the importance of this hat-trick," said Emanuele Pirro. Pirro had received the "casco d'oro" back in 1996 for his impressive winning streak in the German Super Touring Car Cup driving an Audi A4 quattro. As no driver can win the "golden helmet" twice, "Autosprint" now awarded the Audi works driver the special trophy "casco d'oro speciale" for his Le Mans hat-trick. A special honour, shared only by a very small number of Italian race drivers who previously received this award.

The Audi works drivers continue to deliver headlines after the end of the motorsport season. For his hat-trick in the 24 Hours, Frank Biela has been voted "motor sportsman of the year" by the German Automobile Club ADAC. His teammate Tom Kristensen is Scandinavia's "sportsman of the year" and received the "Zulu Award" from Denmark's television station TV2 for the best sports performance of the year 2002. Kristensen has already been Denmark's "sportsman of the year" last year and is again among the nominated candidates this year.