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FIAT of Austin Tops 100 Units to Earn Visit by Chrysler Group CEO Sergio Marchionne

June 3, 2012, Austin, Texas - Chrysler Group LLC CEO Sergio Marchionne today personally congratulated FIAT of Austin for becoming the first FIAT studio in the country to sell more than 100 Fiat 500s in any given month.

FIAT of Austin, located in this state's capital city, sold 110 Fiat 500s in April, setting a sales record for FIAT studios in the U.S.

Marchionne celebrated this milestone today with dealer principals Nyle Maxwell and Lisa Copeland, and the dedicated FIAT of Austin sales team.

Copeland and her committed sales team almost hit this important milestone a month earlier, falling shy by just a few units. Determined to hit the mark in April, Copeland snapped up every Fiat 500 she could find, buying them from other dealerships around the state and the country.

What triggered today's visit in Austin from the company's CEO was a bet.

Tim Kuniskis, Head of FIAT Brand North America, bet Copeland that if she could hit the century mark in sales he would find a way to introduce her to the celebrity of her choice. Kuniskis had no idea how he would ever pay this bet off, but given the studio's low inventory level in the wake of strong sales, he wasn't really that concerned. For Kuniskis, it seemed more like a fun conversation, than a real bet.

When Copeland and her team not only hit the mark, but exceeded it by 10 units, it was time for Kuniskis to pay up. Much to his surprise, Copeland didn't want a Hollywood type. She wanted to meet Marchionne.

"No one was more surprised at her choice than I was," Marchionne said. "But this is one promise I was happy to keep, even if someone else made it for me."

Marchionne told Copeland that she was "the only true celebrity here today."

"Lisa is also an incredible salesperson herself, an excellent manager and a dynamic leader, and what she and her team have achieved here at the Fiat of Austin store is unprecedented," Marchionne said. "I know the passion and the personal involvement all of you feel every day in what you do. The team has a passion to succeed, and there's no question that Lisa helps inspire the enthusiasm they bring to representing Fiat."

On April 30, to celebrate their success, Copeland and her team, as well as a few straggling customers, celebrated their retail victory with champagne and hamburgers until the wee-hours of the morning.

Copeland and her team demonstrated that even in Texas, the land of pickups and SUVs, the Fiat 500 can perform better than in any other state. Copeland and her team hold a second sales record as well. Fiat of Austin has sold more Fiat 500s by Gucci than any other FIAT studio.

Copeland's studio here in the heart of Texas sold 411 Fiat 500s during the first five months of this year to become the nation's top-selling FIAT studio. FIAT of Los Angeles is second with 356 sales.

"This means that FIAT of Austin sold nearly 300 new Fiat 500s in just 90 days," Kuniskis said. "That is an amazing accomplishment and demonstrates what a determined FIAT studio is capable of."

The FIAT brand set another sales record in May by selling 4,003 units in the U.S., a 128 percent increase compared with May sales a year ago. The sales record in May was the brand's fourth consecutive record this year. May marked

the first full month of Fiat 500 Abarth sales, the ultimate high-performance small car.

“The Fiat 500 Abarth is unstoppable,” Kuniskis said. “Dealer orders for the Abarth dramatically exceeded the number of units we had scheduled for production. We had to schedule additional production to try and keep up with the demand. Most Abarth units are sold within one day.”

There currently are 161 open FIAT studios in the U.S., and 16 of them are in Texas.

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