JENSON BUTTON
WHY RON COULDN’T DROP HIM

The full story of McLaren’s late driver choice

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McLaren makes the right choice to keep Button

There was a time when it seemed very likely that Jenson Button would not be in Formula 1 next year. Ben Anderson explains in depth on page 10 why it took Ron Dennis and McLaren so long to make its final decision on the 2009 world champion. F1 will be a better place for Button’s continued presence on the grid.

Thankfully, McLaren has also kept the faith with the very promising Kevin Magnussen, who had a good rookie season and merits a long F1 career.

Both Button (15th) and Magnussen (42nd) feature in our Top 50 drivers of the season. It’s the 13th time AUTOSPORT has put together this list. The 2014 edition is the product of plenty of arguing, showcasing some of the drivers who have excelled this year. Remember, it’s not the 50 best drivers in the world, it’s the best performers of the season.

Button has been an ever-present in the list since it first started and, if he keeps operating at his current level, will surely retain his place next year.

This is good news for F1, for not only is Button a first-class driver, but also a fine ambassador for motor racing.
McLAREN KEEPS BUTTON IN F1

McLaren will retain Jenson Button alongside Fernando Alonso in 2015, after finalising its driver line-up. McLaren’s autumn capture of Alonso for its new works engine partnership with Honda left 2014 drivers Button and Kevin Magnussen both facing uncertain futures. Debate raged within McLaren over whether 2009 world champion Button’s greater experience should be preferred to rookie Magnussen’s longer-term potential.

A decision on the final line-up was anticipated ahead of November’s Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, but an announcement was twice delayed as agreement failed to materialise at boardroom level. Button, 34, was ultimately given the chance to prolong his career into a 16th season. The decision means Magnussen, 22, will be without a race seat in F1 next year, but the Woking team said the Dane would act as its reserve driver. Button said: “Being a part of new-look McLaren-Honda is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, and I’m very pleased to have been invited to do my bit. In fact, I’m absolutely raring to go.”

ALONSO: SEASONS AT FERRARI WERE MY BEST

New McLaren signing Fernando Alonso believes his five years with Ferrari were the best of his career, despite failing to add to his collection of two world titles. When asked to rate his time at Ferrari, Alonso replied: “From one to 10 I think in those five years I will put nine. “I know it seems high, but I have enjoyed it so much – I grew up as a driver, as a person, and I raced with my heart. I raced at the best level of my career.”

Alonso twice missed out on the world championship in the final race of the season while at Ferrari, in 2010 and 2012, finishing sixth this year.
**Gutierrez lands Maranello role**

Esteban Gutierrez has joined Ferrari as test and reserve driver. The Mexican, who has raced for Sauber for the past two seasons, is set to focus on simulator work for the team. "I want to thank everybody for their belief in my potential," said Gutierrez. "This will bring a great opportunity for me to develop further and get to the top in the near future."

**Ferrari should not fear change**

Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne urged his Formula 1 personnel not to "fear change" as he emphasised his faith in new team boss Maurizio Arrivabene at the squad’s annual Christmas event.

"I have full confidence in Maurizio," said Marchionne. "He has known this world for a long time and has the ability to steer the Scuderia in what is a difficult period for it and for Formula 1 in general."

"Do not fear change, be proactive and have the courage to come up with ideas. I know you can do it and that’s what Ferrari needs."

**Nielsen heads to Williams**

Williams has appointed ex-Toro Rosso sporting director Steve Nielsen as its new sporting manager. Nielsen left his role at Toro Rosso on December 12, having been at the Italian squad for two years following a period at Caterham. Nielsen’s career has also included stints as team manager at Tyrrell and Arrows, and as sporting director at Benetton/Renault.

"I think we can make a massive step," Chester told AUTOSPORT. "Williams have done a great job; it will be hard to catch them, but we’ll be trying to get on the back of Williams if we can."

**Teams to test loophole in engine-freeze rules**

The FIA is facing a challenge over F1’s engine freeze, as some teams believe there is a loophole in the 2015 sporting regulations that could hand them extra development time. It is widely understood that 2015 power units have to be lodged with the FIA before the first race of next season, but some teams believe they can wait until later in the year to homologate by using a 2014 engine in the early races.

Paragraph 2 of Appendix 4 of the regulations states: "A manufacturer may homologate no more than one specification of power unit."

The FIA argues the clause prevents the running of two types of engine in one season, making a late homologation impossible.
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Renault Clio Dynamique MediaNav dCi 90 S&S with 16" alloy wheels and integrated touchscreen navigation

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Representative example

<table>
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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (/100km) for the Renault Clio Dynamique MediaNav dCi 90 S&S are: Urban 70.6 (4.0); Extra Urban 88.3 (3.2); Combined 83.1 (3.4). The official CO₂ emissions are 90g/km. EU Directive and Regulation 692/2008 test environment figures. Fuel consumption and CO₂ may vary with driving styles, road conditions and other factors.

*Deposit contribution is available to new Renault Finance customers when taking Renault Finance on a new Renault Clio (excluding Clio Expression and RenaultSport). Offers cannot be used with other schemes or finance offers and are available on specified new vehicles when ordered and registered by 31 December 2014. Dci shows has optional metallic paint, available at an additional £595. Participating dealers only.
No 'taxi drivers' here: Merc stars fight it out

There's little doubt that in terms of the dynamics of the Formula 1 title battle, it was the clash between Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton at the Belgian Grand Prix that proved to be the key moment of the campaign.

The way that Mercedes management came down hard on both drivers – and in particular how Rosberg was widely perceived as being the less-innocent party – took the bad blood out of their rivalry, which seemed to help Hamilton step up a gear. The Briton was dominant after that, winning six of the remaining seven races.

But if you want to pick a race that was even more important than Belgium in shaping what happened in F1 this year, then there should be doubt: Bahrain.

In fact, there is a view shared by some pretty senior figures in F1 that if Bahrain had delivered us a different type of evening, then the sport could be in very different shape right now. And not in a good way.

We could be heading to a 2015 season marking the return of V8 engines, and a sport facing the real possibility of manufacturers quitting.

Let's not forget that in the run-up to the race in Bahrain, F1's new turbo regulations was coming under a pretty sustained attack from Bernie Ecclestone and then-Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo.

News of a meeting between the pair in the days before Bahrain to discuss concerns about the new fuel-efficiency regulations had been leaked, and all focus was on a meeting they had planned with FIA president Jean Todt on race day.

Hours before that, Ecclestone had wandered into the media centre, well aware that he would be stopped by journalists and would be able to get his views out that fans found the new F1 'unacceptable'.

Similarly, di Montezemolo's theatrical entrance to the paddock ensured he too ramped up the pressure about how the new rules were not working, as he claimed that modern F1 stars were nothing more than taxi drivers.

In the end, the joint plan of attack failed. F1 delivered a thrilling spectacle as Rosberg and Hamilton were unleashed for one of their closest-fought battles of the campaign, proving that the new rules did work.

Di Montezemolo left before the chequered flag, and Ecclestone's complaints about the racing were never as loud again, even if he never accepted the sound of the engines. Over time his attention would shift to dissing social media and young fans instead...

But if Bahrain had been a procession of 'taxi-cab racing', with no overtaking and little to get excited about, then do not underestimate how politically that would have strengthened Ecclestone and di Montezemolo's hands. And they surely would have seized the moment.

Some senior team figures privately believe it may even have been enough to mobilise a push to get rid of the new V6 turbo engines and force through a move to agree on the return of V8 power units for 2015.

If Bahrain had been a procession, some believe it could have forced the return of V8s for 2015"
This week in motorsport

WEBBER CRASH CATALYST REVEALED

Mark Webber’s giant shunt in the closing stages of the World Endurance Championship finale at Interlagos is almost certain to have been caused by a clash with the AF Corse Ferrari driven by Matteo Cressoni.

Porsche’s analysis has concluded that the rear of Webber’s Porsche 919 Hybrid clipped the Ferrari 458 Italia in the flat-out Turn 14 and spun into the outside wall. The AF team also believes that there was contact. Porsche LMP1 technical director Alex Hitzinger said: “We are pretty sure that there was nothing wrong with the car, no technical failure or a puncture. It seems to have been caused by a very light contact, but at those speeds it doesn’t have to be big.”

AF team manager Batti Pregliasco explained that the likelihood was that there was contact, but stressed that the Italian team believes that Cressoni was not at fault. “We can see from the data that he did not change trajectory,” he said. “He was sticking to his line, which is what the drivers are told to do.”

CARLIN BACK OUT IN FR3.5...

Formula 3 European Championship runner-up Tom Blomqvist and Indonesian Sean Gelael look increasingly likely to form Carlin’s line-up on the team’s return to Formula Renault 3.5 in 2015. Blomqvist and Gelael drove in the unofficial FR3.5 test at Estoril last Sunday as Carlin’s cars returned to action, while Jagonya Ayam stablemate Antonio Giovinazzi tested with AVF. Meanwhile, Brazilian Pietro Fantin (below) remains with International Draco Racing for a third season in FR3.5.

...as Jones joins Lights team

Formula 3 racer Ed Jones is the first recruit for Carlin’s new Indy Lights team. The 19-year-old Emirati was a podium finisher with Carlin in this season’s F3 European Championship, although his season was hampered by a back injury. Jones previously won the European F3 Open title in 2013.

PADDON GAINS HYUNDAI SEAT

Hayden Paddon will remain with Hyundai for the World Rally Championship.

The New Zealander impressed on six rounds in an i20 this year and decided earlier this month to stay with Hyundai rather than switch to Citroen. He will contest nine rounds, starting with Sweden.

Citroen has added Stephane Lefebvre to its line-up for at least 10 rounds of the championship. The reigning Junior WRC champion will drive a DS 3 R5 on eight events and a DS 3 WRC on at least two more. The 22-year-old Frenchman is likely to miss the long-haul rallies.
Hulkenberg gets first Porsche run

The announcement of Nico Hulkenberg’s team-mates in the third Porsche 919 Hybrid for the Le Mans 24 Hours is unlikely to be made until the new year. Plans to announce who would join the Force India F1 driver in the car at last Saturday’s Night of Champions were shelved because the final evaluation test of Porsche GT drivers Frederic Makowiecki, Nick Tandy and Michael Christensen finished the preceding Thursday. Porsche LMP1 team principal Andreas Seidl said that the data from the test had yet to be fully analysed and that there was no hurry to make a decision.

Hulkenberg got his first taste of the 2014-spec 919 over the course of the three-day test at Motorland Aragon.

Bamber secures factory deal

Porsche Supercup champion Earl Bamber has landed a factory drive with the German manufacturer next year.

The 24-year-old, who was one of the marque’s scholarship drivers in 2014, sealed his promotion with a starring drive in October’s Petit Le Mans endurance race.

Bamber had yet to be fully evaluated while the test had yet to be fully analysed and that there was no hurry to make a decision. Bamber got his first taste of the 2014-spec 919 over the course of the three-day test at Motorland Aragon.

In brief

Olympian Hoy goes ELMS

Olympian Sir Chris Hoy will graduate to prototype racing in 2015 with an LMP3 drive in the European Le Mans Series backed by Ginetta and Nissan.

The six-time Olympic cycling gold medallist, who drove a Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3 this year, will partner 17-year-old Charlie Robertson in the Team LNT-entered car.

Hoy, who will also take part in the official Le Mans 24 Hours test day in May, said it was a step closer to competing in the famous French endurance.

Robertson, the Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion, was a McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist in 2013.

Toyota rally D-day looms

AUTOSPORT sources in Japan have confirmed that a movement on Toyota’s World Rally Championship plan is expected early next year.

Historically, Toyota announces its motorsport programme in Tokyo in the first three months of each year, and sources close to the firm say president Akio Toyoda is moving towards a commitment to the WRC from 2017.

A Toyota Motorsport spokesman said: “It’s a wish and expectation to see a clear timetable. As far as we can judge things, it is very clear that there is a wish to go back [to WRC] from Japan. I think Akio Toyoda has communicated that quite clearly.”

Russians take on Dallara in F3

Russian constructor ArtLine Engineering aims to take on Dallara in the Formula 3 European Championship from the 2015 season.

The ArtTech F315 represents what the Moscow company describes as ‘an unconventional approach’ to F3, featuring low-drag bodywork around a central exhaust system.

ArtLine plans to test the car from February, using a Neil Brown Engineering powerplant and the Renault-badged ORECA unit, at ADM Raceway in Moscow and Rustavi International Motorpark in Georgia.

The Frankfurt-based ArtLine team, which ran older-spec ArtTech cars in German F3, is lined up to race the car.
Last week, McLaren finally signed up Jenson Button for 2015 and beyond. Why the delay? Ben Anderson investigates, and hears why the team stands by its lengthy decision-making process.
The long wait is finally over for Jenson Button. And the moment it was, most of us were wondering what the hell took them so long.

As the dead of winter approached, the eyes of Formula 1 fans around the world were glued on McLaren, the only team still to announce its final driver line-up for 2015, as bigwigs in Woking wrestled with the dilemma of who should partner prodigal son Fernando Alonso next season – Jenson Button or Kevin Magnussen?

After repeated delays, that debate was finally resolved last week when McLaren opted to offer Button a fresh deal to remain in Woking as a race driver, while relegating Magnussen to “reserve, test and third-driver” status. Button put pen to paper late on December 10, and hours later the Brit was set alongside new team-mate Alonso, Magnussen, Honda motorsport boss Yasuhisa Arai and McLaren chairman Ron Dennis, as McLaren-Honda’s 2015 driver line-up was finally unveiled to the world.

For Button it has been an uncomfortable game of patience, but one he himself said had been “well worth it” in the end. “It’s been a long few weeks, but sometimes the best things in life are worth waiting for,” says the 2009 champion. “I did reflect on life outside of Formula 1, and it’s nowhere near as exciting as life in F1 from what I’ve seen. My heart has always been here – to race for McLaren, and to race with Honda.”

On paper, re-signing Button seemed like the obvious choice – a no-brainer. Not only did he (marginally) get the better of Magnussen in qualifying this year (Button finished the season 10-9 up in what many regard as one of his weaker suits), he utterly trounced the Dane when it came to the drivers’ championship. Button scored more than double his Danish team-mate’s number of points. If McLaren had two Magnussens in 2014 it would have embarrassingly finished behind Force India in the constructors’ championship…

Beyond the simple question of performance and maths, Button also has greater experience (vital for helping McLaren-Honda cope with the anticipated growing pains of its new V6 engine), plus world champion status, which is attractive to potential sponsors (McLaren’s search for a new title backer is on-going).

But, if the decision were that simple it wouldn’t have taken until almost the middle of December to come to a resolution. This sorry saga has been drawn out so far that if it were a piece of pastry it would have collapsed in the middle weeks ago.

Dennis made no apology for the repeated delay, claiming he wanted to avoid “destabilising” the team and some important aerodynamic testing during the championship run-in. He also argued that the on-going debate surrounding third cars in F1 (something McLaren is contractually obliged to provide should grid numbers fall below the minimum) had contributed.

This argument doesn’t really hold much water. After all, what’s to stop McLaren simply ‘promoting’ its third driver as and when third cars become a reality – if they become a reality? Claims by Dennis that he wanted the decision-making process to be “collaborative” within McLaren carry more weight. According to the team’s racing director Eric Boullier, debate raged back and forth within Woking because the correct longer-term option for McLaren-Honda was not as obvious as the straightforward
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“JB was willing to jump through any hoops put in front of him”

decision to retain Button for at least another year based on 2014 results.

“There was a lengthy debate [and] it’s true that we discuss all the minuses and the pluses for both drivers,” says Boullier. “Things changed over these [last] few weeks — some minuses became pluses and vice versa. Rationally, the decision was complicated.

“If you consider next year, it could be an easy choice. Then if you consider what we want to do in 2016 and further, it became less obvious. Some plus in your mind can be minus for somebody else.

“To be honest, we had a very fair discussion. I sat down with Ron, closed the door and said, ‘OK, I’m your lawyers, you’re mine; I defend your position and try to attack mine’. You can push for an argument and kill it. In the end, we left the room three times with it being fifty-fifty.

“It takes time and many, many considerations. Now the decision is done, so let’s move forward.”

Button seemed almost relieved to have finally been able to commit pen to paper. There’s certainly still some bafflement in the Button camp as to why it all took so long to resolve.

Dennis spoke of “concerns” he held regarding Button, but it seems the Brit has shown enough willingness to jump through the hoops placed in front of him — whatever they may be.

When challenged by AUTOSPORT to explain what had convinced McLaren to plump for Button, Dennis was evasive. “When we were discussing internally, we came up with a series of things that gave people cause for concern,” Dennis says. “I discussed these with Jenson and I gave Jenson some ideas on solutions and he just said “no problem” and that was it.

“We had addressed some of the concerns — gone. It was very easy. And then everybody aligned and then we had consensus. We settled all of the things between us that concerned me. What we have to do now is deliver against the promises we have made to each other.”

Promises that relate to Button’s willingness to raise his game in order to meet the colossal, Alonso–shaped force of nature that will now blow in to the other side of the McLaren garage. There were times this year, where some — Dennis certainly — felt Button wasn’t giving his all.

It certainly seemed as though Button got better as the season wore on. His performances in Japan and Brazil in particular, as the recalcitrant JB’s slow second stop at a wet Suzuka ruined his chance of a podium

WHAT NOW FOR KEVIN MAGNUSSEN?

So what now for the gooseberry in McLaren’s bush — the jilted junior Magnussen?

The Danish rookie ultimately hasn’t done enough to warrant a race seat next year — principally he still struggles to manage his tyres properly through a race without guidance from the team — but he still did a good job, and he’s only 22 years old. Alonso and Button are both more than 10 years his senior.

Both Dennis and Boullier reckon Magnussen still has the potential to become a top driver in Formula 1. That’s why he’s been retained as test and reserve driver. But, at the moment, it is unrealised potential in their eyes.

Dennis was keen to stress the parallels Magnussen’s new path would take with the likes of Alonso, and another former McLaren double world champion: Mika Hakkinen.

“One year’s testing does not take away the opportunity to race in the future,” argues Dennis. “Fernando spent a year testing between Minardi and Renault; Mika did two years at Lotus, came here, did one year’s testing then raced for us. And both then subsequently went on to win world titles.”

By demoting Magnussen, but not rejecting him, McLaren feels it has squared the circle and looked after both its short and long-term interests. And with Stoffel Vandoorne, favourite for next year’s GP2 title, and Honda protege Takuya Izawa racing at the next level down, there is more than an eye on the future.

Magnussen has been aligned with the team since the early days of his career and realistically had no other options. If McLaren hadn’t kept Button racing, he would have walked away from F1, taking his impressive scoring and vast experience with him. Honda has already talked about a potential customer engine programme in 2016. If that comes to fruition, it’s reasonable to expect that Magnussen’s driving skills will come with the package. For now, all he can do is sit and wait.
GLOBAL LAUNCH OF THE GINETTA JUNO LMP3

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Now he’s chosen, the pressure is really on Button to deliver

MP4-29 improved, were magnificent, as though he knew he was driving for his career. If that was the case, Dennis will naturally expect to see him deliver that kind of performance race-in race-out. He will need to if he wants to avoid getting ‘Kimi Raikkonened’ by Alonso next year.

“Jenson now has no reason not to get the job done,” Dennis adds. “There was a turning point for me, which was strangely the conversation that took place between Jenson and I after the [last] race. It was in contrast to the previous month. It re-energised in me the belief that Jenson did want to be in a Formula 1 car for all the right reasons. And I really believe that he can absolutely kick Fernando’s butt.

“If he can do that – great; if he’s going to get close to that – great. We want two drivers that are going to win races. These guys are seasoned veterans. They understand the media, they understand the chemistry inside the team, and they’ve both had enough experience of McLaren to know that we have one common objective – we have to win."

Now he’s been ‘chosen’, the pressure is well and truly on Button to deliver alongside a driver who most feel is the very best in the world.

But none of this really explains why the decision took so long, and why it had to be deferred repeatedly. But then difficult choices often seem much simpler in hindsight. McLaren has made the right choice for now – something it hasn’t always done successfully on race weekends when it comes to strategy. You could certainly accuse it of grossly overthinking things, but it got there in the end, and now F1 fans can look forward to two world champions pitting their wits against each other in the same car.

“I know the media, fans, sponsors etc put on every bit of pressure they could for a decision,” says Dennis. “But that decision sits with me and I take the consequences of the results in 2015. So I can feel completely justified in taking my time, because while it was a little bit painful for the two drivers, the pain they had then is nothing in comparison to the pain that I will suffer if the decision proves to be wrong.”

In fairness, this is one call that McLaren got right – eventually.

ALONSO: MAKING AMENDS FOR 2007

It’s not often that Fernando Alonso finds himself overshadowed, but the furore surrounding Button’s future rendered his new Spanish team-mate’s first public engagement with McLaren something of a sideshow.

Alonso’s deal to return to McLaren has been an open secret for weeks. Finally able to talk freely about his defection from Ferrari, Alonso said he had returned to Woking to finish the job he started in 2007. He described that year, where he left the team in acrimonious circumstances after a single season, as the lowest point of his Formula 1 career so far.

“It was not the best feeling in 2007,” says Alonso. “I was happy with everything I have done apart from 2007. I didn’t achieve or deliver the best of myself.

“Years later you are more mature; you understand things you didn’t know at 25 years old. Now I arrive to finish the job I started. This was the first and the main priority to come back.”

McLaren chairman Ron Dennis, who was at the centre of the storm with Alonso and then-rookie Lewis Hamilton in 2007, said the passing of time had relieved any tension. “In Formula 1 seven weeks is a lifetime – seven years is a huge amount of time,” says Dennis. “I know the media will be looking for any kind of fracture in any part of the team’s relationship, and especially Fernando and I, but I can tell you you’ll be wasting your time. It isn’t an issue.”

Dennis also believes Hamilton was a key player in the problems at McLaren escalating in 2007, rather than Alonso being solely to blame. “To go back to that period, you look at this young guy, understandably perceived by many as the chosen one,” he adds. “But [he was] also someone who had immaturity, and really, who struck the first blow? I would say Lewis had his role in starting this process, which escalated.”
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- Affordable full-season budgets ranging from £80,000 to £120,000 (depending on testing)
- Strong grids of 20+ cars during its first two seasons
- 2-litre Duratec engine developing 185bhp
- Advance spaceframe chassis, fully FIA safety compliant
- Sadev six-speed paddleshift gearbox
- Sealed engines and gearboxes for maximum equality
- 24 races across 8 UK rounds - 6 co-headlining with British GT
- One-hour ITV4 highlights show plus international TV coverage
- Full-time media officer and dedicated website
- Three BRDC F4 graduates nominated for 2014 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award (MABA)
- 2014 F4 Champion George Russell won MABA - including £100,000 and a McLaren F1 test

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“2014 has been a dream year for me! BRDC F4 was always the obvious choice for my first season of car racing and it’s helped me to develop massively as a driver. It’s a powerful car but really easy to adapt to, and the racing is extremely competitive. It’s the perfect championship for rookies, or those fairly new to single-seaters, and I’d definitely recommend it to any young driver.”

For details on how to join BRDC F4 visit www.formula4.com
McLaren’s decision to keep on Jenson Button to partner Fernando Alonso next year is the right one. During my time on the Formula 1 pitwall, I usually found that young, hungry chargers such as Rubens Barrichello, Eddie Irvine, Ralf Schumacher and Giancarlo Fisichella came up with the goods. But, given McLaren’s need to get the new Honda power unit working, it makes sense to keep on Button, who after all has a lot of experience working with the Japanese during his Honda days.

Jenson had a strong end to the year, getting regular top-five results in an improving McLaren. And at 34 he’s not exactly over the hill. The key to getting the best out of the new engines (once you’ve made them run for more than a lap or two without going bang) is getting the software that makes the various parts of the power unit work well together. Jenson has plenty of experience of giving the kind of precise engine feedback McLaren and Honda will need. Remember how much trouble some engine manufacturers had at the start of the 2014 season with three or four teams to do the work? Honda has just one team, and must make that count.

But I’m pleased that McLaren has not cast aside Kevin Magnussen, who had a good first season. As you would expect, there were some errors and poor weekends among the high points, but he proved himself to be a driver worthy of a place in F1. McLaren claims he will be back on the grid in 2016, possibly with a Honda customer team, so he just has to be patient. It might also prove to be a good situation for him to be out of if Honda struggles in 2015. If McLaren has a bad season, it would have been very easy for a young driver such as Magnussen’s career to be ruined by it.

In Alonso and Button, McLaren has one of the strongest driver line-ups on the grid. It’s rare for two drivers with a lot of championships on their CVs to be put together, and there are already questions about whether Button can live with Alonso. Those same questions were asked when Button joined Lewis Hamilton at McLaren in 2010, and that didn’t turn out badly. But the balance of power between the two could depend on the car.

My biggest concern were I running the team would be that they require very different car characteristics to suit their driving styles. Button needs a car with a very good balance to allow him to carry good mid-corner speed. If the rear is in any way unstable on the way in, that costs him momentum and, if the front end does not turn in well, he can’t keep the minimum speed up.

Alonso likes a car with a little understeer. One of the reasons he outperformed Kimi Raikkonen this year was that he overcame the lack of front-end grip of the Ferrari by how he approaches the corner on the brakes. By unsettling the rear, he is able to rotate the car and has that ability to keep the back of the car under control.

These are very different driving styles and there will need to be a difference in set-up between the two cars.

“My biggest concern is that Button and Alonso require very different car characteristics”
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Who have been the standout drivers of 2014? We’ve once more put our heads together to come up with the traditional AUTOSPORT top 50 list. There’s been a lot of movement from last year, but the eclectic mix remains, with five series represented in the top 10.
Earl Bamber
Porsche Supercup champion
Asian Carrera Cup champion

Q&A

You raced so much this year in Porsches. Was that really good for getting into the rhythm? It was great because I got 20 to 25 weekends in the Cup car – I was just living inside the car, and that helped make the season very successful. We also had some success at the start of the season, winning the Bathurst 12 Hours in a Cup car as well, so that was great. Then doing some of the iconic races like Daytona, Sebring and Petit Le Mans.

You were leading the German series with Timo Bernhard's Team 75 up until August, after which there were some clashes… There were three rounds that clashed with Asia but Timo wanted to keep the same driver in for the rest of the season, or a consistent driver. So then it wasn’t possible to return. But I think our results there were pretty good to be leading. It was also fantastic for his team – they are a very, very small team. We were just getting the most out of what we had and pulling some big results out against some of the big teams.

How satisfying was it to be leading the German Carrera Cup when many Germans think that series is even more competitive than Supercup? Supercup is more difficult because you get such limited running. You get one practice, one qualifying and one race. In Germany you get free practice, two qualifying sessions and two races so there’s more window of opportunity to make a difference.

Kris Meeke
7th in World Rally Championship

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**Nick Tandy**

**Porsche rising star**

The Porsche factory GT driver won his class in the Daytona 24 Hours but had a luckless USC campaign thereafter. Impressive WEC performances highlighted his quality, as did Ferrari World Challenge and British GT victories.

**TANDY ON...**

**Winning at Daytona...**

"It was the first time I'd been there with a realistic shot at winning. It's difficult to expect anything with a new team but we were going for the win and it was as straightforward a 24-hour race at Daytona as you can expect!"

**Finding the positives...**

"It's almost certainly been the best year for me inside the car. We should have won the USC easily but had the majority of the bad luck. "Austin was heartbreaking. We had a 40-second lead in the USC race and retired with a few laps to go and a 20-second lead in the WEC race before a problem in the final pitstop."

**An LMP1 opportunity...**

"To be recognised by the people you work for with the opportunity to do something else is great. The first test in the 919 Hybrid went very well. It's a bit of a nervous wait to find out what's happening."

**Jules Bianchi**

**17th in F1 World Championship**

At the time of writing, Bianchi remains in a critical condition following his sickening crash in the closing stages of the Japanese GP. Before then, he was having a strong season for Marussia. And it wasn't only his ninth place in Monaco that caught the eye. After a difficult start, once Bianchi came to terms with the 2014 cars he was seriously fast. He passed Kamui Kobayashi brilliantly on his way to eighth on the road in Monaco, before a penalty was applied, proving his strength in battle.

This form continued even as the Marussia faded. Next year there's every chance he would have been racing a Sauber as a stepping stone to a potential Ferrari seat.

**Petter Solberg**

**World Rallycross champion**

Mexico, 2005. That was a long, long time ago. And, prior to this year, that was the last time Petter Solberg stood on the roof of a car and danced his dance. Granted, his last World Rally Championship win came the following September, but there were no celebrations following Michael 'Beef' Park's death. That was the event nobody wanted to win.

Between March 2005 and May this year, plenty of years and tears have passed. He'd come close, but never quite close enough to sharing a moment of glory with his beloved fans. His switch to rallycross still didn't deliver the dream last year. His Citroen broke too often.

This year, it was tougher. And so was he. This was the second coming of Petter Solberg.

From the third heat of the first World RX round, Solberg wouldn't be beaten. He was back jigging on top of the car in Montalegre. Ten rounds and four wins later and he was back on top of the world.
Kazuki Nakajima
Japanese Super Formula champion
Nakajima outstripped even the versatile Andre Lotterer in 2014, winning races in three very different categories. Best known for his WEC activities with Toyota, the 29-year-old ex-grand prix driver was hugely successful in his homeland.
He won the Japanese Super Formula series, claiming victory in two out of nine races against strong opposition. On top of that, partnering James Rossiter in the Super GT rounds he was available for, Nakajima won twice.

Dean Stoneman
2nd in GP3 Series
Dean Stoneman is invariably talked about in the context of his fightback from cancer to return as a race-winning driver. But his backstory isn’t a consideration when it comes to his ranking here. The bottom line is that he had a strong season, again showing his class on his way to second in the GP3 standings.
A very quick driver and a combative racer, it was following his switch from the struggling Manor squad to Finland’s Koiranen GP team that he really starred. Taking over a car that had qualified at the back throughout the championship, he immediately turned it into a winner at Sochi. His strong performances in the final two meetings rocketed him from eighth in the standings to the point where he was the only person who could deny Alex Lynn the title.
While three of his wins came with Manor, his two feature-race wins with Koiranen late on were the high points of his season. It was always a long shot and Lynn clinched the title in qualifying at the Abu Dhabi finale, but former F2 champion Stoneman had reminded everyone of his class.

Kevin Magnussen
11th in F1 world championship
Kevin Magnussen enjoyed an accomplished rookie season that proves beyond doubt he deserves a long-term future in F1. While that won’t be with McLaren in 2015, this is more down to circumstances than his own form. After his podium debut, the Dane made good progress through the season. The only concern was that the very motivated Button did a better job of delivering results later on.
But as his experience builds, Magnussen will only continue to get better.
Seven and a half years after walking away from single-seaters midway through the 2006 F1 season, many doubted whether Montoya had it in him to deliver on his return to open-wheelers in IndyCar. He silenced the critics with a consummately impressive comeback season, finishing fourth in the championship and winning at Pocono.

While he didn’t set the world alight in many of the early races, by the second half of the season he was usually a threat for the podium. Particularly on road and street courses, his form was increasingly strong and proved that, while approaching his forties, he remains a formidable competitor.
Colin Turkington
British Touring Car champion
UPI

The alliance of Colin Turkington and WSR claimed a second BTCC title in 2014. For all the complaints about the advantage of the rear-wheel drive BMW 125i M Sport, few would argue that the Northern Irishman was not the class of the field.

Q&A

How good a season was 2014 for you?
It was a dream season but it doesn’t happen by chance. We worked really hard this year; the team did a great job through the winter. There were no weak tracks and that only happens through hard work. It’s a great reward for the whole team.

Is there a stand-out moment for you?
The defining moment for me was probably Knockhill. Coming from 22nd to fourth was probably better than any wins I’ve had. That’s when the momentum really swung. It could have gone with Jason [Plato] and it was important to fight back.

Was it tougher than it looked from the outside?
It’s never easy or straightforward – it always goes to the last round. This year was no different. It was more difficult than ever. I have to say special thanks to my team WSR and Dick Bennetts. They’ve given me an incredible car. I want to be back with number 1 on the side of the car. I’m determined to be back and defend my crown.

Pierre Gasly

2nd in Formula Renault 3.5
NEW ENTRY

Somehow Pierre Gasly didn’t win a race en route to finishing runner-up in Formula Renault 3.5 this year, but that doesn’t mean it was a season of underachievement.

While the reigning Formula Renault Eurocup champion didn’t make the same splash that his FR2.0 rival Oliver Rowland did early on, his progression during 2014 was more gradual, and the improvements kept coming all the way to the end of the year. It was mainly down to individual days of brilliance from others in the field that he ended the year with eight podiums but no victories. By the end of the season, he was even starting to see the funny side (through gritted teeth) of narrowly missing out so many times.

“Even if we didn’t get the win, the main thing was to always be in the top three,” says the Frenchman. “I still have this feeling that I should have got a win, but I’m really happy with my year.”

The 18-year-old, who made six GP2 starts with Caterham late in the year, signed off with a bang as he dominated post-season GP2 testing.

Touring car heavyweight Yvan Muller appeared unsettled by the immediate impact of Jose Maria “Pechito” Lopez in this year’s WTCC. The Citroen Racing team-mates were the only men in contention for the crown, but Muller’s title defence got off to an uneven start in Morocco, where he became entangled in a start-line accident.

Muller served up a fightback, of sorts, in the first half of the season. In the opening seven rounds, he achieved four first-rate feature-race wins and three pole positions. But the four-time champion’s previous WTCC experience counted for less thanks to the introduction of TC1 regulations in 2014. He expressed dissatisfaction at his incomplete understanding of the C-Elysee’s aerodynamic capabilities, after years building an intuitive feel for the previous machines.

At the season end, Muller trailed new champion Lopez by 126 points. Readers may therefore be surprised to find Yvan in AUTOSPORT’s Top 50 for an eighth time in 13 years. He had, after all, made qualifying errors in Moscow and Marrakech, a questionable lunge on Hugo Valente at Suzuka and incurred a jump-start penalty in Slovakia. But four retirements through accidents, none of his making, and a puncture have been put into consideration.

“This year, I struggled a bit on the car,” said Muller, “and I know I need to work on myself during the winter. We have some evolutions to the car for next year, and there is something that I can’t talk about too much but relating to the front axle that should help me. We’ll see.

“My experience didn’t help so much with the new car and because of the Citroen simulator, which Seb [Loeb] and Jose have developed. It was Pechito’s first time in Macau but if you include the laps in the simulator he has done more laps than I have. For me it’s not realistic but for them it is. I hope we have the same result for Citroen next year, just a different order.”
What was your best qualifying lap?
I really liked my lap at Budapest. It was such a difficult session and I messed up my first two sets of tyres. My lap was mega and I thought there was no way anyone could beat it, but Richie Stanaway pipped it by half a tenth.

And your best race?
The reversed-grid race at Spa. Me and Richie were on the front row together in the damp and I was nervous about the conditions. I knew I couldn’t let him beat me. Mentally that was a big win.

And your best post-season test? Formula 1, DTM or GP2?
F1 [with Lotus] was very special – my boyhood dream. Especially when the floodlights came on with an hour to go as I drove down the pitlane. I thought, ‘Yeah, this is what it’s about!’

The rise of the young Belgian continued in 2014. Vanthoor came of age in his second year of sportscar racing in 2013 on the way to victory in the FIA GT Series, but he took a further step forward through another championship-winning season in 2014 to emerge as the best driver on his side of the sportscar divide.

A year ago, AUTOSPORT ranked Vanthoor behind fellow Audi factory driver Rene Rast in its list of the top 10 GT drivers. Twelve months on, the 23-year-old has leapfrogged the German. His qualifying record in the Blancpain Sprint Series against his team-mate at the Belgian WRT squad – six-one in Vanthoor’s favour – has something to do with it, but so too do a series of strong drives in both the BSS and the Blancpain Endurance Series.

Vanthoor was every bit as good as Rast when they joined forces in WRT’s superteam at the Spa 24 Hours, even if his co-driver stole the headlines by chasing down the ailing Marc VDS BMW to steal the victory at the end. That result is the double-points blue-ribbon enduro provided the bedrock of his successful bid for the BES crown, while an imperious performance on the way to a double victory on the streets of Baku in Azerbaijan in the BSS finale gave him overall Blancpain GT Series title to go with it.

Vanthoor underlined his status as one of the men to watch on Audi’s roster of GT talent in 2014 and must surely have a future with the German manufacturer beyond GT3 racing.

“To be a part of a team which is used to winning, and is not winning, it makes a strange atmosphere,” said Ekstrom when quizzed about Audi’s lack of wins in 2014 before his Zandvoort triumph. When a driver can take it upon himself to change a situation like that, in a period during which a whole eight-car squad feels down on its luck, it speaks volumes about that driver’s quality.

Adding to Ekstrom’s impressive 2014 season are his exploits in the World Rallycross Championship. He took the wheel of an Audi S1 run by his own EKS RX squad at just three rounds in 2014, but he won one of them.
Top 50 Stalwarts

Since the AUTOSPORT Top 50 started in 2002, only one driver has been ever-present. That honour falls to Jenson Button. He’s on 13, and here are the other stalwarts – fading in boldness and diminishing in size – down to those on seven.

Jenson Button
Nico Hulkenberg
Kimi Raikkonen
Jimmie Johnson
Nick Heidfeld
Giancarlo Fisichella
Helio Castroneves
Sebastien Bourdais
Sebastien Loeb
Dario Franchitti
Nico Rosberg
Lewis Hamilton
Jarno Trulli
Rubens Barrichello
Fernando Alonso
Juan Pablo Montoya

When Jos Verstappen stopped me in the Norisring paddock and asked which F1 team I thought might offer the best opportunities for his son, it was quickly apparent that we were talking about just Red Bull or Mercedes.

Jos reckoned there was too much talent in the queue at Red Bull. Neither of us at that time, late June, could have guessed Red Bull would leapfrog him over Carlos Sainz, Alex Lynn and Pierre Gasly. Just watch him go in 2015…

Marcus Simmons

The esoteric points system in the NASCAR Sprint Cup meant that the controversial Keselowski was not one of the four drivers who shot for the title in the final race of the year. But his performances during the 2014 season, winning six times and taking five pole positions, earn him a place in this ranking.

Not only that, but the 30-year-old also won five races in the Nationwide Series in 11 starts, as well as winning at Bristol in the Truck Series. There were a few arguments along the way, but that served only to make him a bigger star in the USA.

At the age of 19, amid fears that the step would be too great from GP3/F3 level into F1, Daniil Kvyat was on a near-vertical learning curve heading into the season-opening Australian Grand Prix. Making Q3 was one thing, but his first proper racing start, grand prix distance and live pitstops in an F1 car would all be in the race itself.

Many drivers would have buckled under the pressure, but not Kvyat. He has a steely resolve, and finished ninth in his first grand prix. Kvyat never looked back. He never looked out of place in F1 and his reward is a berth with Red Bull’s senior team.
Esteban Ocon

**European F3 champion**

This protege of the Gravity management stable – and therefore also the similarly owned Lotus F1 team – graduated from the Formula Renault Eurocup having finished third behind Pierre Gasly and Oliver Rowland. But there was a belief in some French motorsport circles that it was actually Ocon who was the realest of deals, that he had been driving equipment not quite on a par with that of his rivals.

Before the end of the FR2.0 season he had already undertaken his first test in an F3 car, with Prema Powerteam at Imola. Those who were there report that he was comfortably better than the other rookies who turned out (including GP3 star-to-be Marvin Kirchhöfer) and even lapped faster than Raffaele Marciello, who was in the process of wrapping up the 2013 European F3 title.

“From when we had our first test at Imola we knew that this driver was something special,” says Prema team manager Rene Rosin. “But winning in F3 is really difficult, and it had never happened that a rookie had won a European F3 championship [actually since Riccardo Patrese in 1976].”

Some, though, were convinced that this gangly 17-year-old Frenchman had it in him to do so. “Some people were sure that this driver could be something exceptional,” continues Rosin. “At the first round at Silverstone it was clear – if he could keep his focus he could do it. He was incredibly fast, especially in qualifying, and he could have scored many more points at the start of the year but he wasn’t 100 per cent synchronised with the starting system.”

Such was Ocon’s qualifying superiority – crucial in F3 – that he took 14 poles from the first 22 races. He then had a tricky mid-summer run with some on-track clashes.

“But this is part of the championship when you have 33 races,” Rosin explains. “He managed to win, not as quickly as we wanted him to do it, but winning it was the most important thing.”

Oliver Rowland

**4th in Formula Renault 3.5**

Oliver Rowland’s rookie campaign in Formula Renault 3.5 should have yielded more than fourth place, but some crippling reliability issues took their toll. When things were going well Rowland was a force to be reckoned with. He took to FR3.5 quicker than his 2013 Formula Renault Eurocup rival Pierre Gasly, winning on his second weekend, and he was a regular contender for poles and victories when the car was behaving itself.

He’s opted for another year with Fortec in ’15. “I think coming back is the best for me,” he says. “I thought I knew everything at the start of the year, but now I realise I’m a better driver than I was, and I’m happy about that.”

Felipe Massa

**7th in F1 World Championship**

The rejuvenated Brazilian had his best season since his run at the title in 2008. The move to Williams after being dropped by Ferrari worked well, even though his haul of three podiums should have been better.

There were some car problems, as well as a number of on-track incidents, all of which cost him better results. But there’s no doubt Massa drove at a higher level this season than in his final years with Ferrari.

“It is a little bit frustrating,” says Massa. “If you see how many points behind I am and how many points I lost in all these races [where things went wrong] I would have been fighting for the top four in the championship. It would have been a big fight between Valtteri [Bottas], [Sebastian] Vettel, [Fernando] Alonso and myself. But I was not there because I lost so many points.”

As for the move to Williams, it proved inspired even though it was a risky tactic to join a team that had been languishing in the lower midfield for several seasons.

“When I first drove the car, I knew we could be fighting with Ferrari,” says Massa.
That Penske, a team with no vacancies whose drivers had just finished first, second and fourth in the points, created a fourth entry for 2015 simply to secure Simon Pagenaud's services says everything you need to know about the Frenchman's 2014 season, and the impact he has made on IndyCar in recent years.

Since he first appeared in Champ Car with Walker Racing in 2007, Pagenaud has looked like a potential champion. Though that process was temporarily derailed by the championship merger diverting Pagenaud into sportscars, Sam Schmidt's wise decision to bring him back into IndyCar full-time has more than paid off.

The Schmidt Peterson team trails big guns Penske, Ganassi and Andretti in both experience and resources, but you would never have known it from Pagenaud's speed. Wins on the Indianapolis road course and in Houston were the headlines and a charge from the back to fourth in Toronto was another highlight. But perhaps the most impressive aspect was how the underdog Pagenaud/Schmidt combination managed to be such consistent frontrunners in a championship whose sheer closeness and high-stakes qualifying format makes consistency elusive for most.

Going into the deciding rounds, Pagenaud was the only outsider keeping Penske duo Will Power and Helio Castroneves on their toes in the championship battle – something that Ganassi's and Andretti's illustrious quartets couldn't manage.

His ultimate fifth place in the standings was cruel given that until the double-points Fontana finale – where he limped around many laps down in a car never back on the pace after a testing crash – he had sat third. But it still kept up Pagenaud's remarkable run of finishing in the top five in the championship in all three of his complete seasons.

Pagenaud has yet to thrive on ovals, something Penske machinery should give him chance to achieve, while Power gets a team-mate who can rival him for explosive pace on road and street courses. Not every underdog hero lives up to expectations when they get their big chance, but there seems little chance of Pagenaud disappointing next season.
To purloin a football cliche, it was a season of two halves for both Hulkenberg and the Force India team. Early on, the duo scored relatively heavily. But as the season progressed, a combination of bigger teams developing quickly and Force India struggling to make its updates work made results harder to come by.

Hulkenberg, too, didn’t always seem able to reach the heights we’ve come to expect. But overall he still had a strong season. While team-mate Sergio Perez got the attention-grabbing podium in Bahrain, this was down to his edge on tyre management. Hulkenberg was comfortably the more consistent of the two. And his tyre management certainly improved.

“Only really in Bahrain,” says Hulkenberg of races where he was outmanaged by Perez. “In Austria I was compromised with big issues with some parts on the car. Likewise in Montreal there was a good opportunity when I decided to start on the opposite strategy, but the safety car screwed it up. There were a few instances where we were quite unlucky.”

A quartet of fifth places was the highlight as Hulkenberg’s class shone through.

The Brazilian is one of those drivers who it’s all too easy to overlook, so familiar is the sight of him doing well in Penske machinery in IndyCar. This was his 15th season driving for the legendary team, showing he must be doing something right, even though it was a year of second places for him.

Second in the championship to Penske team-mate Will Power despite a patchy end to the season, he also missed out on his fourth Indianapolis 500 win by just six hundredths of a second. With a bit more fortune on his side, he could easily have won both the title and the biggest race of the season, cementing his position in the pantheon of Indy legends.

Always quick, Castroneves was a consistent force and with three races remaining was right in the title hunt with Power. But his run-in was dreadful. Handling problems at Milwaukee left him down in 11th, at Sonoma he was caught in a lap-one accident, and then at Fontana, where he was still in contention for the title, he was penalised for an improper entry to the pits. That took the wind out of his sails and left him a distant second to Power.

Now 39, Castroneves proved that he still has it in him to have a run for the championship. So while he often seems hidden in plain sight, he remains one of the top performers in IndyCar.
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EFFECTIVE FHR
Jose Maria Lopez

World Touring Car champion

Former TC2000 star Jose Maria Lopez became a hero to his countrymen in Argentina thanks to a series of sensational drives in this year's World Touring Car Championship. ‘Pechito’ made the most of a formidable Citroen C-Elysee to break WTCC records for the most wins and points in a season. “Of course I had the best car on the grid,” he said, “but I also had three team-mates and this raises the value of what I have done. There were eight tracks that I didn’t know. To have never been to Macau before and to win is just amazing – but things have been like that all year.”

Jari-Matti Latvala

2nd in World Rally Championship

The Finn started the month on the crest of a wave at home. He took the most confident, self-assured and brilliant win of his career, overcoming the mental blow of a brake problem that slashed his lead over Sebastien Ogier to just three seconds with one day to run.

On that first Sunday, he was unbeatable. Unstoppable. A world champion in the making.

Three Sundays down the line, he was distraught. He’d had Rally Germany in the palm of his hand. It would have been his first asphalt win. But then he went off, clattering his Polo through the vines and out of the event. Dream. Nightmare.

One thing is sure, though. Latvala’s getting closer and closer and next year’s world championship will be even harder fought between him and Ogier.

Jolyon Palmer

GP2 champion

Were F1 as healthy as it should be financially, Palmer’s dominant GP2 title campaign would have guaranteed him a place on the grid.

He has matured as a driver over his four years in GP2 to become a rounded performer, strong in both qualifying and race situations. That meant that neither fellow category veteran Felipe Nasr, nor eventual runner-up Stoffel Vandoorne, were able to get close to him.

Wrapping up the title with three races to spare underlines how comfortable he was.

ALL-TIME TOP 20

Awarding points to those appearing in the AUTOSPORT Top 50s since 2002 produces an unsurprising winner in Fernando Alonso. But the rest of the top 20 does contain a few shocks. Points are awarded to the top 10 each year based on the F1 scoring system of 25-18-15-12-10-8-6-4-2-1.

1 Fernando Alonso
2 Lewis Hamilton
3 Sebastien Loeb
4 Sebastian Vettel
5 Kimi Raikkonen
6 Michael Schumacher
7 Jenson Button
8 Jimmie Johnson
9 Marcus Gronholm
10 Juan Pablo Montoya
11 Petter Solberg
12 Darío Franchitti
13 Scott Dixon
14 Robert Kubica
15 Sebastien Ogier
16 Mark Webber
17 Daniel Ricciardo
18 Will Power
19 Giancarlo Fisichella
20 Andre Lotterer

226 DRIVERS

H ave appeared in the

2002 Michael Schumacher
2003 Michael Schumacher
2004 Michael Schumacher
2005 Sebastien Loeb
2006 Fernando Alonso
2007 Kimi Raikkonen
2008 Robert Kubica
2009 Lewis Hamilton
2010 Sebastian Vettel
2011 Sebastian Vettel
2012 Fernando Alonso
2013 Sebastian Vettel
2014 Daniel Ricciardo

101 DRIVERS

H ave only made

ONE APPEARANCE

4 HIGHEST-PLACING FOR

ONE-HIT WONDERS

Marco Wittmann (2014)
Carlos Sainz Jr

Formula Renault 3.5 champion

A record number of Formula Renault 3.5 wins in a season propelled Carlos Sainz Jr to the honour of being the first Red Bull junior to win that championship, and landed him a Formula 1 drive with Toro Rosso. But his dream appeared in tatters when the team’s first vacancy went to car-racing rookie Max Verstappen.

Jean-Paul Driot, DAMS boss

“This year Carlos demonstrated that when something strong happens against him, like Verstappen going to Toro Rosso, that he can react accordingly. To think you have lost your chance at F1 is quite a strong thing when you are 20 and you are hoping to get the seat. He proved he knew how to react, and that he can remain concentrated. Even if he was a little bit down during the summer.

“After the Verstappen announcement I knew what was going to happen. Unfortunately I was not at the next race in Budapest, and we had a tough weekend. But we had a very big conversation before the next race at Paul Ricard on the Friday night. I took Carlos outside of the circuit, outside of the team, outside of all the people who are in motor racing. It was just me and my wife.

“Apparently it worked because the next day he was quite good [winning two races]

“Dealing with Carlos was not the same as working with [2013 FR3.5 champion] Kevin Magnussen. Kevin was overconfident to begin with, so I had to bring him down and explain to him that talent is not enough. And Kevin learned.

“Carlos had to mature and not get overexcited as soon as there is a little bit of pressure.”

Jenson Button

8th in F1 World Championship

Perhaps it was the pressure of knowing he was fighting for his future but, after being given a hard time by rookie team-mate Kevin Magnussen in the first half of the season, Button did great things in the closing stages of the year. Even his old trait of struggling with a car with an unstable rear end, especially in qualifying, seemed less of a problem late on as he delivered a series of first-rate performances, finishing in the top five in four of the last five races of the season.

What didn’t change is that Button oozed class on track during the whole year. In battle, he is one of the toughest drivers to race against because he is generally completely in control even in wheel-to-wheel situations. That allows him to turn the tables on aggressors, and overcome his prey, more often than not. His outright speed has always been better than many make out, and even in qualifying he had marginally the better of the highly rated Magnussen, beating him 10-9.

As to how he will fare against Alonso next year, don’t worry about it. There were doubts about going up against Lewis Hamilton at McLaren, yet his qualifying deficit was small over those three years and he actually outscored his team-mate. Button will surely show well against Alonso and prove that he has far more than just one or two more years at the top level in front of him.
Do you think you drove better than before this year?
Definitely. I really felt that I took another step as a sportscar driver. I believe I got on top of the new fuel-saving regulations.

What was your best drive?
It was a really clean year for me. I wasn't happy with my second stint at Interlagos, but the final two stints were the best drives of my life. Fuji was the event with which I was most happy in terms of the weekend.

Where did you and team-mate Sebastien Buemi have the edge over the drivers of the sister Toyota?
It was a mental thing. When you are leading a championship, it elevates you to a new level. Not fighting for the championship takes its toll.
Valtteri Bottas
4th in F1 World Championship

Q&A

How do you feel you have progressed as a driver this year?

I have definitely improved since last year and over the winter. The first races of this season I was definitely a better driver than I was last year. But during the season I have been really able to learn a lot just to get a lot more confidence in general in the car and get a better feel of everything. Just getting more experience always helps, but still there is lots to do to get better.

Did you learn a lot from Felipe Massa?

Well, there have been some interesting bits in driving style, there are differences between Pastor and Felipe. Little things like what you do with the steering, things like that. But other than that there is nothing major. Of course, it has been really good to have the experience of him because there have been some situations with the car set-up and he just gets this idea from the past and what has been done, and sometimes those things have worked. That’s the advantage of experience. But nothing game-changing.

In the first few races of the season you appeared to be driving very aggressively but then maybe dialled it back a bit?

I think especially Melbourne was a good wake-up call for me just to calm down a bit. When I touched the wall there, I learned a lot from that weekend. In many races after that when I have been in situations like that, when things are going really well, you get this good feeling and you want to push more. But I remember that race and back off a bit because you need to finish. How aggressive you are is a really fine line.

You had two shots at a possible pole with a maximum-attack final lap in Austria and Sochi. Are you disappointed one of them didn’t come off?

Yeah, it has been close. I know in Austria that it that were not my fault. And in Russia I did a really good lap until the last sector but even if it had been perfect, Mercedes would have been quicker. There is always next year!

What are the performances that stand out?

All of the podium races; they were really good ones for us as a team and me personally.

Do you see Austria as a potential win that got away?

I don’t know. It still feels like a really positive weekend because it was my first podium. Looking back, it was the closest race we were to Mercedes so maybe, maybe not.
Toyota will tell you that Buemi’s talents as a sportscar driver were there to see as long ago as 2012 during a quadruple stint at the Le Mans 24 Hours on his only start for the Japanese marque that season. His sportscar prowess became more evident through a full World Endurance Championship campaign in 2013, but it was only this year that he was able to prove to the outside world that he really is one of the best sportscar drivers around on the way to winning the World Endurance Championship drivers’ title with Anthony Davidson.

A seat in the best LMP1 car in the field, the Toyota TS040 HYBRID, gave him the opportunity to fully showcase his talents, of course, as did the decision to allow him to take the start in six of the eight races – there is glory to be grabbed and headlines to be made when the lights go out. But the Swiss, Davidson and (initially) Nicolas Lapierre got the most out of the impressive tool that was given to them in a way that their team-mates aboard the sister car didn’t.

Perhaps more importantly, Buemi sprinkled his sessions with some of those career-defining performances that ultimately separate the good from the great. His drive at Austin (35 seconds up on team-mate Alex Wurz in 20 laps and then a spirited chase of the second-placed Audi at the finish) and his opening stint at Shanghai (up to second place and within sight of the leader after having to drive through his opening stint at Shanghai (up to second place and within sight of the leader after having to drive through

the field following an early, strategic fuel stop) marked the boy down as a bit special. And then there was the Le Mans comeback drive for the #8 Toyota TS040 HYBRID, during which Buemi, Davidson and Lapierre were all superb in a car that wasn’t exactly spot-on after its early shunt.

Buemi is an aggressive driver in traffic, and he did make mistakes at both Austin and Interlagos. Such prowess among the slower cars was one of the talents that helped make three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Allan McNish one the best sportscar drivers of his generation. There was plenty of evidence in 2014 to suggest that Buemi could go on to achieve similar greatness.

Will Power

In an era even more competitive than CART’s 1990s halcyon, Will Power has been the fastest person in an IndyCar pretty much since Penske signed him. But that reputation for sheer speed was undermined by a reputation as a choker, someone who would blitz most of a season then find a way to lose the championship at the last gasp – probably on an oval.

There was little reason to suspect anything other than more of the same in 2014. Yet this year the three-time runner-up held it together and defeated mighty opposition from Penske team-mates Helio Castroneves and Juan Pablo Montoya, four-strong armies from both Andretti and Ganassi, plus the ultra-rapid Simon Pagenaud to become champion.

For a man whose previous near-misses had been largely due to mistakes, Power might’ve been expected to be more circumspect this time. He did the opposite.

He felt his 2010-12 last-gasp defeats and his generally disappointing ’13 had been caused by trying to stifle his natural urges. When he convinced himself he had to play it safe, that style proved alien and led to more errors. The best answer, Power felt, was just to go for it. Take the fifty-fifty chances.

It worked. It also led to a lot of penalties early on, mostly for driving-standards misdemeanours, and one particular collision in the Long Beach race left his long-time friend (and both past and future team-mate) Pagenaud enraged. But the ‘just-be-yourself’ philosophy was the right one, as Power was plenty quick enough to make up for every time things did go wrong, and was hardly a thug on track anyway. He also proved that he could keep his nose clean when required, and there were several times when Power settled for getting points in the bank.

There was one final hint that he might blow it when he spun in the penultimate round at Sonoma, a race he had looked set to control. It didn’t matter, partly since Castronev’es’s day was even worse, and partly because Power didn’t let the Sonoma error freak him out for the Fontana decider. Nor was he troubled by the quasi-Milwaukee Mile three rounds from the end was pivotal, and bravery in traffic at Fontana ensured he held on to ninth as his handling faded. Demons conquered, ovals mastered, championship won.
He might have only won two rounds of the World Endurance Championship in 2014, but the Audi driver came out of this season with his reputation as one of the world’s top sportscar drivers fully intact, and perhaps even enhanced. His part in the comeback drive that took Audi to victory number 13 at the Le Mans 24 Hours was arguably his greatest ever at La Sarthe, and his performances over the rest of the season were always of the highest level, even when it became clear that the R18 e-tron quattro wasn’t a competitive proposition on your average Tilkedrome.

Lotterer, once again, had a consistency of performance that set him apart from his team-mates at Audi, both in his car and the second R18. Time after time the #2 Audi would come alive when the German clambered aboard and immediately register its fastest lap of the race.

He had only two peers in the WEC this season in Sebastien Buemi and Neel Jani, and Lotterer beats them both in this list courtesy of his exploits in Super Formula in Japan, where he won races and finished third in the points with TOM’S, and what he achieved at Spa in the summer. And we’re not just talking about his exploits in an Formula 1 car.

Lotterer proved at Spa by outqualifying Caterham team-mate Marcus Ericsson by almost a second what many of us have always known — that he is one of the great talents ‘lost’ to F1. That he did it without so much as having driven the Caterham-Renault CT05 prior to free practice makes it an even more impressive feat, though a decade ago he had a year in a slow green car as Jaguar’s test driver. The team clearly thought it was no fluke, because he was invited back even when old friend Colin Kolles was no longer at the helm after Caterham was placed in administration. Having scratched his F1 itch, he sensibly declined the invitation to jump in the perennial also-ran again.

One month earlier he had proved his versatility at the wheel of an Audi R8 LMS ultra GT3 car by running competitively at the Spa 24 Hours. The outing, in a car shared with WEC team-mates Marcel Fassler and Benoit Treluyer, didn’t yield the result their pace deserved, but it showed that Lotterer can be fast in anything and underlined his enthusiasm for the sport.

The racer’s spirit was there for all to see in 2014, perhaps because of the difficult circumstance in which Audi found itself after Le Mans. Nowhere was that more apparent than on the first lap at Fuji when Lotterer vaulted into the lead from fifth on the grid, overriding the fuel cut, before dramatically slowing at the final corner when the electronics got their way.
Sebastien Ogier
World Rally champion

Ogier’s path to a second World Rally Championship title was a little tougher than his first, with a strong challenge from Volkswagen team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala. But the Frenchman’s class won out, with eight victories in 13 events allowing him to take the title with a round to spare.

Q&A

Which was the best win of the year?
Emotionally, Monte was a good one – it’s my home rally and it’s one of the most iconic events. It was important. But Spain, in terms of performance, I was really happy with that one. I really expected to struggle on that first day in gravel, so I really prepared for it and it was fantastic. That first day in Spain was one of my best. This result was special to take the second title like this.

What was the worst moment of the year?
I think you know the answer to this one! Rally Germany was a very bad one – two crashes in less than 12 hours. And the second crash was a huge one, probably the biggest one. I think it’s fair to say that I was quite lucky at that moment that nothing more serious happened.

Which was your favourite stage this year?
I would have to say the Myhinpaa stage in Finland. We were fighting a lot with Jari-Matti [Latvala]. There was less than four seconds between us starting the final day and we managed to take 1.3 seconds from him in there. Both of us were completely flat-out all of the time and just flying through the stage. We were quite a bit faster than the rest of the guys and, at that time, there was a lot of adrenaline in the car and a lot of pleasure!

Which rally was your favourite?
Monte is something special. It’s a huge challenge.

You were going to say Wales, I think.
Ah, I could say Wales. It was a great fight on the first day, but the two last days were not so much of a fight – but it’s still a challenge to stay on the road.
It would be incredibly easy to assume that Marco Wittmann has been placed far too high on this list, given that what he won in 2014 is, essentially, a domestic touring car championship.

But that assumption is an oversimplification of what Wittmann achieved this season. He didn’t just win the DTM title. He dominated. And in the DTM, that isn’t an easy thing to do.

Make no mistake; the DTM is remarkably competitive. In 2014, only one driver failed to score a single point. It was Vitaly Petrov, the same guy who finished third in the 2011 Australian Grand Prix. When an F1 podium finisher is dead last, you know you have a quality field on your hands.

And that is why Wittmann is so high on this list. There are few, if any, series in the world that can boast a level of overall driver ability as high as the DTM, so to finish 50 points clear at the top is a big deal.

What was incredibly refreshing about Wittmann’s 2014 title run was that he actually went out and won the championship, rather than just collecting it through consistency. After three rounds he was in a position where he could have spent the rest of season settling for spots just inside the top 10, and relying on the inconsistent nature of DTM results to help him limp across the line to the title.

But instead he went on and won two more races, giving him a total of four for the season. And in the end he led every single major statistic. His 50-point lead after 10 rounds was, quite simply, a fair reflection of his dominance. Sure, he was consistent, and that consistency played a part in him winning the title, but it was his raw pace that made the big difference.

The final point that underlines Wittmann’s superb performance this season is the fact that he was so often the lone BMW driver at the front of the field. That was most evident at the Nurburgring – which was Wittmann’s drive of the season – where he won the race even though BMW was generally having an off weekend (the next best M4 was Maxime Martin’s down in seventh).

Only once did he get any real help from his team-mates, and that was his Red Bull Ring win, where he was given a trouble-free run past Timo Glock and Augusto Farfus late in the race to take a rather unlikely win. But even if he had finished third or fourth in that race, he still would have won the title comfortably.

Wittmann looked as if he was born to drive the M4 throughout the entire 2014 season. And he made quality opposition look average. That’s why he deserves to be this far up the list.

Much of the talk about Alonso during 2014 was consumed by off-track matters. Would he walk away from Ferrari? Where would he go? Was Ferrari falling apart around him? But in racing terms, the real story was that Alonso was, for the most part, still delivering exceptional race drives that made the Ferrari look perhaps more respectable than it deserved.

Compared with Kimi Raikkonen in the second Ferrari, Alonso’s statistics were breathtaking. He outqualified the Finn 16-3, was only beaten by him once in the races that both finished and outscored the 2007 world champion 161-55. That led Ferrari to fourth in the constructors’ championship, but with two Raikkonens in the car it would have added up only to enough points for sixth in the standings, behind McLaren and Force India.

There were moments when Alonso seemed to slip into a frustrated mood and didn’t deliver his
His proactive style behind the wheel was often a stunning sight. The Ferrari was not the most responsive of cars on turn-in, which made life extremely difficult for Raikkonen, but Alonso had an ability to provoke it in a way that got the car turned in, and hustle it through the turn without seriously compromising momentum. Raikkonen, by contrast, could hustle the car, but struggled to keep the speed up. A reminder that Alonso really is an extraordinary driver, even though an astonishing eight seasons have passed since he was last crowned world champion.

Next year, he faces a new challenge with a switch to McLaren-Honda. While he had his eye on a move to Mercedes that was never on, what once would have seemed an impossible return to McLaren again puts him in a team that might not be in a position to fight for wins in 2015. Time is running out for the third title he covets, so there's a lot riding on this partnership for the Spaniard.

usual standards behind the wheel in races (his final stint in the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, for example), but the good far outweighed the bad. Hungary was a case in point. Put into a position where he could fight for victory by the timing of the safety car, Alonso got agonisingly close to stealing victory, only losing the lead to the charging Daniel Ricciardo at the death. Even with a superb drive, and the all-conquering Mercedes drivers out of the way, he wasn't able to capitalise. That says everything about the quality of the Ferrari and nothing about what Alonso did behind the wheel.

That was one of only two podium finishes. The rest of the time, Alonso could but skulk around the middle to bottom end of the top 10. In Bahrain he made his feelings very clear about the car with a 'celebratory' fist shake as he crossed the line a desultory ninth. That encapsulates the frustration Alonso was feeling, and regularly referred to obliquely when outside the car.

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The foundations for Lewis Hamilton’s sensational season were laid in September 2012. The bold decision he made then, to walk away from a McLaren team that produced a car that was capable of winning multiple races to one that had won just once in the preceding three seasons, was viewed with incredulity in some quarters. There was always the likelihood that Mercedes would produce the best car/engine package, but the decision was about more than that and allowed a driver always regarded as one of the fastest – perhaps the fastest – in grand prix racing to fully realise his prodigious ability.

Hamilton matured to become a better driver than ever before in 2014. There were doubts about how he would deal with the challenges of the 2014 power units, but he cast them aside, driving more efficiently than Rosberg and – particularly in the second half of the year – regularly outpacing his team-mate in race conditions. Given that Alain Prost-like ability, it simply didn’t matter that he lost out in qualifying more often than not. Six years on from his first title in 2008, the Hamilton that won 11 races this year and was a worthy champion is a far more complete driver.

“I had an amazing season,” he said at the AUTOSPORT Awards earlier this month. “I was very fortunate to have the best team and the best car and we did an amazing job together.

“A lot of people doubted the decision I made to move to this team, but it was a team that, when I sat with Niki [Lauda] and Ross [Brawn], I knew straight away that they had the right plans in place. But when I joined, I never imagined we’d been dominating as soon as we had.”

During the middle stages of the season, it seemed it might all slip away. After winning four races on the bounce following his retirement from the season-opening Australian Grand Prix, things started to go wrong in Monaco when Nico Rosberg controversially triggered a yellow flag in qualifying.

That precipitated a series of qualifying sessions in which Hamilton made errors, followed by a spin on cold brakes on the first lap in Hungary. Combined with the mechanical problems Hamilton was suffering, Rosberg seized control. Then came the collision at Spa. Initially, it seemed another moment when things had gone against Hamilton. But what followed was a series of grands prix in which he was imperious on the Sunday afternoons, scooping the world championship relatively comfortably.

“This one [championship] definitely feels sweeter than the first,” he said at the FIA prize-giving gala. “But that’s probably just because I’m older and because of what I’ve gone through to get to this one and the decisions I’ve taken.”

Last time Hamilton won the championship, a major rule change derailed his McLaren team and left him fighting even to win races. But in 2015, expectations are that Mercedes will again have the strongest car in the field. If the late-season Hamilton is in it from the start, even Rosberg might not see him for dust.
Daniel Ricciardo’s combination of effortless speed, canny racecraft and off-track character established him as a bona fide grand prix superstar in 2014. At the start of the season he had so much to prove, but come the end of it he had comprehensively outperformed Sebastian Vettel, won three grands prix, and earned the respect of the top drivers in grand prix racing.

RICCIARDO ON...

The maiden podium (that wasn’t) in Australia…

“That felt like a victory. It all just felt so surreal then, whereas now it feels somewhat normal, which is nice because it means I’m getting used to it. But Melbourne seems a blur. When I was standing on that podium, if I would have said I’m going to have eight more of those and a few victories, I’d have thanked you all day! I remember sitting on the grid for Melbourne like it was yesterday. It seems so clear in my mind. The season goes very quick.”

The memorable races…

“The whole Bahrain GP weekend. That was probably the first one when not only did I qualify strongly, but I also raced hard. It was probably the first weekend where people saw that maybe this kid can overtake after all! After that, Monaco was cool as the team could see I was willing to push the car and handle it. Obviously, the victories were good, but third at Austin was a complete weekend where I delivered pretty much everything I could.”

Learning to win…

“When I took the lead in Canada, I was well aware I was there. You feel the heart rate going up, so you have to control your emotions and keep doing the basics right. Those last few laps, a lot is going through your head and you make sure that your hands still work to change gears, that you don’t freeze! When my body was functioning under that sort of pressure, I realised I had what it took.”

The standout victory…

“I would say Spa was more difficult. From very early on, the lead was mine to lose, whereas Canada and Hungary that was not the case. So in terms of pressure, that was the one. The car did start to slide a bit. Even through Eau Rouge, every time through you feel your tyres getting more and more worn, but I wanted not to get complacent so every lap I did Eau Rouge flat, even the last one.”

Overtaking…

“Overtaking comes with confidence. This year I’ve felt that from the first race. There was a monkey on my back in the past years about not being attacking enough and I wanted to change it.”

Number of times Ricciardo outqualified team-mate Sebastian Vettel in 19 races.
Bernie: F1 doesn't need young viewers.
Next week: F1 doesn't need viewers.
Week after: #F1 doesn't need drivers

Richard Williams @rwilliams1947 - Nov 21
The more I think about it, the more amazed I am that Bernie Ecclestone is still in a job after giving this interview: http://bit.ly/1qHGsLP

Tiff Needell @tiff_tv - Nov 14
Been reading Bernie's latest rant! So how many of his 70 year olds buy Red Bull??

Ed Barton @e2theb - Nov 14
Bernie is refreshingly direct on social media audiences and F1
THE RISE OF TWITTER

Martin Brundle @MBrundleF1 - Nov 15
Love the Tube and walking around London. So many passionate F1 fans to speak to. Even young F1 fans who are especially welcome.

Jon Noble @NobleF1 - Nov 14
Bernie Ecclestone claims F1 shouldn’t chase young fans - rich pensioners are a better target. autosport.com/news/report.php?id/115442

Chris Hill @chrishill1407 - Aug 21
It seems Bernie Ecclestone doesn’t think F1 needs social media. Further proof he’s from another planet?

McLaren @McLarenF1 - Nov 14
Just in case you were wondering... we love social media at McLaren & we love young #F1 fans too! #McLarenNextGen pic.twitter.com/KCOqaUuzNI

Lotus F1 @LotusF1Team - Nov 14
Confirmation: We like all our fans, no matter what their age or timepiece. #F1 pic.twitter.com/0nFO04IBT

Alan Baldwin @alanbaldwinf1 - Nov 14
And then, of course there is always Mr E. He’s not going to be on Twitter any time soon. reut.rs/1zoxpos

Lotus F1 Team @LotusF1Team - Nov 21
Ironic. @TwitterSports on how to follow #F1 Finale on Twitter but Bernie Ecclestone doesn’t get social media. blog.twitter.com/2014/f1-set-for-

Marcus Simmons @MarcusSimmons54 - Nov 14
Dear Bernie, I got into #F1 aged 7 – drivers were heroes, cars gorgeous and circuits mega. Now I have bank account bit.ly/115nwAk

Peter Leung @peterleung - Nov 21
Irrity. @TwitterSports on how to follow #F1 Finale on Twitter but Bernie Ecclestone doesn’t get social media. blog.twitter.com/2014/f1-set-for-

Matthew Walthert @MatthewWalthert - Nov 16
Is Bernie Ecclestone as out-of-touch as he seems when it comes to social media? bleacherreport.com/articles/22691... via @BleacherReport @br_uk #F1

Ryan Martin @RyanMsoccer - Nov 14
Just read Bernie Ecclestone’s recent comments about social media, fans, etc. Again reminded that he is out of touch. planetf1.com/news/3213/9563...

Sorry Bernie, Twitter is in #F1 to stay

Formula 1 is not known for its social-media prowess, but that is beginning to change. @SCOTTMICHELL89 explains what makes Twitter an important part of the sport’s future and how it can get the most from it.

Matthew Walthert @MatthewWalthert - Nov 16
Is Bernie Ecclestone as out-of-touch as he seems when it comes to social media? bleacherreport.com/articles/22691... via @BleacherReport @br_uk #F1

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Marcus Simmons @MarcusSimmons54 - Nov 14
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Martin Brundle @MBrodie_F1 - Nov 15
Love the Tube and walking around London. So many passionate F1 fans to speak to. Even young F1 fans who are especially welcome.

Peter Leung @peterleung - Nov 21
Irrity. @TwitterSports on how to follow #F1 Finale on Twitter but Bernie Ecclestone doesn’t get social media. blog.twitter.com/2014/f1-set-for-

Matthew Walthert @MatthewWalthert - Nov 16
Is Bernie Ecclestone as out-of-touch as he seems when it comes to social media? bleacherreport.com/articles/22691... via @BleacherReport @br_uk #F1

Ryan Martin @RyanMsoccer - Nov 14
Just read Bernie Ecclestone’s recent comments about social media, fans, etc. Again reminded that he is out of touch. planetf1.com/news/3213/9563...

Jon Noble @nobleF1 - Nov 14
Bernie Ecclestone claims F1 shouldn’t chase young fans - rich pensioners are a better target. autosport.com/news/report.php?id/116761 pic.twitter.com/mrBi4ZCjw9
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Twitter is a divisive subject in motorsport. It is easily misunderstood, with Bernie Ecclestone a prime example, but if used correctly can be a powerful tool that engages fans and has commercial benefits for the teams.

It’s easy to dismiss social media as a technological fad, but it’s not about hashtags or trends, it’s the audience they represent. The best use of Twitter isn’t to patronise the #bestfans, nor is it for a driver just to let the world know that their breakfast that day was particularly satisfying. The real benefit lies somewhere in the middle, with different parts of the sport taking on different roles.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Formula 1 has a global fanbase, but is largely inaccessible to its audience. Far more can sit at home than can sit in a grandstand, thus the ways for teams to showcase what happens off-track are wide-ranging. After a quite dormant existence the F1 Twitter account fired into life mid-season, transforming itself from something that existed for the sake of it to an active, informative tool. By the end of November, @F1 had more than one million followers on the popular micro-blogging site – an increase of 50 per cent over the season. But follower count isn’t everything on Twitter. In fact, it’s becoming less and less relevant.

Engagement, how much your followers interact with you and how much your content is shared, is the true test of social-media prowess. Quality trumps quantity.

FOM’s role in F1’s social strategy need not be a direct one. Its improvements to the official F1 account are along the right lines, so the main focus needs to be helping the evolution and growth of the teams’ individual accounts. They are the places the fans will go for interaction and they are the places the sport will benefit from a proper social media strategy.

What teams have done is attempt to break down the barrier between the fans and the paddock, and Twitter affords that opportunity. Formula 1 doesn’t stop once the television cameras have been turned off on Sunday evening, so why limit its reach? Especially when, with teams in control of the accounts, the sport can tailor its messaging to suit.

Pushing social media will only help bring the sport’s previously off-limits moments into the spotlight. That has been embraced more earnestly by teams in the second half of this year, with Red Bull embedding video of Sebastian Vettel driving through the streets of Austin directly into its feed and McLaren inviting 15 “super fans” to its Woking headquarters.

Teams have more to showcase, and a dynamic approach works best. Mercedes is the most interactive with its followers – the result of a deliberate strategy to build its audience on social-media platforms this year – and engenders high levels of engagement as a result. Conversely, while the popularity of Ferrari is without question, its style on social media reads as a newsletter – here is the announcement, click to read it on our website. That has a negative impact on its effectiveness online.

If you take the social-media equivalent of TV coverage – often referred to as the “share of voice” – then according to leading social media analyst Repucom Mercedes dominated the Twittersphere in 2014, comfortably ahead...
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THE RISE OF TWITTER

Alonso engages with his fans, the Tifosi, via a selfie on the Monza podium

POTENTIAL NOT WITHOUT PITFALLS

“I chose Twitter from the beginning because I thought it was the most simple way of doing it and communicating with the fans,” explains double world champion Fernando Alonso, who has over two million followers, regularly posts in Spanish and English and intends to ramp up his activity now his time at Ferrari is over.

“It’s fun, it’s good to share a little bit of our unknown life to our fans. From now on, I think I will be on Twitter a bit more, like in the past, because this year has been a little bit restricted.”

Twitter is the key to unlock to F1’s personality prison. But it’s not without its problems. Conspiracy theorists in particular leaping in all guns blazing whenever there’s a whiff of controversy – Sebastian Vettel “passing” Jean-Eric Vergne under yellow flags on his way to defeating Alonso in the 2012 title fight and the storm that raged following Jules Bianchi’s horror crash in the Japanese Grand Prix this year concerning whether the marshals had done their jobs properly. It’s unfounded and detracts from more serious issues.

Using the same topic, Bianchi’s fight for survival, Twitter has brought together fans and drivers in a social-media context it falls short of the aim of generating engagement, too; the common tactic has been to simply encourage fans to vote instead of giving them a reason to.

Other, more traditional, series have also invested in Twitter, and for reasons that extend deeper than attempting to drum up an artificial conversation.

NASCAR chief marketing officer Steve Phelps said in 2012 that it had been an important part of its drive to “further engage our fanbase and help grow the sport”. The seeds laid in previous years have continued to bear fruit, with America’s premier motorsport category enjoying unparalleled support online, with 1.6m followers compared with national rival IndyCar’s 140,000.

HOW OTHER SERIES DO IT

Plenty of championships have adopted social media as an essential promotional tool, though Formula E’s arrival turned it into a weapon for success as much as anything else.

The all-electric series’ FanBoost idea meant Twitter and Facebook became channels for teams to drum up support for their drivers in order to win a 67kw (90bhp) power boost during the race.

Unsurprisingly that proved divisive. Some fans liked having some kind of influence, while purists saw it as a gimmick and little more.

A conservative strategy from teams and drivers might be a by-product of the series’ strict social-media policy, which Helio Castroneves fell foul of earlier this year, ending up on probation.

The British Touring Car Championship is heavily invested in social media. Its most successful offerings are competition-based, which help validate existing fans and potentially bring new ones into the fold. Social support is a big asset here as it is more likely to translate into numbers on the gate.
drivers with the adoption of the #ForzaJules trend, something that also occurred following Michael Schumacher’s skiing accident (#KeepFightingMichael). F1’s PR side can also muddy the waters. Hamilton brought his issues here on himself following telemetry-gate at Spa in 2012, when he posted a picture of his and then-McLaren team-mate Jenson Button’s telemetry from qualifying. The fallout didn’t quite bring down the Iron Curtain, but a more controlled social-media strategy followed. But eyebrows were raised when a post was made to one of Hamilton’s accounts ‘from my iPhone’, when Mercedes had sponsorship from Blackberry. Like anything else, socialing has its pitfalls.

Romain Grosjean set up an automatic Tweet announcing his re-signing at Lotus earlier this year, only for the official confirmation to be delayed. This is one of the more amusing anecdotes – “My phone went crazy with it being tweeted and I went ‘no, no, no!’” he remembers. “You will never see a picture of my son,” the Frenchman continues, “because I believe that this is 100 per cent private. But it’s nice to be as close as you can to people.”

“There are obviously things you can develop that you could expect people to pay for but we need to embrace racing fans, not monetise everything we do” Claire Williams

MONEY TO BE MADE
Mercedes claims it has a following of 10 million across the leading social-media platforms Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. That audience is the result of a deliberate strategy. With more fans invested in it, F1/FOM’s social-media market becomes stronger. Making money out of Twitter is a tricky topic, but what Ecclestone is relying on his new working group to ascertain is whether it is possible and the best way to achieve it. But the short answer is that there is money to be made. Understanding how to use social media is a boost to F1’s commercial appeal — and a highly-regarded asset in terms of sponsorship proposals — but the future lies in making money from the audience it helps generate and grow.

Claire Williams, who will chair the new Popularity Working Group, has been one of the
most vocal F1 figures on this subject. F1’s future probably lies in the direction of a combined social-media strategy, with the teams working together to build up a paddock-wide brand rather than just looking after individual interest.

“We haven’t drilled down into that level of detail in that meeting, but it is something we will look at and hopefully do as a group,” Williams said recently in Abu Dhabi. “At the moment we do all our social media as individual teams — but I think if we did something collectively it could be really powerful.”

That, in turn, can take the dialogue with fans to the next level, and turn it into a revenue stream — something social-media expert WePlay calls the Fan Adoption Journey, which is outlined above. While this is arguably where F1’s social-media future lies, Williams is keen to proceed with caution.

“I said a while ago that for me in the short-term, monetising social media is not where I personally see it,” she added. “If we want to make F1 accessible to fans they don’t expect to pay for the basic stuff. There are obviously things you can develop that you could expect people to pay for but we need to embrace racing things you can develop that you could expect people to pay for but we need to embrace racing

Opinions are divided on how to achieve that next step, but patience should be the order of the day. Twitter can have financial benefits but it’s primary purpose is to engage and entertain, which makes it an opportunity for F1 to improve its image. If greed turns it into a fan-fed cash cow, it could achieve the opposite.

 given the 2012 NASCAR Sprint Cup champion isn’t afraid to get raucous in real life, he’s not going to shy away when behind a keyboard. Says what he thinks and engages fully with his fanbase.

The Colombian once tweeted a picture of his workshop while he was building a huge model plane. It’s not always that random, but there are a few personalities whose lives off the track are as interesting.

The two-time British Touring Car champion is even more frank and personal online than he is in real life. That makes him an entertaining addition to your timeline whether it’s a BTCC weekend or not.

The reinvented Japanese is one of Twitter’s most entertaining characters. Sometimes you think sportspersons need to take themselves less seriously - Inoue is already there.

The best motorsport photography straight to your timeline. On-track and behind-the-scenes images from Formula 1, the World Endurance Championship and more.
So, which were the best and worst grands prix of 2014? BEN ANDERSON

was at all 19 and attempts to separate the wheat from the chaff

1 HUNGARY

Of all the races in 2014, this one had the mix of ingredients that every Formula 1 fan loves to see in a grand prix: bad weather, strategic gambles, fast cars out of position, dramatic displays of car control – and the lack of it – and daring overtaking moves. F1 is all about obsessively eliminating variables, so when you introduce some jeopardy things get interesting.

Rain on race day rendered Friday's practice running meaningless and created an unpredictable race, with the result in doubt until the closing moments. Would Fernando Alonso hold on? Could Daniel Ricciardo come through? Would Lewis Hamilton complete an amazing burn from the stern after Saturday's dramatic qualifying fire? Or would Nico Rosberg recover from the unfortunate timing of an early safety car to trump them all? No one knew the answers to these questions until the final stages. The best race of the season, and arguably the best Hungarian Grand Prix ever.

2 CANADA

Similar to Hungary, but without the rain. The Mercedes in trouble, Williams messing up its pitstops, Massa and Perez clashing (above), and Daniel Ricciardo stealing through to claim a maiden win with a mega pass on the outside of Perez with two wheels on the grass.

3 BAHRAIN

This was the race that slammed a door in the face of the critics of "taxi-cab racing" (Bernie Ecclestone and Luca di Montezemolo – we mean you) and ensured F1's V6 engines were not hurriedly replaced by the old V8s. Brilliant lead battles by Hamilton and Rosberg drowned out complaints about the (lack of) noise…

4 BELGIUM

Ricciardo the 'honey badger' hung on brilliantly after Rosberg did the dirty on Hamilton. Everyone loves Spa – even more so when the race is so controversial, and the faster car is chasing a slower one.

5 AUSTRIA

The template for every grand prix event to follow in an age of corporate soullessness. A festival atmosphere akin to Le Mans with just as much beer, and the only race where we woke every day to the sound of thumping European electro music.

6 MONACO

A little waggle of the steering wheel, plus a trip down an escape road, made for intra-team rancour (below), and a Sunday spectacle that no fan wanted to miss.
THE F1 YEAR IN REVIEW

15 SPAIN
Similar template to Brazil but with less overtaking.

8 USA
Lewis Hamilton proved he was the fastest gunslinger in the West, while the also-rans whooped, hollered, cheered, and then knocked seven bells out of each other. Who needs Indianapolis?

14 CHINA
A hazy and forgettable procession.

16 MALAYSIA
Like China but with higher humidity.

18 RUSSIA
Another white elephant to add to Tilke’s growing collection of zoological curiosities.

19 JAPAN
A decent wet-weather race, augmented by delicious driver-market intrigue off the circuit – but all rendered irrelevant by the terrible accident that befell Jules Bianchi and placed F1 2014 under a dark cloud.
F1’S ONE-HIT WONDERS

After years of waiting, many people’s F1 careers are over almost as soon as they’ve begun. STUART CODLING reveals why history records these drivers as Formula 1’s one-hit wonders

Most racing drivers grow up dreaming about Formula 1. Very few reach it, and of those, some fail to find a foothold and are gone almost as soon as they appeared. Some of the shortest Formula 1 careers haven’t stretched beyond the opening lap. But, like other mileage-challenged soloists Josef Peters (1952 German Grand Prix, one lap), Bob Said (1959 US GP, half a lap) and Graham McRae (1973 British GP, half a lap), Marco Apicella enjoyed success in other fields, racing among the frontrunners in Super Formula and Super GT.

Apicella had already left the European Formula 3000 scene after five seasons and begun a race-winning relationship with Dome in Japan when he got an offer to drive for Jordan in the 1993 Italian Grand Prix. Ivan Capelli and Thierry Boutsen had already vacated that seat, preferring retirement, but Eddie Jordan wasn’t asking for much money. Apicella had half a day’s testing at Imola then headed to Monza, where he qualified 23rd after hitting a rivulet at the Lesmos and spinning off.

“I remember this experience very well, unfortunately!” he says. “I was so excited. A lot of the other guys on the grid I’d raced against in F3000, and somehow it was as if they were waiting for me. It was a great day.

MARCO APICELLA
1993 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

Distance covered by Apicella

200 YARDS
Apicella still doesn't know who put him out of his only GP. "But I knew I was just going to do this one race so there was a big pressure. Still, it was all good for me, except for the result! I did maybe 200 metres before somebody hit me and it broke the steering, so I had to stop, even before the first corner.

"I still don't know who hit me, I don't want to watch the video – it's really painful to think about, even though in many other ways I was very lucky in my career and had good results."

HANS HEYER
1977 German Grand Prix, Hockenheim

Touring car racer and one-off F1 entrant Hans Heyer hadn't even qualified for the German Grand Prix in 1977, but he parked his ATS-Penske at the pitlane exit come Sunday so as to be ready in case another entrant failed to make it to the grid. As first reserve he was entitled to do this; then, when Clay Regazzoni and Alan Jones collided at the first corner, Heyer took it as his cue to join the fray anyway.

The crowd were delighted, the race stewards less so. When Heyer's gear selector linkage came apart after nine laps it neatly solved their quandary over what to do about him; they duly scrubbed him from the record.

TIFF NEEDELL
1980 Belgian Grand Prix, Zolder

Then a jobbing racing driver with a good Formula 3 pedigree, now a popular and accomplished broadcaster, Tiff Needell talked his way into the Ensign drive that had been vacated by Clay Regazzoni after his life-changing accident at Long Beach. After a brief test at Donington he made his debut at Zolder, qualifying in the penultimate grid slot ahead of Emerson Fittipaldi.

"I remember sitting on the grid humming the Grand Prix theme tune," he says. "And I had a dice with Emerson, my schoolboy hero."

Needell's engine blew after 12 laps and he failed to make the grid for the next race, Monaco, after crashing in qualifying. Jan Lammers took over the car from then on, though he also struggled to qualify it.

STÉPHANE SARRAZIN
1999 Brazilian Grand Prix

Formula 3000 frontrunner Sarrazin was testing Prost GP's F1 car at Barcelona when he got the call-up to replace Minardi's injured Luca Badoer for the Brazilian GP.

"I remember it like yesterday," he says. "When I arrived the spare car had Marc Gené's name on it. Free practice was wet and I was about 14th. Then they changed the name to Sarrazin, I was very happy about the feeling. "I was going well in the race. I was in front of Panis, and he finished sixth. I was in front of a Benetton and I felt I was doing a very good job.

"Then the front wing broke and I didn't realise. When I arrived at Turn 14 I had no downforce and went straight in the wall. It was a big one. They had a problem with the wings at that time, they had many failures."

Believing he was safe for the drive with Prost in 2000, Sarrazin turned down Minardi's offer to stay on. This proved to be a mistake, since Prost took Nick Heidfeld in F1 and Sarrazin had to scrabble for another F3000 drive.

"It was my choice," he says. "I was very young – 22, 23 – and I had no manager. I should have stayed in F1 and got a lawyer!"
JONATHAN WILLIAMS
1967 Mexican Grand Prix, Mexico City

Taking a drive at Ferrari is occasionally akin to accepting a poisoned chalice, but by any measure the reaction of Jonathan Williams, who passed away earlier this year, to his summons to the 1967 Mexican Grand Prix was somewhat extreme: "I was dragged there kicking and screaming," he said.

Ferrari had run a single entry for much of the season after Lorenzo Bandini's fatal accident in Monaco. Months later 24-year-old Williams, who had contested a number of F2 and sportscar races for the Scuderia, was informed that he should make haste to Mexico City and bring some overalls "just in case". Upon arrival he kicked his heels on the sidelines throughout Friday practice. Then, on Saturday, for reasons that go unrecorded, Williams was told to suit up and get going.

"I'd never even sat in the car," he said. "I had maybe 15 to 20 laps before the race."

He still qualified 16th out of 19 runners, albeit 7.24s away from Jim Clark's pole time, and he came home eighth, though three of the cars classified behind him were walking wounded.

"I was terribly ashamed after Mexico and was walking around in dark glasses hiding from people," he said. Williams never raced in F1 again but he achieved modest success in F2 and sportscars before hanging up his helmet in 1972.

GERARD LARROUSSE
1974 Belgian Grand Prix, Nivelles

"I think I wanted to say that I'd done one grand prix in my life," said Gerard Larrousse in an interview with Motor Sport 10 years ago. Thus the rally driver turned sportscar ace, obtained a ride in the Swiss-run Team Bretscher Brabham BT42 for the 1974 Belgian Grand Prix at the unloved Nivelles circuit. He had only driven in four single-seater races before.

"The first time I saw it was when it turned up at Nivelles on the back of an open trailer pulled by a little truck," he says. "There were just two mechanics." Larrousse qualified 28th and made it to lap 53 before his tyres gave out – and the team had no more to fit.

"I've always suspected that Leo [Mehl, Goodyear supremo] gave me qualifying tyres," says Larrousse. He still qualified 28th and made it to lap 53 before his tyres gave out – and the team had no more to fit. "I've always suspected that Leo [Mehl, Goodyear supremo] gave me qualifying tyres," says Larrousse.

MARKUS WINKELHOCK
2007 European Grand Prix, Nürburgring

Uniquely among Formula 1 soloists, Markus Winkelhock led the one grand prix he started. The 27-year old was called up by Spyker to contest the 2007 European Grand Prix at the Nürburgring in place of Christijan Albers (who had been dropped when his sponsorship ran out).

Thanks to a pitwall gamble, Winkelhock was the only driver on full wets when torrential rain drenched the circuit on the opening lap, and he found himself leading as others scurried to the pits for intermediates or flew off the road before getting there. He briefly led after the restart, but his hydraulics failed after 15 laps and he never raced an F1 car again; Sakon Yamamoto arrived with wallet in tow and took the seat for the remainder of the year.

"To lead a Formula 1 race is something nobody can take away from you," says Winkelhock. "You have it for your whole life."

MIGUEL ANGEL GUERRA
1981 San Marino Grand Prix, Imola

Argentine Formula 2 graduate Guerra arrived at Long Beach for the first race of 1981 with no F1 cockpit time apart from a day of straight-line testing at an airfield. Osella's FA1B was woefully off the ground-effect pace and Guerra was one of five drivers not to make the cut.

Guerra had raced in F2 at Imola and there, at the fourth race of the season, he finally qualified. But what would prove to be his only GP start didn't last long: as the field rounded Tamburello for the first time, with the track still wet, Elio de Angelis clipped the right-rear of Guerra's car and sent him almost head-on into the wall. He sustained a double fracture to his left ankle in the impact, which also trapped him in the car.

"That's life," he says. "I didn't manage to find another F1 chance. At the beginning of 1982 there was a big currency devaluation in Argentina and suddenly it was no longer possible to find the sort of sponsorship required."
**ANDRE LOTTERER**
2014 Belgian Grand Prix, Spa-Francorchamps

As a Le Mans 24 Hours winner and serial frontrunner in Japanese Super Formula, Andre Lotterer had little left to prove at the top level of motor racing. But, having spent a formative year of his career (2002) on the sidelines as Jaguar’s F1 test driver, he couldn’t resist an offer to drive for Caterham in the 2014 Belgian GP.

Driving a backmarking F1 car proved a disappointment in terms of cornering ability compared with his LMP1 Audi, but he rapidly outpaced team-mate Marcus Ericsson in practice, and outqualified him. Lotterer’s race lasted just one full lap before his engine lost power and he halted at Blanchimont.

“It’s a shame I didn’t finish the race,” he says, “but I can go home happy, even though it didn’t end the way I’d have liked it to.”

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**JEAN-LOUIS SCHLESSER**
1988 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

Making his world championship F1 debut the day before his 40th birthday, Schlesser had been called up by Williams to stand in for Nigel Mansell, who was suffering from chicken pox. “I was not surprised to get the call,” he says. “I’d already done a lot of testing. I hadn’t driven the car for a year, though.”

It had been a dire season for Judd-powered Williams, one not greatly improved by reverting the FW12 to passive suspension. Schlesser was lucky to qualify after crashing during Saturday’s second session.

With just one full lap of the race to go he was running in 11th as the leader, Ayrton Senna, came up to put him two laps down... the rest is history.

Schlesser ran out of asphalt as Senna swept by at the Rettifilo and turned in, nudging the McLaren into retirement and allowing Gerhard Berger and Michele Alboreto through for a Ferrari one-two. It would be the only race of 1988 not won by McLaren.

“I was surprised he tried to pass me where he did,” says Schlesser. “I was braking, braking, braking and thinking, ‘Why has he not passed me yet?’ So I had to turn when I did and ‘ping’! He hit me.

“Ayrton was quite nice with me about it after the race, though. He said, ‘It’s OK, don’t worry. It’s a racing incident.’ Everything was all right – no problems.”

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**ERNST LOOF**
1953 German Grand Prix, Nürburgring

A pre-war motorcycle champion and BMW engineer, Ernst Loof co-founded the Veritas marque after hostilities had been concluded. Finances were always tight, but in a workshop near the Nürburgring, Loof built a decently competitive Formula 2 chassis named the Meteor. It was in one of these that, at the age of 46, he qualified 31st (out of 34 entries) for the 1953 German GP, while the world champions were running to F2 rules.

Juan Manuel Fangio seized the lead in his Maserati at the start, tearing past polesitter Alberto Ascari’s Ferrari; and, once the field had departed, one car remained. Loof’s fuel pump had broken, stranding him on the grid.
CLEMENTE BIONDETTI
1950 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

Biondetti had raced for Maserati in pre-war grands prix and won the Mille Miglia four times, but surely his most curious adventure was to enter a Jaguar-engined Ferrari at the 1950 Italian GP. “His stubborness and persistence, characteristic of the old Viareggio stock, emerged on road races more than on the track,” wrote Enzo Ferrari in his book Piloti, che gente. Perhaps this is why Biondetti could not obtain a Ferrari F1 car, even though he had won both the Mille Miglia and the Targa Florio in Enzo’s machinery.

Neither could he persuade Jaguar to build an F1 car or even supply him with a new engine, though he was on Jaguar’s books as a works sportscar driver in 1950. Instead, he took a used XK120 engine – one that had thrown a conrod on the Targa Florio – and fitted it, along with the drivetrain, into what is claimed to have been the body of a Ferrari 166 (the subsequent history of the original Ferrari chassis has muddied the waters somewhat). It’s believed, but impossible to say definitively, that the majority of the chassis was Maserati.

Biondetti qualified his bitsa car 25th out of 27 starters, albeit 32s off Fangio’s pole position time of 1m58.6s, and he rose as high as 18th before his engine failed on the 17th lap. Ill health forced Biondetti to quit motor racing in 1954 and the following February he succumbed to cancer, aged 56.

ARTHUR OWEN
1960 Italian Grand Prix, Monza

“Jerseyman Arthur Owen couldn’t care less about being sent to Coventry,” wrote Gregor Grant in his AUTOSPORT report from the 1960 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Those Brits who broke the boycott of the race (Lotus, Cooper and BRM refused to take part on safety grounds because of the use of the banking) had apparently been threatened with an “angry silence” when they returned home, but for Owen – an experienced hillclimber – the opportunity was too good to miss. Only 17 cars were entered and just 16 started, since Jack Fairman – due to race Horace Gould’s Maserati 250F – decided at the last minute to observe the boycott.

Owen qualified his two-year-old Cooper-Climax T45 11th, slowest of the nine F1 cars on the grid, and behind F2 cars driven by Wolfgang Von Trips (Ferrari) and Hans Hermann (Porsche). He managed to get ahead of Hermann but dropped out of the race before having to tackle the banked section, suffering a locked brake at the Parabolica and taking to the grass, terminally damaging his car’s suspension.

Owen returned to hillclimbing and won the British championship in 1962.
CHRIS CRAFT
1971 US GP, Watkins Glen

Even when it was possible to “do” Formula 1 on a budget there were limits, as accomplished sportscar racer Chris Craft found when he tackled a handful of events at the end of 1971 in a second-hand Brabham bought by Alain de Cadanet.

“I didn’t realise the budget would be so tight that we’d only have one set of brake pads,” he says.

Alain bought Jack Brabham’s 1970 BT33 from Ron Tauranac. It still had a dented front wishbone from when Jack had gone off on the last lap at Monaco.

Craft finished fifth at the Oulton Park Gold Cup and qualified at the tail of the Canadian Grand Prix grid, only for the engine to fail on the formation lap.

At the final GP of the year he put the car 27th on the grid at Watkins Glen, but the rear suspension collapsed after 30 of the 59 laps, a consequence of Craft ignoring a vibration from the tyres.

That was it for Craft and F1 but he would race the car again, or at least parts of it. De Cadenet cannibalised the BT33 to create his eponymous Le Mans sports-prototype.

Even on idle, as the Bentley Continental GT3 is shunted around for the picture that opened this story, it sounds beautiful. Walking to the window, it seems Cumbria has been good to us today, revealing all her early-autumn loveliness. But nature can’t compete with what’s sitting outside Dovenby Hall’s front door. 

Wilson casts his mind back to 1979 to start his story

A RAGS TO RICHES
Thirty-six years ago, Malcolm Wilson was embarking on a British Rally Championship bid. Today, his M-Sport operation is a motorsport powerhouse. DAVID EVANS hears how it happened.
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It’s the two faces of M-Sport: the two-time World Rally Championship winner’s Ford Fiesta RS WRC and the latest addition to the list of endurance racing’s movers and shakers.

Wilson smiles benevolently at the two cars being arranged neatly. But then it’s back to business. That’s very much the Wilson way. There’s not much resting on laurels around here – a point hammered home by the plans that sit on a table across the room. This is a computer-generated vision of the firm’s future, complete with a private test track and 105,000-square-foot “evaluation centre” that can cope with the research, development and construction of any kind of race or rally car from the ground up.

It’s a long way from the back of the Wilson family tyre business, a handful of miles southwest of Cockermouth in Branthwaite. That’s where it all began.

It’s 1979. A 23-year-old Malcolm Wilson has landed support from Ford and Total for an assault on the British Rally Championship.

“I’d been running my own cars before that,” says Wilson, “but I saw this as the chance to do it properly with the support I was getting. I also saw the chance to set up a business selling parts.” Malcolm Wilson Motorsport was born.

Much as Wilson was driven by the desire to succeed in a car, he was all over the commercial opportunities and had been for some time. “We used to get stickers and things sent in for the tyre business,” says Wilson, “so I used to take them into school and sell them. I’ve always been interested in business. It’s more rewarding than driving.”

Malcolm Wilson

It’s more rewarding than driving

Malcolm Wilson

Ford had seen enough and signed Wilson to develop its RS200. He gave the Blue Oval’s Group

Main attractions: the Fiesta RS WRC and Bentley Continental GT3

Wilson Sr and Jr with the plans for the future

“I’ve always been interested in business. It’s more rewarding than driving” Malcolm Wilson
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“Even when I was in my late 20s, I said that I would stop driving at 40, irrespective of whether I’d achieved my goals or not” MALCOLM WILSON

RAC Rally – an event that would be going down in British motorsport history. While Colin McRae celebrated stepping up to the top of the world, Wilson slipped away quietly to prepare himself to take on the same world from outside the car.

Malcolm Wilson Motorsport had seriously taken off by now and his own British title-winning Michelin Pilot-backed Escort Cosworth was running by the Cumbrian firm, which had established itself beside the family home near Cockermouth.

At the time, Ford was struggling to know what to do with its programme and had experimented with satellite teams, but with little return – despite the Ford Escort Cosworth being the best-packaged and quickest car of its Group A era.

Watching Toyotas coming out of TTE in Cologne, Subarus from Prodrive in Banbury and Mitsubishis from Balliart in Rugby, Wilson was desperate for a chance to show what he could do with works Escorts from Cumbria.

“I’d dreamed about the Ford deal, but never thought it would happen,” he says, even though he was working on it with Martin Whitaker, Ford’s then new head of European Motorsport. “I never thought or imagined that I would ever get that opportunity. We had a good business, with an expanding customer base and I focused on that.”

The 1000 Lakes Rally in 1996 focused Ford’s mind, however, as Jarmo Kytolehto took a podium finish in a Wilson-run Escort, while the factory’s best effort was 11th with Bruno Thiry. The sister factory Ford of Carlos Sainz failed to make it past the end of the first day before it broke.

“Things moved quickly. I was approached and asked if I would run the team from Boreham,” Wilson says. “I thought long and hard about it and I can tell you I did agree terms. I thought I would keep my own business going up here and work the week down at Boreham.

Then, one Sunday night Elaine [Wilson’s wife] and I were talking and I said to her: ‘Much as I want this job, I’m going to turn it down.’ And that’s one of only two things I’ve reneged on in my life. I told them my decision and thought, ‘Right, Malcolm, that’s that – you’ve burned your bridges there. Time to move on’. I really thought that was it. But after the Finland result, I was invited back down and told we could do it from Cumbria. I still didn’t dare believe it until I had the press release in my hand!”

Reality bit hard in November 1996, when...
Wilson took over Ford’s WRC effort and the full force of what he’d undertaken hit him. There was a World Rally Car to be created, as well as a workforce to assemble in just a couple of months.

“We went from 18 people that November to 106 on the Monte Carlo Rally,” he says.

And John Millington was the only man to make the journey from Essex to Cumbria. He remains with the team today, still working as co-ordinator.

“The work really started then,” says Wilson, “and the work was incredible. It wasn’t an easy transition — you could understand the people at Boreham’s feelings. There wasn’t much of a Christmas that year, but we got to Monte Carlo and we were second and sixth. We were second as well in Sweden and came very close to winning the championship in our first year. If Carlos’ cam belt hadn’t gone in Australia…”

At this point, Ford’s WRC effort was still being run from the Wilson family home. At the time, the focus was firmly on two official cars, so the premises were big enough, but Wilson was thinking bigger. He toured Cumbria, exhausting planning officer after planning officer in the search for his ideal place. It didn’t exist. Until the former mental-health facility at Dovenby Hall came on the market.

“I knew nothing about the place,” said Wilson. “But as soon as we drove in through the gates, I knew it was perfect.”

Derelict. But perfect.

So, in 1998, work began on turning a former mental home into the headquarters of Ford’s World Rally Championship programme. And, just as that was ramping up, work was really kicking in on the other project that the recently re-named M-Sport was involved in... the small matter of the Ford Focus World Rally Car — the most technologically advanced rally car ever to wear the Blue Oval.

With no development base, a couple of units were taken on at Millbrook, just the 275 miles south of Cockermouth.

“That time was a mammoth challenge,” says Wilson. “As well as the Focus and Dovenby, we were also running the programme through the year, which meant 14 rallies and lots of testing. We couldn’t have even considered running customer cars at that time.”

Crucially, Wilson was also negotiating the driver switch of the generation as he lifted Colin McRae away from Subaru in a two-year deal which cost £6m.

The works cars for Elfyn Evans and Ott Tanak will be our shop window again next year” MALCOLM WILSON

After some teething troubles, the McRae-Ford partnership came on song and came within an ace of the world title in 2001. Three years later and McRae was gone and, Wilson landed in Japan to discover Ford was about to follow the Scot out of the series.

“I was handed a press release pretty much as soon as I stepped off the plane,” says Wilson. “It was a Ford withdrawal. I asked when the release was going out and was told: “Tomorrow morning.” I got the first plane back to Europe and asked for a meeting before the release went out.”

Wilson got his meeting and, in the coming weeks, a new deal was hammered out with reduced Ford financial commitment in return for the opportunity for M-Sport to expand its customer operation.

Wilson seized the opportunity with both hands.

“It was music to my ears,” he says. “Don’t forget, I had started my career in a 1300cc Escort and had used the same shell all the way up to fitting a two-litre BDA engine in it. Now we had the chance to create that kind of ladder within Ford again.”

So, Ford stayed and M-Sport developed a new Focus in time for the 2006 season. And this one was a real beauty, coming from the pen of the firm’s own design genius Christian Loriaux. With Marcus Gronholm at the wheel, the world was beaten. Twice. Back-to-back manufacturer titles were delivered for Ford before Gronholm retired at the end of 2007.

Younger Finns Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala stepped up to the plate, but neither could muster the same kind of success their lanky countryman managed.

And this time, when the bombshell was dropped for the second time, there was no coming back.

The day after Wilson, Ford and M-Sport celebrated a dominant Rally GB victory in 2012, he was told Ford was out.

WILSON JR IN M-SPORT ROLE-REVERSAL

The arrival of the Bentley marque at M-Sport offered one employee a particularly high-profile career.

Malcolm’s son Matthew was a full-time World Rally Championship driver from 2006 until 2011, but the loss of a sponsor allied to a broken ankle put paid to his 2012 season. The family firm was calling louder and louder, but Wilson Jr wasn’t sure. It meant a return to rallying on the wrong side of the drivers’ door.

Try as he might to avoid it, there was a desk with his name on it.

“The playboy lifestyle might have been nice,” he says, “but I’d have sooner had that knocked out of me! I was given a bit of a kick up the arse and told to get down there and find a new project.”

Wilson has become Bentley’s race team manager. He’s the link between Cockermouth and Crewe. And he’s absolutely loving it.

“The timing,” he says, “was perfect with the Bentley deal. If this had been a rally project, I would have looked at the driver getting into the car and thought: “I could be doing that…” But with this, I knew I hadn’t done any racing since 2003 and I had no natural desire to get in and drive. That allowed me to do this new job to the best of my ability.”

As you’ve read, Wilson Sr is sure victory as a team principal outweighs anything you can do as a driver. Prior to this season, that was something which Matthew had always struggled to fathom.

“When dad used to talk about the buzz of winning with the team, I could never understand that,” he says. “How could anything compare with the buzz of driving a car. But it does. That feeling when we won for the first time at Silverstone was just amazing and every bit as good as the feeling from driving the car. As was the feeling when I called dad — he was on Rally Argentina — and told him we’d got our first podium in only our second race.”

Wilson has traded the WRC cockpit for a seat in an office
“It was certainly one of the darkest days of business life,” says Wilson. “To be honest, I didn’t expect it. We had another year on the contract, but there was a clause that Ford could stop sooner if they informed us before the end of September.”

The biggest worry for Wilson was his staff. The firm had grown and grown and with that came a responsibility to the community in which Wilson had been born and bred.

“It flattened me,” he adds quietly.

Fortunately, the news came after M-Sport had started work on an all-new category of Fiesta, the R5. This cost-effective class was looming large and looking popular.

The easy way out would have been to knock it on the head. Wilson went in the other direction and hurled himself headlong into it, driving down prices for transmission pieces by ramping up the orders into the hundreds. Millions of pounds were invested in parts as M-Sport set itself the target of being the first company to run an R5 car. It worked. The Fiesta R5 has been wildly popular, with celebrations to mark the 100th sale being planned.

The customer side of M-Sport’s operation is vast and way bigger than anything any other team in the world could consider. And it’s the economic model of winning on Sunday and selling on Monday that makes the team economically viable in the absence of manufacturer support or a title sponsor.

“The two works cars for Elfyn [Evans] and Ott [Tanak] next year will be our shop window again,” says Wilson. “Getting those cars right gives people the confidence to come and buy from us.”

There was, however, another significant ray of light to brighten those dark September 2012 days. And it came from a most unexpected source.

“I was on the factory floor,” says Wilson, “when I got the message to say Brian Gush had called from Bentley to talk about a possible GT3 programme.”

Wilson was slightly perplexed.

“I'll be honest,” he says, “I had to Google GT3…”

That done. He returned the call from Crewe. Gush wanted to have a look around M-Sport.

“Brian came up, had a look around and said he wanted to come back with some board members,” says Wilson. “He said it might take a while to get the head of marketing and the chairman together on the same day, so I asked if it would help if I sent the helicopter to pick them up. I did that and a week later we sat in the Oak Room in Dovenby and talked things through over lunch. It was an absolutely beautiful day and the fit for Bentley and us was just perfect.

“I couldn’t believe it,” says Wilson. “In such a short space of time, we were now helping to build and develop Bentley’s GT3 programme. It was unbelievable.”

And not bad for the fella who started out building Escorts over the hill in Branthwaite.
PICTURES OF THE YEAR

Our photographers captured some stunning images during 2014. Here are the best of the best from around the world over the past 12 months.
LOOKING ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

Jason Bright's Holden is launched into the air during the Clipsal 500 in Adelaide. The car wasn't in great shape, but fortunately Bright was able to walk away from this.
As Kevin Magnussen makes contact, Felipe Massa prepares to be flipped.

Juho Hanninen showed promised during Rally Sardinia, but he ended up the wrong way up after this over-ambitious moment.

Inconsolable Jari-Matti Latvala after ploughing through a vineyard and crashing while leading in Germany.

Iconic view of Porsche curves down to final Ford chicane from the Le Mans ferris wheel.

As Kevin Magnussen makes contact, Felipe Massa prepares to be flipped.

Power into Disaster: Juho Hanninen showed promised during Rally Sardinia, but he ended up the wrong way up after this over-ambitious moment.

Fairground Attraction: Iconic view of Porsche curves down to final Ford chicane from the Le Mans ferris wheel.

Wine Leads to Tears: Inconsolable Jari-Matti Latvala after ploughing through a vineyard and crashing while leading in Germany.
TRUEX FORCED TO BACK UP
Martin Truex Jr had to switch to his backup car for the Daytona 500 after becoming embroiled in a nine-car crash in his Duel.

NOWHERE TO GO AT GP2 MONACO
Leader Jolyon Palmer needs assistance to make his way past Andre Negrao’s machine.

DAKAR SPLASH AND DASH
Not a pitstop, but a genuine first-stage splash for Argentinian fans as Ayrat Mardeev charges through stage one.

TEN IS HIS MAGIC NUMBER
Stage 10 action on the way to victory; Nani Roma’s dramatic Dakar win came 10 years after he won the motorcycle title.
SPANISH LEAP OF FAITH

Alexander Toril is launched over the top of Mitch Gilbert during the Formula 3 European round at Pau.
SNAPSHOTS OF 2014

MASS ENTERTAINMENT
The excitement of NASCAR and the thrill of raw racing never disappoints the thousands of fans at Richmond.

AMERICA’S NEW ROCK TRIO
Massa, Gutierrez and Perez find time for musical banter at the US fan forum.

PASTOR OUT ON A BANG
Maldonado’s sorry year at Lotus ended with an engine blow up at Abu Dhabi.

STUNNING TECHNOLOGY
Dominant on track all year in the hands of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, the Merc also looks fantastic.
Following over a decade of running Championship in 2015 Vincenzo Sospiro will join the LAMBORGHINI BLANCPAIN VINCENZO SOSPIRI RACING will also run the LAMBORGHINI in Formula 4. The drivers for the programme will be overseen by Lamborghini.
winning single-seater teams for Euronova Racing, ANCOPAIN SUPER TROFEO with two new Huracán ST cars. LORCHINI SQUADRA CORSE FORMULA JUNIOR TEAM will be announced in March following a selection by Lamborghini Squadra Corse and Vincenzo Sospiri.
RACING WARHORSES

Some racing cars just go on and on and have extraordinarily long careers. GARY WATKINS
picks out some of his favourite stories involving competition chassis that stood the test of time

REYNARD/IRM 02S #01

This car had four different names and as many engines during a seven-year career. What started out as the Reynard 02S raced as an IRM, a DBA4 and, most famously, a Creation.

The LMP675 design was rescued from the ashes of Reynard by a group called International Racing Management. Sports car legend John Nielsen’s RN team gave the Zytek-engined IRM a debut at Petit Le Mans in 2002 before the Dane’s team — based at the ex-nuclear bomber base at Newbury — took over the project and dubbed it the DBA4 in deference to sponsor Den Bla Avis.

The fledgling Creation team was the next owner of the car, and with Nicolas Minassian and Jamie Campbell-Walter was a thorn in the side of the Audis during the 2004, ’05 and ’06 seasons — with a different engine each year.

The Zytek powerplant was replaced by a Judd V8 for ’05, before the car was turned into an LMP1 machine — courtesy of a five-litre Judd GV5 V10 and a longer wheelbase — when the regulations changed for ’06.

It was in this specification that Frenchman Minassian famously outqualified the factory Audi R10 TDI turbodiesels at Petit Le Mans. That’s the best memory of the car for Ian Smith, who engineered it during his time at both RN and Creation.

“We were working out of cardboard boxes in a tent,” admits Smith. “We held Nic back, sent him out and then, bang, pole,” he adds. “[Audi boss] Wolfgang Ullrich appeared and you could see him looking at all our boxes, and the words ‘how the fuck have they done that?’ were written all over his face.”

Creation subsequently sold the car to the US Autocon team, which fitted a four-litre Judd, and raced intermittently in the American Le Mans Series in 2007 and ’08.
THE RULES

This story is about individual chassis and their contemporary racing careers, which means that historic racers cannot be included. Cars that have been rebuilt around a new chassis are also excluded, which is why there is no touring car in this list.

Matt Neal’s British Touring Car Championship-winning Honda Integra Type-R of 2005, which twice came close to the independents’ crown with Mike Jordan and then notched up some decent results as late as 2010 with Paul O’Neill driving, was set to be included.

It had to be ruled out because it became clear that it was reshelled and went from being Integra TD01 to TD06. A similar fate befell several other touring cars after investigation of their histories.

Q&A

NICOLAS MINASSIAN
SPORTSCAR RACER

How did you end up at Creation?
I’d seen the car at Oschersleben when I’d been doing a race for Pescarolo in FIA Sportscars. I could see that it was in a different league to us and thought that I could kick some ass in that car. When Creation bought it, I rang [team owner] Mike Jankowski. They needed money, but I said just give me 10 laps, please. I got those laps at Valencia and they signed me.

What was it like to drive?
I could do whatever I liked in that car; the downforce was good and so was the mechanical grip. You could drive it like a single-seater, but you had to push it hard.

How important was that car in your sportscar career?
It more or less made me. I showed what I could do and eventually signed for Peugeot.

LOTUS 72 #R6

Ronnie Peterson had a new chassis built for him when he joined Lotus at the start of 1973. The funny thing is that he preferred an older, updated car, type 72 #R6. The car that first raced at the end of 1971 would take him to four grand prix victories that year.

The sixth Lotus 72 first raced in the hands of Reine Wisell at the 1971 German Grand Prix and was Dave Walker’s regular mount for the following season. Peterson crashed it twice in ’73, first at the Silverstone International Trophy and then at Zolder, before a sequence of seven points-scoring finishes from 10 races took him to third in the world championship.

The car was sold to Team Gunston for use in the South African F1 series for 1974. Ian Scheckter added another four wins to its CV before #R6 was retired after a year with Eddie Keizan driving in ’75.

VITAL STATISTICS

50 RACE STARTS
26 GP STARTS
RACE WINS 9
GP WINS 4

Lotus 72 #R6 first appeared in 1971 German GP with Wisell

Peterson won at Monza in 1973

Scheckter took 13th at Kyalami in ’74

Lotus 72 #R6 first appeared in 1971 German GP with Wisell

Peterson won at Monza in 1973

Scheckter took 13th at Kyalami in ’74
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**Porsche 935 #009 00030**

This Porsche chassis has a pretty substantial claim to fame as the car in which Hollywood legend Paul Newman took a remarkable second place in the 1979 Le Mans 24 Hours. Yet its high-profile race debut was only one peak in an amazing career that included victories in both the US endurance classics at Daytona and Sebring and taking Bob Garretson to the first World Endurance Championship title.

Dick Barbour and Garretson, who ran his team, built up the car around a new 935 chassis purchased from the factory. “If you look at the back of the car, it says ‘Made in Mountain View,’” says Garretson. “It was a kind of resurrection. We put it together around the pieces of car that I had crashed at Le Mans the previous year.”

The car came within a jampacked wheel of victory at Le Mans in 1979 with Newman, Barbour and Rolf Stommelen and finished second at the Watkins Glen 6 Hours with the same drivers a month later before it was sold to Ray Hasbach, a friend of Garretson’s. Converted to 935K3/80 Kremer specification, it was run under the Barbour banner in the colours of Apple Computers in the ’80 IMSA series.

Garretson continued to race the car after Barbour withdrew and pulled off a victory in the 1981 Daytona 24 Hours sharing with Bobby Rahal and Brian Redman. That result, together with a sixth at Le Mans and third at Watkins Glen, was enough for him to seal the inaugural WEC drivers’ title with second place in the Brands Hatch finale.

After Garretson ran out of money at the end of 1982, the car was sold to Wayne Baker, who converted it to single-turbo 934-spec for an attack on the IMSA GTO title in 1983. “I thought that was a cost-effective way to do it,” says Baker. “The 935 was beginning to fade a bit and I only paid something like $60,000 for it, and I had a fast and reliable car.”

Fast enough, it turned out, to take a shock victory in the Sebring 12 Hours together with Rees Nierop and Jim Mullen. And reliable enough to finish every race on the way to winning the GTO title.

Baker turned the car back into a 935 for customers to drive in 1984, before its next owner, Chester Vincentz, reconverted it to a 934 and raced it in IMSA under the Electrodyne Performance banner as late as ’86.

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**Lola-Chevrolet T330 #HU2**

Privateer Horst Kroll didn’t have any inkling that he was about to buy a new car when he headed off to the Road America round of the US Formula 5000 series in 1976. But an accident in practice aboard his own Lola T300 resulted in the purchase of a later T330 on the eve of the race. And he ended up running the same car deep into the 1980s.

“I’d crashed my car and really wanted to participate in that race,” says Kroll today. “I had been told that the Theodore team had a spare car. I got them in the bar when they were half-drunk and they agreed to sell me their car.”

And so began the final, extended chapter in the extraordinary racing life of T330 #HU2. The car had been purchased by Jackie Epstein for Dane Tom Belso to race in the European Formula 5000 Championship in 1973, scoring one win – at Snetterton in ’74 – in three seasons. Theodore Racing took over tenure of the T330 for ’76, Alan Jones winning at Brands Hatch in April, before the car was transferred Stateside for its US campaign.

Kroll only contested three US rounds prior to the demise of the series, but the car was back in action in Can-Am with all-enveloping bodywork for 1978. Kroll fielded the car for tardy Canadian Howard Kelly that year before taking back the wheel himself for the following year. “He just couldn’t get it going; maybe it was a problem with his right foot,” says Kroll. The car owner was a largely undistinguished regular in the Can-Am field until he converted the car to Frissbee KR3 specification for 1981.

With the updated car and the quality of the entry waning, Kroll finished fifth in the points in 1983, third in ’84, second in ’85 and then won the final year of the Can-Am series in ’86 at the age of 50. The car continued to race on in the one-off CAT series of ’87, a kind of Can-Am relaunch in which modified CART chassis dominated, after which Kroll parked it.

Kroll can confirm that the car was never rebubbed, though it was continually modified. “I had a local guy call Roy Hayman strengthen the chassis when I started to get serious,” he says. “I had the Frissbee bodywork made and it ended up with inboard front suspension.”

Maybe that explains the longevity of a car that competed in more than 100 races.
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ARROWS A23 #01, #02 & #03

It’s no secret that the fleet of Arrows A23s of 2002 vintage were pressed into service as the basis of the Super Aguri SA05s and SA06s in 2006, with none becoming the unraced Minardi PS04 along the way. Which A23 became which Super Aguri isn’t clear, but it can be taken as read that at least one of the monocoques raced as all three models. And there’s a decent chance that it tested as a Minardi as well.

Had team owner Paul Stoddart got his way, the Arrows would have raced as a Minardi. He had bought the A23s, which had run with Cosworth V10 engines before Arrows went bust halfway through 2002, with the intention to run them as Minidis and tested the car at Mugello as the PS04 in September 2003. Stoddart had a problem, however.

Greg Wheeler, Jos Verstappen’s engineer that season, says that the team owner would have had a mutiny on his hands had he tried to run the Arrows. So much so that when the car tested, he had to bring over the mechanics who ran Stoddart’s two-seater F1 cars.

“The Italians didn’t want anything to do with it,” he explains. “The car was only briefly in the factory and the mechanics threatened to walk out if it stayed.”

The idea for the Arrows to become the Super Aguri was borne of desperation. The fledgling Honda B-team originally planned to use designs supplied by its paymasters before that plan was kiboshed by the FIA. Plan B was suggested by Mark Preston, technical director at Super Aguri and formerly head of R&D at Arrows.

“It was Mark’s idea,” says former Aguri sporting director Graham Taylor. “It made sense because a lot of us were ex-Arrows and had a working knowledge of that car.”

The original plan was for Aguri to get both the Honda V8 engine and its gearbox. That was changed six weeks before the first pre-season test at Barcelona, which meant pressing the Arrows ‘box back into service and, remembers Taylor, “raising the engine by an inch and half” to marry it up to a transmission designed for the crank height of a V10.

Super Aguri got the Honda ‘boxes at the same time as an aerodynamic upgrade that turned the car into the SA06 from the German GP. The chassis, though, were still most definitely Arrows A23s.

WEV 2B

Few club-racing cars have been quite so successful over such a sustained period as the WEV Formula 1300 car designed and built by Graham Gant. Its creator claimed a first title in 1982 and Mike Fry triumphed 17 years later in the final season of a category that can be traced back to 1953 and the earliest days of the 750 Motor Club. In between times the Ford-engined car claimed a further six titles and is reckoned to have won more than 100 races.

The rear-engined car was built in 1979 before a major update for ’81 – “I chopped the front end off and made big changes to the front suspension,” says Gant – turned the car into a winner. It was third in this B-spec in the ’81 F1300 standings before taking the title in ’82.

“It took about two years to get the handling sorted, after which it was wonderful to drive — it was limpet-like in the corners,” recalls Gant. “Its big advantages were that it was a rear-engined car up against the front-engined Mallocks and that it was 60 or 70kg lighter.”

That probably explains the car’s longevity. Gant lent the car to Paul Overton, who won the title in 1983, before it was sold to Martin Walford who made it four in a row in 1984-85. He subsequently narrowed the bodywork and took off the mudguards, before racing it in Formula 4 with some success in ‘86. The WEV subsequently passed to Keith Atkins and then Chris Emery, who fitted a Hewland gearbox and took it to another title hat-trick in 1993-95.

Mike Fry won a final title in 1999 in what was by then known as Club Sports and then went on to compete in Classic Clubmans before the car ended up on the hills, where there is a replica competing today.
Redman/Siffert took 908 to 1970 Targa win
Chassis #008 won 'Ring 1000km in 1971...

Heylen was a frontrunner in '06 aboard ageing Lola

LOLA-COSWORTH B01/00 #HU22

This might just be the chassis that has covered the most miles in the history of CART and Champ Car. The 2001 car, which was upgraded from B01/00 to B02/00 specification for ’02, completed no fewer than 62 races in the hands of 10 drivers.

The Lola was ordered by the short-lived Sigma Autosport team for 2001 and driven by Oriol Servia. Max Papis drove it at the start of ’02, notching up its best results with third places at Long Beach and Milwaukee before the team closed its doors.

The car was back in action that September after its purchase by Dale Coyne. Darren Manning raced and led in it under the Team St George banner at Rockingham. Andre Lotterer, who made a CART cameo at Mexico City in 2002, Joel Camathias, Geoff Boss, Tarso Marques, Gaston Mazzacane and Ricardo Sperafico all drove it before Jan Heylen got his hands on the car and led two races in ’06.

I had no idea that chassis was so well used. It was a competitive car though. I was fifth at Cleveland, which up to that point was one of Dale Coyne Racing’s best results

Jan Heylen

Carlin made a habit of winning the British Formula 3 Championship and remarkably achieved four consecutive wins with the same chassis. It wasn’t premeditated, at least until the final year, but it showed the strength of the Red Bull Young Driver scheme.

Jaime Alguersuari claimed the 2008 title at the start of a new F3 rules cycle with Mercedes power and it just so happened that the next Red Bull youngsters — Daniel Ricciardo and Jean-Eric Vergne — to be placed with Carlin were good enough to emulate his success after a switch to Volkswagen engines. At the end of each season, it made sense for them to take over the previous incumbent’s car.

“It was good for the photos during winter testing,” says team boss Trevor Carlin. “And then he’d just stay in that car.”

For 2011 Felipe Nasr’s manager, Steve Robertson, requested that his Brazilian charge have the multi-title-winning chassis.

“Steve wanted all Jean-Eric’s kit for Felipe,” recalls Carlin. “I told him that the engine didn’t matter, but he could have the chassis. There was never any difference between our cars; it just worked out that that particular car won four titles in a row.”

And that explains why Dallara F308 #016 has pride of place in the reception area of the Carlin factory today.
There is surely no sports car that had an international career that stretched for longer than this Porsche 908/3. Chassis #008 won on its competition debut at the Targa Florio in 1970, claimed a last world championship victory at Brands Hatch in ’79 and made its final appearance as late as ’83.

The works JW Automotive team gave the car its winning debut at the Targa Florio with Jo Siffert and Brian Redman driving before the car claimed another world championship victory in 1971 in Martini colours at the Nurburgring. Yet it was the owner of the car after it left the factory who turned it into a legend.

Reinhold Joest bought the #008 ahead of the 1972 season and raced it every year up until its retirement in the early ’80s in a variety of series. It was, he says, the perfect car for him. “I could enter it at the Le Mans 24 Hours, in the world championship, in the DRM in Germany, the Interserie, so many different races,” he says. “That was very important for me, because I didn’t have the money to buy a second car – I only needed one with the 908.”

The Porsche evolved over its lifetime. It was given a turbocharged engine – a single turbo in 1975 and a twin-turbo from ’78 – and its aerodynamics changed with a series of configurations inspired by Porsche’s 936. Crucially, though, it was never crashed heavily, which is why the car in Joest’s private collection today still bears chassis plate #008.
Our annual look at who set the quickest time in a car race on all the circuits in the British Isles during 2014 – with a few of the best laps under the spotlight. Compiled by MARCUS SIMMONS

SILVERSTONE GP
Lewis Hamilton set the UK’s fastest lap of the year when he was hunting down Nico Rosberg for the lead of the British Grand Prix. The world champion famously messed up qualifying and had also suffered a small time delay at his first pitstop. But, on his first flying lap on the softer option tyre, Hamilton set the fastest lap. A few laps later he was in front thanks to Rosberg’s gearbox problem.

THRUXTON
Slipstream is everything at Thruxton, and Matt Rao’s best lap from the British F3 round is a case in point. Rao seemed to have a small speed advantage that weekend anyway over Fortec team-mate Martin Cao, but didn’t put a winning drive together until the third race. After losing the lead he closed back in, and took fastest lap as he hooked into Cao’s tow, from 1.215s back at the start of the lap to 0.711s at the end.

MALLORY PARK
The great thing is that Mallory is here in the first place. And appropriately for a circuit that originally opened in the 1950s, the fastest lap at the solo car meeting held at the track in 2014 was set by an F3 car powered by a motorcycle engine. A bit quicker than a Cooper-Norton through, for Graham Read whistled his Suzuki-engined Dallara around in the 44s in the lead of the Monoposto race before dropping out.

### Fastest Laps of 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track, Driver and Car</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silverstone Grand Prix</strong></td>
<td>Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes F1 W05 Hybrid)</td>
<td>1m37.176s</td>
<td>135.607mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rockingham Oval</strong></td>
<td>Paul Tompkins (SHP Ford Pickup)</td>
<td>40.478s</td>
<td>131.53mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thruxton</strong></td>
<td>Matt Rao (Dallara-Mercedes F312)</td>
<td>1m08.725s</td>
<td>123.41mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silverstone Historic GP</strong></td>
<td>Bob Berridge (Mercedes C11)</td>
<td>1m50.735s</td>
<td>118.33mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silverstone National</strong></td>
<td>Graham Cole (Jade-Millington Trackstar)</td>
<td>53.148s</td>
<td>111.11mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donington Park National</strong></td>
<td>Duncan Williams (Juno-Honda)</td>
<td>1m05.094s</td>
<td>109.45mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brands Hatch Grand Prix</strong></td>
<td>Santino Ferrucci (Dallara-Mercedes F312)</td>
<td>1m20.343s</td>
<td>109.03mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goodwood</strong></td>
<td>Jay Esterer (Chinook-Chevrolet Mk2)</td>
<td>1m19.369s</td>
<td>108.85mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mallory Park</strong></td>
<td>Graham Read (Dallara-Suzuki Hayabusa F301)</td>
<td>44.912s</td>
<td>108.21mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donington Park Grand Prix</strong></td>
<td>Matt Rao (Dallara-Mercedes F312)</td>
<td>1m24.390s</td>
<td>106.10mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Castle Combe</strong></td>
<td>Simon Tilling (Ligier-Honda JS49T)</td>
<td>1m03.684s</td>
<td>104.57mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Silverstone International</strong></td>
<td>Mike Millard (Rapier-Nissan SR2 LMFX)</td>
<td>1m03.927s</td>
<td>104.23mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snetterton 300</strong></td>
<td>Sam MacLeod (Dallara-Mercedes F312)</td>
<td>1m42.718s</td>
<td>104.05mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oulton Park</strong></td>
<td>Alex Mortimer (Radical-RPE SR8)</td>
<td>1m33.473s</td>
<td>103.68mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snetterton 200</strong></td>
<td>Andrew Dunn (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6)</td>
<td>1m10.462s</td>
<td>101.36mph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASTLE COMBE
Andover-based Scouser Simon Tilling has made the Combe spot his own in recent years, but this year there was a difference. The rapid Radical pilot wheeled out a Ligier, powered by a turbocharged Honda powerplant. Although it wasn’t quite as quick as his Radical times, his Ligier mark was still the best of 2014, coming on the second flying lap of the season finale before problems slowed him – he still won though.

CADWELL PARK
Such was Tim Gray’s domination of the 750MC’s Bikesports races that winning often wasn’t in doubt. His Spire GT3 was 38 seconds to the good after eight laps at Cadwell when he unleashed a time that shaded Enrique Mansilla’s Formula 3 lap record of 1982 by just under a tenth! Mission accomplished, he eased the pace for another victory.

KNOCKHILL
Ashley Sutton had just cleared Max Marshall in the fight for second place when he set Scotland’s fastest lap of the year in his bid to catch Jayde Kruger for the lead of the second British Formula Ford race of the TOCA weekend. Sutton soon caught the South African, and on the final lap was in Kruger’s slipstream when his brake pedal went long into the hairpin. After a monster shunt, it was amazing that car (and driver!) were repaired for the day’s finale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRACK, DRIVER AND CAR</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>SPEED</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KIRKISTOWN</td>
<td>Eamon Matheson (E5-Suzuki Hayabusa)</td>
<td>54.389s</td>
<td>100.076mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRANDS HATCH INDY</td>
<td>James Maclachlan (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6)</td>
<td>44.926s</td>
<td>96.79mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROFT</td>
<td>Jayde Kruger (Mygale-Ford/EcoBoost M12 SJ)</td>
<td>1m19.754s</td>
<td>95.92mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADWELL PARK</td>
<td>Tim Gray (Spire-Suzuki Hayabusa GT-3)</td>
<td>1m22.89s</td>
<td>94.98mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BISHOPS COURT</td>
<td>Fergus Faherty (Tatius-Renault RC00)</td>
<td>1m09.390s</td>
<td>94.630mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OULTON PARK FOSTERS</td>
<td>David McArthur (Van Diemen-Ford/Kent LA10)</td>
<td>1m03.428s</td>
<td>93.87mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNOCKHILL</td>
<td>Ashley Sutton (Mygale-Ford/EcoBoost M12 SJ)</td>
<td>48.595s</td>
<td>93.85mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OULTON PARK ISLAND</td>
<td>Paul Rose (Saker-Subaru RapX)</td>
<td>1m25.822s</td>
<td>93.37mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKINGHAM INTERNATIONAL LONG</td>
<td>Sam MacLeod (Dallara-Mercedes F312)</td>
<td>1m19.490s</td>
<td>92.84mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKINGHAM INTERNATIONAL</td>
<td>Toby Sowery (Dallara-Volkswagen F305)</td>
<td>1m16.825s</td>
<td>90.90mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEMBREY</td>
<td>Tom Stoten (Gunn-Ford/Duratec TS8B)</td>
<td>57.775s</td>
<td>90.72mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGLESEY INTERNATIONAL</td>
<td>Garry Watson (Westfield-Ford/Zetec SEIW)</td>
<td>1m30.338s</td>
<td>83.68mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANGLESEY COASTAL</td>
<td>Paul Rose (Saker-Subaru RapX)</td>
<td>1m08.551s</td>
<td>81.39mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYDDEN HILL</td>
<td>Ian Conibear (Caterham-Ford/Duratec S3)</td>
<td>43.498s</td>
<td>81.21mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONDELLO PARK LONG</td>
<td>Paul Dagg (Dallara-Toyota F304)</td>
<td>1m39.650s</td>
<td>78.635mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROCKINGHAM NATIONAL</td>
<td>Jeremy Webb (Caterham-Ford/Sigma)</td>
<td>1m18.083s</td>
<td>78.35mph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MONDELLO PARK SHORT</td>
<td>Cian Carey (Tatius-Renault RC00)</td>
<td>54.483s</td>
<td>75.956mph</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FESTIVE FEVER 2014

Win tickets for the 2015 British Grand Prix at Silverstone in HENRY HOPE-FROST’S Christmas quiz

A 2014 and all that
How much can you tell us about the season past?

1. How many teams ran more than two drivers during the GP2 season?

2. Other than Takuma Sato, who else raced for AJ Foyt’s team in IndyCar?

3. How many European drivers scored points in the top class of Japanese Super GT?

4. Name all the World Touring Car Championship polesitters who didn’t win a race.

5. Which World Rally Championship event had the highest number of different leaders?

B Missing link
Spot a theme from motorsport history and fill in the blanks.


3. Chilton, Cocker, Davidson, Drayson, Franchitti,__________, Jarvis, Kane, McNish, Rossiter, Smith, Soper, Wallace, Weaver.

4. 23, 22, 20, 4, ____________, 11, 1, 3, 7, 7, 1, 17, 36, 7, 7, 26.

5. Burt, Harvey, Huff, ____________, Soper, Walkinshaw.

C Where in the world?
Identify these international venues, some current, some defunct.

D Winners' gallery
Who are these 2014 event winners and/or champions?
CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Send your answers to the 60 questions on a separate sheet of paper & crossword (photocopies are fine) to the address on the right by Friday January 9, 2015.

Remember: in the event of a tie-break an answer sheet deemed to be the most detailed will be adjudged the winner.

Your details – must be completed
(Block capitals please)
Mr/Mrs/Miss: __________ First name: __________ Surname: __________
Address: _______________________________________________________________________________________
Postcode: __________ Telephone: __________
If you would like to receive emails from us containing news, special offers and service information please include your email address below
Email: __________________________________________________________________________________________

The judge’s decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There is no alternative cash prize and the prize is non-transferable.

We’d like to send you great offers and other information on products from Haymarket Media Group. Please tick box if you don’t want to receive these offers.

Very occasionally we may pass your contact details to another company whose products we think you’d love to hear about.

Please tick box if you don’t want to receive this information.

Please return to:
Henry Hope-Frost
AUTOSPORT (Christmas Quiz)
Teddington Studios
Broom Road, Teddington
Middlesex TW11 9BE

Terms and conditions: No entries will be accepted from employees of Haymarket Media Group or their families, or any other companies associated with this competition. The judge’s decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. There is no alternative cash prize and the prize is non-transferable.

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Please tick box if you don’t want to receive this information.’
TWO FORMER RED BULL JUNIOR F1 DRIVERS fought out victory for the third round of Formula E at Punta del Este by the Atlantic Ocean in Uruguay. One, Sebastien Buemi, is a recently crowned World Endurance champion. The other, Jean-Eric Vergne, is the recently ousted Toro Rosso pilot who is looking for a new career path. Buemi triumphed; Vergne was struck down with a car failure just as he seemed poised to puncte.

Despite Buemi’s win, his first in the series, Vergne was the true star of the show. He brushed the wall at Turn 1, but Andretti Autosport’s new signing grabbed pole position over Nelson Piquet Jr by 0.122s. But this advantage was reversed as Vergne’s attacks were bent suspension after clattering the kerbs too hard at the chicane early on. Vergne’s attacks were bent suspension after clattering the kerbs too hard at the chicane early on. Vergne’s attacks were reversed as Vergne wheelspin away from the starline, and Piquet led the way for China Racing. Behind them, Buemi outdragged DAMS team-mate Nicolas Prost for third, while Lucas di Grassi found himself elbowed towards the Turn 1 wall by Jaime Alguersuari, and his evasive action cost him another place to Nick Heidfeld.

In between, Vergne was heaping pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggling with pressure on Piquet, who was struggle...
REMEMBER WHEN
September 18
2011

Jean-Eric Vergne's last pole position came at Paul Ricard in Formula Renault 3.5, when he beat Alex Rossi and Daniel Ricciardo by over eight tenths.

IN THE PADDOCK

APART FROM THE LATE GONZALO Rodriguez, Uruguay hadn’t really registered on the world’s motorsport radar before Saturday’s Formula E round at Punta del Este. The Atlantic seaside resort is in a beautiful location, and the track’s position adjacent to the beach gave rise to some stunning helicopter TV shots. While its claim to be the ‘Monte Carlo of South America’ was pushing it a bit far, it reminded me of what Spain’s Costa del Sol would have looked like before package holidaymakers ruined it.

I’ll go along with Alejandro Agag’s belief that the venue can become a “future classic” – and its layout was the fastest Formula E track so far, with some fast sweeping bends and one really quick chicane. Criol Servia likened it to Surfers Paradise. But while the Aussies seem to have perfected their kerb set-up, the ‘red sausage’ and ‘yellow banana’ kerbs here threatened to overshadow the weekend, especially when Matty Brabham’s car was almost wrecked by stray bolts that tore through his floor (below) and into the tub.

At all, not a bad place to come to write my last report for AUTOSPORT; a bit different from my first assignment at Oulton Park 25 years ago. The weather was the same though, as I got sunburnt at both!

New manufacturers to revolutionise season two

FORMULA E IS POISED FOR AN influx of manufacturers for its second season in 2015-16, with series founder Alejandro Agag expecting “a number from six to eight” to sign up in the near future, and revealing that they will bring a diversification of electric powertrains.

“There was an application process by the FIA for future manufacturers for this championship,” explained Agag. “That finished on October 31, and 12 applications were presented. They are a mix of car manufacturers and others are technology companies – which is a really different option for us, so ones that produce batteries, electric motors or even a full powertrain – and we will find out who has been successful in the next week. The number of selected manufacturers is likely to be between six and eight.

“We will then have meetings to define their roadmap of the technology level of the championship. It’s very important to develop a five-year roadmap to define the clear direction that this championship is going to go. We need to decide what areas can be developed and what cannot – but the focus must remain on the electric powertrain.”

Although the final decision will rest with the FIA as the series’ regulator, Agag wants to keep the current SPARK chassis for “a number of years” to focus on developments of the powertrains, especially their economy.

“The good news is that we will have quite a number of different powertrains next year; we will have some big names delivering those,” he added. “We have a great idea of the direction that we’re going to go, and we’ll of course work closely with the FIA on the regulations and with the selected manufacturers. We will have the competition that we’ve always wanted to have that will improve the technology.”

Vergne confident about future

OUSTED TORO ROSSO F1 RACER

Jean-Eric Vergne says he will reveal his 2015 plans “quite soon” after his stunning Formula E debut.

Vergne scored pole position and challenged for victory with Andretti Autosport, but is unsure if he will continue in IndyCar next year.

“I don’t know yet, we will see,” he said. “I will choose what’s best for my career. It was nice to start on pole position – it’s been a long time, because it’s mission impossible in F1 unless you’re in a Mercedes or a top team. To keep racing has been good.”

When asked if he was interested in joining Andretti’s IndyCar Series squad, he replied: “Yeah, yeah, I’m exploring all the opportunities next year to find the best ones. I’m sure I’m going to come up with something really good next year, quite soon.”

Double-header for Battersea

THE FORMULA E FINALE AT London’s Battersea Park next June will be a double-header format, bringing the number of races in the first season to 10.

Series chief Alejandro Agag said: “A race in that location is such a great opportunity, to set up all that infrastructure once we are there, why not have two races to complete this championship? Yes, the intention is to do a double-header in London.”

Agag was delighted with the decision of Wandsworth Borough Council to approve plans for the June 27 event.

“I think now we can say the races are happening, but we have to be completely respectful of the planning process;” he added. “I myself have met the residents around the park and their associations. They were interesting; they started with them boring me and ended with them clapping!”

BRABHAM RETURNS

Matthew Brabham was recalled to the Andretti Autosport squad at the last minute to replace Franck Montagny for unexplained health reasons. In other moves, Antonio Garcia made his series debut for China Racing as Ho-Pin Tung was racing in the Gulf 12 Hours, while Salvador Duran replaced Katherine Legge at Amlin Aguri as she had a clashing United SportsCar test.

SENNA FURIOUS

Bruno Senna was left seething after he was thrown to the back of the grid for a parc ferme infringement when his wheels were attached too late: “The car has to be ready five minutes before qualifying starts; it’s an odd rule. If you work on the car, fine, but just adding the wheels? That’s harsh.”

BIRD SHUNTS TWICE

Putrajaya dominator Sam Bird suffered a horrendous weekend in Uruguay, crashing his Virgin car both in qualifying and early in the race. “Something got stuck under the car [in qualifying] and sent me straight into the wall. Then in the race I locked up and hit the kerb, which acted like a take-off ramp. I hope those kerbs (below) go because I think they’re dangerous.”
Jim Bamber, who passed away this June, was our resident cartoonist for many years. Bamber’s View was a popular feature, controversial at times but always amusing. As Sir Jackie Stewart put it, “Jim was well-known in the motorsport community for the wit and wisdom of his cartoons. Few of us escaped his attention over the years”

Jim’s unique take on all sorts of F1 stories can be seen in his Grand Prix Heroes book, a compilation of his favourites he put together.

In addition to his drawings, Jim designed a collection of limited edition cartoon models in tribute to his personal ‘Heroes’, each of which supports a motorsport charity through a royalty on every sale. They are a great reminder of his work.

Following agreement with his family, the range will continue and the latest releases are tributes to Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss, who are each featured in a Maserati 250F. They are limited to 600 pieces and priced at £54.

Jim was very pleased with the production masters and would have been flattered by the reaction of Sir Stirling, who said of it, “Jim’s model is great fun and I am delighted that it supports the Grand Prix Mechanics Charitable Trust. It is a small tribute to all those who keep us drivers going and, I hope, a tribute to Jim.”

Full details can be found online at www.thejimbambercollection.com

JIM BAMBER’S
GRAND PRIX HEROES
Coulthard collects in the Caribbean

IN A BATTLE BETWEEN YOUTH AND experience, it was experience — in the form of 13-times grand prix winner David Coulthard — that prevailed. The 43-year-old was on imperious form, winning all seven of his head-to-head races and defeating 20-year-old DTM ace and Mercedes Formula 1 reserve Pascal Wehrlein in the final.

Coulthard drove with remarkable precision throughout, held at Bushy Park in Barbados. In Saturday’s two-driver Nations Cup, he linked up with Susie Wolff and only narrowly lost out to the Nordic team of veterans Tom Kristensen and Petter Solberg. He went into the main event among the favourites, and lived up to expectations in the group stage with wins over V8 Supercars champ Jamie Whincup, 2012 RoC winner Romain Grosjean and motorcycle legend Mick Doohan. But his path through the knockout stages wasn’t so easy.

Coulthard took on World Rallycross champion Solberg in the quarter-finals behind the wheel of the VW Polo RX that should have favoured the Norwegian, and looked to have control of their race before running wide and off the track at the first corner. Fortunately for Coulthard, Solberg had the event’s spin moments later and kissed the barrier, allowing the Scot to recover to win.

Coulthard then pipped Whincup by just under two tenths in the semi-final driving the Audi R8 LMS. With Wehrlein — who drove stunningly well in the spectacular Super Trucks used for several races — beating the versatile Robby Gordon and then Formula 3 European champion Esteban Ocon in the knockout stages to earn the right to take on Coulthard, the best-of-three final was expected to be close.

But Coulthard needed only two races, first defeating Wehrlein by 1.4486s behind the wheel of the nimble KTM X-Bow, then by 2.7s in the Ariel Atom, to take his first Race of Champions crown.

Several of the fancied runners failed even to escape the group stage. Grosjean managed only one win in three races, while Kristensen, twice Race of Champions runner-up, spectacularly launched his truck over the Turn 1 barrier during his final head-to-head with former IndyCar champion Ryan Hunter-Reay after accidentally selecting first gear and locking the rear wheels.

RESULTS
Nations Cup Team Nordic (Kristensen/Solberg).

Ferrari beats Merc to win

AFTER VICTORIES IN THE FIRST AND second runnings of the Gulf 12 Hours in Abu Dhabi, Italian Ferrari team AF Corse also won the fourth edition of the race at the Yas Marina circuit.

With a total of 24 cars (16 GT3 cars, four Porsche Cup entries and four CN2 prototypes), the entry was somewhat smaller than promoter Andrea Ficarrelli had hoped for. “Many more teams had committed, but there were several last-minute withdrawals and then it was too late to find replacements,” the Italian said.

Following the debut of the Bentley Continental GT3’s last year, the new McLaren 650S GT3 has its maiden race in Abu Dhabi this year. For McLaren, it was the first works effort since the Spa 24 Hours in 2012, with support from Dave Ryan’s Von Ryan team. In qualifying, with the average of the fastest times by each driver used to determine the grid positions, Alvaro Parente, Kevin Estre and Rob Bell put the McLaren on pole.

In the race — split into two halves of six hours with a three-hour repair break in between — the McLaren, the Black Falcon Mercedes with last year’s winners Bernd Schneider, Jeroen Bleekemolen and local hero Khaled Al Qubaisi, and the AF Corse Ferrari with Italians Michele Rugolo and Davide Rigon and Australian Steve Wyatt soon emerged as the main contenders for the outright win.

The Ferrari was first across the line at the end of the first half, followed by the Mercedes and the McLaren. In the second half, the Mercedes led for most of the time, but Rugolo overtook Schneider in the final hour. A late safety-car intervention following a crash by MotoGP star Jorge Lorenzo in the Kessel Racing Ferrari led to a 30-minute sprint to the chequered flag. Schneider was unable to mount a challenge for Rugolo, so the Italian brought the Ferrari home to take victory from the Mercedes and the McLaren.

The second Black Falcon Mercedes took Pro-Am class honours in fourth place overall with Abdulaziz Al Faisal, Hubert Haupt and Richard Muscat, while German team MRS won the Porsche Cup class and Avalon Wolf drivers Pizzuti, Stoller and Emanuela took the spoils in CN2.

RACE OF CHAMPIONS  BUSHY PARK (BDS), DECEMBER 13-14

Coulthard did the business in KTM

RACE CENTRE
Harvick takes one of his five wins at Darlington.

There'd be plenty of celebrating for KH.

ANY WAY YOU MEASURE IT, NASCAR must be happy with the return on investment of its new Chase system. It’s hard to imagine that any other major series would gamble on a play-off-style elimination system to decide its champion. More pragmatically, no other championship has a long enough schedule to make the isolation of 10 races viable in the first place.

NASCAR wanted excitement and drama from its new system and, if it were injected with a truth serum, it would also have admitted that it would like a new champion. It got all three. True, that ‘new champion’ was very nearly Ryan Newman, whose winless season might have undermined a format specifically engineered to reward victories, but those blushes were spared by a heroic final stint by Kevin Harvick at the Homestead finale.

Harvick’s championship credentials are impeccable: he won five races during the year, putting him second only to Brad Keselowski. He was equal third in top-fives and top-10s, and led more laps over the course of the year than any other driver. His brilliant final stint at Homestead, where he climbed from 12th to first, was as emphatic an explanation point as you could ask for.

Newman was right on Harvick’s bumper as he took the chequered flag, and three weeks later NASCAR fandom continues to debate the question of a winless driver beating/cheating (depending upon your perspective) the system. From a fan-popularity viewpoint, it didn’t help Newman’s cause that he secured his place in the final shootout for the title at Jeff Gordon’s expense. Gordon finished third at Phoenix and briefly thought he had done enough to progress to the next round but, behind him, Newman drove rising star Kyle Larson into the wall to claim 12th and secure the extra point he needed to bump Gordon out.

It was also unfortunate that Keselowski was not in the running. The Team Penske driver was in superb form all season, and won twice during the opening two phases of the Chase. A mechanical problem at Martinsville put him into a hole, and two podiums at the next two races were not enough to dig him out of it. There was some consolation for Penske in the fact that Joey Logano made it to the final four in Keselowski’s absence; a feat that speaks of the team’s growing prowess as a top-tier NASCAR operation as opposed to the team that previously struggled to get both its entries firing at once.

The ‘excitement’ part of the equation came into play as early as the Daytona 500, when the series’ most famous race was won by its most popular driver, Dale Earnhardt Jr. But the real drama was reserved for the Chase itself and, finale aside, most of the big moments involved Keselowski.

It was he who won the second Talladega race through sheer force of will, he who found himself clamped in a headlock by the normally sedate Matt Kenseth after a fracas at Charlotte, he who was in the middle of a wild brawl with Gordon’s crew in Texas. The last incident resulted in several Hendrick crew members being penalised for ‘actions detrimental to the sport’… but they weren’t detrimental enough to stop NASCAR from uploading video of the skirmish onto its own website. If NASCAR is about treading the line between motorsport and entertainment, the 2014 season was classic showtime.

Mark Glendinning

POINTS
1. Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet SS), 5043;
2. Ryan Newman (Chevy), 5042;
3. Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry), 5037;
4. Joey Logano (Ford Fusion), 5028;
5. Brad Keselowski (Ford), 2361;
6. Jeff Gordon (Chevy), 2348;
7. Matt Kenseth (Toyota), 2334;
8. Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy), 2301;
9. Carl Edwards (Ford), 2288;
10. Kyle Busch (Toyota), 2285.
**INDY LIGHTS**

**Chaves denies late-charging Harvey**

**THE FINAL SEASON WITH THE**

antiquated Dallara IPS/Infiniti V8 Indy Lights technical package was all about quality over quantity: only eight drivers contested every race, yet the championship still went down to a three-way fight.

Ultimately, that fight was settled in favour of Colombian-American Gabby Chaves over British rookie Jack Harvey, but it had to be decided on a countback of second places after the pair finished equal on points and tied on the number of wins. It doesn’t get much closer than that.

In many respects, Harvey did well to be in the hunt at all. Chaves and Zach Veach started the season as joint title favourites on the basis that they were the only two frontrunners with prior experience in the series. And indeed, the pair won all of the opening four races while the rookies around them settled in.

But the 2014 rookie intake was unusually strong, with a roster that included last year’s runaway Pro Mazda champion Matthew Brabham, long-time GP2 racer Luiz Razia, and 2012 British Formula 3 champion GP3 graduate Harvey. Brabham and Razia were the first rookie winners, sharing victories on the Indy road course, but it was Harvey who started to do it consistently. A sweep of the Mid-Ohio weekend launched him into title contention, and another domination of the Sonoma finale was a solid consolation to end the year.

*Mark Glendenning*

**POINTS**

1 Gabby Chaves (Belardi Auto Racing), 547; 2 Jack Harvey (Schmidt Peterson Motorsports), 547; 3 Zach Veach (Andretti Autosport), 520; 4 Matthew Brabham (Andretti), 517; 5 Luiz Razia (SPM), 513; 6 Juan Pablo Garcia (SPM), 457; 7 Juan Piedrahita (SPM), 372; 8 Scott Anderson (Fan Force United), 309; 9 Zack Meyer (Team Moore Racing), 274; 10 Alex Baron (Belardi), 261.

**AUTO GP**

**Sato out of rivals’ reach**

**KIMIYA SATO FOUND TIME ALONGSIDE**

his primary commitments in GP2 to take this year’s Auto GP crown.

The Kobe racer had narrowly missed out on last year’s title, and returned for another attack with Euronova Racing. Six victories allowed Sato to claim the crown with a round to spare and duck out of the season finale at Estoril.

Tamas Pal Kiss was runner-up ahead of Markus Pommer. The Hungarian ended a year-long victory drought for Zele Racing at Paul Ricard before switching to Virtuosi UK, where he was also a winner.

Pommer joined Sato in contesting dual campaigns. That Pommer emerged on top in this year’s German F3 series provided a useful additional indication of performance levels at the sharp end in Auto GP.

Michela Cerruti won at Imola in the sister Super Nova entry. Rapid former GP2 driver Kevin Giovesi claimed pole position first time out for new entrant Eurotech Engineering at Marrakech. Eurotech was replaced by FMS at Imola, but not before Giovesi picked up two wins at Paul Ricard and Monza.

Giovesi’s absence from the final round allowed the consistent Andrea Roda to work his way up to fourth in the classification.

Talented MRF graduates Sam Dejonghe and Shinya Michimi showed well, Michimi standing on the top step of the podium at Estoril in just his sixth start, while Antonio Pizzonia produced flashes of his old speed in a one-off outing at Estoril.

*Peter Mills*

**POINTS**

1 Kimiya Sato (Euronova Racing), 221; 2 Tamas Pal Kiss (Zele Racing/Virtuosi UK), 207; 3 Markus Pommer (Super Nova International), 180; 4 Andrea Roda (Virtuosi), 166; 5 Kevin Giovesi (Eurotech Engineering/FMS Racing), 155; 6 Michela Cerruti (Super Nova), 113; 7 Michele la Rosa (MLR 71 by Euronova), 73; 8 Shinya Michimi (Euronova), 55; 9 Vittorio Ghirelli (Super Nova/ FMS), 44; 10 Sam Dejonghe (Virtuosi), 41.

**JAPANESE FORMULA 3**

**Champion: Nobuharu Matsushita**

**BRAZILIAN FORMULA 3**

**Champion: Pedro Piquet**

**PRO MAZDA**

**Champion: Spencer Pigot**

**EUROFORMULA OPEN**

**Champion: Sandy Stuvik**

**GERMAN FORMULA 3**

**Champion: Markus Pommer**

**BRITISH FORMULA 3**

**Champion: Martin Cao**
McLAREN GAVE NYCK DE VRIES ONE instruction in 2014, and it was not up for negotiation. The Dutchman had to win the Formula Renault Eurocup at the third attempt, and he did so in dominant fashion.

De Vries had found some form in the latter part of the 2013 campaign. Remaining with Koiranen GP, he carried that momentum into 2014. Four poles in the first six races showed he was clearly the fastest driver in the field, but the fact that he only converted one of those into a victory was a cause for concern. He rounded out the year with three wins from the final four races, and proved a point by taking his final win thanks to a “very satisfying” mid-race pass for the lead at Jerez.

It was hard to judge exactly how much de Vries stepped it up this year though, as his opposition was so inconsistent throughout the season. While his average grid position was 2.7, the next best in the field were 7.6 and 9.2. Challengers came and went: Bruno Bonifacio used consistency to pose an early threat, while Prema team-mate and eventual runner-up Dennis Olsen stood out on his best days but was too far down the order on others. The same could be said for Andrea Pizzitola, and towards the end of the year Alexander Albon got things together to vault up to third in the standings.

However, it’s not de Vries’s fault that his opposition didn’t do a good enough job on a consistent basis, and his success earned him a Formula Renault 3.5 drive with DAMS for 2015.

Glenn Freeman

POINTS
1 Nyck de Vries (Koiranen GP), 254; 2 Dennis Olsen (Prema Powerteam), 124; 3 Alexander Albon (KTR), 117; 4 Andrea Pizzitola (Manor MP Motorsport), 108; 5 Bruno Bonifacio (Prema), 88; 6 Kevin Jorg (Josef Kaufmann Racing), 87; 7 Jack Aitken (Fortec Motorsport), 86; 8 Egor Orudzhev (Tech 1 Racing), 83; 9 Aurelien Panis (ART Junior Team), 82; 10 Ignazio d’Agosto (Koiranen), 73.

DERBYSHIRE’S BEN BARNICOAT did a fine job to win an ultra-close title fight in his rookie season of car racing at the season finale.

Barnicoat and Fortec team-mate Seb Morris were both double winners in a year that saw 10 drivers take victory in 13 races.

The main title rivals for the Racing Steps-backed Barnicoat were Louis Deletraz and Steijn Schothorst. Bizarrely, Deletraz was one of three different Swiss to win the first three races, while Dutchman Schothorst really should have scored more than one victory with his experience.

A number of other Brits competed, with Jake Hughes and Raoul Owens both in the top 10.

Marcus Simmons

POINTS
1 Ben Barnicoat (Fortec Motorsport), 258; 2 Louis Deletraz (Josef Kaufmann Racing), 242; 3 Seb Morris (Fortec), 224; 4 Steijn Schothorst (Manor MP Motorsport), 224; 5 Gustav Malja (JKR), 193; 6 Ukyo Sasahara (Euronova Racing), 191; 7 Callan O’Keeffe (ART Junior Team/KTR), 187; 8 Jake Hughes (Mark Burdett Motorsport/ART), 152; 9 Ryan Tveter (JKR), 150; 10 Raoul Owens (MBM), 125.

THERE WAS NEVER MUCH DOUBT THAT Nyck de Vries would win the Formula Renault ALPS series.

De Vries was the class act in winning nine of the 14 races, with the most-talented of his opposition being newcomers to the category.

Monegasque karting graduate Charles Leclerc was the runner-up with two mid-summer wins at Monza helping him overhaul rapid Russian Matevos Isaakyan.

Both Isaakyan and George Russell missed a round apiece: Russell sat out one weekend with chicken pox, while Isaakyan couldn’t contest the opening round as he wasn’t yet 16, so wasn’t old enough to compete! Alessio Rovera also showed good speed.

Marcus Simmons

POINTS
1 Nyck de Vries (Koiranen GP), 300; 2 Charles Leclerc (Fortec Motorsport), 199; 3 Matevos Isaakyan (JD Motorsport), 180; 4 George Russell (Koiranen), 123; 5 Simon Gachet (Arta Engineering), 70; 6 Alessio Rovera (Cram Motorsport), 65; 7 Dario Capitanio (BVM Racing), 55; 8 Denis Korneev (JD), 46; 9 Pietro Fittipaldi (MGR Motorsport), 43; 10 Stefan Rieder (Cram), 37.
SOLBERG FLIES TO INAUGURAL WORLD CROWN

AFTER A COMPETITIVE BUT winless move to rallycross last season, Petter Solberg raised his already high game even further for 2014 to claim victory not only in the first-ever World Rallycross round, but in the inaugural championship itself.

Consistently fast through the first half of the year, Solberg wasn’t without his troubles early on; after his kick-off success at Montalegre he spun in the final at Lydden, where fellow Norwegian Andreas Bakkerud took the spoils, and he was beaten in a straight fight on home ground at Hell by 18-year-old Reini Nittis. Solberg’s Citroen then missed the final at Kouvala after a semi-final accident.

With six different winners from the first six races (Toomas Heikkinen, Tanner Foust and Mattias Ekstrom had also scored), it was one of the most fiercely contested rallycross seasons in years. Then came Solberg’s assault; after wins at Trois-Rivières and Loheac, he beat double DTM champion Ekstrom by five thousandths of a second at Estering. Third place at Franciacorta was enough to claim the crown of 25 stage wins was a measure of his versatility following his success on the Latvian snow of round two.

Thanks to the efforts of Nittis and Bakkerud, Ford team OlsbergsMSE sealed the first World Rallycross Teams title at the last round in Argentina, beating rivals Marklund and Team Peugeot-Hansen, which was led by Timmy Hansen.

• Hal Ridge

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

HAPPY LAPPIS IS FAST AND STEADY FOR SKODA

ESAPEKKA LAPPI MADE IT A HAT-TRICK of ERC titles for the factory Skoda team, but the 23-year-old Finn was by no means 2014’s standout performer.

Granted, he was the only driver to win more than once, while his capture of 25 stage wins was a measure of his pace. But crashes in Ypres and Zlin showed a weakness and he was often too quick to point to the power deficit of his normally aspirated Fabia Super 2000 compared to the turbocharged Regional Rally Cars and B5 machines that won seven times.

Even so, the second of Lappi’s three wins, on April’s Circuit of Ireland, was sublime and demonstrated his year with the Marklund Motorsport VW, while Nittis wound up third.

Thanks to the efforts of Nittis and Bakkerud, Ford team OlsbergsMSE sealed the first World Rallycross Teams title at the last round in Argentina, beating rivals Marklund and Team Peugeot-Hansen, which was led by Timmy Hansen.

• Hal Ridge

POINTS
1 Petter Solberg (Citroen DS3), 267;
2 Toomas Heikkinen (Volkswagen Polo), 221;
3 Andreas Bakkerud (Ford), 199;
4 Timmy Hansen (Peugeot), 199;
5 Anton Marklund (VW), 173;
6 Timur Timerzyanov (Peugeot), 152;
7 Pontus Tidemand (Audi S1), 84;
8 Robin Larsson (Audi), 76;
9 Vasily Gryazin (Ford Fiesta S2000), 63;
10 Mattias Ekstrom (Audi), 55.

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INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

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Daniel Zampieri/Roman Mavlanov

FRENCH GT

Champions:
Nicolas Armindo/Raymond Narac

ITALIAN GT

Champions:
Raffaele Giammaria/Lorenzo Case

WORLD CHALLENGE (US)

Champion: Johnny O’Connell

ASIAN LE MANS SERIES

Champions: Ho-Pin Tung/David Cheng

GLOBAL RALLYCROSS

Champion: David Cheng
AFTER 2013 WAS OVERSHADOWED by the Sean Edwards tragedy, the Porsche Supercup needed a decent title race to get everyone’s minds back on the racing in 2014. The duel between Earl Bamber and Kuba Giermaziak certainly delivered.

The opening rounds set the trend, with Kiwi Bamber winning the opener at Barcelona as Giermaziak struggled. But the Pole then turned the tables in Monaco, where he took the first of two consecutive wins as Bamber toiled.

Giermaziak clung to the championship lead until late July in Hungary, where he scored his third win of the season, but Bamber grabbed it away with a great victory next time out at Spa, where his rival suffered a second poor weekend.

They went into the season finale at Austin just a handful of points apart, and the climax came when they collided as Bamber tried to pass an overly defensive Giermaziak on the back straight. Giermaziak spun himself out of the top 10, as Bamber survived and then sealed the title a day later with ease. Bamber also added the Asian crown, and was leading the German series when he halted his campaign due to clashing dates just after the halfway point!

Other winners included Clemens Schmid with a surprise victory at Silverstone, reigning champion Nicki Thiim prevailing twice on his sporadic appearances and Porsche junior Sven Muller at Monza (a relief after he spun out of the lead at the Red Bull Ring), while Michael Ammermuller broke his Supercup duck in the final round. Britain’s Ben Barker had a strong second campaign in the series, finishing sixth. Philipp Eng was also a frontrunner, but the Austrian failed to convert his pace into a Supercup success and was forced to settle for winning the strong and very close-fought German Carrera Cup by a couple of points from Ammermuller.

Charles Bradley

POWERSHORE

Bamber’s final-round clincher

Whincup’s six from seven

ON PAPER, THE CHAMPIONSHIP was all about one man. Jamie Whincup won his sixth title in seven years, sealing his crown with four races up his sleeve.

But in reality it wasn’t quite so clear-cut. At one point he trailed Ford driver Mark Winterbottom by nearly a round’s worth of points, and over the mid-season clearly struggled. But the ’Triple Eight team gelled (as it nearly always does) and, in the end, Whincup prevailed.

Winterbottom looked to be his biggest challenger, but as the endurance races came around Shane van Gisbergen came alive. The New Zealander has always had the speed but, under the watch of team manager Steve Hallam (ex-McLaren and Waltrip), he blossomed. Only a stalled engine stopped ‘The Giz’ from winning at Bathurst and the single–car Tekno Autosport team punched above its weight.

Winterbottom was third after an up-and-down season, and the same could be said for Whincup’s team-mate Craig Lowndes.

Two youngsters emerged as stars over the season. Scott McLaughlin was a revelation, taking 10 pole positions and showing that, in its first year in the category, Volvo’s S60 was a threat to the more established makes. The other was Chaz Mostert, who settled in as Whincup’s team-mate and, with veteran Paul Morris, won an astonishing Bathurst 1000.

Phil Branagan

POWERSHORE

Whincup attacks Mount Panorama
Nakajima prevails after battle of class

KAZUKI NAKAJIMA PREVAILED AFTER A dramatic season in which the title could have gone any one of four ways.

It was the second Super Formula title for the ex-Formula 1 driver, who formed a very strong challenge from the TOM’S team alongside versatile German Andre Lotterer.

Nakajima went into the final race level on points with Joao Paulo de Oliveira, and a stylish win in the rain at Suzuka meant a repeat of his 2012 championship title.

De Oliveira won three races — more than anyone else — in his Team Impul car but lost ground in the penultimate round at Sugo, when a tangle with Lotterer preceded a spectacular accident also involving GP2 racer Takuya Izawa that eliminated all three from the race.

Lotterer lost further points when he skipped the Motegi round in order to make his Formula 1 debut in a Caterham — a car that in Marcus Ericsson’s hands went around Suzuka only one second faster than Lotterer’s Super Formula Dallara.

The other potential champion was Team Le Mans ace Loic Duval. The Frenchman was on hand to win the opening round when race leader Nakajima lost out due to the appearance of a safety car just after he’d passed the pit entry. Duval was still atop the points when he suffered his monumental Le Mans 24 Hours practice shunt, causing him to miss the following round at Sugo.

Toyota-engined cars dominated the first year with new Dallara chassis and two-litre turbo engines, taking the top eight positions in the points. Honda’s results were abysmal until a couple of late-season poles for reigning champion Naoki Yamamoto and a rather isolated win at Sugo for Tomoki Nojiri.

POINTS

1 Kazuki Nakajima (TOM’S/Toyota), 46, 2 Joao Paulo de Oliveira (Team Impul/Toyota), 39, 3 Andre Lotterer (TOM’S), 36, 4 Loic Duval (Team Le Mans/Toyota), 28, 5 Hiroaki Ishiura (Cerumo-Inging/Toyota), 26, 6 James Rossiter (Kondo Racing/Toyota), 22, 7 Yuki Kunimoto (Cerumo-Inging), 19, 8 Ryo Hirakawa (Le Mans), 16, 9 Naoki Yamamoto (Team Mugen/Honda), 14, 10 Tomoki Nojiri (Dandelion Racing/Honda), 10.

It’s sunny for the Nissans

RONNIE QUINTARELLI PROBABLY isn’t going to get stopped by autograph hunters when he goes to the supermarket in his home city of Verona, but he’s had a lot more success in motorsport than many better-known Italian drivers.

Quintarelli has just completed his 12th season in Japan, one that netted his third Super GT title in the past four season with the factory NISMO Nissan team and the highly able Tsugio Matsuda as co-driver.

The duo took a while to feature in the points table, with electrical problems costing them victory at Fuji, but then a win at Autopolis propelled them into the hunt.

As the season wore on it became a fight between the NISMO boys and the TOM’S Lexus entries. Some great strategy had carried James Rossiter and Kazuki Nakajima to two wins in a row — virtually at the opening of a series with savage levels of success ballast — although only Rossiter was in the title hunt as Nakajima missed some races on WEC duty. Rossiter therefore led team-mates Andrea Caldarelli/
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The successful candidate will need to justify a strong background in Mechanical Engineering, as well as very good knowledge with CATIA. We also expect an engineering degree or equivalent, excellent team and communication skills and fluent English.

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Reporting to the Engine Workshop Leader, the Engine Builder is the one to build or strip complete development and event WRC engines within Hyundai Motorsport, including respecting the engine assembly and disassembly procedures, reporting to Engine Workshop Manager in case of problems in these processes, fulfilling assembly and disassembly documentation and report, building / stripping engine sub-assemblies, monitor engine mileage, assisting built engine through the continuity of its life (dyno, car tests, event support). Potential attendance to tests and events might be required on an irregular basis.
The successful candidate will need to justify a previous experience of 5 years minimum in engine building within a Motorsport environment like WRC / Endurance / GT / Touring Car / F1. We also expect an engineering degree or equivalent, excellent team and communication skills and fluent English.

ENGINE PROJECT LEADER:
Reporting to the Engine Manager, the Engine Project Leader will have to coordinate the work between the Engine Supplier, our Headquarters in Alzenau and the Group Headquarters in Korea. He/She will follow the planning in relation with the other department involved in the project, the Engine Supplier and the Global Project Leader. Working in relation with the Chassis Project Leader for the integration of the engine and related engine accessories, he/she will as well follow up and control the BOM. Testing activities with Engine Supplier and/or events (tests, rallies) might be to attend.
The successful candidate will justify a strong Engine related background in Motorsport. We also expect a Mechanical Engineering degree or equivalent, excellent team and communication skills and fluent English.

CHASSIS PROJECT LEADER:
Reporting to the Chief Design Manager, the Chassis Project Leader will have to lead and control the Designers Group for the project in the Chassis Engineering Office, coordinate the work between the engineering office and workshop, follow the planning in relation with the other department involved in the project and the Global Project Leader. Working in relation with the Engine Project Leader for the integration of the engine and related engine accessories, he/she will as well follow up and control the BOM.
The successful candidate will justify a strong Chassis related background in Motorsport. We also expect a Mechanical Engineering degree or equivalent, good Catia knowledge, excellent team and communication skills and fluent English.

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Revitalised Mallory on the up

Friendly Circuit’s resurgence continues with seven-race 2015 calendar

MALLORY PARK WILL HOST seven car race meetings in 2015 after completing a provisional calendar.

The Leicestershire circuit, which has been under the ownership of Real Motorsport Limited for less than a year, has booked in six weekends for next season with events from the UK’s leading organizing clubs.

Real saved the venue from closure when it took charge last December, ending a long-running noise row that took the previous operating company into liquidation.

Its 2014 programme largely comprised bike meetings and trackdays, with a few car test days as well, but car racing returned in July courtesy of a one-day Classic Sports Car Club-run meeting. Those meetings have kept the circuit afloat and enabled Real to pursue

MALLORY 2015 CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 29</td>
<td>MGCC</td>
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<td>May 24-25</td>
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<td>June 14</td>
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<td>August 22</td>
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>BRS3CC</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>750MC</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mallory’s time in the wilderness could finally be over. Mallory’s traditional Plum Pudding event will return on Boxing Day with four car and four bike races run by Club Mallory, ahead of next year’s much-expanded calendar.

Roberts, who had initially hoped for 10 meetings next year, believes the circuit is almost back on its feet again. “It’s very encouraging,” he added.

“We've been working hard pretty much since the last time we ran a race there. The circuit’s making a fresh start and I’d like to draw a line under what happened in the past.”

CIRCUIT ‘TURNED THE CORNER’

“People are believing in Mallory again. It's been a lot of hard work.

“It seems now we’ve turned the corner we needed,” he added.

“Mallory’s previous issues forced then-leaseholder British Automobile Racing Club to turn its back on the circuit, but the BARC is one of the seven clubs that will run race meetings next year. General manager of the BARC Ian Watson said it had always been the club’s intention to get some of its championship back to Mallory when the circuit was running properly.

“I think it's very important to visit all of the venues in the UK and Mallory Park is a cracking circuit,” he said.

“We ought to be using it, I've always wanted to run there again. We've been working hard pretty much since the last time we ran a race there. The circuit’s making a fresh start and I’d like to draw a line under what happened in the past.”

750MC EYES MORE EVENTS

The Club Mallory operation - formed earlier this year and based at the circuit — will also put on an event next year, as will the 750 Motor Club, which will run a one-day meeting in September.

750MC competition manager Giles Groombridge said a positive meeting next year would be a catalyst for bigger meetings in the future.

“It's great that it's back open,” he said. “It used to be one of the 750MC core venues for many years. It will be very good to have. Hopefully we'll get a good entry and if the meeting goes well, we'll be looking at more for 2016.”
World kart champion Norris to Carlin for single-seaters

WORLD KARTING CHAMPION

Lando Norris has joined top British team Carlin for his debut single-seater season in MSA Formula.

Norris clinched the CIK-FIA World KF crown in France earlier this year after stepping up to karting's senior class at just 14 years old.

The now 15-year-old also made his car racing debut in the Ginetta Junior Championship this season, finishing third with four wins.

"I'm looking forward to the partnership with Carlin," said Norris, who has also been testing in Formula Renault 2.0 with a variety of teams.

"I do have a little advantage over some other drivers next year, in that I've had the car racing experience from Ginetta. That has really helped me learn car control and racecraft.

"But nobody has driven the new MSA Formula car yet, so I'll be getting down to hard work when the car is delivered."

MSA Formula teams are expected to take the first delivery of their Mygale-Fords before the New Year.

Donnelly’s son eyes BRDC F4 after joining Virtuosi test

LOTUS ELISE TROPHY RACER

Stefan Donnelly, the son of ex-Formula 1 racer Martin, is eyeing a switch to single-seaters after taking part in Auto GP team Virtuosi’s BRDC Formula 4 evaluation test last week.

Donnelly joined karters Harry Webb, Lars Lamborelle and Alexandra Marinescu, plus existing BRDC F4 racer Tom Jackson, at the free test at Brands Hatch, put on by Virtuosi as it evaluates a likely two-car effort in the series next year.

"F4 is the championship to be in at the minute," said Donnelly. "It's the place to be to show how good you are and I very much want to be a part of that for 2015.

"Hopefully we can go onwards and upwards and get some sponsorship behind me to get on the grid in April."

Chris Dittmann Racing tested Omar Ismail at Brands, while race-winning team Hillspeed completed an extensive testing programme in Spain with South African racer Sebastian Lanzetti.

Huff and Soper in Goodwood Capri battle

TOURING CAR STARS STEVE

Soper and Rob Huff will make their Goodwood Members’ Meeting debuts in 2015, competing against each other in Ford Capris.

Soper will race a Gordon Spice Racing/Autocar-liveried Capri III 3.0S shared with entrant John Young, with whom he co-drove a Group 2 Cologne Capri in this year’s Silverstone Classic and Donington Park Historic Festival.

The former Japanese Touring Car champion, who drove factory Eggenberger Ford Sierra Cosworths RS500s in 1987-88, said: "I wanted to do this meeting last year, but couldn’t because I had a prior arrangement. I’ve driven with John before and I know the car’s owner, so it all came together nicely.

"I want to pick and choose the races I do, and this is definitely one I want to do because I love Goodwood. It looks like it’s a competitive car and it will be good to race a Ford again."

Huff, the 2012 World Touring Car champion, will drive Richard Meins’ Bastos-liveried Capri.

The 34-year-old will also take part in the Graham Hill Trophy in the same Jaguar E-type that he shared with Meins in the RAC TT race at the Revival this year.

Existing Goodwood house captains Emanuele Pirro, Anthony Reid, Jochen Mass and Nicolas Minassian will also contest the race, but their cars are yet to be confirmed.

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BRDC Formula 4

Donnelly ran with Virtuosi

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WEC Revival

Shake-up as Martini series gets WEC Revival makeover

THE HISTORIC SPORTS CAR CLUB

Martini Trophy has been rebranded the WEC Revival for 2015, with the series becoming open to Sports Racing, GT and Touring cars.

The initiative, a second joint venture between the HSCC and Flavien and Vanessa Marciais’ Automobiles Historiques, makes a variety of cars that populated World Endurance Championship events and other internationals up to 1980 eligible. It’s two-litre focus, around which the Martini Trophy has been built since 2011, continues in pre-’72 and pre-’79 timeframes, with a pre-’85 Sports 2000 class as well.

“We are building on what we’ve done so far, to bring out cars which have not previously had a high-profile series,” said HSCC chief Grahame White.

The WEC Revival will run as part of the HSCC’s International Trophy at Silverstone (May 16-17), the Brands Hatch Superprix (July 11-12), Zandvoort’s Historic Grand Prix (August 28-30) and the Motors TV Cup at Dijon-Prenois (October 2-4).

Flavien Marciais said: “The WEC Revival will run on the most evocative circuits, combining historical context and modern facilities. With additional cars lined-up, it looks very promising.”

Compact Cup will swap tyre suppliers

Compact Cup will swap tyre suppliers

FORMULA FORD 1600

Knockhill and Combe join National FF1600 calendar

THE BRITISH RACING AND SPORTS CAR Club’s Formula Ford 1600 National Championship will visit Knockhill in 2015 as part of a revamped calendar that makes the series truly nationwide for the first time in the modern era.

In recent years the National schedule has been largely based around the thriving Northern championship, plus limited ‘away’ rounds. The 2015 calendar of eight double-header events includes a Knockhill round alongside the Scottish series on September 13, as well as including Castle Combe for the first time in many years, with the National championship joining the local grid on July 18-19.

The May visits to the Donington Park Grand Prix layout and Oulton Park, plus the Anglesey finale in September, still accompany Northern rounds.

Two events at Silverstone (one each on the National and International tracks) and a Brands Hatch date complete a National schedule that will answer leading teams’ requests for a fully-fledged UK series to complement FF1600’s recent resurgence.

750 MOTOR CLUB

750MC trio in Nankang deal

THREE ONE-MAKE 750 MOTOR

Club classes will switch to control Nankang rubber next season.

Nankang, in addition to Toyo and Dunlop, tendered for the contract to replace the Italian Marangoni tyres on which the BMW Compact Cup has raced for two seasons, while the Civic Cup and S Club Racing MX-5 Cup will also adopt the Taiwanese manufacturer’s rubber.

Back-to-back tests at Donington with leading drivers from this year’s Compact Cup proved conclusive, and the series will use Nankang’s harder-compound tyre, with the Civics on the softer alternative.

Tyre use will be policed with retro-fitted coded chips, which will record the history of each competitor’s allocation; competitors will receive four sets for £999.

“It’s about the package, and Nankang’s deal stood out for us,” said Compact Cup promoter Paul McErlean, whose Scottish BMW series will follow suit.

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing

Old MAWP’s Almanac: a personal view of 2014

M y 17th Old MAWP’s Almanac – or ‘Not the AUTOSPORT Awards’ – presents a subjective reflection on a season of extraordinary highs and traumatic lows in different motor sporting disciplines. This year’s compilation may contain surprises to jog memories, provoke debate and hopefully inspire you to try something different in 2015.

SUBLIME MOMENT OF 2014

A year after historic racing fans left Thruxton’s Easter Revival with frostbite, Lord March drummed-up shirt-sleeve weather for Goodwood’s 72nd Members’ Meeting. Almost 38 years after the 71st, the BARC was still in charge and post-’66 Touring Car races and a select audience contrasted with the Revival.

BEST CHAMPIONSHIP

I’ve looked beyond racing; the inaugural World Rallycross Championship was special. Contested by a variety of superstars, it took the sport to new audiences with exciting TV. Eleven years after he won the World Rally title, Norway’s Petter Solberg emerged a worthy winner. Catch up with it at Lydden on May 22-24.

GREATEST DRIVES

Classic Clubmans champion Mark Charteris annihilating F5000 and F2 opposition in a wet HSCC Derek Bell Trophy race at Thruxton was mega. Over the season young Josh Webster beating Porsche Carrera Cup GB king Michael Meadows was a remarkable achievement.

TOP VALUE

The Tegiwa Civic Cup first blipped my radar at April’s 750MC Brands Hatch meeting. The spectacle of the sharp-looking, high-revving Japanese tin-tops there was superb, and there is no shortage of VTEC cars or tuning parts. While it is one-make, joy of joys it’s multi-model so they don’t all look the same – a huge selling point. Championship status for ’15 gives another lift.

HISTORIC EVENT OF THE SEASON

All three ‘Goodwoods’ were awesome, the Silverstone Classic is now a monster, Zandvoort’s third annual Historic Grand Prix deservedly drew 50,000 spectators and the Algarve Classic Festival season-closer hit new heights. For me, though, the Spa Six Hours remains peerless. Pure seat-of-the-pants racing on the ultimate circuit. If you’ve not been, go!

ONES TO WATCH IN 2015

1000cc Formula 3 screamers at Goodwood’s 73rd Members Meeting on March 21-22, 50 years of the Clubmans Formula and speed eventing’s return to Chateau Impney (last used in 1967) on July 11-12.

Given a fair wind I’d also love to get to Bo’ness in Scotland – where the British Hillclimb Championship debuted in 1947 – and Jersey’s Bouley Bay, which has never left the calendar.

Marcus Pye
**MARCUS PYE’S**

Highlights of the year

From Goodwood to Monaco and Castle Combe to Algarve, **MARCUS PYE** got to see a great deal of fabulous competition in 2014, so who better to pick some of the year’s highlights?

My 2014 season was one of mixed emotions: triumph and tragedy. The deaths of friends Al Fleming and Denis Welch (at Hockenheim and the Silverstone Classic respectively) and Allan Miles and Mick Hill (due to illness) — plus sight of the Silverstone incident that cost rising VSCC star Garry Whyte his life — overshadowed what, in many ways, was a sensational year.

The sheer breadth of events, kicked off by Goodwood’s magnificent successor to the BARC Members’ Meetings of yore, kept me so busy reporting, commentating and doing peripheral work that I didn’t get to compete, or even drive a racing car. That strengthened my resolve to return to the tracks occasionally in 2015. Having been so tantalisingly close over 30 weekends this term, to the tracks occasionally in 2015. Having been so tantalisingly close over 30 weekends this term, I’m missing something I started in 1981.

**GOODWOOD 72ND MEMBERS’ MEETING**

Continuing a sequence that stopped abruptly in 1966, when the motor circuit closed its doors to contemporary racing, the 72nd Members’ Meeting strengthened the Goodwood Road Racing Club’s quality programme and used the remaining two ‘noisy’ days of its annual planning permission. How Lord March’s daffodil-festooned late-March initiative was greeted with T-shirt weather defied belief!

As a season opener it could not have been better. The MSA’s decision to license the 2.4-mile track to embrace races for iconic Touring Cars of the 1970s–’80s, plus high-speed F1 and Le Mans car demos, imbued the event with a distinctly different flavour to September’s sell-out Revival.

The racing was brilliant, even if random inter-house points-paying contests remain unfathomable to most, but a fraction of the Revival’s attendance gave preparation teams room to work. Less pressure made the Members’ Meeting a big favourite with them too and it’s back next March. I hope it doesn’t snow!

**TEGIWA CIVIC CUP**

The big surprise of the club season for me was the Tegiwa Civic Cup. A single-make, multi-model promotion showcasing high-revving, performance-matched Hondas, it provided fast, close racing — and plenty of overtaking — without breaking the bank.

It was new to the 750MC family and I discovered it at Brands Hatch in April, where the natural amphitheatre of the Indy Circuit came alive as the colourful field was let loose. More cars had joined the fray when I witnessed, at Castle Combe, and by the end of the year it had really taken off.

That it has caught competitors’ imagination is reflected in the number of cars in build, with strong take-up reported from Stock Hatch converts for whom the ‘Citroen Saxopoly’ has lost its shine.

**MONACO GP HISTORIQUE**

The Automobile Club de Monaco’s Grand Prix Historique, run in alternate years, is the amateur weekend warrior’s only chance to race on the streets of Monte Carlo. Securing a coveted invitation blurs the eye-watering entry fee, easily doubled by the cost of lugging your steed there and hanging out in the Principality — and that’s if you do everything yourself! Having been twice, though, I can understand its aspirational lure even if it’s way beyond my pocket.

Seventy-five years after the inaugural Monaco GP and 25 since my first visit, I didn’t make the pilgrimage in May, but enjoyed an extraordinary weekend commentating ‘live’ for Motors TV, with John Hindhaugh and Goodwood colleague Bruce Jones. Although many viewers did not realise it — certainly not, once our voices were synched — there were no luxury yacht, casinos or Stars ‘N’ Bars for us. We were ensconced in Hindhaugh Towers in Northamptonshire, having a ball. Do we want to be trackside in 2016? You bet...

**AUTOSPORT 3 HOURS**

Fifty years after the last contemporary AUTOSPORT 3 Hours for Sports-Racing and GT cars at Snetterton, the HSCC’s seventh retrospective — equalling the period number — satisfied on several levels. Having sold club supremo Grahame White on joining forces with Flavien and Vanessa Marcais’s GT & Sports Car Cup group, an unprecedented entry provided an excellent race in extremely challenging conditions.

My highlight, though, came beforehand. Local ace Jack Sears’s fascinating recollections of winning the foggy 1964 race, on the debut of John Willment’s AC Cobra Coupe, illuminated AUTOSPORT’s preview, painting a vivid picture...
As a season opener the daffodil-festooned Members’ Meeting could not have been better

of the contrast between top-class racing then and now. Following a stand-off with circuit manager Oliver Sear over start money (remember that?), only the intervention of enthusiast Bill Bunbury guaranteed the victorious combo's appearance.

‘Gentleman Jack’, who has supported the modern classic and presented the prizes most years since the HSCC revived the concept in 2008, was particularly proud that daughter Suzanne competed in the special anniversary event in an MGB.

FESTIVAL OF SPEED
I've attended every Goodwood Festival of Speed since Lord March's first in 1993 and, having been the commentary team's startline emissary for eons, was initially underwhelmed at the idea of returning to the main box.

Working on the hillclimb's launchpad had its moments. A CanAm Lola disappearing deep into the trees (pre-massive straw-bale walls) in the tyre-warming area and a Fuel Altered dragster launching in reverse certainly caught my attention. I’d built a strong rapport with the marshals and timekeepers, though, and enjoyed taking my mic on track to interview such luminaries as Sir Stirling Moss when a gap needed filling.

A change of scenery often proves beneficial, however. The double-header with Henry Hope-Frost in the main box, now directly overlooking the notorious Molecomb Corner – which I'd only seen competitors tackle on TV screens previously –
Racing returned to Mallory Park after a tumultuous 2013

Woodcote Trophy fight at Spa was a highlight

RETURN OF MALLORY PARK
That thousands of enthusiasts from the motorcycle and car-racing fraternities, and legions of supportive locals, flocked to Mallory Park for its relaunch in March augured well for the Leicester venue. Its future had looked bleak following the BARC’s departure amid much discontent.

Now in the hands of Real Motorsport, headed by two-wheeled nuts Stuart Hicken and Eddie Roberts, this was a huge thumbs-up and overwhelming show of affection for the ‘Friendly Circuit’, which has hosted cars and bikes since 1956, as well as an important bridge-builder with neighbours.

I’ve loved Mallory’s lap of the lake since the 1970s, and won a race there in Paul Howarth’s Chevrolet ‘Bo' at the ‘82 finale, after which Leeds property developer/racer Chris Meek rescued it from oblivion. This time round, most car-racing promoters had fixed their calendars expecting it to be gone (or at least off the radar), but the Classic Sports Car Club committed to the summer’s only pure car meeting, at which I was proud to be commentator. Several clubs, including the VSCC and 750MC, are returning in 2015, but August’s CSCC event will uphold traditional club-racing values over a full weekend.

BLACK MAGIC AT ZANDVOORT
Zandvoort’s inaugural Historic Grand Prix event in 2011 captured the imagination of the town, the wider Dutch public and all who took part. It continues to grow to the joy of circuit boss Erik Weijers and commercial backers, behind it in ever-increasing numbers. Pushing the spectator attendance through the 50,000 landmark in August was a huge achievement.

The racing programme – from a 500cc Formula 3 posse to three-litre F1 cars, plus all manner of touring, GT and sports-racing machinery – was the strongest yet on the rollercoaster through the dunes. But a pair of JPS Lotus 79s, representing world champion-elect Mario Andretti’s and Ronnie Peterson’s one-two at the ‘78 Grand Prix made the hairs on my neck stand to attention.

Local hero Arie Luyendyk, a double Indianapolis 500 winner, played Andretti to Andrew Beaumont’s Peterson as the beautiful black wing cars circulated together. The distinctive soundtrack of synchronised Cosworth DFV engines – broadcast through twinned exhausts exiting centrally through the rear decks, as they traversed Tarzan hairpin, the Hugenholtzbacht, Hunserug and Scheivlak, then howled past the pits – transported many onlookers back 36 years at a stroke.

‘50s SPORTSCARS AT SPA
The Spa Six Hours has been a ‘must-do’ since I first went, to compete and report, in 1997. I’ve not missed one since, but this year the weather during the Saturday afternoon/evening feature – thunder, lightning and torrential rain after a fine start – was the worst in the Pre-’66 race’s history. Survival was key and Martin Stretton/Diogo Ferrao enhanced the Ford GT40’s record with a hard-earned win.

The race of Roadbook’s relentless showpiece was actually for Royal Automobile Club Woodcote Trophy honours within Motor Racing Legends’ one-hour ‘50s Sportscars contest. While Gary Pearson juggled Jaguar D-types owned by Carlos Monteverde and Christian Glasel, Patrick Blakeney-Edwards gave the Coventry cats the slip
in Fred Wakeman’s similarly-powered Cooper T38, aided by an efficient pitstop and Andrew Hall’s splendid start, to notch a sensational 2.2s victory.

CASTLE COMBE’S AUTUMN GOLD
Built over three years, the Castle Combe Autumn Classic – brainchild of long-time venue marketeer Rodney Gooch and outgoing CCRC chairman Adrian Fawdington – is established on the west country circuit’s calendar and continues to grow.

Having sown the seeds of 500cc Formula 3’s return to Combe (the movement started locally, within the Bristol Aeroplane Company, an engineering centre of excellence post-war), I was relieved that the first race for the motorcycle-engined cars in 49 years was totemic. The fixture is set to become a regular seasonal finale for 500OA members.

Fine Austin-Healey, Aston Martin, Jaguar, VSCC, FiSCar and Formula Junior races, interspersed with parades, made an attractive programme. The one-day format – following the modern CCRC championship finals, although they will be on successive Saturdays in 2015 – also enabled folk to mingle, party and enjoy great hostelries nearby.

ALGARVE CLASSIC FESTIVAL
Portugal remains an enigma in European motorsport. While the financial realities of a relatively poor country can’t sustain many able young competitors’ dreams beyond karting, it boasts one of the finest circuits anywhere in the Autodromo Internacional Algarve, situated in the hills outside Portimao.

For five years its season-ending Classic Festival has ticked along, but this October local series promoter – and September’s Spa Six Hours winner – Diogo Ferrao teamed up with AIA chief Paulo Pinheiro and injected a real slug of passion into it. To spectacular effect!

Underpinned by Peter Auto’s photogenic Classic Endurance Racing pack and Automobiles Historiques’ GT&SCC field arriving in strength, with the FIA Lurani Trophy Historic Formula Junior Championship finale and returnees from British-based MRL and HGPCA, the entry trebled and more spectators pitched up. Now the message is out it should thrive, because it’s a fabulous place to race when the autumn sun is shining.

MICK HILL CELEBRATION
The turnout at Mick Hill’s funeral earlier this month spoke volumes for the Super Saloon pioneer, famed for his V8-engined Ford Capri, VW Beetle, Skoda and BMW M1 clones. It also underlined the popularity of the ‘wacky racers’ of the 1970s and ’80s, and the dearth of big personalities in today’s club classes.

There are so many well-sorted road burners today – most front-wheel drive with powerful, reliable engines, and plentiful after-market components to boost performance – that aspiring racers need look no further than whichever marque series matches their budget. No need, then, to spend a winter hiding grunty American engines, redundant transaxles and obsolete racecar suspension (all cheap and plentiful in the ’70s) under caricature bodysells for a monster buzz.

Watching intrepid ‘Superloon’ kings Hill, Jonathan Buncombe, Colin Hawker, Tony Hazlewood, Doug Niven, Alec Poole, Ian Richardson, Tony Strawson, John Turner, the late Gerry Marshall and others slugging it out in hybrids that could (and did) bite defined an era of tin-top racing now impractical – not to say financially suicidal – to emulate.

The CSCC’s Special Saloon and Modsports revivals are enjoyable windows on the past, however, where you can still wonder at golden oldies and admire a few superb modern follies from dedicated competitors who dare to be different. ¥
Our pick of this year’s rising stars, hidden heroes and weekend warriors racing in club-level series in 2014

**Club drivers of the year**

**Top 10**

1. **James Blake-Baldwin**  
BRSCC Mazda MX-5 champion  
Blake-Baldwin gave MX-5 benchmark Tom Roche a run for his money in 2013 and stepped up to title favourite in the Welshman’s absence. A run of seven consecutive victories mid-season – ironically ended by a Roche one-off – proved the tipping point in the title battle, and a total haul of 14 was superb in the country’s biggest MX-5 grid. A worthy champion.

2. **Dean Brace**  
Legends UK champion  
Brace’s maiden Legends UK title last season was a huge confidence boost, and he won more races than any other UK-based driver this season as he made it back-to-back championship successes.

3. **Ciaran Haggerty**  
Scottish Formula Ford 1600  
A record-breaking season for the young Scot, a protege of IndyCar legend Dario Franchitti. Fully deserved the Scottish FF1600 title after completing the second half of the season unbeaten.

4. **Simon Hadfield**  
FIA Masters Historic Sports Car champion  
Another fine season for Hadfield, who won 11 races in 2014 in six different cars, further exemplifying his remarkable racing dexterity, and clinched two FIA Masters titles alongside Leo Voyazides.

5. **Chris Knox**  
Mini Challenge champion  
Scotsman Knox became the first person in the Mini Challenge’s 14-year history to claim a second title, adding this year’s crown to his 2011 triumph with 11 wins from 21 races.

6. **Adam Gore**  
Lotus Elise Trophy champion  
Seven victories clinched Gore the inaugural Lotus Elise Trophy title, while four class wins in the Lotus Cup UK earned him the Production class crown. His switch from MX-5 racing is complete!

7. **Aaron Head**  
Caterham R300 Superlight champion  
The Essex ace took the R300 crown in his second season in Caterham’s flagship series, clinching the title in the final round ahead of Tracksport and Supersport champion David Robinson.

8. **Matthew Palmer**  
Toyota MR2 champion  
The dominant force in a packed grid of Toyota MR2s. Palmer wants to move up to a national-level championship in 2014. His form this season would mark him out as one to watch if he does so.

9. **James Dodd**  
HSCC Super Touring Car champion  
Dodd showed at the Silverstone Classic that good club drivers are good full stop when he fought wheel-to-wheel with former WTCC champion Rob Huff for the victory. The inaugural title duly followed.

10. **Pete Morris**  
Porsche Club Class 1 champion  
The Porsche Club grid was not the biggest, but beating Tom Bradshaw is evidence of a fine season. Five victories helped Morris’s cause, but it was his consistent scoring that landed the title.
Britain’s version of FIA F4 was finally confirmed, selling 32 Mygales for the new MSA Formula. BRDC F4 announced its own FIA F4 chassis plans with Tatuus, selling 26. Let battle commence in 2015.

**BRDC F4 v FIA F4**

Junior single-seaters

Rivalries of the year

10. **Bryant v van der Garde**
   Goodwood Revival Tourist Trophy
   Oliver Bryant and Formula 1 test driver Giando van der Garde engaged in a terrific Cobra-on-Cobra contest, a battle which petered out through mechanical failure just as it was about to erupt.

9. **BRDC F4 v FIA F4**
   Junior single-seaters
   Britain’s version of FIA F4 was finally confirmed, selling 32 Mygales for the new MSA Formula. BRDC F4 announced its own FIA F4 chassis plans with Tatuus, selling 26. Let battle commence in 2015.

8. **Finn v McBennett**
   Mondello GTs
   The rivalry between Connaire Finn and Pat McBennett is arguably the biggest in Irish circuit racing. Finn called in back-up to take points off his rival in the finale but the Lotus driver edged it in the end.

7. **Dempsey v Kevin Mills Racing**
   Walter Hayes Trophy
   Controversy reigned at Formula Ford 1600s showpiece event. Peter Dempsey wiped out semi-final winners Michael Moyers and Scott Malvern, leading to a post-final war of words.

6. **Albone v Cowley**
   750 Formula
   Former karting team-mates Bills Albone (Batten 3) and Cowley (Cowley MkIV, #6) duked it out at the front in cars originated four decades apart. Albone's win tally (10) was enough to beat his rival.

5. **Mittell v Spires**
   750MC RGB
   Scott Mittell ended three and a half years of Spires GT3 dominance in the 750 Motor Club’s RGB category with a hard-fought win at Cadwell Park in his self-built machine.

4. **Hayes v Avery v Lawrence**
   BRSCC Porsche Championship
   Went down to the wire thanks to a thrilling season-long contest in which Jonathan Greensmith trailed Ed Hayes and Richard Avery but edged his rivals to the crown on dropped scores.

3. **Lanan v HHC**
   BRDC Formula 4
   George Russell (Lanan) and Raoul Hyman (HHC) non-finished twice after crashing while fighting for the title, with the top six spots often exclusively Lanan and HHC drivers. Fiercely competitive to the end.

2. **Cryer v Roddison**
   Mak 5 Racing
   A sensational scrap between Jonathan Cryer and Paul Roddison was settled at the final round in favour of Cryer. Roddison’s mid-season surge set up the showdown but Cryer won by four points.

1. **Kruger v Scott**
   British Formula Ford
   The British Formula Ford title protagonists made contact at the first round and had close on-track fights thereafter. A clash at Silverstone in the penultimate encounter spun Scott to the back, but it was the shunt at the Brands finale, which forced Scott to DNF and handed Kruger the title (not to mention leading to judicial proceedings), that this fight will be remembered for.
AUTOSPORT’s band of photographers are an intrepid bunch, shooting the breadth and depth of Britain’s diverse and vibrant club scene. Here’s a selection of their best shots of the season.
NATIONAL PICS OF THE YEAR

DECEMBER 18-25 2014

JONES WALKER

MOIR JONES

SMYTH'S GRAVELLY END

Neville Smyth's Ray GRS10 shed its wheel while challenging for the lead in the Formula Ford Festival semi-final.

TIN-TOP TUSSLES

Tom Bell leads 750MC Stock Hatch rivals and battling siblings Lee (centre) and Shayne Deegan at Castle Combe.

KNOCKING ON THE RECORD

Phil Dryburgh attacks Knockhill in his Aston Martin V12 Vantage, just falling short of the circuit record.

WILDFIRE IN THE PARK

Mike Wilds' and Steve Guglielmi's rorty BMW CSL spits flames during the Masters All Series race at Oulton Park.

SPLASH AND DASH

The Roadsports field is unleashed at Thruxton on Easter Sunday as part of the HSCC's Revival weekend.
GOING FOR GUARDS GLORY
Hugh/Mark Colman's Chevron B8 (72) battles the similar Charles Allison/Peter Thompson car at Oulton Park

AMERICAN FLAIR
The Euro NASCAR leaders blast down the main straight during the Brands Hatch Speedfest meeting

QUICKEST BY A HARE
The Lotus Elan of Chris Drake/Mark Elliott races a hare at Snetterton during the AUTOSPORT 3 Hours

A FINE REFLECTION
Clive Brandon's Lotus Europa and its shining reflection splashes round a soaking Kirkistown in August
COMING THROUGH!
Scott Mittel and his family-built Mittell MC-52B give RGB rival John Cutmore (Spire GT3) a whack at Snetterton

FISCAR RUNS WILDS
A massive FISCAR grid charges off the line at Castle Combe’s season-closing Autumn Classic meeting

NOT A BAD VIEW
Simon Hadfield’s FIA Masters Historic Sportsscar-winning Lola T70 in the setting sun at the Silverstone Classic
For 40 years, Renaults of one type or another have had a constant presence in UK motorsport – from the perky, heeled-over Renault 5 TLs that started it all (Maggie Anderson won the first race and Neil McGrath took the first three championship titles) to the current hectic BTCC-supporting Clios. That’s impressive by any standards, but the Renault series have consistently punched above their weight.

Three men were central to the success of the French manufacturer in motorsport here, and two of them got together recently to reminisce. It’s no surprise that the anecdotes were soon flowing. Dennis Carter, clerk of the course, race director, former head of the BARC, and Tim Jackson, longtime Renault head of PR and the firm’s de facto motorsport boss, swapped tales of a cloak-and-dagger attempt to buy black-market Russian dolls in a dusky forest rendezvous with a wagon that only ran in reverse gear, and encounters with Moscow ‘executives’ whose promises to “run your security” were more threat than offer.

They were discussing the Moscow Superprix, planned for 1992. In some ways it was an excellent example of the work the pair did: imaginative, ambitious, viable and fun. But it lacked the hallmarks of their work – that the job got done and in style. The Superprix was way ahead of its time but failed when the volatile Russian politics of the era unnerved the American backers and funding was pulled.

Renault is all about cars and they play a big part in this story – from the first 5s through the early Formula Renault heroes from Van Diemen and Swift to Spiders, Clios, the super-successful carbon-chassised, Tatuus-built FR of which more than 1000 were sold, Laguna touring cars and championship-winning rally Meganes. But when it comes down to it, the people are all; Jackson’s reply to a question about what has been the best bit of the adventure is telling: “It’s been great to see all those drivers coming through and developing.”

Among ‘all those drivers’ are a handful that have made it to the very top. Of the world champions in whose careers Renault UK has played a major part, Kimi Raikkonen and Lewis Hamilton were Formula Renault champions, Jenson Button drove for the Renault Formula 3 team (pictured on opposite page), while Andy Priaulx was both a Renault Spider champion and a member of the F3 squad. A handful of others made it to F1 – Pedro de la Rosa, Antonio Pizzonia, Paul di Resta and Heikki Kovalainen (pictured opposite). And if you drop down a rung or two on the motorsport ladder the list grows – think of Le Mans winner Guy Smith, Indycar star Mike Conway and BTCC champion Jason Plato (who raced Formula Renault, was the first Spider champion and graduated to employment as a BTCC Laguna driver). And it’s not just as racing drivers that those who developed in the...
Renault family have shone. Christian Horner, who was a Renault kart scholar and Formula Renault race winner, now runs the most successful Formula 1 team of recent years, Red Bull. John Booth, team principal at Marussia, ran a clutch of talented Formula Renault racers such as Plato, Smith and James Matthews, as well as Horner and many others, as he first established himself as a team boss. Then there's Chris Goodwin, who was runner-up in the super-competitive 1990 Formula Renault championship, when the series really took off, and is now McLaren Automotive's chief test driver.

Behind the scenes over those 40 years there has been a lot of hard work, not a few dramas, a great deal of fun and inevitably some sadness. Jackson and Carter are quick to give credit to the missing face at the table: that of the late Robert Fearnall, another great force in the development of Renault's UK racing series in the early years, who died in 2012.

The early years of Formula Renault in this country provide a good example of Fearnall's role. Carter recalls that the decision to bring the series (which had already thrived for many years in France) over here for the 1989 season was taken relatively late. That meant there was little official or financial backing that Jackson and Renault UK could bring. “Basically Robert and I funded it,” says Carter. Jackson provided moral support and technical back-up from John Millett – another ever-present member of the tight-knit team that made the Renault series so successful. Carter remembers his first meeting with Millett in his tiny office below the smart Radbourne Racing premises in Wimbledon: “It was roughly the size of a matchbox with the matches still in it. I had severe doubts that this operation was ever going to work. But as usual they came up trumps and were efficient throughout, although I notice that John still blinks when he’s in daylight.”

The faith Carter and Fearnall had in that sparsely populated first series — won by Neil Riddiford — proved sound. In 1990 Renault backed it fully, more than 70 drivers raced at one round or another, qualification races were needed at some circuits and the formula became an important rung on the career ladder of ambitious drivers for more than 20 years.

Not that everything always went entirely smoothly. To launch the series in 1990 Jackson organised daytime fireworks — a great success, apart from the parachuting flare that dropped through the open sunroof of a brand new Jaguar and set fire to the passenger seat. Then there was the qualification race at Kirkistown — Carter and
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Fearnall were in race control for the eight-lapper and, when they’d counted 11 laps and cars were starting to run out of petrol, asked legendary clerk of the course Des McAuley what was going on. He explained: “It’s a lovely day and they look like they’re having fun out there, so I thought I’d give them a few more laps.”

Many others played their parts, not least the managing directors of Renault UK – most prominent among them in a motorsport context was Michel Gigou, an intensely competitive man who loved the sport. He was in the fortunate position to make remarks such as: “I think this year, we’ll go rallying,” and have people like Jackson to hand who could make that happen and successfully. The team took the British championship twice, with Martin Rowe and Tapio Laukkanen, and also hosted another world champion, Derek Ringer, who’d already taken that title with Colin McRae when he sat beside Robbie Head in the Megane.

The rally programme began in 1995 and unsurprisingly it’s the ’90s that provide the fondest memories for Jackson. Renault had a BTCC programme that started in 1993 (with the unloved 19) and included his favourite Renault racer, the Laguna, which began its race career before it went on sale in the UK and went on to win the BTCC with Alain Menu. Rallying joined in from 1995 and Formula 3 – in which it was a very serious championship contender without ever quite landing the title – from 1996. It also coincided with a UK sales boom for Renault.

So what’s the Renault long-life secret? Jackson points to his close-knit team of effective operators: Carter, Fearnall, Millett, long-time championship manager and PR Simon North, scrutineer Roy Fewkes and many more. They took it through the great times, such as that 1990 FR season and the early years of the 21st century with the Tatuus FR chassis, which included Raikkonen’s title in 2000 and Hamilton’s in 2003. Of course it wasn’t always smooth and easy. The transitions between iterations of the championships have sometimes been hard work — for example when the entire fleet of Spiders had to be fitted with new roll cages after a problem was highlighted by a pre-season testing crash — but the team’s ability to overcome such potential disasters means the good times have massively outweighed the bad.

Now year 41 is drawing to a close, and there’d be few who’d bet against the Renault streak continuing for many more beyond.

“I had severe doubts that this was ever going to work, but as usual they came up trumps” DENNIS CARTER
Ron was right to take his time

As a British F1 enthusiast I am very pleased to hear of Jenson Button’s confirmation as a McLaren driver, at least for 2015, and I wish him every success.

However, I quickly grew tired of the media coverage around McLaren’s protracted deliberations. Racing drivers are simply employees, as are the vast majority of the planet’s workforce.

In my opinion it is absolutely correct that Ron Dennis took his time in making a complex decision, as he will do what is best for the McLaren organisation, regardless of any external influence.

F1 has always been a brutal business, and the fact that Button is an extremely experienced former world champion is a moot point.

Paul Roberts, Caerphilly

Noble and Straw both miss a big hunk of F1 DNA in their contribution to the 2014 review (December 11).

Noble misses that F1 is about technological marvels. Doubtless at any NASCAR race, the depth of field of incredible drivers and relentless racing far exceeds any F1 race. But they are racing glorified taxi-cabs.

At China 2014, I was captivated by the complex machines flung around corners at unbelievable pace using one-thousandth fuel; and capturing the energy made by the slowing process to enter a corner, storing it to use to rocket out of the corner.

Noble misses that F1 is about absurdly paid drivers in absurdly fast and complex cars racing in huge architectural monuments to the absurdity of the whole circus. A driver’s championship? About 20 per cent a driver’s championship. It’s cars, technology, venue, concept, financing, teams… all the best together in one glorious dish.

As to Straw, he should have focused on the show, not the scraps. A major part of F1 DNA is its ruthless free-market capitalism. F1 is about spending all you can to produce the most outrageous show possible, so hundreds of millions will watch on a Sunday and hundreds of millions will watch on a Sunday and hundreds of millions will watch on a Sunday and hundreds of millions will watch on a Sunday and hundreds of millions will watch on a Sunday.

Marussia and whoever else is eaten by the ruthless competition is hardly a sign of distress or failure of F1, but proof of its vitality. Shine or die is F1.

Johnnie Crean
Waikoloa, Hawaii, USA

I’m tired of hearing the VW rally lot moaning.

Team principal Jost Capito was moaning a few weeks ago about the dropping of his (and the WRC promoter’s) bidders idea of changing the WRC rules so that the winner was decided by some mathematical co-efficient, and is now moaning about Sebastien Loeb’s return on the Monte Carlo Rally.

Sebastien Ogier was complaining recently about the running order for the rallies. I liked Loeb’s response to this problem, which was a gallic shrug of the shoulders and a comment along the lines of ‘it is what it is’ – and then he’d go and beat everyone anyway.

Capito says Loeb’s return will undermine the sport. I think he may well be concerned at Loeb beating his dominant VW team in a somewhat lesser developed car…

I’m delighted to see Loeb’s return and hope that he blows them all away on the Monta.

Andy Maclean
Churchill, Oxon
STADIUM TRUCKS WOW RoC
Race of Champions regular
Robby Gordon’s spectacular Stadium Super Trucks proved a crowd favourite at Bushy Park, Barbados, at the weekend.

NORDICS IN CARIBBEAN VIBE
Were these questionable dreadlocks key to Team Nordic drivers Tom Kristensen and Petter Solberg’s RoC Nations Cup success?

KUBICA TAKES BETTEGA WIN
Robert Kubica signed off his season with a win at last weekend’s Bettega Memorial Rally Sprint. The Pole’s motorsport future could be revealed this week.

BESIDE THE E SIDE
The Punta del Este resort could have offered one too many distractions for the Formula E visitors. We hope this (show car?) was rescued.

WARNER/LAT
SCALEXTRIC AUDI QUATTRO
£39.99 – scalextric.com
Rally-loving slot racers will rejoice in the arrival of another Group B monster from Scalextric: this time a replica of Michele Mouton’s Audi Sport Quattro S1 from the 1985 Ulster Rally. It has working lights and magnatraction, but sadly won’t whistle and spit flames when you lift off.

JACKY ICKX BIOGRAPHY
€49.90 – mckleinstore.com
There are very few books about superstar all-rounder Ickx, the Belgian well known for his reticence about his past. Still, Ed Heuvink’s German/English language tome is packed with epic McKlein pics and great nuggets about a man who won in F1, sportscars, rallying and touring cars.

RIVAUX WATCHES/GLASSES
£59 (sunglasses); £395 (watches) – rivauxwatches.com
Racing-inspired firm Rivaux implements cues from motorsport into its line of watches – pistons, gear ratios and a racing car’s fuel cap can all be spotted when you look closely at the designs. It also boasts a range of sunglasses, which an increasing number of drivers have worn during 2014.
My Favourite Driver

David Llewellin

Watching this 6R4 being threaded between trees on the 1986 Welsh Rally made David Evans a devoted follower of one of Britain’s finest

The passing of time, the rise and shocking demise of an iconic and heroic figure such as Colin McRae would have made it easy for me to write this story about Britain’s first World Rally Champion. McRae always was the hero’s hero. But to fill this column with words of worship for the McRae man would be an injustice to the driver I followed before Coco even stepped aboard his Sunbeam. That man was David Llewellin.

Speculating on the 1986 Welsh Rally I found my hero. I’ll be honest, I didn’t know much about Llewellin before that season. But he’d won his first ever British round one event earlier, and a Circuit of Ireland win certainly created headlines.

And now here he was howling up the side of Dyfi, putting one over Hannu Mikkola’s short Quattro and Stig Blomqvist in an RS200. Incredible.

Llewellin led the event twice, but couldn’t keep it together until the finish. He dropped it in spectacular fashion, overshooting a hairpin and essentially launching the thing off the side of a mountain.

Having recorded Grandstand, I watched in wonder at the am-cam footage of the cartwheeling white Metro. And then listened intently as my new favourite Welshman stood aside his trashed 6R4 and talked about “Taking it home. In a box…”

The demise of Group B meant a move to Audi’s lukewarm Coupe Quattro for 1987, before the onset of the horribly unwieldy 200 Quattro for the following year. Watching Llewellin manhandle this thing which looked bigger than a bus between the trees was a sight to behold. And the noise wasn’t bad either. Much better than the hairdryer he’d been pedaling the previous season.

Finally, he found himself in the right place at the right time in 1989. Toyota GB would be running a Celica and, when Jimmy McRae favoured a stay at Ford, Llewellin’s name was stenciled onto the side of the Securicor-backed, Phil Collins-run GT-4.

Llewellin and co-driver Phil Short won from the off, dominating the Cartel International. A duff clutch forced them out of the Circuit, but then came a historic home win in Wales.

By that point, I was corresponding with Llewellin regularly. Not quite stalking the poor chap, but certainly keeping him informed with where I’d been watching and what I thought of his progress. It was all good. In return, he kept my bedroom wall plastered with signed photographs.

Two British titles were taken in the 1999 Honda Accord Super Tourer, a 1995 Corvette Stingray and a Lola T70 Spyder, making it simply something you can’t miss.

And then there was the 2000 World Rally Championship with Nissan. Unfathomably as far as I could see, from behind my economics homework in the upper sixth.

Fortunately, before he was cast mercilessly from the top of rallying’s tree, there was time for one more moment; victory on the Audi Sport Rally in 1991 in an all-white Sunny which was, undoubtedly, the coolest thing in the world — along with the purple coats with fur around the collars which the team wore.

My hero slaughtered Russell Brookes and Colin McRae through mid-Wales.

Fifteen years on, I was back in Dyfi and as impatient as ever to see Llewellin. My favourite.
Revved up over what’s on the box

The BBC Sports Personality of the Year always offers an effective barometer of how great an unwashed perceive Formula 1. Lewis Hamilton went into Sunday’s show as second favourite to golfier Rory McIlroy, but ended up taking a dominant win.

Perhaps it was his bold gambit to take Roscoe onto the SPOTY red carpet that warmed in his interview. Either way, he claimed 33.8 per cent of the vote – 209,920 people – compared with McIlroy’s 19.9 per cent (123,745). A resounding endorsement for the ‘fearless’ section, in which the poetic renderings of the key moments of the season, including the clash with Rosberg at Spa. While picking up on the technology, it stressed the importance of the driver. As Hamilton’s voiceover had it, “it’s a complicated business… but simple.”

His victory was greeted with plenty of criticism, notably on Twitter. Impartial expert witness Ian Poulter was unhappy that McIlroy didn’t win, declaring SPOTY “a complete joke” and complaining that he had one person to beat all year. “It’s a joke,” he stormed, “I mean, it’s a joke!”

McIlroy himself was magnanimous in defeat, just as Hamilton was in victory. The Mercedes driver seemed genuinely overwhelmed to have won the award, which he missed out on last time he overthrew to have won the award, which he missed out on last time he

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But the still found time to throw in a quick plug for Nicole Scherzinger’s Cats (the musical, not actual felines).

Given that motorsport outside of F1 is often given short-shrift, it was good to see both Jolyon Palmer and Alex Lynn feted in the ‘fearless’ section, in which the poetic voiceover that has been derisive at BBC Sport for the past few years also gave a quick reminder of drivers who find themselves in dire straits.

“Fearless with an engine,” said the voiceover. “Jolyon Palmer in GP2, Alex Lynn in GP3 and Marc Markquez, again, in MotoGP. For Michael Schumacher and Jules Bianchi, the fight goes on…”

A sombre moment in a great evening.

Revved Up
THERE WERE MANY RACES
I enjoyed during my career on the pitwall, but the 1991 Mexican Grand Prix was the first race when I really felt as if the Jordan team belonged in Formula 1.

We had scored our first points with fourth and fifth place in Canada a race earlier, but this is the one that really sticks in the memory.

In the first half of the season, we had to prequalify early on Friday morning as a new team, with the top four getting through. We were running Goodyear tyres, but the Pirelli runners had the advantage because they could have their qualifying tyres cleaned up between runs. We just had to be brave and wait until the end of the prequalifying session before doing one run.

It wasn’t easy in Mexico, or ever in prequalifying, as the track was so dirty and the Goodyears were not as good in those conditions as the Pirellis. Andrea de Cesaris got stuck in gear so had to switch to the spare car and he got through in third.

Bertrand Gachot was fifth so missed out, but was let back in when Nicola Larini’s Lamborghini was excluded for its rear wing being too high.

Andrea qualified 11th and Bertrand, after crashing at Peralta and giving us a lot of work to do overnight in first qualifying, was 20th. He had a good race until he spun off after missing a gear. Before that point, we were on course to have both cars in the points again as he was in fifth place behind Andrea.

It was the early stages of the race that I really remember. On the pitwall I saw the Williams, Ferrari and McLarens leading out of the fast, banked Peralta. Then came Andrea in the little green Jordan hanging onto their tails! I remember thinking, ‘Yeah, this is good.’

It was the moment that I realised we were actually in F1 and racing rather than just competing. What we had achieved really hit home.

Andrea finished fourth. At the end of the race he was the last car on the lead lap, but a problem with the throttle meant that he stopped 150 metres short of the finish line. We were on the pitwall cheering him on as he did it. It turned out that he didn’t need to do it and, in fact, pushing the car over the line wasn’t legal. So for about an hour after the race there were arguments with the stewards. At first they ruled Andrea was disqualified, but a few minutes later he was back in.

It was a great result for the team and for Andrea, a driver I was sceptical about when Eddie Jordan signed him but who was so important in getting the team up to speed in the first season.

We went on to finish fifth in the constructors’ championship in 1991. Not bad for a small team nobody gave much of a chance to when we first announced our F1 plans!
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