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F1 RACING

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13 DRIVER EXCLUSIVES

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Plus

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Peter Windsor on why it might – *just* – be mega

ALONSO ON THE BRINK
Can Fernando join the Ferrari legends?

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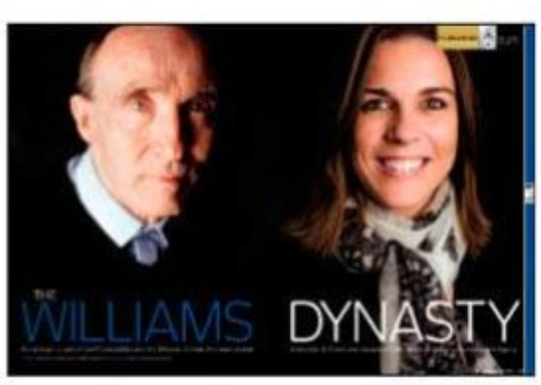
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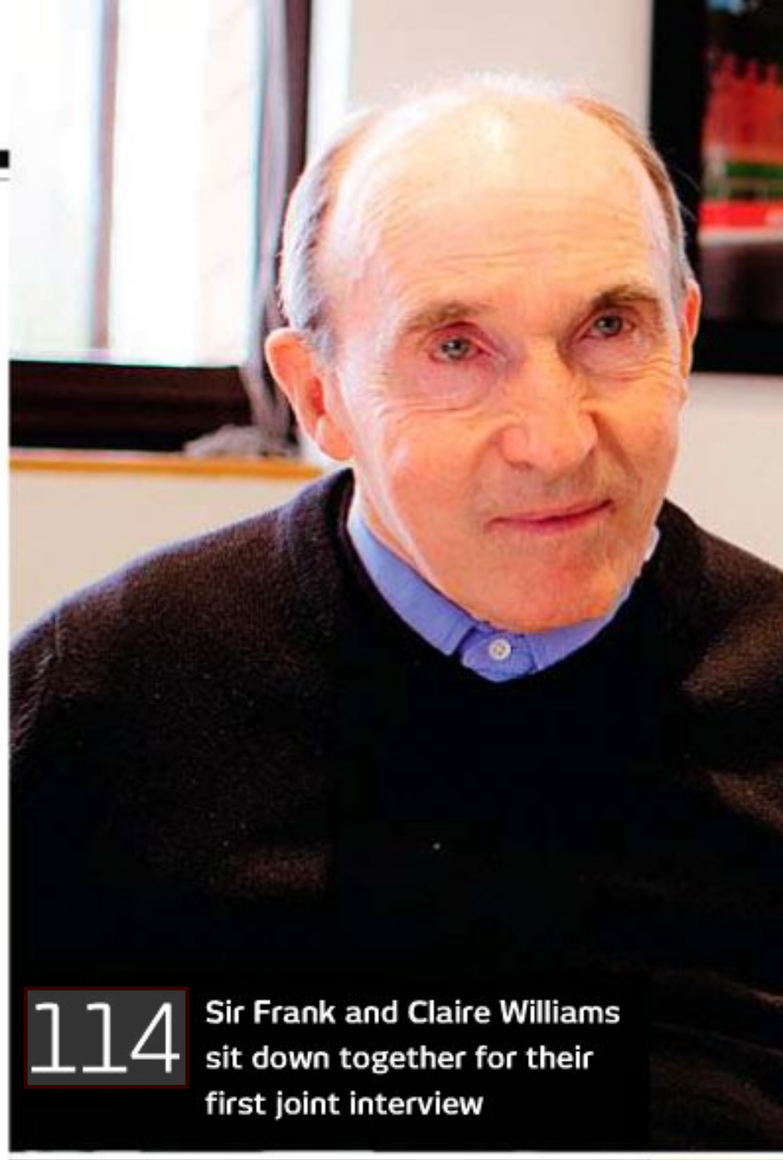
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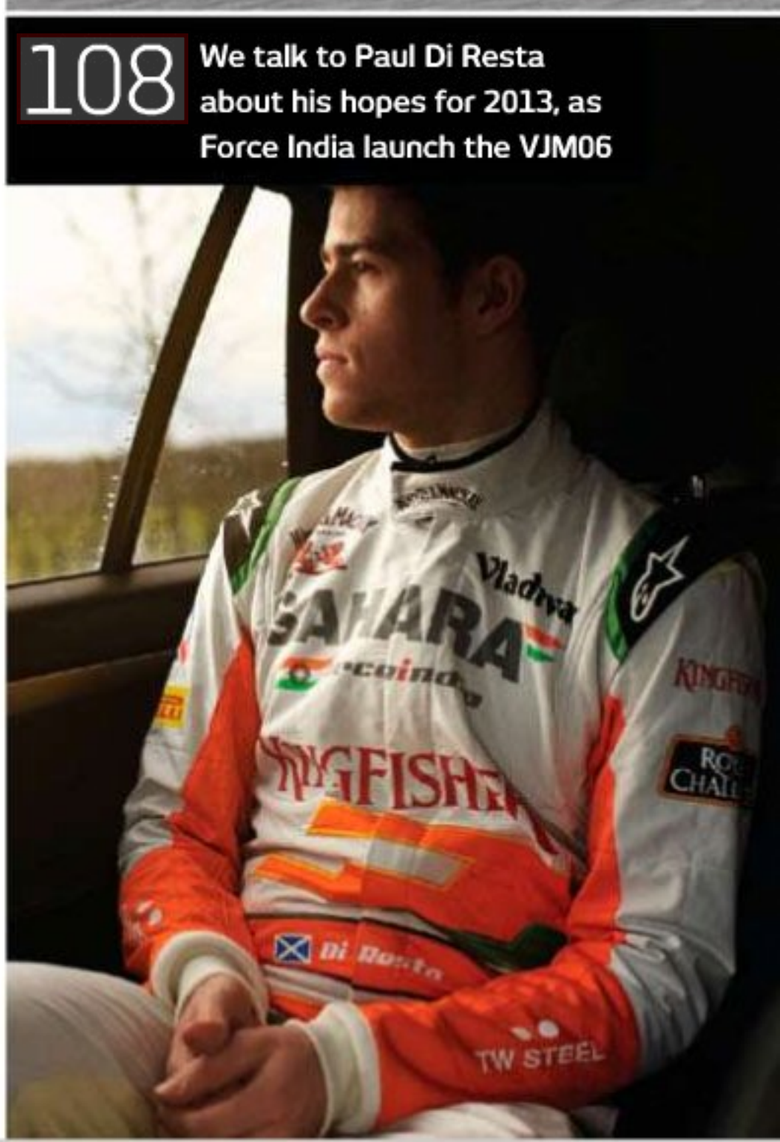
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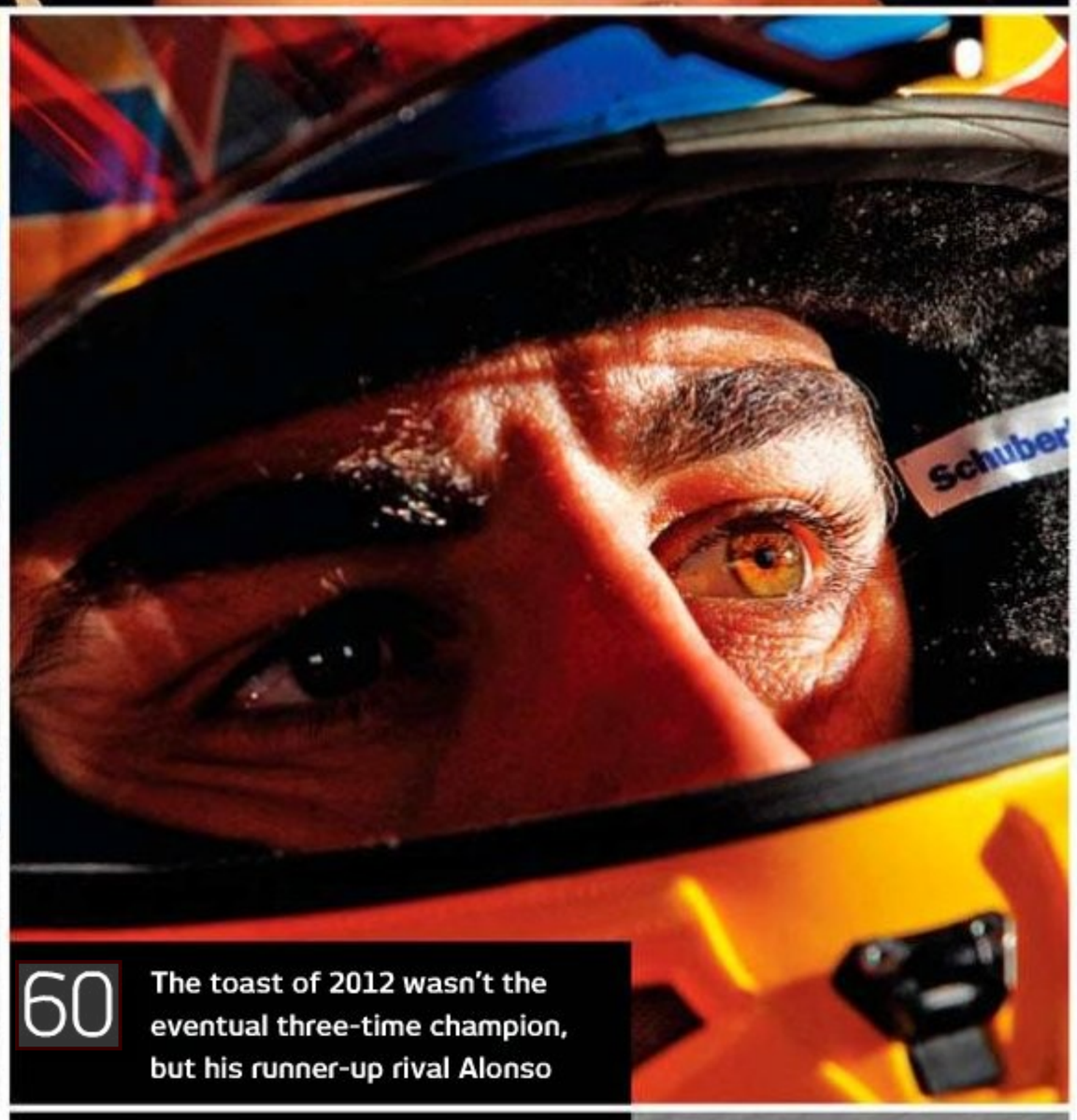
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Ignition / Anthony Rowlinson / 03.13

Let's get ready to rumble

Officially, of course, the Formula 1 season begins on Friday 15 March in Albert Park, Melbourne, by which time teams will have arrived en masse Down Under to commence hostilities. But as any reader of *F1 Racing* knows, the season *truly* starts when you pluck a copy of this very magazine from the newsstands, hurry home, or back to the office, and dive in.

Why? Because only by leafing through this whopping 156-page tome, digesting every word and absorbing every image, can you settle back for FP1 in a couple of weeks' time, confident in the knowledge that you know significantly more about our wonderful sport – and the season to come – than most of your peers. Feeling just a little bit smug? Good. Because so you should.

Here's why: perhaps you'd like to know why a driver as brilliant as Jenson Button can also mysteriously fade from view when circumstances conspire against him (p68). Or maybe you'd appreciate a little insight into why Lewis Hamilton might just have made the smartest move of his career in moving to Merc. Peter Windsor – who else? – explains on p86. Then how about a piece by the peerless Richard Williams on where Fernando Alonso stands among the great (and not-so-great) Ferrari champions (p60)?

So far so good? Well read on, because there's more. Our guide to every one of the 2013 circuits (all 19 of them, starting on p133), is an invaluable reference to the venues on which the championship will be fought. There's a page on every team, too, detailing all the vital info on whichever squad you happen to shout for.

You want interviews? How about Red Bull's Christian Horner, spilling the beans about what it takes to command F1's sharpest race crew (p54). Or Sir Frank and Claire Williams, interviewed together for the first time and speaking openly about succession, success, and the future (p114)? We hitch a lift with Paul Di Resta on his way to the Force India launch (p108); we put your questions to Sauber's new driver pairing (p102); we chew the fat with Daniel Ricciardo (p120) and F1's baby-faced new Brit, Max Chilton, tells us all about the thrills of getting his F1 break with Marussia (p128).

And did we mention Nico Rosberg's passion for chess? It set us up nicely to discuss his next move against the driver many reckon to be F1's fastest – that man Hamilton. You'll have spotted Lewis on our cover, shot in 'sprinter' pose in another world-exclusive of which we're rather proud. Why? Because it proves that *F1 Racing* gets you closer to the stars than anyone else.

And rest assured, that's our commitment to you this season – to keep you up close and personal with F1, feeding your passion, even in those wee small hours on Sunday, when no one else is stirring, but still you haul yourself from your slumber, ready for lights-out in Oz, Malaysia, Korea, Japan...

Bring it on!

Anthony Rowlinson, editor

Follow Anthony on Twitter: @RowlinsonF1R

Contributors



Andrew Benson
Strides boldly where others fear to tread

He's broken any number of exclusives during his two decades in the business – so who better to delve into the mystery of Jenson Button's ups and downs? (page 68)



Adrian Myers
Always ready to get up close and personal

Friends reunited: Adrian and Lewis go back to Lewis's early McLaren days, so it was fitting that a familiar face be there to snap him on his first day at Mercedes (p92)



Maurice Hamilton
Not Lewis Hamilton's long-lost Irish uncle

The veteran wordsmith's interview with Alain Prost in our last issue was a cracker. This month he prompts Martin Brundle to speak for himself (page 42)



Andrew Ferraro
Just one vowel away from Maranello mega-ness

You'll usually find our principal photographer trackside, but this month we sent him out into the garden. Check out his portraits of Christian Horner on p54

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PORSCHE

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Parade

A new era An unusual sight in F1 terms: Lewis Hamilton driving something other than a McLaren. His first day on track with his new team didn't go to plan as brake problems pitched him into the barriers. Despite the setback, the performance of the Mercedes W04 so far suggests a promising 2013
Where Jerez, Spain **When** 4.15pm, Friday 8 February 2013
Photographer Mark Thompson/Getty Images
Details Canon EOS-1DX, 26mm lens, 1/40th at F22

Parade

Tripping the light fantastic There were smiles aplenty in the Lotus garage following the first days of winter testing in Jerez. Both Romain Grosjean and Kimi Räikkönen set encouraging times, which was enough for the team's technical chief James Allison to admit he was "quite chipper". Roll on 2013
Where Jerez, Spain **When** 9.03am, Thursday 7 February 2013
Photographer Mark Thompson/Getty Images
Details Canon EOS-1DX, 16mm lens, 1/400th at F5.6

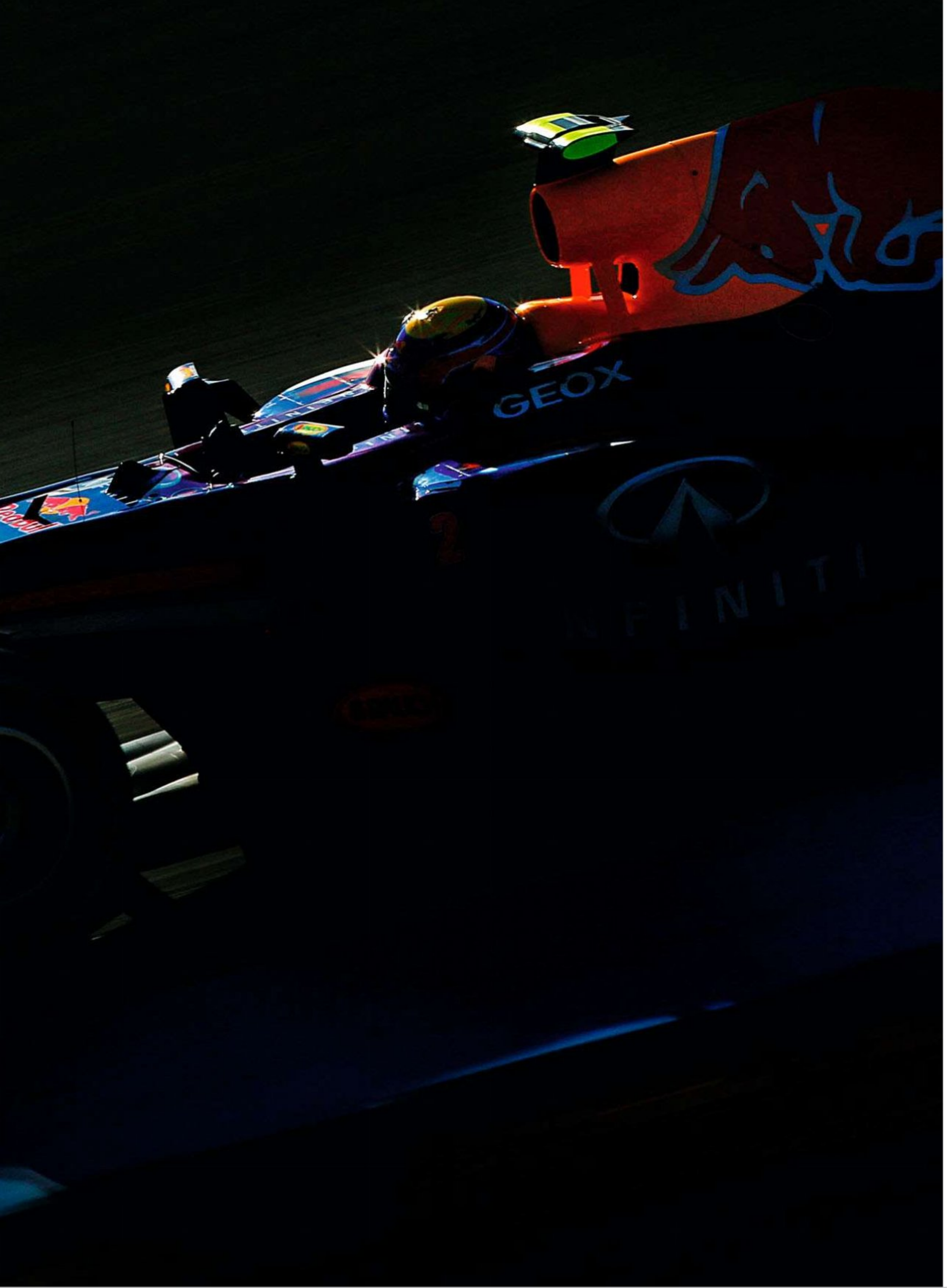


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Parade

Bullish prediction As testing for a new season gets under way, the question on everyone's lips is whether Red Bull's stranglehold can be broken this coming season. Although no headline fastest times were set by Mark Webber (pictured) and Sebastian Vettel, they start 2013 as favourites
Where Jerez, Spain **When** 5.54pm, Wednesday 6 February 2013
Photographer Paul Gilham/Getty Images
Details Canon EOS-1DX, 300mm lens, 1/250th at F20

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PITPASS News Analysis Opinion



INSIGHT

Paddy's power struggles

It's been an interesting winter for McLaren technical director Paddy Lowe, as he eyes up team principal roles at both Williams and Mercedes...

The drivers receive the lion's share of the attention in F1 but everyone in the sport knows that the men who design and oversee the cars are just as important – as Adrian Newey's presence at Red Bull has proved over the past three years.

With a couple of exceptions – Newey being one, Ross Brawn being another – most of these men have a low profile. But that just changed for McLaren technical director Paddy Lowe as it recently emerged that Mercedes are trying to poach him to run their team – which would leave no place there for Brawn.

The story broke on the BBC Sport website a week before the McLaren launch in January. And when the new car was unveiled, the man who had led its design was nowhere to be seen. According to McLaren, Lowe was "taking a day's holiday."

Team boss Martin Whitmarsh said: "The one certainty is that Paddy will be part of the team for the rest of this year. It is less certain beyond that, but hopefully it is something we will have more certainty on in the future."

With Lowe's contract running out at the end of the year, the question is: what happens now?

McLaren managing director Jonathan Neale said that if Lowe opted to remain at McLaren, he would want him to continue in his current role. But others at the team may not necessarily agree with Neale. And if Lowe says that he does want to leave, can McLaren hold him to a year's contract, when the normal period of 'gardening leave' in such situations is six months?

Lowe's future at McLaren looks tenuous. It is apparent that he wants to move on from being a 'mere' technical director – he had accepted a role as Williams' team principal before receiving the Mercedes offer. That option does not exist at McLaren, who have earmarked sporting director Sam Michael as their potential next team principal when Whitmarsh eventually moves on.

> "It is apparent that Lowe wants to move on from being a 'mere' technical director"

The link between both offers and Lowe is Toto Wolff, the former Williams chairman, and newly appointed boss of Mercedes Motorsport. Wolff had already persuaded Lowe to join him at Williams; when he received an offer from Mercedes that was too good to turn down, he persuaded Lowe to move with him.

Meanwhile, Mercedes insist that they had already approached Lowe through their non-executive chairman Niki Lauda, prior to Wolff's appointment.

Lowe, though, had not signed a Mercedes contract when the story became public and the question now is whether Wolff and Lauda have the clout to force through



Mercedes' Ross Brawn: "I am the team principal and I am in charge"

Lowe's appointment. Doing so would mean getting rid of Ross Brawn – and Brawn himself announced in a news conference the day after the story emerged that: "I am the team principal and I am in charge."

Wolff has not denied that Mercedes are pursuing Lowe, but the early emergence of the plans has clearly made things tricky for him. "All the rumours about new people joining is not good at this stage; it doesn't help," he said.

"Of course, Paddy is one of the top guys, is very well recognised, and McLaren and many other teams are going to be interested in him. But he's at McLaren this year, so let's get on with our job and do the best possible in 2013."

Can Lowe remain with McLaren now it has become public that he has accepted two offers from other teams? Especially when McLaren Group chairman Ron Dennis told the *Financial Times*: "You cut yourself, you bleed McLaren. We're about winning, we care about how we win... We want to win with the right principles, the right values. If people don't want to be part of that and want to go and do different things, then fine."

Lowe might, however, have another option. Although Williams were a bit put out when he changed his mind and plumped for Mercedes, their door is not completely closed. That deal could still potentially be revived.

So, which way will Paddy jump? If he doesn't appear at the first race in Melbourne in his capacity as McLaren technical director, it most likely means he'll be leaving the team sooner or later.

Who is Paddy Lowe?

After graduating from Cambridge in the mid-1980s, Lowe joined Williams where he oversaw the active suspension project that contributed to Nigel Mansell's 1992 title win. A year later he joined McLaren as head of R&D, where he worked on key innovations such as brake steer and McLaren's simulator. In 2001 he became chief engineer, before being appointed engineering director in 2005 to oversee McLaren Racing's engineering operations. Lowe turned 50 last April and has been McLaren's technical director since 2011.

WINNERS + SPINNERS

UPS AND DOWNS ON THE F1 ROLLER COASTER

GOOD MONTH FOR

Trips across the pond

Lewis Hamilton's new private jet was spotted at Gibraltar Airport during winter testing. Painted scarlet, it has been dubbed the "love plane" since it's apparently used to ferry Hamilton back and forth across the Atlantic, allowing him to see girlfriend Nicole Scherzinger as often as possible.

All things McLaren

The launch of the new McLaren MP4-28 at Woking was accompanied by a display of McLaren machines past, present and future to celebrate their 50th anniversary. A parade of cars came to the MTC, including a 1974 M23, a 1988 MP4/4 and Lewis Hamilton's title-winning MP4-23. Jenson Button arrived in their P1 prototype supercar and new boy Pérez drove a 12C Spyder.

Wet towels

You wouldn't think a towel in a bucket of water was very F1, but a number of teams used them to cool down and to cover up their cars' exhaust exits as the new machines came back into the garage during testing. Red Bull's were plain white, while McLaren's were black with accompanying red logo.



Magazine deadlines

The Force India team profile in our season preview (page 113) went to press before the team decided who would partner Paul Di Resta. So for now it's a 'TBA'. Once it's announced, we'll report it on Twitter: @F1Racing_mag

BAD MONTH FOR

Old cathode ray tube TVs...

It's time to throw away your old television set and upgrade to a fancy new 3D TV to watch Sky's coverage of the final Barcelona test. In a world first, Sky will broadcast HD 3D live coverage from Barcelona, starting at 2pm each day.

Access

All you could see in the Jerez pitlane were the screens covering the garage entrances. Will this change when the tests are televised?



PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; DREW GIBSON/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; VLADIMIR RYS/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES; McLAREN

F1 Mastermind



Your chosen specialised subject: the world's greatest sport

1 Who won the 1983 Monaco Grand Prix?

2 In which year did Magny-Cours first host the French Grand Prix?

3 Where and when did John Surtees win his first world championship F1 race for Ferrari?

4 Which car did Jackie Oliver drive to third place at the 1973 Canadian Grand Prix?

5 How many Formula 1 wins did Fernando Alonso score in 2008 and where were they?

6 How many world championship races were held on the Nürburgring Nordschleife (below, left)?

7 In which race did John Watson score his first Formula 1 world championship point?

8 Where did Mika Häkkinen make his Formula 1 debut?

9 For which two teams did Japanese racer Tora Takagi drive in Formula 1?

10 Can you name the only F1 driver from Chile to start an F1 race?





Answers: **1** Keke Rosberg **2** 1991 **3** Nürburgring, 1963 **4** Shadow **5** Two, Singapore and Fuji **6** 22 **7** Monaco 1974 **8** Phoenix 1991 **9** Tyrrell and Arrows **10** Eliseo Salazar

THIS BOY CAN DRIVE

Keeping an eye out for the stars of tomorrow



Daniil Kvyat

Who is he?

An 18-year-old Russian and the new protégé of the Red Bull Junior Team young driver programme.

How good is he?

Last season he came second to Stoffel Vandoorne in the Formula Renault Eurocup, losing the title on a penalty in the final race. He was also crowned champion of Formula Renault Alps. Having been on the Red Bull Junior Team since Formula BMW in 2010, he has progressed through the ranks and in 2013 joins fellow Red Bull hopeful Carlos Sainz Jr at the Christian Horner/Mark Webber-run MW Arden team in GP3.

Anything else we need to know about him?

Kvyat topped GP3 testing times on the first two days of testing at Estoril last year and is a title favourite for 2013. He also drove Arden's World Series by Renault machine at Motorland Aragon and was among the top five runners.

F1 chances

As a Red Bull Junior, he must get results or he'll face the axe. If he performs well, Toro Rosso and then Red Bull are within reach.

PHOTOS: JACOB EBREY/LAT; MARK THOMPSON/LAT; PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES; LAT ARCHIVE

NEWS

Ferrari turn to an old friend for help

Legendary former designer Rory Byrne has been called out of retirement to assist with development of Maranello's 2014 machine



Ferrari have underlined their determination to ensure they are competitive at the start of a new era of Formula 1 in 2014 by getting legendary designer Rory Byrne more heavily involved in their design programme than he has been for some years.

The 69-year-old South African officially retired from F1 at the end of 2006, and had stepped down from the role of chief designer after Michael Schumacher's final title-winning year in 2004. But Byrne has been retained by Ferrari as a consultant, working around six months per year for them.

He was asked to take a look at the 2012 F1 car following its troubled inception, but has most recently been working on the new Enzo hypercar project.

Ferrari say Byrne is now offering "operational support" to the team working on the 2014 car. This is understood to be a major involvement in the important decisions about the fundamental layout of the car.

This season is the final year of the existing 2.4-litre V8 normally aspirated engines, which will next year be replaced by 1.6-litre V6 turbos with far more extensive use of energy recovery. Chassis rules are also being tweaked to make the cars more efficient.

The energy-recovery aspect of the new engines is free within certain restrictions, and they will be a first-order performance parameter. So getting the big decisions right from the start will be paramount.

Byrne is the only designer of the past 20 years or so whose record compares with that of Red Bull's Adrian Newey – in fact, between 1992 and 2004, every world championship title was won by a car on which they had led the design.

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NEWS

Vettel's Ferrari dream put on hold

A renewed deal between Alonso and Ferrari could delay Vettel's move to the Scuderia

The prospect of a mouth-watering showdown between Fernando Alonso and Sebastian Vettel as Ferrari team-mates appears to have vanished.

Impeccable sources claimed last summer that Vettel had made a non-binding agreement to join the Italian team in the future. The plan was for this to happen in 2014.

But developments over the past few months have torpedoed the plan – and it now seems that if Vettel is to join Ferrari, it will not be until after Alonso leaves the team.

Ferrari bosses have been careful not to deny the possibility. President Luca di Montezemolo emphasised his admiration for Vettel, while saying he was not keen on having "two roosters in a henhouse". And as recently



as the Ferrari media week in the ski resort of Madonna di Campiglio in January, team boss Stefano Domenicali described the line-up as a "dream team" and said "never say never". But at the launch of this year's Ferrari F1 car, di Montezemolo was asked again if he could imagine Vettel at Ferrari with Alonso. He replied: "No, I don't think so."

Behind the scenes, there has been a shift. We understand that in the final months of 2012, Alonso renegotiated his Ferrari contract on the back of his outstanding season. Few details are clear, but it seems the new terms include an acceptance by Ferrari that they won't sign Vettel while Alonso is at the team.

There are also rumours circulating that Alonso, who will be 35 when his current contract ends in 2016, is already talking about staying with Ferrari even longer.

Meanwhile, the links between Vettel and Red Bull grow ever stronger. It is understood that Vettel will extend his contract there by two more years, taking his contract to the end of 2016, when Alonso's current deal with Ferrari ends. Coincidence? You decide...



ANALYSIS

Are McLaren and Ferrari the early 2013 pacesetters?

Testing times are notoriously hard to decipher, but we think Pérez and Massa looked most impressive at Jerez

Ferrari's Felipe Massa grabbed the headlines at the first pre-season test in Jerez, Spain, by setting the fastest time of all four days on the third day. Pacesetters on the other three days were McLaren's Jenson Button and Lotus drivers Romain Grosjean and Kimi Räikkönen.

Headline times in testing can be poor indicators of pre-season form. And on the face of it, Jerez was even less indicative than normal. The abrasive surface at the track meant Pirelli's deliberately soft tyres wore out faster than usual, so teams were unable to put in meaningful long-distance runs, which are traditionally a better indication of pace than headline lap times.

Having said that, an analysis of the test at Jerez suggests that perhaps the headline times were not so misleading after all. If headline times are cross-referenced with the number of laps a driver does on the run on which he set that time, and also with the fastest lap he did at the start of a long run while applying correction for fuel loads, an interesting picture emerges.

Under these conditions, the fastest time belongs to McLaren's Sergio Pérez, a particularly impressive achievement when you consider that the young Mexican did not fit the car comfortably at the test. Massa is next up, underlining the fact that Ferrari have done some very impressive work in tidying up the rear bodywork on the new car to improve aerodynamics. Next, just a tiny fraction behind Massa, was the Mercedes of Nico Rosberg.

The Lotus is looking consistent, but perhaps lacks the outright speed of the McLaren and the Ferrari. The Red Bull, by contrast, looked quite ordinary, although few expect that to remain the case for long.

It's still early days, but much can change. Given how bad a start Ferrari made at the beginning of the 2012 season and how close Fernando Alonso came to securing the title, it's all looking rather hopeful for Maranello at the moment.



It's all looking good for Massa, who set the fastest time in Jerez

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MONEY

Wanted: pay drivers for cash-strapped F1

Even the bigger teams are now starting to turn to paying drivers to help with finances in the tough economic climate

McLaren team principal Martin Whitmarsh has offered a stark insight into the financial difficulties facing Formula 1 by saying that: "Of the 11 teams, seven of them are in survival strategy".

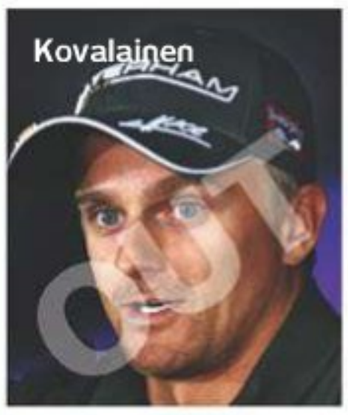
This has been widely known within F1 circles for some time, but for a figure as senior as Whitmarsh to come out with it underlines the seriousness of the situation.

"It's tough," Whitmarsh said. "We're in the world of advertising and you only have to see how advertising is worldwide. The rate card is down. We have taken some measures but I think it's going to be tough for some of the teams to have a viable business model for a few years. There's no doubt about that."

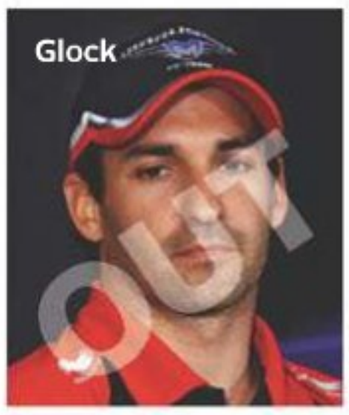
The most immediate effect of this situation is the rise of 'pay drivers' in F1. Obvious examples include Heikki Kovalainen and Timo Glock losing their drives at Caterham and Marussia in favour of Giedo van der Garde and Luiz Razia, but it is also happening further up the grid. Even Lotus – third in the constructors' championship last year – are involved. Their driver Romain Grosjean's seat is linked to the involvement of oil company Total with the team.

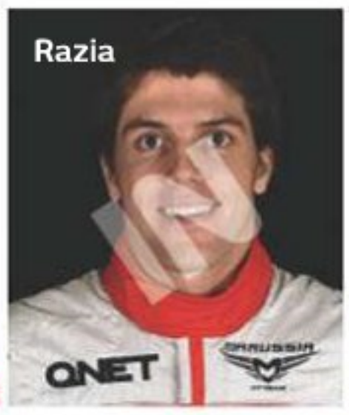
The issue raises fundamental questions about the way the sport is being run. The teams would not be in such dire financial straits if they received a greater share of Formula 1's revenues – about 50 per cent of which go to the sport's owners, the venture capital group CVC.

Whitmarsh also added: "Bernie [Ecclestone] has done a fantastic job for the owners and we could criticise him but he's doing a better job than we are. He's keeping the money on behalf of his employers. If the teams aren't cohesive enough to work together to secure a larger share of that then they have to blame themselves."





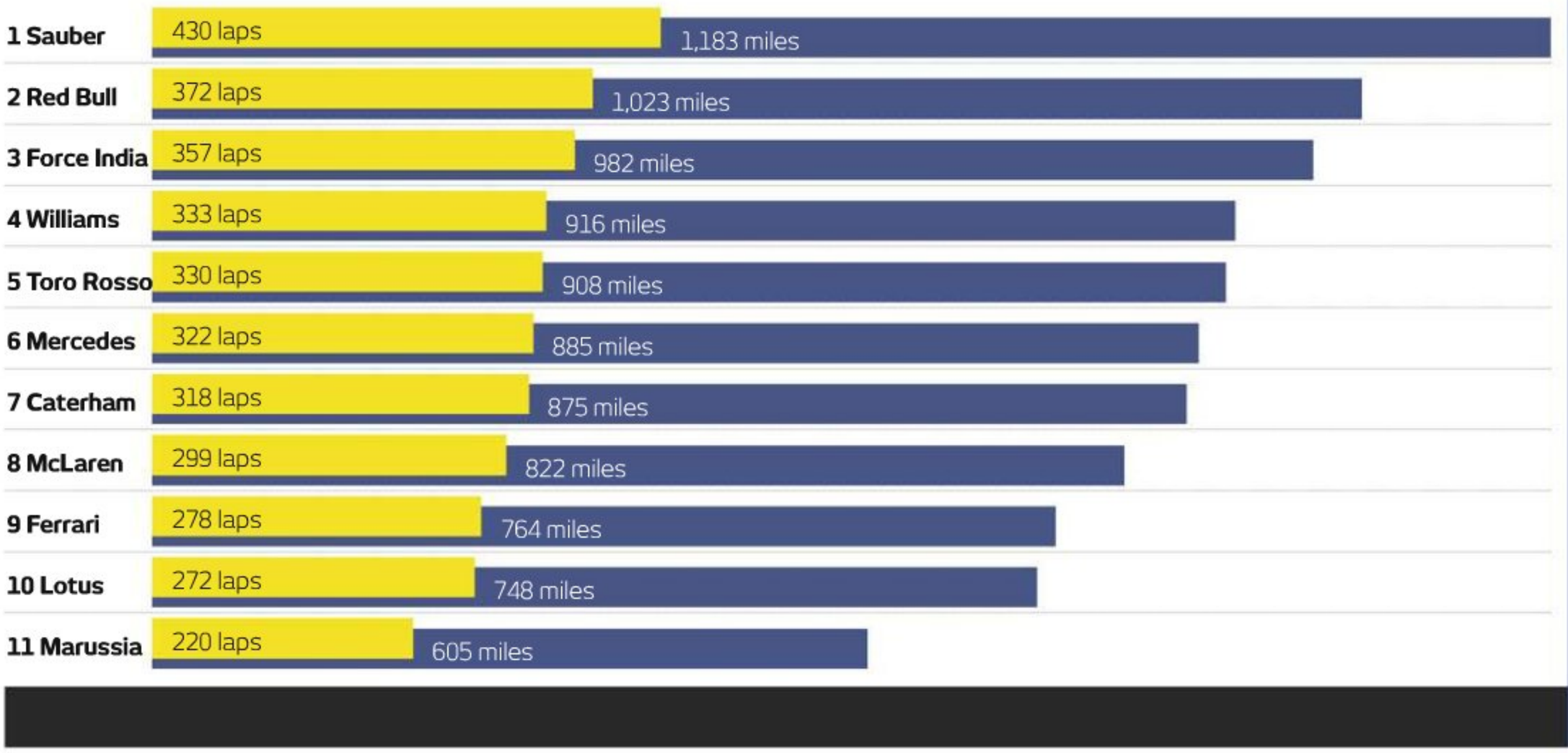




STATS

Sauber put in the miles at Jerez

After the first test in Jerez, it was Sauber who ran the most laps with their new car

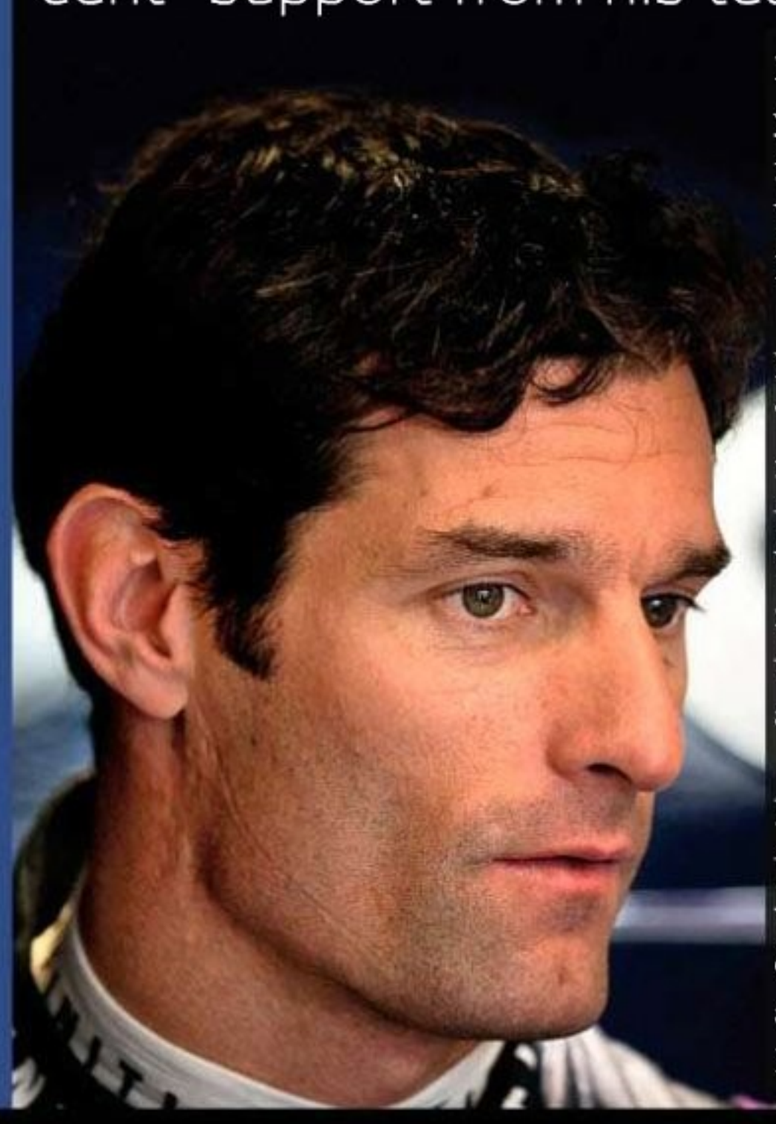


PHOTOS: PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES; LARS BARON/GETTY IMAGES; MARUSSIA

CONTROVERSY

Webber criticised *again*...

But the Australian insists he needs "100 per cent" support from his team to win a title



Red Bull could be in for an uncomfortable year in terms of intra-team harmony following widely publicised comments made by the company's motorsport consultant Helmut Marko about Mark Webber.

The comments made by Marko included his claim that Webber is "unbeatable" for "on average two races per year" but "can't maintain this form" and that "he has a little trouble with the pressure" of a championship battle. In a separate interview with German newspaper *Sport Bild*, Marko also hinted that Webber would be expected to play a supporting role to Vettel in 2013.

Marko is believed to have been directing his ire at Webber for his behaviour during the title-deciding Brazilian Grand Prix, when Marko believed that the Australian driver was obstructive towards Vettel and helpful towards Vettel's title rival Fernando Alonso of Ferrari.

Webber waited a couple of weeks before addressing the remarks on his own website, commenting in a Q&A that "everyone at this level has their own agendas and it's been evident for a long time now that I've never been part of Marko's".

The response was notable for how much it said in so few words – particularly the use of the word 'agenda', and the reference to the Red Bull consultant by his surname.

The subject inevitably came up at the launch of the car, when Webber pointedly said: "The team know I need 100 per cent support. You cannot win world championships with 90 per cent support. We are going into 2013 with this in place."

Team boss Christian Horner did his best to smooth over the situation, saying the comments were Marko's "opinion" and could be "misinterpreted". He added: "We give both drivers equal opportunity and it is down to what they do on the track."

Webber is on a rolling one-year contract. with the team. He isn't one to either back down quietly or hand a win to his team-mate, so many are expecting fireworks at Red Bull over the course of 2013.

NEWS

Red Bull with Infiniti for 2013 and beyond

New title sponsor hints at a continued engine agreement with Renault for next season



Although the Formula 1 teams have yet to start the 2013 season, all have an eye on 2014, when a major change in the rules introduces 1.6-litre V6 turbo engines in place of the current 2.4-litre normally aspirated V8s.

This will be the biggest change to the engine regulations in decades. Although the chassis rules are fundamentally based on the existing ones, there are important differences there, too – noses must be lowered by 36.5cm and there are other revisions to the aerodynamics to make the cars more efficient.

The engine rules will also have an effect on car architecture. Energy-recovery systems will play a bigger role in performance than is the case now and teams will have various options about where to place them. Where they place them will also have an effect on performance.

It is in this context that Red Bull would like the world to see their expanded partnership with Nissan's luxury-car brand Infiniti. The name has been given a much bigger profile on the cars and is now part of the official team name – Infiniti Red Bull Racing.

Red Bull and Infiniti say they are working together on the 2014 rules, and the multi-year partnership may have another effect. As long as Infiniti is on the car, Red Bull will have to use Renault engines. It's hard to imagine, after all, Mercedes putting their engine in a car emblazoned with the logos of a market rival.

Infiniti is part of the Renault/Nissan alliance and the strengthening links between Renault and Red Bull have been emphasised by Toro Rosso's desire to switch from Ferrari engines to Renault for 2014.

PHOTOS: MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

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TECHNOLOGY OF CHAMPIONS

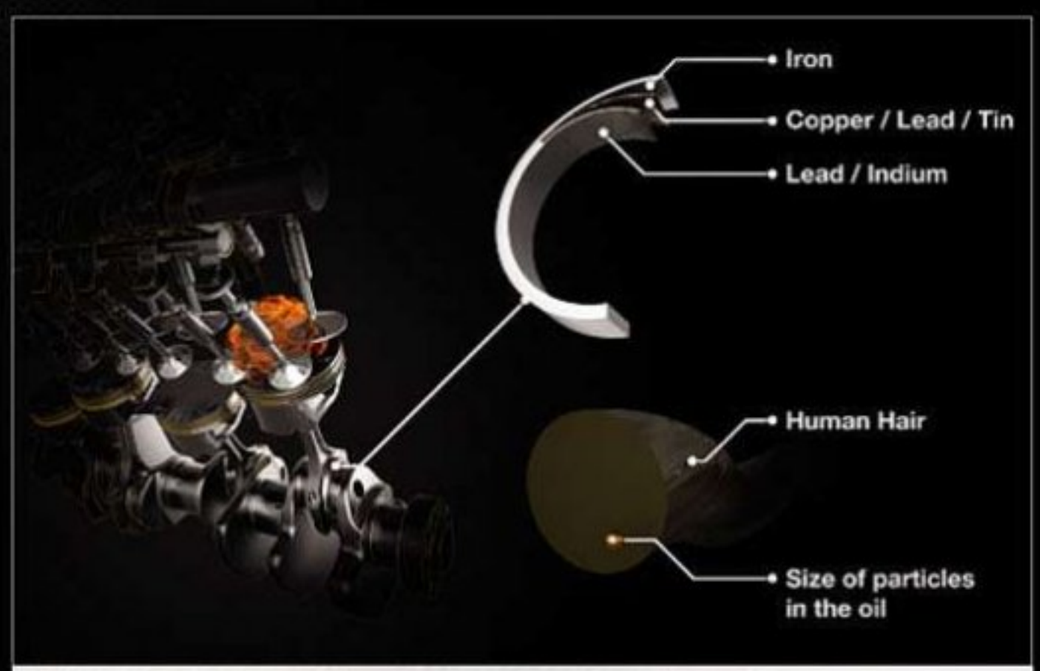
A victory lap for the Mobil 1™ forensics team.

At the end of the 2008 Turkish Grand Prix, a routine trackside oil test conducted by the Mobil 1 technology team detected a fault with the Vodafone McLaren Mercedes MP4-23's engine. Post-race evaluation identified a defective pump, which was then replaced. The following race, this engine powered the team to victory at the Monaco Grand Prix, and they went on to win the season championship.

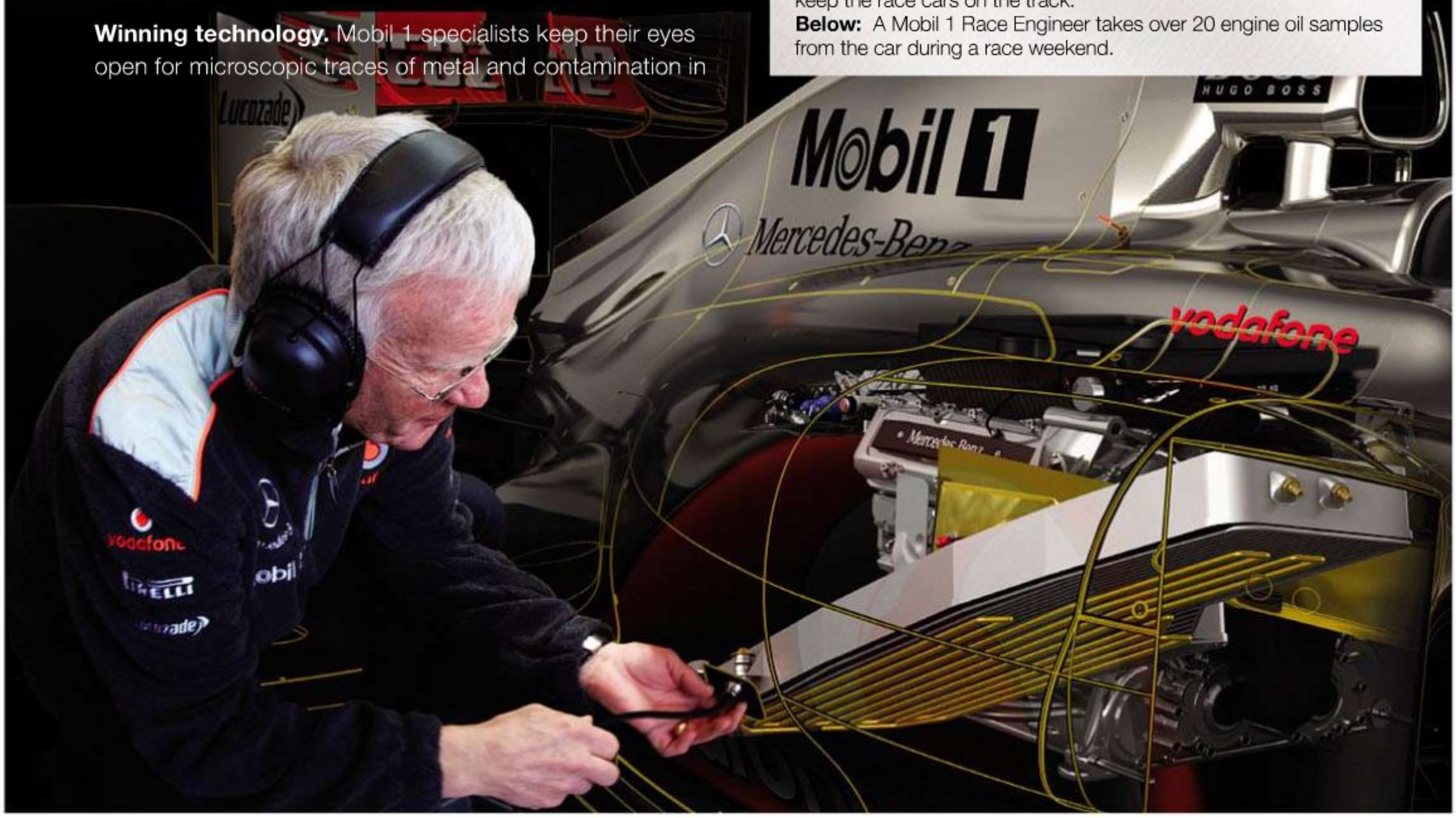
Trackside partnership. The relationship between Vodafone McLaren Mercedes and Mobil 1 has resulted in an impressive 74 race wins and four championships. Part of that success can be attributed to trackside support. Because not only does Mobil 1 provide their high-performance lubricant products and fuel for every race, they also bring the expertise of their engineers.

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Above: Under the microscope: Lead, indium, copper, tin and iron are five of 15 elements monitored during oil-analysis tests to help keep the race cars on the track.
Below: A Mobil 1 Race Engineer takes over 20 engine oil samples from the car during a race weekend.



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Pat Symonds

PITPASS TECH

Explaining the hidden brilliance that drives Formula 1 forward

THE SCIENCE BEHIND...

The 2013 Formula 1 regulation changes

The drag reduction system (DRS) has been a success story, so what has changed and why change something that works so well?

As far as improving the show goes, DRS has certainly been the best thing Formula 1 has adopted in years. True, there are times when it seems as if a hard-won position is sacrificed in a less-than-equitable fashion, but over the course of the season – or even the race – the situation tends to equalise and each driver will gain just as often as he loses.

Unfortunately the drivers have not been so keen on the system, but their objection is somewhat different. They feel that the pressure to perform means that they are pushed into taking risks on opening the DRS as early as possible and that, if they misjudge it, the consequences could be dangerous. Personally, I don't feel this is a valid argument. A driver's skill lies in his ability to judge the limit better than his competitor whether it be determining his braking point, squeezing open the throttle or operating his DRS.

The new rules restrict the use of DRS in qualifying to the same zones in which it can be used in the race – usually two of them – but nowhere else. When DRS was first introduced it was considered important that it was allowed to be used freely in qualifying to encourage the teams to choose a top gear that allowed the car to make good use of the lower drag it offered to gain top speed. If the use were to be restricted, then the tendency might be to gear the car so that it was close to the rev limit in the race with DRS not deployed. This would of course mean that using the DRS would not gain top speed as the engine would already be on the limiter.

In fact most teams make a compromise that is biased toward qualifying and overtaking performance, but Red Bull have been notable in favouring a race setup over a qualifying one. I fear that many more will follow this route now and that the seemingly innocuous change in rules will have a profound effect on overtaking.

So, no DRS and a ban on 'double DRS' as well this year?

Not exactly. The system whereby the movement of the rear-wing flap uncovers a duct that is used to destroy flow on another element of the wing system has been outlawed. This may mean that there is even more incentive to try to develop a passive system such as the one Lotus have been working on since last summer. Not only is this remarkably difficult but it is also likely to be extremely inconsistent. The drivers may soon be much more concerned about the unintended consequences of this rule change than they ever were about free use of driver-controlled DRS.

Have we seen the last of stepped noses after 2012?

The cars have been allowed to undergo a certain amount of rhinoplasty for the coming season.



PHOTOS: DANIEL KALISZ/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES



TWEAKS MADE TO 2013 QUALIFYING

Since the departure of HRT from F1, there are now only 22 cars on the grid – as opposed to 24 in 2013. Taking this into consideration, only six cars will now be eliminated in each of the first two qualifying segments.

No stopping on track during qualifying in 2013, without sufficient fuel in your tank

In addition to this, any car that stops on the track during qualifying – as Lewis Hamilton did in Barcelona last year – must now have not only the mandatory one litre of fuel left in the tank for sampling, but also an additional amount of fuel sufficient to have allowed it to return to the pits had it not stopped.

The minimum weight limit has also been raised by 2kg to account for the slightly heavier Pirelli tyres used this season.

As with humans, however, the effect is going to be largely cosmetic. This year, a very light panel can now be placed over the stepped nose to smooth out its contour. The panel is allowed only one ply of carbon either side of a 3mm Nomex honeycomb core, so it cannot be structural in any way.

Aerodynamically, the stepped nose was quite neutral. Even though it looked as though it might trip the flow on the upper surface, it actually had little effect, so it is going to be interesting to see whether teams bother with the panel given that it is optional. The more important feature was that the stepped nose was the only way of achieving a design with a high front bulkhead, while also complying with a rule intended to bring down the nose height for safety reasons. As many people felt that the high bulkhead was an aerodynamic gain, the stepped nose was an inevitable result.



Crash-testing regulations have been tweaked this season

And crash tests are now even tougher to pass?

They haven't really got more difficult, it's just that the procedure has changed slightly, which helps the teams with the logistics of getting full FIA approval before the first test.

Prior to 2013 there was always one 'reference' chassis that had to be subjected to the most intense static tests and also had to be used for all the crash tests. The static tests are immense squeeze loads that are applied to the monocoque in many different areas. The loads applied vary according to where they are applied. The toughest require the chassis to stand a 30-tonne load. Once the static tests had been done, the chassis was crash-tested and subsequent chassis needed to be tested to only 80 per cent of the static load used on the reference chassis. To ensure that all chassis were the same, even though not tested to the same degree, they were all weighed and had to come within five per cent of the weight of the reference chassis.

For 2013, all chassis have to have the higher static loads applied, which means that teams can now choose to do the frontal impact test on a different chassis to the one doing the side impact test, for example. It may not sound significant, but it helps the teams manage the extremely intense production and test schedules that precede the season.

Front-wing flexibility seemed to be a bone of contention last year. For 2013 the wings have to be stronger, don't they?

It wasn't just last year that front wings were the subject of debate. It is a fact that the lower the endplates run to the ground, the better the performance will be. Indeed, on various occasions when the FIA has wanted to limit aerodynamic performance, it has done so by lifting the minimum height of the endplate. Consequently, the teams do everything in their power to run them low and this includes pushing the flexibility to the limits allowed. Article 3.15 of the Technical Regulations is often quoted as it states "...any specific part of the car influencing its aerodynamic performance... must be rigidly secured..." This is a useful catch-all phrase but, in reality, nothing is rigid and the FIA therefore allows a degree of flexibility that is policed by specific tests on various parts of the car.

The front wing came under renewed attention late on in 2011 when a technical directive was issued by the FIA that halved the allowable deflection under the one-tonne test load. This requirement was applied in 2012, but still there were concerns. During the season, scrutineers started testing the wings with two loads applied independently, both forward and rearward of the old point of load application. This sought out designs that were stiff in bending but soft in torsion, thereby meeting the letter of the law but not necessarily the spirit. This offset test has now been incorporated in the 2013 rulebook.

Tyres were a major talking point in 2012. Are there going to be any further changes for 2013?

Not by regulation but, in fact, the 2013 Pirelli tyre is already quite different and will probably have as big an effect on races this year as any regulation change. Pirelli have changed both the construction and compounds for 2013 as well as replacing the silver designation of the hard tyre with more easily recognised orange markings.

In terms of construction, the tyres have been re-engineered to be asymmetric. This means that the tyres are now 'handed' and have to be fitted on the correct side of the car. This construction was tested last year during practice for the Brazilian GP and generally performed well, with a quicker warm-up and slightly higher running temperature than the 2012 tyre. The wet rear tyre construction has also changed, with the aim of improving aquaplaning resistance, although the tread patterns will look the same.

In terms of the compounds, these will be all new for 2013. The biggest change made has been to the hard compound, which will be harder still, while being designed for higher working temperatures. Pirelli have stated that they want the tyres to have a much bigger performance difference between the 'prime' and the 'option' at each circuit, and we will see this in Australia where they will be bringing the medium and supersoft compounds rather than the medium and soft compounds of last year.



Hard tyres will now be marked in easier-to-see orange paint

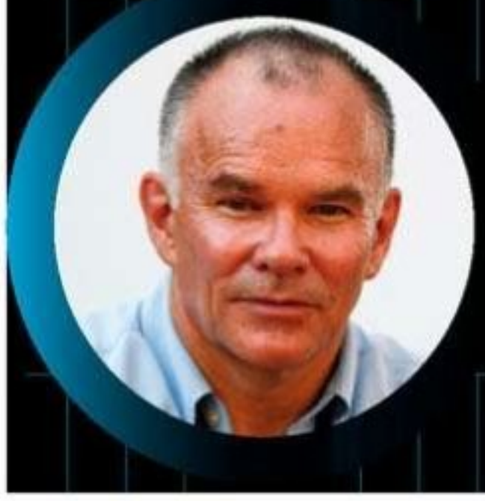
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RACER'S EDGE

Authority, wit and intelligence from the voice of *F1 Racing*

FOR ONCE, FORGET THE FIGURES. SOME GRANDS PRIX ARE VITAL TO THE CALENDAR – THEY JUST GIVE YOU MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

And so a new season begins. My thoughts on the 2013 championship can be found later in this issue (starting on page 86). For now, we're abuzz in Australia, where the sky – as is often the case in the Land of the Southern Cross – is the literal and metaphorical limit. Even the Marussias and the Caterhams will look fresh enough to win, so pristine do they sit in the Albert Park paddock; many, too, are the smiles worn by the normally F1-morose. Formula 1 is, after all, the biggest thing in town.

The world will look very different a week or so from now, of course: the Australian and then the Malaysian Grands Prix will have taken their toll and the number-crunching will have begun.

You know the deal: "The 2013 Australian Grand Prix will suck US$34m from the pockets of Victorian tax-payers before other expenses are added" (to quote a recent edition of Melbourne's influential *Herald Sun* newspaper). "This is a huge increase from 2012," it adds, "when the fee demanded by the sport's chiefs was US$32.5m – more than half the $56.7m" (presumably Aussie dollars now – not that there's a lot of difference these days) "that Victorian taxpayers paid overall to subsidise that event once other expenses such as building and dismantling the Albert Park circuit were included."

All of this is probably true, even if circuit-FOM contracts are subject to non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). To my mind, however, the critical words in the article were those of the Victorian State Government's Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Louise Asher: "The Grand Prix is a terrific event but does cost taxpayers too much at the moment," said Asher. "My job is to lower the overall cost of hosting the race. My responsibility as Minister will be to evaluate what is of most benefit to taxpayers as we sit down to negotiate. I'm going to go to the table in good faith, to have a proper discussion about whether Melbourne can retain this Grand Prix."

Everything is relative, of course, and everything is subject to market value, but that sounds pretty reasonable to me. More to the point, I think it would be illogical to lose the Australian Grand Prix altogether for the sake of a five per cent escalator or hidden costs that break the back of public opinion. I say this because I believe there are certain countries that *belong* on the F1 calendar, give or take a compromise or two, and that Australia is one of them. It has a long and successful motor-racing heritage. It's a country most people love to visit. The AGP organisers try to supply the fans with non-stop entertainment from Thursday through to Sunday night. The AGP can return to Adelaide if that is the way the money cycles (they have, after all, recently discovered oil in South Australia!) but if F1 negotiates itself *out* of an Australian GP – when a non-escalator $US35-37m is on the table as the starting point of a new contract – then the loss to the F1 industry would be incalculable. Yes, the team owners would be happy, for more money would presumably be coming from some other race in the middle of nowhere. No, this would not necessarily be good for F1.

We take for granted, for instance, the absence of the French GP from the F1 calendar. It's a while since we had one and most modern F1 people didn't like Magny-Cours anyway (too difficult to find decent hotels; too far to travel to the track. Personally, I loved Magny-Cours, but that's another column...)

"The money isn't there," they say when you talk to them about it. "We're doing Korea instead." My bet is that the money *is* there in France; it's just that it isn't the sort of money, time or energy, that F1 people want to spend. To stage a French GP now – at a time when the old payment systems are no longer tenable – would be to acknowledge France's pivotal role in the history of our sport and to maximize that heritage with huge F1 promotions and publicity. Scotland's economy doesn't boast a massive budget for major, international sporting events, yet no-one in the golf industry would ever contemplate *not* regularly staging The Open in the cradle of their sport.

"It would be illogical to lose the Australian GP altogether for the sake of a five per cent escalator"

So it is with France – and we have Renault in F1, too, so it's not as if we don't have a leg-up here.

Adelaide stopped hosting the Australian GP in '95. Since then, we've had 17 GPs in Melbourne



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Albert Park: "There are certain countries that belong on the F1 calendar... Australia is one of them"

Who's to say that we wouldn't have an increase in overall F1 revenue if we hadn't been staging a properly marketed French GP for the past couple of years – even if its appearance fees had been discounted? Isn't that why we have the NDAs in the first place – to ensure secrecy between one race fee and another?

Anyway, I digress: as Aussie fever grips the F1 world again (albeit briefly) I hope we find the balance that allows the Australian GP to continue. In a perfect world that will be more of the same – more Melbourne, more money. In the real world it could also mean a relative *reduction* in fees. I mean, what are F1 cost-controls all about if they don't permeate through the industry? If they spend less to run an F1 team today, why shouldn't that benefit be felt down the line? I say this with the shuddering memory of what transpired at Indianapolis a few years ago. "Is that *tiny* amount of money all they were squabbling about?" asked an F1 team sponsor after that race was canned. "If they'd told us, *we* would have come in and made up the difference...."

Let me close by saying how much I'm looking forward to meeting you, the F1 fans, in our new online interactive TV show, *The Racer's Edge*. For those of you who've joined me on *The Flying Lap* over the past two years – welcome back. For those new to online TV, the format is this: a globally accessible, free-to-air, weekly F1 chat show that can be watched live or on-demand via your computer, your tablet or any smart device. You, the fan, can ask questions or make comments during the show via Twitter. We'll be live streaming via our YouTube channel (peterwindsor); and I'm delighted that we'll be presenting the show in conjunction with your favourite monthly magazine *F1 Racing*. Join me, the *F1R* contributors, guest hosts and countless F1 luminaries as we begin the new season live from Melbourne on 14 March.

For Racer's Edge updates, follow Peter Windsor on Twitter (@PeterDWindsor), on Facebook (www.facebook.com/peterdwindsor) and our YouTube channel (peterwindsor)



F1 was last seen at Magny-Cours in 2008. Could Melbourne go the same way?

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Discover why Peter thinks Lewis will take the 2013 title for Mercedes on p86 →

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Dieter Rencken POWERPLAY

The stories F1's bigwigs would rather you didn't know...

THE TYRE CONTRACT PROVIDES A NEW FLASHPOINT BETWEEN THE FIA AND FOM

It may be taking place behind closed doors, but the struggle for overall control of Formula 1 between the governing body and the commercial rights holder remains as intense as ever. For proof of that, look no further than the machinations behind the new tyre-supplier contract for 2014-2016, a formality required in terms of the FIA's Sporting Regulations.

Clause 25.1 of those regulations is unequivocal in terms of identifying who selected the current single manufacturer, how long that deal would last, and – crucially – who will pick the manufacturer for 2014, when this three-year arrangement ends. "A single tyre manufacturer will be chosen by the FIA for subsequent seasons," it says, "following an invitation for tenders to supply tyres to all the cars entered in Championship Events for the duration of such subsequent seasons."

Pirelli, the incumbents, spend an estimated $50m (£35m) annually on "bridge and board" signage and hospitality programmes. They have expressed a desire to remain in the sport – and are likely to put in the only tender. Selecting a rubber supplier to see Formula 1 through the first three years of its V6 turbo era should, therefore, be the work of a moment.

Any number of tyre suppliers could succumb to the lure of a global activity fervently followed by hundreds of millions of committed fans, and may better the Italian company's offer. Teams currently shell out around $2m for a two-car supply. In return, they get to share around 40 per cent of Pirelli's marketing spend on a sliding scale, with Formula One Management retaining the rest. A good deal all-round, then, but one with no inherent continuity guarantees.

In what could be seen as an attempt at pre-empting the selection process, Pirelli and FOM have agreed to extend the signage deal to 2018. That would force the FIA's hand, for no competitor in their right mind would tender for the supply contract in the knowledge that Pirelli's name is writ large around every circuit; equally, not going to tender would place the FIA in breach of its own regulations, and possibly leave it open to legal challenge.

Can the FIA halt the signage deal? Absolutely not, for at the turn of the century it gave the EU Commission undertakings it would not meddle in F1's commercial affairs as a condition for approval of the bargain-basement 100-year commercial rights deal negotiated between Bernie Ecclestone and the FIA's then-president Max Mosley.

Thus the Paris-based body, now headed by Jean Todt, can only grin (through gritted teeth) and bear it, before going through the motions and hoping no competitor tenders – or, worse, nudges the EU into unwelcome anti-competitive action.

That there exists bad blood between Todt and Ecclestone, the latter *de facto* controller of F1's commercial rights on behalf of CVC Capital Partners, has been clear ever since Ecclestone went all-out to block Todt's introduction of 'green' engines. This was initially slated for 2013, but pushed back a year after intense lobbying by Ecclestone and his allies.

At the heart of the wrangle lies the extension to the (expired) 2010-2012 Concorde Agreement, the tripartite covenant that dictates F1's governance and technical and financial provisions. Essentially this is a negotiation between a cash-strapped governing body, a voracious commercial rights holder and a fragmented band of competing teams.

With an annual bounty worth $1bn, Ecclestone has cut (unequal) deals with each team, so has them in his pocket. He has restructured the governance process such that the top four (Red Bull, Ferrari, McLaren and Mercedes) hold sway, with Williams and Lotus further bolstering his grip. With six outfits on Ecclestone's side plus half F1's income, what chance Todt?

Thus the FIA, offered just $50m per annum (split 50/50 between a stipend from Ecclestone and increased entry/licence fees paid by competitors), has in effect been sidelined, but is kicking back hard as it endeavours to maintain control over what is, after all, the *FIA* Formula 1 World Championship.

In early January, Todt all but threatened to withdraw from Concorde negotiations. Ecclestone for his part seems undeterred, publicly questioning the need for the Agreement in the first place.

The agenda is headed by so-called 'customer car teams' – a concept whereby the top four supply the rest of the grid with cars to the previous year's spec. Could it come to this? Unlikely, for it would destroy F1 by endowing it with the atmosphere of a second-hand car dealership while removing all chance for a team to move from the back row to world domination. That said, the concept would let Ecclestone reduce payments he makes to minnows while arguing that the majors profit from supply arrangements.

But it seems a racing certainty that Pirelli will supply whatever formula prevails...

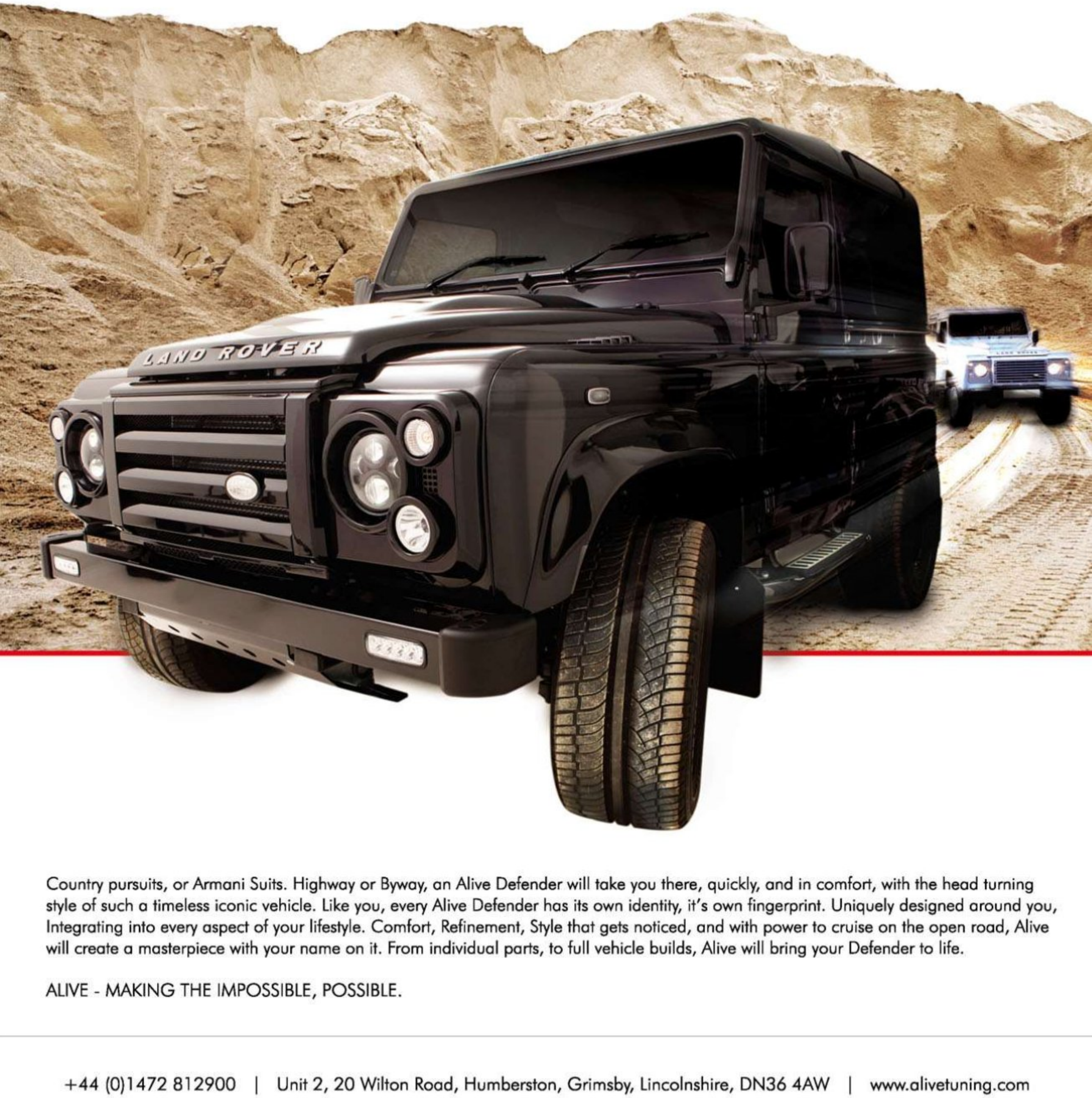
"Any number of tyre suppliers could succumb to the lure of a global activity fervently followed by hundreds of millions of committed fans, and better Pirelli's offer"



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VALTTERI BOTTAS
ROOKIE YEAR

Williams' new signing is also our new driver columnist

MY JOURNEY ALONG THE ROAD TO FORMULA 1

Since this is my first column of my rookie year in Formula 1, I thought that I would start off by telling you the story of how I came to be an F1 driver. We have to go right back to the beginning to when I was six years old and living in Finland. One day my father and I came across a sign for a karting race by accident and we went to investigate...

Up until that day, all I'd really done was kick a football around or play ice hockey, but when we went to that kart track at Lahti near my home town, suddenly I was fixated. Immediately I thought that karts were really cool and I pestered my dad to let me have a go.

My father had always been interested in Formula 1 and he used to watch Keke Rosberg and Mika Häkkinen racing on TV. After we saw that first kart race he was reluctant to let me have a go, saying it was dangerous and expensive, but day after day I bugged him and finally he took me back to that track to let me try.

Unfortunately, being just six, I was too small for any of the karts and I wasn't allowed to drive one. That was a really tough winter and I remember my grandfather telling me that if I wanted to get taller, I should eat porridge. So that's exactly what I did. I ate porridge every morning for the whole winter just so I would be big enough to drive a kart.

> "My grandfather told me if I wanted to get taller, I should eat porridge. So I ate porridge for a whole winter so I would be big enough to drive a kart"

Finally when I got my chance, that was it, I knew that it was my thing. Nearly every day after school and after my father had finished his work we went to the kart track. Whether it was raining or snowing, I was always there.

In the first couple of years it was all very low-budget; I had a second-hand kart and we just did local races. It wasn't too serious or expensive, but my father did everything he could to keep me racing. He ran a small cleaning service business and once I started getting good and results came, I got some local companies to sponsor me. I won my first Finnish championship in 2004, then my main sponsor Wihuri came on board and they are still with me to this day.

The first time I drove a kart was the first time I dreamed about being in Formula 1. But things didn't become serious until around 2008 when I was 19. And when I got some good results in Finland and Europe, that's when everything started going to plan.

After my years in Formula Renault and Formula 3, I really started to develop as a driver. In 2009 Williams were looking for a new test driver, and that's when they contacted me to come to their factory. I did a test in the simulator and they also gave me a written exam to find out how much I knew about the technical side of F1. They spoke to a number of drivers and apparently I made a good impression, so they chose me as their test driver for the following season.

"The first time I drove a kart was the first time I dreamed of being in Formula 1"



Having been with Williams for a number of years, the factory now feels like a second home to me. I live very close to Grove, I know a lot of the people and it's a big advantage for any rookie to know how everything works. Having done the young driver test and 15 of last year's practice sessions, I'm probably as well prepared as any rookie could be.

I'm also spending a lot of time in the simulator and working on my training. It's been really hard work and I'd say that I'm definitely in the fittest condition of my life. I've been running in the snow in Finland and I even did a 10km competitive run on New Year's Eve when I finished in the top 25 of 260 entrants.

I feel as though I have done everything I possibly can to get myself mentally and physically prepared for this season. I'm very excited to get in the car and race, but I'm also fully focused on the job I have to do. It will be a big thing for me to make my debut in Australia, but I'm looking forward to it and trying not to think too much about being a rookie...

PORTRAIT: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

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STAR LETTER



Don't Mercedes value experience?

The ruthless restructuring of the staff at Mercedes GP looks like a nasty case of throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

Remember, it was Mercedes who supplied the engine to Brawn GP, the Formula 1 team, who won the 2009 championship with Jenson Button, and then bought the team that made their engine such a success. Why then, in such a short space of time, would they decide to bring in new blood? Mistaking 'experience' for 'dead wood' is a mistake that will always come back to bite you.

Formula 1 may be an unforgiving and unsentimental environment to work in, but there also seems to have been a recent emergence of a mentality to 'win at all costs'. If, as Red Bull's Christian Horner claims, "We are successful because of the spirit, the desire and the way we work as one unit," then the way Mercedes are going about things in their bid to rekindle success is all wrong!

Peter Green
Saffron Walden, UK



SILVERSTONE

STAR PRIZE

Peter Green wins a pair of three-day admission tickets to the 2013 British GP at Silverstone. For more details, call the hotline on 0844 372 8300 or visit www.silverstone.co.uk

Let Grosjean learn

I believe Lotus will find that they were right to give Romain Grosjean another chance. In partnering Kimi Räikkönen (world champion in 2007), he will receive the benefit of Räikkönen's experience and with it a sensible driving line to follow: he couldn't have a better team-mate.

Seven first-lap crashes in 15 races is a statistic that is unlikely to be surpassed, but you can't doubt Grosjean's enthusiasm: it demonstrates his appetite to win. Besides, from the viewer/spectator perspective, Grosjean's participation makes the first lap of every grand prix truly unmissable.

Graham Talbot
Suffolk, UK

Science in action

Explaining to me the technical changes to F1 cars from one season to the next is usually about as pointless as nailing a squid to a mattress. However, Pat Symonds', Tech (P)review in your February issue changed all that.

In particular, I now know what the Coandă effect is and I see how understanding it can help the designers to create a more aerodynamic and therefore more efficient car. It just goes to show that the engineering involved in the construction of Formula 1 cars is so much more than 'boys with toys', tirelessly tinkering in the hope of gaining a marginal advantage – these are engineers using pure physics and mathematics to gain the biggest advantage they possibly can.

I take my hat off to them. Formula 1 is not just a sport, it's a science!

Chris Lamb
London, UK

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NEXT MONTH...



MARANELLO MASTERPLAN

How Ferrari plan to make Alonso the next world champ

PLUS...

› Iceman on Ice: We're off to Moscow with Kimi

› Who's hot and who's not: Our technical analysis of the 2013 field

APRIL ISSUE ON SALE 28 MARCH

PHOTO: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT

Now *that* was a car

No 13: The Renault RE50

This elegant machine signalled a temporary end to Renault's stay in F1

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS **PICTURES** TIM KENT

It wasn't known at the time, but the 1984 Renault RE50 would mark the beginning of the end of Renault's involvement in F1 for a while. The 'Régie' had entered the sport as a manufacturer (with a turbocharged engine) in 1977 and, in the subsequent years, racked up 15 race victories, although not outright championship success.

At the end of 1983, Renault's Alain Prost lost the world title by two points to Brabham's Nelson Piquet and was made a scapegoat for the team's title defeat. He duly switched his allegiance to McLaren. His countryman Patrick Tambay had just lost a seat at Ferrari, so was contacted by Renault team boss Gérard Larrousse and placed alongside Britain's Derek Warwick, who had come from Toleman.

The RE50's predecessor, the RE40, won four races in the hands of Prost, and the Michel Tetu-designed machine was expected to be equally competitive in 1984. 'RE', incidentally, had replaced the Renault Sport 'RS' designation due to closer ties between Renault and fuel supplier Elf. Unfortunately, fuel would be the RE50's undoing.

Mid-race refuelling was banned for 1984 and tank capacity was cut to 220 litres. Renault's EF4 V6 turbocharged engine, nearing the end of its development life, was notoriously thirsty. "We had a poor fuel-management system and lost several races in the last few laps when we ran out of gas," recalls Tambay. "I lost second place in Brazil and third in South Africa like that, so to conserve fuel we used less than full power. We became economy-run drivers, and that wasn't racing."

Despite those retirements, Tambay *did* score points, his best result being second place at the French GP, but even this was seen as a disappointment as it was traditional for the national team to win their home race, having done so in 1979, '81, '82 and '83.

Bernard Dudot's 1.5-litre EF4 V6 enjoyed a newly modified alloy block for 1984, plus a switch from KKK to Garrett turbochargers, bringing power to over 750bhp. The RE50's chassis was carbon fibre, rather than aluminium, but was particularly fragile, with the suspension prone to breaking through the monocoque in accidents. Tambay broke his leg at Monaco when he struck his team-mate's car at St Devote, the lowest point of a difficult season.

Gerard Larrousse and Michel Tetu left at the end of the year and Michelin also pulled out. The 1984 season was the first since 1978 in which Renault had failed to win a race and they pulled out of F1 at the end of 1985. Despite future engine-supply deals with various teams, it would be another 16 years before a team named Renault made it back to the F1 grid.





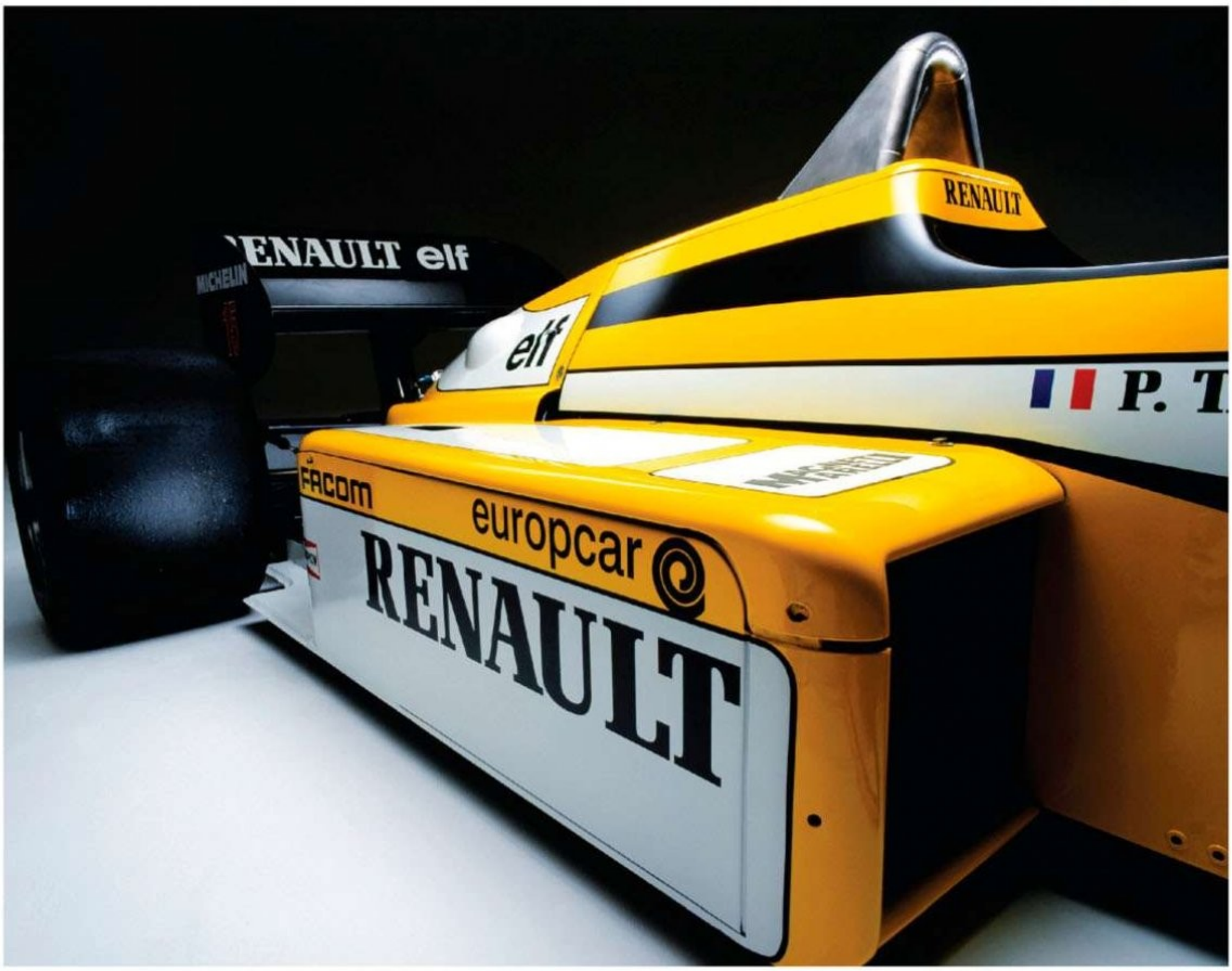




RENAULT RE50 TECH SPEC

Engine	1.5-litre EF4 V6 turbo	**Wheelbase**	2.68m
Power	750bhp	**Weight**	540kg
Maximum revs	11,500rpm	**Fuel and oil**	Elf
Transmission	5-speed Renault-Hewland	**Tyres**	Michelin
Turbochargers	Garrett	**Drivers**	Patrick Tambay, Derek Warwick
Suspension	Double wishbone, pullrod		





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F1 SEASON PREVIEW 2013

Formula 1 is all set to come rocketing out of the blocks. Here's the lowdown on 2013's key players, plus an in-depth look at every team and every circuit

MARTIN BRUNDLE P42
Formula 1's most outspoken commentator lets rip

RED BULL p48
Can Vettel be beaten?
Plus: Christian Horner interview

FERRARI p60
Will Fernando Alonso become Ferrari's tenth world champion?

McLAREN p68
Jenson Button's ups and downs explained **Plus:** McLaren's lightning-fast pitstops analysed

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We attempt to puzzle out F1's great enigma: Kimi Räikkonen

MERCEDES p86
Exclusive! We join Lewis Hamilton for his first day at Mercedes, and explain he can win the title *this* year.
Plus: Nico Rosberg interview

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Nico Hülkenberg and Esteban Gutiérrez answer *your* questions

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We hitch a lift with Paul Di Resta on launch day

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Exclusive! Sir Frank and Claire Williams interviewed together for the very first time

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Daniel Ricciardo tells us why he's super-motivated for the new season

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Introducing the new Brit on the grid: rookie Max Chilton

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Your ultimate track-by-track guide to the new season



PHOTO: ADRIAN MYERS

BRUNDL

VETTEL

HAS SHOWN HE CAN RACE, BUT THERE ARE STILL SOME QUESTIONMARKS: HE MANAGED TO TRIP OVER AND BREAK A MARKER BOARD AT ABU DHABI LAST YEAR AND I PRETTY MUCH THINK THE FIRST-LAP INCIDENT IN BRAZIL WAS HIS FAULT.

RÄIKKÖNEN

I THOUGHT HE'D BE RUSTY BUT HE DIDN'T TOUCH ANYTHING ALL YEAR LONG

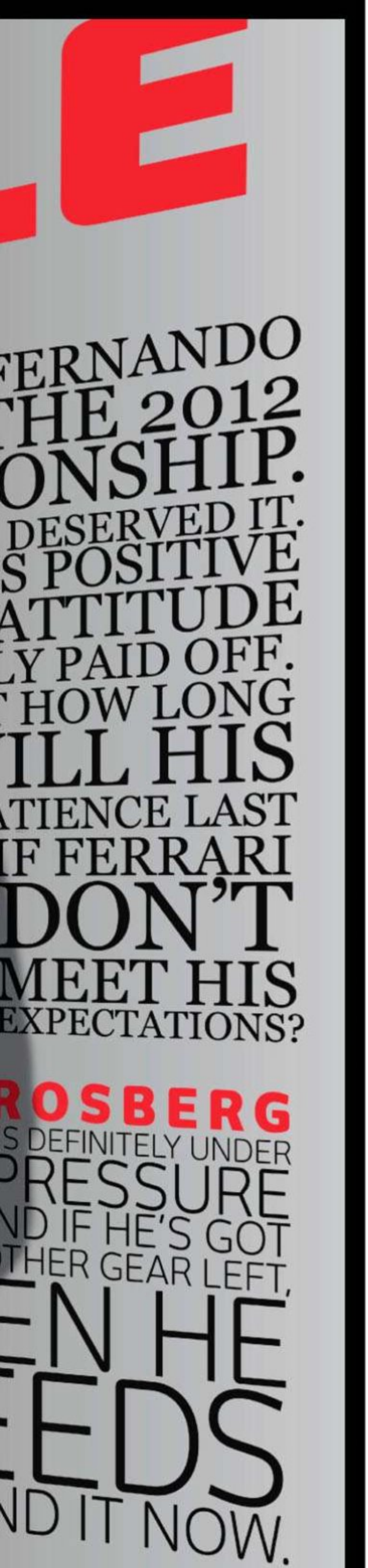
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LIVE AND (VERY) DIRECT

Britain's leading F1 commentator is never one to mince his words – here's how he rates the 2013 line-up...

RED BULL

They should have been beaten in 2012. Their success was down to their rapid development, their second driver, McLaren's unreliability, the second driver at Ferrari – and, to an extent, to Lotus. They didn't have the fastest car – it's well known that McLaren had the fastest – and after China, their drivers were fourth and fifth in the standings. But once again, they outdeveloped the others. I'd put them on a par with McLaren in terms of the driver pairing – but McLaren had reliability issues and, despite alternator failures, Red Bull made more of what they had.

You can say Sebastian Vettel has only ever had the best car. Well, since 2009, so has his team-mate. Vettel has shown he can race as well as lead from the front, but there are still some question marks: he managed to trip over and break a marker board at Abu Dhabi last year and I pretty much think the first-lap incident in Brazil was his fault. He was on the racing line and, from his championship point of view, to sweep in from the outside like that, in those circumstances when you're a little on your back foot, it's 100 per cent certain somebody was going to be there.

Mark Webber? Walk a mile in his shoes. He's had a car that's won three world championships for his team-mate and three constructors' titles, and that's brutal. Here's a package that can →

win a title, and your team-mate did it and you didn't. And you didn't even finish a close second every time. It's really hard.

But look back at Mark's wins – including two at Monaco – and they're world class. Any driver would like those victories on their CV. He re-signed with Red Bull last year and the wheels just fell off; gearbox penalties, contact... he gets into squabbles he doesn't need to be in.

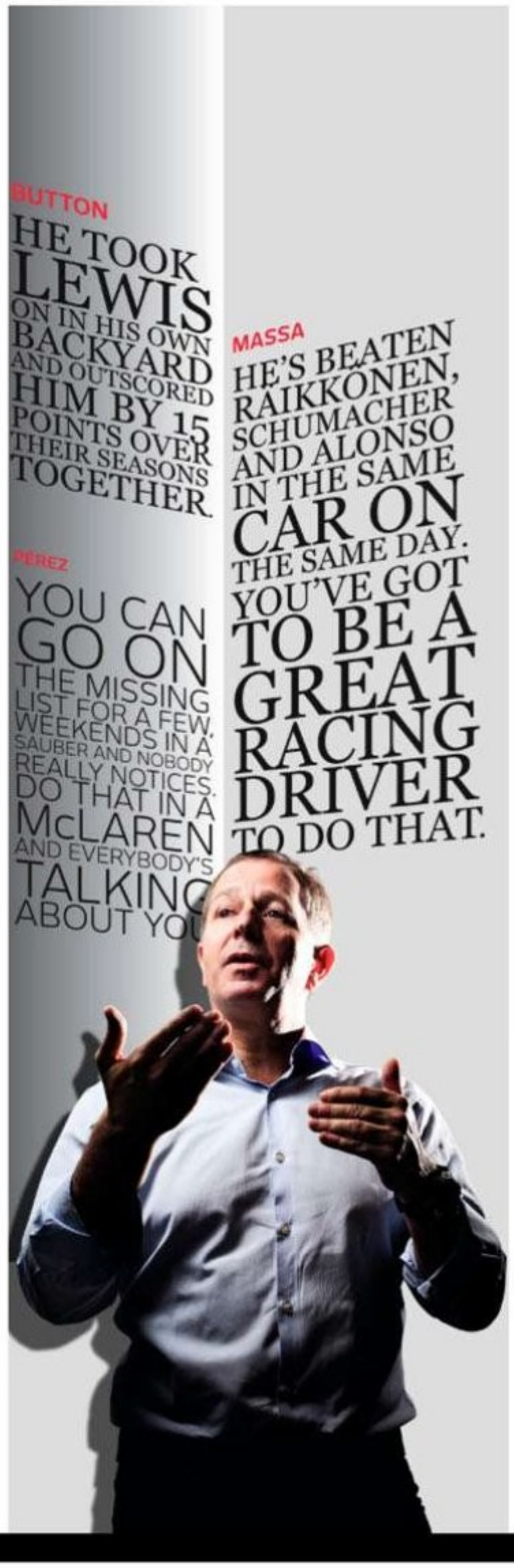
FERRARI

We did a feature for Sky Sports F1 early last year in which Ferrari let us into the inner sanctum. We filmed in rooms we'd never been allowed in before. I was looking around the facility thinking, "this is quite old, this is small". They've not wasted resources on fancy bits.

I wanted Fernando Alonso to win the 2012 championship. I thought he deserved it. The bloke's positive mental attitude nearly paid off, but how long will his patience last if Ferrari don't meet his expectations? If, after they've closed the windtunnel down and re-calibrated everything, they turn up with a pup again, then I'd very much expect some frustration.

There was a bit of a fightback in India because he didn't do a great job in qualifying and there were a few people who weren't slow off the mark to point that out. Team driver though he is, he always wanted the message to be: 'I'm doing an incredible job despite this shed that I'm driving.'

Over the August break, Massa must have thought: 'Why don't I just drive and enjoy myself?' He had hit rock bottom, which I can completely relate to. You hit rock bottom and bounce back. You get to a situation where you've got nothing to lose; exactly how I was against



Senna in F3 in 1983 when he won the first nine races, and in early '92 against Schumacher. You think, 'I'm done for now anyway, so I may as well enjoy myself.' All of a sudden, your juices start flowing again.

As I always say with Massa, he's beaten Kimi Räikkönen, Michael Schumacher and Fernando Alonso in the same car on the same day. You've got to be a great racing driver to do that.

McLAREN

They should have won both championships last year, but they just didn't have good enough reliability, even though they currently hold the record for consistent points finishes. I think what that tells you is that unlike other teams, they always have equal number one drivers.

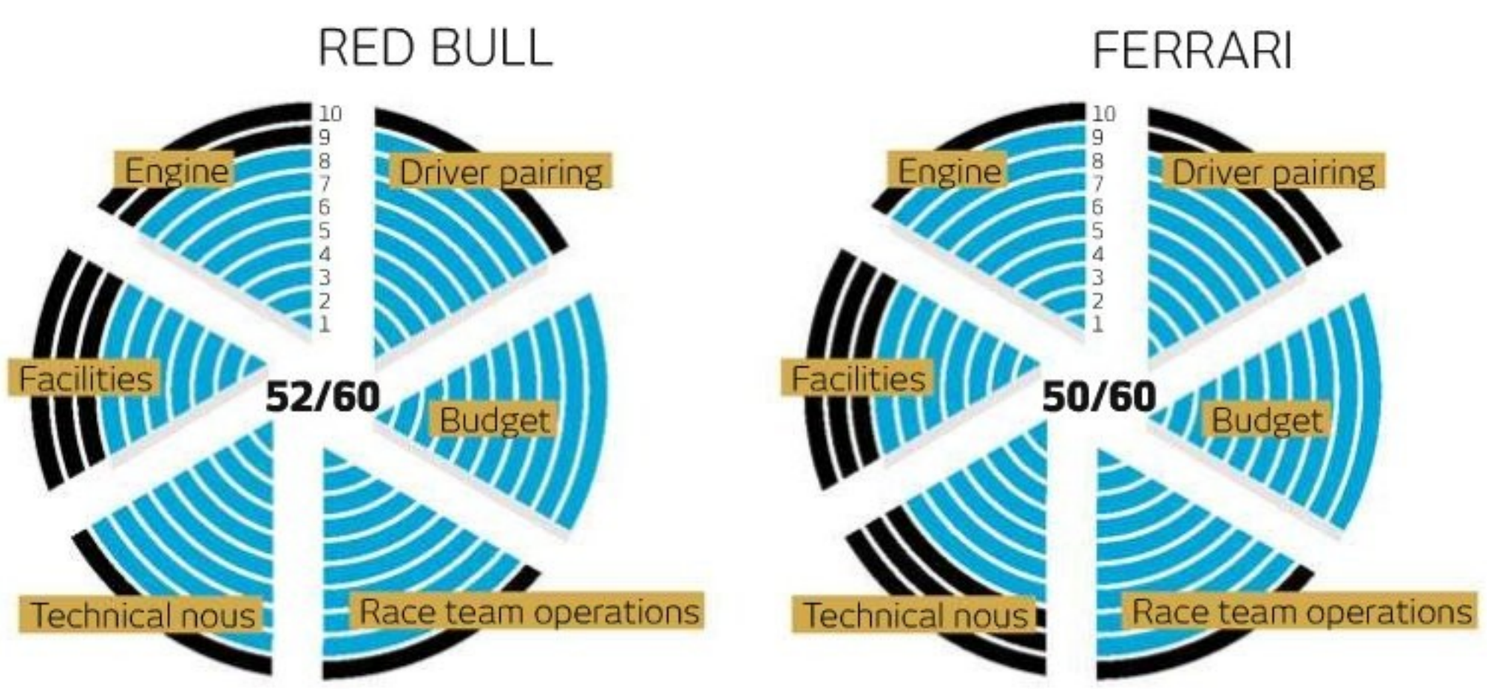
If you did a forensic analysis, are they more unreliable than the other teams? My gut feeling is that they are, because they make key mistakes and have key problems. There are good people there and a lot of facilities and resources, so I don't understand why the car isn't bulletproof when its front-running rivals usually are.

I think Jenson Button will step up to the plate. He's a born leader and he took the team off Lewis Hamilton. He's done an incredible job. Three years ago I thought Jenson had made a terrible mistake going to McLaren. Then he took on Lewis in his own backyard and outscored him by 15 points over their seasons together.

Okay, so he was thrashed in qualifying and in terms of wins Lewis outscored him 10-8. But that victory in Brazil was Jenson serving notice: 'Okay, I'm the man around here now and I will galvanise this team.' His manner on the radio showed how cool he was. Ultimate calm.

How the 2013 grid stacks up

F1 Racing rates each team's vital statistics



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The spotlight of being in a top team either gives you energy or wilts you like a flower and I wonder if Sergio Pérez has the confidence. You can fit into McLaren – they're very good at pastoral care – and Martin Whitmarsh will want to put him in an environment where he can deliver.

You can go on the missing list for a few weekends in a Sauber and nobody really notices. Do that in a McLaren and everybody's talking about you. That's what he'll find so different. In Malaysia, Canada and Italy last year he was fantastic, but that's three out of 20. Next year he'll be allowed maybe three to make a mistake.

LOTUS

You look at Lotus and wonder: 'What if they had two Kimi Räikkönens?' I'd give Romain Grosjean another year, but he'd be on a contract where I could get rid of him with immediate effect. He has no power in the negotiation other than the fact that Eric Boullier manages him. I'd try to manage up his positives and manage down his negatives – but if you look back through the junior formulae, history suggests that's just how he is. It's not like he can't race. I suspect their thinking is that it's better the devil you know, providing all the funding is there.

Kimi should have won in Bahrain. He could have easily won three or four races. He won one. I still wouldn't want to underplay what he achieved – I thought it was an extraordinary comeback. I thought his race-craft would be rusty, but he didn't touch anything all year long. In Brazil he recognised he was about to hit Vettel and went off the track to avoid him; of the other drivers, everybody else apart from Alonso would have creamed into him in that situation.



Even so, I really think that Kimi could have won more races. Was he getting as much out of that Lotus as he should have been? There are teams out there, some of them senior teams, who thought that the Lotus E20 was the fastest car on the track at times. Their technical director, James Allison, is a really solid lad – a no-bullshit kind of guy.

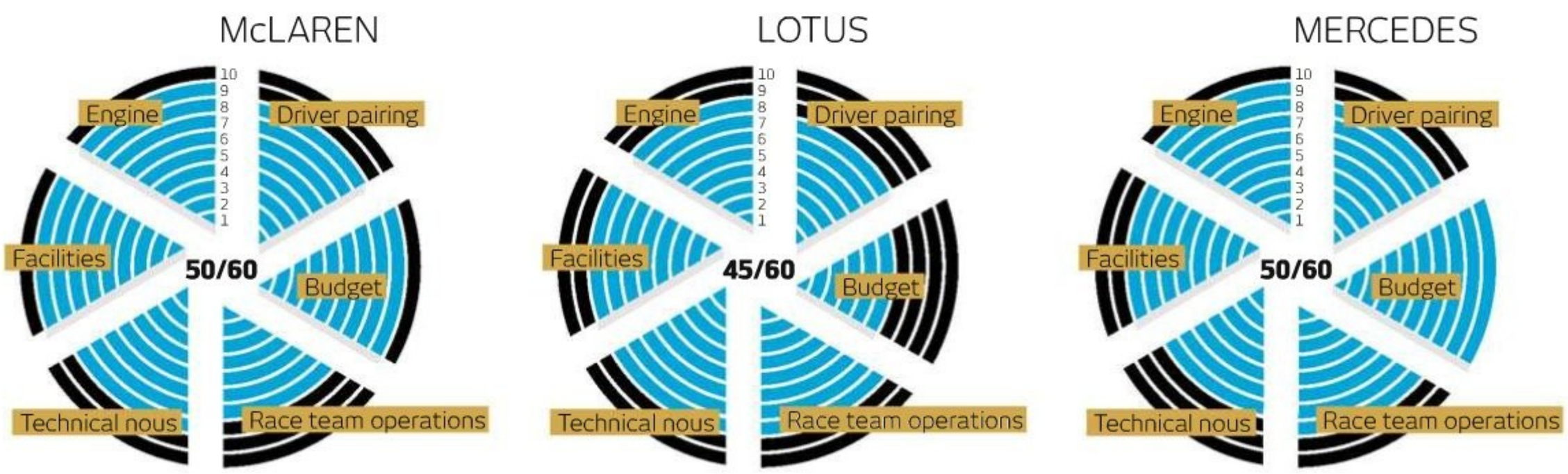
MERCEDES

It's going to be really interesting to see what happens at Mercedes. Nico Rosberg is definitely under pressure and if he's got another gear left, he needs to find it now. Otherwise they'll focus on Lewis Hamilton, because they've got to now. If they thought Nico was their man for the future, they wouldn't have needed Lewis. They've clearly sold Lewis to the board as the man they can win with, so now they've *got* to win with him.

I've always been a fan of Nico and I still am. He goes forward in races, he's got some decent speed – he showed flashes in the early Williams days and even set fastest lap in his first race in Bahrain – and he won very well in China last year. So it's in there, but he's got nowhere left to hide any more. There's no time left.

I think that Lewis mentally prepared himself for 2013 by writing it off: anything's a bonus and then let's wait for 2014. He needed to get away from McLaren. He's lived half his life there so even though he's grown up, he was always going to be seen as a junior member.

When we did the track guide in Brazil he said things to me that are not repeatable, to the effect that he needed to go. You saw how he just took off on the track once he'd made that decision. He was mighty in the last few races. Incredible. →



SAUBER

Nico Hülkenberg's manager Timo Gans was very open when I asked him about the move to Sauber. He said: "I see points at Force India, I see podiums at Sauber. We need podiums next."

Nico was on pole in Brazil for Williams in 2010 and he was leading that race for Force India in 2012. He was having a go. That dice with Lewis was for the lead and it was a bit, 'Oh my god, I can take the lead, I think I'll try that right now.' In a way I admire him for not just thinking: 'You know what? Second place would be a fantastic result today.' Because it would have been. I bet if he had his chance again and accepted second place having led the race, it would have done fine.

So, having almost made it in Brazil for Force India, he must know that moving to Sauber is a bit of a risk. They have some great facilities left over from the BMW era and they usually produce a good car, but they never quite do the business.

FORCE INDIA

Paul Di Resta is a great talent. His biggest problem is that despite being a really nice lad he's very introverted and the paddock and the media in general don't get him. I'm afraid that, today, that's a serious issue.

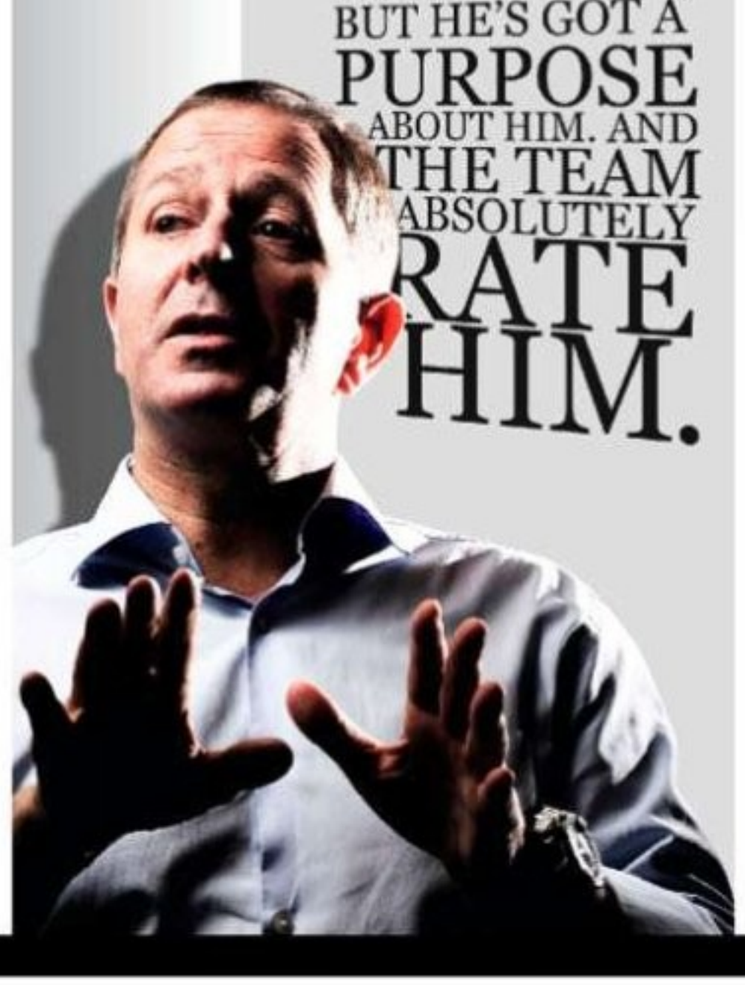
If the photographers, the media and your team all love you and say nice things about you, it travels. But if they don't, that travels as well. Whether it's true or not doesn't matter. Perception is reality. You can't afford that these days. You've got to work. You've got to see those things like an anti-roll bar or a torsion bar; they're all elements to make your performances better in the end. If you're popular, you get opportunities, there's no doubt about it. You've got to work with all the tools available to you.

What happened last year was that Hülkenberg got on top and Di Resta's head went. And Hülkenberg was always smiling; he always seemed happy. People want to work with people like that. They think: 'I can work with this driver.' Unless you're winning everything all the time, in which case you can be the biggest arse ever and nobody really cares.

SAUBER
THEY HAVE SOME GREAT FACILITIES LEFT OVER FROM THE BMW ERA, BUT THEY NEVER QUITE DO THE BUSINESS.

PAUL DI RESTA
THE PADDOCK AND THE MEDIA IN GENERAL DON'T GET HIM. I'M AFRAID, TODAY, THAT'S A SERIOUS ISSUE.

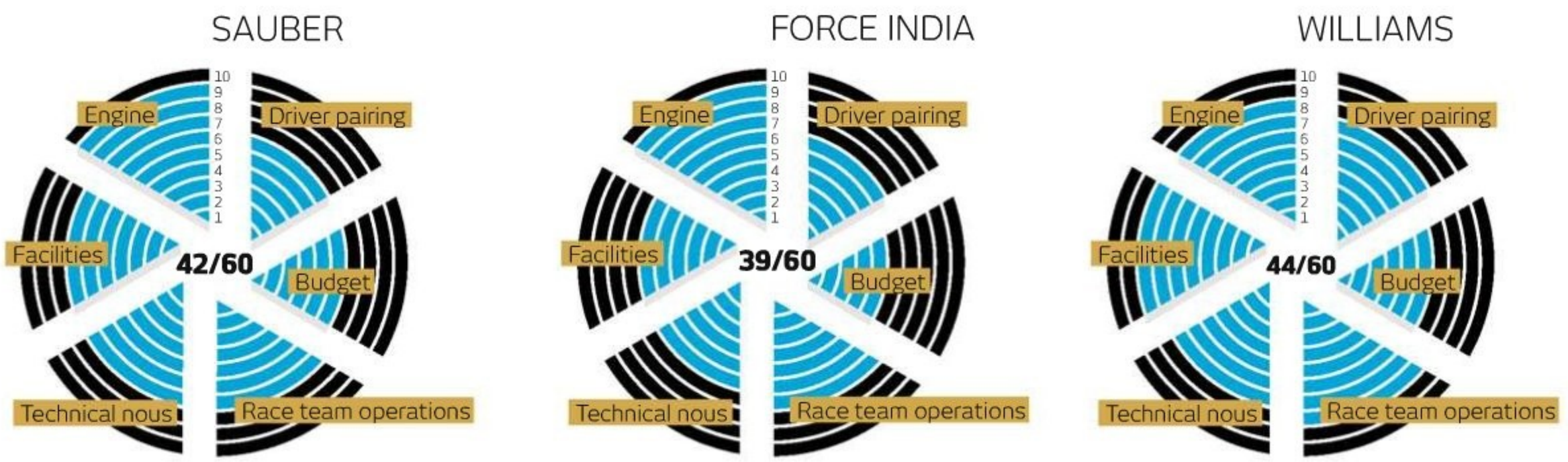
BOTTAS
HE'S SORT OF KIMI-LIKE; A LITTLE BIT MORE TALKATIVE, BUT HE'S GOT A PURPOSE ABOUT HIM. AND THE TEAM ABSOLUTELY RATE HIM.



WILLIAMS

With Valtteri Bottas, his managers have 'done a Räikkönen'. They've short-cut the system. Räikkönen's first grand prix was only his 24th car race; Bottas hasn't raced for a year and he came through GP3. They've gone for gold, but I know that Williams think he's amazing from the work they've seen. There's something about Bottas. He's sort of Kimi-like; a little bit more talkative, but he's got a purpose about him. And the team absolutely rate him.

Williams got rid of Bruno Senna, who scored points in ten grands prix despite not having his car on a Friday morning 15 times. If you took away Maldonado's win, Senna pretty much outscored him. But he didn't show Maldonado's speed. So they've biffed a kid who was coming on, whose race-craft was really good, who scored a lot of points for them and who presumably



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brought in some money. That tells you how good they think Bottas is.

Williams work hard to manage Maldonado's mindset. He's so fast. With that win in Barcelona he dropped behind Alonso and you thought, 'Game over.' But he still came back to win.

TORO ROSSO

Toro Rosso are like Sauber and Force India; they spin their wheels and threaten to go quite well. Their problem is that 2008 hurt them because, in effect, they had a Red Bull, a Ferrari engine and Sebastian Vettel. They embarrassed the main team – so much so that Adrian Newey probably vowed never to do that sort of thing again. So they had to set sail on their own.

I thought Daniel Ricciardo and Jean-Eric Vergne did a good job in 2012, particularly Ricciardo towards the end of the season. They are exciting drivers and maybe we'll see more from them this year, particularly now the team have a bit more structure, with Steve Nielsen joining them from Caterham. Toro Rosso could also benefit from the pack closing up, because, with the regulations not changing, it's hard now to find that little bit extra.

CATERHAM

Now that HRT have departed the sport, Formula 1 really needs Marussia and Caterham to start getting their act together. I know from feature packages we did on Sky last year when we've dived into the Caterham team, that there are some characters in there and some great stories to tell about what those guys do. You really do need that, because you can't always just be focusing on the teams up at the front of the grid who are fighting for the world championship.

Let's hope they finally ace it, but you can't help but look at them and think that they haven't looked like they're going to do it in the first three years – so what's going to change? Where's the money coming from? Where are the resources? And where are the skills?



MARUSSIA

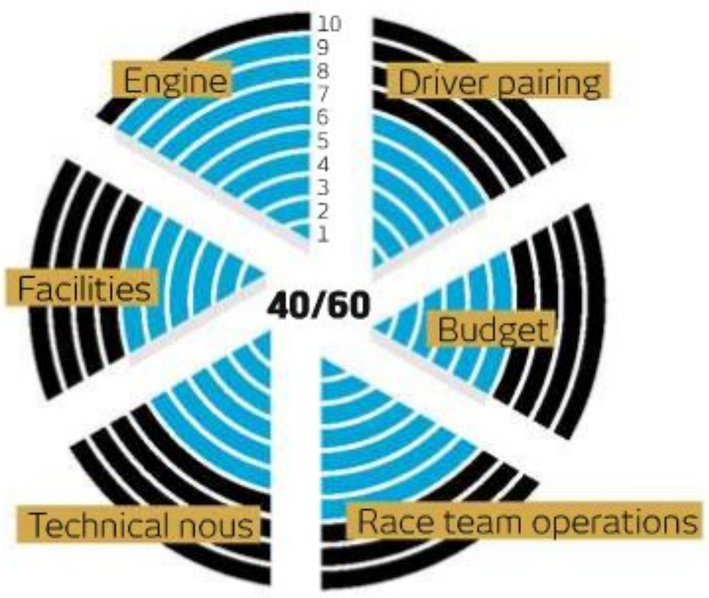
When Pat Symonds ended up at Marussia I thought, okay now, let's go. But they're still absolutely back of the grid. The cars are moving around, but they haven't got the downforce – I don't know why. It shows how tough F1 is, which is why I think there should be customer cars.

Charles Pic was quite impressive last year, but now he's gone to Caterham. You do wonder if anyone watching on television is interested in the private battle between teams that are so far behind everyone else. The only time you see these drivers on screen is when they're getting in the way of the frontrunners.

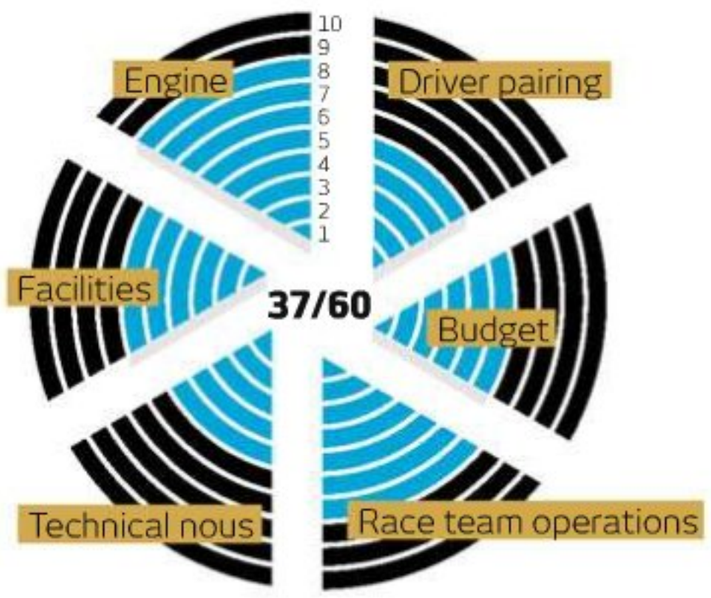
I did feel a bit sorry for Marussia in Brazil because they were fighting Caterham for that tenth place in the constructors' championship and the share of the TV money that comes with it. It must have been tough passing the hot potato around: 'Here, you have the financial disaster.' 'No, you have it,' 'No, you have it.'

Martin Brundle was talking to Maurice Hamilton

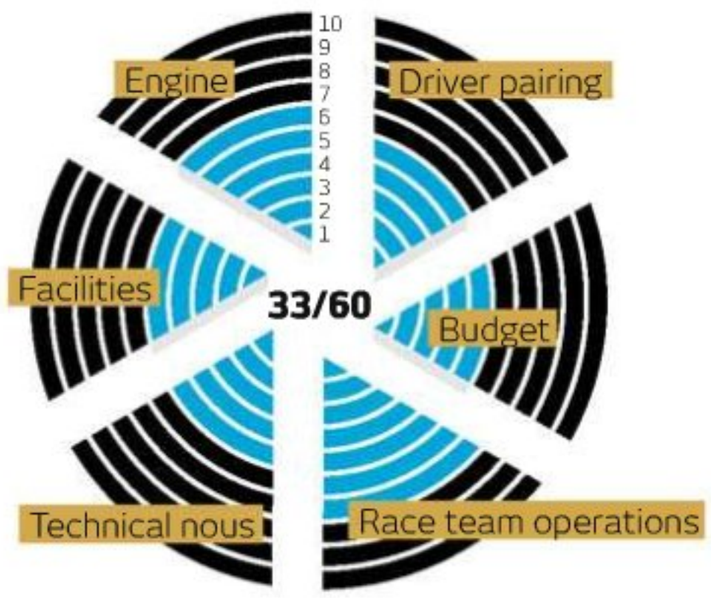
TORO ROSSO



CATERHAM



MARUSSIA



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MARKED MAN

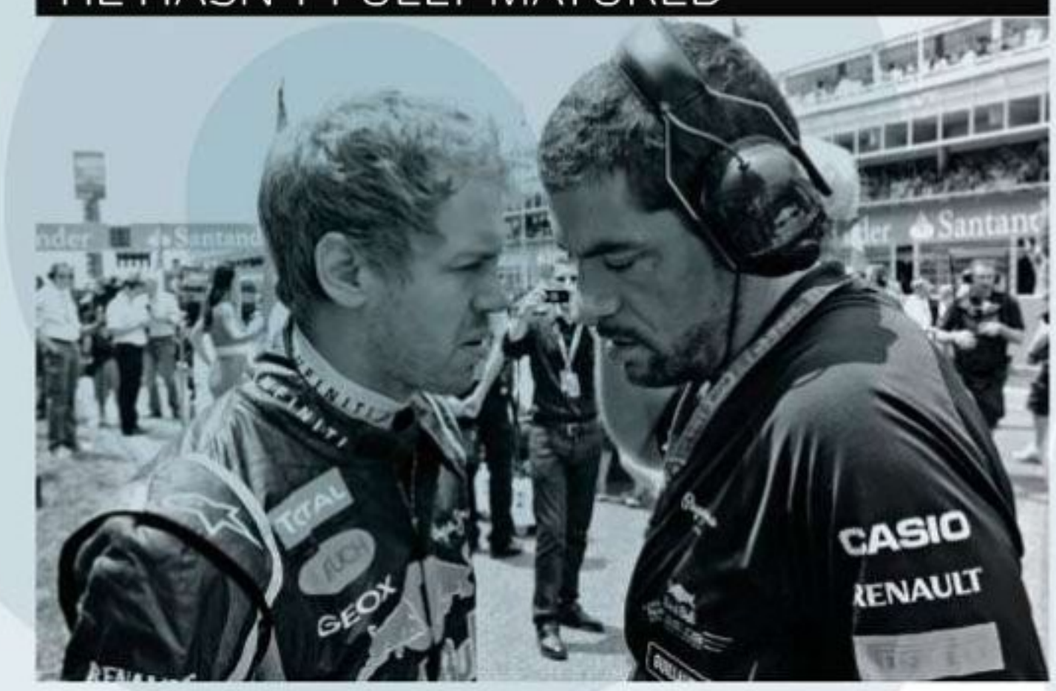
After three straight world titles Sebastian Vettel is assuredly Formula 1's man to beat. So where can rivals find a weakness in this near-perfect team/driver amalgam? *F1 Racing* investigates...

WORDS MATT YOUSON
AND ANTHONY ROWLINSON

TO recap: Sebastian Vettel is the 2012 world champion. It's useful to remember this fact after three months during which Fernando Alonso has been the toast of the off-season. It's not often that F1 has time for the plucky loser, but in Alonso's case his achievements in *not* winning last year's drivers' championship have served to lessen those of Vettel, now F1's youngest triple champion. Yes, Alonso fought to the very last and overcame the deficiencies of his machinery through a combination of talent and bloody-mindedness. Yes, he led his team through victory and defeat, keeping both achievements and failures in perspective. But so, too, did Seb. After winning the title at the death in 2010, then dominating 2011, he dug deeper in 2012 and did even better. It was his finest hour.

Vettel has now reached that enviable point of symbiosis with Red Bull where it's hard to imagine one without the other. Clark-Lotus; Senna-McLaren; Schumacher-Ferrari... Vettel-Red Bull has become one of F1's classic alliances, which, with eventual historical perspective, we'll come to credit for its greatness. Pretty daunting, then, for those up against him this year – the Buttons, the Hamiltons, the Alonsos, the Webbers – all of whom must try to find, then exploit, any weakness. Trouble is, with success, confidence and experience buttering layer upon layer of impregnability onto Vettel's always-obvious talent, areas of vulnerability are becoming ever harder to identify. But look hard and they can be found, as *F1 Racing* discovered by talking to those who have worked with him most closely. →

ATTACK 1
HE HASN'T FULLY MATURED



The likes of 1997 world champion Jacques Villeneuve have sniped at Vettel in the past for throwing his toys out of the pram when things aren't going his way. And it's true that in 2010, when under extreme intra-garage pressure from Mark Webber, Vettel looked fast but fragile.

A political schism within the team, caused by the 'favourite son' status conferred upon Vettel by driver Svengali Helmut Marko, did neither team nor driver any favours – although ultimately Vettel prevailed at the season-closing Abu Dhabi shoot-out, as Alonso and Webber reversed themselves out of the world title. That internal tension lingers on, as evidenced by Marko's petulance about Webber in a pre-season interview that subsequently prompted a stiff rebuttal from F1's grittiest Aussie.

On balance, after a torrid 2012 campaign against Alonso, Ferrari and the often-faster McLarens of Button and Hamilton, Seb and Red Bull have emerged battle-hardened and more savvy. Yet Seb still has a lot to learn according to one of his sternest critics, who also happens to be among his most steadfast supporters: Guillaume 'Rocky' Rocquelin, – Vettel's race engineer since the then 21-year-old Vettel joined Red Bull from sister team Toro Rosso. "I think he's at his peak for raw speed but regarding everything else that's being part of a driver, he can still improve a lot," Rocky says. "In terms of patience, maturity, letting the car do the work for him, all of these things will come with age and experience."

Pre-Seb, Rocquelin engineered David Coulthard. And while at BMW and Toro Rosso, Vettel was often described as being wise beyond his years, Rocky found him very inexperienced compared to the veteran Brit who'd known exactly what he wanted. "With Sebastian in 2009 everything was more open-ended," he says. "He wasn't sure what would suit his style in terms of setup and driver interface. On top of that, he didn't have David's level of comfort outside the car, dealing with the media, the FIA and other drivers – so we also had to look at that as well."

The Hollywood narrative would demand Vettel to be – four years, 25 victories and three titles later – a very different driver to work with. Rocquelin concedes that may be the case outside the car, but maintains that Vettel's relationships inside the team are largely unaltered. "This is a good thing," he says. "I suspect if Sebastian were to leave the team at some point, whoever's going to work with him next will see a three-time – maybe a five- or six-time – world champion and the rapport he builds will be very different. We don't see him like that: we still see the guy who came out of the Red Bull junior programme."

HOW CAN THIS BE EXPLOITED?

Back in the day, Lauda vs Prost 1984, for example, a cunning old hand might have hoped to gain an advantage over a younger, faster rival, by using all his wiles to beat pure speed. We saw some of that last year from Alonso, who won three times – twice against the odds – and elsewhere maximised often poor grid positions to rack up 11 other podiums to be in with a shout at the title till the very last. Unlike in 1984, however, the younger man prevailed and with every year of success the inner conviction of invincibility becomes stronger. And Vettel, let's not forget, is now a triple world champion; Alonso 'only' a double.

ATTACK 2
KEEP HIM BEHIND



One criticism of Vettel over the years has been that he doesn't overtake well, often expressed via the backhanded compliment of saying he only wins from the front. The seeds of this were planted in 2010 after high-profile collisions while trying to overtake Mark Webber (Turkey) and Jenson Button (Spa). But there hasn't been anything similar since and at Monza 2011 on lap 5, he put a move on Alonso around Curva Grande that neither man will forget in a hurry. Two left wheels on the grass, a twitch, a flurry of dirt and through: ballsy, brave and successful. The 2012 results show a string of solid, place-making drives, with some herculean passes that set up his eventual triumph. In Abu Dhabi and Brazil, Vettel fought through the field to secure points vital to his title success. Having spun at Interlagos, he looked down and out, yet his recovery from 22nd to sixth, with a little help from Michael Schumacher, is the kind of comeback fans will recall with a rosy glow when he's grown too old to race (what a thought!)

Rocquelin admits to greater satisfaction from easy wins – but says that for Vettel the opposite is true. "From an engineering point of view, it's satisfying to put the car on pole and drive away but Sebastian *loves* racing from the back. He knows we won't be on his case, telling him to go easy; he knows he gets to do every lap like he's qualifying. It's also simpler in terms of objective, because when you have a lead of 20secs, what do you do? You can only think too much, let your mind wander and make mistakes. Some of our best races have been the other type. Monza three years ago where we finished fourth but did the race on one set of tyres; Spa last year (12th on the restart to second) where we made one stop, Abu Dhabi... (pitlane start to podium) – from

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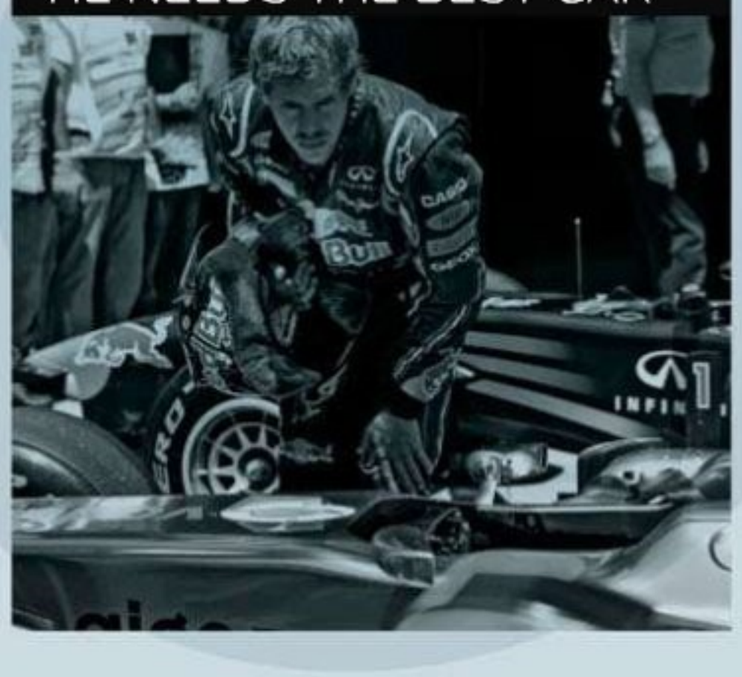
the driver's point of view, those are the ones."

Rocky continues: "To the people who say he can only win from pole, I don't think they realise how much quicker he would go under those circumstances if we weren't holding him back. His real pace is illustrated in those races where, for whatever reason, he's at the back and let off the leash. When he pushes on every lap it shows you what he can do."

HOW CAN THIS BE EXPLOITED?

The best way to get Vettel behind is to outqualify him, but given his fearsome one-lap pace in a car honed ever more to suit his driving style, that's no easy task. And even for those who do, it's less and less likely he'll botch a pass. His lap 52 skewering of Button at Abu Dhabi last year was immaculate.

ATTACK 3
HE NEEDS THE BEST CAR



It's not hard to find a paddock naysayer to insist Vettel's success is the result of having a car designed by Adrian Newey. Even Alonso, in a classic piece of psychological warfare declared at last year's Indian GP: "When we had similar cars to everyone, we were leading the championship. Now we are fighting against a Newey car."

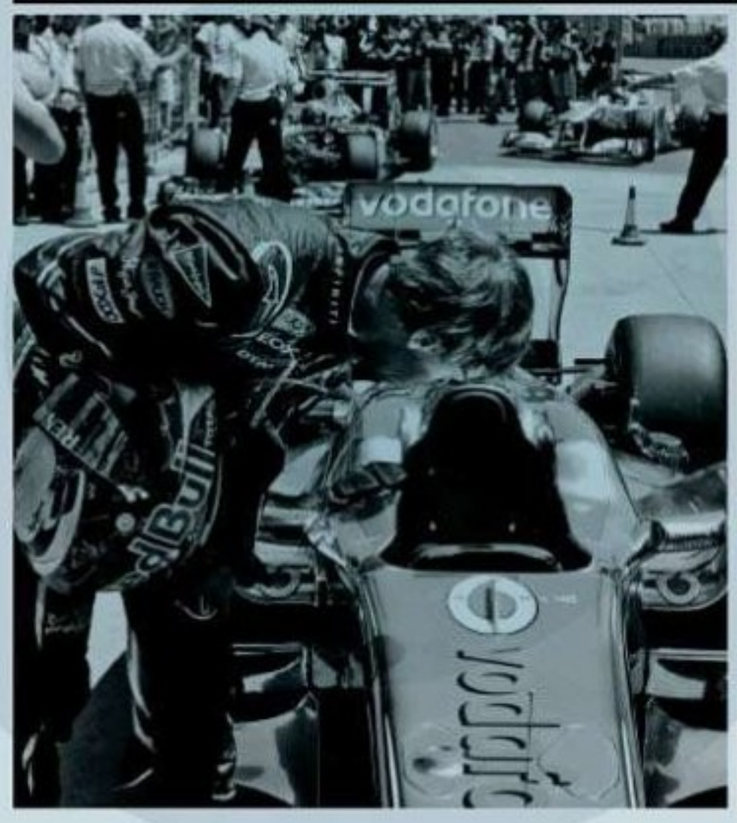
Well, yes, but as Kimi Räikkönen or Mika Häkkinen before him at McLaren might suggest, it takes a certain kind of driver to get the most out of a Newey car. Vettel's first win, for Toro Rosso at Monza 2008, came in a car that, while Newey-designed, was hardly class of the field. But even this is dismissed by his detractors, who argue Vettel's victory from pole that day came about because Toro Rosso gambled on the right setup for wet conditions everyone else misread.

Giorgio Ascanelli, then STR's technical director, scoffs at the notion: "It wasn't us. It was Sebastian," he says. "We just gave him a reliable car. He drove a masterful race after a masterful qualifying in a car with a dry setup: he's the fastest driver in the wet." Ascanelli's insights give another hint that with Seb, it's too simplistic to suggest it's all about the machine. At his first race for STR – Hungary '07 – Ascanelli recalls Vettel 'fessing up to an error: "After qualifying he told us he made a mistake – which was refreshing. *War and Peace* is a pamphlet compared to the book of driver excuses. To borrow from Jackie Stewart, I value the expressions 'I don't know' and 'I made a mistake'." If nothing else, this suggests Vettel is a driver prepared to recognise, then minimise, his own limitations.

HOW CAN THIS BE EXPLOITED?

For now, it's difficult. With Vettel almost certain to stay with RBR at least until the end of 2016, and Adrian Newey looking more settled than he ever was during his McLaren tenure, the yin and yang of Vettel-Newey looks stable. The 2014 technical shake-up could offer an opportunity for rivals to capitalise on a fumble from Newey and co. Past performance suggests, however, that whenever the book is ripped up, it's Newey who's best at finding ways to put it back together.

ATTACK 4
HE'S NOT AN ENGINEER



Toro Rosso race engineer Riccardo Adami recalls Vettel having the raw talent but not necessarily the engineering knowledge to get the best from it. "We taught him how the car behaves and how the tyres react to set-up changes," he says. "He learned to develop the car and make it match a driving style. He had something special, particularly with his level of braking and the ability to tolerate higher oversteer than normal. He also had sensitivity and a feel for the car that was particularly good when conditions were changing. After six months, he was able to tell us what he needed."

The analytical grounding at Toro Rosso has been apparent during Vettel's tenure at Red Bull, especially over the past two Pirelli-shod years. He's managed to eke out longer stints than his front-running rivals and developed the knack of getting his tyres into the right window for qualifying. He acquired an affinity with the Pirellis quicker than team-mate Webber, which contributed to his early lead in 2011.

Guillaume Rocquelin reckons that early grounding at STR gave Vettel a taste for the nuts and bolts: "I think he so very clearly enjoys his work," he says, "because it's a form of escapism from everything he's called upon to do outside. Far from being demotivating, I think success →

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makes him keener to spend time with us and really get to grips with the car. That's going to make him even stronger in the future."

HOW CAN THIS BE EXPLOITED?

Such is the nature of modern F1 that the days of a savvy driver-engineer – a Bruce McLaren or a Dan Gurney – being able to think through the limitations of a machine and engineer performance-enhancing solutions are gone. But in the unlikely event that the RB9 turns out to be a shed, Alonso's experience of carrying a team in adversity and driving technical change could prove a trump card. With only a scrap more car performance after all, Alonso would have been 2012 champion and the early indications are that the F138 has none of its predecessor's canine attributes.



Vettel with his biggest supporter and sternest critic, race engineer Guillaume Rocquelin



PHOTOS: CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES; ANDY HONE/LAT

ATTACK 5
POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTROL

"I give him a lot of stick after the race... it's been like this ever since he first drove for us"
Guillaume Rocquelin

Rocquelin offers two conflicting views on Vettel's ability to nurse his car versus his headstrong impulse to be the fastest guy on track. "Sebastian's very good at staying in control of his tyres," concedes Rocky. "He's good at not locking up the fronts under braking and not blistering the rears on power. He'll go as slow as he needs to go to maintain the gaps he needs to maintain, taking as little out of the tyres as possible. Sometimes that's worth a lap or two."

He praises Vettel's ability to look after his car and cosset tyres: "When going off-line brings a high puncture risk, he'll drop two-tenths in one corner to avoid it, even in qualifying. He'll take the risk in Q3 because you can't leave two-tenths on the table, but he won't do it if he doesn't need it. The last 20 laps of the race he'll stop taking kerbs if he has a gap and he'll always ask if he can turn the engine down. He knows where he's at."

This 'good Seb' verdict is somewhat at odds with the 'bad Seb' Rocky is often heard trying to rein in over the radio on the final laps of a race "I do give him a lot of stick after the race because it is something I'm not happy about. I think it's silly," says Rocquelin. "If it's more apparent this year, that's just the feed picking up what they want, but it's been like this ever since he first drove for us – he's a bugger like that."

HOW CAN THIS BE EXPLOITED?

Imagine, in the final laps of the 2013 Brazilian GP, a driver is in second place, four seconds behind a leading Vettel. If Seb wins, a fourth title is his, but he *must* win to beat his pursuer to the crown. Since Vettel's gut instinct is to go for broke, will his challenger be able to apply lap-time pressure from behind and force the error? We haven't yet seen it happen, but what a finale it might be...

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The Lion in Winter

Red Bull's Christian Horner on success, fear of failure and motivating his troops for another crack at the crown

WORDS ANTHONY ROWLINSON **PORTRAITS** ANDREW FERRARO/LAT

More than anything, it's the lack of fuss that is a Horner hallmark. An absence of pretension; an ability to remain 'normal'. So it's a (very decent) pub lunch for today's interview, rather than some multi-starred gastro-extravaganza. And a company Infiniti for the 15-minute drive from Milton Keynes HQ – not the chauffeur-driven executive barge some of his peers would have chosen. How come? Because with Christian Horner, it's all about the racing. And that's as true now about the team he steers with enviable aplomb as it was when he worked his way up the racing ladder to F3000 as a driver, then turned his F3000/GP2 team, Arden, into a multi-title-winning squad. Period YouTube clips of Horner (they're there if you go look) reveal a determined young man who had his sights set on becoming F1 world champion – as a driver. That one didn't work out – "it became obvious I'd be better off expending my energies outside the cockpit" – but his off-track ambitions most certainly did.

In eight seasons, all with Horner at the helm, Red Bull Racing have clocked up three championship doubles, second place for team and Vettel in 2009, 34 wins, 80 podiums and 46 poles. Even more impressive is the →

fact that all the heavyweight silverware has come since 2009, when Adrian Newey's RB5 set them up as winners. Seems like only five minutes ago that Horner gave a nervous laugh on the eve of the 2009 season, as he mentioned that the still-under-wraps RB5 "certainly looked different from everything else". Turns out he needn't have worried.

But that was year zero. Four seasons on, with a heaving trophy cabinet, where does Horner find motivation for self and the MK massive? "Fear of failure. For me, for everybody. We're the target now and we have a number of competitors who are jealous of our success. But that's what happens when you start winning.

"When we won the title for the first time," he continues, "it was an incredible feeling of elation for everyone in the team, but you don't know if that's going to be your only opportunity. So the challenge for 2011 was to defend our titles and Seb was totally in a league of his own that year. He had things pretty much wrapped up by the end of the European season."

By then, Horner reckons, the team had gone through a subtle, but significant shift in its collective consciousness, developing into one for which winning was, if not expected, then at least very familiar. "That," he says, "gave us tremendous self-belief and meant that even when we fell behind in the middle of last season and Seb was 40 points off the championship lead, we never once lost our focus. To have come from behind and to have won the treble is a remarkable feat for everyone in the team."

A moment, then, to bask in that success and lap up an achievement that only three other teams and two other drivers have bagged in more than six decades of F1?

No chance. "F1 is such a forward-looking sport," Horner asserts, "so there's never time to think about what you've done." [Aside: This isn't *quite* true. One mobile phone conversation to Christian, a couple of days after the team had won their first GP – China '09 – was accompanied by the unmistakable background ambience of waves lapping a shoreline...]

Whatever, as defending triple champions, hungry to "maintain the momentum and keep the trophies coming back to Milton Keynes" Red Bull are the guys who must daily feel the pressure to sustain success, all the while with rival teams' cross hairs lining up between their shoulderblades.



Shanghai 2009: first pole and first win (courtesy of Sebastian Vettel) for Red Bull – a taster of the domination to come



"We push the regulations because they are there to be pushed"

"There are more plates spinning in 2013 then ever before," adds Horner. "The technical challenge for the new 2014 regulations is huge." Handy then, to have the undisputed modern master of regulatory rune-reading on your side: the fabled Mr Newey. From the RB5 onwards, Newey and a hand-picked technical team surrounding him, which includes the likes of chief designer Rob Marshall and head of aero Peter Prodromou, have scarcely missed a beat. The accolades that have followed are evidence enough of their efficacy, even if their rivals have taken to frequent sniping as to the tech legality of RB-series cars. Horner bats away such criticism: "We push the regulations, yes, because they are there to be pushed. But never once have we been penalised for illegality. The closest we got was having to start Seb from the pitlane in Abu Dhabi last year because the car was underweight – but that was just because we didn't put enough fuel in the tank."

His pride in the Red Bull machine is quietly evident as he speaks of the demands that intricate Newey designs place on those who must fettle them. And he recounts how often he has seen the Red Bull garage with its

INSETS: CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES. THANKS TO: THE SWAN IN SALFORD, FOR LETTING US USE THEIR PREMISES FOR THIS PHOTOSHOOT







Horner's racing record

AS A DRIVER

1991	Formula Renault scholarship winner
1992-3	British Formula Renault: race winner and best rookie (1992)
1994	British F3: 16th
1995	British F3: 16th
1996	British F3 and British F2
1997	F3000 as driver/team boss of Arden: 21st; best finish 6th (Jerez '97)
1998	F3000 as driver/team boss of Arden: not classified (0 points)



AS TEAM BOSS

1997-8*	F3000 as driver/team boss of Arden: Best finish 6th (Jerez '97)
1999	F3000, Lukoil Arden Racing: 16th
2000	F3000, Arden Team Russia: 8th
2001	F3000, Arden Team Russia: 9th
2002	F3000, Arden Team Russia: champions
2003	F3000, Arden International: champions
2004	F3000, Arden International: champions
2005	Red Bull Racing: 7th
2006	Red Bull Racing: 7th
2007	Red Bull Racing: 5th
2008	Red Bull Racing: 7th
2009	Red Bull Racing: 2nd
2010	Red Bull Racing: champions
2011	Red Bull Racing: champions
2012	Red Bull Racing: champions

* F3000 teams' title not awarded

shutters up, lights ablaze, late into the evening at this circuit or that, with tireless bolters toiling beneath monocoque and sump. It's one of Horner's answers to the question 'how come you keep winning?' The Newey factor – while undeniably vital – is, he says, the public-facing pinnacle of a team that, behind the Red Bull marketing glitz, is a refreshingly straightforward racing team. An old-school and, dare we say it, *British* racing team, in fact, undistracted by luxury road-car projects or 'brand extensions'. That side of things is looked after by Red Bull's central marketing operation in the alpine hamlet of Fuschl-am-See. The MK squadron just go racing.

It begs the question: were Red Bull to one day to pull out (unlikely, given boss Dietrich Mateschitz's professed love of motorsport), or if the world energy drinks market were suddenly to implode, what future would there be for the world-beating F1 operation with still-modest premises that has grown up on the site of Stewart Grand Prix? Horner's answer, while politically astute, gives a hint that thought has been given to life without the comfort of a cash-rich benefactor: "The team has got itself into a strong position where we have several sources of income and we aren't totally dependent on Red Bull funding," he says. "Red Bull own the team and have invested heavily, but bringing in Infiniti as title partner for this year is extremely positive, as it lessens the team's burden on the company. And the team brings real value to Red Bull in terms of brand exposure, which was always part of Dietrich's vision."

Questions in the boardroom about the value of F1 to a globally ambitious energy drinks company will have been answered by the presence of a hugely promotable star driver, who just happens to be a product of the Red Bull talent academy. What would happen if *he* were to quit, for Ferrari, as the F1 rumour mill claims he might? Horner's brow furrows. His eyes tighten and there's a hint of bonhomie-disguised steel, so essential to any serious F1 player. "There are always rumours about Ferrari," he says, keen to settle the point. "Everybody was going to Ferrari last year – even I was. They have huge heritage and they're a great team, but Seb's completely comfortable in this environment and the rumours are exactly that." With a shake of his head he adds: "I can assure you that there is no agreement in place with Ferrari." There it is, for the record.

But what of Horner himself? Having achieved a remarkable amount with RBR by the tender age of 39, what role does he see for himself in or beyond F1? The answer is straightforward: "I don't have any thoughts in that direction," he says, "because in this business, long-term is the next race. I have no aspirations beyond this team and trying to keep winning."

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INFINITI RED BULL RACING

Building 2, Bradbourne Drive,
Tilbrook, Milton Keynes, MK7 8AT, UK

TEAM INFO

Company Red Bull Racing Ltd
Chassis RB9
Engine Renault RS27 – 2013
Website redbullracing.com
Twitter @redbullracing





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 2004
First GP Australia 2005
Races started 146
Wins 34
Poles 46
Fastest laps 29
Constructors' points 1,864.5
Constructors' titles 3
Drivers' titles 3

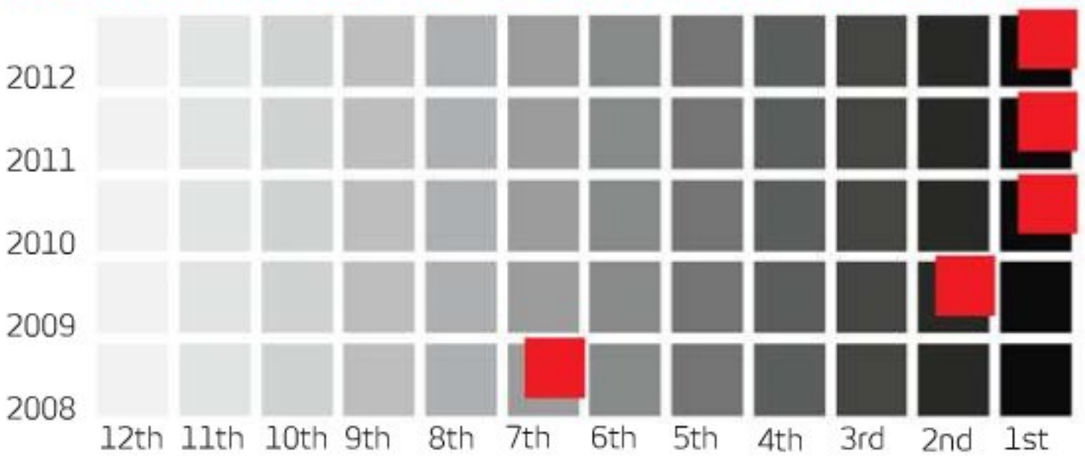
KEY PERSONNEL

Chairman
Dietrich Mateschitz
Team principal
Christian Horner
Chief technical officer
Adrian Newey
Head of aerodynamics
Peter Prodromou
Chief designer
Rob Marshall

F1 RACING SAYS...

What was most impressive about the way Red Bull took their third consecutive championship double was their incredible rate of technical progress over the course of the 2012 season despite the setback caused by the rule changes to the exhaust-blown diffusers. Chief technical officer Adrian Newey has likened the situation to his years at Williams in the early 1990s, when active suspension was suddenly banned and the team were subsequently left playing catch-up to their rivals. Despite this recent technical instability, the fact that the RB8 ended the 2012 season as the fastest car means that the team will be starting 2013 as favourites for the world championship, looking quite feasibly to add a fourth crown to their already impressive haul.

RED BULL'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 1 Black camera

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Born 3 July 1987
Place of birth
Heppenheim, Germany
Height 1.74m
Weight 64kg
Race engineer
Guillaume Rocquelin
Twitter N/A

F1 HISTORY
Debut USA 2007
Races started 101
Previous teams
Toro Rosso, BMW-Sauber
Wins 26
Poles 36
Fastest laps 15
Points 1,054
Drivers' titles 3
2012 position 1st

Car number 2 Yellow camera

MARK WEBBER

Born 27 August 1976
Place of birth
Queanbeyan, Australia
Height 1.84m
Weight 74kg
Race engineer
Simon Rennie
Twitter @AussieGrit

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2002
Races started 196
Previous teams
Williams, Jaguar, Minardi
Wins 9
Poles 11
Fastest laps 14
Points 848.5
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 6th



ALBERTO ASCARI
1952, 1953



JUAN MANUEL FANGIO
1956



MIKE HAWTHORN
1958



PHIL HILL
1961



JOHN SURTEES
1964

ALONSO
THE PERFECT 10?

The brilliance of Fernando Alonso and his eminence among his peers is beyond question. But can he fulfill his destiny and become Ferrari's tenth world champion?

WORDS RICHARD WILLIAMS

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NIKI LAUDA
1975, 1977



JODY SCHECKTER
1979



MICHAEL SCHUMACHER
2000-04



KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN
2007



FERNANDO ALONSO
2013?

"I am now and then asked who was the greatest driver of all time," Enzo Ferrari once said, "but this, I am afraid, is a question to which no reply can be given. It is not possible to compare drivers who have raced at different times, on different roads and tracks and especially under widely varying circumstances and conditions. None of them, I think, can be judged fairly out of his own time." And then, being Enzo Ferrari, he went ahead and did just that, nominating Tazio Nuvolari, a star of the Scuderia in the 1930s, and Stirling Moss – the one who got away.

As Fernando Alonso is now well aware, however, any man who steps into the cockpit of a Ferrari grand prix car must expect to be judged against the great figures of the past. Can he secure his place in the gallery of champions that began with Alberto Ascari in 1952 and continued through Juan Manuel Fangio, Mike Hawthorn, Phil Hill, John Surtees, Niki Lauda, Jody Scheckter and Michael Schumacher to Kimi Räikkönen, who became, in 2007, the most recent Ferrari driver to capture the title? Or is he destined to be numbered among the many starry recruits who arrived brimming with optimism but, for one reason or another, never quite matched up to the Scuderia's expectations?

Alonso may yet become the tenth man to win the Formula 1 world championship at the wheel of a Ferrari, but it is perhaps lucky for him that history says a driver doesn't necessarily *have* to achieve that feat in order to secure the profound respect of the Scuderia's worldwide army of fans. Among the Spaniard's predecessors, the figure whose memory is most cherished by the team's older adherents is one who never captured the title. It was a measure of Gilles Villeneuve's charisma that Enzo Ferrari himself, hardly the most generous assessor of his pilots, loved the little French-Canadian even when he was wrecking the team's machinery.

"With the destructive capacity he had when driving cars, grinding up differential shafts, gearboxes, clutches, brakes," Ferrari wrote in his memoirs, "he taught us what had to be done in order for a driver to be able to defend himself in an unforeseen moment. I liked him."

Times have changed and Alonso no longer needs to demolish the machinery in order to demonstrate its limitations. The telemetry does that for him. But would the Old Man have liked him, warming to him as he did to Villeneuve, or would he have withheld his fullest admiration, as he did from Ascari, Fangio, Hawthorn, Hill and Lauda?

There can be little doubt that, like almost everyone else, Enzo Ferrari would have looked beyond the recent statistics in order to arrive at an opinion. Three years without the title might seem like failure to the outside world, particularly when a $32m annual salary is factored into the equation, but a panel of distinguished observers of the motor-racing scene – including Damon Hill, Johnny Herbert and Murray Walker – named Alonso their man of the year in the January issue of this magazine, while in a poll of Formula 1 team principals carried out by *Autosport* he was voted driver of the season, separated by a clear margin from Sebastian Vettel, who had just become the youngest triple champion in the sport's history. Eight of those 12 team principals chose Alonso as their number one, a clear and hugely authoritative →

PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT

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Mike Hawthorn







recognition of the general belief that, in finishing a mere four points behind Vettel in the final championship table, he had spent the year overcoming the severe performance restrictions imposed by his car. Alonso's own end-of-the-year message to his fans was simple and upbeat. He said: "I give the season a ten. I would change nothing done by the team or yours truly; no mistakes, no mechanical problems, zero mistakes at the pitstops, zero strategic mistakes. Under maximum pressure we have performed again above what anyone imagined."

Alonso is a creature of moods, but nowadays he keeps the darker emotions well hidden. It helps that he very quickly became acclimatised to the unique environment of the Scuderia, endearing himself to the workers by spending plenty of time on the shop floor and showing an active interest in their work, while establishing himself within the team's aura by making regular use of the apartment created by Schumacher in the house at the Fiorano test track once used by Enzo himself.

It is two and a half years since he told me, during a conversation at Spa midway through his first season with Ferrari, that the title would be "the last thing to complete a perfect moment of my life". But whatever happened, he said, he was relaxed because Ferrari were always in a position to win: "I'll have this possibility for many years."

A few days earlier, Bernie Ecclestone had remarked, somewhat gratuitously, that Alonso would never match Michael Schumacher's achievements with the team. At 31, however, there is no reason why the current Ferrari team leader might not feel that there is still time to match Schumacher's five titles with the team, if not his 72 race wins in 11 seasons at Maranello.

Like Schumacher, Alonso arrived in Italy with the status conferred by a pair of back-to-back titles. The principal difference is that the Ferrari jigsaw of which Alonso formed a part in 2010 could not really be compared with the one into which Schumacher had slotted himself more than a decade earlier. When Ross Brawn and Rory Byrne joined Schumacher in the setup headed by Luca di Montezemolo and Jean Todt, with Gilles Simon running the engine department, something close to perfection was reached in every aspect of the operation. The combination of managers and engineers that welcomed Alonso in 2010 contained plenty of expertise, but it was not capable of functioning at the exalted level of synergy that enabled Todt and Brawn to propel Schumacher to his five consecutive titles.

> "I give the season a ten. I would change nothing"
> *Alonso on 2012*

To date, Alonso has raced in 58 grands prix as a Ferrari driver, winning nine times. By that yardstick, Schumacher had a more impressive start: 16 wins in his first 58 starts for the Scuderia. But the current team leader can take heart from the knowledge that it was not until Schumacher's fifth year with the team that the German was able to add to the two world titles he won with Benetton.

Plenty of incidents have studded Alonso's three seasons at Ferrari. In Bahrain 2010 he became the fifth driver – the others were Juan Manuel Fangio, Mario Andretti, Nigel Mansell and Kimi Räikkönen – to win on his Scuderia debut. Four more victories followed before, at the final race in Abu Dhabi, a catastrophic error by the pitwall strategists cost him the chance to beat Vettel to the title. One of those victories, however, was the tainted win at Hockenheim, where Rob Smedley's barely coded instruction to Massa, clearly issued

PHOTOS: STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES; LAT ARCHIVE







Jody Scheckter



Michael Schumacher



Niki Lauda



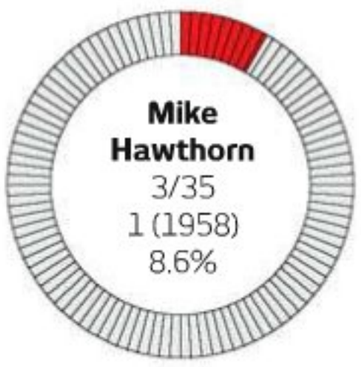
Kimi Räikkönen

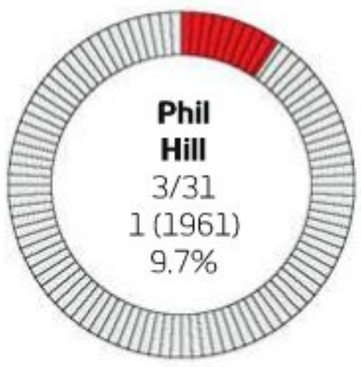


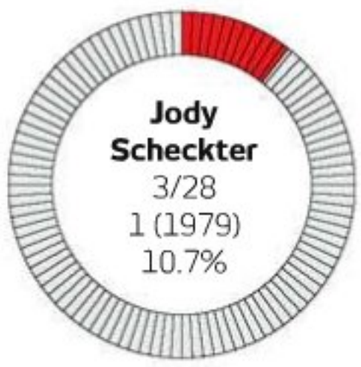
Fernando Alonso

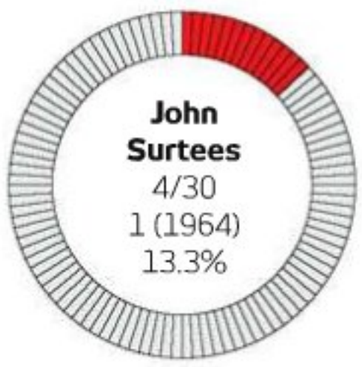
How does Alonso stack up against other Ferrari title winners?

KEY
DRIVER
WINS/GPS STARTED FOR FERRARI
TITLES
WIN RATIO %



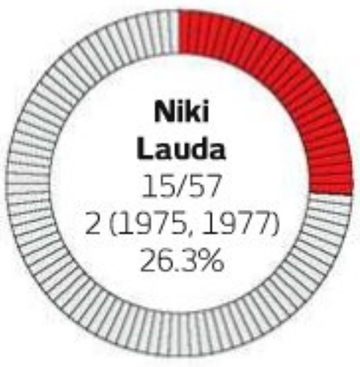


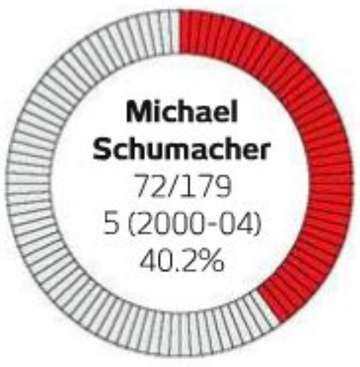


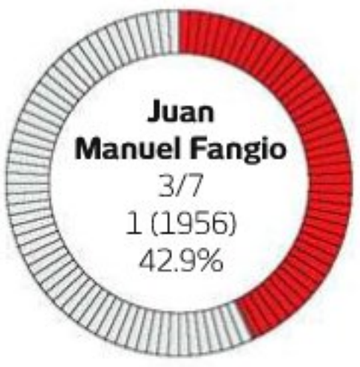














under duress, entered the annals of F1 infamy: "Fernando is faster than you," Smedley muttered, furious that his driver was being denied a victory that would have capped Massa's comeback from a serious injury.

In 2011, in an otherwise barren campaign, Alonso helped the team celebrate the 60th anniversary of their very first world championship GP victory by winning at Silverstone, the very place where José Froilán González got them off the mark in 1951. Of last season's three race wins, his victory in Valencia was achieved after qualifying 11th. Only four Ferrari drivers – Giancarlo Baghetti, 12th on the grid at Reims in 1961; Nigel Mansell, 12th in Hungary in 1989; Alain Prost, 13th in Mexico in 1990; and Rubens Barrichello, 18th at Hockenheim in 2000 – have come from further back to win.

Alonso's sheer talent is elevated by an ability to apply it with great intelligence in any and all circumstances. Those two titles with Renault in 2005 and 2006, his 17 victories with them, the 15 consecutive podiums between Turkey in 2005 and Canada 2006, all established the young man from Asturias as a major figure of his era. Strangely enough, despite its disappointing outcome, the 2012 season – with its victories snatched against the odds and the points finishes acquired through shrewdness and patience rather than sheer speed – only succeeded in consolidating his standing. →



FERNANDO ALONSO













Ferrari have certainly never doubted him. Two years ago, his original three-year contract, which began in 2010, was extended until the end of 2016. He has the additional security of knowing, too, that all their eggs are in his basket: he is their undisputed number one, even if Massa finally pulled out of a long decline towards the end of last season and suggested that he may once again be capable of bolstering the challenge for the constructors' title by picking up the sort of wins that took him to the brink of the 2007 championship.

One quality that Enzo Ferrari would certainly appreciate is the streak of ruthlessness that occasionally emerges from behind the generally laid-back public façade of a driver who loves to entertain his friends with card tricks. It was evident in Alonso's psychological duel with Lewis Hamilton during his ill-fated season with McLaren in 2007, in his – albeit seemingly passive – role as the beneficiary of his team-mate Nelson Piquet Jr's staged crash in Singapore the following year, and in his willingness to accept victory from Massa at Hockenheim.

"All Ferrari's eggs are in Alonso's basket"

Every one of the significant changes that has taken place inside the Scuderia over the past three years has been aimed at helping Alonso achieve his ambition. Aldo Costa was replaced as technical director by Pat Fry, and Loïc Bigois joined as head of aerodynamics, now to be assisted by Martin Bester, formerly of McLaren and Williams. This crucial area of development has caused the team persistent problems in recent years, to the extent that all aero work on the 2013 car has been done in the Toyota windtunnel at Cologne, while the troublesome tunnel at Maranello is completely rebuilt. During the traditional winter get-together in Madonna di Campiglio, Alonso gave a vivid precis of their travails with the old facility.

"We had a front wing that would give us two-tenths of a second in the tunnel," he said. "We would keep testing it, bring it to the race, and then it would go even slower. There were times when what we were testing in the tunnel did not correspond to what would happen on the race track. So simply we remained a bit behind in the last few seasons. Starting from 2013, we hope we are the ones who will innovate and we will have good correlation between what we find in the windtunnel and on the race track."

He probably believes it, given his faith in a team with whom he has struck up a rapport on all levels, technical and emotional. After driving Gonzalez's 60-year-old Tipo 375 at Silverstone on the morning of the 2011 British Grand Prix, he emerged from the cockpit to remark that "every single championship for Ferrari began with Froilán and that car." Later in the day, celebrating his own win, he said his thoughts were with the people at the factory who are "the sons and daughters of the guys who were there 60 years ago, and who are working with the same passion for racing."

On 14 August 2013, Ferrari will observe the 25th anniversary of the death of their founder, the man whose name, more than any other, still symbolises the appeal of motor racing and whose aura continues to hang over the team. Nothing could be more appropriate than for Fernando Alonso to fulfil his manifest destiny and capture, a year ahead of Michael Schumacher's schedule, the title that, as he told me, would "complete a perfect moment of my life", to seal his place among the Scuderia's immortals.

Richard Williams is the former chief sports writer of *The Guardian* and author of *Enzo Ferrari: A Life*, *The Death of Ayrton Senna*, *Racers* and *The Last Road Race*.

PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; KER ROBERTSON/GETTY IMAGES; MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES; CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES

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TEAM INFO

Company Scuderia Ferrari SpA
Chassis F138
Engine Ferrari 056
Website ferrari.com
Twitter @InsideFerrari





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 1929
First GP Monaco 1950
Races started 851
Wins 219
Poles 207
Fastest laps 227
Constructors' points 5,264.5
Constructors' titles 16
Drivers' titles 15

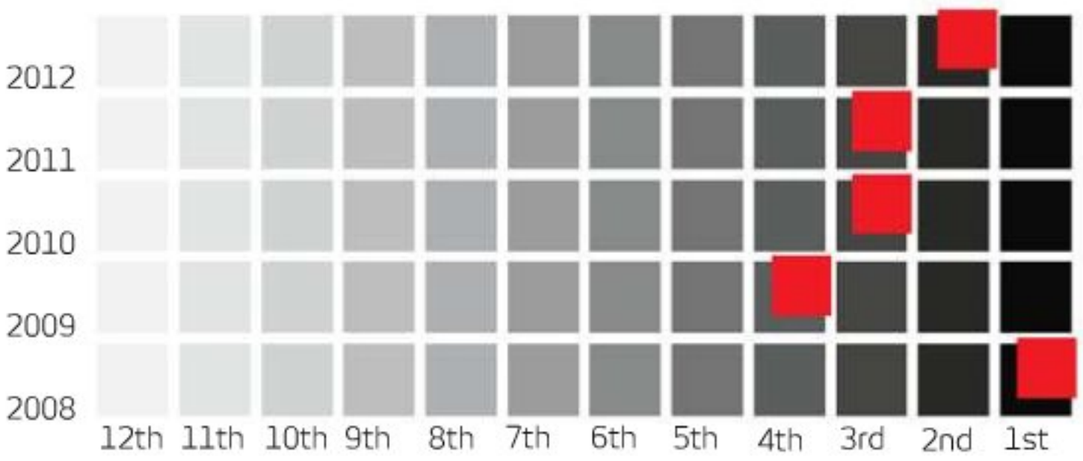
KEY PERSONNEL

President
Luca di Montezemolo
Team principal
Stefano Domenicali
Director of chassis
Pat Fry
Chief designer
Nikolas Tombazis
Engine and electronics director
Luca Marmorini

F1 RACING SAYS...

Ferrari certainly couldn't be accused of a lack of development over the 2012 season. They started testing with a car that was fundamentally poor, but with up to 15 different front wings and 18 new floors, in Alonso's hands the F2012 ensured Ferrari took the title right down to the wire yet again – only to suffer another last-minute defeat by Red Bull. Their biggest problem was qualifying pace, probably caused by an increased DRS effect, which led to handling instability. With the Maranello windtunnel undergoing an upgrade throughout 2013, the team are trying to sort out their correlation issues by using Toyota's facility in Cologne. But they're not allowed any more excuses after that...

FERRARI'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 3 Black Camera

FERNANDO ALONSO

Born 29 July 1981
Place of birth
Oviedo, Spain
Height 1.71m
Weight 68kg
Race engineer
Andrea Stella
Twitter @alo_official

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2001
Races started 196
Previous teams Renault, McLaren, Minardi
Wins 30
Poles 22
Fastest laps 19
Points 1,364
Drivers' titles 2
2012 position 2nd

Car number 4 Yellow camera

FELIPE MASSA

Born 25 April 1981
Place of birth
São Paulo, Brazil
Height 1.66m
Weight 59kg
Race engineer
Rob Smedley
Twitter @Felipe1Massa

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2002
Races started 172
Previous teams Sauber
Wins 11
Poles 15
Fastest laps 14
Points 704
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 7th

Dazzling one weekend, invisible the next. Why is it that Jenson Button – the man on whose shoulders McLaren's 2013 hopes rest – has such wild swings in performance? Andrew Benson investigates...

THE CURIOUS CASE OF JENSON BUTTON



PHOTO: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

Despite a world title, a brilliant maiden win in mixed conditions and another in only his second race with McLaren, it probably took until the 2010 Chinese Grand Prix before Jenson Button removed any remaining doubts that he was a truly great racing driver.

His first F1 win – Hungary 2006 – came after 113 races, so impressively though he handled the unpredictable weather that day, it was never going to be enough to secure the mantle of greatness. The foundations of his 2009 world championship, six wins in the first seven races with Brawn, were explained away by some – rather too simplistically – as being the result of a superior car. And even victory in Australia in the second race of 2010 could be attributed partly to luck in choosing the right tyres at the right time. But his China victory in 2010 was stunning: it could not be ignored.

Again there were mixed conditions. Again he built a huge advantage by choosing the right tyre at the right time, a proven skill of his. But this time, the advantage was wiped out by a Safety Car. The race came down to a shoot-out between Button and team-mate Lewis Hamilton over the final 17 laps, on a damp track, on tyres that were only one lap different in age.

Button won. Conclusively. A straight fight against 'the fastest driver in the world' in equal cars in wet conditions. No longer could there be any question. Button was truly exceptional. And since then, he has proved it again and again. →

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From last to first in 30 breathtaking laps in Canada in 2011. Beating Sebastian Vettel in a straight fight on the German's favourite circuit in Japan 2011, even as Vettel clinched his second title. Operating on a different level to anyone else – and outqualifying Hamilton by nearly a second – at Spa 2012.

And yet, there is another side to Button. The driver who displays such deftness of touch and exquisite feel for grip levels time and again in damp races is the same driver who sometimes simply disappears off the radar – finishing 16th in Canada last year while Hamilton won, for example. Since last summer, McLaren have attributed that performance in Montréal and some similarly weak ones around the same period to their lack of understanding of the notoriously difficult Pirelli tyres last year.

"What made it look a lot worse for Jenson than it actually was," says sporting director Sam Michael, "was that at a couple of those races – Barcelona qualifying and then the Montréal race – Lewis performed exceptionally well. That probably highlighted it more. We were also struggling to understand the tyres on Lewis's car; we were just about getting away with it."

Which is all very well, but there are two obvious objections. First, why didn't Hamilton suffer as badly? And second, even Button himself admits that he tends to struggle more than other top drivers when the car is not to his liking. So what's going on? Why does a driver who so often looks untouchable sometimes look so unconvincing?

Ask anyone who knows Button well to describe his driving and one word comes up immediately: 'smoothness'. Jenson has a silky touch with the car; a way of putting it on the limit without it looking dramatic. It almost seems as if he isn't really trying. It is a driving style that Jackie Stewart has championed for decades and which arguably reached its apotheosis with Alain Prost, to whose driving style Button's has rightly been compared.

Smoothness appears to the outside world as the car never being out of shape, never obviously sliding at the front or rear. But that's not what's going on. An F1 car is *always* sliding when it's cornering; how it appears to the observer is merely a reflection of how much its driver allows it to deviate – either front or rear – from its perfect angle of attack.

Sometimes a driver may do this deliberately. Outstanding though Sebastian Vettel is, he only really comes on song when he can perform what he refers to as his "tricks" – by which he means using oversteer to turn the car into the corner. But that creates an inherent instability, which is not always easy to correct. And that's why Vettel didn't really take off last season until Red Bull design chief Adrian Newey found a way of accessing much more downforce from the exhausts than before. This kept the rear nailed while Vettel danced.

Button is not like this. His car is sliding, too... but imperceptibly. He only lets it go so far. He likes what his former Brawn team-mate, Rubens

From one extreme to the other: Button finds himself battling the backmarkers, having qualified 12th in Monaco 2012 (above) then ends the season on a high with a peerless drive to victory in mixed conditions at Interlagos (below)



PHOTOS: STEVEN TEE/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

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"Button struggles more than other top drivers when the car is not to his liking"

Barrichello, describes as "a good back end on turn-in". He wants to be able to rely on the rear; he doesn't want it to step out; he wants to balance it with what Barrichello describes as "a great feeling for what the car is doing". This is partly what explains his supernatural ability in mixed conditions.

How 'great' is Button's feeling for the car's behaviour? From 2001 until 2007, traction control was allowed in Formula 1. During this time, most drivers basically stamped on the throttle at the apex of the corner and let the electronics sort out the optimum exit. Not so Button. He never ran what most people would understand as traction control. The system on his car would stop the wheels going out of control if they were going to break away completely, but had he ever gone hard on the throttle he would – unlike the other drivers – have got wheelspin. He always had command of the throttle – he does not like not having control of the engine. And the remarkable thing is that so fine was his feel for exit grip, he was just as quick with his car set up like this as he was with traction control.

The conventional wisdom in F1, even among engineers who have worked with him, is that beyond the smoothness, Button has a very distinctive driving style – he turns in early, on the brakes, balancing the car with pedal modulation and steering. Others, like Hamilton, the theory goes, turn in later and more sharply, using different forces to rotate the rear of the car.

For Sam Michael, though, this is a "myth". He agrees that Button is "very smooth", but adds: "The main differences in style between quick drivers are between turn-in and apex. But they won't necessarily be consistent all the time. You couldn't necessarily do an overlay between Jenson and another driver and say: 'Jenson always does this and he always does that' because they are changing with the car balance. It's too complicated to say he's got a certain style. I know people love to say it and it sounds great in an article, but I'm afraid it's just not true."

Propose to Michael the theory that Button doesn't want a snappy rear end, and he says: "Yeah, that's true, but I've never met a driver who does like the rear to snap. It goes back to this myth.

"Ring up Lewis now," he adds, "and ask him if he likes oversteer."

"I don't have his mobile number," I say.

"I can tell you what the answer is," he responds rhetorically. "It's one of these myths where people try to read stuff into their style but it comes down to little intricacies more to do with what they do with the steering wheel at the apex than anything else – and that's very difficult to see on the data."

But certain aspects of Button's driving *do* stand out. He is always particularly quick at certain tracks – Silverstone, Spa, Suzuka, Shanghai and Melbourne for instance – and then there is his pace in mixed conditions. It seems as if there should be different reasons behind these different things but, in fact, the reasons are fundamentally the same. Those specific circuits, Michael says, are tracks where front-end grip – or, specifically, the lack of it – dictates pace. Perfect for a driver who is particularly good at feeling the limits of the tyre and driving up to but not beyond them. Meanwhile, Button's pace on a damp track, and his ability to get right to the →



Button is always quick at Spa, but here, in 2012, he went from pole to victory, outqualifying team-mate Hamilton by over a second



JENSON BUTTON



limit straight away rather than taking three or four laps to adapt to it as some drivers do, is down to him extrapolating accurately the grip that will be available at each corner. Which, again, is all about feeling and anticipating what's available and not going beyond it. And not just once, but all the time, practically every time there is such a race.

So why does this driver with such exquisite touch and balance sometimes struggle if, in the dry, the car is not behaving quite as he wants it to? Again, his former team-mate Rubens Barrichello has an answer.

"A smooth driver has a good feeling for what the back end is going to do," he says. "It is almost as if things happen in slow motion. That is why he is good in mixed conditions. For some people, things can happen too fast, but a driver like JB can see ahead to what the car is going to do.

"In the past five or ten years, Formula 1 cars have become quite sensitive. You could have a great balance in final practice and so not want to change it for qualifying, but then come qualifying the track is five degrees hotter and the wind is blowing just a little bit stronger.

These factors tend to be completely imperceptible to the viewing public but they can be a big thing for a driver – and for some more so than others. This is where Lewis could have an advantage over JB. He has a great feeling for what the car is doing. Sometimes this is great but sometimes it can damage your confidence, because with a little less grip you don't push right up to the limit.

"I used to struggle with this," Barrichello continues. "I had a great feeling for the car and the setup. But, for example, I would go out and feel the car had less grip than before lunch. Michael [Schumacher, Barrichello's Ferrari team-mate] did not have those feelings.

"The car would go sideways a little more but he would probably lose a tenth where I would lose two. Feeling the car more sometimes was not ideal. I think JB could suffer from that, too."

As for the struggles Button was experiencing in trying to generate tyre temperature in 2012, Barrichello has sympathy. This time, it's all to do with that smoothness.

"You may not change your style from one day to another, especially after so many years driving like that," Barrichello explains. "So you don't get the front tyres to work. The temperatures are low. Then you don't generate grip and that is it. Setup can have an effect, but only to a certain point."

And why doesn't this affect Button in the wet? "Because the tyres are much softer," Barrichello says, "so drivers normally don't have a problem with lack of temperature. They could have the opposite – aggressive drivers destroy wet tyres much sooner. Whereas smoothness keeps them in good condition for longer."

So the sensitivity to grip levels that makes Button exceptional is also the reason behind his occasional struggles. And yet because his smoothness is so extreme, the problems are magnified. You can't have one without the other. If you want the exquisiteness of Button on form, you have to accept the occasional mediocrity as well.

Andrew Benson is BBC Sport's chief F1 writer.



At the 2011 Canadian GP, Button sped from last to first in just 30 laps. The following year, he qualified tenth here to finish 16th

What will Sergio Pérez bring to McLaren?

There was a time when no father-of-the-bride speech was complete without the line, "I like to think that I haven't so much lost a daughter as gained a bathroom." Following Lewis Hamilton's departure for Mercedes, McLaren have lost one of the fastest drivers in Formula 1 – so what, if anything, have they gained?

Sergio Pérez is cheaper to employ than Lewis, the importance of which should not be underestimated. For while McLaren are a large and well-resourced team, they remain dependent on sponsorship – and, in road-car manufacturing terms, they are still small fry compared with the likes of Mercedes or even Ferrari. Yes, Lewis wanted to leave, but the final schism stemmed from a failure to agree on his 'package'.

In marketing terms Sergio will open up new opportunities across the Americas, but the quantity and value of those will depend on his performance on track. He needs to be more consistent than he has been. In 2012, for instance, he gamely challenged for the win in Malaysia, but at many other rounds he was anonymous. After the announcement of the McLaren move, he scored no points at all.



When he appeared in McLaren kit for the first time, he acknowledged this. "I made some mistakes," he told reporters, "but the points didn't come for many reasons... We have to attack qualifying more and extract the maximum. I think obviously it is something to improve."

Stuart Codling

PHOTOS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT; McLAREN

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GONE IN

On track, the cars are so evenly matched that pitstops have become race-deciding moments. That's why teams such as McLaren are pushing the limits – and aiming to get faster still

WORDS MATT YOUSON PICTURES STEVEN TEE/LAT

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2.31 SECONDS...

The sound of two guns firing is a beautiful thing for a pitcrew to hear. It's the signature of a smooth operation: one noise as four wheels come off in unison; one noise as four go on. No overlaps; no delays; no confusion. All things in harmony. It's simple to explain, incredibly difficult to do – and doing it in less than 2.5 seconds is complicated beyond belief. But that was a decent time for a top Formula 1 team at the end of the 2012 season. By the end of this year, 2.5 seconds will most probably be considered rather slow.

Pitstops are in a state of flux. Riccardo Patrese had an insipid 1993 Belgian GP, memorable only for the fact that his Benetton crew had him up and down in 3.2secs. That record stood for 17 years. Then refuelling returned and pitstops got longer. Even the most limited splash-and-dash was likely to be a five-second affair. The pressure was off and development was geared towards comfort rather than speed. Even when cars came in just for tyres, there wasn't the kit or the training to beat Benetton's time. It took the latest refuelling ban to change that.

It's been a bit of a slow-burner. In 2010 the teams were still finding their feet: the arms race didn't really begin until 2011. Since then we've seen the arrival of retained wheel nuts, laser alignment, helium-powered guns, customised guns, trick regulators, carbon jacks, swivelling jacks and every sort of traffic-light system imaginable. They don't get much attention because there's been plenty of action out on track – but the battle in the box is fought just as hard. Mercedes and Red Bull both slipped below the three-second benchmark in 2011, →

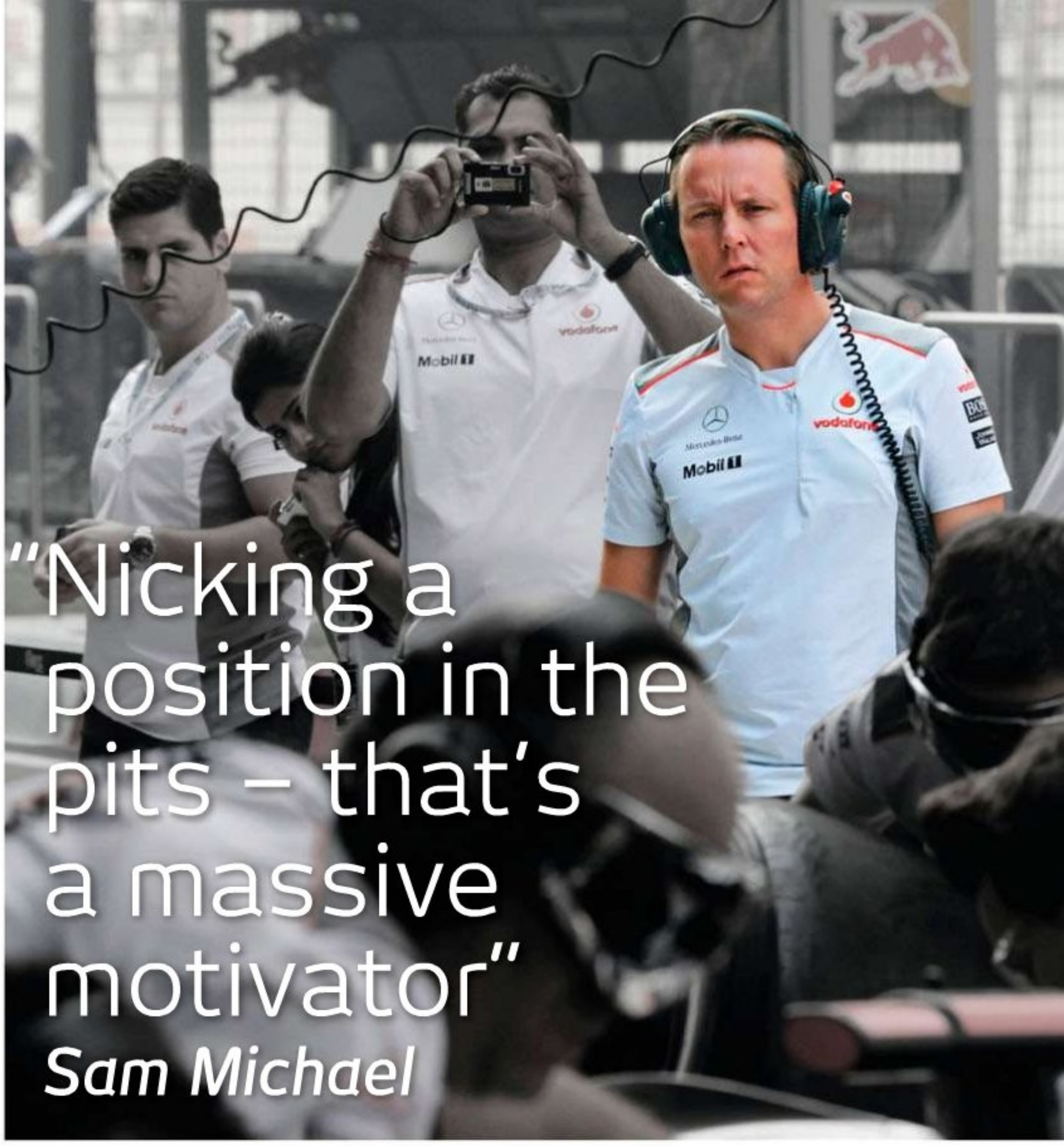
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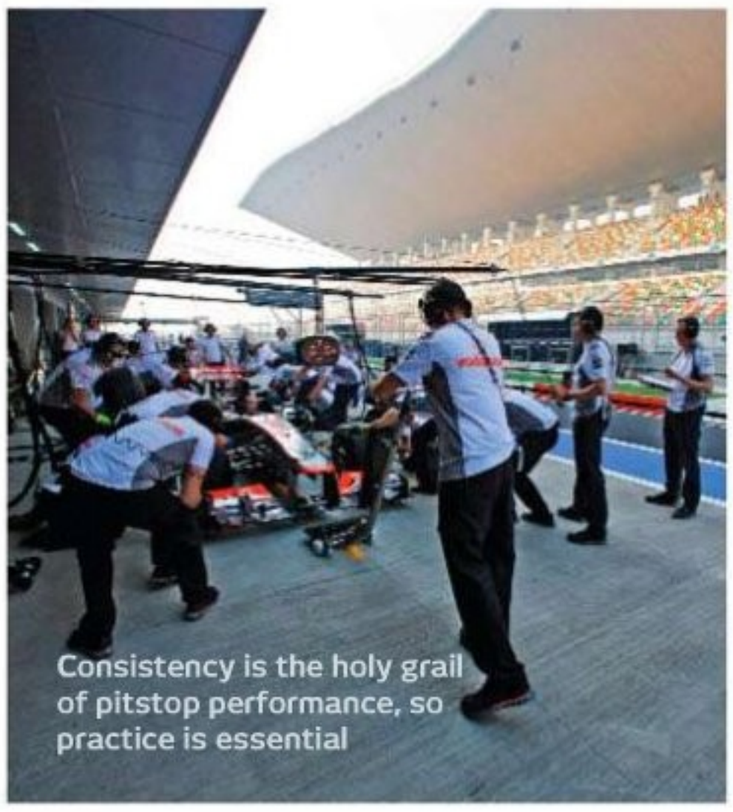
then last year Ferrari started well with an extreme thread pitch that took only three turns to tighten and untighten. But the Prancing Horse proved to be a one-trick pony and were soon overtaken by Red Bull again – then McLaren.

This was a turnaround from McLaren's early season form when botched stops caused them to be alternately lampooned and disparaged. It hid the fact that when they got pitstops right, they got them *very* right. There was plenty of experimentation in the mix, which was often blamed for their failures, although closer analysis suggests the only problem caused by new kit was the broken swivel jack in Valencia – every other problem was down to established equipment or finger trouble. That alone justifies McLaren's programme: if the old equipment is unpredictable it isn't much of a gamble to try something new. It all came good in Germany, when Jenson Button's 2.31-second stop set a new unofficial record (pitstop times are always approximate) and, more importantly, stole second place from Sebastian Vettel. That's pitcrew gold, incidentally: a stop done well is one thing; a stop done well that nabs a position is something else entirely.

"When you talk about what makes a pitcrew happy it's not about the time on the stopwatch; it's about when they make a material difference to the race outcome," says McLaren sporting director Sam Michael. "Having a good stop when we're ploughing on with five seconds either side of us on the road is all very nice, but nicking a position in the pits – that's a massive motivator. Everyone knows they've directly contributed. Of course the same is true if they drop the ball and lose a position. It's gutting."

Michael, who works with team manager Dave Redding on McLaren's pitstop performance, argues that F1 needed a nudge to re-engage in a pitstop race. "The priority for any team is always going to be how fast the car is, not the pitstop.




Consistency is the holy grail of pitstop performance, so practice is essential

But the cars are much closer together at the moment, and pitstops can be performance differentiators. Suddenly they're crucial, race-deciding moments. Hence there's a lot more energy going into them right now. We're in the third year of the refuelling ban and it's taken that long for teams to reapportion the resources and say 'this is worth it'. And because that decision has been taken, good stops have come down from four seconds to 2.5 seconds."

It's still a work in progress: Michael believes there's more time to be found. "It'll be sub-two-seconds before long. To run that time on average through the season will be difficult, but it is possible. I'd say that next year, two seconds will become the norm."

STOPS AND STARTS: McLAREN'S 2012 PITSTOP PERFORMANCE

From a bumbling 4.06sec performance in Malaysia to a blistering 2.31sec record-breaker in Germany, McLaren picked up the pace in terms of pitstops over the course of 2012



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The paradoxical logic of pitstops means McLaren and their rivals will achieve their targets by ignoring them. Chasing records is a good way to foul up a stop. Consistency is the holy grail of pitstop performance – which is why Michael candidly admits Red Bull are still the benchmark, despite his team regularly having the quickest stop in the second half of 2012.

"It's always been about the average time. We've never had a target for ultimate pace. In fact we don't even talk about it internally. We only talk about consistency and average times because we'd rather the crew focus on being smooth and consistent, not on breaking records. Through that process they do break records – but it's a consequence rather than a target."

Setting records is not for everyone. While the sub-three-second stop is the benchmark for leading teams this year, at the other end of the grid 4.5secs is still a challenge. It's a given that top teams have better pitstops. Whenever that's mentioned, there is an implication that those at the wrong end of the pitlane somehow go about their box business with less professionalism. That's not the reality. The back of the grid isn't sinking resources into the technology to go faster. There's no real incentive to shave a tenth off a pitstop in a car four seconds off the pace: it's better to plough the budget into making the car faster. Or, to put it another way, McLaren wouldn't be doing a 2.31-second stop if they borrowed a car and garage kit from Caterham.

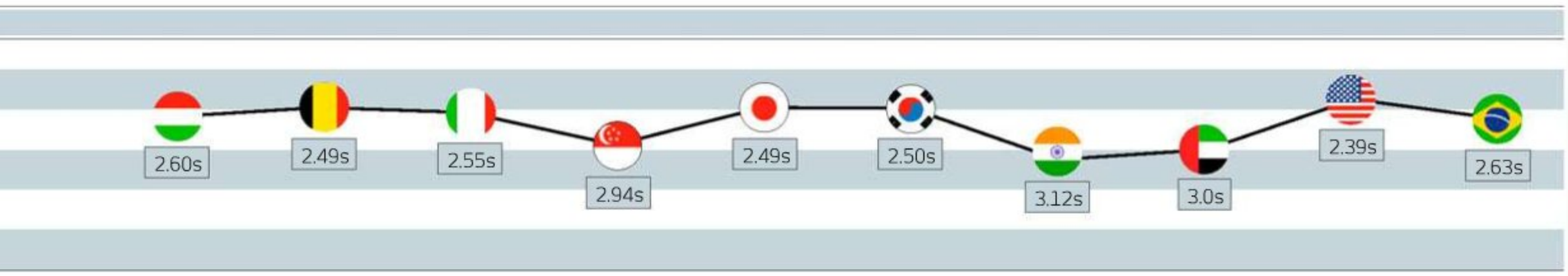
For those who are in the race, however, incremental improvements rather than magic bullets seem to be the way forward – if only because the magic bullets have already been tried. Mercedes grabbed an advantage in 2011 by porting their retained wheel-nuts over from DTM. Their rivals scrambled to design their own – Lotus alone went through four iterations in the first half of 2012 – because there was such a big chunk of time to be found. Swivelling jacks were worth two or three tenths, hence McLaren's decision to gamble on theirs. Experiments with helium-powered pneumatics were banned for 2012, but work continues at pace on gun technology, such as creating better regulators to ensure pressure doesn't drop when the trigger is pressed. On the car, axles and wheel-nuts continue to be tweaked, and anything that can shave off a hundredth of a second is considered fair game.

Teams battle to outdo each other by constantly developing time-saving pitstop technology

"Where will the time come from? Everywhere," says Michael. "It will come from everywhere, with the refinement of everything. If you've had a certain design for a long time and then see a fundamental shift to something else, that's what you get. It's going to be ongoing refinement for pitstops over the next few years."

So where does it all end? After the two-second barrier is breached, will the target be one second? Probably not. Even if the laws of physics and the science of biomechanics allowed it, it's hard to imagine the technologies that could do it without hampering the performance of the car. "We'll reach the point where it's not worth the investment," forecasts Michael. "Once we get below two seconds, there will be only a finite amount we can gain – but we're not there yet."

So perhaps the pitstop race is a transient contest. Best enjoy it while it lasts.







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PHOTOS: PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES; MCLAREN

TEAM INFO

Company McLaren Racing Ltd
Chassis MP4-28
Engine Mercedes-Benz FO 108F
Website mclaren.com
Twitter @TheFifthDriver





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 1963
First GP Monaco 1966
Races started 723
Wins 182
Poles 155
Fastest laps 151
Constructors' points 4,710.5
Constructors' titles 8
Drivers' titles 12

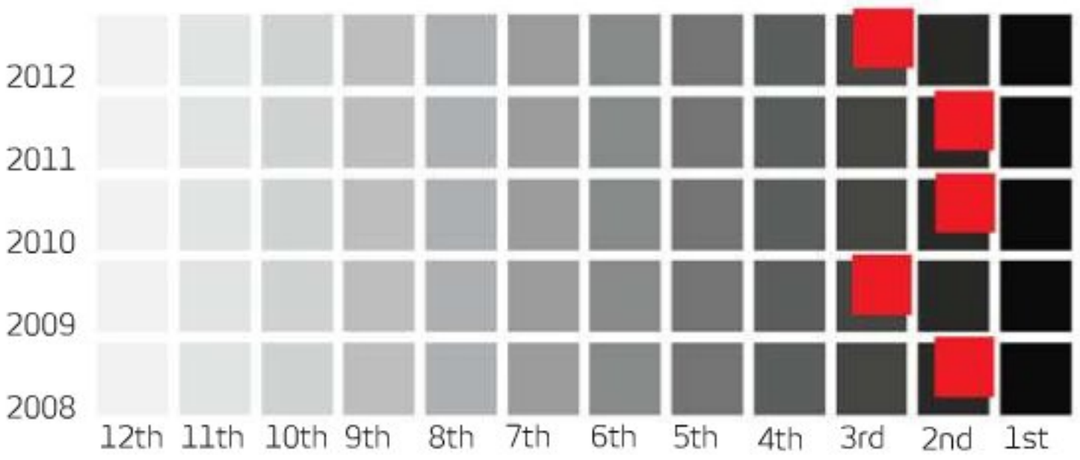
KEY PERSONNEL

Chairman
Ron Dennis
Team principal
Martin Whitmarsh
Managing director
Jonathan Neale
Sporting director
Sam Michael
Director of engineering
Tim Goss

F1 RACING SAYS...

McLaren must eradicate their inconsistency in 2013. Yes, in Germany last year they recorded the fastest pitstop of 2012 – a sharp 2.31 seconds – but they also suffered some calamitous delays. Although their reliability was better than average, the MP4-27 suffered more failures on Sundays, which cost them both points and wins. Development was rapid, and by the mid-season point 80 per cent of the bodywork was new – but McLaren themselves concede they didn't do as good a job as Red Bull. Jenson Button – now their undisputed lead driver for 2013 – won magnificently in Melbourne and Spa, but struggled so much with the Pirelli tyres in Canada that he ended up being lapped.

McLAREN'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 5 Black camera



JENSON BUTTON

Born 19 January 1980
Place of birth Frome, UK
Height 1.82m
Weight 72kg
Race engineer
Dave Robson
Twitter @jensonbutton

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2000
Races started 228
Previous teams Brawn, Honda, BAR, Renault, Benetton, Williams
Wins 15
Poles 8
Fastest laps 8
Points 999
Drivers' titles 1
2012 position 5th

Car number 6 Yellow camera



SERGIO PÉREZ

Born 26 January 1990
Place of birth
Guadalajara, Mexico
Height 1.73m
Weight 63kg
Race engineer
Mark Temple
Twitter @SChecoPerez

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2011
Races started 37
Previous teams
Sauber
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 1
Points 80
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 10th

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Kimi: the full picture





One of very few journalists to un-riddle F1's great enigma is Anthony Peacock, who spent a year as the reticent Iceman's personal press officer. And guess what? It turned out to be a laugh a minute...

PORTRAIT LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT



The scene is a slightly grotty chain hotel in France a couple of years ago. You know the sort: beds bolted to the floor, a bathroom that smells of damp, lights in the long and dingy corridors that suddenly extinguish themselves and rooms painted in clashing primary colours in a desperate attempt to make the place look 'contemporary'.

Definitely not the sort of establishment where you would expect to find a former Formula 1 world champion, or indeed any world champion.

But outside this hotel, sitting in a minibus in the half-light of the early morning, is rally driver Sébastien Loeb – and he now has nine world titles to his name. Loeb isn't alone: all the other Citroën drivers and co-drivers are in the bus. Apart from two: Kimi Räikkönen and his co-driver Kaj Lindstrom.

Kaj is frantically ringing upstairs from reception, with almost visible steam coming out of his ears. Kimi is nowhere to be seen. Sébastien is amused. "It's good Kimi's here because it takes the heat off me," explains the Frenchman. "Normally I'm the one who is late for everything..."

Except Sébastien is wrong. Kimi isn't here and the normally implacable Kaj →



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Lindstrom (you have to be implacable to be a successful co-driver) is growing vexed. There's urgent talk of taxis or a second minibus being summoned so that the first one can leave. And then, all of a sudden, a freshly showered Kimi appears, wandering down the stairs, sunglasses perched on head, sipping a small coffee.

"It was such a nice hotel I thought I'd enjoy it a bit longer," he explains, gleaming driving shoes picking their way through the forest of fag butts outside reception before discarding the coffee cup, hopping into the minibus, pulling his cap down over his eyes, and checking out for the three-minute drive to the service park. Which is presumably the only reason why Citroën chose such an insalubrious hotel in the first place.

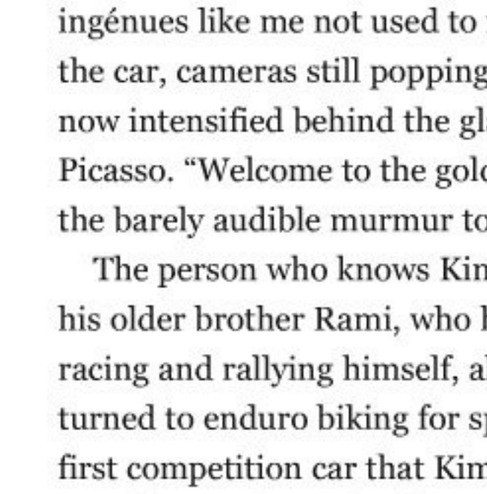
This was just one of the many memorable one-liners I was fortunate enough to hear from the Iceman while I was looking after his media commitments on the World Rally Championship: an environment where he often said he could show more of himself and his own personality, away from the constant pressure and scrutiny of Formula 1.

The result was a fascinating insight into what Kimi Räikkönen is *really* like. His speed behind a steering wheel is undeniable, his car control is legendary and his aversion to public speaking is infamous. But what most people don't always realise is just how funny he is. His drily acerbic asides are almost straight out of PG Wodehouse.

Take one evening sponsor function he attended in Finland. As soon as he came out of the building, there was an explosion of flash bulbs like tracer fire, daunting for those ingénues like me not used to it. We scurried to the car, cameras still popping, with the glare now intensified behind the glass of a Citroën Picasso. "Welcome to the goldfish bowl," came the barely audible murmur to my left.

The person who knows Kimi best is probably his older brother Rami, who has done a bit of racing and rallying himself, although he has now turned to enduro biking for sporting kicks. The first competition car that Kimi drove was actually Rami's Opel rally car, taken without consent one evening by little brother.

They started out in karting together (a gift from their late father) and it was soon obvious where the greater talent lay. But once Kimi reached Formula 1, the brothers stopped talking about racing. Or rather, Kimi did.



"He never really speaks about it and I don't ask him," says Rami. "When we're together we talk about normal family stuff. Anything apart from racing."



"Say what you think, they use it against you. So it's best to say nothing"

The only family members who badger Kimi about Formula 1 are his nephews. Rami has two young boys – the eldest of whom has already started karting – and they idolise Uncle Kimi. "Every year when I ask them where they want to go on holiday they always ask to go to Kimi's place in Switzerland," Rami points out. "There's no point trying to take them anywhere else."

But the price of fame is a high one, particularly if you live in a small village near Helsinki and you're a young karter riddled with the usual adolescent insecurities. "It's tough if you're racing and you have the name Räikkönen," adds Rami, who is just under two years older than Kimi. "There are certain expectations and people are always looking at you. So it's not easy for the boys and sometimes they wish they had a different name."

This aversion to publicity is certainly a family trait, and as well as never discussing racing, Rami went only to one grand prix last year – Monaco – during which he didn't see much of his brother at all.



"We only went because Monaco is a nice place and we thought it would be fun," Rami says. "Probably we will go to Monaco again this year too, but really that's it. We don't get involved: we just see Kimi as Kimi, not this famous grand prix driver."

However, Rami – along with the rest of the family – watches every race on TV. The highlight last year, of course, was Abu Dhabi. "We were all really excited; especially the boys," Rami recalls. "It was fantastic and the result was everything Kimi deserves. I think he's happy now in Formula 1. For ages afterwards the boys would say: 'Leave me alone, I know what I'm doing!'"

Kimi's desire to keep himself to himself is a well-known family trait: he's pretty much the same in family life as he is at racetracks, unreconstructed and true to himself. In other words, he has no time for bullshit – which is why people love him.

According to Mark Arnall, his physical trainer and confidant since the McLaren days, this is one of Kimi's defining characteristics. "He doesn't get caught up worrying about what people think of him," says Mark. "People have differing opinions about Kimi, but he really doesn't care what they are. Instead, he has the ability to focus solely on driving the car."

Everything else takes second place... especially media work. "In the end, they all mostly ask the same questions," said Kimi himself once, in reflective mood over a beer. "Then sometimes if you think about it and say exactly what you think, they use it against you. So really, it's best to say nothing."

The same rule doesn't apply to everyone else, though. I often used to do written interviews for Kimi and started off thinking that it was best to check with him first to see what he wanted to say. Kimi simply shrugged. "Say whatever you like," he replied. "They'll just make it up anyway..."

Kimi may leave some interviewers frustrated, but unlike many of his contemporaries, he'll never tell a lie. And that's the overriding impression that everyone who works with Kimi gets; beneath the laid-back exterior there is a man with rigorous integrity. He makes no secret of his dislike of media work, but if he has made a commitment he sticks to it... eventually.

One journalist on Rally Finland thought he wasn't going to get a Kimi interview scheduled for the afternoon, due to a re-arranged technical debrief. But at around seven in the evening, when the whole thing was long forgotten, Kimi

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Kimi proves that he knows *exactly* what he's doing with that win in Abu Dhabi 2012

PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT

suddenly mentioned that he hadn't seen the journalist in question. "Where is he?" asked the Dictaphone-shy Iceman. "I can do it now." And he did too, very eloquently.

Kaj Lindstrom, the only man to share a competition car with Kimi and witness his work first-hand, says: "There's no side to Kimi. What you see is what you get. Sure, it wasn't always easy. But it took me about two minutes to realise how special he was. He enjoyed his rallying and I think he'll give it another go one day. If he asked me, I'd be delighted to co-drive for him again. It's obvious he's got the talent and speed."

There's no substitute for that of course: it's the reason why his managers, David and Steve Robertson, originally signed him as a tongue-tied teenager and brought him to England. He still speaks fondly of those days. "Did you ever see that TV programme, *Footballers' Wives*?" Kimi once asked. "I lived in that house where they filmed it, in Essex, when I first came to England..."

This is the main thing that people don't appreciate about Kimi: he is very funny, with a supply of unexpected anecdotes. But that's not what made him famous. It's that transcendental sixth sense he has with any car, whether in rallying or racing.

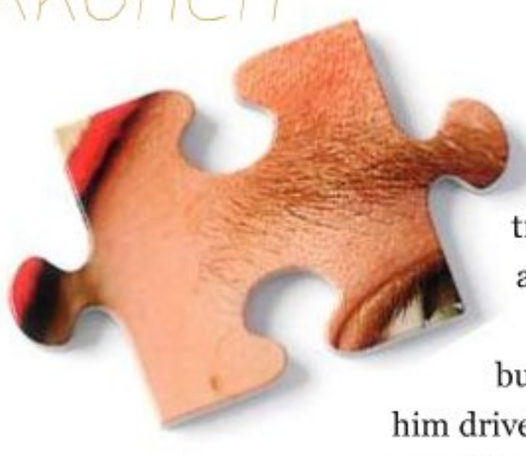


"He's always had this great natural feel that lets him push hard but still get the most out of the tyres," says Steve Robertson. "The number of fastest laps he's set speaks for itself. It's a god-given talent."

"In the end, Kimi will just do what he wants to do"
Rami Räikkönen

The only drivers with more fastest laps are Michael Schumacher (77) and Alain Prost (41) – and with 37, Kimi is closing in on Prost's tally. People who thought he never really got his head around rallying were wrong, too: in testing Kimi was often faster than Sébastien Loeb.

Rally testing, of course, is all about pounding up and down the same godforsaken piece of road, *ad nauseum*, and even though the shortest test stage has far more corners than the average circuit, you end up learning them all by heart. It was only the assimilation of pace notes that held Kimi back. At a subconscious level he still resented people talking to him when he was trying to drive: the same thought he articulated so famously in Abu Dhabi.



For Kimi, rallying is unfinished business. Last year he asked Lotus to let him drive on Rally Finland: the response was a big fat 'no'. Expect the same question and the same answer again this year, but perhaps not the same result. "In the end, Kimi will just do what he wants to do," says his brother Rami. "The only sure thing is that the more you tell him not to do something, the more likely he is to do it."

Neatly packaged in one sentence, that's all you need to know about Kimi. And it's what makes him the most interesting, individual and surprisingly committed driver out there. Because it's easy enough to conform. Much harder to choose your own road.

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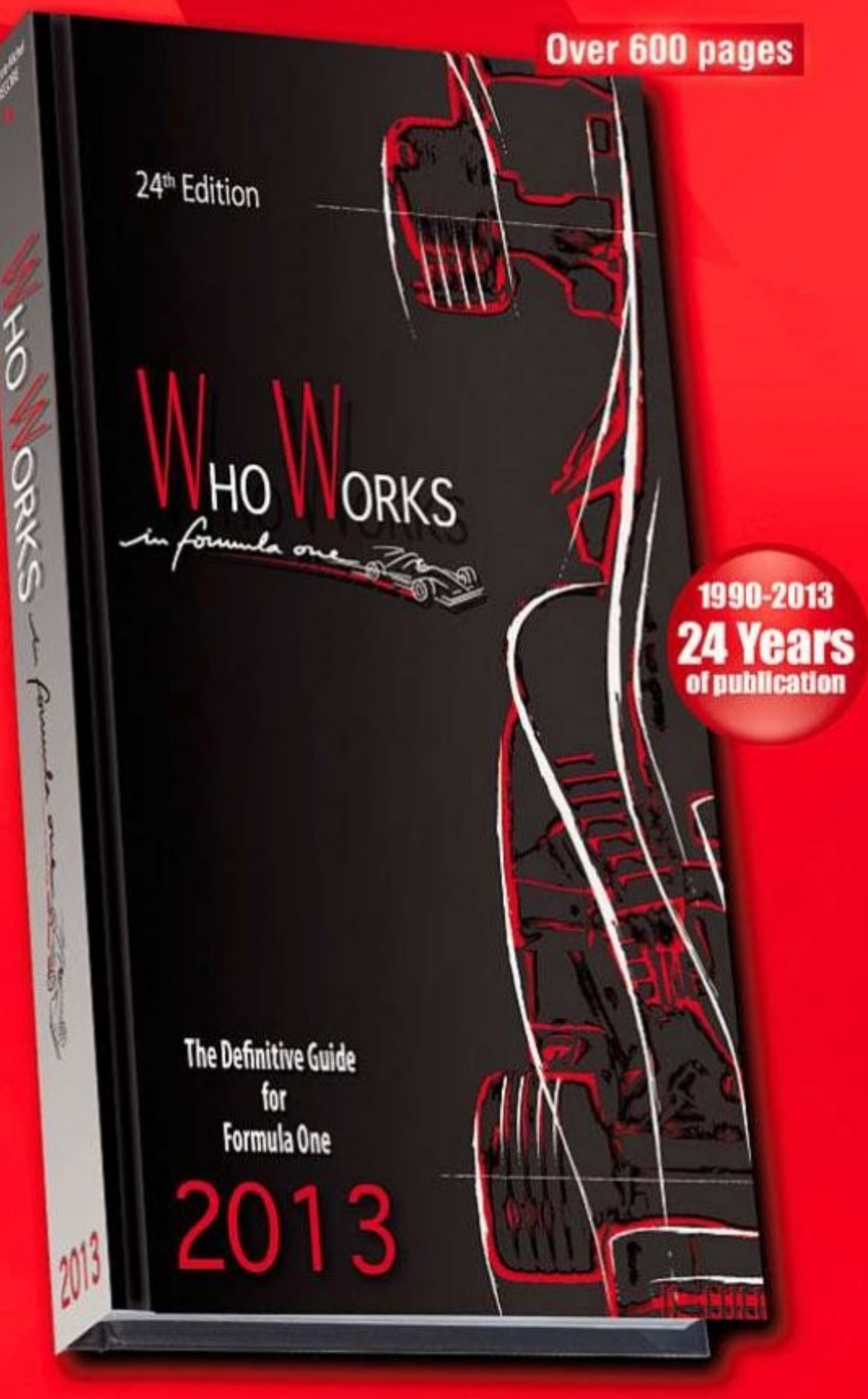
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LOTUS F1 TEAM

Whiteways Technical Centre, Enstone, Oxfordshire, OX7 4EE, UK



PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; ANDREW KALISZ/LAT; SUTTON IMAGES; LOTUS

TEAM INFO

Company Lotus F1 Team Ltd
Chassis E21
Engine Renault RS27 – 2013
Website lotusf1team.com
Twitter @Lotus_F1Team





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 1952
First GP Monaco 1958
Races started 549
Wins 80
Poles 107
Fastest laps 74
Constructors' points 1,671
Constructors' titles 7
Drivers' titles 6

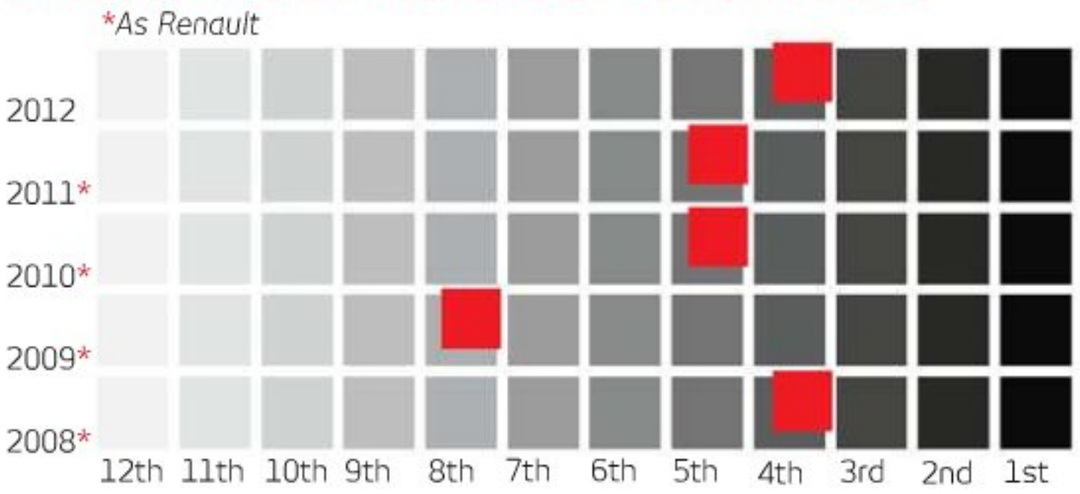
KEY PERSONNEL

Chairman
Gerard Lopez
CEO Patrick Louis
Team principal
Eric Boullier
Technical director
James Allison
Trackside operations director Alan Permane

F1 RACING SAYS...

The team formerly known as Renault returned the legendary Lotus name to the winners' circle again in 2012 when Kimi Räikkönen won the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, entertaining us along the way with his radio chatter. He'll hope to be collecting more wins in 2013 if his steering issues can finally be resolved, but the main challenge for Lotus will be to settle on a clear technical direction. Too often in recent years they have been distracted by one particular route to the detriment of the rest of the car – notably the forward-facing exhausts two seasons ago, or their double-DRS last year.

LOTUS'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 7 Black camera

KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN

Born 17 October 1979
Place of birth
Espoo, Finland
Height 1.75m
Weight 62kg
Race engineer
Mark Slade
Twitter N/A

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2001
Races started 175
Previous teams Ferrari, McLaren, Sauber
Wins 19
Poles 16
Fastest laps 37
Points 786
Drivers' titles 1
2012 position 3rd

Car number 8 Yellow camera

ROMAIN GROSJEAN

Born 17 April 1986
Place of birth
Geneva, Switzerland
Height 1.8m
Weight 71kg
Race engineer
Ayao Komatsu
Twitter @RGrosjean

F1 HISTORY
Debut Europe 2009
Races started 26
Previous teams
Renault
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 1
Points 96
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 8th

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"Shhhhh. Whisper it..."

I believe Lewis WILL win with Mercedes in 2013"

Popular wisdom has it that Lewis Hamilton will have to wait until next year before Mercedes can provide him with a championship-winning car. **Peter Windsor** believes otherwise...

PORTRAITS ADRIAN MYERS



I think most of us agree that Lewis Hamilton is looking pretty good for 2014. The racers at Mercedes AMG High-Performance Powertrains – formerly Ilmor – will undoubtedly produce 'power units' – formerly 'engines' – that will add true texture to what I described a couple of months ago as the era of technology (following on from the Schumacher era and then the era of safety). As I write, Bob Bell and his AMG Mercedes chassis engineers at Brackley are cosying up to Andy Cowell's Mercedes engine guys – even more comfortably, perhaps, than Pat Fry is working shoulder-to-shoulder with Luca Marmorini at Ferrari (given Ferrari's historical departmental segregation). McLaren, by contrast, are currently in engine-contract no-man's-land – something that will be new to them after years of ultra-close templated engine regulations. Together with Red Bull (and Brawn, for that matter), McLaren have, in recent times, been living proof that the customer is always right.

In 2014, with power units becoming the dominant F1 *regulatory* force for the first time since 1966 (when F1 leapt from 1.5-litre to 3.0-litre engines) – and with lots of scope for one power unit type to be dramatically different from another – the boys at Brixworth, Northamptonshire, as I say, are looking good, while the guys in Woking are... looking on.

Here's a thought, though: Lewis Hamilton is also very well-placed for success in *2013*. I say this not only because Lewis is brutally fast and will maximise any Formula 1 car he drives. I say this because we are set for what could be a very curious year in aerodynamic terms. The conventional wisdom, I know, is that Adrian Newey and Red Bull-Renault will continue to find additional downforce here and drag reduction there – and hence Seb Vettel will continue to stay a couple of tenths of a lap ahead of his opposition over the season as a whole. That is what he has done in recent times; that is what is expected of him.

There are limits, though, and Red Bull's 2012 was by no means perfect. There were days when the RB8 was just another F1 car driven by two aces. The tyres didn't work; the balance wasn't right. Yes, the back half of the year was a great one for Adrian and Sebastian Vettel. Yes, they won another couple of championships. But no, it wasn't bulletproof. Not in the way it was in 2010 or 2011. In 2012 other teams loomed near, and in 2013, I think, those other teams will loom nearer still. My logic is that the aerodynamic regulations, already enormously restrictive, are not changing at all for the new season. If there is a new solution out there to be achieved – a new surface shape, a new exhaust deflection – the odds of that solution being found by one aero team only – or by Adrian alone – are growing increasingly small. The aero regulations are themselves effectively housed in a narrow plenum chamber: there are very few options out there and very few wrong turnings to take. We've been living within these clothes for at least two years now, give or take a technical directive or three, and most well-structured, well-financed aero and design teams are going to find more or less similar responses to the questions they raise. There's →



a rule-prescribed brick wall of performance out there, in other words – and more and more teams by definition are going to reach it.

As an aside, I can't remember a time in F1 when everything – the aero, the engines, the drivetrain, the brakes, the running gear, the car layout – was so pre-defined. In 2012, we went through the engine torque mapping directives and more flexi-wing controls. What's left for 2013? Only a new DRS regulation involving restricted usage on Friday and Saturday. That's my point. It's as if everyone involved in the rule-making – the teams, the FIA – have said, "Okay. One more year of this. We've got nice, new rules in 2014, so for 2013 it'll just be *close*. That's all we want it to be: *close*."

That being so, I think the very small differences we have seen between engines in the last few years will suddenly become significant. If you have a McLaren MP4-28 and a Red Bull RB9 producing the same downforce for drag within a measurable point or two, the car with the slightly better engine torque curve, or fuel-efficiency, or overall friction co-efficient, with over 180 miles of racing, will have some sort of advantage. It may manifest itself in tyre usage; it may be obvious in the trap speeds.

Far be it for me to say definitively that the Mercedes engine is superior in most areas to the Ferrari and the Renault. No one in the F1 pitlane, particularly the engine experts themselves, knows enough about the relative performance of all three engines to be absolutely accurate. Measurements can be taken, however. Comparisons can be made.

The general opinion is that the Mercedes is the quicker engine, followed in equal distances by the Ferrari and the Renault. Rob White fan that I am, I should add immediately that we are talking only relative differences here: over at Viry-Châtillon, Rob and his team will undoubtedly continue to build engines that will win races. And Luca Marmorini will of course continue to be right there in the middle of it all in Maranello. Over a 19-race championship, though, on the sort of point-and-squirt (down the longish straight) circuits that continue to propagate, I can't see the Merc being outperformed. On the contrary, I can see it providing an edge.

> "For the first time since the first part of 2009, Ross Brawn's team have a car that will be driven on its limit"

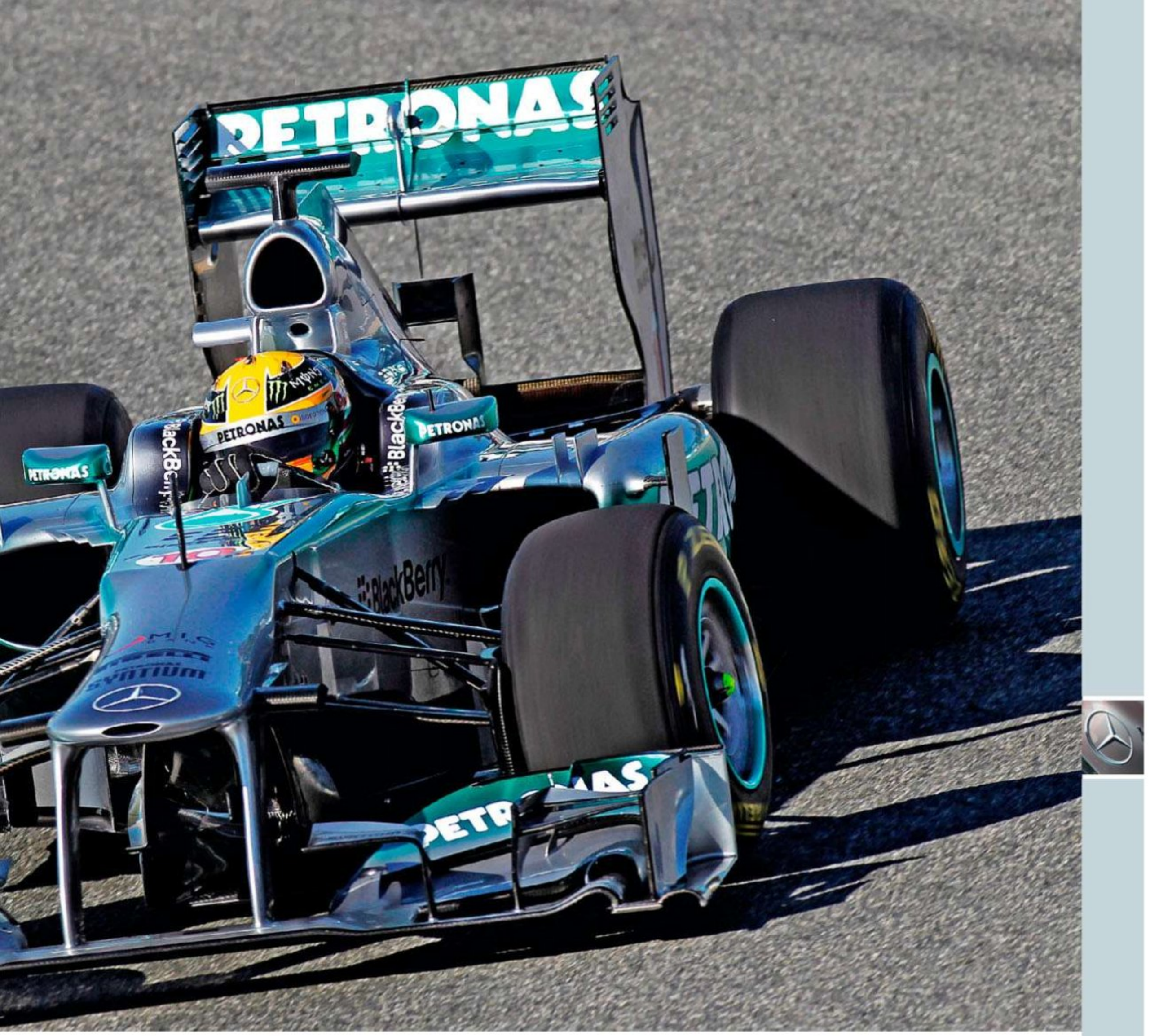
Why, then, am I not touting Jenson Button to win the 2013 championship? For the simple reason that I find it hard to imagine McLaren building a quantifiably quicker car than Ross Brawn, Aldo Costa and the rest of the Mercedes team in Brackley. Not after two years of their getting it wrong; not after two years of learning – and watching – how to do it right. Throw in the Lewis factor and you have a serious package. And even if the MP4-28 *is* the better car in terms of aero efficiency – by how much will it be superior? I would argue that the difference is unlikely to be any bigger than the difference in pace between Jenson and Lewis. And we saw what that was in qualifying in 2012: Lewis 15, Jenson 5.

There's another element, too: all the teams will say they are still abiding by the legal constraints of the resource restriction agreement (RRA) drawn up in the halcyon days of the Formula One Teams' Association (FOTA). Back in 2009, you'll recall, when even Ferrari were robust members of FOTA, the RRA was part of the peace-making solution that prevented F1 tearing itself asunder: Max Mosley resigned and the teams, as a sop to the FIA's budget-cap ideas, introduced their self-governing RRA.

Today, FOTA is but a ghost of what it used to be. Ferrari, Red Bull, Toro Rosso and Sauber have all departed. FOTA's aims are still valid; the political muscle-power has gone. And suspicion of course rules the day. Does everyone in the pitlane believe that Ferrari, for example, abide by the letter of the RRA rule? No. Will a manufacturer as large, as hungry and as capable as Mercedes spend whatever it takes in order to win – particularly now that they have Lewis Hamilton? Yes.

Significantly, I think, the F1 engine manufacturers are not – and never have been – a party to the RRA. The F1 template design regulations control engine costs and, in the main, they have worked extremely well. Given the variables imposed by KERS and the pressures and the complexity of the F1 logistics, it is for me still truly astonishing that we have three manufacturers producing such comparable engines at such staggering performance levels. Mercedes V8 engines, between 2006 and 2012, suffered only six failures from 556 race starts – and the stats would not be significantly different at Ferrari or Renault. The 2013 F1 engine is also 11.6 per cent more fuel-efficient than it was in 2006 (when F1 switched from V10s to V8s); and it's also fun to reflect that, although the

PHOTO: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT



2013 V8 will produce around 750bhp at a rev limit of 18,000, it would, with no restrictions, develop well over 800bhp at around *25,000rpm*.

An interesting by-product of engine companies not being controlled by the RRA is the possibility that it wouldn't be too difficult for Ferrari to lose some excess budget spending through their engine department. And the same, of course, goes for Mercedes – the only other team who wholly own their engine plant (the Lotus-Renault team are now majority-owned by Genii Capital). Put simply: even if the Mercedes F1 W04 lacks in a couple of key departments (which is possible, but in my view unlikely) I believe that Mercedes will be able to throw enough resources at the issues to resolve them. Forensic RRA accounting makes that impossible for customer-engine teams; the matter is less clear for factory-engine teams, even if Mercedes are still paid-up members of FOTA.

Of course it is true to say that money doesn't always solve technical issues – and that Ferrari and Mercedes were unable to do very much about their downforce and balance problems in 2012. My response is that the 2013 Mercedes team is very different from that of 2012. Aldo Costa, who worked so harmoniously with Ross Brawn in the golden Ferrari years, has had enough time (nine months) to settle in to his new job and to produce the new car. Bob Bell, who manages the whole technical department, is a gem of a guy. And then there's Lewis Hamilton. For the first time since the first part of 2009, when they dominated with Jenson Button, Ross Brawn's team will have a car that will be driven on its limit. Lap in, lap out. That sort of database does wonders for car development.

Beyond that, Norbert Haug is out and Niki Lauda is in – as is Toto Wolff. Niki could be an issue, given the disaster that was the Lauda-consulted Ferrari in the mid-1990s and then the Jaguar F1 programme, but you suspect he is still sharp enough to have learned from that (and therefore to leave the running of the team to Ross and the boys). Niki's primary role, I would have said, would be to ensure that there is a constant flow of money from Stuttgart to Brixworth and Brackley, although in fairness you'd have to say that two of the team's most recent, excellent, personnel changes – the hiring of Lewis and the appointment of Andy Cowell – came under his watch. And Wolff's presence can only be positive. He's one of only a few bright young F1 executives who isn't afraid to say "I don't know" when appropriate. That's rare. →





So let's look at 2013 another way by asking: who is going to beat Lewis and Mercedes? Obviously Red Bull are the prime candidates but their championship success, in this year of ultra-tight chassis rules, rests on Adrian Newey yet again devising an aerodynamic advantage that at least accounts for the differences between Mercedes' and Renault's performance. That will be harder to achieve than at any point over the past four years, but it will not be impossible. Nothing, you'd have to say, is impossible where Adrian Newey is concerned.

Ferrari have the golden nugget that is Alonso and should produce a better car than the unloved F2012. Will the F138 generate more usable downforce, however, than the Red Bull RB9, the McLaren MP4-28, the Lotus E21 or the Mercedes F1 W04? Unlikely. Few are the changes within the Ferrari team we saw in 2012. Greater are the pressures to succeed. More likely is that the F138 will be almost there and that it will again be up to the brilliant Fernando to maximise the compromises (with the help of his excellent wing man, Felipe Massa). As stated, though, I think the difference between the Mercedes and Ferrari engines – although small – will also become a factor in 2013. That will make Fernando's job more difficult still. Of course he'll win races. Winning the championship, though, I think will be more difficult for him than it nearly was in 2012.

Lotus-Renault? No doubt they'll produce a car and will be about there with the best of them. They'll be quick. They'll win some more races. To win the championship, though, this Renault customer team will need more downforce than Red Bull, resources equal to those of Ferrari and Mercedes – and they'll require their drivers to qualify and race as well as an Alonso or a Hamilton. Again, not easy.

Then there's McLaren, now minus some of their key players. Jenson drove beautifully in the 2012 Brazilian semi-wet, on slicks, and is no doubt thinking about converting all that touch and skill into 2013. To my mind, Jenson has about the same chances of success in 2013 as Sebastian Vettel. He'll win a bunch of races, he'll be particularly brilliant in the wet; but, to beat Lewis and the Mercedes over 19 or 20 races, I think he's going to need a car that is definitely more aerodynamically efficient than the F1 W04.

So that's my pick for 2013: Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes. I was wrong in 2012 (when I opted for Fernando, based on the likelihood of it being a scrappy year with lots of opportunity for Fernando to drive elegantly through the middle of the mess), so you shouldn't put too much store on my musings. Having said that, if I'm as wrong as I was in 2012 – by four points – then we're in for another of those sticky-palm, can't-wait-for-the-next-copy-of-*F1 Racing*-type seasons.

Meet Lewis's new boss



The press release arrived out of the blue: "Mercedes-Benz strengthens Formula 1 racing team" was the headline. "Daimler AG plans to reorganise its Formula 1 activities" was the seismic first sentence.

Toto Wolff, former racer, venture capitalist, investor, driver-manager, DTM team co-owner, Williams F1 shareholder and director, can now add 'executive director of Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd' to the list. He will also "acquire a significant minority interest" although, since that phrase was couched in the future tense, we can assume that no money has changed hands yet.

Wolff, 41, left professional racing in the mid-1990s and moved into finance and industry. In 2004 he founded Marchsixteen Investments, which two years later took a shareholding in HWA, the company that ran the **Mercedes** factory AMG team in the DTM and which now looks after Mercedes' entire DTM programme.

In 2009 he became a **Williams** shareholder and non-executive director – significant, since Frank Williams and Patrick Head don't like to part with equity in their company – then executive director. Now he has "complete coordination of all Mercedes-Benz motorsport activities" while retaining his shareholding in Williams. He is also a partner in Aces Management, handling current drivers Bottas and Pic. A busy man indeed...

Stuart Codling

INSET: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

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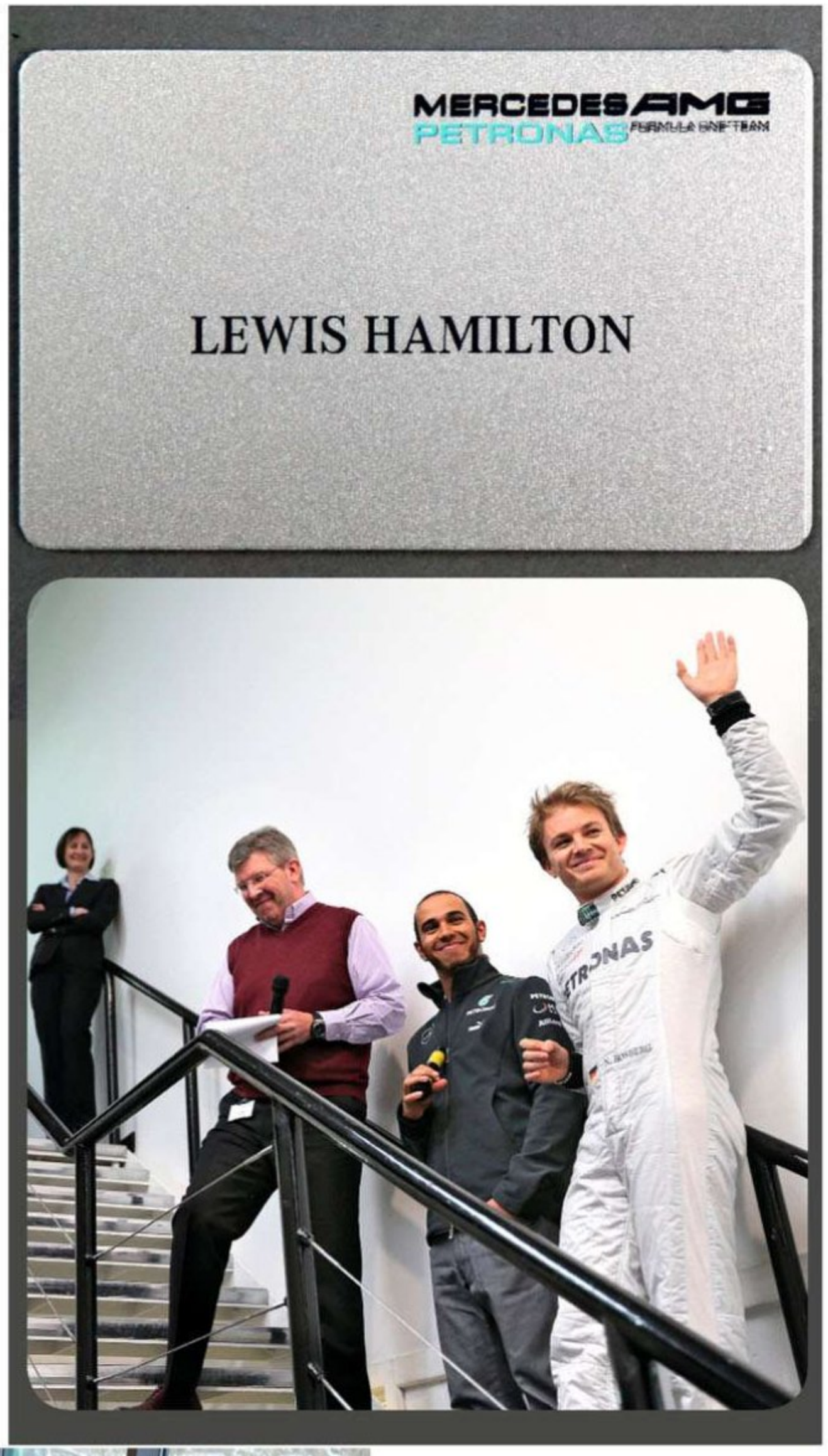
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There's a new kid in town

Lewis Hamilton's move to Mercedes for 2013 has become one of the biggest talking points in Formula 1. So when he visited the team factory in Brackley for the first time, *F1 Racing* tagged along to see how it went...

WORDS ROBERT HOLMES
PICTURES STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT



Never before has Lewis Hamilton walked around an F1 factory and not known a soul. In 2007, when he graduated to the top echelon, he'd known everyone at McLaren for several years. But that's not the case at Mercedes GP.

On his first tour of the team's factory in Brackley, Lewis is polite and even slightly introverted. He introduces himself to everyone with a slightly self-conscious "Hi, I'm Lewis," and he shakes a lot of hands. As first impressions go, his are positive: he hugs people when it's appropriate; he stands quietly in the corner when it's called for – and he laughs a lot, too.

F1 Racing walked side-by-side with Lewis on this first day. And here's how it went...



10.45AM
« A CHAT WITH THE BOSS

Ross Brawn greets Lewis with a bear hug, before ushering him to the sofa. Over the next 15 minutes they discuss Lewis's recent seat-fitting for the F1 W04 and the possibility of him switching to a Schuberth helmet for the season ahead. "I've been with Arai since I was ten years old," he says, "and I'd like to stay with them. They've been good to me." With helmets on his mind, Lewis stares intently at Nico Rosberg's lid, the only helmet in Ross's office, which sits on the sideboard.



11.30AM
IN THE DESIGN OFFICE »

Into the design office with technical director Bob Bell (centre) and chief race engineer Andrew Shovlin (right). More than 100 pairs of eyes follow Lewis as he makes his way through the room, until he stops to discuss this year's seamless-shift gearbox with one of the transmission designers. You could hear a pin drop as they chat. "There's a good vibe in here," says Lewis. "Keep those ideas coming!"



11.45AM
NEXT STOP: MACHINE SHOP »

Parts for the F1 W04 are manufactured in the machine shop, a room that's the size of an aircraft hangar. Lewis is fascinated by all the technology and he asks to look at the team's latest investment. It's a machine that cuts the gearbox casing from either aluminium or carbon. "Look at that bad boy," says Lewis."That's impressive. The more I see of this place, the more it becomes clear that we have everything we need to succeed."





11.55AM
« COMPOSITES

No trainers? Lewis isn't allowed into the composites cleaning room without the right footwear (or a white coat), so he's talked through the various processes from behind closed doors. Later, in the composites bonding room next door, he gets the chance to see some of the finished parts from the new car, including the chassis he will use in winter testing and some elements of the front-wing assembly. →

12.10PM
MEETING THE MEDIA »

Lewis's first day at Mercedes hasn't gone unnoticed by the world's media. He makes himself a coffee (white, two sugars) and sits down to answer their questions. Fleet Street kicks off with a hard-hitting question about who else will join him at Mercedes from McLaren (a reference to technical director Paddy Lowe), while the TV broadcasters want to know about his emotions. "There's mutual respect between me and the media," says Lewis. "Some guys stir it up, but I understand everyone has a job to do."





LEWIS'S FIRST DAY







12.30PM PHOTOSHOOT »

Everything's ready. Snapper Adrian Myers has perfected the lighting, F1 Racing *art editor Frank Foster has nailed the poses he wants from Lewis, and Mercedes' PR guru Bradley Lord is true to his word about timings. But when Lewis arrives, something immediately feels awry. There's nothing wrong with the hardware; it's the overalls. Lewis looks out-of-place without any rocket red across his stomach, or the sponsors with which he became synonymous over six years at McLaren. Only the three-pointed star reminds us of what was before. It's so strange to see – just imagine how it must feel for the man himself.*





1.30PM THE WELCOME PARTY »

The race bays at Brackley aren't big, particularly when all 500 people at the factory gather inside them, but it's here that team principal Ross Brawn officially introduces Lewis to the team. Also in attendance at this welcome party is Nico Rosberg, who's just arrived for his seat-fitting. "I'm honoured to join this team," says Lewis. "I want us to grow together and move forward together."

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C) MARK WEBBER

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NICO
ROSBERG

NICO'S NEXT MOVE

Beating Michael Schumacher was just the beginning.

Keen gamesman and canny strategist Nico

Rosberg is now ready to play Lewis Hamilton...

WORDS
STUART CODLING
PORTRAITS
MALCOLM GRIFFITHS/LAT

Gambit. From the old Italian

expression *dare il gambetto*, literally to extend a leg to trip someone. A classic opening to a chess game where you, in effect, offer a pawn to your opponent in the hope that they accept its sacrifice and in doing so lay themself open to attack.

Nico Rosberg knows a thing or two about games. He lists chess and backgammon among his hobbies – more about that later – and in his first year in Formula 1, driving alongside Mark Webber, he learned the hard way about the repertoire of mindgames a veteran driver can bring to bear on a rookie. It would serve him well when he came to share a garage with Michael Schumacher. Nico has always been among the smartest and most articulate of F1 drivers, but after seven seasons in the sport he can streetfight with the best of them. Little wonder →



then that it was him rather than Michael who became the first Mercedes driver of the modern era to record a grand prix triumph.

"It was an amazing feeling," he says of China 2012. "It had been a long time coming both for me and the team, and it was special to share it with everybody because they all deserved it. It was about time!"

Although of Finnish parentage, Nico was born in Germany and races under the German flag. He speaks with Germanic precision and more than a hint of canny PR-iness, distributing praise with diligent equality and seasoning his narrative with caveats when required. Asked if the pre-race simulations suggested a win was on the cards in China, he says: "Definitely not, no. I think maybe we knew during the last pitstops or something, but not before that. The previous two races we'd had a bad race car – a bad car for the race, I mean, because in qualifying we'd been good – so I didn't have such high expectations. But we changed a lot of things and it came good in China. At the last stop I knew that I was on a two-stop and the others were on three."

> "I got on well with Michael, but change is always good"

Well, that's what he says. But the fact that he'd been ballpark quick throughout practice and had then completed only three laps in each of the final two qualifying sessions suggests that he and his team knew they were on to something. It takes a *gambetto* to persuade Nico to stumble a little.

F1 Racing tentatively suggests that China was one of those early-season races where everyone was getting used to the new tyre characteristics and it was therefore pretty much open for anyone to win.

"What do you mean?" His eyebrows furrow with a touch of indignation. "I was miles away in the distance!"

True enough, but there's always the possibility of a Safety Car deployment...

"Ah," he says, with a twinkle of amusement in his eyes, "but I was the fastest guy on the track..."

This season will present a challenge to Nico, following the arrival of Lewis Hamilton, but it's also an opportunity. For you could suggest – mischievously – that while Nico was the Mercedes driver who took that significant first win, Michael Schumacher's status meant the focus of the media and the bigwigs in Stuttgart remained fixed on Schumacher's garage right up until his retirement.

"Not really," says Nico. "The core team respected both opinions all the time and really tried to stay even. That came all the way from Ross at the top. I was fortunate to be in that situation because that was one of my questions on starting up: having Michael in the team, how equal was the treatment going to be? In the end it was equal, and that was great, because it was what gave me the opportunity to do so well against him over the three years.

"Definitely it's been a great experience against Michael. I didn't know how it was going to go. I was sure I was going to do well, but against the best of all time you just don't really know. In hindsight, I've beaten him in all three years. That's very important and I'm very pleased to have stayed ahead. We pushed each other hard and each of us picked out things from the other, helping ourselves to improve. It's obvious from his approach to the job why he was the world champion so many times. He's very professional.

"With Michael leaving I have a bigger... I have a chance to help lead the team even more strongly and assist with development direction, to strengthen my opinion. I'm very motivated to help out as much as possible and to grow in my role. That's why I've been visiting the team so much, even in December, because the day after

INSETS: CHRIS DIXON/LAT; PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES

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Win number one for Mercedes came in China 2012, courtesy of Nico – not his more experienced team-mate

the last race was the first day of the next season. And I look forward to the challenge."

Over the winter Nico has been carefully manoeuvring his pieces, regularly visiting the factory, demonstrating an interest in technical developments and, above all, showing willing. He might have beaten Michael Schumacher, but this was not the Schumi of old, not the rapacious operator who steamrollered his way to seven world championships. This was an occasionally befuddled man in early middle age who ultimately sought to resign at the very moment of checkmate, fooling nobody.

This cannot have escaped Nico's notice, for all that he's benefitted from watching Michael work the garage. So how did he feel when he knew he would be competing alongside the ultra-competitive Lewis Hamilton again for the first time since their karting days?

"It was a positive feeling. It would have been good also to continue with Michael because we got on well, but I'm pleased by the change because it brings a breath of fresh air for everybody. Change is always good, I think."

On page it may read like a carefully diplomatic response, but Nico says it like he means it. There have already been a number of changes elsewhere within Mercedes over the past 12 months or so, beginning with the arrival of various former technical directors from other teams – Bob Bell, Geoff Willis, Aldo Costa – to fill an assortment of newly created technical roles, and ending with Toto Wolff slotting in at the upper end of an already top-heavy senior management organogram. And somewhere within all that flux, Niki Lauda was slipping his feet under a desk in some nebulous role as a non-executive chairman. Is he Stuttgart's eyes and ears on the factory floor or Bernie Ecclestone's? Perhaps we need a Venn diagram to figure out the answer to that...

What the changes illustrate is that the people who sign the cheques are no longer willing to put up with also-ran status. Which is to be expected, since the Mercedes-Benz brand is built on being the best – on *winning* – in a way that, say, Force India's isn't. Nico is clear about what is expected of him and his new team-mate.

"Winning regularly was important already last year. And we started off really well, but we tailed off in the second half. So what we need to do is start off a little better but also to hold it. That's our challenge for this season and it won't be easy, especially at the end of the season. But the team is strengthening: that should be obvious. The factory is a stronger team than it's ever been and it's making big steps. I have no doubts that a better car will come out of that. Will it be enough? We don't know yet, but we're improving.

"I don't think anybody sees 2013 as an interim year. Of course, the development for 2014 started earlier than it would normally start to look at the next season's car, but that's not unusual. It was the same with 2009."

It seems fatuous to ask Nico if he thinks he can beat Lewis, because he's a racing driver so the answer is always going to be an unequivocal 'yes'. He's certainly left nothing to chance in his preparations for the new season, so it's interesting that away from the circuit he expresses a preference for backgammon over chess – the latter being a game of pure skill from opening gambit to endgame; the former involving the roll of the dice.

"Backgammon is sort of a family game," he says. "My dad taught me how to play and I like it because it's fun and in the long run it's not so much about chance. It's more about skill. I enjoy the challenge of playing games and that's very similar to what I enjoy about F1. Whether it's the challenge of going up against Lewis or the challenge of playing backgammon against a friend, it's very much the same. You try to get the best out of yourself and perform well."

Your move, Lewis...

Friends reunited

This season isn't the first to feature Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton in identical silver overalls. In 2000, Nico's father Keke set up TeamMBM.com with backing from McLaren and Mercedes-Benz (hence the acronym, although it was never officially acknowledged and the website was only ever a holding page) as a Dino Chiesa-managed vehicle for Nico's racing aspirations. Aged 15 and 14, Lewis and Nico raced as team-mates and Lewis was crowned European champion in the Super A category that year.

McLaren still use Chiesa as a talent scout, recently snapping up Nyck de Vries – who subsequently won the karting world championship twice with Chiesa – to their driver development programme. He's being groomed as a future McLaren star and has already appeared in two episodes of *Tooned*...







Rosberg and Hamilton have a working relationship going back 13 years to their time in karting

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2-Centre Holiday

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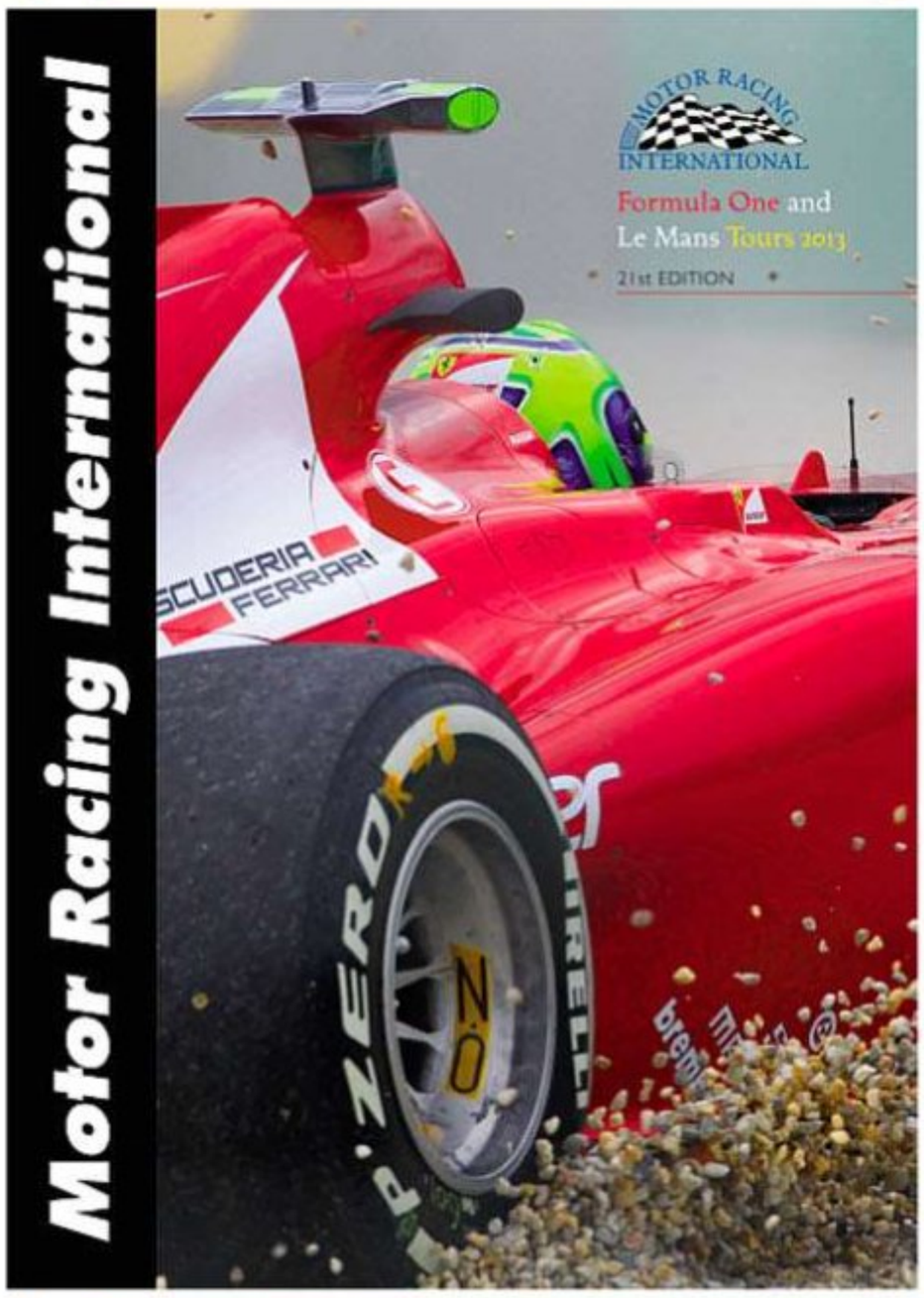
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5a Reynard Park, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 7BD, UK

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TEAM INFO

Company Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula 1 Team
Chassis F1 W04
Engine Mercedes-Benz FO108F
Website mercedes-amg-f1.com
Twitter @MercedesAMGF1





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 1886
First GP France 1954
Races started 70
Wins 10
Poles 9
Fastest laps 12
Constructors' points 521
Constructors' titles 0
Drivers' titles 2

KEY PERSONNEL

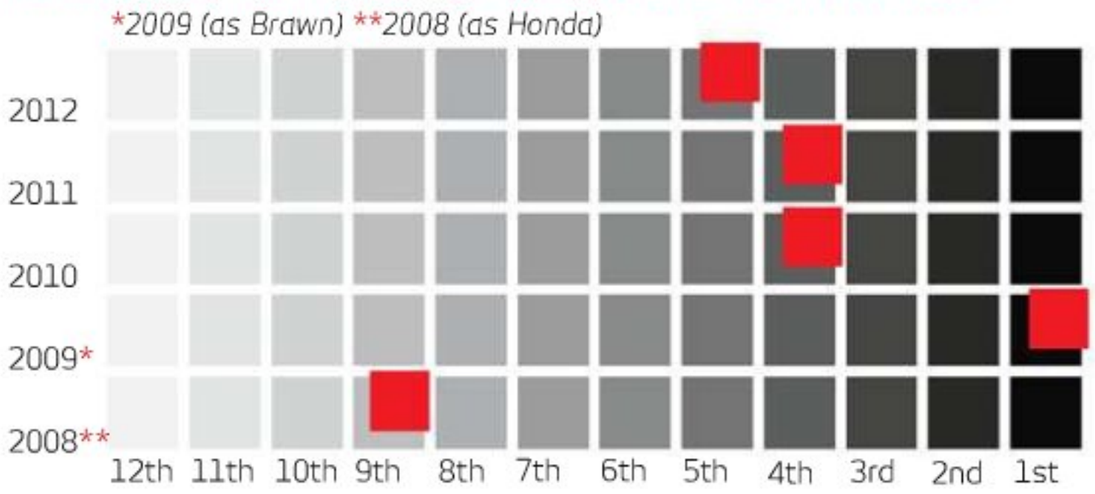
Team principal
Ross Brawn
Non-executive chairman
Niki Lauda
Executive director
Toto Wolff
Technical director
Bob Bell
Engineering director
Aldo Costa

F1 RACING SAYS...

This is an important year for Mercedes, with the focus on how Lewis Hamilton will adapt to his new team and whether the German manufacturer can consistently run up front given their mighty resources. If not, who will follow Norbert Haug's sudden exit? One casualty last year was Loïc Bigois, replaced as head of aerodynamics by Mike Elliott. Mercedes' main problem in 2012 was tyre optimisation. The car was easy on its fronts, hence the breakthrough win on the front-limited track at Shanghai, but at Singapore and Suzuka the W03 struggled to get heat into its front tyres without damaging the rears.

MERCEDES' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

*2009 (as Brawn) **2008 (as Honda)



DRIVERS

Car number 9 Black camera



NICO ROSBERG

Born 27 June 1985
Place of birth
Wiesbaden, Germany
Height 1.78m
Weight 67kg
Race engineer
Tony Ross
Twitter @nico_rosberg

F1 HISTORY
Debut Bahrain 2006
Races started 128
Previous teams
Williams
Wins 1
Poles 1
Fastest laps 4
Points 399.5
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 9th

Car number 10 Yellow camera



LEWIS HAMILTON

Born 7 January 1985
Place of birth
Tewin, UK
Height 1.74m
Weight 68kg
Race engineer
Peter Bonnington
Twitter @LewisHamilton

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2007
Races started 110
Previous teams
McLaren
Wins 21
Poles 26
Fastest laps 12
Points 913
Drivers' titles 1
2012 position 4th

Nico Hülkenberg and Esteban Gutiérrez

Only one of the front-midfield teams has an all-new driver line-up for 2013 – and it's a good job one of them wasn't chosen for his bowling ability. We catch up with Sauber's new pairing...

WORDS STUART CODLING **PORTRAITS** THOMAS BUTLER

We're used to seeing back-of-the-grid teams change their driver line-ups but – Toro Rosso aside – it's rarer for the midfielders to wield the axe. And yet it's all change at the cutting edge of the midfield as Sauber, having lost Sergio Pérez to McLaren, decided to give Kamui Kobayashi the elbow and start again from a clean sheet.

Nico Hülkenberg is the proven runner, Esteban Gutiérrez the rookie who comes with a small bag of Telmex gold. The Hulk managed to get the upper hand over the highly rated Paul Di Resta at Force India last year, culminating in a remarkable Brazilian GP he could, but for a moment of madness, have won. Gutiérrez has been on Sauber's radar ever since he tested their 2009 car as part of his prize for winning the Formula BMW championship.

So how will this new pairing gel? They seem comfortable already, laughing and joking even after a full day of press interviews as the wraps are pulled off the new Sauber C32. "I'm sure one person asked me the same question three times," Esteban tells Nico. "Is that usual?"

Rest assured there will be no repetition when *F1 Racing's* readers take over the agenda...

Esteban, what can you tell us about your first ride in an F1 car? And what do you expect in your first season?
Patryk Lucków, Poland

Esteban Gutiérrez: The first time I got in an F1 car I was so impressed about the perfection of everything. It was so smooth to drive – there were hardly any vibrations. The team were looking into every detail. It was a different world. For my first season I expect to have a very positive consolidation, to adapt quickly to the car and to the team, and to take advantage of any opportunities to achieve good results.

Nico, you've had two seasons in F1, what advice would you give to Esteban to help him through his first year?
Rosie Baillie, UK

Nico Hülkenberg: For me, it's not so long since my first year in F1. My advice would be to stay focused, to work hard – even after a setback, or when it's difficult – and to just keep trying.

You are both young and energetic but driving for a (in my opinion) rather old-fashioned Swiss team. Do you want to bring some 'young spirit' to the team?
Aditya Satriady, Indonesia

NH: That's a bit harsh on Sauber! They're not old-fashioned. But I do want to bring my spirit to the team and my commitment to help motivate everyone to get the best out of themselves.

EG: Sauber have been in F1 for many years but there are many young people here – engineers, designers and mechanics. For me, it's a good thing to learn from people with experience – but I don't see this as an old-fashioned team.

Nico, what are your feelings when you're on the grid before the red lights come on?
Esther Giménez, Spain

NH: [Laughs] Well, the pulse rate is a bit high... You're excited and a bit nervous, watching the →

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mirrors for when the last cars line up so you can start your procedures and select first gear. Then your eyes are just glued to the starting lights to try to get a good reaction time and you focus on doing everything right with the clutch.

Esteban, do you believe you are fully prepared for F1?
Oliver Knight, UK
EG: Yes, I would say I am. I feel confident that I'm prepared. I have to make a consolidation of all the experience I have – to use it to quickly adapt to Formula 1.

Nico, have your bowling skills improved?
Fumi, Japan
NH: [Laughs] This must be someone who watched me bowling in Japan! I was so bad. I was terrible. No, unfortunately the bowling skills have not improved...

Esteban, how much more complicated would you say it is to operate an F1 car compared to a GP2 car, in terms of all the different steering wheel functions?
Pablo Fuentes, Spain
EG: Well, there are a lot more buttons on a Formula 1 steering wheel! A GP2 car doesn't have power steering so it is more physically demanding to drive, but in the F1 car you really have to think about getting to know the different functions of the steering wheel. There are a lot more things to think about while you're driving on the limit. It's not scary – nothing you do is going to blow up the car and you have all the support from the team, who are giving you the right instructions. It's not something that you have to worry about.

Have you compared your simulator performances yet and, if so, who was the fastest?
Paul Gent, UK
NH: There's no simulator here, so no.
EG: We will see in real life...

Nico, what made you decide to leave Force India and join Sauber this season?
Lauren Harrison, UK
NH: [Laughs] There are plenty of factors. It's not an easy or straightforward decision to explain... I would have to talk around many corners.... So I'll leave it at that!

Esteban, what are you most looking forward to as a full-time F1 driver?
Thomas Dahl, UK
EG: I'm looking forward to the challenge, but I'm also looking forward to racing in a series where there are three free practice sessions, a separate qualifying session and a long race. In GP2 and GP3 we had only a very brief time on the track – half an hour of practice, half an hour of qualifying then two short races. I'm really going to enjoy the amount of track time I have in Formula 1.

Nico, you had some great drives last year and led a grand prix – do you think you could be in with a chance of winning a race this season?
Kirsty Capewell, UK
NH: I would like to think so – we're all very competitive. I love racing and I love winning. My last win was in GP2 and I'd love to win a grand prix, but it's a big job. We need a strong package for that to happen, and we've just taken the cover off the car today so I don't know where we stand – or where the others stand. We need to be patient, keep our heads down and develop the car to make a win possible.

Esteban, are you going to move to Switzerland to be closer to the team?
Bill Rodrigues, USA
EG: Yes, I'll be moving to Switzerland, but because we are travelling around so often I don't know how much time I will actually spend there. I plan to visit the workshop as often as I can, but we are going to be on the road for much of the year with 19 or 20 races. There will be sponsor events to attend in various countries as well, but in my first F1 season my focus has to be on the most important thing – and that is my on-track performance.

Nico, I've heard you're a fan of Bayern Munich. Does joining Sauber mean you have to support Chelsea?
Bill Thomas, Australia
NH: I wouldn't say I'm a big fan of Bayern but I like them, yes. Become a Chelsea fan? I don't think so...

Esteban, do you think the road to F1 through the junior formulae is too complicated?
Ryan Williams, UK
EG: I don't think that it is all that complicated really – in the end you have competitiveness. I see also that there is the economic point of view: the world economy is not so healthy at the moment so it's hard to get sponsors, both for the drivers and teams – but for a driver the important thing is just to show ability and



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Nico, what has been the highlight of your career so far?

Tom Salt, UK

NH: The last Brazilian Grand Prix, I think. Leading a grand prix for 30 laps was a special feeling. It was a great feeling to chase down the McLarens and overtake them. I'm hungry for more.



competitiveness. Then you can find the support that you need to make progress through the different categories.

Nico, could you tell us a little about your early years in A1GP? You were clearly a class above the rest of the field...

Mark Salisbury, UK

NH: I have great memories from this time. I was still pretty young at the end of 2006 and the beginning of 2007, and then suddenly I got into this big international world, flying across the globe, going to places like New Zealand and China. It was pretty cool. I had a lot of good races and I was pretty successful. And I liked the car – it was the first time I had driven a car with power. Formula 3 had nice technical cars but they were quite underpowered. A1GP cars had 450-500bhp. It really got me and I loved it.

Esteban, do you have any rituals before you get into the car?

Gustavo Herrera, Mexico

EG: Yes, Gustavo – I sleep! Before the race I always sleep.

Nico, Sauber are based near Zurich, the Force India factory is in the UK. What change has that made for you?

Ivana Ozimin, Croatia

NH: It's a lot more convenient because I don't have to fly to the UK any more. I can drive here or I can fly to Zurich. So I don't have to go across water. And I don't have to speak so much English any more because so many people here speak German. English is still the main language in Formula 1, though, and the main language in this team on a race weekend.

Esteban, do you feel under any pressure to perform after Sergio's great 2012 season with Sauber?

Michael Filletti, UK

EG: Every driver has different circumstances coming into Formula 1. The 2012 season was Sergio's second year, so this is something to consider. From the other side, I'm not looking to beat his performance, I'm trying to look at my adaptation into F1. That's the key factor in the beginning. I want to achieve consistency and to be competitive, and I think that's true of any driver on the F1 grid.

Esteban, what made you want to become a racing driver? Did you have a particular hero when you were growing up?

Paul Smith, UK

EG: There was nothing specific but I always loved cars – that's very important. This was my passion; it kept me warm about racing. To be honest, I did not know much about Formula 1 before I started racing.

Esteban, which circuits on the F1 calendar that you haven't raced on before are you particularly looking forward to?

Alex Jackson, UK

EG: In GP2 and GP3 we mainly raced in support of the F1 races in Europe, so there are several that will be new to me. There is Shanghai, Interlagos, Austin, Suzuka and Korea, which I don't know. I'm really looking forward to Austin.

Nico, have you ever given a car a name like Sebastian Vettel does?

Ahmad Ammar, Malaysia

NH: No, I've never done that.

Nico, do you still have your pink/red trousers?

Bethany Andrews, UK

NH: [Laughs] No, I think I scrapped them – I got so much grief after I put them on for an interview.

Nico, what's the best gift you have ever received from your fans?

Laura Dai, China

NH: I once got a DVD that was sent to me by an Indonesian girl. She put a lot of effort and heart into it. She's obviously a big fan. It was really nice.

Esteban, when you play Formula 1 games on the PS3/Xbox, who do you race as?

Rich Daniels, UK

EG: [Laughs] That's a good question. Unfortunately I don't get to sit in front of a television with a PlayStation 3 all that often because we're travelling all the time. I don't play regularly during the year, but when I do I always take Sauber, of course!

Esteban, what is the support like from your home country now that there are two Mexican drivers on the grid?

Vicki Brand, UK

EG: The support is massive. It's very surprising. It's very motivating to know that you have so many people behind you, following your career, enjoying your victories and supporting you even when you fail. That is very special. The interest in racing in Mexico is increasing exponentially and it's a great honour to be able to represent my country in Formula 1.

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Wildbachstrasse 9, 8340 Hinwil, Switzerland

PHOTOS: LAT, SAUBER

TEAM INFO

Company Sauber Motorsport AG
Chassis C32
Engine Ferrari 056
Website sauberf1team.com
Twitter @OfficialSF1Team





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 1970
First GP South Africa 1993
Races started 343
Wins 1
Poles 1
Fastest laps 4
Constructors' points 717
Constructors' titles 0
Drivers' titles 0

KEY PERSONNEL

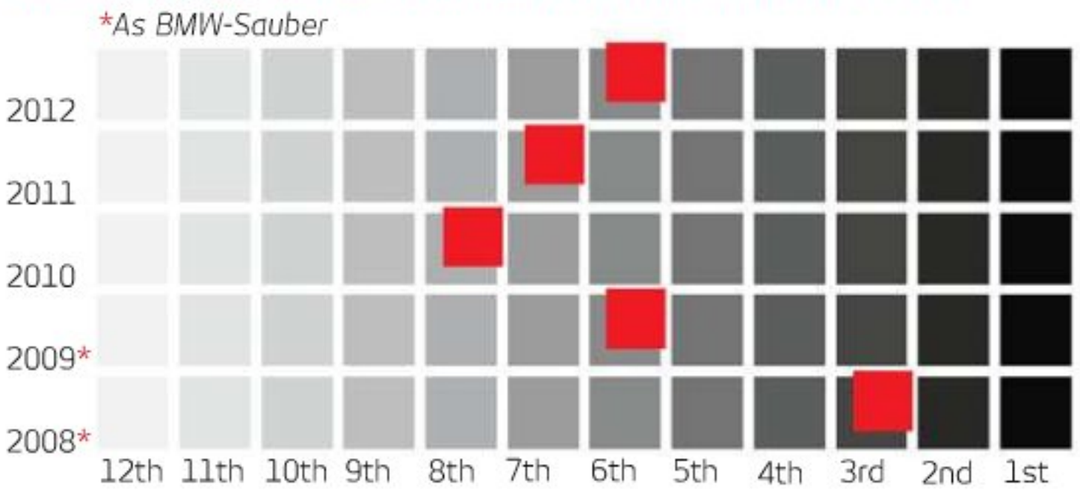
President of the board of directors Peter Sauber
Team principal Monisha Kaltenborn
Operations director Axel Kruse
Chief designer Matt Morris
Team manager Beat Zehnder

F1 RACING SAYS...

With the departure of James Key, Sauber underwent a technical upheaval last year with Willem Toet returning to the role of head of aerodynamics, Matt Morris becoming chief designer and Pierre Waché taking on the role of head of vehicle performance. The foundations of the C31 were very good and, in the hands of Sergio Pérez, it could have won at either Malaysia or Monza. Part of its success was down to good tyre management, and if the new car can replicate those characteristics then Sauber could have another good season. Having said that, two new drivers – one a rookie – isn't the ideal platform for stability.

SAUBER'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

*As BMW-Sauber



DRIVERS

Car number 11 Black camera



NICO HÜLKENBERG

Born 19 August 1987
Place of birth Emmerich, Germany
Height 1.84m
Weight 74kg
Race engineer Marco Schuepbach
Twitter @NicoHulkenberg

F1 HISTORY
Debut Bahrain 2010
Races started 39
Previous teams Force India, Williams
Wins 0
Poles 1
Fastest laps 1
Points 85
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 11th

Car number 12 Yellow camera



ESTEBAN GUTIÉRREZ

Born 5 August 1991
Place of birth Monterrey, Mexico
Height 1.8m
Weight 61kg
Race engineer Francesco Nenci
Twitter @EstebanGtz

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2013
Races started 0
Previous teams N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 0
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position N/A

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Third time lucky?

We hitch a lift to Silverstone with the talented Paul Di Resta to hear what he has to say about this new season – his third with the team – on the morning of the Force India VJM06 launch

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS **PICTURES** ANDREW FERRARO/LAT

Standing outside Whittlebury Hall at a little past eight o'clock in the morning, I'm wondering whether I should say 'white rabbits' out loud, since it's the first day of a new month. I'm told it'll bring good luck, but then again I may appear less than sane if I'm caught mumbling it over and over again.

It's strange to think that in such a high-tech sport, quirky beliefs are still common in Formula 1. The man I'm about to interview should be racing with the number 13 on his car this year. Force India finished seventh in last year's constructors' standings, so theoretically should compete with car numbers 13 and 14. Due to superstition, the FIA bypasses the unlucky number, so Paul Di Resta takes number 14 and his team-mate 15.

The start of the new month is also the dawn of Di Resta's 2013 season and it could be *the* day that defines his year. This is the →



morning of the launch of the new Force India VJM06 and the 26-year-old will be the first driver to get behind the wheel of a 2013 car, before testing commences in earnest next week.

F1 Racing is poised outside Whittlebury Hall to accompany Di Resta from his hotel to the Silverstone circuit where he will be unveiling his new car to the world. And we are privileged to be the first media to hear his thoughts during the short car journey over to the track. Looking fresh and ready for a long day of talking to the press, Paul strides purposefully through the hotel lobby, greets us outside and together we jump into a waiting car.

The Scotsman had his first chance to look at the new car at Force India's Dadford Road factory the previous night and will complete an installation lap once he removes the covers later this morning. He'll no doubt be crossing his fingers that this year's car is a step up in performance over last season's and I ask whether there are nerves on the first morning of a new car launch.

"I wouldn't say it was nerves," he says. "It's more anxiety at seeing the final product of what has been coming together with various windtunnel models and to see the development path the team has been taking over the winter. When you see the finished product there is a sense of relief, but when you get the car out on track at Jerez, that's really when you get to know about it. Today we'll launch the car to the world and have a small shakedown to ensure everything is in order ahead of testing. Given the fact that the rules are essentially quite similar to last year, the car will be an evolution rather than a revolution and I hope we'll have put right the weakness of the previous car."

As we talk in the back seats of his chauffeur-driven Merc, Paul is relaxed and surprisingly chatty considering the early-hour alarm call. Outside, a chink of sunlight shines through a grey mass of clouds and the overnight rain still glistens on the narrow Northamptonshire lanes.

"The big thing this season is going to be the tyres," he continues. "They are of a different construction, which we tested in Brazil, but we haven't tried the new compounds yet, so there's another question mark over how they are actually going to work. That's what we'll use Jerez for and then we'll build up the car over the 12 days of testing. As we get into the latter stages of the Barcelona test, that's when you'll really see teams doing performance runs and race simulations. And then leaving there and arriving in Melbourne will be a different story again."



Paul greets the press at the unveiling of the Force India VJM06

As we sweep past St Mary's church in Whittlebury, I ask Paul whether he's approached the start of this new year, his third in Formula 1, any differently to previous seasons?

"The winter is very short now, isn't it? You finish the last grand prix and then you have three weeks until Christmas," he ponders as his phone bleeps in his pocket. "In the bit of down time you do have, it's important to restructure yourself, sacrifice a few dinners, make sure you don't put on too many pounds, then concentrate on training. That's about building yourself back up and ensuring your baseline has lifted. This is the part of the year when you need to be on top of your game because if you do two or three days at a time testing, this is when the strain goes through your neck. The shock of being back in the car is big, even though it's only eight weeks since I was last in the car."



And out comes the car. "Everything is new. We're all kids in a toy shop," says Di Resta







"This team punches above its weight – it has done for years"

As we head up past the old Royal Oak pub in Silverstone village, he carries on: "We need to come out of the box very aggressively in Melbourne and we need to give ourselves the opportunity to really push on. We've looked at everything throughout the race weekend to maximise everything and to really be on top of our game this year. Whether it is fitness for our team, how we travel, when we get rest. We need to make sure that everyone is in the best frame of mind because it is such a long season."

Before we head to the circuit to meet and greet the rest of the world's media, our car makes a short detour to the Force India factory opposite Silverstone. Entering the gates of the factory, it dawns on you what a tidy little facility Force India have; small and understated, the opposite of the team's owner Vijay Mallya. In the car park, Paul gets a warm handshake from the man whose name surely gives the best Scrabble score in Formula 1, chief operating officer Otmar Szafnauer. Overlooking the car park is the office that once belonged to Eddie Jordan, then Colin Kolles and now Bob Fernley, Mallya's deputy. While plenty here has remained fundamentally the same, the team's owners and moneymen have not always been so constant.

"This team punches above its weight and has done for a number of years," says Di Resta, taking the phone from his pocket. "Fundamentally changing things is not for the best though; you have to gain resources within the environment we are in and what we are used to."

There's a quick break in proceedings while Paul phones his dad, Louis, who has come down from Scotland for the launch. We also talk a little off-record, catching up on some of the happenings over the F1 winter: the management changes at Williams and Mercedes, and particularly the very sudden departure of Norbert Haug, the man who gave Di Resta his break in the DTM. As we make the final short trip from the factory to the Silverstone pitlane, the excitement builds: we are approaching the allocated hour when the car will make its first public appearance.

"There is always a lot of excitement when you see a new car," he says with a childlike grin. "Everything is brand new – when you've run it for the first time and come back to the garage, there's the smell of the carbon fibre and everything glowing. I think everyone likes new toys, don't they? That's essentially what it is. We're all kids in a toy shop."

With that and a firm handshake, Paul disappears off to greet Bob Fernley, to smile for the television cameras and to climb aboard the VJM06 to begin the first day of his 2013 season. As I join the rest of the media to watch the unveiling, I notice which garage the team has picked to debut their new machine to the waiting world. Yup, they've only gone and chosen number 13... Under my breath I whisper 'white rabbits' on their behalf.





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SAHARA FORCE INDIA F1 TEAM

Dadford Road, Silverstone, NN12 8TJ, UK

PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; SUTTON IMAGES; FORCE INDIA

TEAM INFO

Company Force India Formula 1 Team Ltd
Chassis VJM06
Engine Mercedes-Benz FO 108F
Twitter @clubforce





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 2007
First GP Australia 2008
Races started 93
Wins 0
Poles 1
Fastest laps 2
Constructors' points 259
Constructors' titles 0
Drivers' titles 0

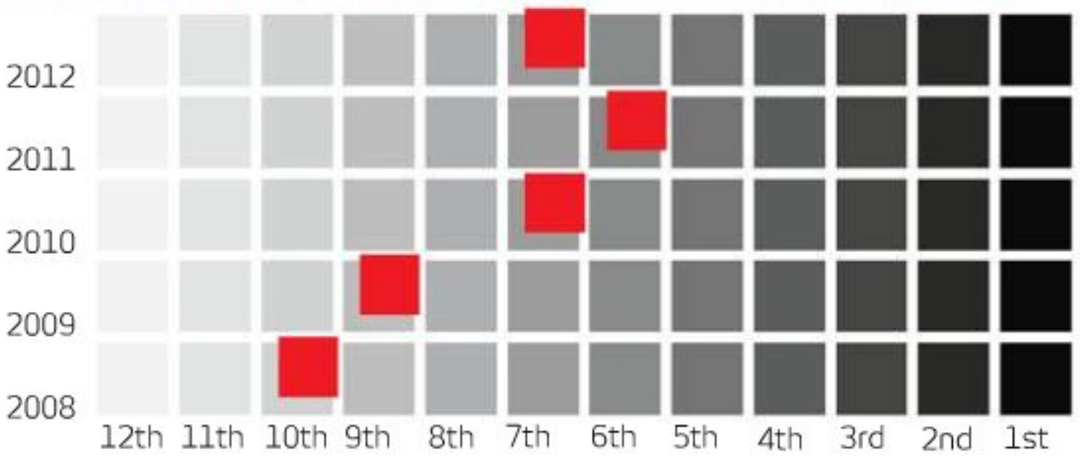
KEY PERSONNEL

Team principal and Managing director
Dr Vijay Mallya
Chairman
Subrata Roy Sahara
Deputy team principal
Robert Fernley
Chief Operating Officer
Otmar Szafnauer
Technical director
Andrew Green

F1 RACING SAYS...

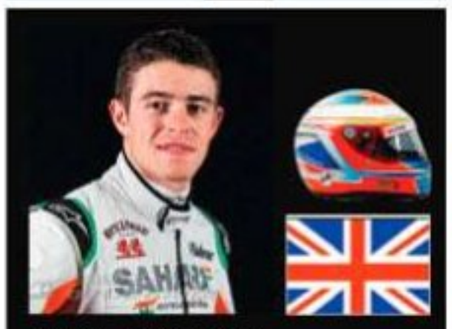
Force India might have a grand emperor as their figurehead (the larger-than-life Dr Vijay Mallya), but they are one of the smallest teams in terms of their resources. Their CFD capability is less than Caterham's and they don't even have their own simulator (part of the technology deal with McLaren is for Force India to use the McLaren machine in Woking). But over the past few years the team have been consistently in the midfield and, on occasion, have pulled themselves up towards the front of the grid. This year, as this section of the magazine went to press, Force India had yet to confirm their second driver.

FORCE INDIA'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 14 Black camera



PAUL DI RESTA

Born 16 April 1986
Place of birth
Uphall, UK
Height 1.85m
Weight 74kg
Race engineer
Gianpiero Lambiase
Twitter @pauldirestaf1

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2011
Races started 39
Previous teams
N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 73
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 14th

Car number 15 Yellow camera



N/A

N/A

TBA

Born N/A
Place of birth
N/A
Height N/A
Weight N/A
Race engineer
Bradley Joyce
Twitter N/A

F1 HISTORY
Debut N/A
Races started N/A
Previous teams
N/A
Wins N/A
Poles N/A
Fastest laps N/A
Points N/A
Drivers' titles N/A
2012 position N/A

THE WILLIAMS

If any team is part of the F1 establishment it's Williams. In their first ever double

WORDS ANTHONY ROWLINSON & JAMES ROBERTS **PORTRAITS** MALCOLM GRIFFITHS/LAT

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DYNASTY

interview, Sir Frank and daughter Claire open up about succession and legacy



SIR Frank Williams

Frank Williams is on chipper form today. Despite the permafrost that has seeped into rural Oxfordshire surrounding team HQ in Grove; despite a background of unsettling rumours concerning the recently departed Toto Wolff and the 'will-he-won't-he' arrival of McLaren's Paddy Lowe, FW is upbeat, optimistic, and – as always – looking to the future.

It won't be long, he knows, till the FW35 that is currently being assembled in the race bays beneath our feet is finally prepped and fired up, before being shipped off to Spain for winter testing. It won't be long until they're *racing*. That's how it is for Williams (for which read 'Frank, team and family'). That's how it always has been. Because it's what they are. It's what they do. And for this reason more than any other, it is only fitting that Sir Frank's daughter, Claire, representing the next generation of Williams, has now emerged as a figure of increasing influence over the team's affairs.

Since April last year, Claire Williams has held a seat on the Williams board, as director of communications and marketing, having been encouraged to step up by departed CEO Adam Parr. And who's to say how much power she will eventually wield? This is, after all, a *family* firm, founded by Sir Frank with fabled technical partner Patrick Head, and one loved by fans and the F1 fraternity for stubborn adherence to their core values. What greater reassurance could there be for FW, looking to the future – as always – than the knowledge that his 36-year-old scion is in place to protect his legacy? So much for business. They're still father and daughter, and the beam of delight that crosses Sir Frank's face when Claire enters his office tells all you need to know about the warmth of their relationship. Claire sits at her father's desk, to his left, and brushes a crumb from his sweater. "You looking all right, pops? He's going to fire me after this..."

Could he, we wonder? "Legally speaking," Sir Frank answers, in that inimitable, insistent whisper "but it's not going to happen." "This is our first joint interview," Claire announces. "Shall we hold hands under the table?" suggests Williams Sr.

The easy banter is as disarming as it is genuine, but with Sir Frank set to turn 71 this year the Williams duo know that *F1 Racing* is keen to talk about succession. They're more than happy to oblige – but only after Claire has batted the opener upstairs: "You can answer that."

FW: I've been here a long time and succession has to be thought about carefully. It has to work. You can have a second chance, but it's very painful if you make a serious mistake. Claire has worked here for a number of years... three or four?

CW: Ten. [Delivered deadpan, with a hint of a raised eyebrow]

FW: Time goes by when you're happy. She knows the company as well as I know it. She's a tough piece of work. She has no hesitation in giving me a hard time – seriously. She fights her corner and she's an ideal candidate. She's experienced and articulate from her years in marketing and she's done a really good job for the company, especially in times when our results have not made us particularly proud.

CW: From my perspective, succession is quite a tricky subject, first and foremost because it's 'dad' and it's quite weird thinking about Frank not being here – and I hope that Frank's going to be here forever. He's doing quite a good job of it...

FW: It'll be me or Bernie first.

CW: I think you two have got a standoff going on! It's a strange question to try to answer really because it's just not something we like to talk about. On a practical level Frank and I work, that's what we do. Maybe it's slightly irresponsible not to talk about succession, but it's much nicer to think that he'll be around forever and that he'll be here. Williams is Frank and the thought of him not being here is very difficult to deal with, but those are the issues on the table.

I don't know whether other people see me in that position, but it's a really big responsibility and it's certainly not one that anyone should undertake lightly. If you were the son or daughter of somebody like Frank, you would want to be extremely sure that you were capable of taking over that mantle, because those are big shoes to fill and you'll have seen the situation before in lots of big companies where it hasn't necessarily worked out. But sometimes it does work and, if it does, then that's great and it's probably the holy grail. But from my perspective it's not something that I would go into lightly and whether I could do it, I just don't know.

> "Williams is Frank and the thought of him not being here is difficult to deal with"

Claire's modesty belies a resolve that those who work closely with her will tell you quickly becomes apparent in daily dealings. She's still grounded enough, however, to admit to feeling the weight of responsibility she has assumed in taking on the Williams mantle with a formal, board-level position. "It plays on my mind, yes," she says. "The strangest thing is that Williams has always been in our lives. I have two brothers [Jonathan, 38, and Jamie, 30] and we are a very close family. Williams has been at the centre of that family for years. We don't really talk about anything else; motor racing is our lives, that's what we do. We've been by dad's side and let him go off and do what he had to do, to create what he's created. We're proud of that."

Sir Frank interjects swiftly to credit Patrick Head for his role in building Williams into a team that for three periods – the late 1970s to the early 1980s; the middle-ish 1980s; and two-thirds of the 1990s – were F1's dominant force. Pre-season (one that will bring Williams' 600th GP, at Silverstone) their scorecard records nine constructors' titles, seven drivers' titles and 114 GP wins.

Leaner times have followed, but Williams have carried out a restructure over the past two years, technical and commercial, and the on-track promise of 2012 has borne a mood of optimism. Always, though, there's that legacy to live up to along with the responsibility of steering a company employing 550-plus people. For Sir Frank, this has been the 'day job' for so long that he has no concept of how an unpressurised nine-to-five might feel.

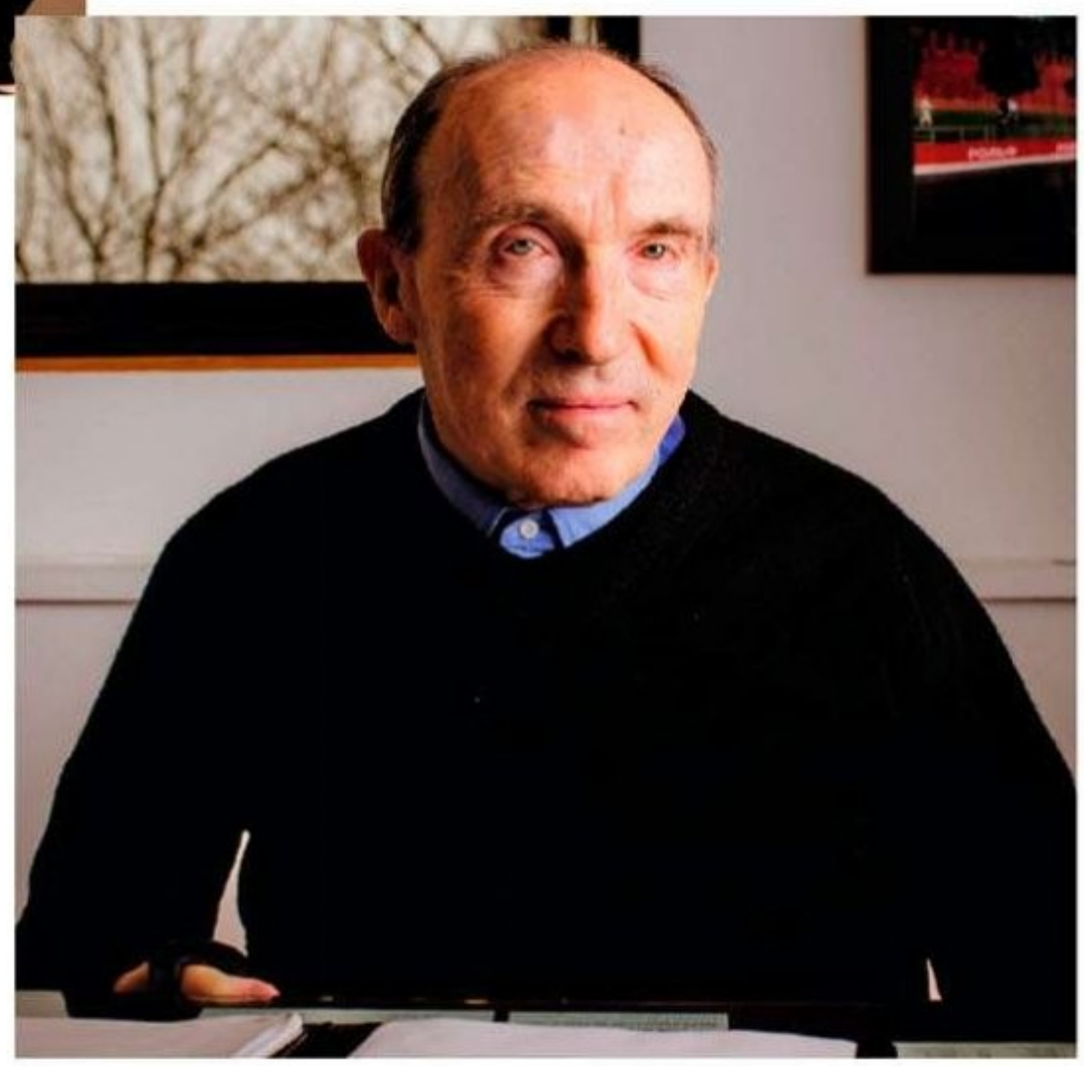
For his daughter, the experience is subtly different: from watching and absorbing how that kind of existence is managed, to suddenly being one from whom guidance is sought. "Over →

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the years there's always a question around the table with mum: 'Have we got the money to go racing next year?'" says Claire. "Now I've got the responsibility of that pressure; to get the budget in. But whenever I've seen Frank, there has never been a time where there's panic that we're not going to make the next season." With conspiratorial hush Frank smiles: "If you look under 'I' in the dictionary you'll find the word 'irresponsible'..."

This prompts a knowing admission from Claire: "Maybe I've inherited a bit of irresponsibility. Maybe because Frank did that role in the past, it proves it can be done, so with hard work and luck those deals will come through and we can keep going racing."

That last could have come straight from the mouth of her father, a very *English* understated pluck. It must make a father proud? "I try not to be very proud," says FW, flashing Claire an indulgent grin. "I try to look at her as another employee – that's hard to do of course. But she's been here quite a while and she's extremely competent. Her mother [Virginia] is a remarkable woman – I wouldn't say 'tough' as that's very unfair – but her father was amazingly successful. Shrewd, clever businessman – that's in the genes, no question! But Ginny is remarkable. She's put up with me for 40 years and it's a great achievement. Claire has got a lot of her mother in her and some of me, and I've not the slightest doubt that she'll steer the ship successfully."

Obligation, duty, maybe destiny – all these words could be applied to Claire Williams' assumption of board responsibilities. It's clear, though, that things might easily have been different.

"As kids we didn't go to many races," she recalls. "I remember going to Silverstone and that was a really big treat, but it was very much considered 'Frank's workplace' and it wasn't appropriate to bring your wife and children to work." Never, says Claire, was there any discussion of her or her brothers working for the team – indeed, mum and dad were keen for their children to 'do their own thing'. "I really wanted to," she says, not entirely convincingly, "but it didn't quite happen. I think to myself now, what else would I do? Then I can't think of anything that would be better than this." Sensing a confessional moment, dad asks daughter: "Do you think about legging off once in a while?"
"I do, sometimes, when you've given me grief!" announces Claire.

For all the lightness of tone, a serious undercurrent runs through the conversation and there's no doubting Claire's sincerity when she speaks of wanting to "pay back" into the team with which she and her family have enjoyed high times as well as low. "Things have happened in the business in the past 18 months that mean there's a vacuum to fill and some people have looked to me to do it," Claire says. "And you do feel: 'If I don't do it, then who else will?' It might sound naff, but Williams has given us a really nice life and it's important that we contribute to paying that back. This is our responsibility: you can't just sit back at home and reap the rewards of someone else's hard work."

Overcoming a reluctance to ask other people (ie sponsors) for money was an early challenge – now conquered – but there's still one outstanding issue to be resolved.

"Do you find it difficult to ask for a pay rise?" *F1R* wonders...

"Yes! I'm not very good at asking for money. I wasn't able to ask mum and dad for pocket money when I was a kid."

How times change.

Son of the father

Jonathan Williams should not be confused with the former F1 Ferrari driver of the same name – but neither should he be seen in isolation from that other JW. He's named 'Jonathan' precisely because of his parents' respect for Jonathan Williams the racing driver, a close friend of Sir Frank.

Jonathan Williams, son of Sir Frank, is much like his father. He's bright and retentive, with passions that include anything F1, Porsche 917s, Pedro Rodríguez, Jeff Gordon, hairy Porsche road cars, NASCAR, IndyCar, GP2, GP3, F3, WSR, karting, his family, and his two black labs, Seb and Harry. His attention to detail is no less keen than that of Sir Frank. He can give you the history of every Williams F1 car ever built – and will do it pretty well for other teams, too. He is poised to play a leading, role at Williams F1, having worked for Dallara (servicing F3 teams in the UK) and he's been involved with the iSport GP2 team from the outset, while from his office at Grove, he works on the Williams driver programme.

Jonny brings a certain charm to the F1 paddock area. There is no ego; just calm, unassuming confidence, tempered by an eye to the future of F1 and of Williams in particular. He is the Next Generation.

Peter Windsor



Jonathan Williams with Pastor Maldonado

INSET: SUTTON IMAGES



WILLIAMS F1

Station Road, Grove, Oxfordshire, OX12 0DQ, UK



PHOTOS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; WILLIAMS

TEAM INFO

Company Williams Grand Prix Engineering Ltd
Chassis FW35
Engine Renault RS27 - 2013
Website williamsf1.com
Twitter @WilliamsF1Team





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 1975
First GP Argentina 1975
Races started 592
Wins 114
Poles 127
Fastest laps 131
Constructors' points 2,750
Constructors' titles 9
Drivers' titles 7

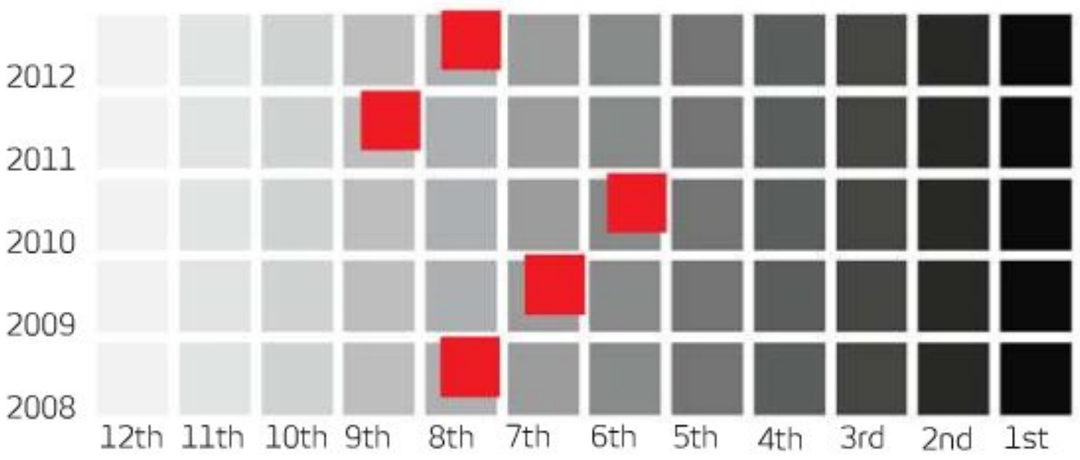
KEY PERSONNEL

Team principal
Sir Frank Williams
Chief executive officer
Alex Burns
Technical director
Mike Coughlan
Chief aerodynamicist
Jason Somerville
Chief engineer
Xevi Pujolar

F1 RACING SAYS...

After such a disastrous 2011, last year was a significant improvement in performance for Williams. Pastor Maldonado scored the team's first win in eight years on the same momentous weekend that Sir Frank celebrated his 70th birthday, and they'll be hoping that upward momentum continues into 2013. The improvements were down, in part, to a new technical structure with Mike Coughlan ringing in the changes. Further moves are afoot in that department, which should hopefully propel this popular, family-run team further up the grid – although their 2013 challenger was revealed later than most teams', not appearing until the second winter test.

WILLIAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 16 Black camera



PASTOR MALDONADO

Born 9 March 1985
Place of birth
Maracay, Venezuela
Height 1.73m
Weight 63kg
Race engineer
Andrew Murdoch
Twitter @Pastormaldo

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2011
Races started 39
Previous teams
N/A
Wins 1
Poles 1
Fastest laps 0
Points 46
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 15th

Car number 17 Yellow camera



VALTTERI BOTTAS

Born 28 August 1989
Place of birth
Nastola, Finland
Height 1.73m
Weight 70kg
Race engineer
Jonathan Eddolls
Twitter @ValtteriBottas

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2013
Races started 0
Previous teams
N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 0
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position N/A

Mr Motivated

If you thought Mark Webber was the only ambitious Aussie in F1, you'd be wrong. Red Bull's young driver programme is an up-or-out deal, and Daniel Ricciardo knows what he has to do to remain a part of it...

WORDS STUART CODLING **PORTRAIT** DREW GIBSON/LAT

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For those of you who keep an eye on all things Formula 1 via Twitter, you'll know that Daniel Ricciardo spent the off-season in Australia. Enjoying himself? Most of the time, it seems. Getting in shape for the new season? Ditto.

"It's never easy coming back after summer in Australia," he says. "I love home a lot and going there in the best part of the year is really good. Coming back to Europe in the worst part of the year – it takes a bit of motivation! Seriously though, being an F1 driver is enough motivation for me. Even though it was snowing pretty heavily when I got back..."

Daniel is in many ways the epitome of the laid-back Australian dude, but he has taken a path beaten successfully (at this level) by very few before him – most recently by Mark Webber, before that Alan Jones, and before Jones... Jack Brabham. Moving from the other side of the globe to F1's European heartland at such a young age then fighting your way to the top takes commitment and determination.

"As a kid I didn't like travelling much – you know, even travelling inter-state in karting seemed too much [Daniel hails from Perth, on Australia's west coast]. I certainly never pictured myself living in Europe. But when the success comes you slowly forget about all the sacrifices you've made. Having your dream job makes up for all the other stuff."

Daniel's career progression has benefitted from his being part of Red Bull's young driver programme, but while securing backing from Dietrich Mateschitz's carbonated beverage empire has its perks, it can have an ultimate cost. If you fail to impress Dr Helmut Marko, Mateschitz's shop steward, you are ejected without mercy. So far the only driver to have graduated from the 'finishing school' that is Scuderia Toro Rosso is Sebastian Vettel. Every other starry-eyed recruit has been judged to have fallen short of expectations. Daniel has had a full season in the chair with six top-ten finishes to show for it; does Dr Marko expect more from him in 2013 and, if so, what?

"It's hard for the team to say, 'We want you to be coming fifth every race,' or whatever," says Daniel. "It's more a case of me, personally, wanting to improve on last year... to get better. The team would like to be up there with the people we can fight with – Sauber, Force India, Williams – and I think it's fair to say we were at the tail end of that group last year. We want to get back in among that group and finish in front."

Expectations *will* be higher this year, with the technical regulations more or less being carried over from 2012 and a new-ish technical director in place – James Key, ex-Sauber – who has had several months to exert his will over the development of the STR8. The team have also stepped up their activities in the Red Bull simulator.







"We use their simulator but with our programme, set up by our engineers," says Daniel. "For me, learning the tracks is a basic, especially new circuits such as Austin. It helps to know a little bit about it before you go. I've gained a better technical response from it – I think my feedback to the engineers has improved because of it. It's not the real thing, but you're still able to increase your knowledge by using it.

"We're all expecting, uh... a bit of a change. What I noticed last year is that he [Key] brought a lot of ambition into the team. He's set – from what I understood – some ambitious targets for what we want to achieve in the first few races this year. I like that. You've got to have ambition and you've got to reach high and keep looking for more.

"He had a hand in last year's Sauber and that was a strong car. We can't say that he's going to give us what they had, but there's a lot of optimism. There have been some other changes. My data engineer from last year is going to be my new race engineer, so the people to my left and right at the driver meetings are going to be switched around a bit."

'Ambition' is the key word here. Unlike, say, Mercedes or McLaren, the Scuderia Toro Rosso 'brand' isn't built on winning. It's all about being there – or thereabouts. But Daniel understands that to make his mark in the Red Bull empire he has to aim higher than that.

"The team's first target is to finish more consistently in the points. We definitely improved in the second half of last season, but sometimes it required a little bit of luck. We want to be in the points on merit much more consistently. I'd like to be on the podium – I'm sure the team want me to be there as well – but we'll have to be realistic and see where we are when we get to Melbourne. I'm setting my sights high and if it's there for the taking, I'll be ready."

"We want to be in the points on merit much more consistently"

Thanks to the White Horse pub on Parsons Green, London, for the use of their dining room during this interview

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SCUDERIA TORO ROSSO

Via Spallanzani, 21, 48018 Faenza, Italy



PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; PETER FOX/LAT; TORO ROSSO

TEAM INFO

Company Scuderia Toro Rosso SPA
Chassis STR8
Engine Ferrari 056
Website scuderiatororosso.com
Twitter @ToroRossoSpy





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 2005
First GP Bahrain 2006
Races started 128
Wins 1
Poles 1
Fastest laps 0
Constructors' points 136
Constructors' titles 0
Drivers' titles 0

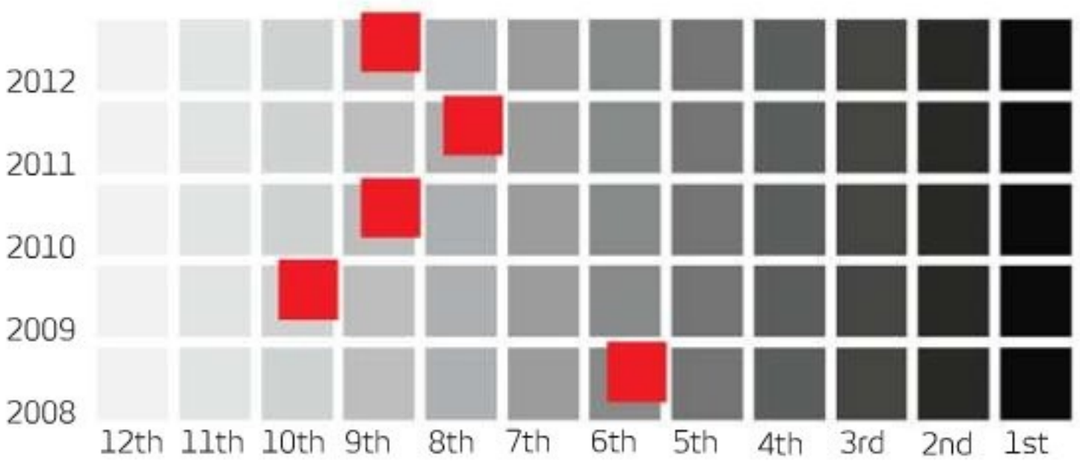
KEY PERSONNEL

Chairman Dietrich Mateschitz
Team principal Franz Tost
Technical director James Key
Chief engineer Laurent Mekies
Chief designer Luca Furbatto

F1 RACING SAYS

Giorgio Ascanelli's sudden departure in 2012 was followed by the appointment of ex-Sauber and ex-Force India man James Key as Toro Rosso technical director. The experienced Key has been impressed by the quality of Toro Rosso's staff and has been working to improve the integration between the various departments at Faenza and the windtunnel in Bicester. Both STR drivers now have a year's experience of the circuits so will spend less time learning the tracks on Fridays – which should enable them to be in a better position to evaluate parts. And, more than anything, Toro Rosso need parts to improve the downforce on their cars.

TORO ROSSO'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 17 Black Camera

JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

Born 25 April 1990
Place of birth Pontoise, France
Height 1.82m
Weight 70kg
Race engineer Phil Charles
Twitter @JeanEricVergne

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2012
Races started 20
Previous teams N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 16
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 17th

Car number 18 Yellow camera

DANIEL RICCIARDO

Born 1 July 1989
Place of birth Perth, Australia
Height 1.79m
Weight 70kg
Race engineer Marco Matassa
Twitter @danielricciardo

F1 HISTORY
Debut Britain 2011
Races started 31
Previous teams HRT
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 10
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 18th

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Trading places

Charles Pic is confident with the huge numbers of high finance. But just one single digit would bring his greatest satisfaction this year

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS **PORTRAITS** THOMAS BUTLER





Tony Fernandes is in the news. On the car radio, in the newspapers and on the TV – all the talk is about his latest big-money deal. A defender called Christopher Samba has joined Fernandes' QPR football club for a rumoured £12.5million; the signing completed in the final hours of 'transfer deadline day.' The headlines are of little interest to *F1 Racing*, however. Much more pertinent is another of his new signings, a certain Charles Pic, who will this year race for Tony's F1 team, Caterham, and whom we're about to meet. The working day is nearing its end as we approach the The Blue Boar in Witney, Pic's residence of choice when he's over from Lyon to visit his team, a stone's throw from their new Leafield factory.

Pic likes his football but he also likes his economics. So it's no matter that his newspaper of choice isn't big on soccer tittle-tattle. It carries an FT score, but it's one of financial news, stocks and shares, global wheeling and dealing. A paper in which Fernandes' market moves probably feature quite regularly, in fact – so a good topic on which to start.

"Tony is very funny," smiles Pic. "He's very nice and he always says that Caterham is a family and that's what I've felt in the short time I've been here. That's important because when you spend so much of the year travelling and working with a team to improve and push the limits, it's very important that the atmosphere you work in is a good one."

Pic made his F1 debut last year with Marussia and, under the continued guidance of Olivier Panis, has switched over the winter to Caterham. Not a huge leap up the grid in terms of performance, rather a switching of marques and a chance to be involved in a wider allegiance with Renault (Caterham's engine partner), following the recent tie-up of Caterham Cars and Alpine.

"Marussia and Caterham are young teams, in F1 terms," 23-year-old Pic explains. "But Caterham have their road-car project with Renault and Tony believes in this a lot."

Something else that Fernandes believes in is spending and making money. Thanks to the success of his budget airline AirAsia, his business interests have grown and expanded through the Tune Hotels group, his Formula 1 team and, more recently, QPR – after he took over Bernie Ecclestone's majority share in the team in August 2011.

It's a world that Pic is familiar with, since his family run GCA (Groupe Charles André), a transport logistics company based in France, with subsidiaries in 14 other European countries employing more than 6,000 people. The company started out by supplying Elf fuel around the Rhône Valley and has now diversified into construction and the leisure industry. It's big business and one Pic likes to keep an eye on through the pink pages. "It's one part of me and ever since I was ten, I was interested in my family's business. So when I'm travelling it's something I follow. I'm interested in the economy and how it works, and I like to read a bit deeper into the news that's happening around the world. Plus I do a bit of investment in the markets myself, but it's not my main job – that's F1, which I'm 100 per cent focused on.

"This is something I have on the side," he adds. "I started when I was young and I continue because it helps me. It's good to have something that isn't associated with racing, just so that you can clear your mind. For some people it's the cinema, for others it's sport. It doesn't matter what it is: you just need to have it."

> "I do a bit of investment in the markets, but it's not my main job – that's F1, which I'm 100 per cent focused on"



Although Pic's family business isn't a motorsport-led company, it did, with Elf, sponsor F3 team Winfield Racing and GCATrans once supported a relatively unknown up-and-coming French racer called Olivier Panis. The same Olivier Panis who went on to win the 1996 Monaco GP and who now mentors Charles.

But back to business: at the 2012 season-ending Brazilian GP, Marussia were on course to finish tenth in the constructors' standings and to pick-up an estimated £10million in TV bonus money. Their closest challengers were Caterham. Was Pic aware of the financial windfall at stake as he raced Vitaly Petrov in the Caterham?

"To be honest, I was really focused on my race and just doing the best I could for Marussia. I was behind Vitaly, but then he spun and I was in front of him. It was raining so hard that I didn't really know what position we were fighting for and he closed back in on me again. Then I received a blue flag as Alonso was behind me, which allowed Vitaly to use both KERS and DRS and he passed me again. I had no chance to fight him."

That pass proved to be a case of Marussia's loss, Caterham's gain – rarely in F1 has the risk-reward ratio of top-level sport been so nakedly exposed. So it's ironic that in a sport of millions, and for a driver so comfortable with numbers, Caterham's – and Charles's – greatest achievement this year would simply be to score their first, single, point.

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CATERHAM F1 TEAM

Leafield Technical Centre,
Langley, Oxfordshire,
OX29 9EF, UK

PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; CATERHAM

TEAM INFO

Company 1Malaysia Racing Team Sbn Bhd
Chassis CT03
Engine Renault RS27 – 2013
Website caterhamf1.com
Twitter @MyCaterhamF1





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 2009
First GP Australia 2012
Races started 20
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Constructors' points 0
Constructors' titles 0
Drivers' titles 0

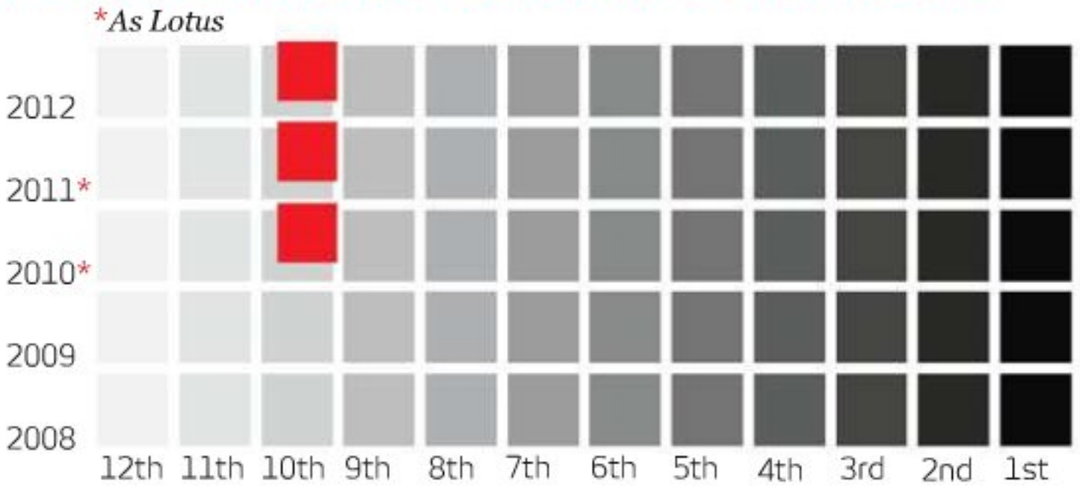
KEY PERSONNEL

Caterham Group co-chairman
Tony Fernandes
Group CEO Riad Asmat
Team principal
Cyril Abiteboul
Technical director
Mark Smith
Performance director
John Iley

F1 RACING SAYS...

It's been a tough few years for this little team, who have been dogged by upheaval during their short existence. First there was the dispute over rights to the Lotus name, then Mike Gascoyne, one of the team's key architects, was taken off the F1 programme. Last summer Caterham moved from their Hingham base to the old Super Aguri and Arrows factory at Leafield. The IT/CFD infrastructure is good, but their cars have never been competitive, the main problem being a lack of downforce, something that must be addressed urgently if this team are ever to score a point. The big question is, for how long will Tony Fernandes tolerate constantly putting in money for so little return?

CATERHAM'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 20 Black camera



CHARLES PIC

Born 15 February 1990
Place of birth
Montélimar, France
Height 1.78m
Weight 65kg
Race engineer
Tim Wright
Twitter @Charles_Pic1

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2012
Races started 20
Previous teams
Marussia
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 0
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position 21st

Car number 21 Yellow camera



GIEDO VAN DER GARDE

Born 25 April 1985
Place of birth
Rhenen, Holland
Height 1.82m
Weight 73kg
Race engineer
Juan Ramírez
Twitter @GvanderGarde

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2013
Races started 0
Previous teams
N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 0
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position N/A

In conversation with

Max Chilton

Marussia's new driver on moving into F1 – and getting a car that fits

INTERVIEW JAMES ROBERTS
PORTRAIT GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

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MAX CHILTON



Factfile

Date of birth
22 April 1991

Birthplace
Reigate, England

Team
Marussia

Role
Driver

2001-04 British karting championships

2005 Makes his debut in T-Cars, scoring seven podiums

2006 Takes seven wins with his team Tomax in T-Cars, finishing second overall in the series

2007 Enters British F3 with the Littlehampton-based Arena team, becoming one of the youngest ever drivers to compete in the series on the weekend of his 16th birthday

2008 Swaps to David Hayle's Hitech Racing F3 team, taking two poles and two fastest laps

2009 As team-mate to Daniel Ricciardo at Carlin, Chilton finishes fourth overall in British F3 taking his first win in the category. Also makes his GP2 Asia debut

2010 GP2 with Ocean Racing Technology, scoring just three points in his debut year

2011 Joins Carlin for GP2 and the GP2 Asia series and also completes a straightline aero test for Force India

2012 Takes two wins in GP2 with Carlin and finishes fourth overall. Joins Marussia as test driver and participates in first practice at Abu Dhabi

Do you pinch yourself in the morning now that you're a fully fledged Formula 1 driver?
I wouldn't say that I wake up and physically pinch myself, but it is quite surreal. When I signed the contract and started getting asked what T-shirt size I took, I started getting excited and from that moment on I couldn't wait to get testing to see how good the new car will be.

When did you catch the motor racing bug?
Ever since I can remember I sat on the living room floor on Sunday afternoons watching F1 races – I always remember Murray Walker entertaining us all, even when it was a boring race. I was about eight when my brother Tom started racing T-Cars, so I was going every weekend to racing circuits and that was when the smell of racing hit me and I picked up the bug.

Why did you decide to race in single-seaters and not touring cars like your brother Tom?
I always wanted to do F1 and, given my build, I could always fit a single-seater easily. My brother was always into car racing, but I had a look at what to do and decided that rather than BMW or Formula Renault it was best to go straight into F3. Although it was probably a year too early, I learned a lot. By the third year, with Dan Ricciardo as my team-mate, I finished fourth in the championship.

You were really consistent in your GP2 season with Carlin last year, so it looks as if you're ready to step up to F1 – would you agree?
I wouldn't want to step up unless I was ready, and I 100 per cent believe that I am. GP2 is not far off F1 and I've had feature race wins and poles, plus I was the second highest points scorer in the second half of the year. So the speed was there. I'm definitely ready: when I got behind the wheel of an F1 car, I was relaxed and it felt right.

How well have you fitted in at Marussia?
I've known them for a little while – I did the young driver test with them, I've spent time at the factory and also the last six rounds of the F1 season last year, too. So with all the travelling and working 12-plus hours a day, it means that I've really fallen in love with this team. I had my seat fitting in January and what struck me was that the team were on round-the-clock shifts throughout the night to get the car ready in time. Also, the car fits like a glove, which is good because it was hard for me to get into last year's car. I'm 5ft 11, but I've got long legs and a short body which is the opposite to what you want. But this year's design has taken me into account a little bit. I feel much more comfortable in this car.

How have you been preparing yourself mentally and physically?
Compared with GP2, F1 races are another 40 minutes longer, which is quite a big jump in time. Also the G-forces are a lot higher, so I've been doing a lot of work on my neck. My fitness levels are good and there are neck machines at Pro Performance near Gatwick, which I've been using. It's a very different training discipline to a normal gym routine. They've worked with a number of F1 drivers before, so they know the programme required.

And mentally, how are you preparing yourself for competing in Formula 1?
I do have a mind coach who I started using this year and it has made a big difference. I never thought it would, but I was on the McLaren programme and they supplied a mind coach and it really did make a difference. Plus, because of Marussia's partnership with McLaren we use their simulator, so I've spent a number of days there. Also it's fun to use the 'Lets Race' sims next to the gym in Horley, too.

It's been reported that your father has taken a stake in Marussia...
I'm glad you mentioned it as I can say straight up that it's not true. We've set up a scheme where we've got 30 individuals and businesses who have invested in me and, in return, they will get a percentage of my future earnings. They've effectively taken shares in me.

What can you and the team achieve this year?
It would be incredible if I could get the first point for the team. They came so close to it in Brazil and it was just heart-breaking when it didn't quite happen. They so deserve a point and I would love to be the one to achieve that for them.





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For updates, timings and log-on details, follow @peterdwindsor on Twitter or visit his blog at www.peterwindsor.com

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MARUSSIA F1 TEAM

Overthorpe Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 4PN, UK



PHOTOS: PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES; MARUSSIA

TEAM INFO

Company Manor Grand Prix Racing Ltd
Chassis MR02
Engine Cosworth CA2013
Website marussiaf1team.com
Twitter @Marussia_F1Team





TEAM HISTORY

Founded 2009
First GP Australia 2012
Races started 20
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Constructors' points 0
Constructors' titles 0
Drivers' titles 0

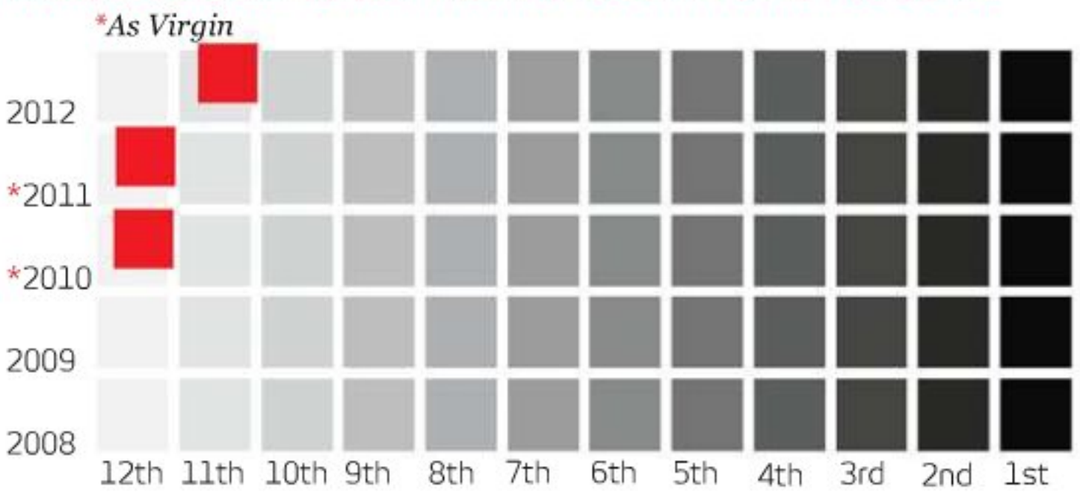
KEY PERSONNEL

Team principal
John Booth
Chief executive officer
Andy Webb
President and sporting director Graeme Lowdon
Technical consultant
Pat Symonds
Chief designer
John McQuilliam

F1 RACING SAYS...

It takes more than good people to make a good racing team, and Marussia's biggest problem so far has been a lack of cash. They haven't been able to afford KERS, fancy kit for pitstops, more than eight days per month in a windtunnel, or much in the way of in-season updates. Throughout the whole of 2012, there were just two floor upgrades (compared with Ferrari's 18). Finishing outside the top ten again means they miss out a higher percentage of FOM TV prize money. All this leads to the team having to take on board rookies such as Luiz Razia to bring in cash and lose experienced race hands such as Timo Glock.

MARUSSIA'S CHAMPIONSHIP POSITION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS



DRIVERS

Car number 22 Black camera

LUIZ RAZIA

Born 4 April 1989
Place of birth
Barreiras, Brazil
Height 1.80m
Weight 73kg
Race engineer
Michael Harre
Twitter @luizrazia

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2013
Races started 0
Previous teams
N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 0
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position N/A

Car number 23 Yellow camera

MAX CHILTON

Born 21 April 1991
Place of birth
Reigate, UK
Height 1.82m
Weight 65kg
Race engineer
Paul Davison
Twitter @maxchilton

F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2013
Races started 0
Previous teams
N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Points 0
Drivers' titles 0
2012 position N/A

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2013 CIRCUITS

THE TRACKS... THE STATS













Round 1

Australia Melbourne

17 March | Albert Park





RACE DATA

F1 debut 1996
Circuit length 3.295 miles
Race distance 191.118 miles
Laps 58
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 24.125secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 69%
Gear changes per lap 56
Winners from pole 8
Race start (UK time) 6am

LAST YEAR

Winner Jenson Button
Retirements 6
Overtaking moves 33
DRS overtakes 12
Weather Sunny, 22°C
Love F1 cars back in action again
Loathe The debilitating jet lag

Round 2

Malaysia Kuala Lumpur

24 March | Sepang International Circuit



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1999
Circuit length 3.444 miles
Race distance 192.879 miles
Laps 56
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 34.223secs, J Montoya, 2004
Full throttle 64%
Gear changes per lap 53
Winners from pole 7
Race start (UK time) 8am

LAST YEAR

Winner Fernando Alonso
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 45
DRS overtakes 12
Weather Rain, 26°C
Love Unpredictable rain showers
Loathe Searing heat and humidity



PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

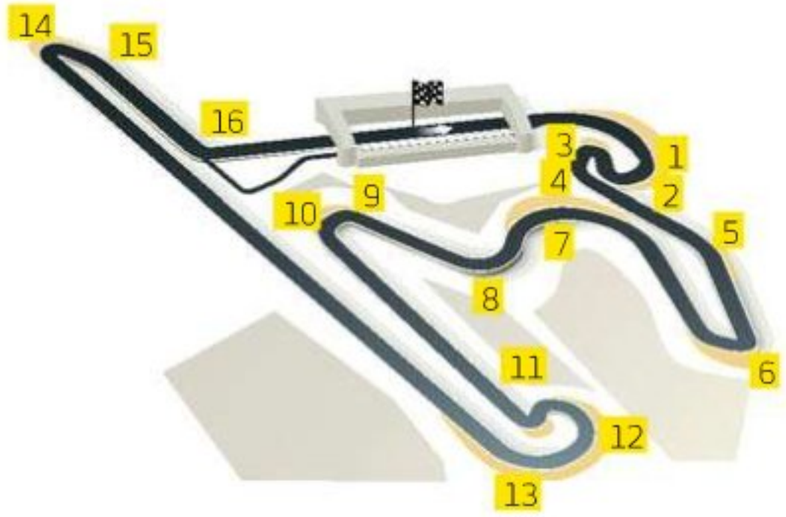




Round 3

China Shanghai

14 April | Shanghai International Circuit



RACE DATA

F1 debut 2004
Circuit length 3.387 miles
Race distance 189.559 miles
Laps 56
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 32.238secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 62%
Gear changes per lap 55
Winners from pole 5
Race start (UK time) 8am

LAST YEAR

Winner Nico Rosberg
Retirements 1
Overtaking moves 65
DRS overtakes 27
Weather Overcast, 22°C
Love The fanatical enthusiasm of the fast-growing fanbase here in China
Loathe Drivers who hide away in Shanghai's gigantic paddock



Round 4

Bahrain Sakhir

21 April | Bahrain International Circuit



RACE DATA

F1 debut 2004
Circuit length 3.363 miles
Race distance 191.53 miles
Laps 57
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 30.252secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 67%
Gear changes per lap 58
Winners from pole 4
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 58
DRS overtakes 14
Weather Sunny, 29°C
Love One of the best paddocks of the year
Loathe The security threat





Round 5

Spain Barcelona

12 May | Circuit de Catalunya



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1991
Circuit length 2.892 miles
Race distance 190.826 miles
Laps 66
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 21.670secs, K Räikkönen, 2008
Full throttle 58%
Gear changes per lap 44
Winners from pole 17
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Pastor Maldonado
Retirements 5
Overtaking moves 30
DRS overtakes 15
Weather Sunny, 22°C
Love Being back in Europe
Loathe A track so overly used in testing

Round 6

Monaco Monte Carlo

26 May | Circuit de Monaco



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1950
Circuit length 2.075 miles
Race distance 161.88 miles
Laps 78
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 14.439secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 53%
Gear changes per lap 55
Winners from pole 26
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Mark Webber
Retirements 8
Overtaking moves 8
DRS overtakes 1
Weather Overcast, 21°C
Love The ultimate drivers' challenge
Loathe Paying five euros for a beer



PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; JAKOB EBREY/LAT; CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES; MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES



Round 7

Canada Montréal

9 June | Circuit Gilles Villeneuve





RACE DATA

F1 debut 1978
Circuit length 2.91 miles
Race distance 189.686 miles
Laps 70
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 13.622secs, R Barrichello, 2004
Full throttle 67%
Gear changes per lap 56
Winners from pole 14
Race start (UK time) 7pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Retirements 4
Overtaking moves 37
DRS overtakes 18
Weather Sunny, 27°C
Love The nearby city of Montréal
Loathe Errant marmots







Round 8

Great Britain Silverstone

30 June | Silverstone

RACE DATA

F1 debut 1950
Circuit length 3.66 miles
Race distance 190.263 miles
Laps 52
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 34.908secs, F Alonso, 2011
Full throttle 69%
Gear changes per lap 43
Winners from pole 16
Race start (UK time) 1pm



LAST YEAR

Winner Mark Webber
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 36
DRS overtakes 16
Weather Overcast, 17°C
Love The knowledgeable – and tolerant – fans
Loathe The miserable weather. And mud

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Round 9

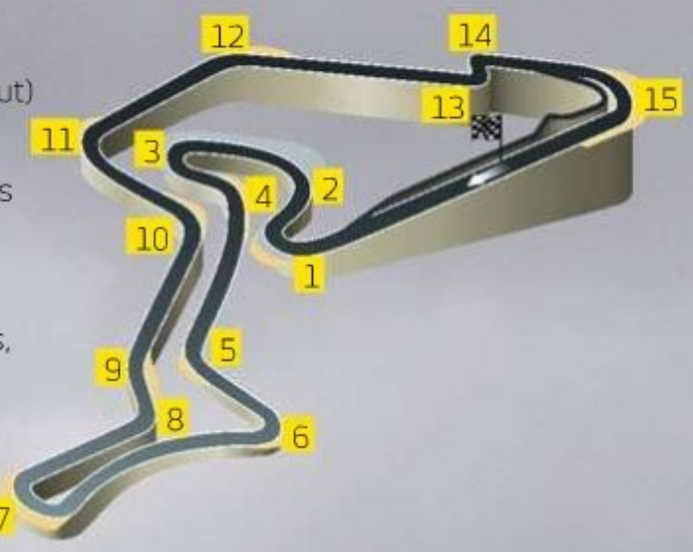
Germany Nürburgring

7 July | Nürburgring



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1951 (original layout)
Circuit length 3.199 miles
Race distance 191.918 miles
Laps 60
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 29.468secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 63%
Gear changes per lap 57
Winners from pole 3
Race start (UK time) 1pm



2011

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Retirements 4
Overtaking moves 28
DRS overtakes 8
Weather Overcast, 13°C
Love Passenger rides around the magical Nordschleife, all 12.9 miles and 170-plus corners of it
Loathe How cold it often is there – even in mid-summer



PHOTOS: DREW GIBSON/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT; CLIVE MASON/GETTY IMAGES





Round 10

Hungary Budapest

28 July | Hungaroring



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1986
Circuit length 2.722 miles
Race distance 190.531 miles
Laps 70
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 19.071secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 57%
Gear changes per lap 51
Winners from pole 12
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 6
DRS overtakes 4
Weather Sunny, 30°C
Love Staying in nearby Budapest
Loathe The lack of high-speed corners

Round 11

Belgium Spa-Francorchamps

25 August | Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps

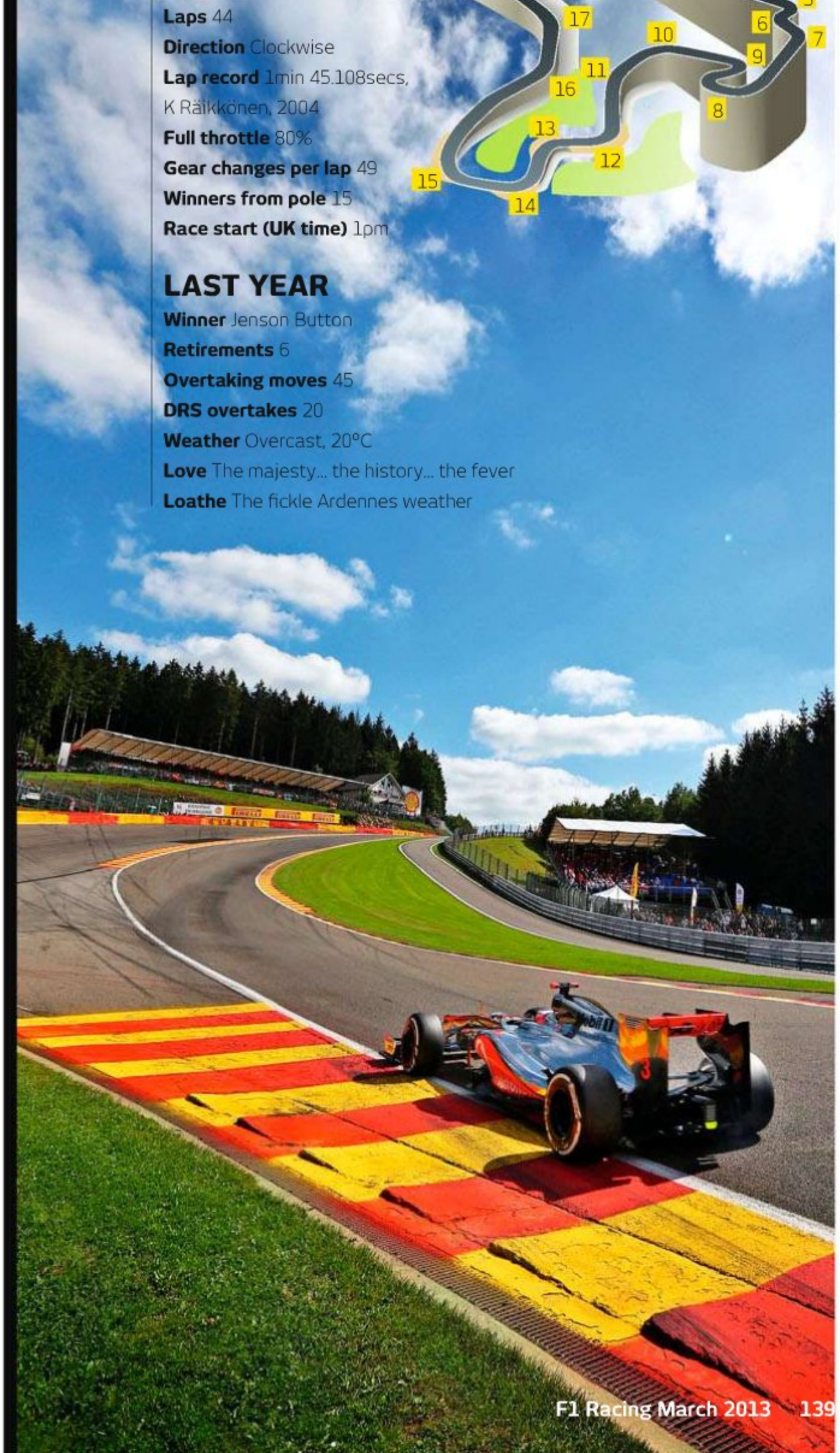
RACE DATA

F1 debut 1950 (original layout)
Circuit length 4.352 miles
Race distance 191.415 miles
Laps 44
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 45.108secs, K Räikkönen, 2004
Full throttle 80%
Gear changes per lap 49
Winners from pole 15
Race start (UK time) 1pm



LAST YEAR

Winner Jenson Button
Retirements 6
Overtaking moves 45
DRS overtakes 20
Weather Overcast, 20°C
Love The majesty... the history... the fever
Loathe The fickle Ardennes weather



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magazinesdownload.com

Round 12

Italy Monza

8 September | Autodromo di Monza



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1950
Circuit length 3.6 miles
Race distance 190.587 miles
Laps 53
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 21.046secs, R Barrichello, 2004
Full throttle 83%
Gear changes per lap 46
Winners from pole 21
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 51
DRS overtakes 20
Weather Sunny, 28°C
Love The speed... the passion... the wine
Loathe The disorganisation inside the circuit

Round 13

Singapore Marina Bay

22 September | Marina Bay Street Circuit



RACE DATA

F1 debut 2008
Circuit length 3.152 miles
Race distance 192.2 miles
Laps 61
Direction Anticlockwise
Lap record 1min 45.599secs, K Räikkönen, 2008
Full throttle 70%
Gear changes per lap 71
Winners from pole 3
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Retirements 5
Overtaking moves 24
DRS overtakes 10
Weather Clear/moon, 29°C
Love Racing under floodlights
Loathe Staying on European time and never seeing the sun

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Round 14

Korea Yeongam

6 October | Korea International Circuit



RACE DATA

F1 debut 2010
Circuit length 3.489 miles
Race distance 191.774 miles
Laps 55
Direction Anticlockwise
Lap record 1min 39.605secs, S Vettel, 2011
Full throttle 62%
Gear changes per lap 51
Winners from pole 1
Race start (UK time) 7am

LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Retirements 4
Overtaking moves 27
DRS overtakes 17
Weather Overcast, 21°C
Love The baseball machine outside the hotel
Loathe Gagnam Style





Round 15

Japan Suzuka

13 October | Suzuka



RACE DATA

F1 debut 1987
Circuit length 3.608 miles
Race distance 191.054 miles
Laps 53
Direction Clockwise & Anticlockwise
Lap record 1min 31.540secs, K Räikkönen, 2005
Full throttle 71%
Gear changes per lap 45
Winners from pole 12
Race start (UK time) 7am

LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Retirements 5
Overtaking moves 15
DRS overtakes 5
Weather Sunny, 24°C
Love Every inch of Tarmac on this awesome track
Loathe Not being able to read the road signs

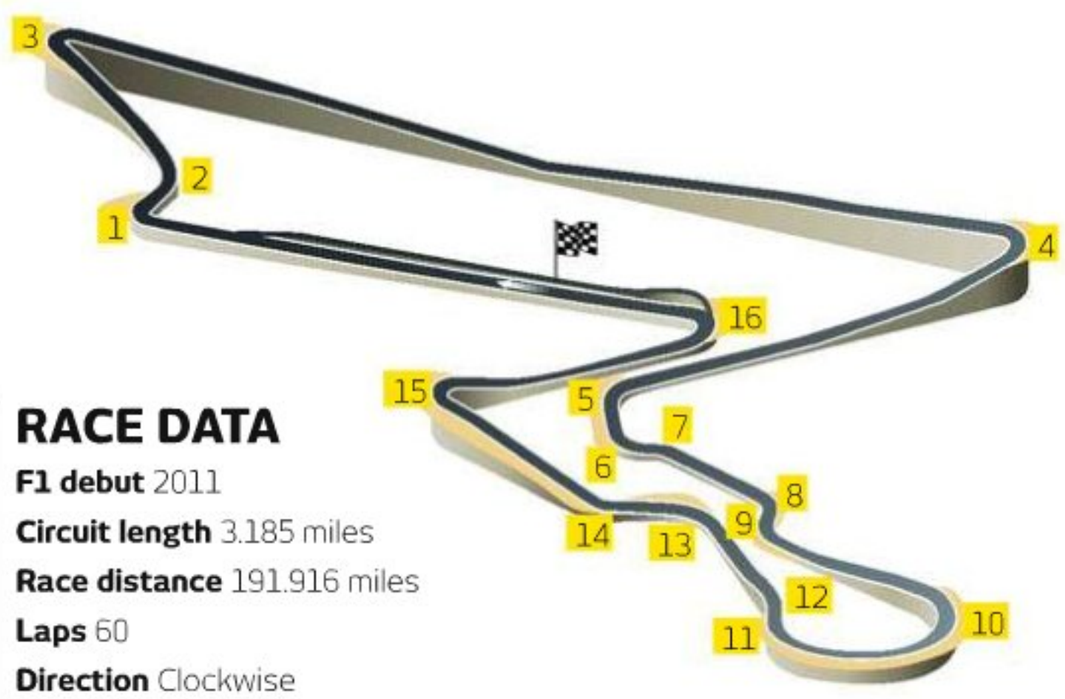




Round 16

India
New Delhi

27 October | Buddh International Circuit





RACE DATA

F1 debut 2011
Circuit length 3.185 miles
Race distance 191.916 miles
Laps 60
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 27.249secs, S Vettel, 2011
Full throttle 65%
Gear changes per lap 54
Winners from pole 2
Race start (UK time) 9.30am

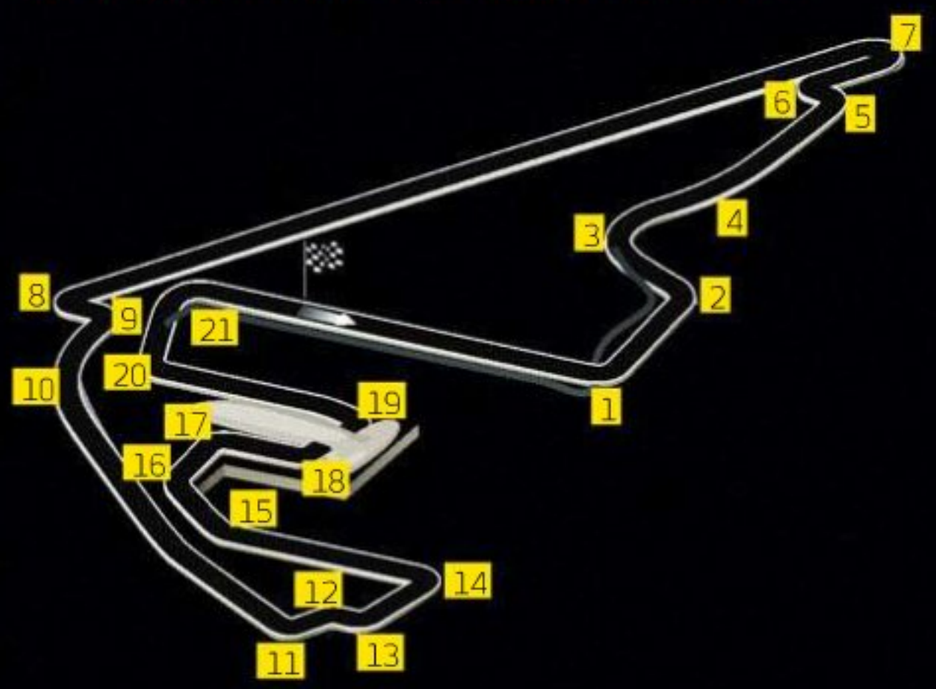
LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 16
DRS overtakes 15
Weather Sunny, 30°C
Love Elephants at the side of the road
Loathe The poor air quality

Round 17

Abu Dhabi
Yas Marina

3 November | Yas Marina





RACE DATA

F1 debut 2009
Circuit length 3.451 miles
Race distance 189.739 miles
Laps 55
Direction Anticlockwise
Lap record 1min 40.279secs, S Vettel, 2010
Full throttle 73%
Gear changes per lap 68
Winners from pole 1
Race start (UK time) 1pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Kimi Räikkönen
Retirements 7
Overtaking moves 18
DRS overtakes 12
Weather Clear, 29°C
Love The state-of-the-art facilities
Loathe The lack of challenging corners

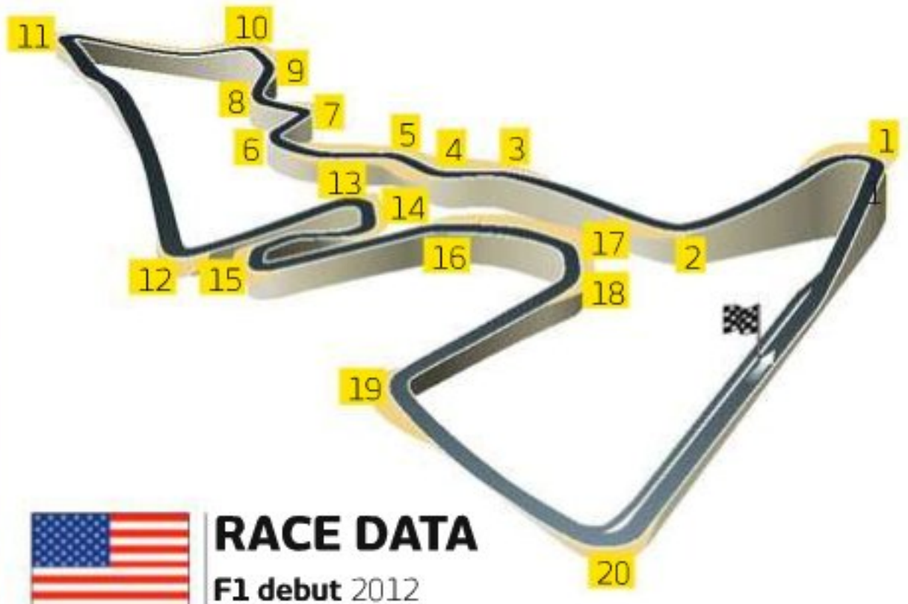




Round 18

United States Austin

17 November | Circuit of The Americas





RACE DATA

F1 debut 2012
Circuit length 3.426 miles
Race distance 191.939 miles
Laps 56
Direction Anticlockwise
Lap record 1min 39.347secs, S Vettel, 2012
Full throttle 63%
Gear changes per lap 59
Winners from pole 0
Race start (UK time) 7pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 51
DRS overtakes 23
Weather Sunny, 24°C
Love The immense climb into Turn 1
Loathe Having to fly home on Sunday night

Round 19

Brazil São Paulo

24 November | Interlagos

RACE DATA

F1 debut 1973
Circuit length 2.677 miles
Race distance 190.083 miles
Laps 71
Direction Anticlockwise
Lap record 1min 11.473secs, J Montoya, 2004
Full throttle 74%
Gear changes per lap 40
Winners from pole 10
Race start (UK time) 4pm

LAST YEAR

Winner Jenson Button
Retirements 5
Overtaking moves 100
DRS overtakes 23
Weather Drizzle, 16°C
Love The track... the crowd... the food
Loathe The security threat (again)





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Lights out!

Formula 1 is back. Get ready to enjoy another action-packed season as the cars line up on the grid in Melbourne once again

PREVIEWS



148 AUSTRALIAN GP PREVIEW

The long wait is over as F1 returns to the tyre-testingly smooth Tarmac of Albert Park



150 MALAYSIAN GP PREVIEW

High humidity and a high risk of monsoon rain: F1 prepares for one of its toughest challenges of the year

OPINION



153 TOM CLARKSON

TC is back from winter testing at Jerez where all the talk was of the new face at Mercedes and his fancy new plane...



154 MURRAY WALKER

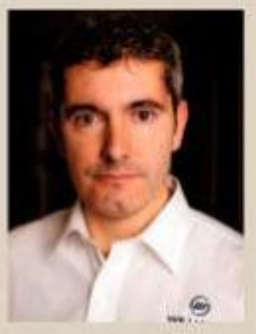
He'll admit to a certain knack for getting it wrong, but Murray is happy to offer up his hot tip for the drivers' championship this year...

The Australian GP preview



15 -17.03.2013 / Albert Park, Melbourne

After all the hype and speculation of winter testing, the season-opener in Melbourne is the place where the teams *really* find out who's done the best job



THE ENGINEER'S VIEW

Xevi Pujolar,
Williams chief race engineer

At the first race of the year there is always a lot of expectation because you never know exactly what the other teams have been doing during winter testing. This year there haven't been too many changes in the regulations, but there is a new DRS setup with two zones now included in the race. We'll also be running the new-for-2013 Pirelli tyres.

When we do that first run on Friday morning it'll be a case of seeing what happens, because that's when you really see who's done the best job. You want to know if what you saw in winter testing was real, or if you were dreaming...

There is a lot of track evolution because Albert Park is not a standard circuit. The Tarmac is very smooth and that makes it difficult for the tyres. In terms of average cornering speed, this track is medium-high; the corners are very short, so the turn angle is quite low. So the amount of energy you put into the tyres is not high.

The main unknown for all of the teams will be how the 2013 tyres behave. From 2011 to 2012 we went one step softer; they will be a step softer again this year and for Australia we have the option of the supersoft rubber, too.

The one concern is that the weather can fluctuate a lot at this time of year in Melbourne. If the temperature is not high you struggle to get the tyres working on such smooth Tarmac – and in the past we've had problems with graining because of it. If it's on the front you can manage it, but if it's front and rear then you have problems. If the tyre works in the right range, then we should be okay as it's not a track where we've had serious degradation in the past.

In terms of strategy, because the pitlane is limited to 37.3mph, how you prepare your Sunday is important as you're more likely to have fewer pitstops than at other races. Although given that it's a street-type circuit with no run-off, you're more likely to have a Safety Car – and that can affect your strategic thinking, too.

MELBOURNE STATS AND FACTS

7 winners of the Australian Grand Prix since 2002 have gone on to finish the season as world champion

3,300
The approximate number of times each driver will change gear over the course of the race

18 The number of world championship races that will have been held at Albert Park after this year's GP

7 The number of times the Safety Car has been deployed in the past 11 Australian GPs



3.5G The highest G-force experienced – at Turn 11



AUSTRALIAN GP RACE DATA

Circuit Albert Park, Melbourne
F1 debut 1996
Length 3.295 miles
Distance 191.118 miles
Laps 58
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 24.125secs, M Schumacher, 2004
Full throttle 69%
Gear changes per lap 56
Winners from pole 8
Tyre compounds
Supersoft and medium

TV TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

Friday 15 March
Practice 1 01:30-03:00
Practice 2 05:30-07:00
Saturday 16 March
Practice 3 03:00-04:00
Qualifying 06:00
Sunday 17 March
Race 06:00
Live coverage
Sky Sports F1 (available in HD)
Highlights BBC One (available in HD)

LAST YEAR

Winner Jenson Button
Retirements 6
Overtaking moves 33
DRS overtakes 12
Weather Sunny, 22°C



ILLUSTRATION: ALAN ELDRIDGE. PHOTOS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; MALCOLM GRIFFITHS/LAT

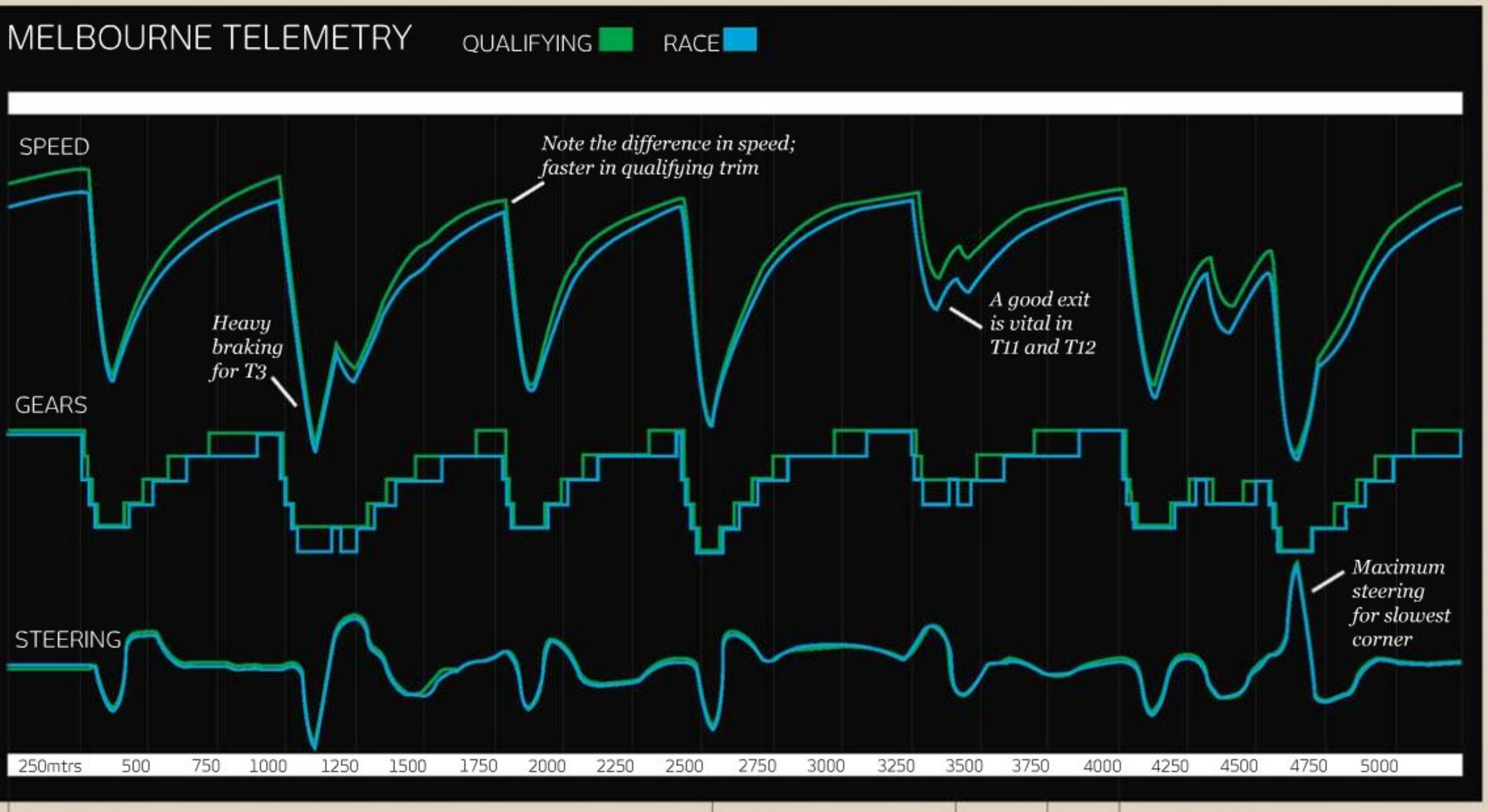
DO YOU REMEMBER...

...the first-day-back-at-school excitement when Ralf Schumacher launched his Williams over the top of Rubens Barrichello and David Coulthard at the first corner of the 2002 Australian Grand Prix?



MELBOURNE TELEMETRY

QUALIFYING RACE



Turns 1-9

The corners are not identical, but they are very similar in terms of braking and change of direction. Key to this first section of the lap is positioning of the car to maximise the exit for the next straight. Rookie drivers tend to brake very deep in places like the first corner, when they actually need to be well positioned for the second part.

Turns 11 & 12

At the high-speed chicane, drivers are front-limited to start, but need to be well-positioned from T11-12 for a good exit.

Turns 15 & 16

In the last section, the key is to position the car between the first and second part of the corners. How much speed you can carry depends on the line you take coming out of Turn 15.

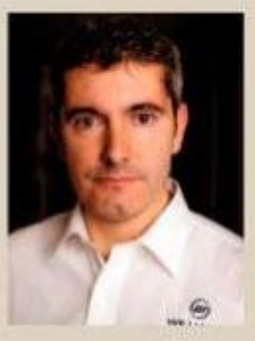
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The Malaysian GP preview



22-24.03.2013 / Sepang International Circuit, Kuala Lumpur

The high ambient temperatures and the risk of a heavy downpour can create headaches for the engineers and drivers alike



THE ENGINEER'S VIEW

Xevi Pujolar,
Williams chief race engineer

As a circuit, Sepang is completely different to Melbourne. It's a track with a few very long corners; the ambient temperatures are very high; and the tyre energy is similarly high. In addition to all that, the average corner speed is not as high as it is in Melbourne because there are more low-speed hairpins but, in all, it's a tough challenge for drivers and engineers alike.

In terms of rubber, Pirelli are bringing the hard and medium tyres to Malaysia, and it will be interesting to see if the new 2013 compounds will be better suited to the high track temperatures we get there. However, the circuit isn't particularly abrasive, so that's less of a concern than it tends to be at other tracks.

The biggest problem here is, of course, the risk of rain, and that comes into play in our strategy when we are preparing for the race. The weather is so unpredictable here and as we've seen in previous years, the rain can be incredibly intense at times.

If you know that there is a high risk of rain forecast for Sunday – as was the case last year – then even if Saturday is dry you could compromise your qualifying setup for the race. We would look at maybe raising the ride-height or altering the overall stiffness, cambers and wing levels – these are all things we could tweak.

Likewise, if the forecast is for a dry race but qualifying is set to be wet, then you can think about where you want to position yourself on the grid. Also, because of the monsoon rain, it's highly likely that the race will be red-flagged, which you also need to factor into your strategy.

For the driver, it's a particularly tough race because the heat and humidity are very demanding. After the winter break, this will be the first time he'll be subjected to such high ambient temperatures. In the past, some drivers have done some of their fitness training in Malaysia over the winter just to get themselves acclimatised to race conditions.

SEPANG STATS AND FACTS

39 **seconds** was the margin of victory Kimi Räikkönen took over Ferrari's Rubens Barrichello for his maiden F1 win. Kimi started the 2003 race from seventh on the grid



1 from the last **12** The number of Safety Car deployments since 2001

660m The length of the run from pole to the apex of Turn 1 – the second longest of the season after Barcelona

1/2 points were awarded in 2009 when the race was red-flagged after 31 laps due to a downpour and fading light



MALAYSIAN GP RACE DATA

Circuit Sepang International Circuit
F1 debut 1999
Length 3.444 miles
Distance 192.879 miles
Laps 56
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 34.223secs, J Montoya, 2004
Full throttle 64%
Gear changes per lap 53
Winners from pole 7
Tyre compounds Medium and hard

LAST YEAR

Winner Fernando Alonso
Retirements 2
Overtaking moves 45
DRS overtakes 12
Weather Rain, 26°C

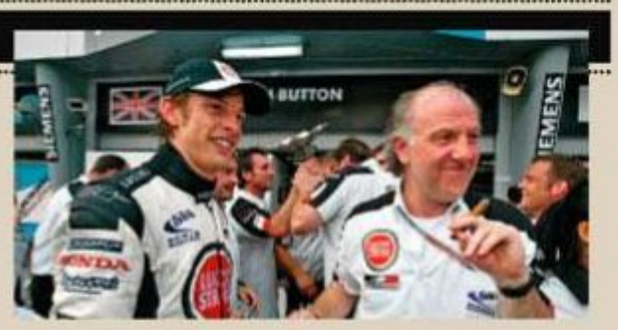
TV TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

Friday 22 March
Practice 1 02:00-03:30
Practice 2 06:00-07:30
Saturday 23 March
Practice 3 05:00-06:00
Qualifying 0800
Sunday 24 March
Race 08:00
Live coverage
Sky Sports F1 (available in HD)
Highlights BBC One (available in HD)



DO YOU REMEMBER...

...when David Richards would light up after a race? This time he's celebrating Jenson Button's first F1 podium, at Sepang 2004. Button recorded a further nine podium finishes that season



SEPANG TELEMETRY

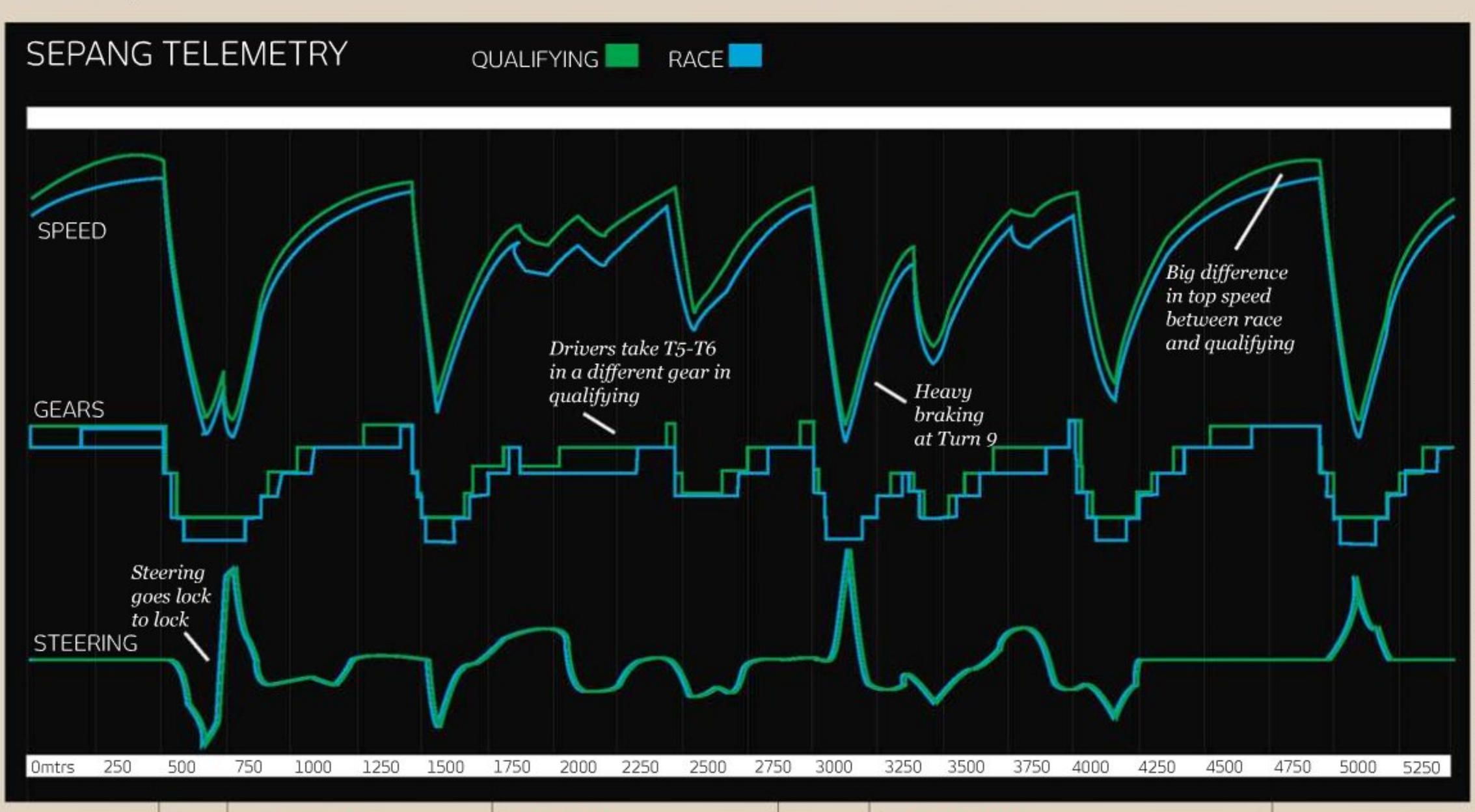


ILLUSTRATION: ALAN ELDRIDGE. PHOTOS: STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; MALCOLM GRIFFITHS/LAT; LAT ARCHIVE

Turns 1-2

It's a challenge to take the first two low-speed hairpins and get a perfect exit for T3 and the long straight that follows.

Turns 5-8

T5-6 are quick corners, but T7-8 are especially demanding for the left-front tyre. The balance changes and the revs are out of the ideal range.

Turns 11-14

This is a tricky section, especially the braking into Turn 14, which you complete with a lateral G-loading. In addition to the high temperatures, it's difficult to keep the rear tyres in good shape around this part of the lap.

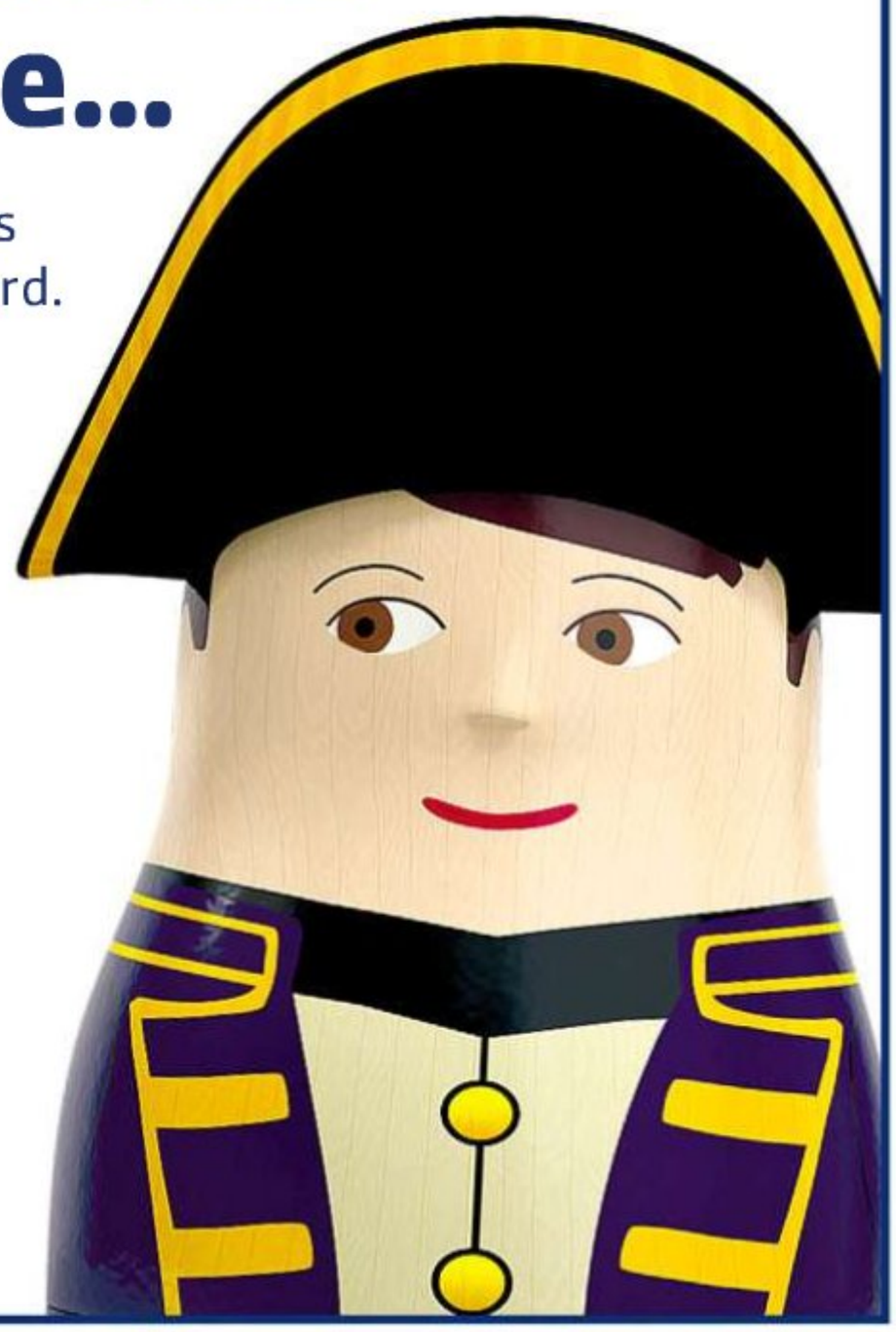
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TOM CLARKSON

Inside the paddock from our man on the road

The first day of a new term

Alarm at 5.30am; get dressed in the dark; try not to wake the wife; grab a banana in the kitchen; sit in a traffic jam on the M25; try not to get stressed; just make the flight to Jerez, connecting in Madrid; marvel at the money F1 teams spend on flying engineers business class around Europe; land in the sunshine; complete a form explaining where Iberia should deliver my luggage when it arrives; check into the hotel and wait for a change of clothes.

We're back on the road!

Getting to Jerez can be somewhat stressful, unless you can blag a ride on someone's private jet. I've done it once and it was a revelation: you arrive at Farnborough 15 minutes before take-off and walk into your Jerez hotel room two-and-a-half hours later, luggage in hand. In reality, though, Ryanair offer the only direct flight from the UK and if you choose to fly with a more expensive airline, the connection in Madrid is usually tight. Best to carry some PJs in your hand luggage.



PHOTO: PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Lewis's brake failure in Jerez was overshadowed by talk of his shiny new plane

A trip to El Bosque quickly improves the mood. It's the oldest restaurant in Jerez and it's what food critics would call 'a banker'. There's nothing dodgy about it; the food's delicious, although it helps if you're a banker when the bill arrives. Most dinners during F1 testing week are on someone else's ticket: Toro Rosso have a team party on this particular evening and Ferrari's bigwigs have booked a table, but they're destined not to show up after returning late from a local vineyard.

One of my companions at El Bosque is an American. He's attending his first Formula 1 test session and he can't stop waxing lyrical about McLaren. His enthusiasm for the team has been stoked by a recent visit to the McLaren Technology Centre in Woking.

"The other day I went to Longbridge (the home of MG) and then to the MTC in the same day," he says. "You can't imagine my relief when I arrived at the MTC; it's proof that British manufacturing is alive and kicking. Bring it on, McLaren!"

McLaren are no doubt saying the same thing about the 2013 Formula 1 season. Lap times mean nothing during testing, we all know that. Even so, Jenson Button immediately looks comfortable in the McLaren MP4-28. The car is stable and reactive, and most of its predecessor's foibles from 2012 appear to have been rectified. Jenson can't wipe the smile from his face when he gets out and I'd bet my bottom dollar that the team is going to win races – note the intentional plural – this season.

"The MP4-28 is stable and reactive, and most of its foibles from 2012 appear to have been rectified"

However, Jerez remains a useless proving ground for F1 cars. The abrasive track surface exaggerates rear tyre wear and the corners aren't quick enough to expose any chassis issues. Lotus completed 1,118 miles at the circuit last winter, but ten laps of Barcelona one week later was enough to expose a structural flaw in the E20 that forced the team to abandon the test.

"We go to Jerez for the weather," says Christian Horner, who's the only team boss to attend every day of the opening test. "You can be pretty sure of dry running, even in February, and that allows us to do the necessary systems checks before going to Barcelona for some performance testing."

Horner is happy with the pace of this year's RB9. He singles out Lotus as a potential threat, but he's as happy talking about extracurricular stuff, be it the lap of the track he and Adrian Newey ran on the penultimate evening of the test, or the ski race he did in Kitzbühel a couple of weeks ago with the likes of Franz Klammer, Gerhard Berger and David Coulthard. He wasn't this relaxed 12 months ago when the RB8 was having a few balance issues.

At Mercedes, it's hard to get into the motorhome due to the journalists surrounding the entrance. Lewis Hamilton is the only story in town and, in between frenzied writing sessions about debut shunts, Fleet Street is busy nesting. The newspaper guys have dominated the McLaren hospitality area for the past six years and they're now making a new home at Mercedes in order to keep a close eye on F1's biggest star.

But for some, there's nothing happening on-track as exciting as the blood-red Bombardier CL-600 that Lewis has parked on the Tarmac at Jerez airport. His new £20million 'Love Plane', as coined by the *Daily Mail*, puts a whole new perspective on travelling to and from Jerez.

MURRAY WALKER



UNLESS I'M VERY MUCH MISTAKEN...

"I don't make mistakes, I make prophecies that immediately turn out to be wrong. Which is what I'm about to do again..."

When I was doing TV commentary in what to me now seems like the dim and distant past, I was often accused of making mistakes. I used to say, "I don't make mistakes – I make prophecies which immediately turn out to be wrong" – which is what I fear I'm about to do again because, with a new season looming large, I'm going to pontificate about 2013. By season's end I'll doubtless be thinking: "How on earth could I have thought that?" But never mind. Here goes...

The constructors' championship may be of minimal interest to the general public, but it's the money-tree of F1 and what matters most to the teams. If the past three seasons are anything to go by, Red Bull, with continuity in drivers and technical staff, should be so strong that it's hard to imagine them failing to make it four in a row. They're still hungry for success, they've got an ample budget, the Infiniti association, the political savvy of team principal Christian Horner, the towering design leadership of Adrian Newey *and* the strongest driver pairing.

In the red corner, meanwhile, Ferrari have had a significant performance gap to close and they've made changes to do so. But even with the brilliance of Fernando Alonso and, hopefully, a revitalised Felipe Massa, it's a big ask.

For the past six years, McLaren have always been in the top three of the constructors' contest – but always a bridesmaid and never the bride. I've no doubt that they'll have a great car and that over the winter they'll have been busting a gut to overcome 2012's reliability issues. But will Button and new boy Pérez be able to rack up more points than Vettel and Webber? I doubt it.

Lotus had three weaknesses in 2012. The car, good though it was, wasn't quite there. Kimi Räikkönen's return after two years away was brilliant, but he was still rusty in qualifying. And while Grosjean may have been blindingly quick, he was also accident-prone and scored too few points. Will the Enstone warriors be able to overcome Red Bull's strengths? It's debatable but, as Kimi is so fond of saying, "We'll see."

The big conundrum of 2013 will be – to mix my metaphors – whether the Silver Arrows turn out to be a dark horse. To be blunt, fifth in 2012 wasn't good enough but there have since been major changes. Mercedes Motorsport boss Norbert Haug has fallen on his sword and Niki Lauda and ex-Williams man Toto Wolff have dramatically taken top positions at the team.

Ross Brawn and last year's Chinese GP winner Nico Rosberg have been making confident noises about a better 2013, but even the brilliance of Lewis Hamilton won't be enough to turn things around if his Mercedes isn't up to it. With concerns about leasership and morale after such a massive management upheaval, challenging times lie ahead at Brackley.

With the greatest respect, I can't see any of the other six teams challenging for the top spot. Not Sauber with two new drivers, one of whom is new to F1; not Force India; not Williams with the fast but inconsistent Maldonado and rookie Bottas; and certainly not Toro Rosso, Caterham or Marussia. A gloomy forecast or an accurate assessment? We'll know in November.

But it will be the drivers' title that grips the public's imagination. There is the possibility here of last year's eight different winners being exceeded. Because with no major rule changes and the cars now more closely matched, there are at least 12 potential winners in 2013. Two each from Red Bull, Ferrari, McLaren, Lotus and Mercedes, plus Hülkenberg for Sauber and Maldonado for Williams.

Now to put my money where my mouth is. My prophecies for 2013? Red Bull for the constructors' title and Alonso for the drivers'. Fingers crossed that the commentator's curse won't strike again... F1



PHOTO: ANDY HONE/LAT

"Now to put my money where my mouth is. My prophecies for 2013? Red Bull for the constructors' and Alonso for the drivers'"

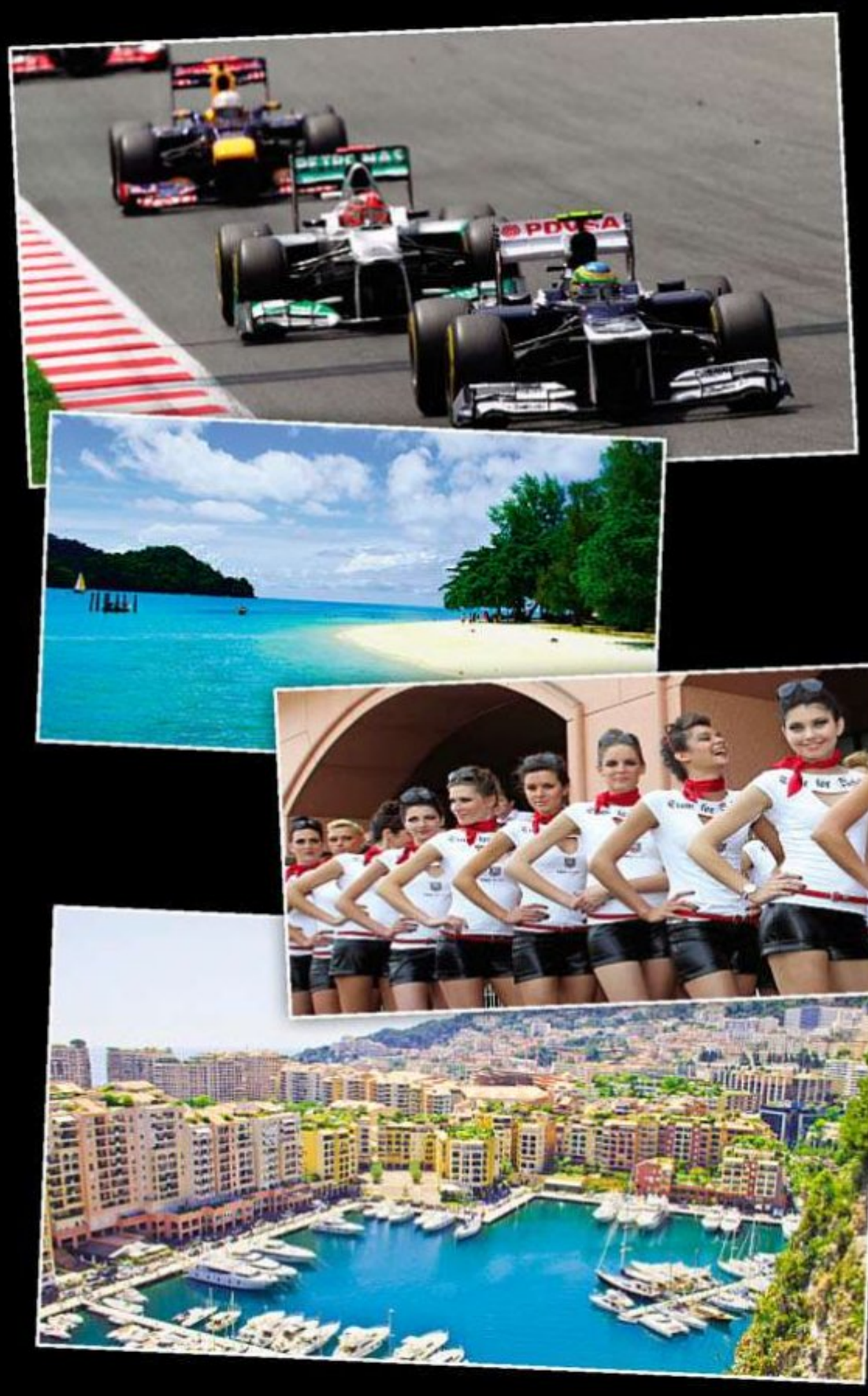


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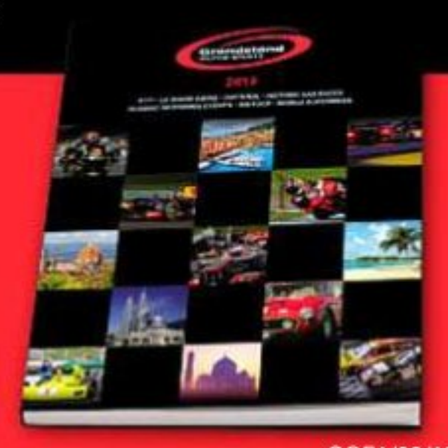
Date	Country	Circuit
17 March	Australia	Melbourne
24 March	Malaysia	Sepang
14 April	China	Shanghai
21 April	Bahrain	Sakhir
12 May	Spain	Barcelona
26 May	Monaco	Monte Carlo
09 June	Canada	Montreal
30 June	Great Britain	Silverstone
7 July	Germany	Nurburgring
21 July	TBC	TBC
28 July	Hungary	Hungaroring
25 August	Belgium	Spa-Francorchamps
08 September	Italy	Monza
22 September	Singapore	Marina Bay
6 October	Korea	Yeongam
13 October	Japan	Suzuka
27 October	India	New Delhi
03 November	Abu Dhabi	Yas Marina
17 November	United States	Austin
24 November	Brazil	Interlagos



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