



# THE CHAMPION ISSUE



# KING OF F1

Understanding the  
genius of the driver  
who reigns supreme

**+** NIGEL ROEBUCK ON THE US  
ACE WHO RILED FERRARI

## THE ROYAL CARRIAGE

How Mercedes  
turned W09 into  
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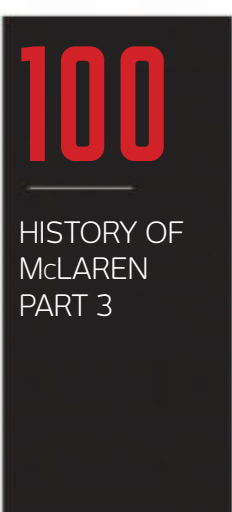
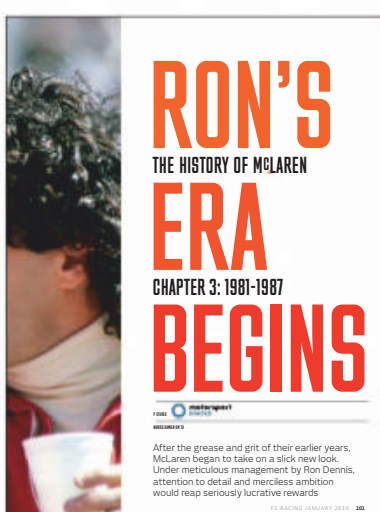
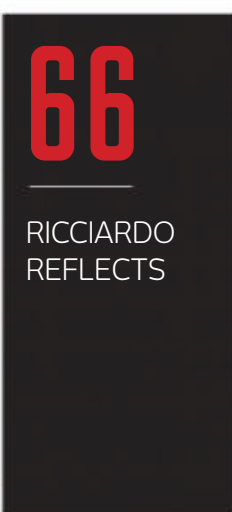
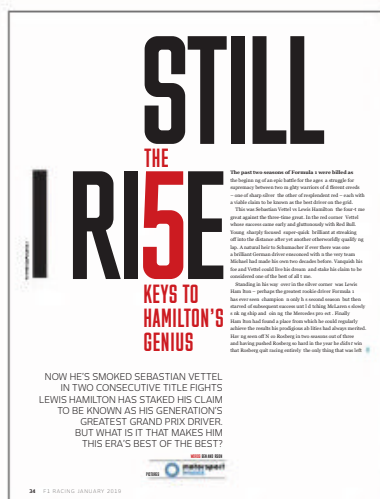
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## King Lewis totally deserves his crown

**The statistics are** astonishing. Mercedes have taken pole position for 84% of the 100 races held so far in Formula 1's V6 era, and won 74% of them. That dominance is significantly greater than Ferrari managed between 2000 and '04 (60% of poles and 67% of wins), or Red Bull between '10 and '13 (68% and 53%).

Lewis Hamilton's prowess within that statistical dominance is undeniable: 52 poles and 51 wins – while adding four world titles to the one he achieved with McLaren. Sebastian Vettel took pole for more than half the races he started for Red Bull between '10 and '13; Michael Schumacher won more than half of Ferrari's races between '00 and '04. Neither managed both, as Lewis has.

But numbers are only one measure of a driver's greatness. This month, we delve into the method behind the might, and analyse the key facets of Hamilton's genius as a driver – how, particularly since Nico Rosberg quit Formula 1, Lewis has pushed himself to even greater heights.

Mercedes have played a major part in his evolution, allowing Lewis freedom to explore his interests away from F1 while going racing his own way. Mercedes' management deserves credit for recognising the need to release Hamilton from corporate shackles, so they can extract the best from him and he can extract the best from himself.

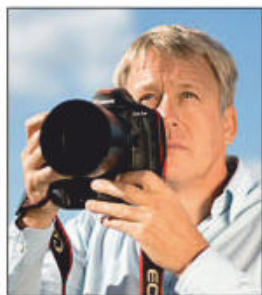
This wasn't an easy season either. The W09 was difficult to begin with, and things were close with Ferrari until Maranello's development progress stalled in the summer. The Mercedes became stronger in the latter half of '18, but it still needed a driver of Lewis's rare calibre to elevate it. Mercedes won 11 races, all to Lewis. Even if Lady Luck credits Azerbaijan and Russia back to Valtteri Bottas, that's still a major dependency.

Would Lewis still have won the title had he swapped cars with Vettel? Difficult to say. But you get the feeling races like Germany, Hungary, Italy, the US, maybe Singapore too, would have turned out differently for Ferrari were Hamilton in their car.

Vettel at his best can get close – in qualifying and so long as it's dry – and rookie of the year Charles Leclerc will be another in red to watch out for (though it remains to be seen how he will deal with the step up from F1's midfield morass). But as things stand, Max Verstappen looks the biggest threat to Hamilton's current reign – if Red Bull receives a Honda engine worthy of their chassis, and Max can smooth the "raw edges" admirer Toto Wolff feels are holding him back from becoming a champion.

That's for the future. For now, grand prix racing is all about Hamilton – the undisputed King of F1. This is his domain and he rules supreme, backed up by an astonishingly successful Mercedes team.

### Contributors



#### STEVEN TEE

As McLaren's principal photographer, Tee has been photographing Fernando Alonso every weekend for four years. His last shoot is on p78



#### EDD STRAW

You can now read the views of *Autosport's* grand prix reporter (and podcast host) every month, with his column on Alonso on page 24



#### JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

After studying motorsport engineering, Boxall-Legge joins *F1R* as our new technical editor. See p52 for his thoughts on the W09



#### MARK GALLAGHER

As a former marketing boss of Jordan and Jaguar, Gallagher is perfectly placed to offer his thoughts on the business of F1, see p31

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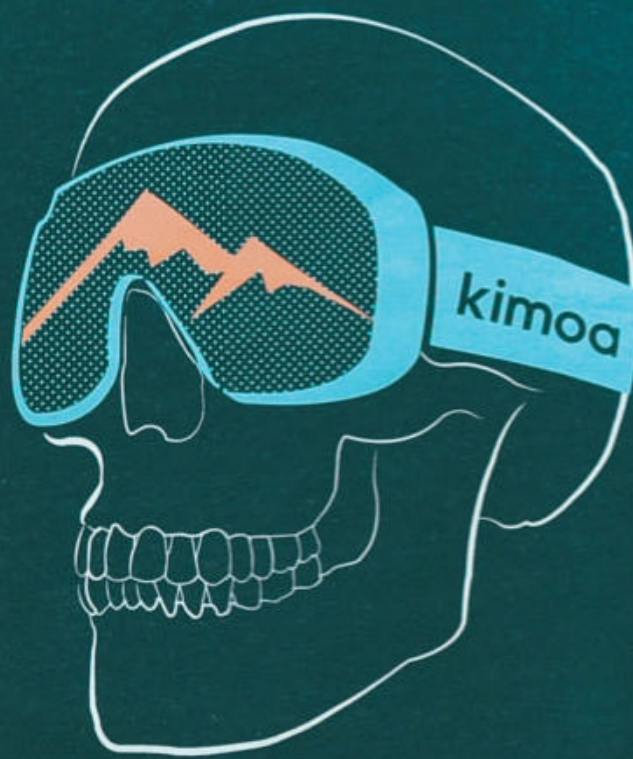


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## You spin me right round baby...

For the final race in Abu Dhabi, I was tipped off by a member of the McLaren team that Fernando Alonso was going to perform some 'donuts' on the start/finish line at the end of the grand prix.

I scouted out the best place to shoot from which was race director Charlie Whiting's starting tower. Unfortunately, Alonso didn't come that far down the straight, but Lewis Hamilton did and I was effectively right over him.

It was the closest I'd ever been to a car doing 'donuts' and as he came towards me anticlockwise, I managed to snap this first pirouette, which was crisp. The second loop had much more tyre smoke.



### Photographer

Steven Tee

**Where** Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

**When** 6.55pm, Sunday  
25th November 2018

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII,  
70mm lens, 1/1000th @ F4.0









## Sirotkin's secret weight routine

At the beginning of the season I noticed that Sergey Sirotkin would always come into the Williams garage already suited and booted with his helmet on. So I did a bit of investigative work to find out where he prepared before getting into the car.

It transpired he would weigh himself on a set of scales in the back of the garage, because he was meticulous with his diet to ensure he was always at the optimum weight.

In the Williams garage in Austin, they had their engine cowlings hanging up on the back wall which makes for a very retro feel, while Sirotkin is on the scales measuring himself before practice.



**Photographer**  
 Glenn Dunbar

**Where** Austin, USA

**When** 12.39pm, Saturday  
 20th October 2018

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII,  
 24mm lens, 1/1600th @ F1.4













## Haas's Magnussen gets blurred vision

Despite what you might think, this picture of Kevin Magnussen in his Haas isn't taken with the car at full chat.

The final practice session in Abu Dhabi on Saturday afternoon is a difficult one to manage as it starts in daylight and finishes at dusk. I started FP3 shooting in the pits, then headed out trackside for some action around the back of the circuit.

As I came up to the pitlane entry, I experimented with some pan shots, with a slow shutter speed, of the drivers coming into the pits.

Not every shot worked, but one did. The result is this dynamic, blurred pic of the Haas looking fast at low speed.



**Photographer**  
Glenn Dunbar

**Where** Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

**When** 5.13pm, Saturday  
24th November 2018

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII,  
70mm lens, 1/10th @ F9.0









## Lewis in low light near 'Spider Alley'

This shot of Lewis Hamilton was taken in the closing stages of this year's Japanese Grand Prix. From experience I know that if it's a sunny day, the low light can create a great effect and did so on the reflective silver paint of the Mercedes.

I'm actually standing on the outside of 130R shooting in the other direction at the exit of the second Degner curve. Hamilton is accelerating out of the corner and he's just about to disappear under the bridge where the track crosses over itself.

The route back to the pits takes you through a very narrow pathway known colloquially by the Formula 1 photographers as 'Spider Alley' thanks to the number of large spiders that line the route.



### Photographer

Steven Tee

**Where** Suzuka, Japan

**When** 3.18pm, Sunday  
7th October 2018

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII,  
210mm lens, 1/125th @ F13.0



## The sun sets on Alonso's F1 career

Given the location of the Yas Marina circuit, we know there is always a decent sunset shot when shooting west from Turn 14 after the second chicane.

But if you've ever watched the sun dip below the horizon you know that it's very quickly gone. There is only a few minutes to capture the moment.

A lot of photographers were standing at this spot, so I was conscious of trying to do something different. I started by shooting the track wide, then went in for a tighter angle.

Given the lack of time to nail a decent sunset picture we were lucky that Alonso was on track, giving the headline writers the chance to say the sun had come down on his F1 career.



**Photographer**  
Glenn Dunbar

**Where** Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi  
**When** 5.24pm, Friday  
23rd November 2018

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII,  
600mm lens, 1/1250th @ F7.1











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PICTURES motorsport  
IMAGES

### The great Kubica gamble

**01 Robert Kubica has achieved** what many thought impossible: returning to Formula 1 competition following the horrendous right arm injuries he suffered in a rally crash in 2011.

Twelve months ago he was overlooked for a 2018 race seat at Williams because the team felt rookie Sergey Sirotkin was quicker. But this has been a bruising season for one of F1's most successful teams, and change is required: they are now convinced Kubica is the right candidate to drive development alongside Mercedes protégé (and Formula 2 champion) George Russell.

While some questions remain over Kubica's strength and fitness, and whether this has a bearing on his ability to drive quickly and consistently enough, this is a critical time for Williams. The Martini title sponsorship deal that furnished the team with a distinctive livery since '14 has now elapsed, and their slump to 10th place in the





## 02 HALO VINDICATED Research backs claim

## 03 HAAS MAKES RACING POINT Why there are 60 million reasons for legal spat

constructors' standings leaves them with a reduced share of the sport's prize money. Key investor Lawrence Stroll has transferred his attention to the soon-to-be-renamed Racing Point team.

Kubica has brought sponsorship from the Polish petrochemical company PKN Orlen to the team. Their logos will appear on the Williams rear wing, nose, intake system and mirrors – as well as drivers' helmets, overalls and team kit. Newly signed reserve driver Nicolas Latifi also comes with a budget.

Deputy team principal Claire Williams insists that the decision to appoint Kubica was motivated by performance alone rather than sponsorship.

"It has been the result of a thorough evaluation process we've been undertaking in the past few months," she says. "As everybody in the paddock knows he has an amazing spirit, he's got a fantastically tenacious personality, he's hugely passionate about Formula 1. All those traits combine into a driver we're really looking forward to working with next season."

"We'll see more than that: the talent we know Robert has. We're really excited. His intelligence in the cockpit but also his engineering capability, we believe, is going to really help drive this team forward."

Kubica admits that his arm injuries do hold him back in life situations: but he is clear that when it comes to driving racing cars he can still cut it with the best.

"It's a story which probably nobody has believed," he says. "The only one that probably never gave up was me and the people around me, which I would like to thank."

"From a driving point of view – the point is very simple. You just need to wait and you will see. I think if I will not be able to drive competitively fast I would not be here. This is a normal way of thinking – that people see my limitations and they ask how it's possible that I do it."

"And I know that it's hard to believe but Williams has seen it this year and I have seen it [for] the last 16 or 18 months, since I first tested an F1 car in Valencia, that I can do it. Things work, but my limitations are not limiting me as most people think."

But even if Kubica is a few tenths off where he was at his peak in F1, what he does bring to Williams is vast engineering experience and a steely determination to push the team on the technical front. Considering the problems Williams face – not only was the FW41 a flawed concept, upgrades failed to deliver the results indicated by simulations – having a lead driver with Kubica's experience and technical savvy could be crucial.

As Williams says: "He's going to be a big part in helping us develop the Williams FW42 and beyond that. He's got an extraordinary understanding of engineering and he's a real pusher as well – he helps drive the engineers and he pushes me."

"He talks to me at 2am in airport lounges about what's gone wrong, what we need to be doing. That's great to



**WHAT KUBICA DOES BRING TO WILLIAMS IS VAST ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE AND A DETERMINATION TO PUSH THE TEAM ON THE TECHNICAL FRONT**

see. We really need a driver pairing that's going to deliver that for us next year."

Kubica will need no reminding that reputations can be quickly won or lost in Formula 1, and some poor showings could be enough to erode his standing as one of the greats. But he has never been one to care much about public perception.

"I know what it takes to be a top F1 driver. I'm not scared of it," he adds. "I know that it requires a lot of work and dedication and I'm ready for it."

"In 2019 we all are starting from, let's say zero, so I'm not afraid that I've been away for eight years. I'm looking forward, I know what it takes and what I have to do – if I do my job well, I'm sure everybody will be happy."

## How halo saved Leclerc

The halo cockpit-safety device divided opinion when it was introduced in Formula 1 and F2 at the beginning of the 2018 season, but a new report has concluded that it played a vital role in protecting Charles Leclerc when his car was struck by Fernando Alonso's McLaren on the opening lap of the Belgian Grand Prix.

So polarising is the device that while it seemed clear and obvious that the halo had fulfilled its brief in the shunt – triggered by Nico Hülkenberg braking too late and pitching Alonso into the air – alternative views have persisted. Advocates on both sides of the debate cited slow-motion replays of the accident in support of their differing narratives: sceptics argued that while Alonso's right front wheel did indeed strike the halo, as evidenced by missing paint on the side of it, had the protection system not been there then he would simply have flown past Leclerc anyway.

Not so, says the FIA – whose Global Institute has

Alonso's wing would probably have struck Leclerc in the visor area without the halo



PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR; ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENIE



concluded that the halo not only did everything expected as Alonso's wheel hit it with a force of 58kN, but also that it helped deflect his car away from an impact with Leclerc's visor. The consequences of such contact are impossible to predict accurately.

"From the available data and video footage, we are confident that the wheel would not have hit Leclerc's helmet," said FIA safety director Adam Baker. "But, as Alonso's car continued to yaw relative to Leclerc's, we believe that Alonso's front wing endplate would have just contacted Leclerc's visor. It is difficult to predict the severity of the contact with any precision though."

The escape for Leclerc comes after the FIA concluded that F2 racer Tadasuke Makino was saved from serious injury or worse in a crash in the Spanish GP support race back in May.

Nirei Fukuzumi's car was launched over the top of his rival, and his left rear tyre made contact with the right-side bodywork of Makino's car – and then, more importantly, the right-side upper surface of the halo. Post-accident analysis concluded that the trajectory of Fukuzumi's wheel would have led it to strike Makino's helmet if the halo had not been there.

The official report into that Barcelona crash concluded: "The halo likely prevented contact between the tyre and the driver's head. Without the halo there would have been potential for a very serious head or neck injury."

While cognitive dissonance dictates that the most extreme critics of the halo will remain unsatisfied, these two incidents have provided vital data which can be employed to refine the device and add detail to the roadmap for future developments. The next step is to integrate a high speed camera into the halo itself from the start of next season. This will help deliver clearer images from inside the cockpit for post-crash analysis.

The scars of the impact were plain to see, but many sceptics still denied the device had any part in protecting Charles Leclerc from injury



**“THE HALO NOT ONLY DID EVERYTHING EXPECTED AS ALONSO’S WHEEL HIT IT WITH A FORCE OF 58KN, BUT IT ALSO HELPED DEFLECT HIS CAR AWAY FROM AN IMPACT WITH LECLERC’S VISOR”**

The halo is here to stay. And although questions remain over how it could be made more aesthetically agreeable, the FIA is also factoring that into its thinking. When the new generation of cars arrives in 2021 it will be better integrated into the overall design concept.

Baker added: "The next generation of halo will be part of the F1 regulation update planned for 2021.

"Importantly the halo is a key element of the car concept from the beginning, enabling a true structural integration and a shape which blends visually into the profile of the car."

## F1 DIGEST THE MONTH'S BIG STORIES AT A GLANCE

**07.11.18** F1 hints British GP's future could be away from Silverstone

**09.11.18** Pietro Fittipaldi joins Haas for 2019 as test driver

**10.11.18** Pirelli says it will use thinner-gauge tyres at every grand prix



**19.11.18** Renault/Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn arrested in Japan



**25.11.18** Jenson Button joins Sky Sports F1 as pundit for 2019 season

**26.11.18** Formula 2 runner-up Alexander Albon to race for Toro Rosso

**27.11.18** Kimi Räikkönen drives a Sauber for the first time since 2001



**30.11.18** Force India name dropped as Racing Point announce Lance Stroll

**04.12.18** TAG Heuer extends Red Bull sponsorship deal





**Winter i\*cept evo<sup>2</sup>**

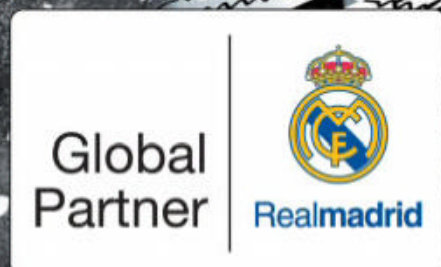
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## Haas fight for their right

**03 The Haas team's fight** for what they claim is 'equality' over F1's prize money could be heading for the courts after a showdown with the FIA stewards in Abu Dhabi.

Haas are angry that the team formerly known as Force India – now temporarily Racing Point – have been allowed to keep their entitlement of commercial rights income, even though they are officially a new entry. New teams traditionally have to wait two years to earn what is known as a 'Column 1' payment – worth around \$30m a year.

Although Racing Point are in all functional aspects a continuation of Force India, who went into administration last summer, the complexity of that team's finances led

to the present situation. Unable to buy the complete package of team and entry within the deadline – in effect the Belgian Grand Prix, after which Force India's entry would have been void had they had failed to race – the new shareholders bought the team's physical assets and filed a new entry with special FIA dispensation. An arrangement was also reached with the sport's owners Liberty Media that Racing Point could retain prize-money owed to Force India.

That didn't go down well with Haas, who feel they have missed out on a potential \$60m of income. Haas lobbied F1 chairman Chase Carey to find some compromise but,

in the absence of progress, in Abu Dhabi they escalated the situation by protesting their rivals' cars.

Their argument was that, as new entrants, Racing Point were breaking the rules in not designing their own cars, as their chassis had been created by Force India. The FIA stewards conducted a lengthy hearing into the matter, but in the end concluded that Force India were in the clear because the new team had purchased the assets *including the intellectual property rights* of the old.

Haas's argument over Racing Point being given preferential treatment was based on the issue of whether or not they were a new team; in Liberty's eyes, the old 'Force India' operation had continued so it was right that they be allowed to keep hold of their historical payments.

The FIA stewards' finding contradicts this. "In relation to the submission by the Racing Point Force India F1 Team that it is not a new team, the Stewards decide that the Racing Point Force India F1 Team is indeed a new team," it declared. "It is a separate and different legal entity to the Sahara Force India F1 Team and holds a different ASN Competition License issued by the MSA of Great Britain, and a different FIA Super License. It cannot be considered as the 'same team' as the former Force India."

Haas believe they have a strong case to challenge the Racing Point payments and have not ruled out legal action.

Haas team's legal challenge concerns the rights of 'new' outfits to a share of prize money



**HAAS'S ARGUMENT OVER RACING POINT BEING GIVEN PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT WAS BASED ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE A NEW TEAM**

# F1 MASTERMIND

Your chosen specialised subject: the world's greatest sport

- Q1** Excluding 1958 when he only did two races, what was the lowest position Juan Manuel Fangio ever finished in the world championship?
- Q2** Which two years, apart from 2018, have seen Safety Car periods during the Abu Dhabi GP?
- Q3** Four British drivers will start the 2019 F1 season. When did this last happen and who were they?
- Q4** Which driver qualified seventh on the grid seven times during the 2018 season?
- Q5** At which Asian circuit did Michael Schumacher have a 100% win record in his F1 career?
- Q6** What number comes next with regard to Kimi Raikkonen: 55, 150, 186, 205 and...?
- Q7** True or false: 2018 was the first time in F1 history that there were no driver replacements, apart from in Free Practice 1 sessions?
- Q8** What connects Dan Gurney, Bruce McLaren and Eddie Irvine?
- Q9** Lewis Hamilton has had more DNFs at Spa than any other circuit. Is it four, five or six times?
- Q10** Where and when did a car carrying the number 1 last win a GP?

are the drivers who only won 4 GPs **6** 9 **10** Brazil 2013 his points scored at Ferrari since his return **7** True **8** They and Hamilton **4** Nico Hulkenberg **5** TI Aida **6** 251. They are **1** Second **2** 2010 and 2012 **3** 2013. Chilton, di Resta, Button

## PROMOTION

### FINAL INFINITI WINNER ANNOUNCED

An engineering student from Dubai is heading to the UK for a Formula 1 work experience placement at Renault, as the final winner of the 2018 edition of the Infiniti Engineering Academy was announced in Abu Dhabi.

Fahim Choudhary, 23, was unveiled as the victor of the Middle East finals and will begin

a work placement in the New Year, along with the six other regional winners. In addition to his work at Enstone for Renault he will also spend six months at Infiniti's Technical Centre Europe in Cranfield.



PICTURES: MANUEL GORIA; OTHER PICTURES: INFINITI



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# THE F1 ANALYST

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evidence of Alonso wringing the car's neck while Vandoorne was constrained by its limitations. One driver defied the car to go ever quicker, and backed himself to keep it pointing in the right direction, the other was limited by it. The way Alonso drove underlines what has made him such a remarkable driver throughout his F1 career.

Azerbaijan and Singapore are seared in the memory. At Turns 11-12, perhaps best described as the exit of the 'Castle Section', in Baku, Alonso was all throttle and steering inputs. He could live with the rear moving around unpredictably and hustle a lap time. It was the same story at Turn 3 at Marina Bay – Vandoorne rolled the car into the left hander while Alonso provoked it, changed his lines, lived with the unpredictability as he sought a way to use the resulting instability to get closer to the edge of the performance envelope.

Drivers can't transcend cars, even Alonso at his most arrogant would not attempt to operate outside the laws of physics, but they can find ways to dance on the edge of what is possible. Do that and

you will go beyond what even a very good performer without the same car control could ever hope to do on more than an occasional basis. When it's a bad car, as the McLaren was, a conventional style is limited, but Alonso – ever the improviser and never a classicist behind the wheel – found a way to make it work. His style has always been about carrying speed into the corner then sorting out the consequences, a method that puts enormous demands on the driver's skill and reactions, but he lives on his wits like no other.

Throughout his career, Alonso has been a street fighter of a driver – perhaps more in the mould of Nigel Mansell than Ayrton Senna. F1 has changed so much during Fernando's career, yet when have you ever heard Alonso complaining the car doesn't suit his style? That reflects the way he drives: infinitely adaptable and backing himself to sort out whatever mess he might find himself in as he tries to drive around a car's limitations. He's a driver who feels the grip, the turning moment of the car, every slip of the tyre, and translates that into the perfect response.

He's shown his versatility in the tough seasons – his remarkable 2012 title bid in a tricky Ferrari stands out, and when the car has been good he's found a way to make it better. During his title winning years at Renault, he wasn't afraid of making the most of the Michelin rubber with armfuls of steering lock even though this was far from the textbook way to drive. That is what makes him so effective in races. He can adapt to the ever-evolving balance of the car and hustle it regardless. He will seek perfection from the

## FORGET-ME-NOT: ALONSO LEAVES F1 AS A LEGEND

**Fernando Alonso** bid goodbye to Formula 1, very possibly for good, with a whimper. Eleventh in the 2018 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. This was the consequence of one of the weakest McLaren chassis we have ever seen, but it was clear his heart wasn't entirely in it during those final few races. The sarcastic Brazilian Grand Prix radio message, where he scoffed at targeting 16th place not long before demanding radio silence, was proof of that, as were a trio of penalties for cutting the track at Yas Marina. This concluded a season during which he has been most conspicuous for his occasionally ludicrous, often irritating and always bombastic self-mythologising.

But this shouldn't be what we remember, because what we can provisionally call his final season was one during which Alonso regularly demonstrated his greatness, and regularly earned the right to make outrageous statements about his own virtuosity. The Alonso pantomime that rumbled off-track must not overshadow what he did on it, because by any measure he walks away from F1 as one of the greats, with some superb



**Even in his 'final' season Alonso managed to demonstrate his greatness on several occasions**

drives in 2018 rewarded only with minor placings. Without Alonso, McLaren would not have finished sixth in the constructors' championship, and he had no business finishing 11th in the drivers' standings in what was, on average, the second-slowest car in the field.

If there's one thing that will never fade from the memory of Alonso's valedictory F1 season, it's what he could do that team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne couldn't. Driving a McLaren lacking in rear stability and prone to losing a proportion of its downforce once steering lock was applied, Alonso minimised its limitations brilliantly. The very favourable comparison with Vandoorne is not only about the statistics, not even the crushing 21-0 qualifying victory achieved by Alonso. It's more about the way Alonso drove. Watching trackside during 2018, there was continual



car, but he doesn't unyieldingly demand it like some, and that's why he flew in everything, whether it was a 2001 Minardi, a 2006 Renault, a 2011 Ferrari, or a 2018 McLaren-Renault. Whatever Alonso was presented with, he did things his way and made the car submit to him.

Those qualities stood him in good stead on track. Off the circuit, sometimes he was too provocative, too rash in his decision making. Can we really take Alonso at his word that he regrets none of the decisions that defined his path and cost him more wins and titles? Two titles does him a disservice, but even with the way his career has gone he could easily have won in '07, '10 and '12 to stand equal with Lewis Hamilton as a five-time world champion. So, it's hard to believe someone of Alonso's intellect would not change some of what happened were he to have his time again.

Alonso is shrouded in myth off-track. He is often portrayed as a victim of F1, as a driver let down by its shortcomings. But while his reputation as a disruptive influence is overstated, he has certainly brought some problems on himself and made even the top

teams he hasn't driven for wary of signing him. But maybe the capacity to subjugate the car to his will shares the same root as what makes him such a provocateur, meaning one cannot exist without the other?

Sure, Alonso should have more wins and world

championships, but that's just numbers. What's important is what he leaves behind – the memories of what he did on track. The results might not show it, but what might well turn out to be Alonso's final season is a part of the enduring legend of a man who bent a grand prix car to his will like no other.



Alonso wore a special helmet in Abu Dhabi, combining his current design with the one he used in '01

**“HE FLEW IN EVERYTHING, WHETHER IT WAS A 2001 MINARDI, A 2006 RENAULT, A 2011 FERRARI, OR A 2018 McLAREN-RENAULT. WHATEVER ALONSO WAS PRESENTED WITH, HE DID THINGS HIS WAY AND MADE THE CAR SUBMIT TO HIM”**







# UNDER THE HOOD

PAT SYMONDS

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I am talking, of course, about the F1 Esports Pro Series. You may find it hard to accept that someone who has been involved in the sport for over 40 years can get excited about a virtual manifestation of F1 racing, but believe me it is good. The boundaries between gaming and professional virtual racing are becoming blurred, and the ever-changing demographic of our world may one day promote a similar blurring of the margins between simulated and actual sport.

The F1 Esports series is just two years old and for 2018 introduced the concept of the Pro Draft. This involved all the F1 teams – all except Ferrari, that is, who seem once again to have some difficulty accepting the changes that modern society brings – selecting drivers

to represent them. They were chosen from 66,000 unique players, who between them made 400,000 qualifying attempts. Scores from qualifying resulted in 40 drivers from all over the world attending the Pro Draft at Silverstone over the British GP weekend, where they were put through several physical and mental challenges – the results of which were scrutinised by scouts from the nine official F1 Esports teams.

The competitors were subjected to fitness tests, interviews as brand ambassadors, kart races and of course Esports events themselves. On the Monday after the race a live show attended by Max Verstappen (an avid Esports enthusiast) announced the 16 drivers that made the Pro Draft to complete the team line-ups.

During the summer break contracts were signed ready for the Autumn competition to start. During three evenings, three races were held at each event. These covered 25% of the distance of a real grand prix, as drivers battled for points toward the championship. Last year's champion Brendon Leigh, a 19-year old from the UK who was snapped up by Mercedes, remains the man to beat. It is a mark of the importance of the sport that Brendon shed 20kg as a result of the fitness regime he imposed on himself to prepare for 2018.

The finals, held in late November, comprised three further 25% distance races, while the final race, Abu Dhabi, was held over 50% distance and counted for double points. Just like in real F1, the prize fund – \$200,000 this year – goes

## THE VIRTUE AND VALUE OF VIRTUAL F1

**We have witnessed** some great races this year and both the British and US Grands Prix provided a level of excitement and uncertainty sustained right to the end. I was fortunate enough to attend another great race recently, and although it was another demonstration of Mercedes domination, they were closely hounded throughout the race by Toro Rosso. In addition, to witness this I had to travel no further than Fulham Broadway.



The second F1 Esports series involved nine of the 10 F1 teams and included a Pro Draft





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### 2011 FERRARI 599 SA APERTA

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### 2001 FERRARI 550 BARCHETTA

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**Brendon Leigh claimed more success for Mercedes as he took a second F1 Esports title**

to the teams based on their position in the teams' championship. The teams in turn have arrangements with the drivers and pay them on the basis of a retainer and a results bonus. Also, just like the real thing, the competition is governed by 63 pages of rules and guides, all of which have to be followed to the letter.

Perhaps the question we need to ask is whether Esports is a stepping stone to the real thing or whether it is a very different activity that will stand on its own as a more inclusive form of

entertainment. At the 2018 Race of Champions, a number of players contested the eROC event with the winner being judged not just on their simulator results but also on lapping the real track in a real car. Considering Brendon Leigh had not driven any form of car two weeks before the event, it was a tribute to simulation that he was even able to compete. On one hand we see examples such as Jann Mardenborough, now a professional driver having won the Nissan GT Academy virtual series, on the other we have the opportunity, through

fans playing the games, to increase understanding of our sport.

While I think there is much we can learn from Esports, and I've been advocating for some time that we use it as a virtual test environment for changes to both technical and sporting regulations, I also think virtual competition is a sport in itself. In some areas, such as Fortnite, gameplay has to remain virtual. In some spaces, such as football games, it allows for inclusion where that might otherwise be inhibited by the physical constraints of the players. In racing, it allows competition in a field where financial constraints may preclude many would-be competitors from participating. While I doubt racing simulations will ever reach the levels of popularity of League of Legends, they have a place, and when we consider the 2018 F1 Esports events each achieved around 25 million social media impressions, we can see that place is substantial.

F1 Esports also allows us to reach a younger, digitally aware

demographic that we don't currently speak to directly but who are our future fans. Recent scrutiny by Arity, a technological research company, found that half of US millennials do not think it worth owning a car. This is causing much concern to the motor industry and should concern us. We must provide access to a sport that can be otherwise inaccessible. It is easy and cheap to pick up a tennis racquet and play, it is neither easy or cheap to race a car.

To dismiss Esports as 'just a game' is short-sighted. To embrace it and embed it as part of the rich tapestry that is made up by all forms of motorsport provides a way to grow our sport and provide a future that is as rich as our past. Formula 1 may be the penthouse of a metaphorical high-rise but Esports may be as important a foundation for our fans as karting is for our drivers.

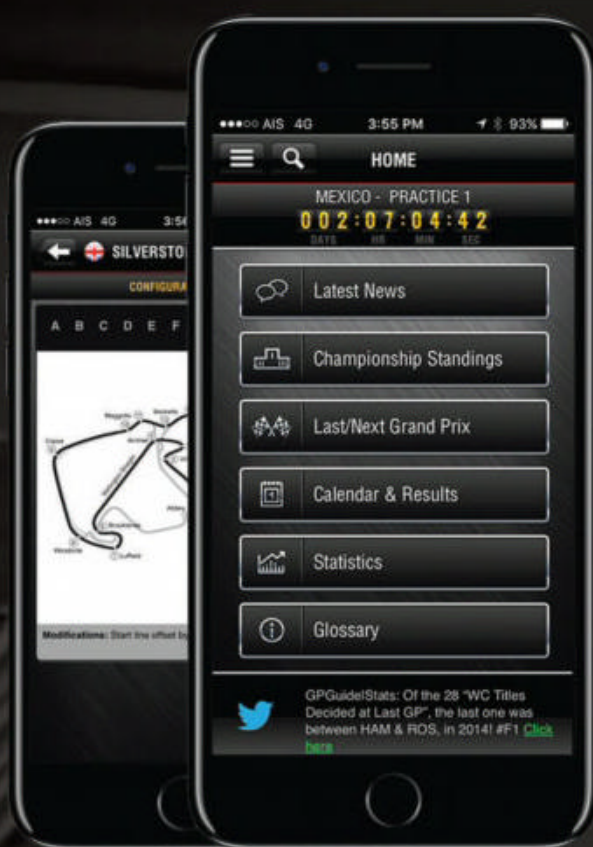
**“PERHAPS THE QUESTION WE NEED TO ASK IS WHETHER ESPORTS IS A STEPPING STONE TO THE REAL THING OR WHETHER IT IS A VERY DIFFERENT ACTIVITY THAT WILL STAND ON ITS OWN”**



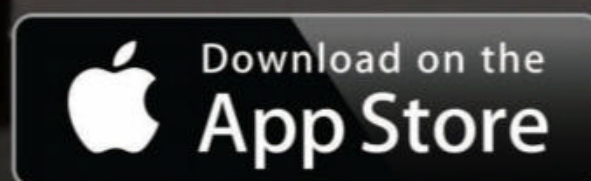




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# STRAIGHT TALK

MARK GALLAGHER

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## TIME TO JOIN THE CULTURE CLUB

**Culture eats strategy for breakfast;** a business mantra that came to mind when I heard Maurizio Arrivabene's tetchy reply of "that is your opinion..." when, in Abu Dhabi, the BBC's Andrew Benson put it to him that Ferrari had made too many mistakes in 2018 to beat Mercedes.

The 'culture' phrase is attributed to the late Peter Drucker, a leading management consultant. It doesn't mean that strategy is unimportant, simply that you aren't going to get anywhere if

your team doesn't have the right culture; including admitting mistakes. Admitting you have a problem is usually the first step towards recovery.

Mercedes' huge achievement owes much, of course, to having the strong technical foundation that Honda and Ross Brawn built in Brackley. Yet major automotive companies have a poor track record in F1; big factories and large budgets seldom guarantee success. Think Jaguar, or Toyota.

A winning culture depends on high-quality leadership, usually delivered by a boss with real authority. One of the first signs Mercedes had

**Toto Wolff's equity in the Mercedes race team sets him aside from all other active team principals in Formula 1**

learned a lot from their time in the sport was in separating the race team from the parent company. The other was the masterstroke in agreeing to sell shares to Toto Wolff and Niki Lauda.

As a 30% shareholder, Wolff is in the unique position of being the only active team principal with significant equity in the team he leads (Frank Williams is not considered 'active' because he no longer attends races). This consolidates Wolff's authority, and makes for a very different situation to that at Ferrari, where Arrivabene was often overshadowed by the late Sergio Marchionne.

Wolff also has a perspective beyond F1, enabling both him and Lauda to draw upon experiences of creating successful companies. Lauda has built and sold three airlines, Wolff's Nextmarch investment company backs a string of successful businesses, not to mention the HWA motorsport empire. This background, glued together by a love and knowledge of the sport, has enabled the pair to form a strong partnership, and drive a culture that has more in common with an

entrepreneur-led business than the squashed sub-division of an automotive giant.

In business management, the process by which you admit, analyse and rectify your mistakes has a name – it's called 'Continuous Improvement'. When Mercedes' chief strategist James Vowles came on the radio to Lewis Hamilton and took responsibility for a pitwall debacle in the Austrian Grand Prix, it illustrated that approach. In the most public way, Vowles was being open, honest and accountable. He also had confidence the team would not punish him.

'Blame the problem, not the person' is one of the in-house sayings in Brackley, and Wolff has referred to the team's way of dealing with issues as 'tough love'. You end up having difficult conversations at times, but nothing is left to fester. Similarly, there is an emphasis on communication, from the trackside emails that flow to everyone back in Brackley and Brixworth, to the Monday afternoon 'town hall' meetings where senior staff debrief everyone after the races.

The positive culture is self-evident – from Hamilton's constant 'thank you's' to the factory, through to non-technical staff, such as the heads of communications, marketing and human resources teams collecting the constructors' trophy on the podium. In this one-team approach, everyone is recognised as a contributor to success.

Ultimately it is openness that works for Mercedes. It's a powerful culture, powerful enough to help drive five consecutive titles, even when last season the competition sometimes produced a faster car.





# THIS MONTH

## Mike Flewitt

CEO,  
McLaren  
Automotive

While McLaren are currently floundering for results in Formula 1, their automotive business is flourishing – producing thousands of exotic supercars each year and underpinning the financial strength of the company. Meet the chief executive who has led McLaren's road car division from small-scale beginnings to become a potent manufacturing force of luxury cars with global reach...

### CV

2013

Chief Executive of  
McLaren Automotive

2012

Chief Operating  
Officer of McLaren  
Automotive

2011

Global Vice  
President of Ford

2010

Manufacturing  
Director of  
Ford Europe

2005

Managing Director  
of Ford Otosan

2003

Quality director  
for Ford Europe

1998

Managing Director  
of AutoNova, a joint  
venture between  
Volvo and TWR

1995

Production Director  
for Rolls-Royce  
and Bentley

1983

Production  
Operator, Foreman,  
Senior Foreman,  
Superintendent,  
Shift Manager, Area  
Manager for Ford  
Motor Company in  
Halewood, Liverpool

**F1 Racing:** McLaren have been building road cars on and off for a long time, but have got much more serious since you joined...

**Mike Flewitt:** Back in Gordon Murray's days it was a department of the race team. It only stopped being that at the end of 2010, when it became an independent company. But it still had to stand on its own two feet. When I came in it was very much the junior partner to racing. It has developed because we developed our own business plan in 2013, and grew Automotive in parallel with the racing company.

**F1R:** How much has the company grown in that time?

**MF:** We've gone from, in 2011, one car – the MP4-12C Coupé – and below 600 units, to this year over 4,500 units, and a range of models. We've grown from 800 people to about 2,300. The F1 team is now only about 700. We'll add another couple of hundred people and will round out at 5,000 cars a year, focusing on exclusivity rather than chasing volume. Fundamentally, we're not about the technology for its own sake, we're about the driving experience.

**F1R:** Does Automotive bring extra cachet for the F1 team?

**MF:** Absolutely. When Zak [Brown] and the team go out representing the F1 team, Automotive is a significant asset. I don't think anyone buys our cars because of F1. They might have heard of us because they've heard of McLaren in F1, but they choose us because of the car. Our cars are the best in their segment, and when customers buy our cars they stay loyal. The fact this isn't a great time in F1 isn't hurting us, but that's not to say it wouldn't be wonderful when we start winning again. What you want is all the companies within McLaren enhancing the brand and credibility. I'm looking forward to the day we're not 17th and 18th.

**F1R:** You race yourself, don't you?

**MF:** I mainly race historic: a couple of Lotuses – a 1961 Lotus Elite and a '63 Lotus Elan. I've also got an F2 McLaren – the ex-Piers Courage car that he won the last

INTERVIEW  
BEN  
ANDERSON

race of the Tasman Series in '67-68. It's a gorgeous car to look at, lovely to drive, but you are constantly on edge... I could do with having a bit more of my hero Jim Clark's talent.

**F1R:** Does the success of the road car division create internal tension while the race team is struggling – especially now you're responsible for 80-85 per cent of total revenue?

**MF:** It doesn't create tension, or certainly not tension I'm aware of. I think we're all just generally supportive of each other. The foundation of the automotive company was funded out of the money Ron [Dennis] and the team earned in F1, so we wouldn't exist if it wasn't for F1. I think that is such recent history that we just feel co-reliant. We don't look at them and think 'you silly buggers aren't doing well now!' Quite the opposite – it's 'what can we do to help?'

**F1R:** And your success will surely help the F1 team in terms of Group revenue?

**MF:** Absolutely. We are a group, so if we are starting to generate cash they can use to develop to become more competitive then that's a great position to be in. There really isn't rivalry. Every Monday afternoon Zak, myself, Jonathan Neale and two of the shareholders have a very informal call. I have breakfast with Zak every week. We had a customer evening for Speedtail – our new top-end product – and Zak was there with his wife hosting one of the tables for me. We're all in it together.

**F1R:** How do you answer critics who say the automotive side is a distraction from the F1 team?

**MF:** I understand how the external perception could be that, but they are fundamentally separate. We don't consume any resource from F1 at all. Arguably, we help them financially. We don't take any of their people, consume or dilute, in any sense at all. It's really far-fetched, that: if anyone criticises a Mercedes road vehicle it's never because they are doing so well in F1. I don't read it about Red Bull, where Adrian Newey is trying to design an Aston Martin road car...







# STILL

# THE

# RISE

## KEYS TO HAMILTON'S GENIUS

The past two seasons of Formula 1 were billed as the beginning of an epic battle for the ages, a struggle for supremacy between two mighty warriors of different creeds – one of sharp silver, the other of resplendent red – each with a viable claim to be known as the best driver on the grid.

This was Sebastian Vettel vs Lewis Hamilton; the four-time great against the three-time great. In the red corner: Vettel, whose success came early and gluttonously with Red Bull. Young, sharply focused, super-quick, brilliant at streaking off into the distance after yet another otherworldly qualifying lap. A natural heir to Schumacher if ever there was one, a brilliant German driver ensconced within the very team Michael had made his own two decades before. Vanquish his foe and Vettel could live his dream, and stake his claim to be considered one of the best of all time.

Standing in his way, over in the silver corner, was Lewis Hamilton – perhaps the greatest rookie driver Formula 1 has ever seen, champion in only his second season, but then starved of subsequent success until ditching McLaren's slowly sinking ship and joining 'the Mercedes project'. Finally, Hamilton had found a place from which he could regularly achieve the results his prodigious abilities had always merited. Having seen off Nico Rosberg in two seasons out of three, and having pushed Rosberg so hard in the year he *didn't* win that Rosberg quit racing entirely, the only thing that was left ▶

NOW HE'S SMOKED SEBASTIAN VETTEL  
IN TWO CONSECUTIVE TITLE FIGHTS  
LEWIS HAMILTON HAS STAKED HIS CLAIM  
TO BE KNOWN AS HIS GENERATION'S  
GREATEST GRAND PRIX DRIVER.  
BUT WHAT IS IT THAT MAKES HIM  
THIS ERA'S BEST OF THE BEST?

WORDS BEN ANDERSON









standing between Hamilton and true greatness was Sebastian Vettel and a resurgent Ferrari.

We've now had two full seasons and 41 races of this modern clash of the titans, the results of which show it is Hamilton, not Vettel, who has risen best to the challenge of claiming F1's throne of supremacy for himself. After equalling Juan Manuel Fangio's five world titles, Hamilton is now the undisputed king of modern F1, and it is time for us to celebrate the key facets of his genius that have helped him make it so.

**One thing Hamilton has never lacked is tremendous** raw speed under pressure in qualifying, as evidenced by the pole position record he claimed from Schumacher in 2017. Lewis is also possessed of an almost supernatural prowess in wet conditions, which played a major role in turning this season's championship tide against Vettel. But this is not just about being an unbelievably good driver. Hamilton's genius lies in being able to produce consistently at key moments, and in finding ways to continually improve so that he is not outwitted by those intently focused on the target on his back.

Vettel's own F1 career began on a similar trajectory, but he has arguably stagnated as Ferrari's recent resurgence has

stalled. Hamilton seized the 2017 championship by the scruff of the neck after the summer break – winning five races as Ferrari capitulated. At the time, Hamilton said the latter part of that season was the highest level he'd yet reached in F1.

This season we've seen several more examples of Hamilton's dazzling brilliance: the pole lap at Silverstone that left him physically shaking afterwards; blitzing the field in Singapore on Mercedes' weakest circuit (leading team boss Toto Wolff to say it was the best qualifying lap he'd ever witnessed); destroying his rivals in the wet in Germany, winning from 14th on the grid as Vettel crashed; and beating the Ferraris to pole in Hungary and Belgium, again in wet conditions, finding grip where others, seemingly, could not.

These are the many impressive peaks, but perhaps Hamilton's true brilliance lies in broadening his horizons, focusing on elevating the various minute details that can make his life easier and help him produce these peaks so consistently that they sometimes don't even register.

"Since I've been in Formula 1 I've had the ability to drive like I do today," says Hamilton. "But naturally every year you are always trying to raise the bar, trying to work on all areas: how you prepare, how you get yourself in the right mindset, how you deliver in the car with your feel, how you

## 1 PURE DRIVING ABILITY

FAST FACT

LEWIS HAS WON THE PAST NINE RAIN-AFFECTED GRANDS PRIX





learn to balance the car and risk versus reward, how you communicate with the guys who you work closely with, to extract the best from them. There are so many areas. For me personally, I've been the most centred this year, been the healthiest I've ever been and I've had more energy than I've ever had. Part of that, I'm sure, is being on a vegan diet. It's been fantastic and I'm so happy I went that way. I wish I went there a long, long time ago."

In maintaining the necessary intensity to win season after gruelling season, the extra energy Hamilton has found from being free to do his own thing and attack Formula 1 in his own particular way cannot be underestimated. It is surely a key component of the chemistry that has allowed the best to become even better.

## 2 SELF-BELIEF

**Vettel is often rightly credited for being a driver** with extraordinary capacity for mental resolve – someone who can bounce back from errors as if nothing happened. He would change nothing if he could relive Singapore '17 all over again, because he argues he could never legislate for Kimi Räikkönen's ballistic start from the second row of the grid. Similarly, crashing out of the lead of 2018's German Grand Prix is simply framed as a small mistake with big consequences. Nothing to be done, just move on.

But this bravado cannot disguise the fact Vettel has cracked repeatedly under pressure. Four world championships or not, that must eat away at your self-confidence. It can also easily create the sort of downward spiral that we saw trap Vettel in the latter part of 2018. One mistake begets another, which begets another, and before you know it people are questioning your ability and saying you must be 'out of sorts'.

Hamilton was prone to plenty of off days of his own in the past. Part of the reason Jenson Button rates Fernando Alonso most highly, of his former McLaren team-mates, is that Fernando would never go missing in races in the way Lewis occasionally did. But the events of the past two seasons that have made Hamilton a five-time champion – in particular the way he and Mercedes have developed tricky cars to take control in the second part of each season – suggest Hamilton has evolved into a more robust, more relentless prospect, with greater capacity for digging deep and finding what's needed to get the job done when things are going against him.

"Usually what happens in those scenarios is you overdrive," Hamilton explains. "That comes with experience – not overdriving, letting it almost come to you a little bit in the car. Controlled overdriving is something I am able to do. We all overdrive at some points and it's something I don't feel I've done much this year. Maybe at the start of the year there were times when I might have been overdriving, to compensate for issues I was having with the tyres or whatever."

PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR; STEVE ETHERINGTON



**Lewis has total faith in himself, in his ability. And, of course, that self-belief has been bolstered by the addition of a fifth world title**

All drivers must battle the urge to overcompensate for the limits their cars impose on them. As Hamilton admits, he is also guilty of trying too hard at times. This is a big part of the reason he has sometimes had trouble beating Valtteri Bottas when the Mercedes has not been at its best. What Hamilton does well now is to recognise this, limit the damage, and then grow stronger in step with the car. In each of the past two years, as Mercedes have added performance, it is Hamilton who has best extracted it while Vettel has struggled to limit the damage when Ferrari's progress has stalled.

Vettel is guilty of destructive overdriving. Hamilton's self-belief perhaps affords him a greater measure of control. ▶



# 3 SUPERIOR RACECRAFT

Hamilton's capacity for brilliance in wheel-to-wheel situations is not only about his obvious ability to make things happen in races and pass rivals. Arguably Hamilton isn't F1's most spectacular overtaker – that honour probably belongs to Daniel Ricciardo. But Hamilton is right up there, and his judgement of risk versus reward in these situations is perhaps the most outstanding aspect of this element of his craft.

Hamilton demonstrated time and time again that he had Rosberg's measure in this regard over the first three seasons of F1's V6 era; Rosberg regularly came off second-best in their fights, occasionally overreaching in his efforts to bridge the gap. Vettel is often unfairly criticised for lacking racecraft, but on several occasions he got the better of Hamilton over the course of 2018 (in Austria, Mexico and for the win at Spa), and also successfully overtook Max Verstappen in Singapore, which suggests this is evidently unfair. But the litany of mistakes he's also made this year have indicated he lacks Hamilton's consistency and precision.

Perhaps the best example of the contrast between the two, and Hamilton's seemingly superior skill, is Monza. Lewis opportunistically overtook Vettel around the outside entering the second chicane while Sebastian spun after clipping the kerb and nudging Hamilton's car. Vettel has often



“IT'S NOT ALL WON ON THE FIRST CORNER OR EVEN THE SECOND CORNER”



“DISCIPLINE IS VERY MUCH THE KEY.”







**“THERE IS ALWAYS THINKING OF THE LONGER GAME BUT ALSO MAXIMISING IN THE SHORT TERM”**

appeared slightly clumsy in battle, much as his hero Michael Schumacher did, while Hamilton's days of repeatedly driving into Felipe Massa are well behind him.

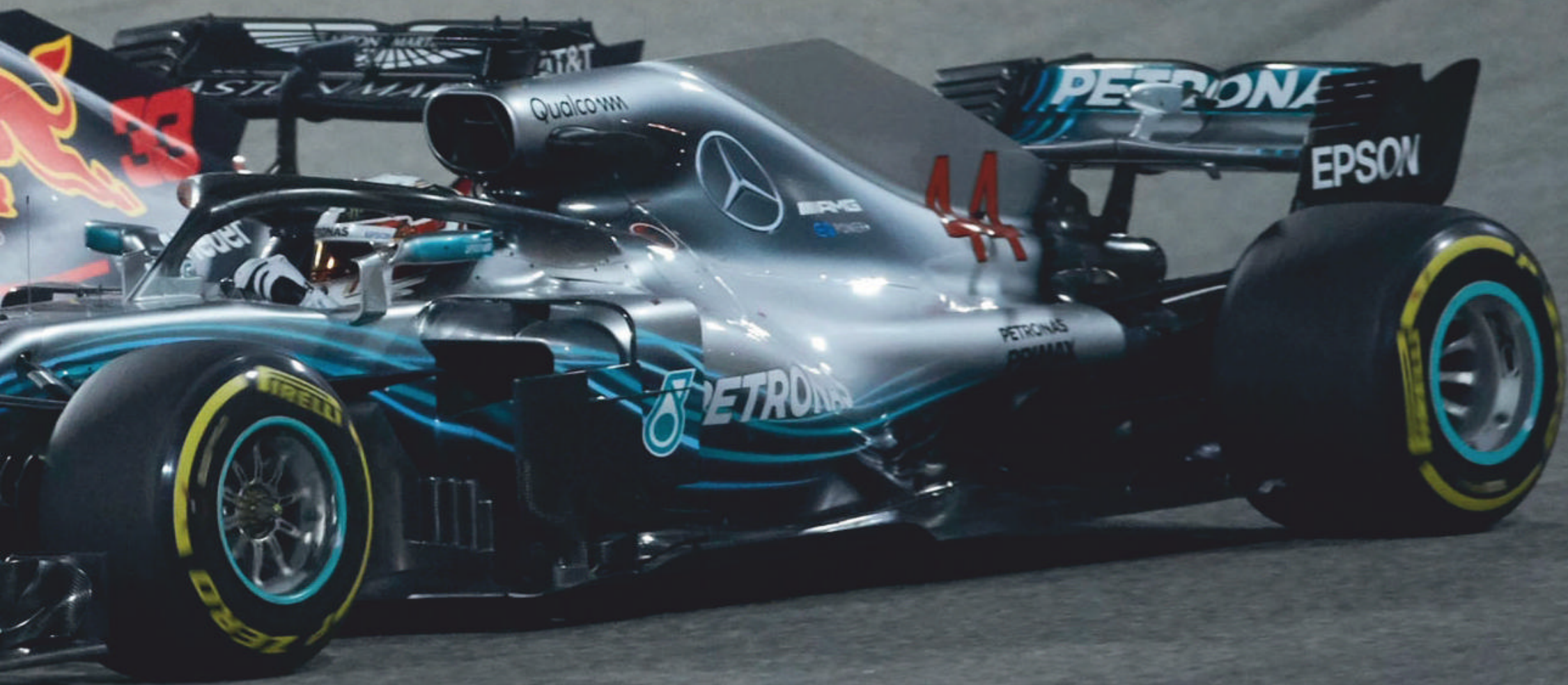
Vettel suffered several such incidents this year, such as with Max Verstappen at Suzuka and with Daniel Ricciardo in Austin. He missed out on a potential victory at Baku by snatching a brake, and collided clumsily with Valtteri Bottas in France. Ross Brawn went as far as to describe Vettel as “out of sorts” after his Austin collision with Ricciardo, although Vettel suggested the cause might be his car's aerodynamic platform being disturbed by running alongside his rivals. Regardless, the tendency towards clumsiness has been evident for a while. Vettel is capable, but too often his judgement is fractionally imprecise, and at this level that costs him dearly.

Interestingly, Hamilton came off second best in a battle with Verstappen in the US GP, but Hamilton had way more to lose, and you could argue this was another example of his greatest talent in wheel-to-wheel battle: fine judgement.

“Discipline is very much the key,” says Hamilton of his general approach to races. “The experience of knowing when to push and how not to push; it is not all won on the first corner or even the second corner. There is always thinking of the longer game but also maximising in the short term.” ▶

FAST FACT

WITH 83 POLES  
LEWIS TOPS THE  
ALL-TIME LIST



PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; MANUEL GORIA



# 4 MENTAL STRENGTH

It is often said that elite sport is won or lost as much within the recesses of an athlete's own mind as it is on the field of battle. Nico Rosberg waged this war in a concerted effort (eventually successfully) to break Hamilton and make up for a deficit in pure driving ability. Vettel doesn't lack in terms of mental strength, but he is an emotional creature – more Italian than German, according to Red Bull motorsport boss Helmut Marko – and those emotions have occasionally got the better of him.

Hamilton is no robot in the car either, but he appears to have learned a lesson from his chastening experience with Rosberg. There is a new steeliness to him now. He has completely subjugated Bottas, ensuring no threat re-emerges from within, and will often subtly twist the knife into Vettel outside the car – such as telling Sebastian he waited until the final run of Q3 in Australia to deliver a storming pole lap because he wanted to “wipe the smile off your face”.

Vettel's complete loss of composure behind the Safety Car in Azerbaijan in 2017, for which he was penalised and hauled in front of an FIA disciplinary committee for deliberately driving into Hamilton, revealed a fragility Hamilton knows

TURNING POINT 2018

Lewis turns the screw, beating both Ferraris at Monza (right), after his first-lap contact with Vettel at the Roggia chicane dropped Seb to 18th



he can exploit. There is perhaps no better visual metaphor for Hamilton's superiority than the video of him serenely scooting through the Monza pitlane, jinking around Vettel only at the last moment while his rival, looking flustered, almost leaps out of the way as Hamilton interrupts Vettel's jog towards the Ferrari garage. The body language just screams 'I've got you exactly where I want you'.

"I never, ever think, 'I own you'," counters Hamilton. "I don't use that mentality. But look at [champion boxer Floyd] Mayweather: I don't think I've ever seen him not look like he knows he's going to win – even if the opponent is taller or whatever."

He might not think it, but Hamilton certainly drove like he 'owned' Ferrari at Monza, and in fact Hamilton describes that race, where he came from behind to beat both Ferraris to victory – against the run of play and in front of their adoring *tifosi* – as “probably the biggest psychological blow” he struck in 2018. Hamilton may play it down, but he knows as well as anyone how quickly things can unravel if your opponent makes you lose your head... ▶

TURNING POINT 2017

Having had time to reflect, Seb apologises for his part in 2017's Baku 'brake test' farrago, as a bemused Magnussen plays peacemaker (above)



“I NEVER, EVER THINK, ‘I OWN YOU’.  
I DON'T USE THAT MENTALITY”



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PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; GLENN DUNBAR

# 5 TEAM BUILDING



Lewis has the full backing of team management (above) and has a supportive team-mate in Valtteri Bottas (below)



**Michael Schumacher is considered the gold standard** when it comes to a Formula 1 driver's capacity for inspiring those around them to achieve new and ever greater heights. He was the fulcrum around which Jean Todt *et al* transformed Ferrari's fortunes after a terrible run in the early 1990s.

The Scuderia have improved greatly in the four seasons since Vettel arrived, following a serious relapse in the first year of F1's V6 hybrid engine formula, but the final piece of the puzzle continues to elude them. Team boss Maurizio Arrivabene says Ferrari have the means to win but are guilty of choking under the pressure. Vettel's experience of winning championships has not inoculated Ferrari against the yips, and the recent signing of Charles Leclerc perhaps indicates that they might not be totally convinced Vettel is the man to ultimately lead them back to the top.

Hamilton, on the other hand, has galvanised Mercedes against the new external threat from Ferrari. Mercedes have placed their full faith in him, allowing him to attack the challenge of F1 in his own way, and they are reaping the rewards of that commitment. Vettel may be the driver most inspired by Schumacher's methods, but increasingly it is Hamilton who appears to be Michael's heir apparent.

"I have this large group of people to utilise; they are my tools, my soldiers," Hamilton elaborates. "If I didn't get those guys in the right positions, I wouldn't be able to extract what I have in me. My job is to try to extract the most from every single person here. How you nurture that and build upon it has been key this year. We've really listened to each other and really executed."

Consequently, Hamilton now stands apart on the current Formula 1 grid as its only five-time world champion and its undisputed king. 🏆

**"MY JOB IS TO TRY TO EXTRACT THE MOST FROM EVERY SINGLE PERSON HERE. HOW YOU NURTURE THAT AND BUILD UPON IT HAS BEEN KEY THIS YEAR. WE'VE REALLY LISTENED TO EACH OTHER AND REALLY EXECUTED"**  
**LEWIS HAMILTON**



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# THE

Of late, **Lewis Hamilton** has come under fire for his extra-curricular activities, which some pundits view as a distraction from his racing. And yet these 'distractions' seem to be making him stronger than ever...

# ROAD

# TO

# FREEDOM

WORDS ROBERT HOLMES PICTURES MV AGUSTA



**E**rnesto ‘Che’ Guevara might have been a doctor, rather than a Marxist revolutionary, had the wanderlust not seized him. His journeys through South America on an old Norton motorcycle in the early 1950s profoundly changed his outlook on the world and the course of his life. In popular culture, Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper’s self-funded road-trip movie *Easy Rider* blew open a creatively moribund Hollywood and kicked off a new era of indie-tinged film-making. While urban commuters and pizza-delivery scooterists might disagree, it’s fair to say that throwing a leg over a motorcycle can take you to some unexpected destinations.

**“I DEFINITELY FEEL THAT IN MY KNOWLEDGE AND MY APPROACH, THE BALANCE THAT I HAVE IN MY LIFE IN GENERAL IS VERY GOOD. WHEN I GET INVOLVED IN SOMETHING I REALLY PUT MY HEART INTO IT”**

**LEWIS HAMILTON**

For many years, Lewis Hamilton has enjoyed arriving at European races aboard a succession of brash, high-performance bikes, usually Italian, always highly customised. In the video to publicise the launch of his most recent collaboration with Italian bike brand MV Agusta, he articulates what it is about the two-wheeled life that appeals: “When I ride a motorcycle I feel free. I feel light. I feel in control.”

But his relationship with MV Agusta is, like his new clothing range and his much-publicised (if little-heard) dabblings in music, interesting not just for what it is on the surface, but also for its consequences in helping him dig deeper on track in Formula 1 than ever before. While orthodox opinions view such off-track stylings as an unwelcome distraction from the business of motor racing, Lewis has arguably become a sharper operator, and perhaps even extended his racing career, by cutting loose regularly.

“I definitely feel that in my knowledge and my approach, the balance that I have in my life in general is very good,” he says. “I’ve really enjoyed working with CRC [Castiglioni Research Centre, MV Agusta’s design operation]. When I get involved in something, I really put my heart into ▶



**In a clever tie-in, Lewis, race number 44, has collaborated with MV Agusta on their LH44 range, based on the MV F4**





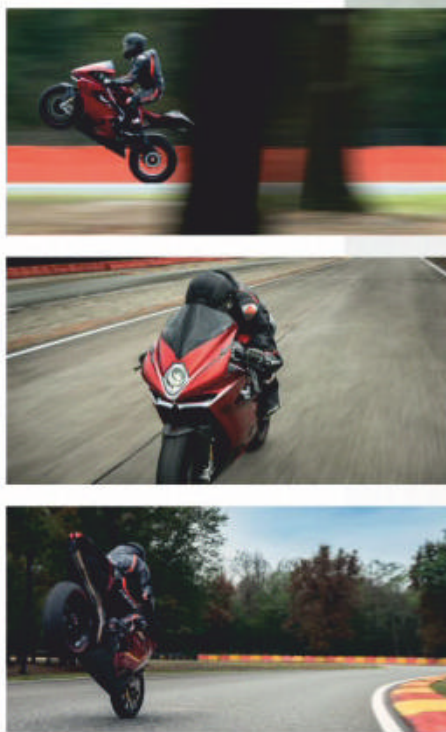




it. I like detail, the shapes and curves of the bike. To see it all come together and look beautiful was really emotional. I try to be a sponge and absorb from people like Tommy [Hilfiger], who has built an incredible brand. Ultimately, on my list, there's a new dream there to do something like he's done within that business."

The three MV bikes Lewis has 'curated' occupy a niche within a niche. Like most Italian bike manufacturers, MV has had a financially troubled past (Ducati is now owned by Audi) and produces highly rarefied bikes, of which the limited-edition 'LH44' trio are more exclusive still. The F4 LH44 ridden by Lewis on these pages clocks in at £54,000 (the 'standard' model is a relatively modest £14,500) and only 44 were built. Based on the F4 RC, itself a limited-run,

Lewis pushes his LH44 to its limit, making the most of the 212bhp produced by its 998cc four-cylinder engine



**"I TRY TO BE A SPONGE AND ABSORB FROM PEOPLE LIKE TOMMY HILFIGER, WHO HAS BUILT AN INCREDIBLE BRAND. ULTIMATELY, ON MY LIST, THERE'S A NEW DREAM THERE TO DO SOMETHING LIKE HE'S DONE WITHIN THAT BUSINESS"**

**LEWIS HAMILTON**

£32,000 homologation special enabling MV to compete in the World Superbike championship, the LH44 squeezes 212bhp out of its 998cc four-cylinder engine. The titanium exhaust, the candy-apple-red, carbon-fibre bodywork and every other aspect of the bike's trim – from the seat to the ancillary components – were specified by Lewis in conjunction with MV's own engineers. Even the suspension components are black rather than the standard Öhlins gold.

Since the F4 was the last bike to be designed by Massimo Tamburini, rightly hailed as one of the most gifted motorcycle stylists ever, you could describe Lewis's work as lily-gilding. Yet it remains utterly extraordinary.

Still, there is a crucial difference between Lewis's exploration of motorcycle accessorising and his new fashion range, designed and launched in partnership with Tommy Hilfiger. The process has been much more intensive, and the demands on his time have manifested themselves in his day job – something that many of his critics have been swift to point out.

Lewis arrived late to the 2018 Italian Grand Prix weekend, missing his Thursday media commitments and incurring the ire of 'Fleet' ▶



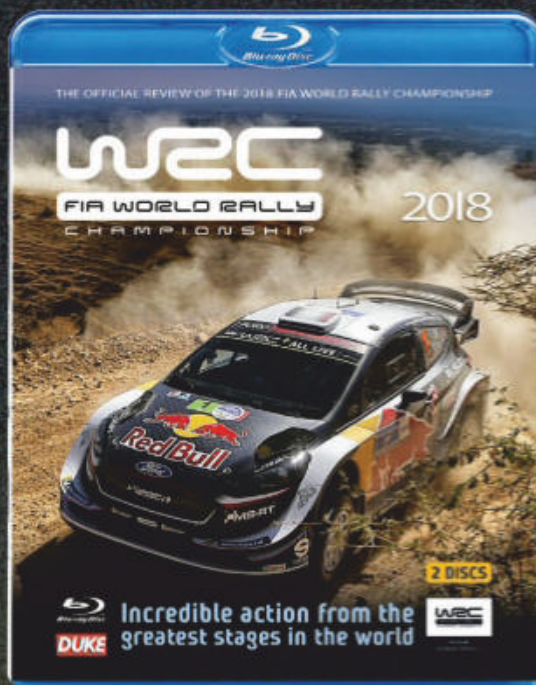




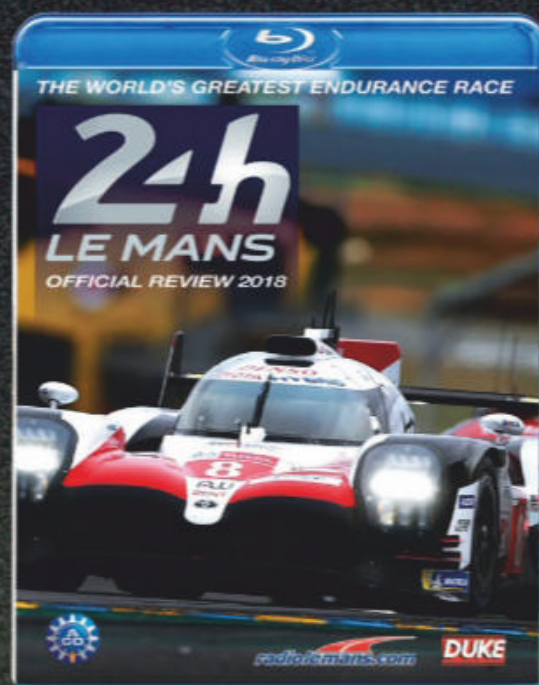
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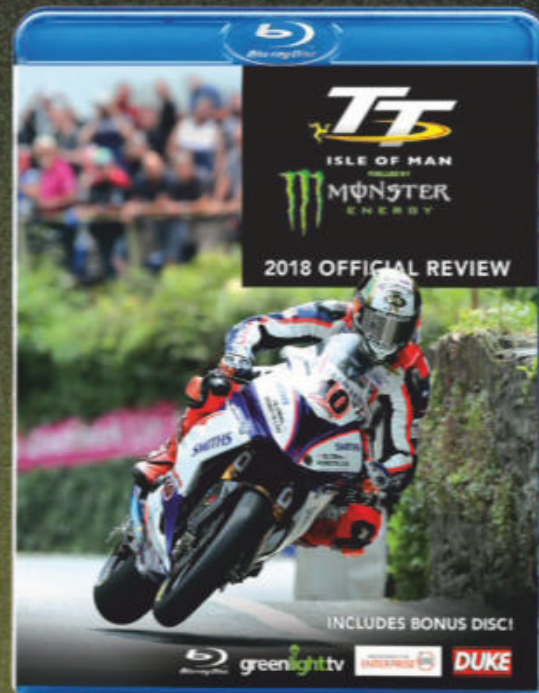
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Street', for whom such interactions provide the bedrock of a weekend's coverage and justification for a healthy expense-account spend. Having won that race, Hamilton went to Singapore via an onerous-sounding, ten-day, 250,000-mile itinerary that took him from Milan to London, then Shanghai, back to London, then New York, for the promotional requirements of his new co-branded venture with the fashion brand. In all he spent around 53 hours in the air, 21 of those on the final leg from New York to Singapore.

There, in a burst of pre-emptive schadenfreude, the nattering nabobs sharpened their pencils in expectation of a brainfade-induced burnout. But in the event Lewis simply snapped his visor shut, got on with the job, and blew Ferrari's doors off at a circuit around which the Mercedes

**“FOR SIX YEARS I’VE HEARD, ‘HOW CAN YOU ALLOW LEWIS TO GET OFF AND FLY AROUND THE WORLD?’ HE WAS IN SHANGHAI ON THE CATWALK, HE WAS IN NEW YORK A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER. THEN HE CAME HERE AND BLEW EVERYBODY AWAY”**

**TOTO WOLFF**

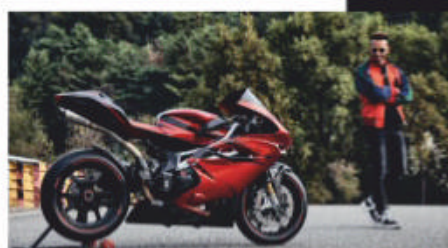
was generally expected to struggle. Several dozen op-ed pieces, gleefully detailing the deleterious effect that enjoying the society of models and rap stars has on a sportsman's competitiveness, ended up on the spike.

For Mercedes boss Toto Wolff it vindicated his policy of letting Lewis do his own thing. After all, Mercedes' sponsorship deal with Tommy Hilfiger was brokered by... Lewis himself. “For six years I’ve heard, ‘How can you allow Lewis to get off and fly around the world?’” said Wolff after the Singapore GP. “You know what? He did it to his most extreme in the past ten days, he loved it – he was in Shanghai on the catwalk, he was in New York a couple of days later. Then he came here and blew everybody away. Let’s be non-judgemental and let everybody judge how they perform best. He knows what’s good for him.”

Although Lewis is more likely to become a fashion mogul post-F1 than a motorcycle designer, it's clear that he thrives on creative adventure rather than being distracted by it. Compare Zen Mercedes Lewis with the miserable late-McLaren era Lewis, frustrated at being held captive within a corporate cage, and you'll see just how healthy it is to get on your bike... 🏍️



**Every aspect of the bike's trim, from its red bodywork to its black suspension components, was selected by Lewis**





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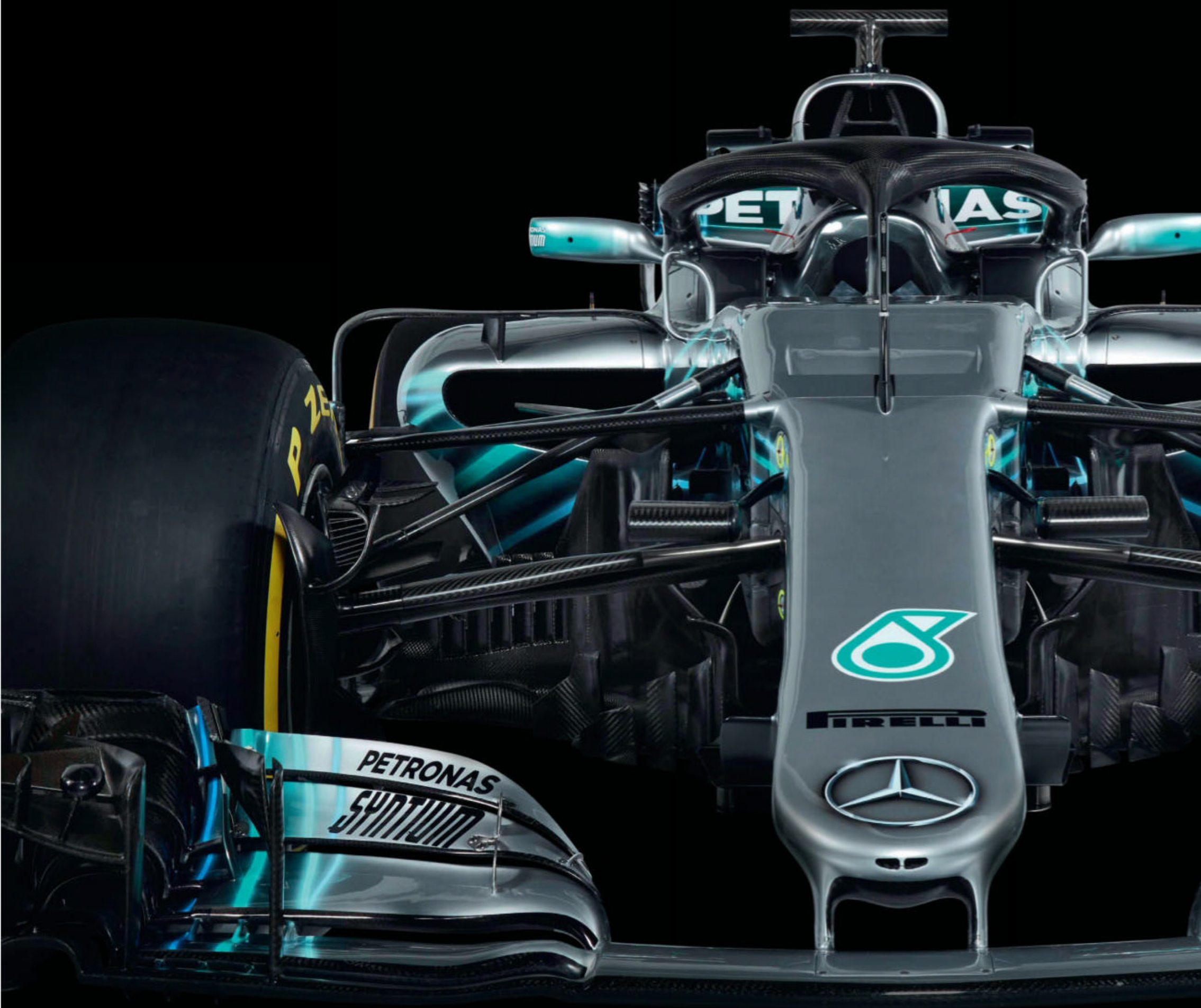
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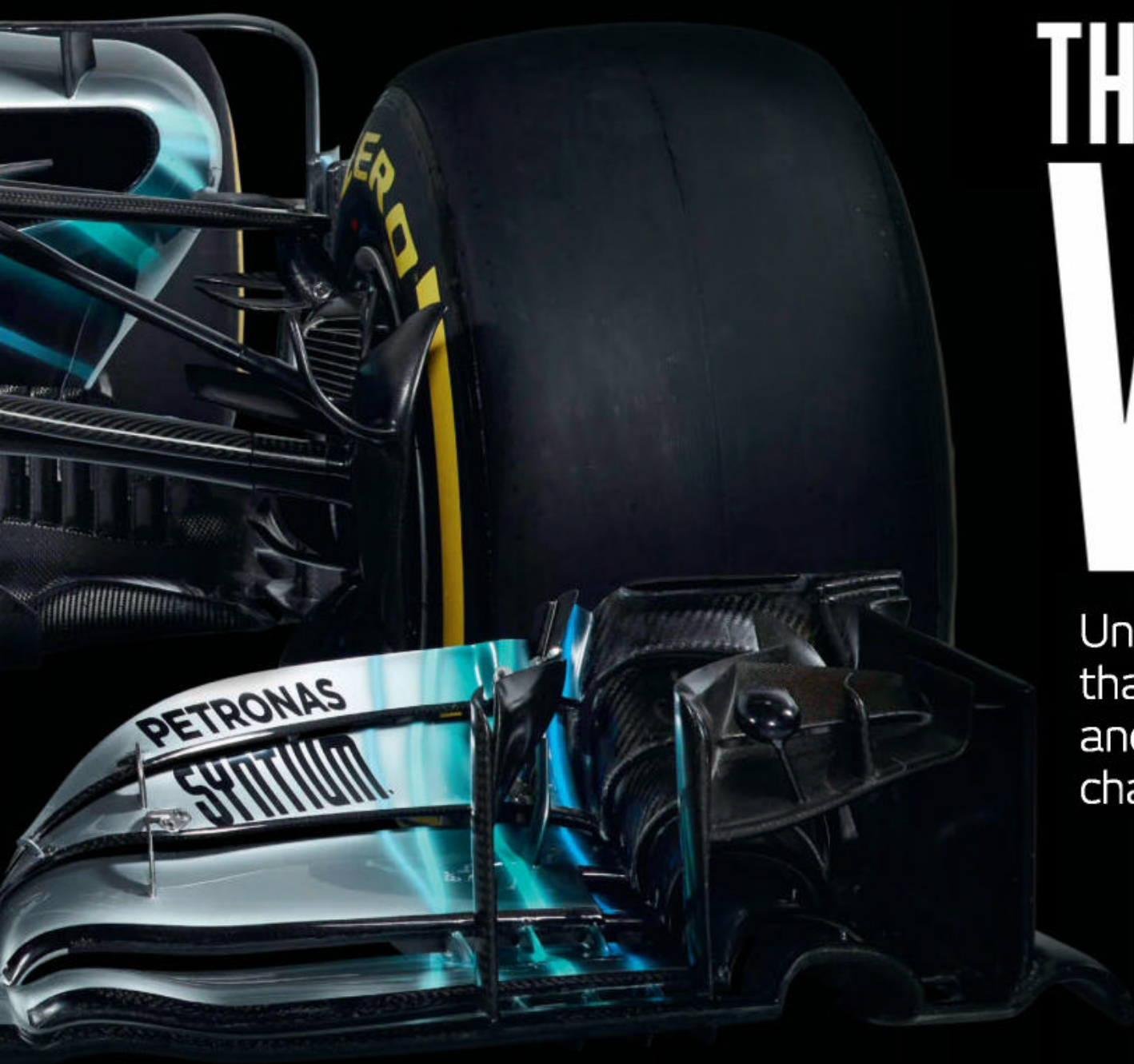
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WORDS JAKE BOXALL-LEGG  
PICTURES MERCEDES

# THE MERCEDES W09

Under the skin of the car  
that powered Lewis Hamilton  
and Mercedes to a 2018  
championship double





“A bit of a diva” was Toto Wolff’s now-infamous assessment of Mercedes’ 2017 car, the Wo8. A championship winner, no less, and yet it was prone to the odd mood-swing; the long-wheelbase concept struggled to perform on the full gamut of circuits on the calendar, especially compared with the more amenable and rapier-sharp Ferrari SF70H. Although a considerable and consistent factor in the title fight, the Prancing Horse wasn’t quite as capable of producing moments of sheer brilliance to that year’s Silver Arrows. So, if only Mercedes could manage more of them...

With the threat of Ferrari looming larger than ever, Mercedes needed to build on the successes of the Wo8 ahead of 2018. The Wo9 was built on the theory of evolution, not revolution, and retained the same wheelbase. Mercedes wanted to ensure the whole package was simply a stronger, faster and more consistent version of the previous model.

Continuing with a similar design philosophy, Mercedes employed the same distinctive tapered nose section to take advantage of the increased airflow to the front of the floor, albeit refined to include a smoother transition to the front bulkhead. The aggressive front suspension was also kept, with the front wishbones raised as high as possible to minimise blockage to the sidepod inlets, reducing the impact on cooling.

While Mercedes looked to optimise an already successful concept, that’s not to say they were reticent to make larger-scale changes. Taking a leaf from the Red Bull playbook, Mercedes raised the Wo9’s rake [the ratio of the car’s front to rear ride height] by just under half-a-degree, to coax extra performance from the diffuser. The aerodynamicists in Brackley tightened up the rear bodywork too as the shark fins atop last year’s car disappeared, making sure the internals were packaged as closely as possible to bolster the aero efficiency of the car. Tweaking the suspension layouts also assisted with aerodynamics, while the halo’s inclusion required a quick chassis redesign in order to accommodate the

## NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No. 74

## THE MERCEDES W09

new load paths determined by the FIA’s new crash tests.

Under the corset-tight engine cover, the Mercedes High Performance Powertrains team produced their best work yet. Tasked with coaxing more grunt out of the most successful package of the modern turbo era, they overhauled the engine infrastructure to improve durability – the 2018 rules allowing a maximum of three power units per season – while the engineers also had to boost the power output to cover off the threat of Ferrari. That said, the start to the season was tentative, and it took until the fourth round for Mercedes to record their first victory of the year when Lewis Hamilton took advantage of a Valtteri Bottas puncture to win in Baku.

Extracting the maximum from the tyres seemed to be the biggest bugbear in the early stages. The “diva” still proved highly strung in high-stakes situations and rear tyre wear was a particular problem. Sebastian Vettel’s excellent early form in qualifying also suggested Mercedes could no longer claim to have the best engine – for the first time in the V6 hybrid era.

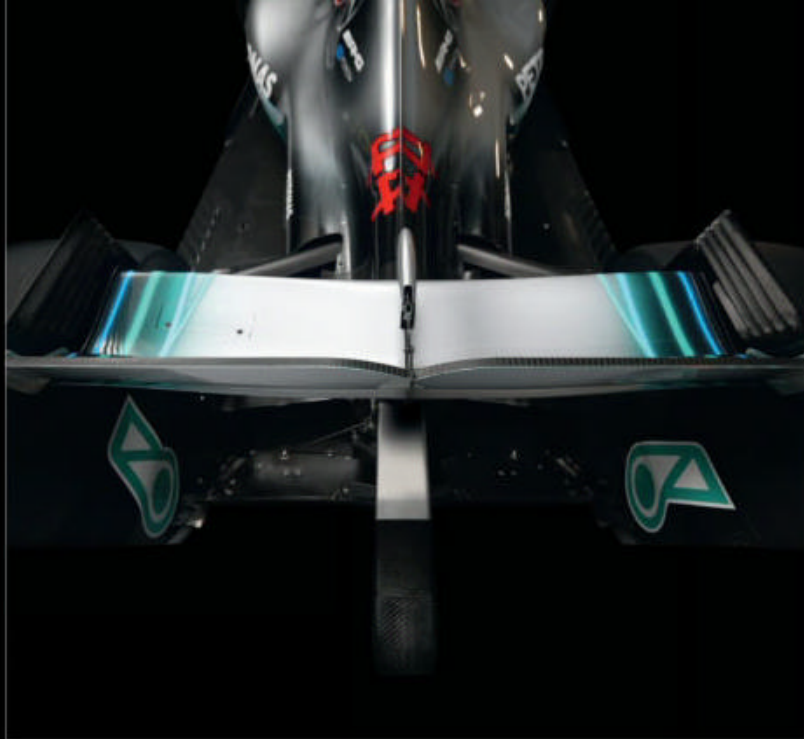
Keeping the rate of development throughout the season almost constant, Mercedes’ endeavours gradually delivered more success. Instead of plonking on a massive upgrade at Barcelona, they produced a series of small changes to the aerodynamics, yielding a second successive win for Hamilton. In Austria, the sidepods were tightened up further – although a strategic miscall and subsequent fuel pressure problem for Hamilton ended his hopes of a win.

It was in extracting the maximum of performance from the Pirelli tyres where Mercedes placed the bulk of their attention, as the team identified a new weakness in working with the new wider tyres first introduced for 2017. The moving goalposts as Pirelli revised their compounds for ’18 ensured Mercedes had to recalibrate again.

With a leave-no-stone-unturned approach, Mercedes increased their momentum with the Wo9, and the prudent, patient update strategy, built on continual gains, started to pay real dividends – especially in the second half of the







## “TAKING A LEAF FROM THE RED BULL PLAYBOOK, MERCEDES RAISED THE W09'S RAKE”

season. At Spa, after the summer break, they rolled out their biggest upgrade package: Brixworth turned out a boosted power unit, while Brackley produced a new wheel design, with raised sections to help draw excess heat from the tyres.

That design was augmented with a system to blow air through the wheel, and the air brought into the rear upright hub to cool the brake assembly was also used to extract heat from the rear wheels. Keeping the rear tyre temperatures down was key to Mercedes' dominance at Singapore, a circuit on which they had often struggled. Hamilton's pole lap there was one of beauty, and the ability to thread his W09 through the narrow streets with such perfection owed much to this important tweak.

Mercedes continued to chalk up victories before their novel solution was rumbled, and they reverted to a more conventional setup for Austin and Mexico, to counter the possibility of a Ferrari protest. Although both drivers suffered increased tyre degradation without the system, the team continued to test it in practice, making changes to the internal flow in the wheel assembly ahead of Brazil.

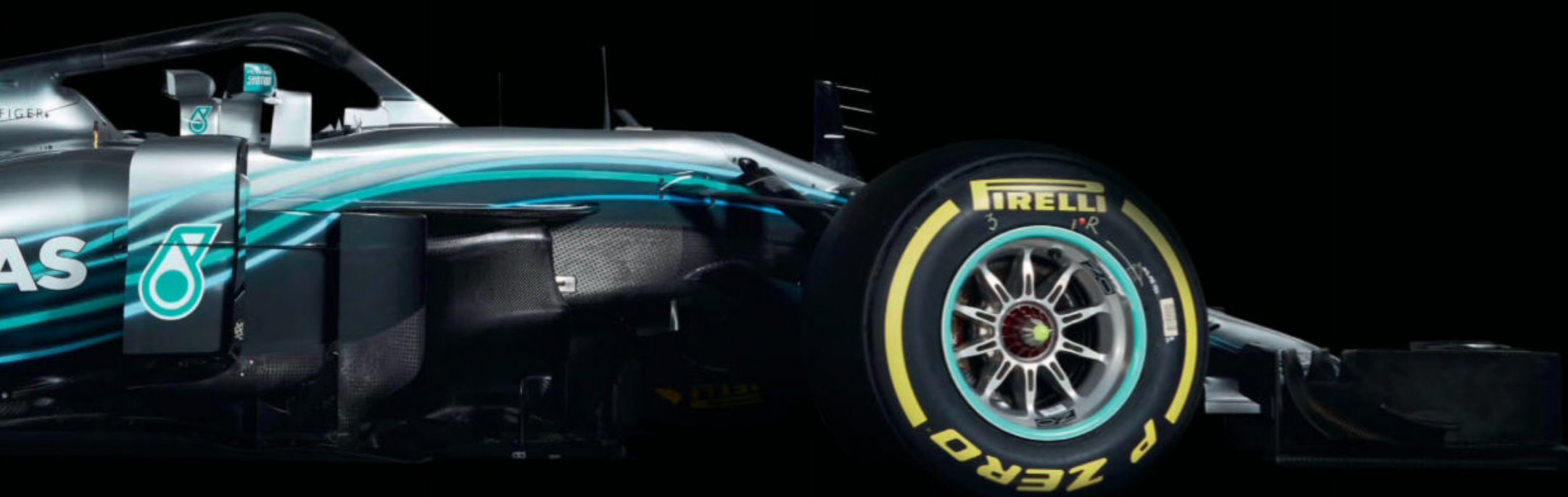
There Mercedes clinched a remarkable fifth consecutive constructors' championship crown. With those many months of continued fine-tuning, development and innovation, Mercedes once again turned their diva into a star.

### SPECIFICATION

**Chassis** carbon fibre and honeycomb composite  
**Suspension** double wishbones, pushrod-operated torsion bar (front), pullrod-operated torsion bar (rear)  
**Engine** Mercedes-AMG F1 M09 EQ Power+ V6 turbo-hybrid  
**Engine Capacity** 1600cc  
**Power** ~1000bhp  
**Gearbox** Mercedes eight-speed sequential semi-automatic  
**Tyres** Pirelli  
**Weight** 733kg  
**Notable drivers** Lewis Hamilton, Valtteri Bottas

### RACE RECORD

**Starts** 42  
**Wins** 11  
**Poles** 13  
**Fastest laps** 10  
**Other podiums** 14  
**Points** 655





## MERCEDES W09

# FIVE OF THE BEST

Our technical experts have gone back to the drawing board to uncover the key design innovations that made the Mercedes W09 a champion

ILLUSTRATIONS

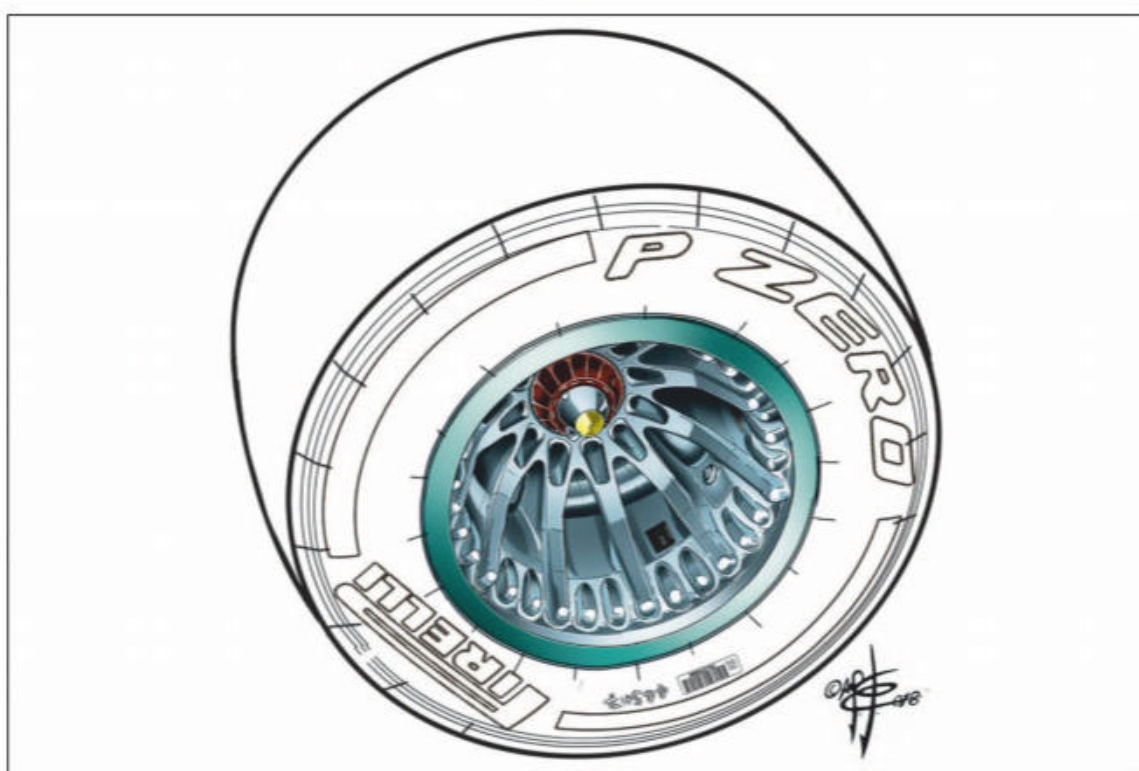


WORDS JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

# 1

### THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE

Narrowly ahead of Ferrari before the summer break, Mercedes returned from their holidays with a brand new weapon up their sleeve. Seeking to get on top of persistent rear-tyre temperature problems once and for all, the team arrived at Spa with a novel approach to wheel design, creating protrusions on the spokes and around the rim to draw heat away from the tyre – improving the thermal distribution around the carcass. In the notoriously sweltering conditions of Singapore, Lewis Hamilton powered to a dominant victory – certainly helped by this innovation.

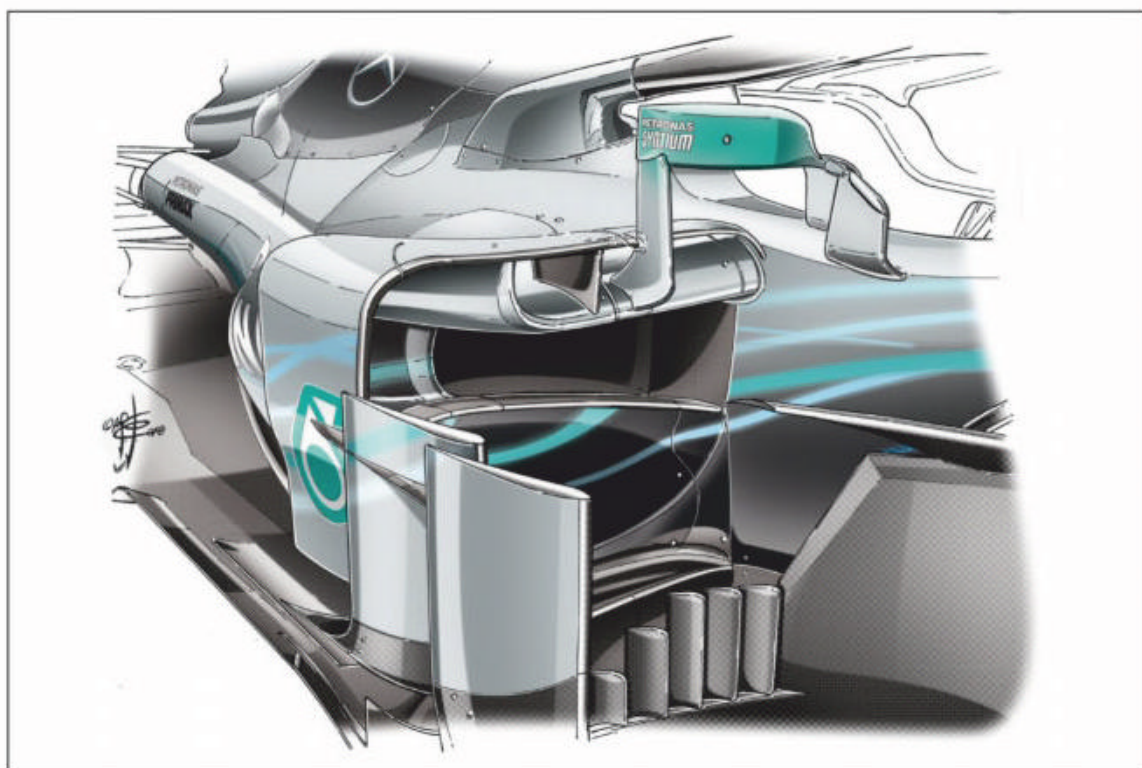


### WHEN IS A WHEEL NOT A WHEEL?

Buoyed by the success of their new rear wheel design, Mercedes looked to go a step further. Actively distributing heat from the entire wheel assembly was next on the agenda. Using a spacer to mount the locating pins to the wheel, it featured pockets of small holes which fed air from the rear hub to the centre of the wheel. Rotation served to draw out the air from the assembly to manage temperatures further. Mercedes dropped the solution before Austin, worried by a potential Ferrari protest. They deemed the concept to be a moveable aerodynamic device, despite the FIA giving it the all-clear.

# 2





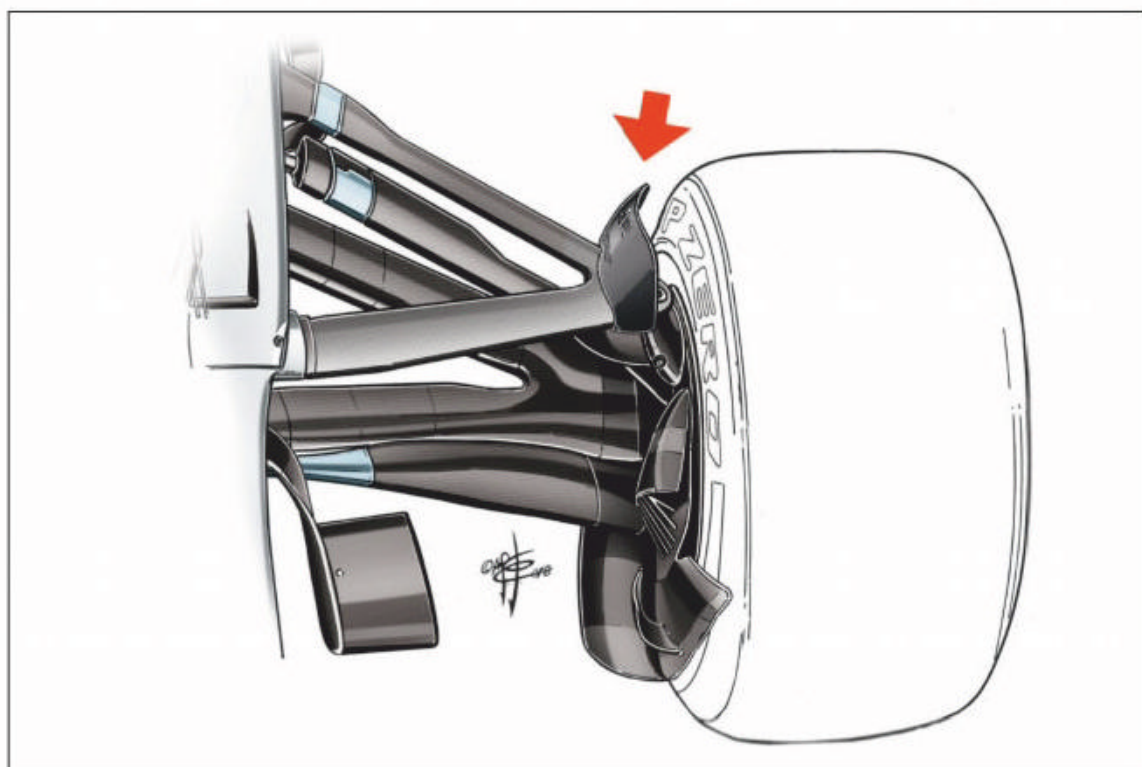
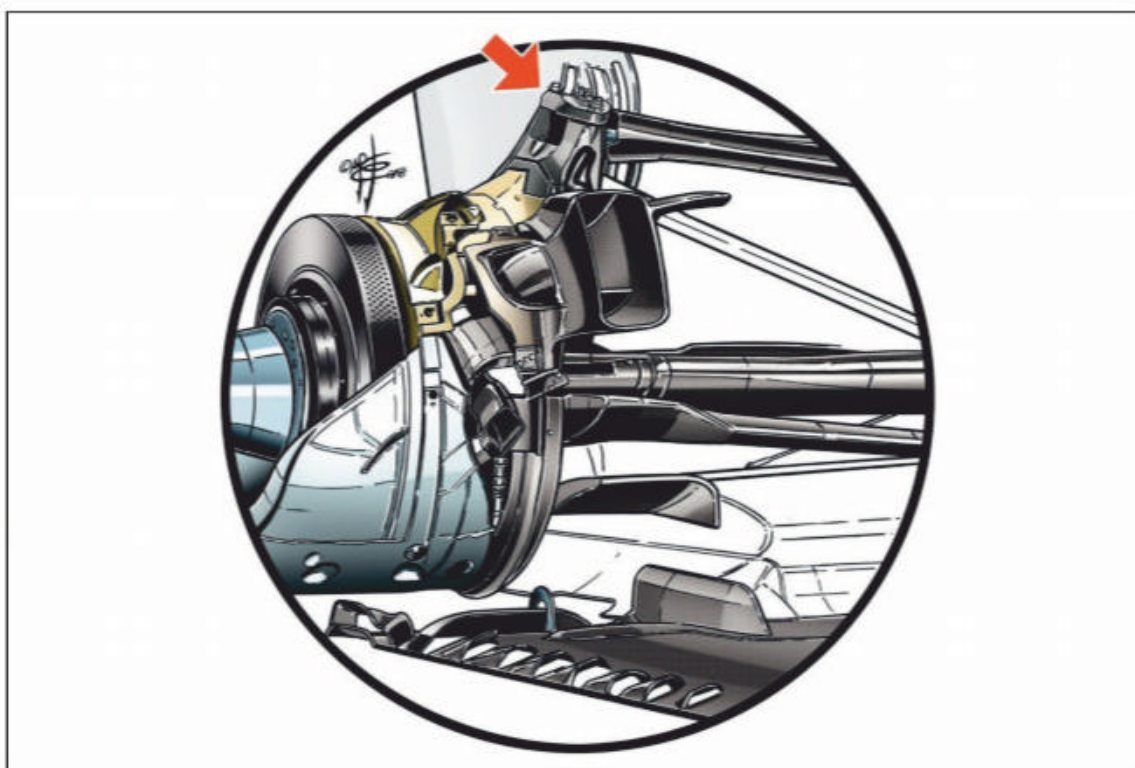
### MERCEDES TRIES SIZE ZERO

At the launch of the W09, Hamilton remarked that his new charge boasted the tightest bodywork he'd ever seen. Looking to optimise the aerodynamics even further from the previous iteration, the internal components were packaged as tightly as possible, resulting in a remarkably svelte design around the rear of the car. Mercedes designer John Owen confirmed the 2017 model was penned with flexibility in mind, and a year of experience with the current ruleset ensured the designers could streamline and focus on improving the airflow paths around the rear of the car.



### SUSPENSION BOOSTS AERO

Building on a concept used on the aggressive front suspension of the W08, in which the upper wishbone was mounted on a raised extension of the hub, Mercedes incorporated the solution to the rear of the W09 in the pursuit of aerodynamic gains. Mounting the wishbone higher gave more latitude for the team to utilise airflow at the rear of the car, and ensured the top surface of the diffuser would receive a cleaner supply of air from the trailing edge of the sidepods. This boosted the overall performance of the underbody and promoted a more stable rear end.



### THE LITTLE THINGS MATTER MOST

Instead of emerging for the start of the European season in Barcelona with a bucket of big upgrades, Mercedes' additions in Spain were testament to the philosophy of rolling out a succession of little updates – perfectly represented by the fin attached to the top of the front suspension wishbone. Working in tandem with the brake duct architecture, the fin drove clean airflow around the top of the tyre face, trimming and managing the resultant wake as the wheel rotated. This reduced the wake's impact on the aerodynamic components of the car downstream. 📌









A  
WORD  
WITH THE

# BOSS

**Toto Wolff** now ranks among Formula 1's most successful team principals. What's the secret behind keeping the Silver Arrows up front?

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS

PICTURES 

**Darkness has long since** descended upon the Abu Dhabi paddock as we wait patiently to see the top man at Mercedes. Ours is his final appointment of the day.

Up a flight of stairs, at the end of the corridor, is Toto Wolff's office. Hanging on the wall next

to his neatly arranged desk is a large black and white print. The image is of the start of the 1955 British Grand Prix, with a huge Aintree crowd looking upon Juan Manuel Fangio and Stirling Moss blasting into the lead. The triumphant Silver Arrows were victorious over Ferrari

that season, much as in the one just past. *Plus ça change*, as the saying goes.

The significance of Mercedes' past glories is not lost on the man who has just guided the modern day outfit to a record-equalling championship success, matching Jean Todt's ▶



achievements with Ferrari in the early 2000s.

“In 2013, if you would have given me the objective of winning five consecutive drivers’ and constructors’ titles, I would have thought you were mad,” says Wolff, reflecting on these years of dominance. “Every season we have done it, but it has been difficult for various reasons. This year, with the fierce competition from Ferrari, it has been very hard – and mentally draining at times.”

Mercedes started the season on the back foot. Strategic errors, difficulties getting their tyres to

operate in the right temperature window and the resulting speed deficit meant Mercedes lost ground to Ferrari early on in the title fight. Maranello had also unlocked a straightline speed advantage. Since the turbo hybrid era started in 2014 this had always been Mercedes’ strength, but Ferrari seemed to have out-innovated them in the engine bay. Although a few unforced errors crept in to Sebastian Vettel’s game, the momentum was with the red cars.

“At times this season, I thought it was going to be very difficult for us to win, since they seemed to have the better package,” says Wolff. “But it motivated us and we came back stronger.”

Austria was one of the lowest points of the season. After a front-row lock-out, the team suffered its first double-retirement in over two years. Valtteri Bottas retired with hydraulic failure, while team-mate Lewis Hamilton stopped later on with a fuel pressure problem. That was his first retirement since Malaysia ’16, ending 33 consecutive points finishes. And it wasn’t the only calamity of Mercedes’ race day.

Earlier in the race, chief strategist James Vowles took it upon himself to publicly apologise to Hamilton over the team radio because he was the only frontrunner not to pit when a Virtual Safety Car was triggered for Bottas’s retirement. At the time, before Lewis had to retire his car, this moment of strategic inertia appeared to have squandered potential victory.

“I’ve thrown away the win,” Vowles said to a disgruntled Lewis in front of millions of viewers on TV. “But we still believe in you. Keep cool.”

That evening, Wolff described the race in Austria as “brutal” and “one of the worst” in his career. How he dealt with the aftermath is revealing. He could have hung Vowles out to dry, and indeed there were many – outside the team – calling for a scapegoating, but Wolff’s management style is the opposite to that employed by other teams in F1.

“What James Vowles did in Austria, is only something you can do in a safe environment where you are not in fear that accepting blame or responsibility will cost you your job,” explains Wolff. “Having this situation is something that takes years of trust. The brutal honesty we have with each other is because we have a goal to win races and championships, and only transparency will allow us to uncover the deficits we have.

“It’s not only members of the team, but drivers who put their hands up too. At Spa, Lewis was the first to admit his opening lap could have been better, but this year we have made more

mistakes than he has – he has kept it together.”

As the season progressed, it was Vettel who was prone to making errors, either colliding with rivals, getting into trouble with the stewards, or sliding off the road. In contrast, Hamilton steered clear of trouble – not hitting the barriers once.

After clinching the championship in Mexico, Wolff said afterwards that of the four titles they had won together, this was the one in which Hamilton was at his best. Part of that is a result of the harmony inside the garage. The fierce rivalry he had with Nico Rosberg has gone, thanks to Bottas’s easy-going persona. Secondly, the relationship Hamilton has with his team boss has evolved. A deeper trust has developed between the pair, and Wolff has given his star driver the freedom to express himself outside the cockpit – quite a departure from the normally restricted principles of a large corporate entity.

“There is not an issue with that at all,” says Wolff. “First of all, we are empowered by Daimler to manage the team in a way we believe is right. It’s all about providing a framework for high performance, so everyone can perform at their best. Lewis needs to follow his dreams and those activities of his which are much more than a hobby. Probably the busiest time for him this year, with the launch of his own fashion collection, was just before Singapore and we didn’t see any lack of performance from him.”

While Hamilton has consistently extracted speed from a car that hasn’t always been the quickest on the grid, Mercedes, too, have never relented in their quest to develop the W09 to out-perform the opposition. The appearance of the rear-wheel rim spacers after the summer break, to help regulate temperatures and airflow, was an example of their determination to explore the boundaries of what is possible – even though they removed them for the American leg after Ferrari questioned the legality of the devices.

“When you set the benchmark you are running around with a target on your back, and everyone knows what you need to achieve – and pushing those boundaries in every area of performance is difficult,” continues Wolff. “But what I think played a bigger part in this team’s success is the ability to recover after the bad weekends. It’s seeing those moments as a way of improving that was the biggest strength of the team.”

After the summer break, the point where Mercedes were under the greatest pressure was the Belgian GP at Spa. Ferrari’s strength on the straights was mighty, and since the hallowed straights of Monza were next up,

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I will **not** **accept losing** this championship

The following Monday, where **we had really been defeated**, I felt the most unbelievable buzz

There was such a strength in the team. A feeling that **‘we will do this’** on the back of a bad performance

Toto Wolff







PICTURES: JERRY ANDRE; STEVE ETHERINGTON

**“WE ARE **EMPOWERED** BY DAIMLER TO MANAGE THE TEAM IN A WAY WE BELIEVE IS RIGHT. IT’S ALL ABOUT PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE, **SO EVERYONE CAN PERFORM AT THEIR BEST**”**

followed by the streets of Singapore – where Mercedes have traditionally struggled – it was a decisive moment in the championship. On the night of the Belgian race, which Vettel’s Ferrari had dominated, Wolff sent an impassioned, motivational email to the whole of the team.

“In it I said, ‘We are not surrendering. I will not accept losing this championship.’ The following Monday morning, where we had really been defeated, I felt the most unbelievable buzz. It was the biggest buzz I’d felt in the past six years,” says Wolff. “There was such a strength in

the team. A feeling that ‘we will do this’ on the back of a bad performance.

“What we realised is that we needed this formidable competitor [Ferrari] to make us better. They helped us uncover our deficiencies. In the days after Spa I couldn’t sleep and it ▶



## WHO'S KNOCKING AT WOLFF'S DOOR?

There is a rap on the door during our interview with the Mercedes head honcho, and a short pause while a driver peers into the room. Toto then asks: "How long are you staying?"

Metaphorically, Valtteri Bottas would like to know that answer from Toto. In the summer he was given a contract extension for one more season (with an option for another), while Hamilton's deal is confirmed until the end of 2020.

A few days after our interview, Esteban Ocon was in the Abu Dhabi paddock, wearing a crisp white Mercedes t-shirt, in his new role as test and reserve driver. After a season where he out-qualified his Force India team-mate Sergio Perez (but fell 13 points short of him in the standings), events conspired against Ocon and he heads into 2019 without a race seat.

Lawrence Stroll's takeover of Force India led to his departure, while links to other teams were compromised by his on-going relationship with Mercedes.

But while Wolff, a long-time Ocon supporter, could not find him a seat, he has brought him into the Mercedes fold, where he can learn what it takes to reach the next level in F1.

Ocon's presence in and around the garage next year will continue to put pressure on Bottas as Wolff considers who will partner Lewis Hamilton for '20.

"Esteban proved again that he deserves a seat, against Sergio [Perez] he had a very strong team-mate," says Wolff. "They were racing each other hard with the advantage on Esteban's side of qualifying. I've no doubt he'll be in F1, but whether with us or another team remains to be seen."

In contrast, it was a disappointing campaign for Bottas, who recorded no wins in the championship-winning car (compared to Hamilton's 11) even though he started brightly.

"There was bad luck in Bahrain, China and especially Baku [where he was leading before a puncture cost him the win]. If Valtteri had finished that race he would have been in the lead of the championship and that would have changed the dynamic – and his momentum," says Wolff.

"If you take away a driver's sole goal, to win a championship, it's clear that mentally it becomes very difficult. I'm still angry about the whole Baku incident because it was so unnecessary – Magnussen and Gasly driving into each other on the straight and costing Valtteri the win."

Bottas was annoyed after Hungary when he was dubbed a "wingman", but to avoid such labels he has to regularly beat Hamilton. And it's not just Ocon waiting in the wings. F2 champion George Russell is also backed by Mercedes and has been given a chance to prove himself in 2019 with Williams, and you can bet that more drivers will soon be rapping gently on Toto's door asking for a chance to prove themselves.



Wolff has presided over a record-equalling run of five consecutive title doubles and, once again, Mercedes rule the F1 world as they did in the picture hanging on his office wall (below)


wasn't just me. There was a large group of people not sleeping, as we were thinking over and over again, 'where can we improve, and how can we get ourselves out of this?' It's in these really bad days where we make the biggest steps."

The drive and competitive spirit to succeed worked. Hamilton drove supremely in Monza to outfox Ferrari, and his Singapore Q3 lap was one of the standouts of the season. The momentum continued into Russia, where Mercedes tightened their grip on the title, and where Wolff decided – controversially – to use team orders.

The decision to sacrifice Bottas to aid Hamilton's quest – with five races remaining in the championship – left a bitter taste with some, who likened it to Jean Todt's tactics at the height of his success with Ferrari.

"Our target was to win these two championships and we had to make an unpopular call because our competitor would have done the same," says Wolff, calmly but firmly.

"When you look back at the more successful winning streaks in Formula 1 with Ferrari, McLaren or Red Bull, at a certain stage you need to put all your force behind the driver that is mathematically better positioned to win the championship. This is the harsh reality, a decision that isn't popular, but one we had to take because it was necessary."

In Toto Wolff, Mercedes have a team leader who has created an environment that brings the best out of his employees. A culture of trust and openness, brought about by a collective competitive desire. He's personable and thoughtful, but will not shy away from difficult decisions. He's matched Todt's achievements and proved that when the competition is stronger, it motivates his team even more. That alone should strike fear into the opposition. Just like tableau displayed on Wolff's office wall, the Silver Arrows are beating Ferrari once more. 



**"WE WERE THINKING OVER AND OVER AGAIN, 'WHERE CAN WE IMPROVE, AND HOW CAN WE GET OURSELVES OUT OF THIS?' IT'S IN THESE REALLY BAD DAYS WHERE WE MAKE THE BIGGEST STEPS."**





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# 10 YEARS ON THE BULL RUN

Renault-bound **Daniel Ricciardo** opens up to *F1 Racing* about the highs and lows of life with Red Bull – the team that made him

PICTURES  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

WORDS STUART GODLING









# REGRETS

## – HE MIGHT HAVE A FEW.

But as Daniel Ricciardo draws back his lips in that famously broad 1,000-watt grin, it's clear that (in public at least) he won't be sharing any private misgivings about his departure from Red Bull. Moving teams is a significant point in any driver's career, but when that migration takes them away from a junior programme that's nurtured them virtually since the racing cradle, it's a *huge* turning point. In the past decade, only Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel have done it willingly.

As part of the Red Bull machine Daniel has done his growing up in public, evolving from wannabe to ferocious competitor, race winner and, arguably, Formula 1's pre-eminent overtaker. During that time, many of his Red Bull Junior Team peers have failed to make the grade – and have been ushered towards the exit mercilessly and without ceremony. It's been quite a journey, and *F1 Racing* has assembled several photographs to focus Daniel's attention on the key moments in his development. Not that he's taking this *entirely* seriously.

"Journey?" he giggles. "When I hear that I think of the song: *Don't stop belieeeeving, hold on to the feeeeling...*"

It's fair to say that Dan's racing career encompasses consistently more high notes than his singing voice, and the listening public can feel relieved that he's found a path that better suits his talents. But it's at moments such as this that you recall times past, during his first seasons in F1, when his frivolity sat uncomfortably with many of the sport's power brokers. Such lack of seriousness, they felt, was inherently career-limiting.

"Oh, but I *was* taken seriously," he counters. "Red Bull took me seriously. Outside, people who didn't know me would just see the smile, the laugh, and at that point I hadn't really had any big on-track battles that created statements. They knew I was a fast driver but probably without the killer instinct to run at the top. But that was another thing, deep down, that I knew I had. I had it all through my career, from karting onwards. For whatever reason, I think in F1 it took time to come out. When I first joined F1 I think I was probably a little overwhelmed."

That chimes with the thoughts of his friend and Red Bull Junior Team contemporary Brendon Hartley, with

**"PEOPLE KNEW I WAS A FAST DRIVER BUT PROBABLY WITHOUT THE KILLER INSTINCT TO RUN AT THE TOP. BUT THAT WAS ANOTHER THING, DEEP DOWN, THAT I KNEW I HAD"**

whom Daniel shared test and reserve driver duties for Red Bull and Toro Rosso in 2010 until Hartley was axed from the programme mid-season. Hartley describes that era as "A dark period where I lost confidence. I wasn't happy and I wasn't performing well."

Viewed in black and white, Daniel's results in the junior formulae were solid rather than spectacular, although his British Formula 3 title came before that series went into terminal decline. From trackside, though, he was always eye-catching – sufficiently so to spark the interest of Helmut Marko, Red Bull's driver advisor, mentor, and chief Junior Team axeman. It was Marko who signed Daniel and then spared him the chop as others – Jaime Alguersuari, Sébastien Buemi, Jean-Eric Vergne, *et al* – fell out of favour. Alongside Red Bull team principal Christian Horner and race engineer Simon Rennie, Marko is a key figure in Daniel's career.

"I guess he's been the day-one homey, as I say," Daniel reflects. "Back in Estoril in 2007, it was 2 November or 2 December – one or the other – he was there to help me sign that deal." In those days, Red Bull ran an annual ►



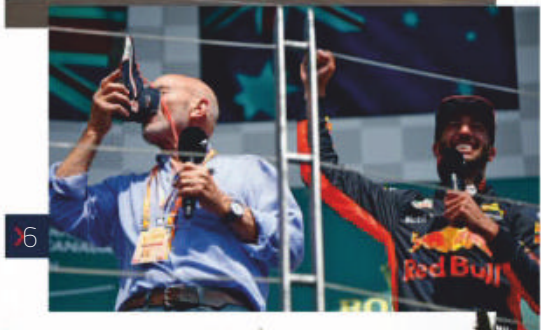
Dan looks back over images from his Red Bull F1 adventure, taking in seven wins, 22 podiums, two years at Toro Rosso and five with the top team











## DAN'S EPIC JOURNEY

### > 1 FIRST WIN, CANADA 2014

"I believed I could win in F1. People who didn't know me knew I was a fast driver but without the killer instinct to run at the front."

### > 2 2015: A TRICKY YEAR

"If this was easy then everyone would do it. It's not easy, I think dealing with the expectation of 2015, that was the toughest."

### > 3 HORNER HAD HIS CORNER

"Christian's always been trying to have my back. Especially this year, through the negotiation process, he was batting for me."

### > 4 DAN ON MAX

"Not taking anything away from Max – for sure he's fast and he's been driving well – it's not necessarily that he [had] bigger balls."

### > 5 MAKING THE MOVE IN BAKU '17

"When they saw me lock up for sure they were like he's going straight on. I kinda knew if I did lock a wheel, how to bring it back and still hold on."

### > 6 SIR PATRICK 'SHOEY'

"I thought I was going to do it once and probably everyone will think I am gross. I really, really did not think it would still be a thing."

### > 7 REDEMPTION: MONACO '18

"It was just massive. It felt like the whole of Monaco wanted me to win and on that day I had the biggest fan base in the world"

### > 8 2018: A CURSED CAR

"I don't really believe in any of that stuff. Much as it sucks to deal with at the time, it's going to make me a better person and a better racer."

assessment shoot-out at Estoril for drivers hoping to join the Junior Team. The top two or three would get Red Bull backing, a budget for the following season, and the installation of Marko as career shepherd.

"The big thing for him, and he still talks about it – which makes me smile – is, 'I remember that first day in Estoril you came sideways in braking.' He talks about my driving style with passion. I respect Helmut because he's a racer and, like it or not, he will always be transparent. Especially in the early days, that made me develop as a man. Maybe some harsh phone calls at the time didn't seem like they *were* helping, but for sure they did."

We take it for granted now that when Daniel graduated to Red Bull's senior team in '14, filling the vacancy left by a disgruntled Mark Webber, he saw off established favourite Sebastian Vettel – to the extent Vettel flounced off to Ferrari come season's end. But at the start of that year it was Daniel who was under pressure. He admits now that he knew the season would be "super important". Red Bull had won four title doubles on the bounce with Vettel, who was very much top dog at the team, but their first hybrid-era chassis was rather pedestrian and Renault's engine was well off the pace. It wasn't until Canada that Mercedes' dominance cracked: both cars suffered identical MGU-K failures that cost power and placed additional stress on the brakes, putting Lewis Hamilton out and leaving Nico Rosberg guarding a wafer-thin lead. Daniel sailed by on the penultimate lap.

"I use the word 'relief' because you believe you can do something, but until you do it you don't actually really *know* if you can," he says, resting a finger on the image of himself atop the podium. "I remember as soon as I passed Rosberg, I passed him on the last chicane, then I was going round Turns 1 and 2, and I remember thinking: 'I hope my hands still work, I hope I can still change gears, I hope I just don't freeze.'"

Although this, plus two other victories, boosted his standing within the F1 paddock and hastened Vettel's decision to depart for pastures new, Daniel's results trajectory didn't take the form of an uninterrupted upward curve. Over successive seasons Red Bull have continued to be sporadic in form, and the Renault power unit has formed but a small part of the malaise.

In '15 he didn't win a single race; in '16 he won just one – the team squandered another, in Monaco, by botching a pitstop – and in '17 Red Bull didn't have a good enough car to compete for podiums until the European season. Daniel's win in Baku, his only victory that year, came about through fortuitous circumstances. This season he started strongly with two opportunistic wins in China



and Monaco and thus considered himself an outside title contender, until his “cursed” RB14 began breaking down again with frustrating regularity. Suffice to say his Red Bull career hasn’t evolved as he expected.

“It’s funny,” he recalls. “In 2014 in Singapore I saw Jackie Stewart in the hotel and he said something to me that I didn’t understand at the time. It was along the lines of, ‘It might get harder now because you’ve achieved this success, this momentum, but it’s important to stay on top of it. You will get a lot of other things happening.’ He kind of suggested it’s even harder to stay at the top once you’ve got there. And he said if you ever want to talk, need some guidance, let me know. I obviously respected him coming up to me and saying that, but I didn’t get it at the time because I was with a big team, I’d won three races already and I thought, ‘This shit’s easy, what are you taking about? It’s only going to get easier. If I can do it against Seb, I can do it against anyone.’”

“I came to understand his point in 2015 though. It doesn’t always go your way. I think dealing with the expectation, that was the toughest. I thought I was going to be the world champion in 2015. That’s why, since then, I haven’t really liked the word ‘expectation’. Let’s be a bit more chilled about it and take things as they come.”

While the victories have been rarer than he’d prefer, Daniel has eked out a reputation as one of F1’s foremost exponents of the art of overtaking. Not breezing-by-with-DRS passing, but good old-fashioned feel for the nuances of grip in the braking zone. Few other drivers within F1 have the same uncanny grasp of the delicate equilibrium between tormented Pirelli and fractious asphalt.

“It comes with confidence,” he explains. “I guess I’ve always been a very sensitive driver. Braking is a lot of feeling. You have to feel the limit when you are about to lock, and modulate the brake. And having that feeling gave me confidence going late. I believe a lot of people saw me as a soft touch when I came to F1. I knew I wasn’t and I wanted to prove those people wrong. I wanted to stick the middle finger up at them and say ‘I can do this, and I can do it very well.’ I wanted to be recognised for it.”


“There were a lot of times growing up where I left a race on Sunday and I left with regrets, because I was like ‘If only I had gone for that move on lap five it would have changed my race.’ I hesitated a lot as a kid, but the few times when I did pull the trigger it always worked out for me. When I got to F1 with a top team I figured I’m not doing it justice if I don’t pull the trigger. I’d become comfortable with the fact that I might crash, but I’m better off crashing than not trying. Once I became comfortable with that it became a lot easier.”



**“A LOT OF PEOPLE SAW ME AS A SOFT TOUCH WHEN I CAME TO F1. I KNEW I WASN’T AND I WANTED TO PROVE THEM WRONG. I WANTED TO SAY ‘I CAN DO THIS, AND I CAN DO IT VERY WELL’”**

For all that this past season has been a tapestry of disappointment and unfulfilled promise, Daniel cannot expect an immediate upswing when he dons the yellow and black. When Renault acquired ‘Team Enstone’ at the end of ’15 they set a three-year target to return to winning form. That timescale has since been revised as the magnitude of the task became apparent, and Renault now view the major rule changes coming in 2021 as the key to joining the ‘big three’; for Daniel that could mean two seasons on the fringes, scrapping to get into Q3 and regarding podiums as a distant hope.

For some of Daniel’s rivals, that may be welcome. His signature podium celebration of quaffing champagne from a race boot proved such a hit in ’17 that the Formula One Group filed a trademark application for the term ‘Shoey’. But while celebrity guests such as Sir Patrick Stewart and Gerard Butler gamely stepped forward to ‘shoot the boot’, others – notably Valtteri Bottas in Austria in ’17 – eschewed the shoe.

“Yeah,” says Daniel with a rueful shake of the head, “what a pussy...” 





# { YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS }

## NICO HÜLKENBERG

The Renault racer looks back at missed chances with stoicism and regards Daniel Ricciardo's arrival at Renault with equanimity. But his composure frays when talk turns to spiders...

PICTURES  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

WORDS STUART COOLING

It's not often that *F1 Racing* specifically asks a photographer to shoot a subject from the waist up. Perhaps it's because we're in Brazil and the carnival atmosphere has proved infectious, or perhaps it's just the fact that it's the Thursday of a grand prix weekend that has moved Nico Hülkenberg to wear his civvies. But there is something about the jangly patterning of his trousers that simply will not do and, in much the same manner that Jeeves' policing of Bertie Wooster's wardrobe powered a thousand comic sub-plots in PG Wodehouse novels, we, as a responsible magazine, acting in utmost good faith, must spare our readers' eyes from this.

Aside from being a dedicated follower of some sort of fashion, Nico is the only driver on the current Formula 1 grid to have appeared on the BBC's venerable sports quiz *A Question Of Sport*. He is therefore ideally placed to face the often eccentric questions our readers pose – a task he approaches with good humour.

"These are the fan questions?" he asks with a twinkle in his eye as he regards the stack of cards placed before him. "They can be a little crazy, no?"

What is your  
biggest fear?

Severine Covens, UK

Nico Hülkenberg: Spiders.

*F1 Racing*: Is it the number of legs?

NH: It's just that they are disgusting little creatures... urrrggghhh.

*F1R*: Because they suck the vital fluids out of their prey?

NH: I just don't like them very much...

Against whom do  
you most enjoy going  
wheel to wheel?

Chris Sartor, UK



NH: [Long, long pause]. I would probably have to say Kevin Magnussen. I really enjoy going wheel to wheel with him. ►







## {YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS}

**Which team-mate do you feel you've learned the most from in your career?**

Michael Filletti, Malta

I was very young, obviously, and had to learn a lot. That was interesting and he was a really good teacher.

**Does it annoy you that junior drivers like Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc get the drives in the top teams when you cannot?**

Dave Hopkinson, UK

in my career it hasn't happened with any of the top teams. Early on I was close, they sniffed a little bit, but ultimately, for whatever reason, it didn't happen. Now I'm here with Renault trying to pull it off.

**F1R:** With that very healthy looking drink [one of the Renault catering team has arrived bearing a glass of effervescent green liquid] you probably should.

**NH:** This is a German *apfelschorle*, apple juice mixed with sparkling water. Like cider without the booze!

**NH:** It was probably Rubens Barrichello at Williams because it was my first year and his 19th. He was incredibly experienced and so good technically with feedback about the car. And

**NH:** It doesn't really annoy me. That's the way Formula 1 works. It's not always, and I don't want to say *fair*, but every career works out differently. It's to do with momentum and it's about being in the right place at the right moment and, unfortunately,

He may have won Le Mans in 2016, but for now, Nico is firmly focused on Formula 1



**Would you ever consider a double championship campaign of Formula 1 and WEC, just like Alonso?**

Matt Lloyd, UK

**NH:** Um, generally, at the moment, I think my answer would be no. But in a way sometimes it would be fun if the F1 world would be more open to us exploring other series a little bit, like I did in 2016 [when he won the Le Mans 24 Hours with Porsche]. Why not? I did it, obviously not the full championship but if there was something else out there that I was interested in...

**F1R:** Drivers used to do that. Jim Clark would race touring cars one weekend and a grand prix the next.

**NH:** Yeah, very different times – and there were far fewer grands prix during the season. Now it's so commercial and your team owns all the rights and you can't just go and do it, you need their approval. After what happened with Robert Kubica you wouldn't be allowed to do it now.

**Is there anyone in sports besides F1, that you particularly admire?**

Pedro Eca, Portugal

**NH:** Yeah, I'm a big tennis fan and there are a couple of guys I admire. I'm quite a big, I don't know if I can say 'a fan', but I like watching Andy Murray. He's a fighter. I know lately in his career he's gone through a tough time with the hip surgery, but I like his spirit and how he's always fighting. Similarly Rafa Nadal.

**Nico, do you think Renault could be better next year, and make it into the top three?**

Gisella Clavel, Mexico



**NH:** Yes, I do think that Renault can be better next year. Can we be in the top three? That's the challenge. It's going to be tough but we will try.





**Fernando Alonso is leaving F1 this year, what does that mean to you? Do you think the sport will be different without him?**  
Dominika Bojar, Poland

has to stop. No hard feelings there.

**F1R:** You could fill the vacancy with some amusing radio messages of your own.

**NH:** I'm trying, I'm trying all of the time to get to his level of sarcasm...

**Do you think that bringing back refuelling during a race, coupled with the current tyre regulations, would make room for more diverse strategies and ultimately better racing in Formula 1?**

Jasper van de Graaf, Netherlands

**NH:** No, I think that would just add another complication. If you have refuelling and more strategies it's just more complicated for the outside world to understand. I think we just need better cars – less aero-sensitive cars – maybe tyres that are a bit more robust and able to cope with overheating, and that should be it. I don't think we need to go back to refuelling.

**How are you feeling about having Daniel Ricciardo as your team-mate at Renault for next year?**

Jenny Rowan, UK

**NH:** I feel good about it. I think it will boost Renault. He will obviously bring his driving skills and his knowledge from Red Bull, and I think he will boost the whole team and be a motivation for everybody. I look forward to working with him.

**Which race has been your best race weekend since you started driving in F1, and why?**

Curtis Martin, UK

**NH:** Race, or race weekend?

**F1R:** It could be either, I suppose.

**NH:** So, for me, 2012 here in Brazil, and 2013 in Korea.

**F1R:** Korea. That was with Sauber?

**NH:** Yes, Sauber, and I kept Hamilton and Alonso behind me the whole race.

**F1R:** They were *furious* about that, weren't they?

**NH:** Yes, that was a nice one!

“  
I'M A BIG  
TENNIS FAN  
AND I LIKE  
WATCHING  
ANDY MURRAY.  
LATELY HE'S  
GONE THROUGH  
A TOUGH TIME  
WITH HIP  
SURGERY BUT  
I LIKE HIS  
SPIRIT  
”



**If our memories are triggered by our sense of smell, what is your most evocative Formula 1 memory?**  
Rick Bruck, USA

*[Nico's team-mate Carlos Sainz appears mid-question, makes an unprintable interjection, playfully slaps the peak of Nico's baseball cap downwards, then toddles off. Nico raises an eyebrow and gathers himself...]*

**F1R:** What comes into your head?

**NH:** Probably 2012, the race here in Brazil. Even though the outcome wasn't what we wanted, the way I managed that race, those conditions, that's still something that I look back to and think: 'Wow, respect to myself.'

**How frustrating has it been to not yet be on the podium in F1? Will you do anything special when you get there?**

Tom Jakovljevic, Australia

**NH:** Oh, nothing special when I get there. I'll just lift the trophy, celebrate, and feel good about it.

**F1R:** Perhaps you could take a lesson from Rubens. He used to do that little comedy stumble on the way up to the podium.

**NH:** Ha! No, I won't stumble. It's frustrating, but it's how my career has gone. There have been missed chances where it got taken away from me. I haven't been up there, and of course I'd like to. I'm still fighting and trying. 🏆



**YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS**

Want to get involved? For your chance to ask drivers questions, sign up at: [f1racing.com/global-fan-community](http://f1racing.com/global-fan-community)





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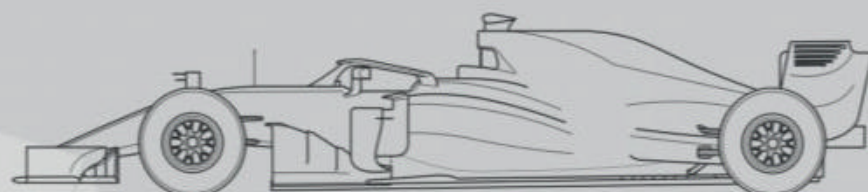
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*\*Image above shows 1:8 scale model*





After 18 years and 311 grand prix starts, Formula 1 said goodbye to two-time world champion Fernando Alonso in Abu Dhabi. We joined him for the farewell celebrations...

# #HASTA LUEGO (FOR NOW...)



PICTURES  **motorsport  
IMAGES**  
PHOTOGRAPHER STEVEN TEE



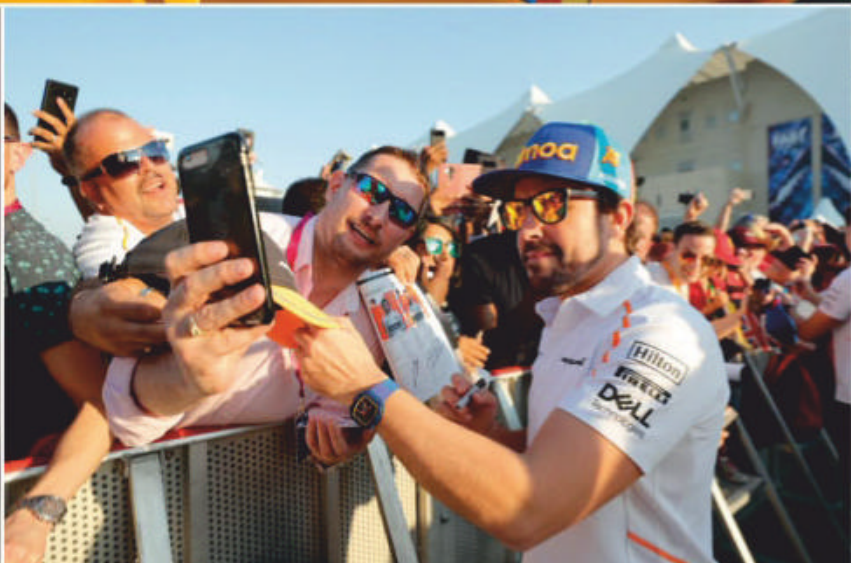






Fernando, his father José Luis and trainer Fabrizio Borra (centre) recreate a pose taken on his F1 debut in 2001

The McLaren garage was graced with royalty as motor racing fan King Juan Carlos of Spain dropped by to offer his support







Poised to drive out of the McLaren garage for the final time (above), and meeting the fans for an autograph session to sign memorabilia (below)



Alonso's sister Lorena came to Abu Dhabi with her husband and children to support her younger brother, complete with Kimoa caps







Reunited with former team boss and manager Flavio Briatore (above) and celebratory donuts on the finish straight at the end of the GP (top)







Respect from rivals including Jean Alesi (above) and Lewis Hamilton (left). Alonso leaves the sport as arguably one of the greatest of all time with two titles, 32 wins, 22 pole positions and 1,899 points





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# AWARDS 2018



## AS VOTED FOR BY YOU

It was billed as a battle between two heavyweights: Lewis Hamilton versus Sebastian Vettel. Only one man would become a five-time world champion in 2018 – but throughout the 21-race season, did Hamilton make the biggest impact on you, the fans, or did someone else impress? Here's how you voted in this year's *F1 Racing Awards*...

TEAM BOSS  
OF THE YEAR **86**

**91** ROOKIE  
OF THE YEAR

OVERTAKE OF  
THE YEAR **87**

**92** CAR  
OF THE YEAR

QUALIFIER  
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**93** DRIVE  
OF THE YEAR

START  
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**94** DRIVER  
OF THE YEAR

PITCREW  
OF THE YEAR **90**

**95** SPIRIT  
OF F1 AWARD



WORDS JAMES ROBERTS







# TEAM BOSS OF THE YEAR

Toto Wolff  
Mercedes

**There are those who say** that Toto Wolff's life became easier in 2017, after he'd installed Valtteri Bottas in the seat formerly occupied by Nico Rosberg, thereby producing harmony where once there had been rancour. No further need to bang his drivers' heads together and exhort them to play nice for the good of the team.

And yet – setting aside the business of how to keep his team at the top – Wolff has had to make tough decisions, few more weighty than at the 2018 Russian Grand Prix. There he made a call that rendered him the object of fierce scrutiny: with five races remaining, he ordered Bottas to cede victory to Lewis Hamilton. Bottas's cool acquiescence to the order made the act no less problematic.

Wolff later admitted he had struggled to sleep the previous night, wrestling with the permutations of the close championship battle between Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel, the morality of team orders, and the effect it would have on 'the show'. But he displayed leadership in his decision and justified his actions. When the sole goal of the Mercedes organisation – totalling hundreds of employees – is to win the drivers' and constructors' titles, then every critical decision must return to that purpose. A clear strategic action is the difference between winners and losers.

It was suggested that Wolff's actions mirrored those unpleasant scenes in Austria in '02, early on in the season when Rubens Barrichello was prevailed upon to make way for Michael Schumacher. Wolff's response was to point out that Jean Todt, then Ferrari team principal, was the most successful team boss in the history of modern motorsport, with numerous championship victories in rallying, sportscars and F1.

Is it any surprise, then, that Mercedes have managed to match Todt's achievement of five consecutive drivers' and constructors' championships? Four of those have been delivered by Hamilton, who, under Wolff's management, has been granted freedoms that have enabled him to grow as a person – and as an increasingly consistent and relentless competitor.

## HOW YOU VOTED

<b>Toto Wolff</b> Mercedes	53.2%
<b>Frédéric Vasseur</b> Sauber	12.7%
<b>Christian Horner</b> Red Bull	10.7%
<b>Guenther Steiner</b> Haas	8.7%
<b>Otmar Szafnauer</b> Force india	5.6%
<b>Other</b>	9.1%



PHOTOS: STEVE ETHERINGTON; GLENN DUNBAR; ANDY HONE; SIMON GALLOWAY



*"To be voted the team principal of the year, by the readers of F1 Racing, makes me very happy. I was privileged to have won this same award once before in 2014, so now I am a double champion! After such a momentous year, I feel very grateful to have won this."*





# OVERTAKE OF THE YEAR

Daniel Ricciardo  
On Valtteri Bottas in China  
on lap 45, for the lead



*"I had such momentum during the last part of the race, that I didn't even think about waiting for the straight and DRS. Prior to this I'd made some comments about Bottas not having a crack at Vettel in Bahrain, so a little bit of my pride and ego meant I had to back up what I said... I knew I had to go deep, but it was only after watching the onboard that I saw we got pretty close."*



**For the third consecutive season**, a Red Bull driver has won our award for 'overtake of the year'. Since this is not a team endowed with either a Mercedes or Ferrari engine, it is clearly the skill of the chase and bravery on the brakes that registers with our readers, rather than straight passes eased by DRS and/or engine grunt.

Daniel Ricciardo is one of the best overtakers in the business, unexpectedly pouncing on his prey with ruthless efficiency. At this year's Chinese GP he overtook title protagonists Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel – plus Valtteri Bottas – to claim the sixth victory of his career.

Despite a tyre advantage, Ricciardo still needed to make the moves stick and if you need an example of how it could have come undone, look no further than his team-mate Max Verstappen. Running the same strategy, he made an error trying to pass Hamilton and then crashed into Vettel.

Two of Ricciardo's moves in Shanghai were assisted by DRS, but the award-winning move was on Bottas for the lead. As they crested the rise and approached the tight right-hander at Turn 6, Ricciardo positioned his car to the inside. Bottas defended by moving across. Ricciardo watched the gap narrow, but kept his Red Bull between the Mercedes and the grass. He beautifully kept off the brakes for longer, didn't lock up, and neatly won the corner. Victory assured.

## HOW YOU VOTED

**Ricciardo on Bottas** in China on lap 45, for P1 at Turn 6

32.7%

**Hamilton on Alonso, Hülkenberg and Ocon**

in Bahrain on lap 5, for P6 on the start/finish line

29.0%

**Ricciardo on Verstappen** in Azerbaijan on lap 35, for P4 at Turn 1

16.2%

**Vettel on Hamilton** in Austria on lap 39, for P3 at Turn 3

11.3%

**Vettel on Bottas** in Britain on lap 47, for P1 at Turn 6

10.8%





# QUALIFIER OF THE YEAR

Lewis Hamilton  
Mercedes

As far as qualifying performance is concerned, there is no driver in the same league as Lewis Hamilton. This is the fifth consecutive season *F1 Racing* readers have voted the Mercedes racer the best qualifier of the year, and the statistics reveal just how dominant he is on a Saturday.

This year his career pole position tally reached 83, putting him 15 clear of Michael Schumacher, the next best in the all-time list. Lewis took 11 in 2018, nine more than team-mate Valtteri Bottas and six more than title rival Sebastian Vettel.

There were a few standout performances this season, such as finding half a second in the wet over the Ferraris at the Hungaroring, and an even bigger margin over them and Bottas in Singapore. If ever you needed evidence of a driving masterclass in action, it was Hamilton's flat-out precision between the walls along the floodlit streets of the Marina Bay circuit in September.

But it wasn't just the large gaps that were so impressive – it was the tiny margins, too. One fine example is the two runs Lewis made during the final session in Austin in October. On his first Q3 run, Vettel was just 0.088 seconds down on Hamilton over the 92-second lap. Hamilton's final lap was a 1m 32.237s, while Vettel stopped the clocks on 1m 32.298s. The difference between the pair? Just 0.061 seconds.

To sum up just how tight it had been between them, when Vettel heard how close he'd come to claiming pole himself, he responded over the team radio: "Oh for f\*\*\*'s sake." And that's what most drivers think when they're up against Lewis Hamilton in qualifying.



"A big thank you to the fans who voted for me, I really do appreciate the support and also from F1 Racing for the support you have given me all these years. For people to recognise my year and the amount of work that has gone into it is great and I'll continue to make qualifying on a Saturday exciting for the fans by constantly giving it my all."

## HOW YOU VOTED

Lewis Hamilton	68.3%
Max Verstappen	6.1%
Charles Leclerc	5.5%
Sebastian Vettel	4.7%
Kimi Räikkönen	4.1%
Other	11.3%





# START OF THE YEAR

Max Verstappen  
19th to 15th at the Russian GP



**A good start is always amplified** at Sochi because the distance from pole position to the apex of Turn 2 – the first braking zone – is 844 metres. That makes the run off the line the longest on the calendar (the next longest is the 800 metres to Turn 1 in Mexico). As the pack of cars head off the line, those further back can benefit from the draft being created and can use the tow to their advantage. At this year's Russian Grand Prix, Max Verstappen managed to move up four places before Turn 3.

He had been forced to start 19th because of grid penalties caused by engine component changes on his Red Bull, plus a further penalty for a yellow-flag infringement in qualifying when he failed to slow for Sergey Sirotkin's spun Williams. Off the line Max had to swerve past a slow-starting Pierre Gasly directly in front, while out-accelerating team-mate Daniel Ricciardo. On the run to Turn 2 Max picked up a tow from Fernando Alonso, who closed the door on the Red Bull and caused Verstappen to momentarily lift.

Choosing the outside, and avoiding what would have been inevitable contact at the apex (which, in the event, involved Ricciardo), Max outbraked Alonso for 16th then took 15th when the second McLaren of Stoffel Vandoorne ran wide. Verstappen despatched both Williams before the end of the first tour, so by lap two he was up to 11th – and he passed five more cars by lap six, making up a total of 13 places from his original starting position.

*"The start in Russia was a bit hectic, I think it was Pierre Gasly who stalled in front of me so I had to go around him. I remember there was a lot of dust on the run to Turn 2 as cars were going off-line left and right in front of me. It was really critical to get through that first lap with positions gained, but also without any damage."*



## HOW YOU VOTED

**Max Verstappen** P19 to P15 (Russia)  
**Charles Leclerc** P8 to P5 (France)  
**Kimi Räikkönen** P4 to P2 (Austria)  
**Sebastian Vettel** P2 to P1 (Belgium)  
**Max Verstappen** P7 to P5 (Hungary)

32.9%  
 28.6%  
 20.0%  
 12.6%  
 5.9%





# PITCREW OF THE YEAR

## Mercedes

*"We're extremely honoured to have been given this award and, as chief mechanic, I'm delighted to accept it on behalf of the pitcrew. We practise up to 60 times over a race weekend, and during the European season we'll practise up to 25 times at the factory, too. We try to be consistent; we don't want to be the fastest, we don't want a 1.8s stop and then a 3s stop - we're aiming for 2.3s every time, to be consistent and to eliminate mistakes."*

**Matt Deane, chief mechanic**



### HOW YOU VOTED

Mercedes	37.7%
Red Bull	30.3%
Williams	13.5%
Ferrari	8.8%
Sauber	3.0%
Other	6.7%

**There is often a view,** particularly from the factory side of an F1 team, that all the frontline – the drivers and mechanics at a race – can do is screw it up. Work done back at base maximises a car's performance and during a race weekend it can all be undone by a driver hitting a wall or a mechanic failing to attach a wheel properly in a pitstop. Therefore one aspect of a successful F1 team's focus during a grand prix weekend is to increase efficiency and avoid errors.

In 2018 Mercedes weren't regularly at the head of the fastest pitstop times, but on the other hand neither were they prone to mistakes. Still, there was a standout moment of brilliance from the Mercedes crew, performed under pressure in China, which helped Valtteri Bottas take the lead. Bottas was running second and pitted to change tyres to fend off Max Verstappen, who had already pitted and was attempting an undercut on fresher rubber. Bottas's crew knew he would need an swift

turnaround if he was going to gain on Sebastian Vettel ahead of him, as well as defending from Verstappen. They pulled it off: Bottas kept ahead of Verstappen and when Vettel stopped a lap later he emerged behind the Mercedes. Bottas's pitstop was then the joint fastest of the year, at 2.15 seconds. That record that stood until Hockenheim, when Ferrari achieved a 2.09s. Red Bull managed 2.08s in Abu Dhabi, but the fastest of the year went to Ferrari's 1.97s in Brazil.

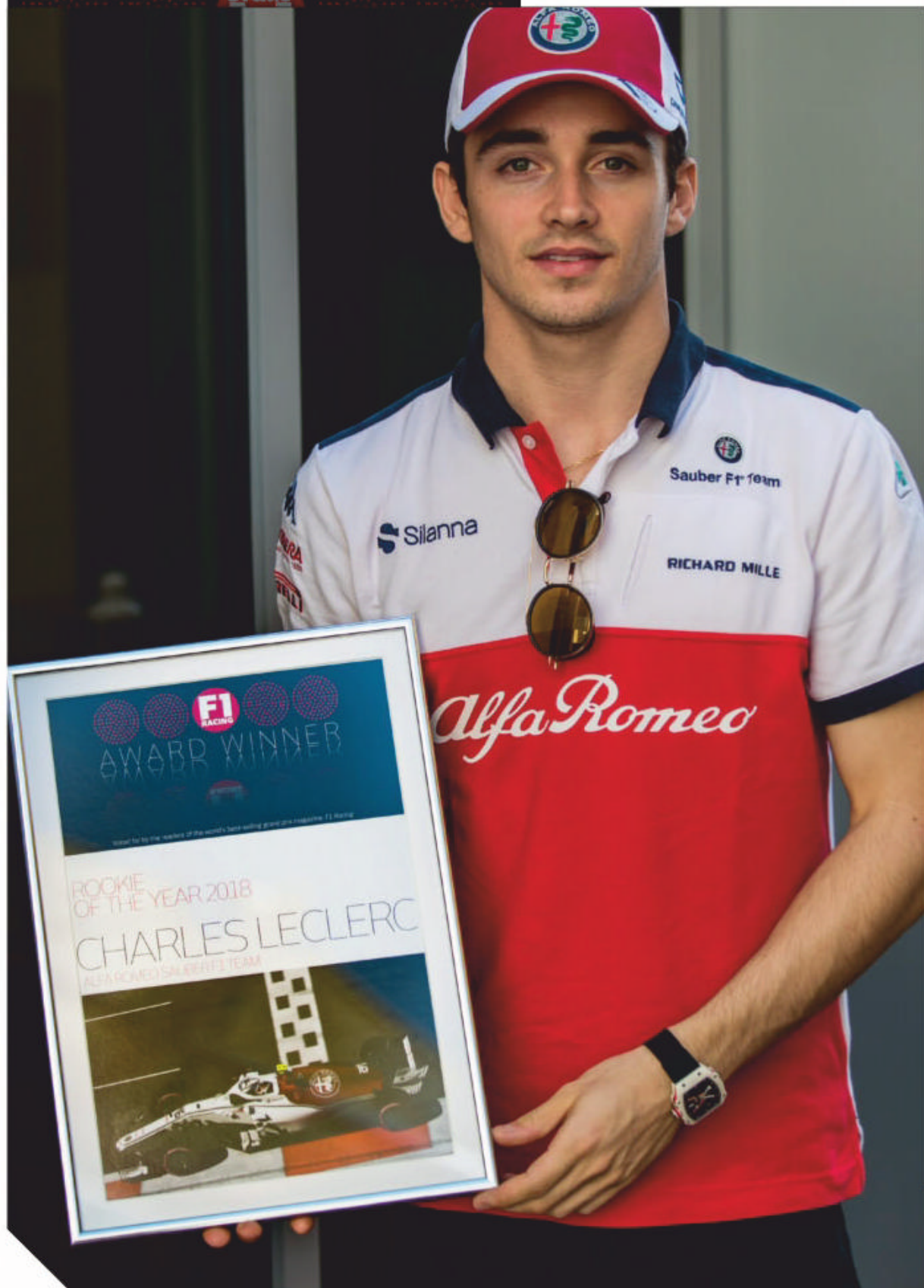
PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; ANDY HONE; SAM BLOXHAM; JAMES GASPEROTTI





# ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Charles Leclerc  
Sauber



**It's a sign of how effectively** he has turned things around that Charles Leclerc's patchy first few outings in Formula 1 have been so quickly forgotten. A solid start at the Australian Grand Prix presaged a strategically flawed race in Bahrain, caused by Leclerc locking up and flat-spotting his front tyre. Then at the next race in Shanghai, he spun his Sauber into the gravel – an unforced error that broke his floor.

Feeling that he was trying too hard, Leclerc took a step back, changed focus, and returned to action as a much more assured character. He hauled his Sauber to sixth at the next race in Azerbaijan, keeping calm when so many were running off the road (or into the wall) and claiming Sauber's highest finish for three years.

He shunted messily into Brendon Hartley in Monaco, but that was caused by a brake disc failure, and scored points in Spain, Canada, France – where he qualified an impressive eighth – and Austria. There had been speculation that Ferrari would draft Leclerc into a red seat to replace a lacklustre Kimi Räikkönen immediately after the Canadian GP, but in the event Maranello decided to hold off until 2019.

Although Leclerc has only a year's experience in F1, few expect him to wilt under the pressure at Ferrari in '19 because he has shown such great resolve in times of personal crisis. He won the Formula 2 title while grieving his father's death, and his route to F1 has been shaped by talent and results rather than riches.

The fact Leclerc collected the highest percentage of 'rookie of the year' votes since Max Verstappen scooped the award in 2015 is probably a good indicator of the glittering career that lies ahead of him.

## HOW YOU VOTED

Charles Leclerc  
Sergey Sirotkin

95.2%  
4.8%

*"It's great to be recognised by the readers of F1 Racing magazine as 2018's rookie of the year. It's been a good season for me as I've developed so much as a driver. Obviously the first few grands prix of the year were difficult, but after that it's been a smooth ride and it's with huge honour that I've accepted this award."*







# CAR OF THE YEAR

## Mercedes W09

The fight for the 2018 world championship was as much about the development war between Ferrari and Mercedes as the personal duel between drivers Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel on track.

Ferrari started the season strongly while Mercedes were still getting to grips with the W09's tendency to overwork its rear tyres. By mid-season, the Ferrari SF71H was also leading in straightline speed; the long-held dominance of the Mercedes engine was now in doubt as Ferrari unleashed more

horses. By the time of the Belgian Grand Prix, it looked as if Mercedes had been left behind.

But that was to underestimate the engineers at both chassis HQ in Brackley and the developers at Brixworth's High Performance Powertrains. The W09 came back as Ferrari faltered after the summer break. New rear wheel rims, designed to improve airflow around the tyres and manage heat transfer, were an example of Mercedes' continuing development push. The wheel rims were significant enough that Ferrari held discussions with the FIA,

and Mercedes chose not to run them in Austin and Mexico, meaning their race performance was less emphatic.

There were small weaknesses on the title-winning car, as demonstrated by hydraulic leaks brought on by hitting kerbs in Austria and Germany. But since Mercedes had been pushed harder than they have been in any of the previous four campaigns, such cracks were inevitable. If the W09 wasn't the quickest car at the start of 2018, it certainly was by season's end.



*"Compared with previous cars, the W09 didn't have as much of a margin over the opposition. Development-wise we have been pushed by Ferrari from start to finish, so it's been one of our cars that has developed most over the course of the season. Overall it's been a challenging season, so it's even more satisfying to win the championship and awards like this one."*

**Andrew Shovlin, trackside engineering director (far right of picture)**







# DRIVE OF THE YEAR

Max Verstappen  
19th to fifth at the Russian GP

**Earning the status of 'Driver of the Day'** isn't a bad way to celebrate your 21st birthday. It's even more impressive when you didn't make the podium but finished a distant fifth. Max Verstappen earned this accolade with his performance at the Russian Grand Prix, where accumulated engine penalties, plus a grid drop for a yellow flag infraction, consigned him to 19th on the grid.

After a superb start, in which he made up five positions by Turn 3, Verstappen pressed on and had made it to 11th by lap two. Having started on the soft tyre – actually the hardest of the compound choices on offer – he was able to extend the length of his first stint, inheriting the lead when those ahead of him pitted. After his stop, he emerged in fifth and charged to the flag. It was all the more impressive when you consider his Red Bull team-mate didn't make the same progress. Dan Ricciardo made his one and only stop on lap 39, when his team changed his front wing: a piece of it had broken off on the opening lap, hindering his performance.

You narrowly voted Verstappen's Russia drive ahead of Lewis Hamilton's German GP win, where he too charged through the field. This begs the question: reversed grids, anyone?

*"It's great to have support from the fans as it motivates me to do well, so thank you. After the good start in the race, we took the opposite strategy to the other cars and that seemed to work well. It was just a shame that I had to make a pitstop, as otherwise I think I could have won the race. I was actually quite surprised we went through the traffic so quickly, but the car balance was very good on the day."*



## HOW YOU VOTED

Max Verstappen (Russia)	10.7%
Lewis Hamilton (Germany)	10.1%
Lewis Hamilton (Italy)	8.7%
Lewis Hamilton (Singapore)	7.3%
Daniel Ricciardo (Monaco)	6.9%
Other	56.3%







# DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Lewis Hamilton  
Mercedes



**Which statement is more accurate?** Did Lewis Hamilton *win* the 2018 drivers' championship? Or did Sebastian Vettel *lose* it? You could argue that Vettel's costly mistakes (as many as nine can be listed) such as the lock-up in Baku, sliding off the road in Germany, and hitting Valtteri Bottas on the first lap at Paul Ricard, meant Lewis Hamilton's fifth drivers' title was pretty much served up to him on a platter.

But this would overlook Hamilton's brilliant driving across the season. During such a high-pressure campaign, perhaps the most impressive aspect is that Hamilton made no serious errors. The last time he made contact with a wall was in Brazil the previous year.

Even during early off-days in China and Azerbaijan, when he was struggling with his tyres, Hamilton still picked up a significant number of points. Then there were the days when he was unstoppable, scoring an unlikely win at Monza after going wheel to wheel with his title rival; staying on the road and winning in treacherous conditions in Germany; and dominating races in Singapore and Japan.

Toto Wolff said of Hamilton's fourth title win with Mercedes that this year he had driven better than ever. Michael Schumacher's championship record and win tally are now in Lewis's sights, and it's no stretch of the imagination to think he could even eclipse them.

*"The driver of the year award is important – and thank you again to the fans who voted for me – because I guess you want to be that one all-round driver and there are a lot of others to choose from who have all had good or great individual performances this season. From my point of view my season has been higher than ever before, so I appreciate the recognition."*

## HOW YOU VOTED

<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	54.3%
<b>Charles Leclerc</b>	9.8%
<b>Max Verstappen</b>	7.9%
<b>Kimi Räikkönen</b>	7.0%
<b>Sebastian Vettel</b>	4.6%
<b>Other</b>	16.4%







# SPIRIT OF F1 AWARD

ESTEBAN OCON  
Force India



*"The way that I've approached this year has always been positive – there is much worse in life that can happen. Being here, in this fantastic world in Formula 1, racing with the best cars, the best drivers in the world is a great place to be – and so I can't complain. I've met some good people over the years and I'm enjoying the work I'm doing. My goal is still to be world champion one day, so I won't give up on anything I do."*

**The final award that F1 Racing makes** every year cannot be measured by statistics or speed. The Spirit of F1 Award is for that one individual who has shown great courage in trying circumstances, someone who continues to strive to achieve their best in a sporting manner against the odds.

Both Valtteri Bottas and Daniel Ricciardo were strong contenders for the award this year. Bottas came so close to victory in Baku and could easily have led the championship in the early part of the season, but increasingly had to yield to his team-

mate and was dubbed a 'wingman'. Ricciardo, too, continued to smile despite his car's appalling reliability. In Mexico it was enough for him to label his RB14 "cursed".

This year, Esteban Ocon is the recipient of our special award. Coming from an ordinary background, he has fought his way to the top by proving his natural talent at every turn, earning his place in manufacturer support programmes, first at Lotus then Mercedes. By mid-season, as Force India went into administration, Lawrence Stroll stepped

in to buy the team. His son, Lance Stroll, then became a shoo-in for Ocon's seat in 2019 alongside Sergio Pérez. Ocon embarked upon the final races of 2018 knowing his options were limited. On social media, Ocon quelled a tirade of Stroll abuse from fans, calling on them to show respect and pointing out that, despite their different backgrounds, he and Stroll were united in their passion for driving.

Esteban deserves praise and recognition for his grace and courage, all regardless of what happened on track in Brazil. 🏆





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# NIGEL ROEBUCK'S FORMULA ONE HEROES

## RICHIE GINTHER

AN  
UNEXPECTED  
BLAST OF

**sound can stop you in your tracks**, and it was just so with me at the Goodwood Festival of Speed a few years ago: as I arrived early one morning, the silence was splintered by a raucous Honda V12. Instantly I thought of Richie Ginther.

While not a great driver, Ginther was yet capable of greatness on a given day: there have been many like this – Bonnier, Ireland, Bandini, Beltoise, Alesi, Trulli – and it is a blessing of the sport that most had their day in the sun, when a grand prix victory came their way.

Ginther's only win – and Honda's first – was in the 1965 Mexican Grand Prix, the final race of the 1.5-litre Formula 1.

If increasingly competitive, the transverse-engined car rarely finished, but at high altitude it thrived, and Richie led all the way.

"My car was just flat better than anything else. When Gurney began to catch me, there was no problem – I had a fuel mixture control, and ran at full rich to protect the engine: if I needed to, I could switch anywhere up to full lean – and the difference was 300 revs on the straightaway..."

Ginther had arrived in F1 five years earlier, one of those Californians – like Phil Hill and Dan Gurney – invited to join Ferrari after sports car success at home. He had got into racing after meeting Hill, who became a close friend. When Phil needed a companion for the '53 Pan-American Road Race, Richie was asked.

Their car, a 4.1-litre Ferrari coupe, Ginther remembered as having only two shortcomings: "It didn't stop, and had a tremendous aversion to going around a corner..." That said, they made the leader board before plunging down a steep drop, end over end, and the following year returned to finish second.

After racing such as Austin-Healeys and Porsches, Ginther began driving Ferraris for John van Neumann, and that led to an offer from the factory team in 1960. Swiftly he established himself as a superb test driver, with acute mechanical sympathy.

"I never could bring myself to abuse an engine," he told me, "and that was something the Ferrari guys found hard to understand! At Reims in '61, I knew the engine was going to blow and came in – and, hey, I was leading! Of course they insisted I go back out – half a lap later the engine was wrecked..."



"They believed I had some sixth sense, and that went back to a test day at Monza in 1960. I came in early, because I sensed something was wrong, but they got agitated, fired it up again, revved the hell out of it, and said I should go back out. I said no, so they put Willy Mairesse in.

"Before he went out, I said, 'That thing is going to blow in 12 laps – and, would you believe, it did! Not on the sixth, not on the 20th, but the 12th – I'd just plucked a figure out of the air, but after that they thought I was magic!'"

As Ginther could attest, back then you drove for Ferrari for love: "As I recall, I got \$400 a month – for F1 *and* sports cars..."

Although he remembered Ferrari well, Richie didn't leave under happy circumstances, having accepted a BRM offer for '62. "Enzo was so angry that I wasn't even allowed to go round the factory to say good-bye – happily, all the mechanics came to my apartment."

On his day Ginther was as quick as anyone: at the '62 Oulton Park Gold Cup, for example, he beat Jim Clark to pole position, having never seen the circuit before. The following year, Richie finished equal second (with BRM team-mate Graham Hill) to Clark in the world championship.

Although Ginther won a grand prix, the performance for which he is most remembered came early in his F1 career, at Monaco in '61. This was Stirling Moss's

PICTURES



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**Top left: Monaco, 1960, driving the Ferrari Dino 246P**

**Middle left: Monaco '61 was considered to be Richie's best performance. He finished just 3.6 seconds behind Stirling Moss, in a race Moss thought was *his* best**

**Bottom left: Ginther celebrates his only GP win, at Mexico in the last race of the '65 season**

**Above: The '65 French GP was one of many races where Ginther found the Honda RA272 too fragile**

greatest day: in Rob Walker's underpowered Lotus 18, he fought off constant pressure from Ferrari, most of it from Richie, driving in only his fourth GP.

"Without any doubt," he said, "that was my best drive – I was on the limit all the way, and I think Stirling was, too. About 20 laps from the end I got a pit board, saying, 'Ginther Give All' – Jesus, what the hell did they think I was giving?!" The statistics of that race beggar belief. Qualifying first and second, Moss and Ginther had lapped in 1m 39.1s and 1m 39.3s, but in the race – 100 laps back then – their *average* lap time was 1m 39.5s, and jointly they left the record at 1m 36.3s.

"Stirling says that was his best race, and mine took only three seconds longer, so you can see why I think it my best, too! Any time you did well against him, you knew you'd really done something – by a long way he was the greatest I ever saw."

For what was to be his final year, '67, Ginther joined Gurney's Eagle team, and Dan's plans for the pair included both F1 and Indianapolis. At the Brands Hatch Race of Champions in March, Gurney won, while Ginther – faithful to his creed – shut down his

ailing Weslake V12, when lying second.


As it turned out, this had been his last race. "At Monaco I didn't qualify – OK, I had a lot of problems, but I was really upset because I loved the place, and had usually done well there.

"Then we went to Indianapolis. I'd never been there before, but got along fine, fifth or sixth in practice, but then, on the first qualifying day, I was in the car, and suddenly I called Gurney over and said, 'Dan, I just don't want to start this race'. He just said, 'OK,

fine, I understand', and I was moved by that – I thought his understanding was remarkable. Back at my motel, going through my mind was the thought that, hey, if I don't want to start this race...I'm a race driver, I should... And I decided to get out before I couldn't – if I kept going with

that mentality, I was going to hurt myself. I never raced again."

When I saw Ginther at Hockenheim in '77, he told me that, having sold not only a successful company but also his house, he was now living in a motorhome. "Kind of old to be dropping out, huh?" he grinned. "But I'm happy, I'm free, and whether it's the mountains or the beach, I can change my view every day..."

At only 59, he died of a heart attack in 1989. 

**THAT THING IS GOING TO BLOW IN 12 LAPS – AND, WOULD YOU BELIEVE, IT DID! NOT ON THE SIXTH, NOT ON THE 20TH, BUT THE 12TH – AFTER THAT THEY THOUGHT I WAS MAGIC!**









# RON'S

THE HISTORY OF MCLAREN

# ERA

CHAPTER 3: 1981-1987

# BEGINS

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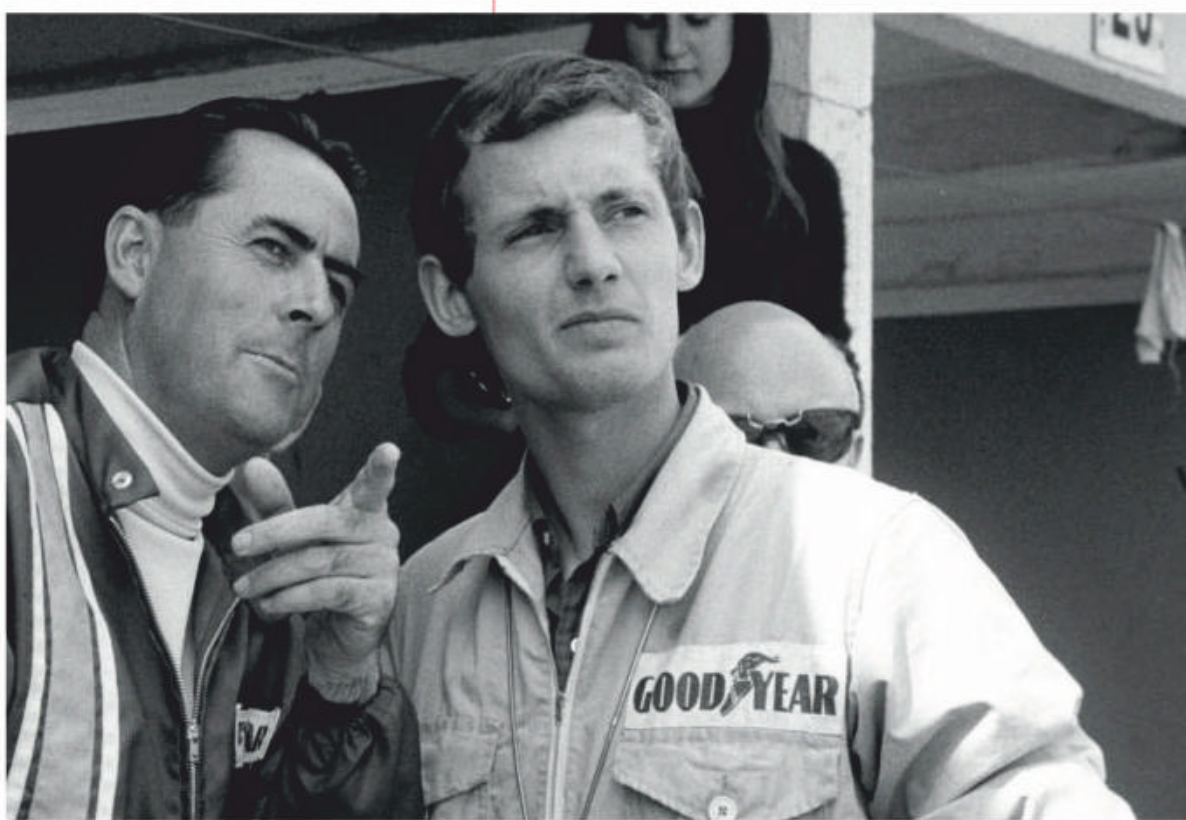
After the grease and grit of their earlier years, McLaren began to take on a slick new look. Under meticulous management by Ron Dennis, attention to detail and merciless ambition would reap seriously lucrative rewards



# RON DENNIS

**wasn't the first team owner to care about how** his racing cars and team transporter were presented. But back in 1971, when he was taking the first steps towards controlling his own destiny, his fledgling team immediately stood out from a motley crowd that tended towards earthy dishevelment.

Professional sheen was rarely a priority in Formula 2, but it mattered to this oddly pedantic 23-year old. Having served an apprenticeship as an F1 mechanic for Cooper and Brabham, Dennis was ingrained in the grime of motorsport, yet his single-minded ambition drove him towards cleaner air – not to mention cleaner hands. It was all too easy to scoff at 'Team Briefcase', but we know who would ultimately have the last sneer.



**Ron Dennis started out in Formula 1 as a junior mechanic to Jochen Rindt at Cooper, before following Rindt to Jack Brabham's team in '68**

Ron's first eight years at McLaren's tiller established clean air between what had come before, from Bruce the creator's grit-under-the-fingernails foundations to Teddy Mayer's traditional, successful but ultimately limited setup of the 1970s. From being world champion technical pioneers, McLaren had slipped down the ranks into the midfield (and often worse) by the turn of the new decade. Now they followed where once they led, seemingly incapable of harnessing the monumental forces of ground-effect aerodynamics in the manner of Lotus, Williams and Ligier.

But Dennis would change the tempo, albeit with his own particular – and sometimes jarring – melody. Under this proud, prickly, meticulous and downright strange leader, McLaren changed the game. But just like his arch-rival Frank Williams, Dennis had the armoury to build his empire only because of the tough lessons learned through a near-decade of toil. He'd more than paid his dues.

From the Ron we'd come to know, Rondel Racing was a cringe-inducing moniker for his first attempt at world domination. An ungainly mash-up of his first name and co-founder Neil Trundle's surname, Rondel were a far more sophisticated setup than they sounded. Within little more than a year, the team were running as many as six cars in Formula 2, for an illustrious roll-call of talent, including Graham Hill, Tim Schenken, Bob Wollek, Carlos Reutemann and Jody Scheckter. But it wasn't to last. Rondel lost their footing on the giant slick created by the 1973 global oil crisis when their main backer, Motul, made for the exit. Dennis was absolutely devastated.

How he built a new team, first under the more clinical banner of Project 3, and then, finally, Project 4, only proved his ambition – to anyone who cared to pay attention. John Hogan at Marlboro certainly did. They had become friends through Schenken, and the Australian-born money man had brokered the Motul deal before he joined tobacco giant Philip Morris. A few years down the line, Hogan had watched nervously as McLaren began to crumble under Mayer.

Project 4 had raised their own game by building the cars for BMW's M1 Procar grand prix support series, in which F1 aces were drafted in for lucrative one-make fun. It was Procar that convinced Dennis his company was ready for Formula 1 – but how?

At first, Dennis had hoped to convince Marlboro to quit McLaren for Project 4, but the tobacco giant had invested too much for too long to consider that. Instead, with Hogan backing Ron's cause, a merger was brokered in 1980. Mayer had little choice but to accept it, but within two years he'd resigned his shares to start afresh in Indycars. Dennis, with help from Marlboro, bought him out to take sole control of McLaren.

No one had done more than Mayer to keep Bruce's dream alive during the '70s – but the American was now out of step. In contrast, Dennis was syncopated in ►



Dennis with the Barnard-designed MP4 at the 1981 season-ending Las Vegas Grand Prix





With Wattie at the wheel, Barnard's groundbreaking carbon-fibre MP4 started to deliver on its promise, winning the 1981 British GP at Silverstone



**“LAUDA REALISED F1 WAS UNFINISHED BUSINESS AND ACCEPTED DENNIS’S OFFER TO TEST AN MP4 IN SECRET. TO RON’S SURPRISE, NIKI HAD SAID YES TO A RETURN BY THE END OF THE DAY”**

perfect harmony with a branch of motor racing on the cusp of a technical and commercial explosion.

His first astute move, and one of monumental importance to F1's evolution, was to recruit a firebrand designer whose stunning Chaparral 2K ground-effect creation had just won the Indy 500. John Barnard was himself a former McLaren man, having worked under Gordon Coppuck on the fantastically successful M23. Now he was back, but this time it was different. This time he was a partner. Apprenticeship well and truly served, Barnard joined forces with Dennis to lead McLaren into uncharted territory. What a combination: combustible, certainly, but also potent with promise.

From the start, the new McLaren International – now based in premises in Ron's home town of Woking – were bold. Carbon fibre was already being used in racing car design, not least on the Procar BMW M1 rear wing. But to build a whole chassis out of the material wasn't feasible. Or was it? After a vain search for a company that had the capability and

vision, Barnard followed up on a nod from promising American engineer Steve Nichols, who had served his apprenticeship at the Hercules aerospace company in the States. It was a suitably Herculean challenge. The 1981 MP4 – or Marlboro (not McLaren) Project 4 in long-hand – was the groundbreaking result. “It had better win,” was the reaction from Hogan, understandably nervous at the risk. He'd stuck his neck out for Dennis – but the payback would come.

Not immediately though. Barnard's brand of precision engineering and total control over his design was new to F1, but by mid-season the promise was starting to be realised. John Watson, the Northern Irishman who'd joined McLaren in '79, finished third in Spain, second in France – and first at Silverstone, after an attrition-blighted British Grand Prix. Whatever the circumstances, this was vindication: McLaren's first win for more than three and a half years. For 'Wattie' it ended a five-year drought.

The merits of Barnard's MP4 series would soon become obvious, while fears that tubs would shatter to pieces in crashes quickly receded. In terms of driver line-ups, Dennis and Barnard always resented Marlboro's insistence on hiring Andrea de Cesaris – or 'de Crasheris' as he was cruelly nicknamed – for '81, but in Watson they had a man they could trust. He would win on three more occasions for McLaren over the following two seasons, earning a reputation as a pass master – coming from 17th on the grid to win on the streets of Detroit in '82, and from 22nd at Long Beach the following season. He was a contender, too, for the wide-open '82 world title, but still wasn't considered the top-line, game-changing talent that Dennis and Barnard felt they deserved.

Project 4 had run Niki Lauda in Procar. Now Ron hatched a plan to convince the great champion to make an F1 comeback, following his abrupt retirement mid-season while driving for Bernie Ecclestone's Brabham in '79. Lauda had his eponymous airline to run, but deep down realised F1 was still unfinished business and accepted Dennis's offer to test an MP4 in secret at Donington Park. To Ron's surprise, Niki had said yes to a return by the end of the day – and at the third race of '82, at Long Beach, he won. Lauda would stay at McLaren for four years, winning his third world title in '84, McLaren International's first. James Hunt's '76 crown for the 'old' McLaren seemed an age ago.

Dennis has since praised the Austrian for the lengths he would go to in his preparation, both physically and mentally. In his near-three years away, F1 had moved on, as it always does, and Lauda was characteristically honest enough to recognise it. So he adapted. First time around, specifically during his Ferrari days, Lauda was the benchmark (nine pole positions in '75). Not this time (zero in '84). But he was still fast enough to put that razor-sharp racing brain to the best possible use. Beating new team-mate Alain Prost to the '84 title,





by just half a point, arguably made his third title his greatest, given just how good Prost would prove to be.

The Frenchman had driven for McLaren under Mayer in '79, having won his seat with a stunning test performance while still racing in Formula 3. But he quit the team in disgust in 1980, telling Wattie he'd never return after Mayer blamed him for a frightening shunt in the brittle M30 at Watkins Glen when the suspension broke. Renault, with their powerful turbo engine, were calling – so Marlboro let Prost go, although they maintained personal support with an eye on the future.

Prost should have notched up at least one world title at Renault, but chronic engine unreliability and disharmony in the ranks eventually made life unbearable. Dennis was angered by Mayer's failure to keep Prost in '80 and, much as he had with Lauda, made it his mission to re-sign Alain. When the split with Renault came, it was acrimonious and the manufacturer ended up paying Prost's salary for his first season at McLaren in '84. Dennis enjoyed that.

**(Left to right) Barnard, Lauda, Dennis and Tyler Alexander, before Lauda's victory, on his third outing with McLaren, at Long Beach in '82**

Lauda wasn't too happy when Alain signed up – a move that ended Watson's five-year stint at the team. Niki knew the little bloke with the crooked nose and mop of curly hair was too fast for him – but it says much for both that they became friends during that remarkable season. This is when Barnard's revolution truly kicked in, thanks largely to adding the final jigsaw piece.

Barnard and Dennis had known from the start that a turbo engine was essential. For a controlling perfectionist like Barnard, off-the-peg was never going to be enough. He wanted a bespoke design, made within his own strict parameters. That brief led Dennis to Porsche, who were embarking on their super-successful 956 sportscar campaign. The Stuttgart giants had no interest in paying for an expensive F1 programme, but they were happy to supply McLaren with a customer V6. So who would pay? The badging deal with Techniques d'Avant Garde, the umbrella for a group of companies with a wide range of specialities, would be one of the most important of Dennis's life. ▶









**“BETWEEN THEM, THEY WON 12 OF 1984’S 16 RACES – PROST SEVEN, LAUDA FIVE. BUT DESPITE PROST’S EDGE ON PACE, LAUDA’S SHEER BLOODY-MINDEDNESS MADE THE DIFFERENCE. JUST.”**



Prost joined McLaren in 1984 and had the edge on Lauda in terms of speed. But in 1988, he would meet his nemesis...

After a rocky start mid-83, Prost, Lauda, the MP4/2 and its TAG turbo were ready to fly for '84. Between them, they won 12 of the season's 16 races – Prost seven, Lauda five. But despite Prost's edge on pace, Lauda's sheer bloody-mindedness made the difference. Just. That half-point, born from rain stopping play early in Monaco (a race Prost won), would make it the closest title battle ever.

But come '85, there would be no stopping the man who had come to be known as The Professor, such was his methodical approach to winning races. Just like Juan Manuel Fangio and Jackie Stewart before him, Prost instinctively understood what it took to win grands prix at the slowest possible speed, taking as little out of his machinery as possible. His detractors have used it against him, but what they tend to forget is that he was also blindingly fast. Prost was the complete package in the mid-80s, and in '85 he finally claimed the world championship his talent deserved. Grand prix racing had been born in France, yet incredibly Alain Prost was the first – and still the *only* – Frenchman to win the Formula 1 driver's title.

Prost sealed his '85 title with two races to spare, such was his relentlessness. Five victories didn't scream 'dominance', but he'd learnt from his experience with Lauda and drove for the title. He did much the same to win a consecutive crown in '86, famously snatching it from under the noses of squabbling Williams drivers Nelson Piquet and Nigel Mansell in a dramatic climax at Adelaide. Those who said Prost and McLaren were undeserving of this one were not only missing the point – they were downright wrong.

But as Barnard took leave of McLaren to move to Ferrari – such were their characters, he and Dennis could never have sustained their partnership – a rising threat to Prost's supremacy was about to further unsettle McLaren's serenity. During Prost's double title years, Ayrton Senna racked up an incredible 16 pole positions for Team Lotus. That only four victories were bagged says a great deal more about that team's shortcomings than Senna's own. He needed a move to make good on his monumental potential.

In '87 Williams dominated when turbo engine supplier Honda hit their stride. Dennis, as ever, was wise to the power shift. Who needed customer Porsches when he could have factory Honda V6s? For the following season, the Japanese motor giant abandoned Williams in favour of McLaren, and with them followed the menacing force of nature in the yellow helmet. Ayrton Senna was coming – and Prost's life would never be the same again. **1**



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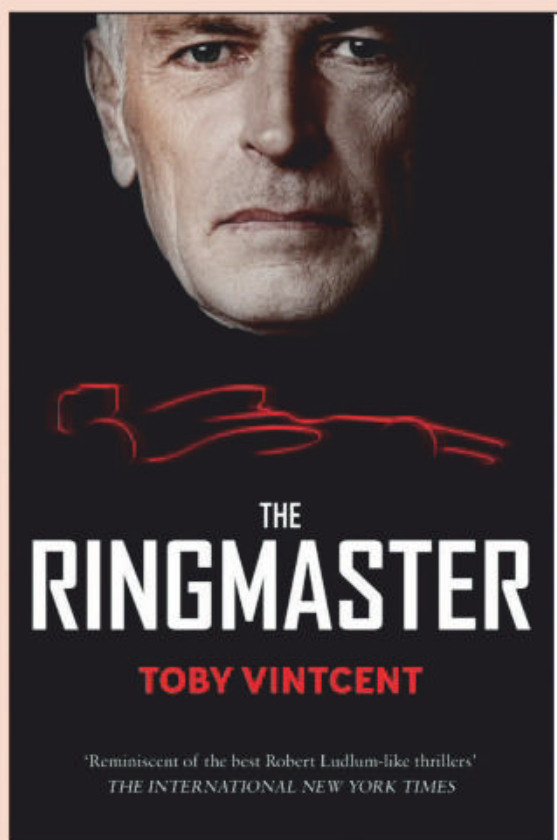
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Some of our readers disagree with orthodox views of the Verstappen/Ocon incident and its aftermath

### Give Max a break

I smiled to myself when the fallout from the Max Verstappen and Esteban Ocon saga in the weighing room in Brazil created as much publicity as the actual incident.

Max justifiably felt he had been deprived of another win, and so was naturally angry. But to blame it on immaturity is ridiculous. I remember Michael Schumacher, then aged 29 and a double world champion, almost running down the Spa pitlane to try to land a punch on David Coulthard following their 1998 Belgian GP crash.

So give Max Verstappen a break. These guys risk their lives every race weekend and are allowed to blow their top occasionally.

**Chris Eadie**

*By email*

### Now You See Me

Not only was the decision by the stewards wrong in Brazil, but so were the majority of so-called “experts” in putting the blame at Esteban Ocon’s door for the coming together with Max Verstappen.

How many times is it mentioned by commentators about a driver being quicker than the leader because he’s just pitted for fresh rubber? This circumstance arose because Ocon had just been lapped. Any driver has the right to unlap themselves, as was pointed out to Max by Lewis Hamilton.

Looking at it as a racing incident, it was Max who caused the collision by turning in early. Ocon couldn’t just make his car disappear.

**Jeff Burn**

*By email*

### Unrestricted formula

If Formula 1 is to have a long-term future and keep existing teams, or get new ones involved, it has to realise that any moves which go against restricting spending alter a basic fundamental of the sport. The essence of competition and lack of money does not always prevent shock results from occurring.

We need to be all about the sport and technological excellence. Any moves designed to dilute what we have, whether via gimmicks of mixed-up grids or sprint races, go against our true spirit.

F1 should therefore scrap all talk of resource agreements and shared parts. This is not a spec formula. Instead, let’s focus on distributing prize revenue equitably, scrap historic bonus payments, and

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award money to teams based on championship finishes only.

**Michael Brierley**

*Stalybridge, UK*

### American dream

I enjoyed Peter Windsor’s piece about Mario Andretti’s pole lap at Watkins Glen in 1968 [*F1 Racing*, November 2018].

I was with the Ferrari team that year. After Mario set his time, Franco Gozzi [Ferrari’s press man] just smiled, spread his hands wide and shrugged, “Of course, this is America...”

**Karl Ludvigsen**

*By email*

### Banish the blues

If you want to make F1 a bit more unpredictable and exciting, eliminate the blue flag. When lapping a slower driver, make the faster car work for it.

It looks spectacular when somebody like Verstappen comes through the field. And if tyres have to work harder, there may be more pitstops. More overtaking makes for more exciting racing.

**Mike Kuster**

*By email*

## THIS MONTH

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## NEXT MONTH\*



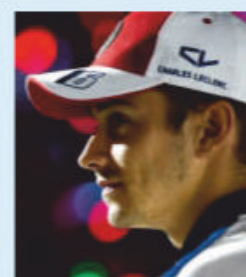
**THE LAW OF MAX**

Is it a help or hindrance?



**OH NO, BREXIT...**

The consequences for Formula 1



**LECLERC**

Charles answers your questions

ON SALE

# JAN 24

- > Johnny Herbert: Britain's lost world champion?
- > Now That Was A Car: The Lotus 100T
- > Pictures of the year: the best images from 2018
- > Part four of the history of McLaren: Senna vs Prost





# RACE DEBRIEF ABU DHABI GP

FINISHING STRAIGHT

## LEWIS SIGNS OFF WITH A FLOURISH

Five-time champion Lewis Hamilton underlined his dominance by ending the year with a crushing win – as the sun also set on Fernando Alonso's F1 career

PICTURES **motorsport**  
IMAGES



**The final act** of the 2018 season was a fitting tribute. After the chequered flag had fallen on the Abu Dhabi GP, the three multiple world champions in the field came to the finish line and orchestrated a series of donuts. They sent tyre smoke pouring into the grandstands packed with cheering fans.

Race winner Lewis Hamilton led the pirouettes, accompanied by second-placed Sebastian Vettel and the departing Fernando Alonso. As has so often been the case during his second era at struggling McLaren, Alonso was nowhere near the podium. He finished 11th, picking up three five-second time penalties for cutting the chicanes on his final laps...

Although the margin of victory at the end was just 2.5s, it was a comfortable win for Hamilton, his 11th of the season and the 73rd of his career. Perhaps more remarkably – since the current points system was introduced in 2010 – Hamilton has become the first driver to break the 400 points barrier, finishing the year on 408 points.

### QUALIFYING

This was Mercedes fifth consecutive front-row lock-out of this circuit and Hamilton's 83rd pole. When he stepped out of the cockpit, he revealed that he was struggling to keep his emotions in check, knowing

this would be the last time he'd get the chance to nail a qualifying hot lap in the W09.

"I'm probably the closest to this car than I've been with any car," said Hamilton. "It's been a real privilege to work with it this year, and I'm just grateful to my team for putting it together."

Hamilton's margin over his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas was 0.162s, with Vettel a further 0.169s back. The margin summed up the latter part of Vettel's season, though he qualified ahead of his team-mate Kimi Räikkönen and the two Red Bulls.

Once again, one of the stars of qualifying was Charles Leclerc, who managed to haul his Sauber into the top ten, along with Romain Grosjean, Nico Hülkenberg and Esteban Ocon.

Q2 was strategically the most interesting session as the top two teams, Mercedes and Ferrari, set their fastest laps according to plan on

**“DRS ENABLED OCON TO RETURN THE FAVOUR IMMEDIATELY ON THE NEXT STRAIGHT, BUT VERSTAPPEN DIDN'T GIVE UP AND MADE THE MOVE STICK – WITH A FORCEFUL, ELBOWS-OUT SHOVE ON THE SEVENTH LAP”**

the ultrasoft tyre. In contrast, Max Verstappen had to make a final run on hypersofts to nail a spot in Q3, which locked him in to starting on the fast-but-fragile compound. Ricciardo, on the cusp of elimination in the other Red Bull, switched to the hypersoft but backed out of his lap when informed he was safe and would start on the ultra.

Further back, there was hope Alonso could achieve something special in qualifying on his final F1 outing. He did manage to get his McLaren out of Q1 at least, giving him a 21-0 qualifying whitewash over team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne in 2018.

### RACE

As the sun began its descent, Hamilton led Bottas away from the line and the Ferraris followed in formation. But Verstappen was slow away in his Red Bull as his engine slipped erroneously into a failsafe mode, and he dropped four places.

As the pack blasted down the main straight, Leclerc got a run past Ricciardo for fifth as they approached the braking zone for the Turn 8/9 chicane. Immediately behind, Hülkenberg dived late on the brakes to snatch seventh from Grosjean.

Both cars went wide but Grosjean *just* managed to avoid taking to the run-off, giving him a sniff of the inside line for Turn 9, the right-handed part of the chicane. Believing Grosjean to have run up the escape road, Hülkenberg turned in and was tipped into a roll as his right-rear ran up and over





Hamilton led from the start (above), and used the VSC period caused by Raikkonen's stoppage (left) to claim his 11th win of the season (below)



Grosjean's front-left. Coming to rest upside down against the barriers, Nico had to stay in his Renault until the marshals had put it back on its wheels.

After four laps behind the Safety Car, racing resumed with Hamilton ahead of Bottas, Vettel, Räikkönen and Leclerc. Behind them, Verstappen was eager to make up lost time and was robust in his pass on his Brazilian GP nemesis Ocon at Turn 7.

DRS enabled Ocon to return the favour immediately on the next straight, but Verstappen didn't give up and made the move stick – with a forceful, elbows-out shove on the seventh lap.

Up ahead, Leclerc passed Räikkönen for fourth, an extraordinary moment that was explained when Räikkönen ground to a halt on the start/finish line with no electrical power. There was no choice but for race control to activate the Virtual Safety Car to recover the stricken Ferrari.

When a VSC coincides with the pit window, drivers can pit and lose less time relative to their rivals – but this seemed rather too early. Still, Mercedes acted quickly to bring Hamilton in, leaving

Bottas out, and none of the other frontrunners took the bait. Eight laps later Ferrari signalled Vettel in, but their hopes of undercutting Bottas were scuppered when Vettel's right-rear wheel was slow to disengage. Bottas stopped one lap later and emerged still ahead.

The stops left Ricciardo leading on the road and, since his lap times were still competitive, Red Bull left him out until lap 33. When he finally pitted he rejoined in fifth, behind Hamilton, Bottas, Vettel and Verstappen. A lap later, Bottas suffered a lock-up into Turn 5 and lost second to Vettel.

Three laps later Verstappen made another of his signature moves and muscled his way past Bottas at the Turn 11/12 chicane, banging wheels and inflicting a slow puncture that consigned Bottas to fifth (behind Ricciardo) at the finish.

With three laps to go, Alonso was 11th and just 3.3s off Kevin Magnussen's Haas. Instructed to "go and get a point", Alonso's blunt response was "I've already got 1,800." 1,899 to be exact, which was fewer than his ability merited.



1st	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	1h 39m 40.382s
2nd	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	+2.581s
3rd	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	+12.706s
4th	Daniel Ricciardo	Red Bull	+15.379s
5th	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	+47.957s
6th	Carlos Sainz	Renault	+72.548s
7th	Charles Leclerc	Sauber	+90.789s
8th	Sergio Pérez	Force India	+91.275s
9th	Romain Grosjean	Haas	+1 lap
10th	Kevin Magnussen	Haas	+1 lap
11th	Fernando Alonso	McLaren	+1 lap**
12th	Brendon Hartley	Toro Rosso	+1 lap
13th	Lance Stroll	Williams	+1 lap
14th	Stoffel Vandoorne	McLaren	+1 lap
15th	Sergey Sirotkin	Williams	+1 lap

Retirements

Pierre Gasly	Toro Rosso	46 laps - engine
Esteban Ocon	Force India	44 laps - oil leak*
Marcus Ericsson	Sauber	24 laps - mechanical issue
Kimi Räikkönen	Ferrari	6 laps - electrics
Nico Hülkenberg	Renault	0 laps - accident

\*includes 5s penalty \*\* includes three 5s penalties - for leaving track & gaining an advantage

FASTEST LAP



Sebastian Vettel  
1min 40.867s on lap 54

POLE POSITION



Lewis Hamilton  
1min 34.794s

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



Hypersoft Ultrasoft Supersoft Inter Wet

CLIMATE



AIR TEMP



TRACK TEMP



DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1	Hamilton	408pts	11	Alonso	50pts
2	Vettel	320pts	12	Ocon	49pts
3	Räikkönen	251pts	13	Leclerc	39pts
4	Verstappen	249pts	14	Grosjean	37pts
5	Bottas	247pts	15	Gasly	29pts
6	Ricciardo	170pts	16	Vandoorne	12pts
7	Hülkenberg	69pts	17	Ericsson	9pts
8	Pérez	62pts	18	Stroll	6pts
9	Magnussen	56pts	19	Hartley	4pts
10	Sainz	53pts	20	Sirotkin	1pt



PICTURES: SAM BLOXHAM; ANDY HONE; GLENN DUNBAR; ZAK MAUGER; MANUEL GORIA; MARK SUTTON





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One of the highlights of the exhibition is the *F1 Racing* display which features many of the current cars on the Formula 1 grid. Last

year we displayed the title-winning Mercedes and hosted a Q&A with 1992 world champion Nigel Mansell.

This popular event takes place at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, from 10-13 January, although the first two days are strictly trade only. Doors open at 09.00 and the shows runs to 18.00 each day. Tickets are available in advance as well as on the door.

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Formula 1's official podcast launched in the summer and has been gaining traction with the addition of more big names from the sport. The concept is simple: former *F1 Racing* staffer and contributor Tom Clarkson sits down with a current (or former) driver, team principal or other key figure and talks about their life away from the track.

The key to its success is the time afforded to Clarkson by the subjects. The first episode is 55 minutes of Lewis Hamilton opening up about his time at school and – genuinely – the frozen sperm of his dog.

Recent episodes have included interviews with Robert Kubica, Gerhard Berger and Stefano Domenicali. If you have a regular, long commute, this is a perfect way to pass the time.



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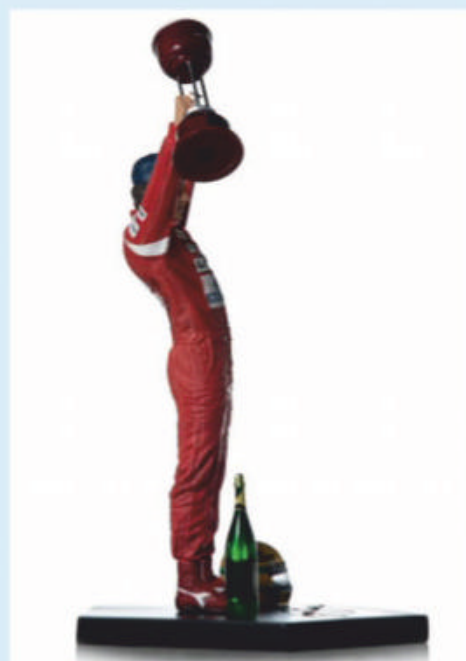
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Thirty years on from Ayrton Senna's first title triumph at Suzuka, fans of the legendary McLaren driver can now purchase a commemorative figurine of him winning in Japan in 1988. A portion of the revenue of the limited edition, 1:10 scale item goes to the Ayrton Senna charitable institute.

The figurine is just one of a huge host of collectables that can be purchased online from the official Ayrton Senna shop. There are accessories (mugs, stationary and keyrings) and a clothing range, including caps, jackets and t-shirts, and even race suits.

But if you prefer models, options include replica helmets or model cars from the various teams he drove for in F1, such as Lotus, McLaren and Williams. Posters, DVDs, watches, books – anything you can think of associated with Ayrton Senna – are all available online at [ayrtonsennashop.com](http://ayrtonsennashop.com).







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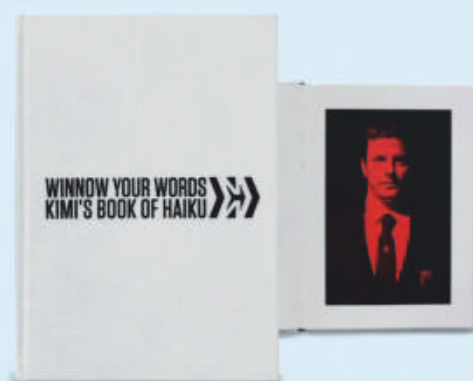
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Due to high demand, Kimi Räikkönen's book of short poetry has been reprinted. *Winnow Your Words: Kimi's Book of Haiku* originally appeared in October and became an instant success, with thousands of fans clamouring for copies.

With sales out-selling demand, a new print run of books has become available with all proceeds going to the Grand Prix Trust, a non-commercial charitable organisation that comes to the aid of F1 personnel in times of need.

The book is a collection of Kimi's quotes turned into a Haiku, a traditional form of Japanese poetry. It is a celebration of Räikkönen's precise, succinct way of speaking, so features no unnecessary words and is full of humour.

#### THE UNKNOWN KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN

**Author** Kari Hotakainen

**Price** £20

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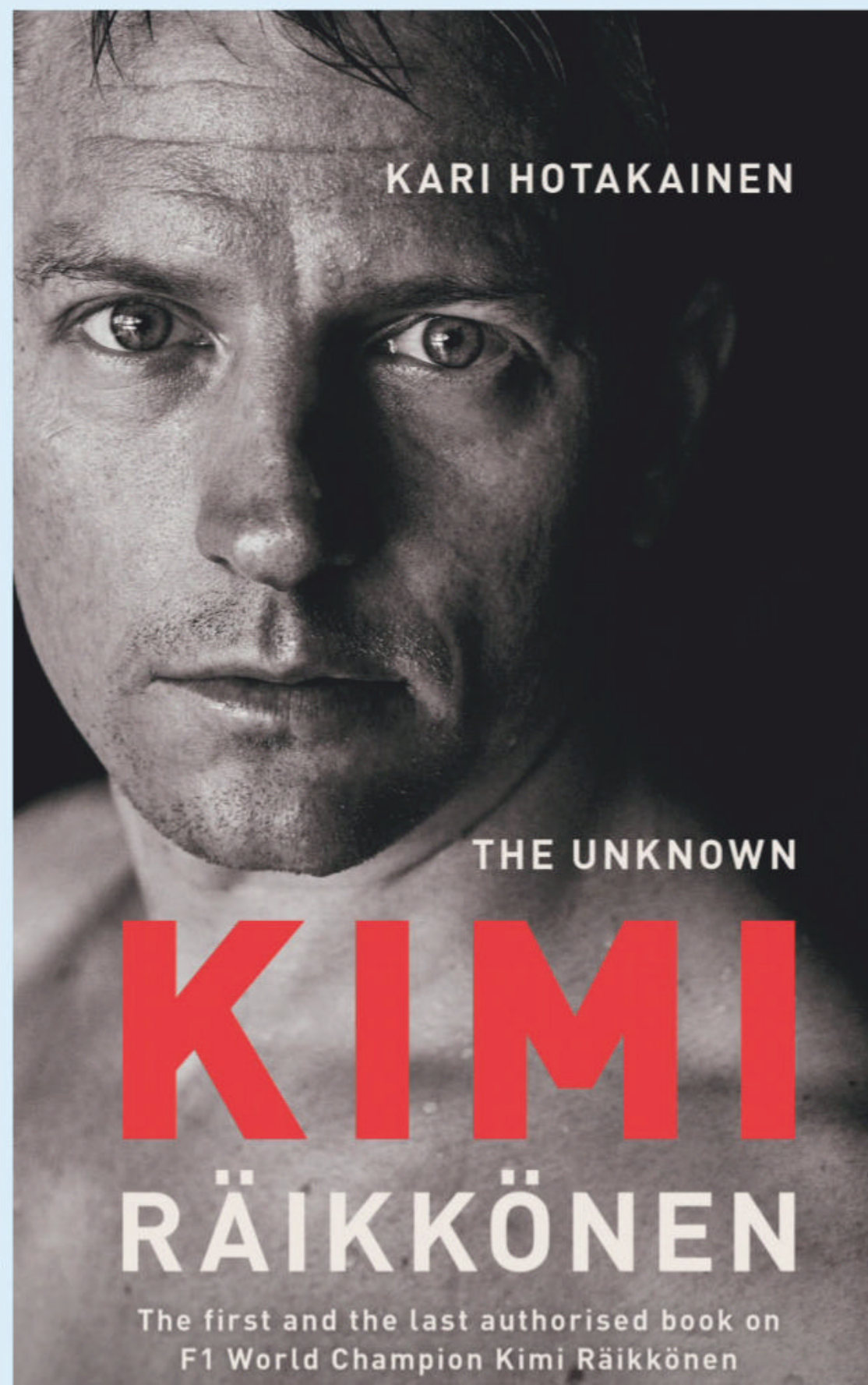
Even if you are not a fan of the 2007 world champion, this new biography of Kimi Räikkönen – extracts of which appeared in the November issue of *F1 Racing* to coincide with the on-sale date of the English language translation – is well worth a read.

The original Finnish version of this detailed appreciation of the enigmatic Ferrari racer first appeared in the summer. The Finnish author admits he's not an authority on motor racing, but that doesn't detract from the story as he manages to gain

access to Räikkönen and his family, getting the chance to interview his compatriot and delve deep into the psyche of a man who is typically reticent in the public eye.

There are a number of revelations in the book, including a chapter entitled 'Sixteen Days' that charts a mammoth party session Kimi had with his mates, between GPs, in the spring of 2012.

The text is accompanied by some fantastic, previously unseen, pictures from Kimi's personal archives, including many from when he was a child and some of those late-night activities with his friends. It won't take you long to read, but you'll be glad you did.







# TRAVEL GUIDE

FINISHING STRAIGHT



It's when the talking stops: the start at the season-opening Australian GP



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## VISIT THE AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

MELBOURNE, 15-17 MARCH, 2019

PICTURES  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

### YOUR GUIDE TO MELBOURNE

Formula 1 fans stay in the city centre when visiting the Australian Grand Prix as the circuit is just three miles from downtown, meaning it is easily reachable by car and public transport. Albert Park hosts the opening grand prix of the year and it is one of the most eagerly anticipated races. This is where the competitive order of the new cars is truly established for the first time.

Melbourne is the capital of the state of Victoria and the region's largest city. It is known as Australia's culture capital and national TV, film and sport all have a strong presence there.

The city has had a prosperous past and now is one of the southern hemisphere's largest economic hubs. *The Economist* also named it as one of the most liveable cities in the world for 2018.

An attraction of Melbourne to visitors is that it is easily accessible via public transport. The City Circle Tram runs around the centre and docklands areas, taking in the key sights.

And one of those iconic Melbourne sights is the Block shopping arcade. In the late 1890s, when David C. Askew was commissioned to design the arcade, he took inspiration from the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele in Milan and built

a glittering indoor plaza. Today, the sheltered shopping promenade is worth a visit for both shopaholics and history enthusiasts who want an insight into the city's Victorian gold rush.

The city is brimming with sport: the nation's main cricket ground, the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), is located here, Melbourne was the birth place of 'Aussie Rules', and it's also home to the Australian Open tennis tournament.

Housed within the MCG is the National Sports Museum, which charts the history of the country's favourite sports, and the Aussies' illustrious Olympic record.





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Melbourne was named one of the world's most liveable cities



The Block arcade attracts shoppers and historians alike



Cricket lovers will flock to the Melbourne Cricket Ground



The Royal Botanical Gardens is a quiet area of the city



## FAST FACTS

**Flight time** 22hrs from London

**Currency** Australian dollar

**Time zone** GMT+10

**Temperature** 24°C (average high during race weekend)

Australia's oldest and most visited art gallery is in the centre of the city. The National Gallery of Victoria is over 150 years old and houses some of the nation's most important art works, as well as the world's largest stained-glass ceiling. From Correggio to Rembrandt, Thomas Gainsborough to Turner, William Blake to Claude Monet, art fans will find something to admire in this extraordinary gallery.

Directly to the east of the gallery, you will find one of Australia's most beautiful parks. A million people a year visit the Royal Botanical Gardens in the city's Southbank area. The 38-hectare

garden is another relic of Melbourne's gold rush heyday and is perfect for a late afternoon stroll. The gardens slope down towards the river and they make for an ideal spot to break away from the hustle and bustle of the city and its five million inhabitants.

Finally, in the north-west corner of the park, you'll find the Arts Centre Melbourne; a complex of concert halls and theatres. On any night of the week you can watch world-class stage plays, opera and concerts from the likes of Opera Australia, the Australian Ballet, Bell Shakespeare and many more.



## ASK THE EXPERT THE THOMAS COOK SPORT REP'S VIEW

**What's your favourite part of the track?**

The Albert Park circuit is fast and flowing, no more so than the opening corners opposite the grandstands named after Australian legends, Alan Jones and Jack Brabham.

**Aside from the race, what's the best thing to do in Melbourne?**

St Kilda beach is a short tram ride from the city centre and it has a very similar vibe to Brighton in the UK. The area is known as a cultural centre that attracts bohemian groups, artists and writers. It also has penguins...

**If you are celebrating a special event, how can the experience be made more amazing?**

You can take cruises down the Yarra River which flows through the city. Catch one of these for a romantic evening trip past some of Melbourne's most spectacular landmarks.

**What local food or drink would you recommend?**

Melbourne is the coffee capital of Australia so be sure to check out the local cafes, sample great wines from the Yarra Valley, or enjoy a pizza at 400 Gradi, Southbank – winner of the world pizza championships.

**What's your top tip for this destination?**

There's a huge amount to see in this amazing city and it's my favourite spot in Australia, but because of the long flight, make the most of it and stay for as long as possible.

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# ME AND MY LID LEWIS HAMILTON

FINISHING STRAIGHT



The design that Lewis used while winning his fifth championship came from the shortlist of his 2017 competition entries



PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; GLENN DUNBAR; OTHER PICTURES: MERCEDES



**For the 2017 season I ran a competition** on Instagram for my fans to submit helmet designs. It had over 8,000 entries when it closed and so many of the designs were so great that it was difficult to choose between them.

So for 2018 I decided to use one of the entries

on the shortlist, which hadn't won in '17. Like my racing hero Ayrton Senna, the designer is a Brazilian – Felipe Torres.

It's a very simple, clean, minimalist design, which helps make the helmet very distinctive through the halo.

Up close there are some nice details such as the layering on the stripes. The addition of my signature and a cross to the carry-over design elements from the 2017 helmet, such as the 'Still I Rise' quote which matches my tattoo, make for a great helmet.



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