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TOGETHER?



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Ben
Anderson

@BenAndersonF1



It's once, twice, three times Alonso

When Fernando Alonso gave us an exclusive interview last winter, to discuss his 'unfinished business' with Formula 1 and his plans to return to the championship he left, frustrated, at the end of 2018, he spoke of how this break from nearly two decades of racing year in, year out in F1 – “you need to eat, sleep, train – everything for F1” – finally allowed him some space to “breathe”.

He used his time off productively, discussing F1's forthcoming (but now delayed) rules revolution in detail with Ross Brawn. Convinced F1 is shortly to become a better, more equitable category, Alonso opened talks with Renault at last year's Abu Dhabi GP. Seven months or so later, they announced they were getting back together – for a third time.

When rumours began surfacing during 2019 that all was not well with Sebastian Vettel at Ferrari, and that Maranello might seek to replace him, my hunch was a reunion with Alonso – a driver still hugely respected by the rank and file, and someone well known (and liked) by current team principal Mattia Binotto. But the mega-deal agreed with Charles Leclerc last winter essentially turned that trail cold.

However, the chain of events sparked by the Scuderia replacing Vettel with Carlos Sainz, and McLaren replacing Sainz with Daniel Ricciardo, has opened Enstone's door yet again to Alonso. The reasons for this (re)arranged marriage of mutual convenience are explored in detail by Andrew

Benson (pp32). Renault/Enstone is arguably the one team that really *gets* Alonso, and probably the only one that views him in an overwhelmingly positive light. Through good times, and bad, this combination always worked well together.

Taking a step back can often re-energise athletes who have been grinding away year after year – with or without success. Even Lewis Hamilton has spoken of his desire to take a break; always tempered by a fear of missing out in a sport that leaves drivers behind so quickly.

Alonso will use 2021 to shake the rust off in what will effectively be a slightly developed version of this year's car, which is actually looking quite handy in 2020's tight midfield battle. Crunch time will come in 2022, when – at Alonso's insistence – Enstone's entire kitchen sink is thrown at producing a world-beating new car to take on the might of the current top teams, handicapped (hopefully, say all the rest) by a major technical rules reset combined with increasingly stringent new financial restrictions.

Christian Horner believes the current top outfits will remain on top regardless – but they will still need to go through some painful downsizing after this season. The teams whose structures arguably already most closely match the ideal for F1 from 2021 onwards are... McLaren and Renault.

In that respect, perhaps third time really could be the charm for Alonso and his old flame.

Contributors



ANDREW BENSON

Andrew, BBC Sport's chief F1 writer, analyses why Renault has once again signed Fernando Alonso and if the move will be a success (p32)



DAMIEN SMITH

The BMW years, from 2000-2005, come under the spotlight as Damien continues his superb history of Williams F1 (p60)



ROBERTO CHINCHERO

As Formula 1 prepares to travel to Mugello for a GP for the first time, Roberto tell us what to expect from the Tuscan track (p40)



JAMES MANN

James is the image man for our sumptuous Now That Was A Car feature. This month's beauty is the open-wheel Mercedes W196 (p70)

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No crowds, but plenty of clouds

Having done the grid of the British Grand Prix – from the outside, of course – I headed off in our minibus to Luffield for the beginning of the race. Normally the big draw here on race day is the huge crowd in the background; they really give a lift to what can be quite a flat circuit to photograph.

I was very pleased to get here and find that while the crowd was sadly in absentia, the Silverstone sky was all present and correct: big, rolling clouds give a nice graphic effect. The way the light fell, you can't see inside the grandstands so you aren't struck by all the empty seats. A simple shot but one that's made by the clouds.



Photographer
Steven Tee

Where Silverstone, UK

When 2.27pm, Sunday
2 August 2020

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
70-200mm lens, 1/1000th @ F10





Love's labour's long lost

There's a little spot at Silverstone where you can shoot from under the roof of the 'Wing' complex and get action shots from the race as well as an interesting overhead angle on parc fermé. For me, what makes this shot is the red-on-red effect combined with Sebastian Vettel's expressively disconsolate body language.

Emirates was the sponsor of this race, hence the red – a week earlier that patch of asphalt had been painted yellow in deference to Pirelli. There's also maybe something symbolic about him walking towards a chequered flag – I hope not, because I think he's got a lot more to give even if the Ferrari marriage is over.



Photographer
Charles Coates

Where Silverstone, UK

When 3.39pm, Sunday
9 August 2020

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
70-200mm lens, 1/1000th @ F5.6

Returning to the scene of the crime

This is Alex Albon hopping back over the barrier to catch a lift home in the truck after his shunt caused a red flag during practice for the British Grand Prix. I'd actually been shooting at Club, much further down, when I heard the unmistakeable sound of a car smiting the barrier.

Marshals began legging it in that direction and so did I. You could tell by the sound that it had been quite a substantial impact so it was pleasing to arrive on the scene and see the driver out of the car and walking. I couldn't see the race number at first and for some reason I assumed it was Max. You can see how badly damaged the car was, so it was impressive how quickly they repaired it.



Photographer
Charles Coates

Where Silverstone, UK

When 3.46pm, Friday
31 July 2020

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
70-200mm lens, 1/800th @ F5







Stronger T



Prints charming: a show of hands

Valtteri Bottas has a really creative graphic on his crash helmet to show solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement; it's a ring of different coloured hands surrounded by fingerprints in other colours. But how to get a close-up?

I was quite lucky with this one because I'm shooting for Racing Point this year and working within the team's 'bubble'. This weekend I was shooting with Canon's latest camera, the mirrorless, 45-megapixel R5. Valtteri's grid spot was just by the Racing Point pitwall station, so as the cars formed up on the grid before the start I had the right light and the right angle to zoom in on the graphic.



Photographer
Glenn Dunbar

Where Silverstone, UK

When 1.57pm, Sunday
2 August 2020

Details Canon EOS-R5,
28-70mm lens, 1/200th @ F2





Three wheels on my wagon

One of the tricks this year has been to find a spot that enables you to photograph parc fermé even if you're not allowed to be in there. The other part of the trick is to not get there too early in case some busybody moves you on.

At the British Grand Prix I found just such a place and got there with a lap to go – just as all hell was breaking loose out on track. Luckily at Silverstone this position also gave me a good angle on the pitlane entry so I was in the right place at the right time to capture a very frustrated Carlos Sainz arriving with everything lit up. It's the sparks that really make this one – he wasn't hanging around...



Photographer
Andy Hone

Where Silverstone, UK

When 3.39pm, Sunday
2 August 2020

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkIII,
500mm lens, 1/640th @ F6.3



FIA PLANS NEW TECH CLAMPDOWN

01

While discord continued to simmer in the Formula 1 paddock regarding the FIA's handling of the Racing Point 'car cloning' affair, the governing body informed teams ahead of the Spanish Grand Prix that it plans to restrict the scope of engine modes used in qualifying. An official technical directive was expected shortly after this issue of *GP Racing* closed for press.

Throughout the hybrid engine era, manufacturers have sought to find an advantage by accessing extra power for short bursts during qualifying. It was Mercedes which coined the term 'party mode' in its internal parlance to

describe the special engine map; others have struggled to replicate its success because of the compromises involved in trading off race pace and longevity.

A letter from FIA secretary general Peter Bayer outlined the governing body's thinking, and which clauses within the technical and sporting regulations it would use to support its case. The 'Duty of Competitor' section of the technical regulations explicitly states that competitors must be able to prove their cars comply with the rules "in their entirety and at all times during an event". It also enshrines the principle that physical inspection of "hardware and materials" is the gold standard. "No mechanical design may rely upon software inspection as a means of ensuring its compliance. Due to their nature, the compliance of electronic systems may be assessed by means of inspection of hardware, software and data."

Essentially the FIA's case is that it wants to "reduce the scope of adjustability" of power unit modes between qualifying and the race, because the "multitude and



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; MARK SUTTON; MERCEDES

complexity of modes being used make it extremely difficult for the FIA to monitor compliance with all the PU-related regulations and provisions in selected critical moments of the event". It also draws attention to the often-cited Article 27.1 of the sporting regulations, the principle that drivers must drive "alone and unaided".

"The changes to ICE modes that are currently in force could potentially mean that the driver does not drive the car alone and unaided," wrote Bayer. "In order to address the above concerns in the future, we will be requiring that during the qualifying session and the race, the PU should operate in a single mode."

F1 insiders have interpreted this as an attempt to curtail at least one aspect of Mercedes' dominance, though it is uncertain just how much effect it will have. It will also promote tensions at a time when several teams have expressed dissatisfaction with the FIA's handling of the protests against Racing Point's RP20, which is regarded by some as a clone of last season's Mercedes.

**"WE WILL BE
REQUIRING
THAT DURING
THE QUALIFYING
SESSION AND
THE RACE, THE
PU SHOULD
OPERATE IN A
SINGLE MODE."**

**PETER BAYER
FIA SECRETARY GENERAL**

Renault lodged protests after the Styrian, Hungarian and British races, then lodged an appeal against the FIA stewards' verdict at the 70th Anniversary GP and continued to protest at subsequent events. Ferrari also appealed the judgement while McLaren and Williams said they would follow suit, but dropped their objections after receiving assurances from the FIA that the regulations would be amended to prevent cloning in future.

While cloning a car from photographs, as Racing Point claims it has done, is not illegal (yet), the protests concerned the RP20's front and rear brake ducts. Until 2020 it was permissible to buy brake ducts – or designs – from other teams. Since they have an aerodynamic effect and can therefore act as a performance differentiator, they are now so-called 'listed parts', which cannot be traded.

When designing its 2019 car, Racing Point legally acquired CAD data for front and rear brake ducts from Mercedes, from whom it also obtained the power unit, transmission and a number of suspension components.



The banning of 'party modes' is seen as an attempt to diminish the success of Mercedes and its hybrid engines (inset)



At the time, however, since it was pursuing the 'high rake' aerodynamic philosophy pioneered by Red Bull, it used its own rear brake duct design. Having decided to clone the W10 and its much flatter aero concept, Racing Point then based its new rear brake duct designs on those previously obtained from Mercedes.

The stewards of the British GP presided over the case and faced a number of complexities, one of which was that delegates from the FIA's technical department had visited Racing Point in March and given the all-clear. Later they conceded they had not closely examined the rear ducts, on which the case hinged. The verdict also conceded that the phrasing of the rules relating to non-listed parts changing status was ambiguous, and acknowledged "it is not realistic to expect Racing Point to redesign or re-engineer the BDs [brake ducts] in a way that would effectively require them to 'unlearn' what they already know."

As such, the decision was to fine Racing Point €200,000 for each car at the Styrian GP along with a 15-point deduction in the constructors' championship, followed by reprimands for using the cars at subsequent events. But rival teams felt this was too lenient.

Racing Point also signified its intention to appeal. Team owner Lawrence Stroll said he would "take all necessary actions to prove our innocence". ►

TECHNICAL RESTRUCTURE AT FERRARI

02 **Ferrari has announced a** restructure of its technical department in recent weeks and moved to quash speculation about a growing rift between team management and former lead driver Sebastian Vettel.

It was also at pains to point out that the restructure – which includes a new performance development department headed up by aerodynamics chief Enrico Cardile – does not preface old-school Ferrari hirings and firings. Team principal Mattia Binotto, who is stepping back from his involvement in technical matters as part of the new organisation, described it as “reaffirming the company’s faith in its technical talent pool”.

Apart from the creation of the new department and a change in the structure of who reports to whom, little has changed in terms of personnel. Simone Resta, who returned to Ferrari in mid-2019 after a year as technical director at Alfa Romeo, remains in charge of the chassis department, while engine development remains the bailiwick of Enrico Gualtieri.

GP Racing understands the detail of the new structure is focused on simplified reporting lines, and a clarification of responsibilities, to combat the kind of political infighting between departments which has long been a feature at Ferrari. An official statement spoke airily – if non-specifically – about “a more holistic emphasis on performance development” and “a chain of command that is more focused and simplified and provides the heads of each department the necessary powers to

Sebastian Vettel’s relationship with senior Ferrari management hasn’t always been bad...

achieve their objectives”.

The performance development department will assume responsibility for technical development, with a mandate to accelerate the process. In several recent seasons, updates have failed to deliver the anticipated performance gains. Experienced heads including Rory Byrne and David Sanchez will have input into the newly refined process.

But even at the highest level, Ferrari is under no illusions that the restructure will bring rapid change to a racing effort that is in trouble on many levels. Chairman John Elkann said in an interview with *Gazzetta dello Sport*: “This year we are not competitive thanks to project errors. We have had a number of structural weaknesses that have existed for some time in aerodynamics and in the dynamics of the vehicle. We have also lost out in engine power.

“The reality is that our car is not competitive. You saw it on the track and you will see it again. Today we are laying the foundations for being competitive and returning to winning when the rules change in 2022. I am convinced of this.”

This timescale will be too long for under-pressure driver Vettel, who will leave the team this year. Vettel has found the SF1000 particularly difficult to drive, exacerbated by a shift to a lower-downforce aero package, and he has appeared at loggerheads with the team at recent races – often engaging in long periods of radio silence, punctuated by vociferous berations.

In recent events at Silverstone and Barcelona Vettel quarrelled with the team over strategy calls in a tone that indicated immense frustration on the part of the driver. But Binotto ►



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- > F1’s 70 @ 70: part 5: the nineties
- > Now That Was A Car: McLaren MP4/2
- > Race engineers: a special analysis

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played down suggestions of tension.

“I think that communicating is important with the drivers,” he said. “It is something that we decided together with the drivers that we should be open as we can. Sometimes questioning doesn’t mean it’s a misunderstanding. I think questioning ourselves by communicating is important finally to get the right choice.”

NEW CONCORDE PREPARES FOR TAKE-OFF

03 After several months of haggling, the entire grid has agreed terms with F1 and the FIA to compete in Formula 1 for the next five years. The hard deadline for signing the latest iteration of the Concorde Agreement, the confidential tripartite commercial deal between the teams, Formula 1 and the FIA, was the end of August – but teams signing up by 18 August received financial sweeteners. Even so, it has been a bumpy road.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff had been among the most vocal critics of the new deal, saying in mid-August that Mercedes was not in a position to sign. Wolff insisted that the Agreement required considerable “cleaning up” before his company could commit and also hit out at team principals who were “up the arse of the commercial rights holder” when appearing on camera even after they had been loudly blasting the terms of the Agreement behind closed doors. His contention was that Mercedes was being treated “unfairly” in the new settlement, even though one of its key goals was a more equitable sharing of revenues than at present. Wolff claimed Ferrari continued to enjoy a privileged share and that Red Bull’s ownership of two teams in effect gave it a bigger slice of the pie.

It was a clear invitation to F1 to go away and sharpen its pencils. At the Spanish GP, Wolff revealed Mercedes’ position had shifted after talks with F1 CEO Chase Carey. *GP Racing* understands that the new Agreement includes annual break clauses that would enable teams to withdraw during the contract’s five-year term.

“I’ve been pretty vocal after the meetings that we had within the team, to say this is what we need and these are the clarifications we need in order to move forward,” said Wolff.

“But I’ve changed my opinion. I don’t think the teams will ever be united. Everybody tries to achieve some little deals outside everybody. There’s a blame culture in the media.

“So we’ve decided to move forward with Liberty. I’ve had some very constructive discussions with Chase over the last weekend, and most of the clarifications that we wanted to achieve have been discussed. I feel we’re at a good point to sign the Concorde Agreement and move on.”

“I FEEL WE’RE AT A GOOD POINT TO SIGN THE CONCORDE AGREEMENT AND MOVE ON”

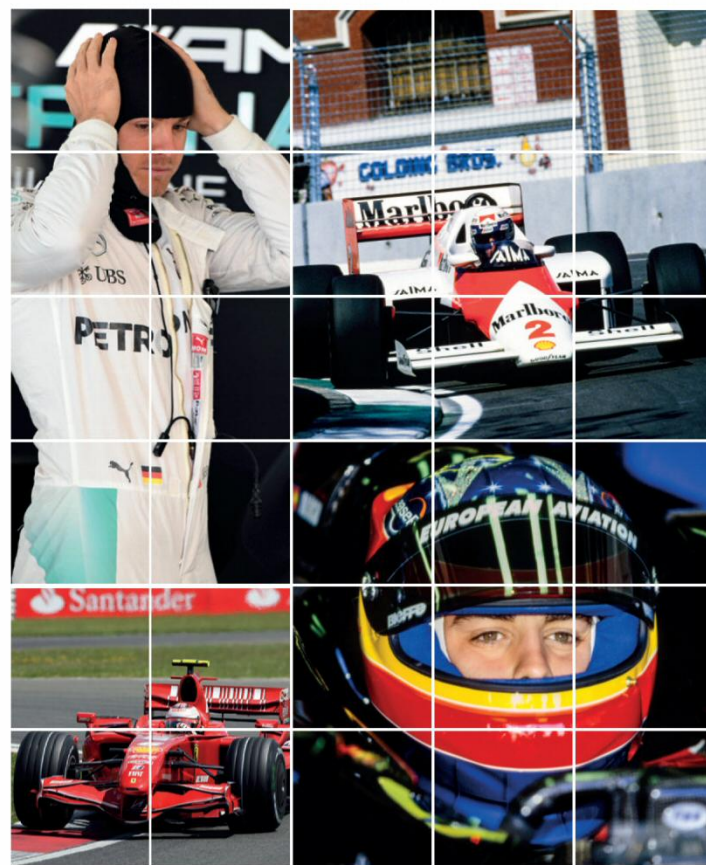
TOTO WOLFF



F1 MASTERMIND

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- Q1** Which is the only GP that Nico Rosberg managed to win three times?
- Q2** Who is the only driver to have led over 60 GPs but not won the world championship?
- Q3** How many races did Kimi Räikkönen win when driving for Ferrari: eight, nine or 10?
- Q4** What did Jack Brabham do in 1960 that didn’t happen again until Alain Prost did it in 1986?
- Q5** Who has made the third most number of F1 starts by a Dutchman, behind Max and Jos Verstappen?
- Q6** Which driver raced in F1 for 11 years but scored all 11 of his wins in his first two seasons?
- Q7** The top 10 constructors in the all-time list of F1 wins includes six current manufacturers, Lotus, Brabham and which other two defunct makes?
- Q8** Who was the last world champion to race with the number 1 on his car and in which year?
- Q9** Fernando Alonso made his F1 debut in the 2001 Australian GP along with Kimi Räikkönen, Enrique Bernoldi and which other driver?
- Q10** True or false: all six Russian GPs so far have been won by Mercedes drivers?



1 Monaco 2 David Coulthard (62 races) 3 10 4 Defend the world title successfully 5 Christian Albers (45) 6 Jacques Villeneuve 7 Benetton and Tyrrell 8 Sebastian Vettel in 2014 9 Juan Pablo Montoya 10 True



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told them in no uncertain terms that while there were three per car for now, the rules dictated only two drivers per car were necessary and if they didn't shape up, he was totally prepared to go down that route.

"As we left, some of the others were a bit stunned, muttering 'Ah, now we've seen a different side to him'. He makes it extremely clear on your roles; he's the boss. But he has this brilliant ability to be able to practise his personal and professional side with the drivers and everyone who works with him because he has a great human component".

The combo delivered superbly. Porsche went on to win Le Mans three years in a row against Audi and Toyota, Mark became World Endurance Champion in 2015, and Porsche won a hat-trick of World Endurance Championship doubles before withdrawing from LMP1 at the end of 2017. Goodwin witnessed Seidl's people skills from outside: "I never got the feeling of anything other than confidence from Andreas, never arrogance. He was a proper sportsman; gracious in defeat, gracious in victory as well."

Signed for McLaren under Zak Brown's leadership in January 2019, Andreas is aware that the timing was fortunate. The team had

already ditched Honda, signed up two very promising racers in Sainz and Norris, and was about to have the benefit of fresh input from new technical director James Key.

Seidl spent those first weeks and months understanding the mindset of a team with such great history, yet which had suffered without a podium in five seasons. At round four in Baku, McLaren scored its first double points finish in 12 months. The season ended with fourth in the constructors' championship and a podium finish in Brazil for Sainz. The spirit of the team had been reawakened, and Webber is convinced there's more to come.

"Building for the future, Andreas brings a holistic approach, creating an image in his mind of how the team will develop," Mark explains. "He's got a good feel for the politics and that's still improving obviously because he's only been there five minutes. He's extremely international in his approach to motorsport, he's on top of it all." His key traits in summary? "Very intelligent, no big ego, good sense of humour," Webber adds. "Loves celebrating a win, you can enjoy a beer with him, but when it's on, it's on..."

So, what would Andreas have brought to that post-Austria McLaren party? His international approach implies something Germanic but also much loved elsewhere; something to get your teeth into, rewarding and delivered with flair and dynamism. Andreas Seidl – apple strudel with spice? Party on!

A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD FOR SEIDL AND McLAREN

Pre COVID-19, McLaren would have celebrated the opening two races of the season in Austria with a well-deserved social gathering. Amazing last laps from Lando Norris delivered a podium and a fifth place; a superb wet qualifying from Carlos Sainz and points in both races put the team second in the constructors' championship – a performance worthy of a shindig.

I can see it now: Zak Brown, CEO, brings the pecan pie, Lando the jelly and ice cream, and Carlos the churros. But what does team principal Andreas Seidl bring to the party? According to a man who has known him for 15 years, it would be something substantial, congratulatory and absolutely spot-on.

Mark Webber first met Seidl when driving for Williams in 2005. "Andreas was my engine technician," says the nine-time grand prix winner. "He was relatively junior in the BMW hierarchy in those days, but culturally he was one of the best of the bunch to knit into the English way of going racing. He was living in Munich, but the chemistry he created was over and above what some of the

other engineers were doing."

Seidl joined BMW in 2000 and by the end of the decade he had become head of track operations at BMW Sauber. Sadly, that 2009 season didn't quite go to plan and BMW pulled out of F1 at the end of it, leaving Seidl unsatiated in his desire to be part of a winning campaign. He made up for it a couple of years later, overseeing BMW's return to Germany's touring car series (the DTM) in 2012. He led the team to the drivers', teams' and manufacturers' titles, ahead of Mercedes and Audi.

It was an impressive result, but Seidl wasn't done. He joined Porsche in 2013, becoming team principal for a new campaign to win Le Mans and the World Endurance Championship. Graham Goodwin, a journalist immersed in sportscar racing, was impressed by Seidl's analytical and methodical approach, laced with a dry sense of humour. The Porsche 919 Hybrid made its debut at Silverstone in 2014, and Webber – who had left F1 in November the previous year – was one of six drivers under Seidl's authority.

"We rekindled the relationship very quickly once we got going," confirms Mark, "What I loved about him again was his incredible work ethic, good stamina and his respect for how things are done in F1. He was very open to ideas and discussions; we had a good dialogue."

"Andreas organised a meeting with the drivers, a chance for everyone to connect. Three drivers per car, driving for the great name of Porsche with success on the horizon. Exciting moments, until he

Seidl joined BMW in 2000 and worked with Webber at Williams. Head of trackside operations at BMW Sauber followed before a very successful time at Porsche



Seidl loves to celebrate success according to Webber, but knows when it is time to be serious



Seidl with McLaren CEO Zak Brown (below). Webber thinks Seidl, despite only being at the team since the start of 2019, is already well on top of the job and politics of Formula 1





UNDER THE HOOD

PAT SYMONDS

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IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR FOR FERNANDO

The 'silly season' within F1 has long been formulaic. It starts in the early summer as journalists and fans examine the art of the possible and the rumour mill swings into action. In a normal year the Hungarian Grand Prix, just before the summer break, is when some shape comes to the rumours and traditionally at Monza, in September, we get some confirmation of driver alliances for the following season.

This year of course has been anything but normal, and with the break-up of the Ferrari/Sebastian Vettel relationship being announced in early May, a flurry of activity meant many berths were full by the end of that month. Daniel Ricciardo's move from Renault to McLaren then left many speculating as to whether Fernando Alonso would return for a third spell at the team which gave him two world championships.

By early July we knew – Fernando is indeed returning to what he describes as 'his family'. Cutting through the inevitable hype that surrounds such events, it is interesting to analyse the

reasoning and speculate on the likely outcomes over the next few years.

Firstly, the reasoning: the Renault team has shown a high level of commitment to success in F1 since returning as a constructor in 2016. The team has spent significantly on upgrading facilities at both the chassis base in Enstone and the engine facility in Viry-Châtillon. I toured the Enstone factory when the work was finished and was highly

Symonds (left) worked closely with Alonso during the Spaniard's championship-winning first spell with Renault



impressed with both the engineering and the production facilities. At Viry, significant upgrades had been made to enable hybrid engine development a couple of years earlier, and these continued to be expanded with the return of the works team.

Resource addition was not just physical – the engineering human resource in both bases has continued to expand. Perhaps most significantly, the recruitment of Ricciardo for 2019, at a salary reported to be around €25million a season, showed serious intent from the company that it is prepared to play with the big boys. It follows therefore that, when Ricciardo announced he was departing the team for McLaren in 2021, Renault was not going to place a

rookie with the talented but yet unproven Esteban Ocon. Enter onto the scene one very talented but somewhat disillusioned ex-world champion: Fernando Alonso.

I worked with Fernando in those championship years of 2005 and 2006. It seems an eternity ago now and, by driver career standards, it is! So, can someone of this great talent return and find that elusive third championship he so desperately seeks?

The answer of course lies in the fact that F1 is a team sport and that success is a relative thing. It depends not just on your own ability but also that of your competitors. It also relies on the many facets that bring success. Only when all of them are aligned can championships be won. If a single attribute is found wanting, then it is still possible to win races – but a championship



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**MADE IN
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Alonso and 'his family' celebrate one of his 17 wins during their previous two periods together. Success this time round may be a little harder to come by

may be out of reach. In other words, success is not just down to the driver – even one with the remarkable ability of Fernando Alonso.

The question therefore is not whether Fernando can win the 2022 title (he seems already to have written off 2021) but what can he bring to the team to enable Renault to challenge for it? The rest will be down to the organisation. That he can

drive a car exceptionally well is proven, and personally I don't think his age – he will turn 41 during 2022 – counts against him. He has demonstrated in premier sportscar events that he retains immense fitness. The rest of ageing is a mental state – and Fernando is immensely mentally strong...

However, winning championships is not just about driving a car fast, it involves many more attributes and it is here that I believe Fernando has much to offer. A successful driver can either step into a successful team or he can build a successful team around him. The latter presupposes the raw ingredients are there, and in the case of Renault I believe the team still has a lot of people who knew how to win and more importantly still know how to win. Reproducing everything that was done in 2006 will not suffice. F1 is such a fast-moving sport that the detail of what worked

15 years ago will not necessarily work today, but the ethos of winning never changes.

We must also remember that F1 is taking a reset in 2022 when significantly different aerodynamic regulations will be put in place and the tyre characteristics will change with the move to 18-inch wheels. While of course this will put emphasis on

Since leaving McLaren at the end of 2018 Alonso has been racing successfully in sportscars and also competed in the 2020 Dakar Rally



“SUCCESS IS NOT JUST DOWN TO THE DRIVER – EVEN ONE WITH THE REMARKABLE ABILITY OF FERNANDO ALONSO”

the engineering teams to find the best solutions to the new rules, it is also a time when an experienced and adaptable driver can contribute a lot.

It is unlikely that the best way to drive a 2022 car and make the most of its tyres will be the same as the techniques employed this season. One therefore needs a driver with the experience to know whether the changes he feels in the car are consequential to the rule changes, or whether there is a fundamental flaw. He also needs the ability to adapt his driving style to those consequential changes. I feel the Fernando I worked with is one of the best at this, and there is no doubt this aspect will only have improved over the years.

So, what it really comes down to is his mental attitude. Will he pull the team around him and will his hunger for that elusive third championship drive him beyond his already exceptional talent? It could go either way, but F1 needs characters like Fernando – and I believe he can and will do the job given just an inkling of opportunity.

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STRAIGHT TALK

MARK GALLAGHER

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ASTON MARTIN GETS SERIOUS WITH MOERS

If the British Geological Survey's seismologists picked up any tremors in Warwickshire last month they can more than likely be explained by Aston Martin's new chief executive striding into his Gaydon office for the first time.

Tobias Moers has arrived from Mercedes' AMG business with a formidable reputation. A results-driven businessman who doesn't fear a challenge – and doesn't mind being feared – and whom executive chairman Lawrence Stroll hand-picked from a very short shortlist.

The arrival of 54-year-old German Moers should also have shaken Milton Keynes, Maranello and Enstone. For all the distracted talk about Racing Point's 'Pink Mercedes', the competition should be rather more concerned about the overall ambitions of Stroll, Moers, and their technical partners at Daimler, to position Aston Martin at the forefront of Formula 1.

This year's £536million Aston Martin rescue deal, led by Stroll and executed amid a global pandemic that has decimated car sales for healthy

businesses, never mind one that was already on its knees, is as courageous a move as any seen in the automotive industry.

Some call it foolhardy, but in Stroll we are talking about a serial investor who has never shied away from the challenges inherent in building

Tobias Moers has swapped the Mercedes AMG engine division for the top job at Aston Martin



global success stories. In Moers he has appointed a boss crowned 'The Engine King of Mercedes' earlier this year by the *Financial Times*. In so doing, Stroll has strengthened an already mighty relationship with Daimler.

Daimler took a 5% stake in Aston Martin back in 2013, and it was Moers' AMG engine division which set about providing engines, electronics and infotainment systems for the new DB11, Vantage and DBX models. This was always an important deal for Daimler but a critical partnership for Aston Martin, particularly now that Stroll and Moers will set about cutting Aston Martin's product development costs wherever possible. Having access to Mercedes AMG's box of technical goodies will play a key part in that.

Ola Källenius, chairman of the board at Daimler and head of Mercedes, was Moers' predecessor at AMG and is sure the new Aston Martin boss is the right man for the job. As Moers sets about reshaping Aston Martin's automotive business, Stroll's parallel passion for Formula 1 will mean the relationship with Mercedes-Benz deepens.

Toto Wolff has purchased a minor shareholding in Aston Martin, a sure sign the Mercedes F1 team boss can see both the opportunity triggered by Moers' appointment and the wisdom of drawing Aston Martin closer.

Aside from Mercedes AMG providing powertrain technologies to both the Aston Martin road car and Formula 1 businesses, Stroll now has the added benefit of both Daimler and Wolff having some skin in the game.

It will be in Mercedes' interests to see Aston Martin succeed – let's say second place in the Formula 1 world championship with the odd win thrown in – which is good news for Stroll and his other investors.

It is equally good news for the likes of Racing Point's technical director Andrew Green and sporting director Andy Stevenson, 20 years after they were celebrating Jordan's third place in the 1999 constructors' championship. Together with former Honda man Otmar Szafnauer they have witnessed the team endure a roller coaster ride since, thanks to the weird and wonderful owners the team has enjoyed and endured since that success.

Under Stroll, they know that things are set to get serious. For Formula 1, it means an Aston Martin team aligned with Mercedes helping to halt the ambitions of Red Bull, Ferrari and anyone else with serious designs on returning to the front any time soon.

THIS MONTH

Mike Jones

CEO, Gulf Oil International Group

Gulf Oil was a key backer of Bruce McLaren's young team in the 1960s and now the modern iteration of the company has rekindled the historic partnership – with a presence on McLaren's Formula 1 cars but also taking a more wide-reaching role in the high-performance road-car products rolling off the production line in Woking

CV

2020

CEO Gulf Oil International Group

2015-2020

Global vice president of Strategic Partnerships, BP Castrol

2009-2015

Global marketing director, BP Castrol

GP Racing: What is different about Gulf compared with some of the more vertically integrated oil companies?

Mike Jones: It's different in some ways, but not in others. Today we operate in over 100 countries. We're one of the largest independently owned downstream lubricant companies with 1100 fuel stations in 16 countries and over 1300 employees. So it's still a sizable operation. I think the difference perhaps between Gulf and some of the majors, companies like Shell and BP, is that we don't have an upstream operation [exploring, drilling, extraction of raw materials]. We're purely a downstream business [post-production and retail], focusing predominantly in lubricants and fuels. COVID has been a challenge for all of us, but of course, we don't carry the high fixed costs of some of those majors and that helps us to be a little bit more agile, and to really get after opportunities.

I see my glass as sort of half full – there are news headlines about some of the major companies downsizing their lubricants business, whereas Gulf is very much on a growth trajectory. We've been very successful in India over the past 12 years, where we've become the number two brand. But of course, there are markets where we want to grow faster and get better. And I think that's going to be our challenge over the coming years.

GPR: It's quite unusual for a new high-profile sponsorship to be signed mid-season. Did that come about because you saw an opportunity? And did the historic connection between Gulf and McLaren make the decision a no-brainer?

MJ: Yes – when I joined as Gulf CEO in January I was very keen to reposition the brand in some way, and to help us to do that we need some strong partnerships. We're into our fifth year of sponsorship with Manchester United. But of course our DNA is motorsport, we wanted to be at the pinnacle of motorsport, and Formula 1 is exactly that. As ever, it's all about timing, and the right opportunity for partners when it comes along. I've known Zak [Brown] for

INTERVIEW
STUART
COOLING

quite a long time. We got together and decided it would be great to put the two brands back together. For sure we were very conscious of the history going back to the Bruce McLaren days – we still have some of the Gulf retro driving overalls in our offices around the world today, and that drove home to me that McLaren was the right partner for us, not just from a historic point of view, but actually about going forward. And I think Zak and I are very much aligned that we wanted to write the next chapter in the history books of Gulf and McLaren. And the reaction we've had on social media has been unbelievably amazing.

GPR: Ferrari has a Shell fuel station in the middle of Fiorano. Is that the sort of intergrated relationship you're looking for?

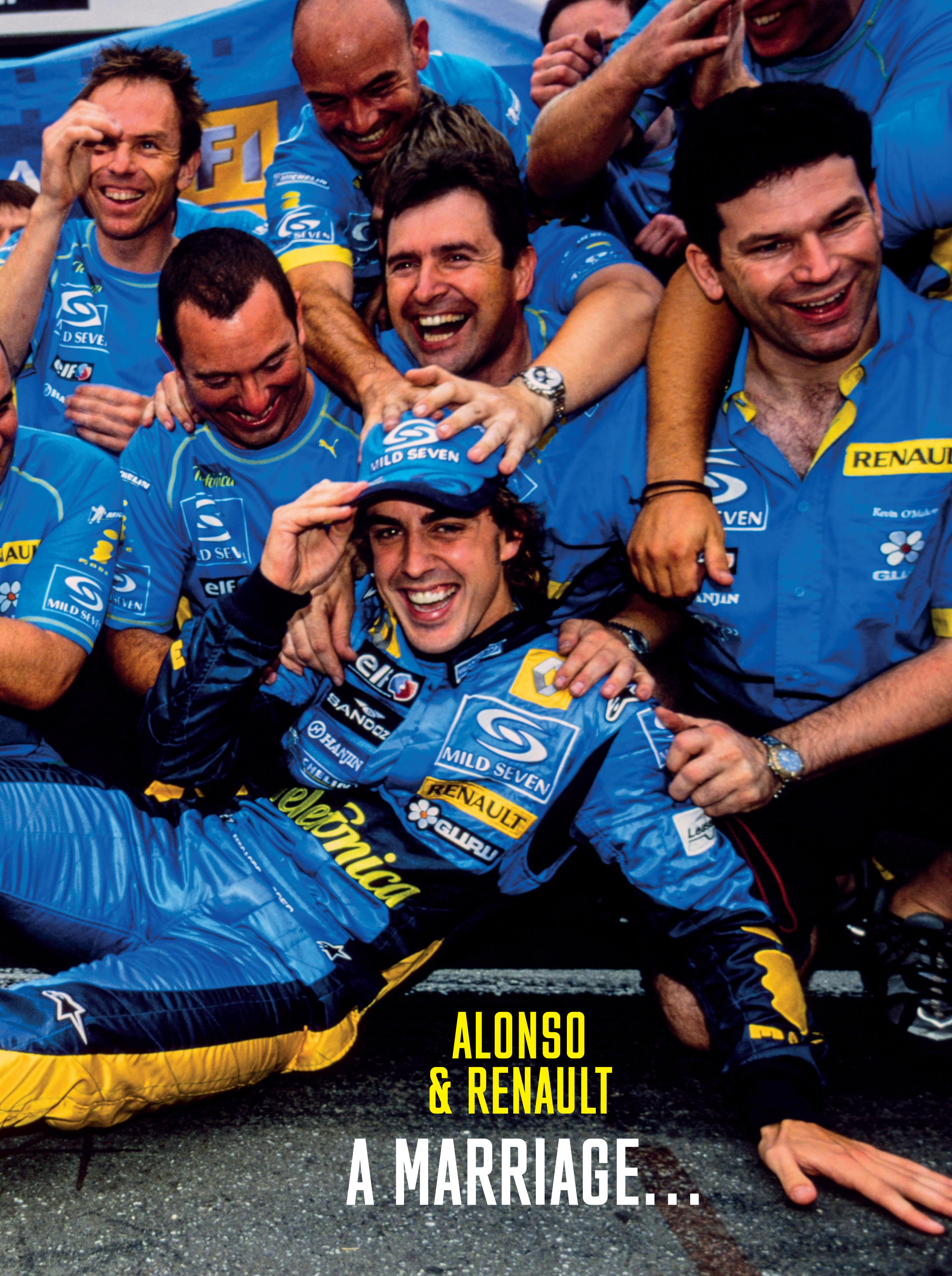
MJ: The lesson of COVID is that businesses need to collaborate now more than ever. And our history with McLaren is there for all to see. I really think we can do great things together, on the track but also off the track, because the partnership also includes McLaren Automotive, and Gulf will be supplying factory-fill lubricants and fuels to McLaren Automotive cars. And we're very excited about developing some new oils for them to maximise performance, and to look at some of the alternative technologies as we start to move forward. I'm sure you'll see some great things come from both brands working together in the future.

GPR: Is developing race fuels and lubricants and the underlying technology, like some of the other oil companies involved in F1 do, a possibility as well?

MJ: The development cycle for performance lubricants and fuel is quite long. So, initially we'll be focusing our efforts on McLaren Automotive and working on specific new oils and new technologies there. We will support the F1 team in every capacity that we can. But our initial focus is very much going to be on McLaren Automotive.







**ALONSO
& RENAULT**
A MARRIAGE...





...(RE)MADE IN HEAVEN?

Fernando Alonso will end a two-year spell on F1's sidelines by returning to the grid with Renault next season. They have a storied history together, but is that good enough reason to get together for a third time, or is this latest reunion destined to backfire on both team and driver?

WORDS ANDREW BENSON PICTURES



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WHY HAS RENAULT SIGNED FERNANDO ALONSO

for a return to Formula 1 in 2021 and beyond? A better question might be, ‘why wouldn’t they?’.

This, after all, is one of the greatest drivers in the history of F1. If a team seeking to return to success could get hold of the sort of performance that Alonso can bring – performance that, for example, could almost single-handedly make the second-slowest car on the grid finish sixth in the constructors’ championship only two years ago – why would that team not take the opportunity?

That’s what you get with Fernando Alonso – a driver who will coax performance out of a car that almost no other driver can.

If that sounds like hyperbole, this is how former McLaren team principal Martin Whitmarsh sums up Alonso’s gift: “Great drivers score the points the car deserves. Exceptional ones – like him – score more than the car deserves. Only one other driver I’ve worked with has been able to do that. It was at the beginning of my career, and he was Brazilian.”

That ‘other driver’ to whom Whitmarsh is referring is of course Ayrton Senna. This is the sort of rarefied company Alonso’s talent keeps. Now, there are of course caveats when it comes to Alonso – big ones. And we’ll come to those. But first, let’s deal with what Renault is getting from the driver. Why, even though he is now 39, Alonso was clearly the best driver Renault could get.

LEST WE FORGET HOW GOOD HE IS

“F1 is about having the best drivers,” says Williams’ George Russell. “Fernando is absolutely one of the best. It makes complete sense for Renault and Fernando, and I think he’ll come back and do a great job.”

Alonso is a global sporting icon, a status he’s developed over a 20-year career in which he has left no possible doubt about his stature as a racing driver. His career statistics are impressive enough: 32 race victories put him sixth in the all-time F1 winners’ list. Add to that two world championships, and the third-highest points total of any driver – although the relevance of that final statistic is skewed slightly by modern scoring system tweaks.

But it’s the context for these statistics that really highlights Alonso’s qualities. Another 11 points spread correctly over 2007, 2010 and 2012 and he would be a five-time world champion. Were it not for some appalling luck, for which he was blameless in 2010 and 2012, Alonso would be a four-time champion.

And all this while arguably never having driven the fastest car in the field for any season of his career. Even Pat Symonds, Renault’s technical boss at the time, admitted on a recent F1 podcast that the team would not have won the title in 2005 and 2006 had Alonso not been in the car. What marks Alonso out above all is his

adaptability, the flexibility to get the most out of any car however it is behaving.

Symonds says: “He is very fast over one lap. There probably are those who can get closer to him in qualifying but when it comes to managing a race, knowing how to plan a race, how to use the car in that race, he is Schumacher-like, Senna-like. This ability to get this holistic view of a race and to picture it from beginning to end and how he’s going to manage it.”

McLaren performance director Andrea Stella, who worked with Alonso for nine years at Ferrari and McLaren from 2010-18, sees the Spaniard’s ability as “a perfect circle” of qualities, “where Fernando is very high in all of them but potentially not the best in any”.

“He is very complete,” Stella explains. “You struggle to find a weak point, basically, in terms of high-level driving skills”.

WILL HE BE AS GOOD AS HE WAS?

No matter how good Alonso was in his first F1 career, there will inevitably be questions as to whether he will return at the same level. Alonso will turn 40 during the 2021 season and parallels will inevitably be drawn with the comeback of another legend, Michael Schumacher, who was clearly not as capable when he returned to F1, at the age of 41 with Mercedes in 2010, as he had been when winning his seven world titles.

But for every Schumacher there are a number of other drivers who have proved age – and a break from F1 – does not have to be a barrier to success. Alain Prost won his fourth title at the age of 38, after a year’s sabbatical. Nigel Mansell finally sealed his world championship in 1992 at 39, went to America and won the Indy Car World Series aged 40, returned to F1 in 1994, and won the season-ending Australian Grand Prix from pole position aged 41.

Mario Andretti returned to F1 aged 42 with Ferrari at the end of 1982 and took pole first time out. He remained competitive in Indycar in his 50s. And although this next example dates back to the 1950s, Juan Manuel Fangio was 40 before he won even the first of his five titles...

Schumacher is just the most recent example. But his and Alonso’s situations are not the same. For one thing, Schumacher suffered a major neck injury in a motorcycle accident in 2009, and some believe that, despite claims to the contrary, this affected him when he came back.

On top of that, Schumacher just did not get on with the Pirelli tyres and their propensity to overheat, which prevented him from driving in the way he had done in his first career. Not only will Alonso’s break have been a year shorter than Schumacher’s, Fernando has stayed competitive in other categories.

In 2019, Alonso did six months in the World Endurance Championship, including winning Le Mans for the second time, in addition to suffering McLaren’s embarrassing failure to sort a car he could qualify for the Indianapolis 500. This was followed by six months of preparation for the Dakar Rally in January. And this year he returned to the Indy 500 in August before starting his work with Renault.

“Last year was a very active season for me,” Alonso said when his Renault deal was announced in July. “I was behind a steering wheel nearly every week of the year. I feel ready and I feel I am at 100% in terms of driving. Physically as well I had to preserve my body. I have to start very specific fitness preparations. I started in February and now I am 100%. I did a couple of fitness tests and I had the best results in my career. I am motivated, happy and stronger than ever. The stopwatch is the only thing that matters, not age. Hopefully, we are still fast – and faster than them.”

Renault F1 managing director Cyril Abiteboul



"WHAT HAPPENED WITH FERNANDO AND DIFFERENT TEAMS WAS MY BIGGEST PROBLEM AND QUESTION MARK. I TALKED TO FERNANDO MANY TIMES ABOUT THAT. I REALLY TRUST HIM THAT HE'S GOING TO HAVE ANOTHER PHILOSOPHY" ALAIN PROST

says Alonso's age is "not a worry": "It is something we take on board and we have taken the time to discuss it. What matters most is not the physical status or situation, it's more the motivation. I guess the one thing that impacts on your level of performance at a certain age is your level of motivation.

"That's why we have taken the time to discuss what he has been able to do so far outside F1, inside F1, the way he sees the project, what we will be able to give and not give in 2021, and the prospect for 2022. Based on all of that, in my opinion, his motivation is strong, based on facts. And therefore, in my opinion, age is not a factor for the duration of our contract."

Daniel Ricciardo, the man Alonso is replacing at Renault, also foresees no problems. "It doesn't look like he slowed down at all with age," the Australian says, looking back at a 2018 season in which Alonso out-qualified McLaren team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne at every single race and scored 81% of the team's points. "His last season in F1 was a pretty strong one from what I saw. It was pretty evident he got the most out of the car."

And former F1 driver Pedro de la Rosa, who is close to Alonso, agrees: "He will be as quick as he was, for sure. Because he has been training every day since he left F1, driving every day some sort of car, and because he has good genetics."

HOW IT HAPPENED

Renault's final decision to join forces with Alonso for a third time came after Ricciardo decided to move to McLaren, in the merry-go-round of moves triggered by Ferrari's decision to dispense with Sebastian Vettel.

It could look from the outside as if Alonso was Renault's only hope, and that team his. But it would be wrong to represent it entirely as a case of 'needs must'. In fact, Abiteboul says Renault had been talking to Alonso about a deal on and off since the works team returned to the grid in 2016 – and confirms they had serious discussions at last year's season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

Alonso, Abiteboul says, "is a very smart observer of what is going on in the paddock". Fernando had noted recent personnel changes at Renault – including the employment of Pat Fry, with whom Alonso worked at both McLaren and

Ferrari, as technical director.

"Discussion started way before Daniel's decision to leave for McLaren," Abiteboul says. "I don't know where things would have got us if Daniel had made a different decision – and, let's be honest, the timing of Daniel's decision was not helpful. We were focused on other aspects. But that being behind us, I am very comfortable with this decision."

Abiteboul admits the "emotional ties" of the past were a factor. But there was cold decision-making, too. Prost, now Renault's non-executive director, says the team was talking to three top drivers: Alonso, Vettel and Valtteri Bottas. And they chose Alonso over Vettel.

"Valtteri is driving a Mercedes and it's difficult for him to leave the Mercedes team at the moment," Prost says. "We did not know exactly what was the motivation of Sebastian. But Fernando has always shown his motivation to come back to the team."

Some have criticised Renault for choosing Alonso over a product of its driver academy. But, in reality, that was hardly a choice at all. Ricciardo is going, and Renault's only signed driver was Esteban Ocon, who has yet to establish his credentials at the very highest level. It's almost inconceivable that a team with aspirations of winning races in 2022 could go into that season with a driver line-up of Ocon plus an F2 graduate, such as the promising Guanyu Zhou or Christian Lundgaard.

Renault is also still in the process of turning itself into a top team. And a man of Alonso's experience and wisdom can play an important role in that. On the one hand, there is the "winning culture", as Abiteboul puts it, that he brings with him, and will seek to impose on Renault. And then there's the certainty that his skills will boost the engineering team.

This is Stella talking about Alonso's insight into the behaviour of his car: "He is very good at getting where he is contributing and where the car is contributing. The sensitivity to the car is exceptional. It is somehow a matter of awareness.

"One interesting thing with Fernando is that, when there is a problem, it tends to be spread over all the corners. If there is too much oversteer, you see it is more or less everywhere. While some drivers may say, understeer here, oversteer there.

"You can create your own understeer, for



example. Like, if the car is a bit nervous, and you don't commit to turn early enough, or to turn enough. So you delay the turn-in, and then are always going to get an understeer-y car mid-corner.

"But not all drivers realise that this mid-corner balance is very much a result of what happens in the earlier 50m. And that's very tricky for an engineer, because if you only go with the driver, you get lost, because you keep going after this mid-corner understeer."

THE THORNY QUESTION OF HIS ATTITUDE

Renault did have doubts about Alonso, centred on his history of tension with the teams he's driven for. There was, of course, the infamous fallout with McLaren in 2007. But his time at Ferrari also ended with a degree of enmity. And while McLaren loved him second time around, the same could not be said of engine partner Honda.

Shouting "GP2 engine, GP2 engine, aargh" over the radio as he went down the straight at Suzuka



Alonso's first spell with Renault brought success after success and both parties will be hoping that some of the magic returns this time

must go down as one of Alonso's least well-considered outbursts – and it came back to haunt him, as Honda still will not supply an engine for him to use at Indy.

"What happened with Fernando and different teams was my biggest problem and question mark," Prost says. "I talked to Fernando many times about that. I really trust him that he's going to have another philosophy."

"Two years outside F1 in my opinion was maybe not bad for him to have a different feeling, a different view. He knows what he's going to get in terms of performance of the car. He knows that 2021 is also going to be a little bit difficult. He's prepared for that. I really think he's going to be very different than people understand."

Abiteboul adds: "It is one of the reasons why it was important for him to take time off, to walk away from the sport. Let's not underestimate how ruthless, how toxic F1 can be. No matter how hard you work, how hard you try, how good you think you are, sometimes it is just not possible. I think that is what at some point burns out every one of us, except maybe Toto [Wolff] and Mercedes and

Lewis [Hamilton]. And doing this sort of break is the best guarantee that these things will not happen again.

"Plus, clearly making sure we don't let him down by over-promising and under-delivering. That is why we have taken the time to be clear and specific about where we stand today and where we will be standing in 2021, and where we think we will be standing in 2022."

Alonso says: "I am aware of things. I have not been underground for two years. I have been watching television and I know only one team will be winning 2020 – and in 2021 probably."

"The rest of the 19 drivers on the grid, we try to work with our own team and our future. I think the 2022 rules will hopefully bring some fairness to the sport and some close action, with teams more level and less scope to invent something that has a large performance advantage."

"I am relaxed, aware of what 2021 will be and hopeful for 2022. It is matter of building something together, that you trust, that has the capabilities and investment and all those things I found in Renault."

THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE

Ultimately, however much some people will attempt to complicate matters, it seems a simple scenario, into which both parties are entering with their eyes open.

Alonso is on a two-year contract with options to extend on both sides. He knows what to expect in 2021 – because he can see how the Renault he will be driving, give or take limited upgrades, is performing this year. In the meantime, Renault earns a bucket-load of publicity from having Alonso in its car, and he gets to come back to F1.

In 2022, under rules aimed at closing up the grid, the team hopes for a new start, and to be fighting for wins. If it works out, great – Renault has one of the best drivers it could possibly hope for, and Alonso gets to challenge for more success and, who knows, maybe even a third title?

If not, either Alonso or Renault, or both, can choose not to continue together. Ultimately, what has either of them got to lose?

Andrew Benson is BBC Sport's chief F1 writer

THE SHOCK OF

Mugello has never hosted a grand prix before – but it's not entirely unfamiliar ground for Formula 1 cars

WORDS ROBERTO CHINCERO

PICTURES  **motorsport** IMAGES AND FERRARI

THE

NEW (ISH)

The story of Formula 1 and Mugello is one of a love that's remained unconsummated for almost 50 years. Many times the two parties have touched each other, for tests or promotional activities, but the long-awaited marriage never arrived. Hope of a grand prix on the 5245 meters of undulating Tuscan asphalt remained exactly that – hope, seemingly destined to be unfulfilled.

Mugello has never wanted for other international sporting events: it was a crucible of Formula 2 and Formula 3000 back in the day, has hosted World Sportscar Championship, FIA GT and DTM rounds, and is a fixture on the MotoGP calendar, but Formula 1 has remained almost a forbidden dream. Then, in a year in which the very ►





possibility of there being a Formula 1 world championship hung in the balance for many months, a miracle quickly took shape.

“We can do it,” insisted the circuit managers and, although this claim was received with all due scepticism by fans and F1 insiders, it has come to pass with a delightful additional *frisson* – the historic coincidence of Ferrari’s 1000th grand prix. For Italian enthusiasts who have been waiting for a race here for decades, there will be no opportunity to watch from the grandstands, but it doesn’t matter: the Tuscan Grand Prix is now a reality.

When you speak to drivers who’ve had the opportunity to run at Mugello, you begin to understand how the physical challenge ramps up sharply relative to a car’s performance levels. The faster the car, the more Mugello

becomes “tough” – a word that crops up very often.

“Driving from the Casanova-Savelli section to the Arrabbiata 2 corner, you’re barely able to breathe,” says Robert Kubica. “The speed is very high, the elevation change is remarkable. It’s an exciting and very technical track, with a high average speed, and the difficulty level increases progressively with the speed.”

While the predominantly fast and flowing nature of Mugello requires finesse, it’s the physical demands

that have been the focus of attention ahead of the circuit’s maiden Formula 1 race. That’s because the high downforce levels of the current F1 cars mean sections where one would normally brake or downshift in lesser machinery will be taken flat out, or perhaps with a brief feathering of the

throttle. Drivers can expect to feel loadings of around 5G on their necks – a level they may experience as a peak at other circuits but which will be constant for several seconds at Mugello.

In 2000 a very young Kimi Räikkönen, at that time racing in Formula Renault 2.0, was invited to Mugello by Peter Sauber, who was looking for a replacement for Mika Salo. At that time Räikkönen was unknown, and the Sauber call-up caused quite a stir. Kimi immediately proved to be on the pace in terms of lap time, but on the afternoon of the first day of testing he abruptly pulled into the pitlane and said: “Today it’s better to stop here, because otherwise I won’t be able to drive tomorrow.”

Sauber was struck by how a driver with so little experience of car racing could take such a big-picture view of the test as a whole. It was this clear indication of maturity and professionalism, along with the impressive turn of speed, which influenced Sauber to sign him up for the 2001 F1 season.

The majority of Formula 1 testing at Mugello has been completed in private by Ferrari, which has owned the circuit since 1988. While the layout of the track remains unchanged since it was built in the early 1970s, Ferrari has improved the infrastructure and maintained the track surface to FIA Grade 1 standards.

Restrictions on testing in recent years means the circuit hasn’t seen much F1 action, though in 2012 it was chosen as the only in-season test ▶

“IT’S THE PHYSICAL DEMANDS THAT HAVE BEEN THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION AHEAD OF THE CIRCUIT’S MAIDEN FORMULA 1 RACE”



Mugello is owned by Ferrari and it used the track for a promotional day with a 2018 car just before racing resumed this season



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RETURN TO IMOLA



After a 14-year absence Formula 1 returns to the Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari, the site of one of motorsport's darkest weekends back in 1994, and yet this is a welcome return. When F1's visit was confirmed there was a certain disbelief, even among the fans. After all, this will be the third GP held in Italy this year, a remarkable and unexpected turn of events.

It will be an atypical event, given that the weekend is scheduled for an unusual date (1 November), but still an eagerly awaited one. There is much curiosity about the feeling this new generation of drivers will encounter on what is a very traditional track, one with combinations of corners seldom encountered on the sanitised 'Tilkedromes' that have predominated recently – not to mention the presence of gravel traps rather than asphalt runoffs.

This June AlphaTauri completed a 'filming day' at Imola, and Daniil Kvyat confirms his enthusiasm for the layout. "Imola is a special track," he says. "I've known it for some time, I did one of my first tests here with a car in 2010. The track is really fantastic to drive, with some nice fast corners."

The most demanding points are the Acque Minerali chicane and the Variante Alta, sections where a mistake involves a high price to pay given the absence of runoff. Imola is a venue where riding the kerbs can bring a huge benefit to lap time if judged correctly, or performance-limiting damage if not. Sadly the current layout doesn't favour overtaking; the chicanes introduced after Ayrton Senna's fatal accident reduced the overall speed as well as breaking up the long straight leading to Tosa, a corner which used to be a key point of attack.

Ferrari fans have keenly anticipated F1's return to the circuit named after Enzo and Dino Ferrari and it's the hope of a new generation of enthusiasts – those who have read stories about a track seemingly forgotten by major international events – that this is not a one-off. If it felt like a miracle that Mugello got a calendar date, followed by Imola, it would be churlish not to hope for similar miracles in future, wouldn't it?


venue. For many drivers it was their first time at Mugello, and at the end of the three days the majority were enthusiastic about it.

"In terms of satisfaction," said Mark Webber, "10 dry laps at Mugello are worth as much as 1000 in Abu Dhabi!"

"This track is incredible," said Sebastian Vettel. "I'm absolutely thrilled. I'd never driven it before, and I didn't expect such a thing."

The only negative opinion back in 2012 was voiced by Caterham driver Vitaly Petrov. "I don't think we should have come here," was his verdict. "It's not safe and wide enough and if you lose your car, the barriers are so close that you hit the tyres."

Mugello is certainly a track to be taken seriously, and not to be trifled with, for it's an 'old school' circuit without vast expanses of asphalt runoffs. Make a mistake here and you must hope to be arrested by the gravel, because the barriers lurk beyond. And even if you don't go off the track, you will still pay a high price for every mistake, because the flowing nature of the layout means each small loss of momentum saps speed further down the line.

"I'm sure there will be some drivers who will say the track is too narrow," says Kubica, "forgetting that we also race in Monaco. But at the same time I'm sure there will be others who, at the end of the weekend, will put Mugello among the top tracks, if not the absolute top. I'm ready to bet on it." 





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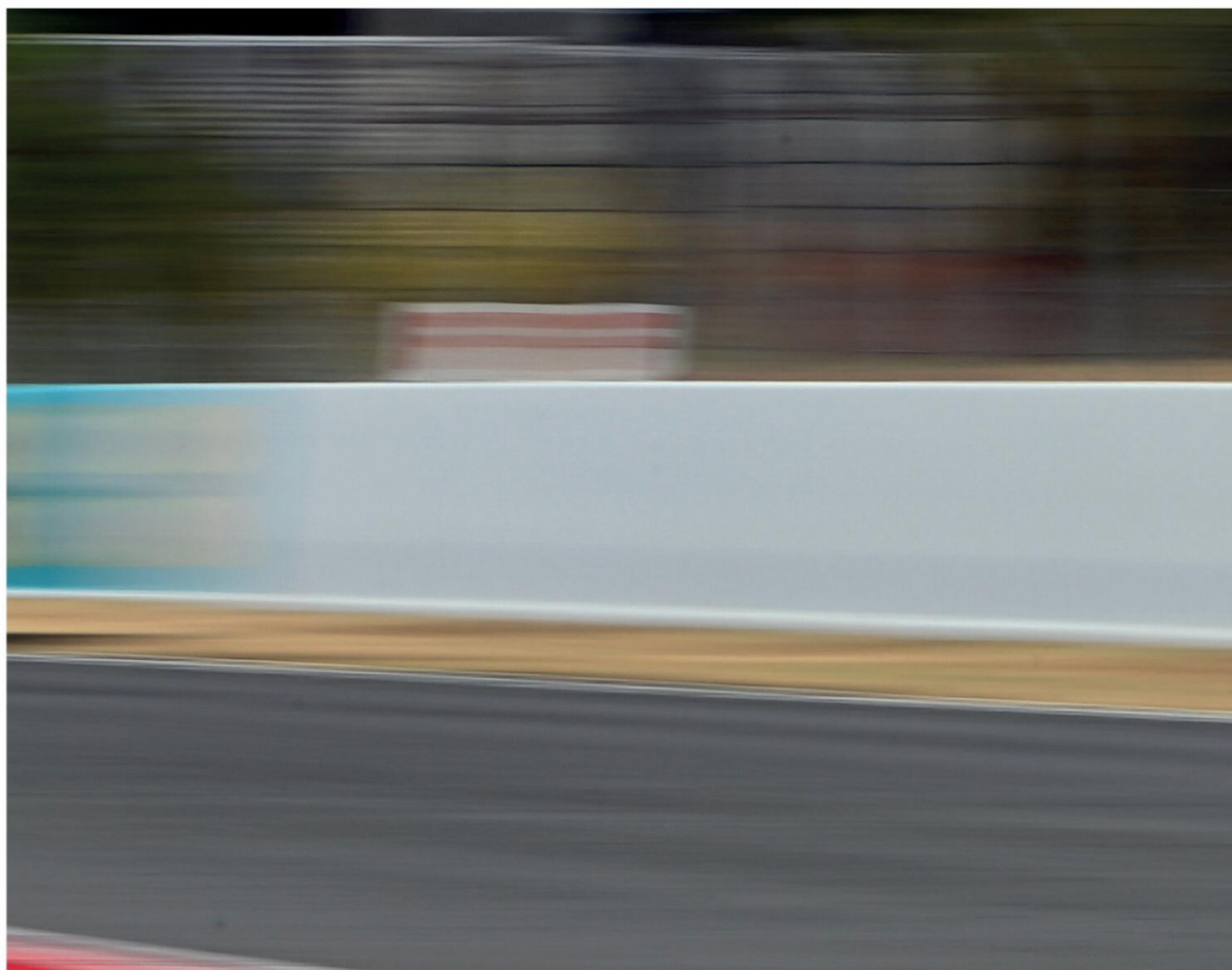
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RACING UNDER A CLOUD

THREE DRIVERS BEGAN THIS SEASON ALREADY KNOWING THEY WOULD BE MOVING ELSEWHERE FOR NEXT YEAR. SO WHAT'S IT LIKE TO BE CARLOS SAINZ, DANIEL RICCIARDO OR SEBASTIAN VETTEL, RACING FOR A TEAM YOU'LL BE LEAVING – AND NOT NECESSARILY IN THE MOST AMICABLE WAY?

WORDS **STUART COOLING**
PICTURES  **motorsport**
IMAGES

PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; ANDY HONE



ONE OF THE MANY JOYS FORMULA 1 FANS

have been forced to forego in 2020 is the ‘silly season’, that annual frenzy of speculation over which out-of-contract driver will end up where. This year the biggest, most significant moves were tied up long before the season began. And while it’s not unprecedented for a driver to telegraph their departure more than a season in advance – Fernando Alonso announced his move from Renault to McLaren at the tail end of 2005 – it’s rare indeed for three big names to be serving out their notice period thus.

Carlos Sainz set the dominoes toppling by signing a 2021 contract with Ferrari, which subsequently announced that it hadn’t even bothered to open renewal negotiations with Sebastian Vettel. Daniel Ricciardo, meanwhile, gleefully bagged the McLaren seat vacated by Sainz, a move that prompted the team principal of his current employer, Renault, to issue a huffy and rebarbative statement about the virtues of commitment and being a team player – or not, in this case.

For these three men, then, this promises to be an even more unusual season than it is for everyone else in F1. Drivers whose departure is formalised at the conventional time, with but a handful of races left to run, can generally expect at the very least for a kind of smiling exclusion to prevail, as their soon-to-be-ex-employer shuts them out of technical briefings and such. F1 teams are close-knit communities and the perception of disloyalty – or the feeling that a driver is on his way out, a lost cause – can foment distrust or complacency within the garage.

Renault team principal Cyril Abiteboul alluded to this in his veiled dig at Ricciardo: “In our sport, and particularly within the current extraordinary situation, reciprocated confidence, unity and commitment are, more than ever, critical values for a works team.”

Carlos Sainz and his management team nimbly and diplomatically avoided this scenario by engaging with McLaren’s leadership before opening talks with Ferrari, enabling McLaren to sound out potential replacements well in advance. By contrast Ricciardo wrongfooted Renault, leaving its leaders exposed and looking like mugs.

“I wouldn’t say it’s been surprisingly easy because it’s no surprise – I know them [the team management],” says Sainz. “It’s been easy going, you know. I think they perfectly understand my position. I perfectly understand their position. There was always a lot of clarity, a lot of honesty on what was going on, and no hiding of any kind of negotiation.

“We were being clear to each other to make sure none of us would end up being upset or on the back foot. I owe a lot of this to Zak [Brown, McLaren CEO] because he’s been the one that trusted me in 2018 when I signed for McLaren. He put the faith in me, we had a very successful 2019, and that is probably what gave me the passport to have the option of going to Ferrari. I’m very grateful to all of this team and at the same time obviously very excited about the future.”

There are no signs of rancour at McLaren, nor that Sainz is being disadvantaged in favour of team-mate Lando Norris, although Norris did secure an opportunistic podium in the season opener through a strategy that required Sainz to obey team orders. There have been incidents of ‘finger trouble’ at pitstops that have scuppered races for Sainz, but only the conspiracy-minded would view these as deliberate, and on each occasion the team has flagellated itself for the blunder. After the Styrian Grand Prix, for instance, where Sainz started third but finished a delayed ninth, team principal Andreas Seidl publicly apologised. Points are what McLaren wants this season, not destabilised and demotivated drivers.

“With this team I would say the idea is very clear,” says Sainz. “We have a target every year, clear intentions of how much we want to improve the car, which areas we’re weak as a team, and which areas we’re strong. We have very clear indications of where we need to improve and this team is in a very

healthy position, performance-wise, right now, because even if we haven’t done the jump of Racing Point – gaining one or two seconds – we’ve done a little half a second step. We’re not lost. We know what we’ve done to the development of the car. And we have a very clear path and very clear targets.

“We’ve taken out that pressure [of expectation, given McLaren’s history], we’ve been honest about our position in the drivers’ and constructors’ championships. We knew we needed to finish fourth in the constructors’ last year, and this year to try and match that or potentially improve it, even though it’s going to be very difficult.”



PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; CHARLES COATES; HENRIK RINGNER/MCLAREN



Sainz (above) moving to Ferrari was the catalyst for this driver shuffle before the 2020 season even started, which saw Vettel (left) ousted from the Scuderia and Ricciardo (top) replace Sainz at McLaren. This means that all three drivers are having to handle an unusually long notice period at their current employer...

Given the current climate in which the sport's commercial revenues have taken a beating, constructors' championship placings have assumed an even greater significance than before. Each position gained means a bigger share of what will be a much smaller pot. Renault may not be under the same financial pressures as McLaren, but it remains answerable to a parent company unlikely to tolerate much more slippage from its stated targets. It too is desperate to finish fourth or better.

To that end, Ricciardo shows no sign of being shuffled down Renault's list of priorities. Perhaps the tensions have been eased by the team's ►

high-profile recruitment of Fernando Alonso to replace him. And for all that Alonso has added his voice to those saying this season and the next are, in effect, ‘zombie’ years of Mercedes dominance before a major rules reset, the midfield battle will remain every bit as intense as it is now. Renault needs to carry on putting its weight behind Ricciardo because he is its main contender for big points at the moment – in the opening races Esteban Ocon simply hasn’t been able to extract the maximum from the car in qualifying, consigning him to slogging for scraps from indifferent grid positions.

If Sainz and Ricciardo are on safe ground in terms of status and competitiveness this season, Vettel is anything but. The opening tranche of races aptly summed up where Ferrari is, competitively speaking, and how it must mitigate the weaknesses of the SF1000 – many of which are now ‘baked in’ for 2021, given the development restrictions agreed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. These mitigations have taken the car in a direction that has enabled Charles Leclerc to elevate it beyond its natural place in the pecking order, but left Vettel struggling. Ferrari appears to be comfortable with this, a situation which would not have prevailed last season, when Vettel was its stated team leader.



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; CHARLES COATES

That Ferrari has been pegged back massively on engine power – after its ‘confidential settlement’ with the FIA – is beyond doubt, for its customer teams are also struggling for want of grunt. Lack of downforce had been a shortcoming of the SF1000’s predecessor and the new car seemed to have overcome that, but at the cost of carrying more drag. The combination of this and reduced power proved ruinous in the opening triple-header, Leclerc’s lucky podium in Austria notwithstanding.

Ferrari has sought to address this with a low-downforce package it introduced at Silverstone, but only Leclerc was able to cope with the twitchiness that ensued (during qualifying both Ferraris had to feather the throttle at Copse, for instance, when even the Williams could go through

Minor pitstop fumbles on Sainz’s car are not a sign of McLaren treating the Spaniard any different to team-mate Norris, and the team has berated itself over such errors

there flat out). Vettel had a hopeless British GP weekend, complaining twice about debris rattling around in the cockpit, labouring to a lowly grid position, then spending much of the race outside the top 10 while Leclerc arguably outperformed the car. A week later Vettel spun to the back of the field on the opening lap and toiled to 12th, publicly berating Ferrari for its

“IN A TEAM LIKE McLAREN OR FERRARI, WHERE THE HISTORY AND THE HERITAGE MEANS YOU’RE ONLY HAPPY IF YOU’RE WINNING, YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT THAT MAYBE YOU’RE GONNA GO THROUGH A TOUGH COUPLE OF YEARS”

CARLOS SAINZ



Vettel is probably suffering the most of the three on notice. He admits his confidence is low and is struggling to get a feel for the SF1000, as this Silverstone spin showed

strategy choices and earning a rebuke from team principal Mattia Binotto.

There was also a suspicion Vettel's race may have been compromised to assist Leclerc's, for he was brought into the pits for a second pitstop after just 11 laps on new hard-compound tyres, which had plenty of life left in them. At the time, the one-stopping Leclerc was coming up behind him on track.

"My confidence is quite low at the moment," says Vettel, "because I'm struggling to get a feel for the car. Every time I try and push, I lose the car."

The trouble for Vettel over the remainder of this season is that he requires a car with a particular set of virtues, particularly a predictable and well-planted back end, in order to perform at his best. He's not going to get that, and his lack of confidence in the operation around him – as well as the car itself – is plainly visible.

While Vettel struggles to put himself in the shop window for future employers, his anointed replacement is enjoying a reasonably competitive car operated by a stable and well-run team with clear goals. But if Sainz has any misgivings about the wisdom of his move, he's not letting on.

"When I signed with with Ferrari," he says, "the last thing they knew is that they had stuck it on pole in the last few races of the season and they were fighting for wins at Monza and Spa. And I was obviously very excited about that going into 2021. And now after seeing where they are, it's time to fix new objectives.


"Ferrari has definitely taken a bit of a step backwards. But when you're in a team like McLaren or Ferrari, where the history and the heritage means you're only happy if you're winning, you have to accept that maybe you're gonna go through a tough couple of years.

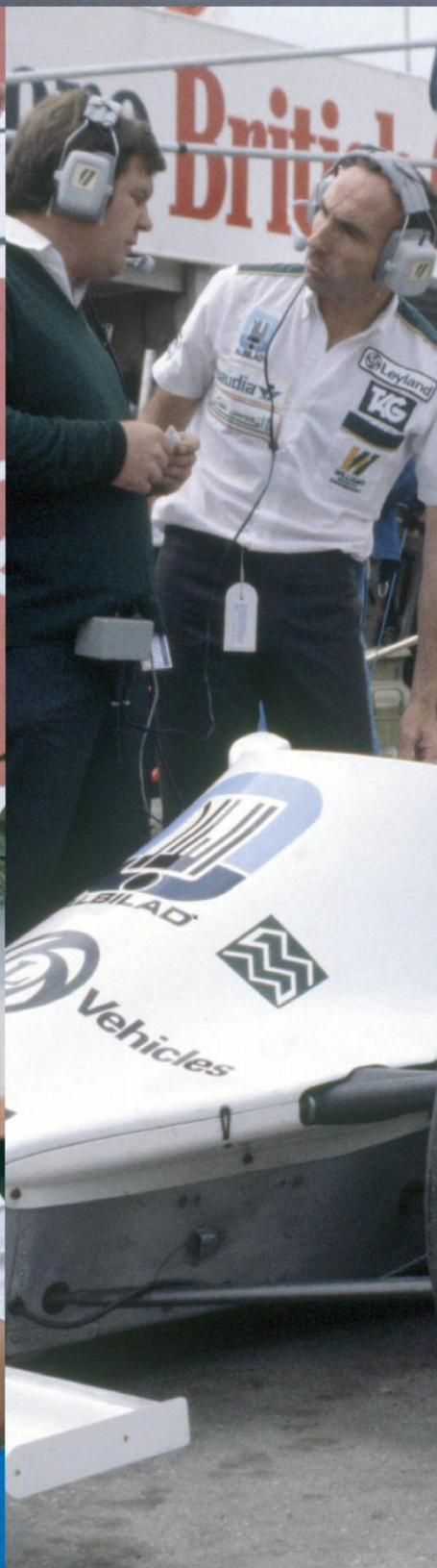
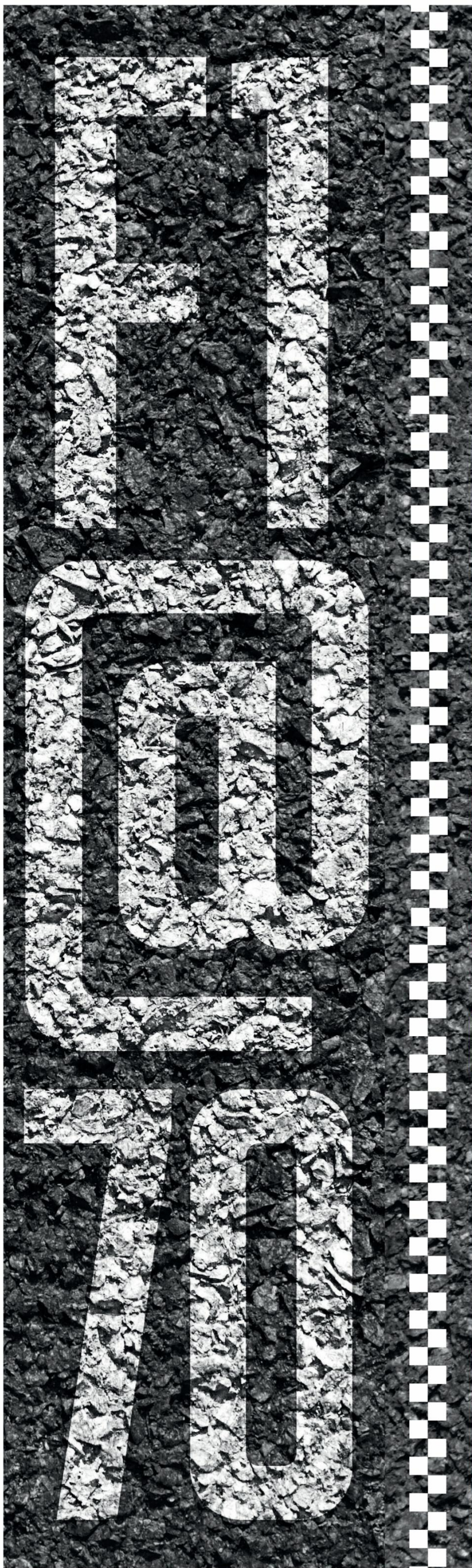
"You need to put yourself in a mindset of wanting to win in the future, and what you need to do to help the team achieve that, because at the moment McLaren, Ferrari and Renault aren't where they belong, at the front of the grid. We just have an incredible group of people at Mercedes who are making everyone's life very complicated, making it very difficult to be in F1, and I think it doesn't matter what team you're in, everybody has that target – to find an answer to Mercedes."



Renault needs to keep Daniel Ricciardo happy as he has held the upper hand over team-mate Esteban Ocon in the opening races of this shortened and compacted season

If it didn't really matter which team you were in, though, not one of these three would have moved. Sainz is an ambitious and gifted driver who saw an opportunity – possibly of the once-in-a-lifetime variety – to get into a race-winning car. Ricciardo is perhaps at a different point in his career, where that opportunity is behind him, and yet he has much to offer given the right car. The same might be said of Vettel even as Ferrari turns its back on him.

For all that the end of the 2020 season is not yet in sight, and the beginning of 2021 barely on the horizon, Sainz and Ricciardo – and perhaps even Vettel – are contemplating a more distant goal. The promise of 2022, and the new formula which may end Mercedes' virtual monopoly on success, is what will sustain them through any choppiness in the months to come. 





FORMULA 1'S SEVENTY GREATEST INFLUENCERS

PART 4 THE 1980s

GILLES VILLENEUVE
JEAN-MARIE BALESTRE
BERNIE ECCLESTONE
NELSON PIQUET
JOHN BARNARD

GUY LIGIER
ALAIN PROST
FRANK WILLIAMS
RON DENNIS
AYRTON SENNA

OUR SEVEN-PART
TRIBUTE TO F1'S
MOST INFLUENTIAL
CHARACTERS MOVES
ON TO AN ERA
SYMBOLISED BY
POWER: THE 1980s,
WHEN HORSEPOWER
RULED ON TRACK AND
BRUTAL POWERPLAYS
ROCKED THE
ESTABLISHED
OFF-TRACK ORDER

WORDS RICHARD WILLIAMS

PICTURES

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IMAGES

F1'S 70 GREATEST INFLUENCERS: THE 1980s

The 1970s had ended with **Gilles Villeneuve** winning the US Grand Prix East at Watkins Glen. A month earlier he had shadowed Jody Scheckter, his Ferrari team mate, around a sunlit Monza on the day the South African became the Scuderia's seventh world champion. Gilles was just doing the right thing, protecting the interests of the team's designated number one. Among the fans around the world who had already taken him to their hearts, the assumption was that he would be the next Ferrari driver to take the title.

It was not to be, but in his brief career the little French-Canadian reminded the world that Formula 1 should be about courage, risk, daring and, above all, panache. A punchy debut at Silverstone with McLaren in 1977 had given glimpses of his potential. Later that year he joined Ferrari, where he established an affectionate bond with the man who gave his name to the team. Enzo Ferrari saw in Villeneuve some of the qualities he had prized in Tazio Nuvolari: sublime skill, dashing bravery and a generosity of spirit that extended beyond his personal ambition.

The statistic of six wins from 67 starts tells far less of the story than clips of Gilles sideways in a red car, tearing into the pits at Zandvoort on three wheels, or cheerfully banging wheels with René Arnoux's Renault all the way round the last lap at Dijon as they scrapped for second place in 1979. Gilles' job was to bring the crowd



The ultimate risk-taker and crowd-pleaser, Villeneuve is still revered and idolised throughout the F1 world despite never winning the world title



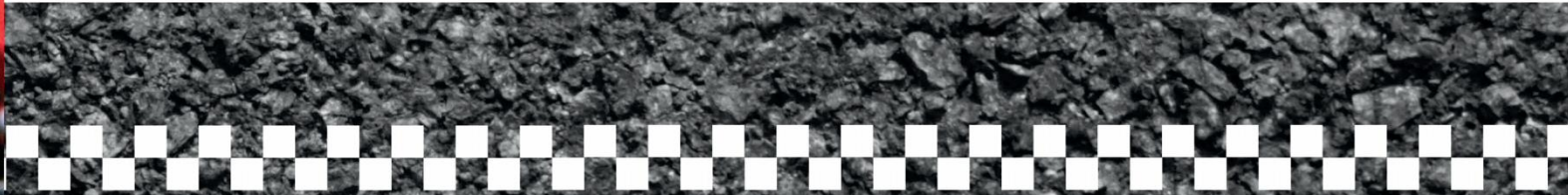
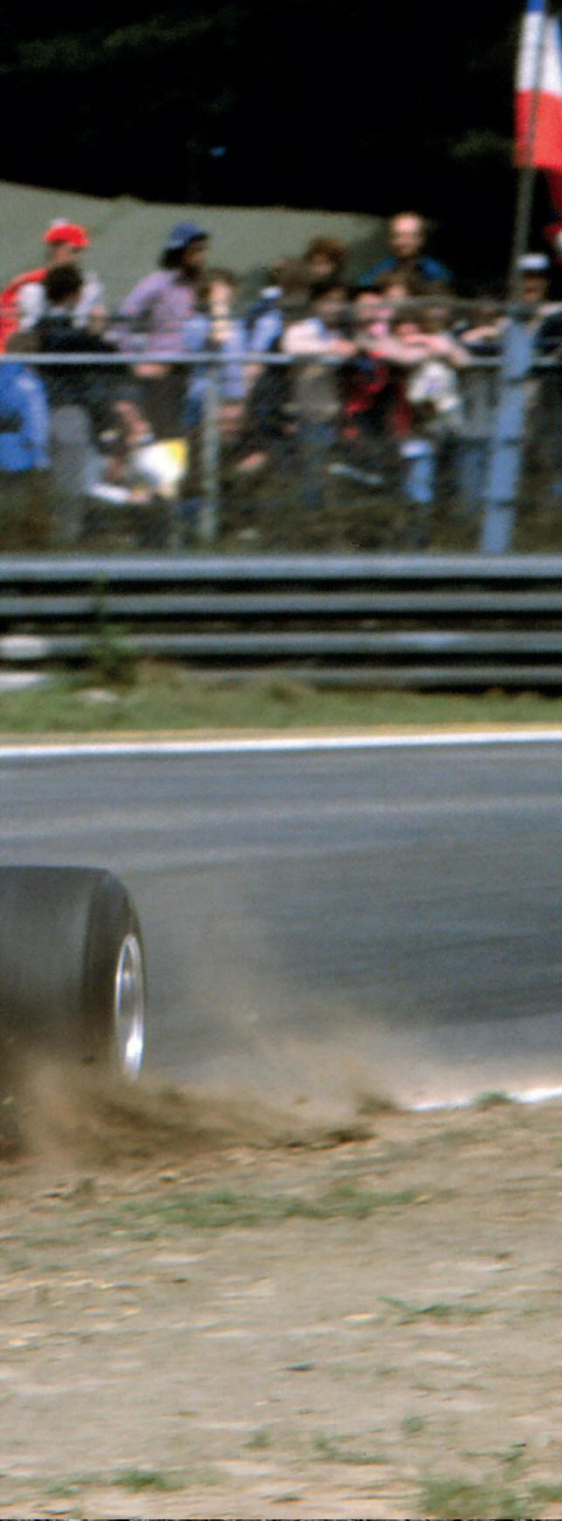
to its feet, and who cared who won?

All motorsport deaths are tragic, but Gilles' death in a practice accident at Zolder in 1982, at the age of 32, had a special poignancy, coming a fortnight after he believed he had been double-crossed when his team-mate, Didier Pironi, snatched a win on the final lap of the San Marino GP at Imola. The number 27, which Villeneuve wore in his last two seasons, can still be seen on the tifosi's banners four decades later. Never a champion in title, but forever a champion in the people's hearts.

While Villeneuve was showing that racing could still be an affair of the emotions, a very different sort of battle was taking place for control of F1 itself. On the one side stood **Jean-Marie Balestre**, the president of the Fédération Internationale du Sport Automobile, an old-school sporting administrator, blazered and blustering, resistant to change, with a slightly murky wartime history and a fortune earned from magazine publishing.

His opponent came from a different world, with different priorities. **Bernie Ecclestone** was a former second-hand car dealer who had raced a bit and then managed a couple of drivers, including the 1970 world champion, Jochen Rindt. After Rindt's death Ecclestone bought the declining Brabham team, made it a success again on the track, and used it as the platform from which to launch a campaign to change the way Formula 1 was run.

Recognising that the teams could wield significant bargaining power, Ecclestone became a prime mover in the creation of the Formula One Constructors' Association. Crucially, he saw that F1 could be transformed by the centralised negotiation of its commercial rights, principally the fees from broadcasters,



Ecclestone (left), with Max Mosley. The pair would later go on to control F1, but the eighties was when Bernie manoeuvred himself into a position of power within the Formula One Constructors' Association

“WHILE VILLENEUVE WAS SHOWING THAT RACING COULD STILL BE AN AFFAIR OF THE EMOTIONS, A VERY DIFFERENT BATTLE WAS TAKING PLACE FOR CONTROL OF F1 ITSELF”

sponsors and circuit promoters. A long war was waged between the predominantly British FOCA and Balestre's FISA, which counted on the support of Ferrari, Renault and Alfa Romeo. A flashpoint came when those three teams showed their support for the governing body by boycotting the 1980 Spanish GP at Jarama, and were joined by further no-shows, Ligier and Osella, when Ecclestone ran a breakaway race at Kyalami the following year.

Enzo Ferrari stepped in to broker a deal through which the FIA, FISA's parent body, retained control of the technical side of the sport while granting ownership of the commercial rights to FOCA. Ecclestone's ruthless appropriation and shrewd exploitation of those rights transformed Formula 1, taking it into territories that would once have been considered unimaginable – China, Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Turkey – and making many people within the championship very rich, most of all himself.

Balestre, who had stood aside to let Bernie do as he pleased, ►

Jean-Marie Balestre was unpredictable as head of F1's governing body, the FIA, and eventually capitulated to Ecclestone



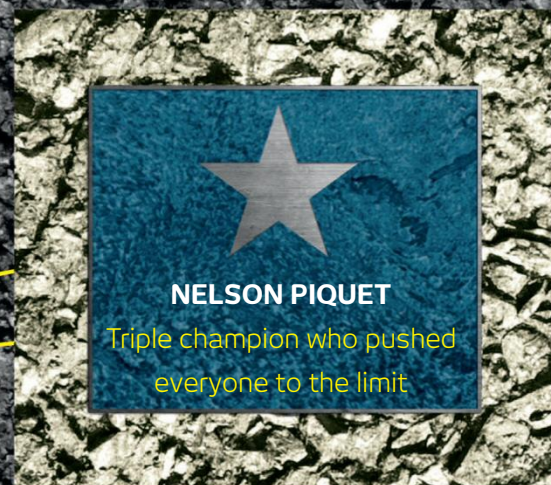


Piquet is synonymous with Ecclestone's Brabham team and won two of his three championships in blue and white in 1981 and 1983, before garnering further title success with Williams in 1987

became president of the FIA in 1985, serving for eight years; he died in 2008, aged 86. Ecclestone supervised the sale of F1 from a private equity firm to Liberty Media in 2017, after which he was eased aside and went off to run his Brazilian coffee farm, becoming a father for the fourth time at the age of 89. He had taught every other sport in the world how to maximise its financial potential.

The success of Ecclestone's Brabham team in the early 1980s brought the name of **Nelson Piquet** to the fore. Piquet was a fun-loving native of Rio de Janeiro who arrived in Europe in 1977. Within a year he had found his way into Formula 1, securing a seat in Ecclestone's team alongside Niki Lauda for 1979. Piquet's first win, in

Ligier with drivers Patrick Depailler (left) and Jacques Laffite in 1979. When Laffite was joined by Didier Pironi the following year the team managed to finish second in the constructors' championship



F1'S 70 GREATEST INFLUENCERS: THE 1980s

the DFV-engined BT49, came at Long Beach the following year. Three more wins in 1981 gave him the first of his two world championships with the team. The second came two years later, with a BT52 powered by BMW's massively powerful four-cylinder turbo engine.

In 1986 Nelson moved to Williams, where he elbowed aside Nigel Mansell to win the 1987 title by virtue of a string of podium finishes, despite having won only three grands prix to the Englishman's six. Two years with Lotus and two more with Benetton yielded the last of Piquet's 23 wins from 204 starts, in the 1991 Canadian Grand Prix.

Piquet brought a malicious streak into Formula 1, accusing Mansell of having an ugly wife and insinuating that his compatriot Ayrton Senna was gay. He was also extremely quick, and enjoyed working with designers and engineers to push his cars up to and sometimes beyond the limits of the technical regulations.

Among the most influential of this particular era's designers was **John Barnard**, a visionary who arrived at McLaren in 1972. He worked with Gordon Coppuck on the M23, which won the drivers' championship for Emerson Fittipaldi in 1974, before leaving to join Parnelli Jones's unsuccessful F1 project and then working on Indycars, including the Chaparral 2K which won the Indy 500 and the CART title in Johnny Rutherford's hands in 1980.

Returning to McLaren, Barnard created the MP4, the first F1 car to use a carbonfibre composite chassis. Its combination of lightness, strength and rigidity revolutionised racing car design and manufacture. After switching to TAG-Porsche turbo engines in 1984, the team won a world title with Niki Lauda and two more with Alain Prost. Barnard's move to Ferrari in 1987 proved less happy, although he did introduce the semi-automatic gearbox operated by paddles behind the steering wheel, which became standard for all F1 teams.

Two years at Benetton were followed by a return to Ferrari, during which he designed the car in which Michael Schumacher took his first victories for the Scuderia in 1996 and 1997. A refusal to move from his Guildford HQ to Maranello led to Barnard's departure for spells as a freelance consultant with Arrows and Prost. Since 2008 he has applied his knowledge of composite materials to advanced furniture design.

For two years in the 1980s the loudest sound in Formula 1 was that of the V12 Matra engine powering the cars of the team run by **Guy Ligier**. Born in Vichy in 1930, Ligier was a national rowing champion and played rugby for the French army. While founding and running a construction company whose work on big infrastructure projects gave him good contacts among senior French socialist politicians, including François Mitterrand, Ligier pursued a part-time career as a racing driver, entering 13 grands prix with his own Cooper-Maserati and Brabham-Repco before retiring from the cockpit after his friend Jo Schlesser was killed in 1968.

In 1976 he launched his first F1 car, designed by Gérard Ducarouge, with Jacques Laffite as his driver and Gitanes cigarettes as their principal sponsor. The all-French outfit achieved a first victory in its second season, when Laffite won in Sweden. At the turn of the 1980s, with Laffite joined by Didier Pironi and then Patrick Tambay, the Ligiers were a threat to everyone, but by the time the



Barnard with Prost as the McLaren MP4/2B is refuelled. Evolutions of Barnard's visionary design won three titles in a row from 1984-86

founder sold the company in 1993 the total of wins had been stuck on eight for a dozen years. Ligier himself remained as an ambassador for the team while concentrating on a new business dealing in natural fertilisers. He died in 2015, aged 85.

France had been robbed of its post-war grand prix stars by the crashes that killed Jean-Pierre Wimille in 1949, Raymond Sommer in 1950 and Jean Behra in 1959. Maurice Trintignant's two Monaco wins in 1955 and 1958 represented the nation's only successes until the appearance of Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Johnny Servoz-Gavin, Henri Pescarolo and François Cevert in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the time **Alain Prost** arrived on the scene in 1980, he was joining an entire generation of Frenchmen, among them Laffite, Tambay, Pironi, Patrick Depailler, René Arnoux and Jean-Pierre Jabouille.

Prost was the star graduate of the Winfield Racing School, based at the Paul Ricard circuit, a calm stylist whose thoughtful approach soon earned him the nickname "The Professor". Already recognised as a prodigy during his debut season with McLaren, Prost moved to Renault, where he won nine races in three seasons. A return to ►

Although his first season in F1 was with McLaren, it was with Renault that Prost established himself as a real talent and future champion

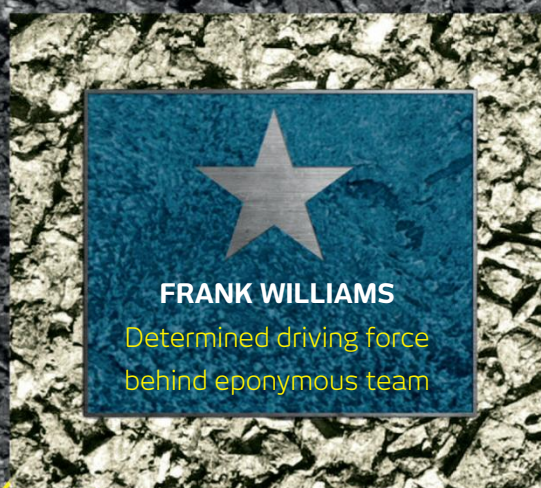


F1'S 70 GREATEST INFLUENCERS: THE 1980s

Frank Williams turned his team from the joke of the pitlane into world-beaters and the success continued even after his life-threatening accident in 1986



Ron Dennis might have been idiosyncratic when he was in charge of McLaren, but he made it into a winning team again and led an operation to be feared



McLaren opened the way to the world titles of 1985, 1986 and 1989, won against competition from his team-mates Lauda, Keke Rosberg and Senna, themselves world champions. Two years with Ferrari began promisingly – although a rancorous battle with Senna for the 1990 title went against Prost after the Brazilian intentionally crashed into him at the first corner at Suzuka – but ended with a humiliating late-season dismissal in 1991.

After a year off, Prost returned in 1993 to drive the car that everyone wanted: the Williams FW15C, with its active suspension and other driver aids. He duly cruised to his fourth title before retiring from the cockpit with 51 wins from 199 starts.

In 1997 he bought the Ligier team and rechristened it Prost GP, but not even the arrival of Jean Alesi could transform it into a real contender and after five poor seasons the project went bust. In 2017 Prost returned to Renault as an adviser to the F1 team; he is now Renault Sport's non-executive director.

Frank Williams, the man in whose all-conquering car Prost won his last title, had taken the long route to the top of Formula 1. From his impecunious beginnings with an Austin A35 in club meetings, Frank progressed through the raffish world of European Formula 3 racing in the 1960s, alongside such pals as Piers Courage and Charles Lucas. A hustler in pursuit of his ambitions, Williams gave up driving and made his way into F1 in 1969, running a Brabham for Courage; they surprised everybody, not least themselves, by finishing second at

Monaco. For 1970 Frank made a deal to run a car built by Alejandro de Tomaso, but Courage's death in a fiery crash at Zandvoort prefaced four seasons of struggle with assorted cars and drivers.

A meeting with the young designer Patrick Head in 1975 presaged a change of fortune. Raising money from Saudia Arabia's national airline, they built a series of neat Cosworth-engined cars capable of winning grands prix, starting with Clay Regazzoni's victory at Silverstone in 1979. The following year the FW07 and FW07B took Alan Jones to five race wins and the world championship. In 1982 Rosberg became the team's second champion, followed in 1987 by Piquet in the Honda-powered FW11B, the year after Williams had been severely injured in a car crash, losing the use of all four limbs.

His racer's brain, however, remained fully functioning, and further titles for Nigel Mansell in 1992, Prost in 1993, Damon Hill in 1996 and Jacques Villeneuve in 1997 illustrated the dominance of a team whose innovative brilliance was enhanced when Head was joined in the design office by the gifted young Adrian Newey. Hindsight would show that Newey's departure at the end of 1996 prefaced a long, slow decline which not even a five-year tie-up with BMW could arrest.

As the fortunes of Williams waxed and waned, so those of McLaren revived under the leadership of **Ron Dennis**, who had started in F1 as a teenaged mechanic with the Cooper and Brabham teams in the 1960s. A visionary with a proud and sometimes awkward manner, Dennis was among the most brilliant of the men



As early as his time in British F3, Ayrton Senna attracted serious interest from F1 teams and his sublime skill in a racing car helped to mitigate the darker side of his character



who cemented Britain's dominance of grand prix racing.

Taking over the struggling McLaren team in 1980, and insisting that his team's factory and circuit garages be kept as spotless as the average operating theatre, Ron turned it back into a title-winner. With a string of great designers and drivers, and support from blue-chip sponsors, he achieved the kind of consistent success that justified the building of a spectacular £200m headquarters in the Surrey stockbroker belt, designed by the celebrity architect Norman Foster. Intent on creating a British equivalent of Ferrari, Dennis also applied the McLaren name and racing technology to a series of road-going supercars, a decision that spelled the end for a close technical partnership with Mercedes, McLaren's engine supplier, and prefaced a gradual slide towards the back half of the grid.


Having supervised championships for Lauda, Prost, Senna, Mika Häkkinen and Lewis Hamilton during his three decades as team principal, in 2009 Dennis stepped back. In 2015 he relinquished chairmanship and in 2017 left the company altogether, selling his remaining 25% stake to existing shareholders for a reported £275m. Like Enzo Ferrari, Colin Chapman and Frank Williams, Dennis was a hard act to follow.

Williams and Dennis played contrasting roles in the career of a figure who emerged in the second half of the 1980s and a man who captured the global imagination like no racing driver before him.

Ayrton Senna began karting in 1973, aged 13. Twice runner-up

in the world championship, he arrived in England in 1981 to compete in Formula Ford. By the time he won the British Formula 3 title after a season-long battle with Martin Brundle in 1983, Senna was already marked for greatness.

Moving into Formula 1 with Toleman, Senna took his first grand prix win with Lotus – a brilliant drive in the rain at Estoril in 1985 – before joining McLaren. Between 1988 and 1991 he and Alain Prost won four consecutive championships, three of them going to the Brazilian, amid an increasingly bitter rivalry which revealed Senna's sometimes questionable reluctance to let anything stand between him and victory. His two most extraordinary performances came in McLarens: at Monaco in 1988, when he qualified almost a second and a half ahead of the field with a lap of what seemed like supernatural virtuosity, and at a drizzly Donington Park in 1993, when he passed five cars on the opening lap to take a lead he would lose only temporarily, during the many pitstops that day.

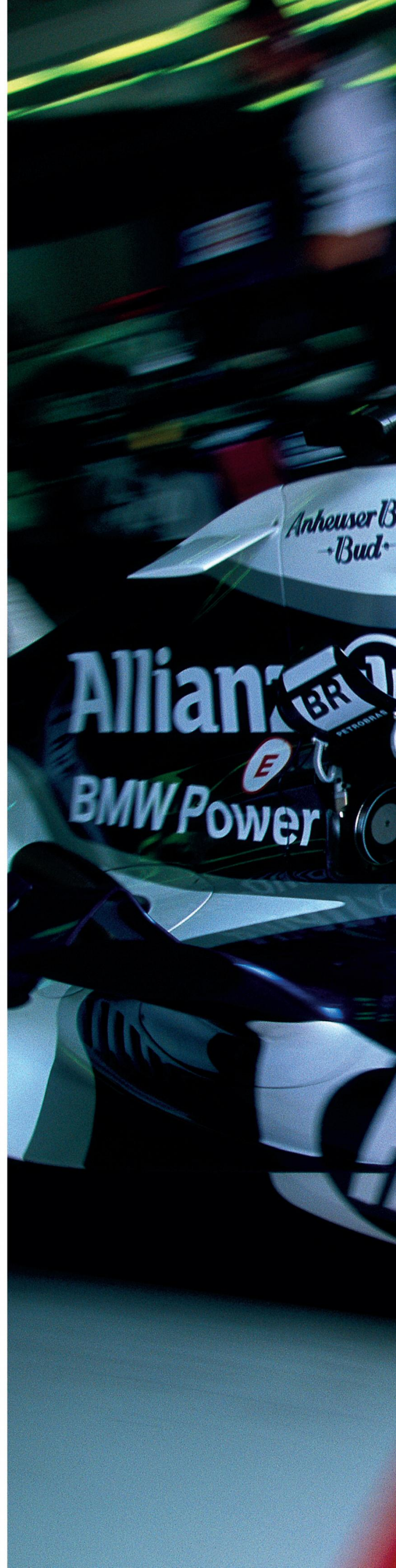
Senna believed that a move to Williams in 1994 would put him back in the best car. After early disappointments, he was leading at Imola when he left the track and hit the wall on the outside of a fast left-hand curve called Tamburello. The causes of the fatal accident are still disputed. Not up for debate is the combination of sublime skill, fierce competitiveness and quasi-spiritual charisma that brought millions out on to the streets of Senna's home town to say a last farewell in scenes of mourning echoed around the world. 

POWER THE HISTORY OF WILLIAMS WITHOUT PART 5: 2000-05 CONTROL

A new partnership with BMW promised to return Williams to championship glory – but that hope remained unfulfilled as tensions mounted behind the scenes...

WORDS DAMIEN SMITH

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THE HISTORY OF WILLIAMS PART 5

Formula 1 erupted in a collective surge of jubilation when Juan Pablo Montoya dived down the inside of Michael Schumacher's Ferrari at Turn 1, Interlagos in 2001. In that moment, an audacious late-braking pass by an F1 rookie in only his third grand prix felt seminal, as a bright new contender stepped up to challenge the threatened dominance that Schumacher and Ferrari were coming to represent. Mika Häkkinen had been just as fast as Michael, if not a shade quicker over one lap, but increasingly he seemed a spent force. Instead, here was Montoya: fresh, cocksure, charismatic, funny – and on the face of it, a true Williams driver in the mould of an Alan Jones, Keke Rosberg or Nigel Mansell. This was going to be good.



The marriage that promised so much. Drivers Schumacher (left) and Button flank BMW men Berger and Theissen at the team's 2000 launch

And it was. But it would never be great, at least by Williams standards, and certainly not for any significant length of time. These were the BMW years, featuring all the ingredients for a tally of world titles – which never quite followed. Instead, the potent team-manufacturer partnership would register bests of two third places and back-to-back runner-up finishes in the constructors' table between 2000 and 2005.

As for Montoya and Ralf Schumacher, his team rival ('team-mate' is simply the wrong term for this pair), they would harvest 10 grand prix wins between them. It feels like they won more – until we recall just how tightly Schumacher Sr and Ferrari gripped F1 by the neck in those first years of the new millennium, almost throttling it to the point of unconsciousness in 2002 and 2004. From a sporting point of view, these were tough years for F1, and even more so politically,

as Max Mosley and Bernie Ecclestone went to war with the manufacturers over power and money – what else?

BMW never did have a natural affinity with grand prix racing like its rivals at Mercedes. Still, 10 years after its F1 withdrawal towards the end of the first turbo era, the company was ready to plunge back in and signed a six-year deal to power Williams from 2000. Perfect timing in the wake of Renault's pull-out at the end of 1997. The dominant team of the decade was left treading water with inferior V10s it had to pay for, but at least it had a bright and shiny new manufacturer supply on the blocks. And last time around, one thing BMW hadn't been short of was power.

But the partnership's first blossoming was in an entirely different motorsport arena, away from F1. BMW also had ambitions to win the Le Mans 24 Hours and wisely chose to tap into the chassis construction expertise of its new F1 partner. Their first collaboration, the BMW V12 LM of 1998, missed the mark – but the second, the V12 LMR, hit bullseye in 1999. McLaren is lauded, as it should be, for its Le Mans success with the F1 GTR in 1995, but Williams's own victory four years later is shrouded by BMW's





When Montoya (below, left) dived inside Michael Schumacher at Brazil in 2001 life seemed good at Williams. It just never became great...

quartered shield – and yet it remains the partnership’s single greatest achievement.

BMW’s smart blue and white colours ushered in a new Williams F1 era in 2000. The younger Schumacher brother had impressed in his maiden season for the team in 1999 and now ticked the German driver box for the prestige car maker. But who would join him?

As racing driver names go, ‘Jenson Button’ is straight out of a comic book, but the fast-track rise of the sunny kid from Somerset was all too real. A European karting champion, Button had just two years of car racing under his belt when Alain Prost gave him a trial in his own team, then alerted Williams to the lad’s obvious talent. A shootout with Brazilian Formula 3000 ace Bruno Junqueira left Button on tenterhooks – until Frank Williams confirmed the drive was his, just before the first Williams-BMW, FW22, was wheeled out to the media. Today, teenage F1 debuts are almost normal, but at 20 years old Button was unusually raw for his time. Still, in the first season of a new engine partnership, there was little to lose gambling on a rookie.

Button paid back the faith. In his second grand prix, he became what was then F1’s youngest-ever points scorer (sixth, behind fifth-placed Ralf, in Brazil), and later offered nuggets of evidence that there was more to him than the playboy label

some had stuck him with. At Spa and Suzuka – proper circuits – he qualified third and fifth respectively, ahead of his team-mate, although Ralf too consolidated his growing reputation. A podium first time out in Australia, in BMW’s first F1 race back, was followed by a couple more at Spa and Monza to lift Williams to third in the standings – far behind pacesetters Ferrari and McLaren, but comfortably ahead of those seasoned campaigners at Benetton.

But for Button, the euphoria of his rapid rise was countered by the reality that Williams didn’t really want him (for now): he’d need a drive elsewhere for 2001, because Montoya was on his way. The Colombian had first contact with Williams back in 1997 when he earned himself a testing contract after impressing in a young-driver session. A convincing Formula 3000 champion in 1998, he found himself farmed out to Indycars with Chip Ganassi Racing in 1999, essentially in a swap deal with Alex Zanardi, who was returning to Europe as a modern folk hero following three stunning seasons in the US. At first, Montoya was disappointed to miss out on the F1 drive he’d thought would be his, but it proved the making of him. In his first US season, he narrowly defeated Dario Franchitti to become champion, then dominated the Indianapolis 500 the following year. By now, Zanardi was back in Indycars after an oddly lacklustre single year, Button was performing solidly... but in Montoya Williams recognised a potential game-changer.

As Button headed towards choppy waters with ▶



Button’s season at Williams had some high points, such as Spa where he qualified third and finished fifth



Ralf Schumacher joined his brother on the podium in Australia in 2000, BMW’s first race after more than a decade away

THE HISTORY OF WILLIAMS PART 5



2001 was a marked improvement, as the combination of Schumacher and Montoya provided four wins and third in the constructors' championship



At the third time of asking Montoya converted a 2001 pole position into a win when he triumphed at Monza



Ralf's victory in the 2001 San Marino GP was the team's first win since 1997 and BMW's first since 1986



a doubting Flavio Briatore at Benetton, Montoya sauntered into Formula 1 with a ready smile and a twinkle in his eye – shades of Jacques Villeneuve back in 1996. But for all his natural flair, he was still a rookie up against an accomplished teammate. After Montoya's landmark performance at Interlagos, which was only scuppered by Jos Verstappen's Arrows punting him out of a five-second lead, it was Ralf who would deliver Williams its first victory since 1997, at Imola. Schumacher's maiden F1 victory also marked BMW's first since Mexico 1986, when the winning Benetton that day was driven by Gerhard Berger... by now the manufacturer's sporting director. Neat. Just as impressively, Imola marked the first F1 win in 17 years for new tyre supplier Michelin, in just its fourth race back. Williams, BMW, Michelin: an axis of power that would now combine to become Ferrari's most potent threat.

Montoya scored his first podium in Spain, then Ralf won again in Canada, beating his brother in the pitstops for F1's first sibling one-two. Next time out, at the Nürburgring, Michael put down a marker that family ties meant nothing in the white heat of competition, by treating his brother to one of his famous chops... But after his first pole position in France, on his 26th birthday, Junior stole back the limelight at Hockenheim with his third win of the season.

Meanwhile, Montoya was finding his feet, creating a fantastically spiky dynamic within the team between two very different personalities. At Monza, from his third pole position in four races, Montoya finally delivered an overdue victory, on a weekend overshadowed by the horrors of 9/11 (the attack happened the Tuesday before the race) and dreadful news from the Lausitzring oval in Germany, where the hugely popular Zanardi had lost both legs in a shocking Indycar accident. Strange, difficult, unforgettable times.

The Williams-BMW-Michelin axis quickly came of age in 2001, but it wasn't yet ready to challenge Ferrari-Bridgestone for the title, even if Ralf outscored double champion Häkkinen in the drivers' standings. Momentum was building for the partnership – only to be thwarted by a devastating red-wash in 2002.

Ferrari would win 15 of 17 races that season, with Schumacher Sr claiming 11 of them to become champion – by Magny-Cours in July... Sure, Williams was best of the rest, but that didn't mean too much in this context. Ferrari scored as many championship points as the rest of the field added together! Like Williams, McLaren too was now running Michelins, which only allowed Bridgestone to narrow its focus further on Ferrari, while the French company was stretched to match the differing needs of two rival teams: the FW24 lacked downforce, the McLaren-Mercedes power.

But it wasn't all doom and gloom. After Ralf had started the season by taking flight over Rubens Barrichello's Ferrari in Australia in a multi-car shunt, he bounced back in Malaysia to head Montoya for the first Williams one-two for five years, as Michelin's rubber dealt better with Sepang's intense tropical heat. Meanwhile, Montoya's growing reputation for spectacular qualifying laps took further root with a remarkable run of five consecutive pole positions, including a 161.449mph lap at Monza that exceeded Keke Rosberg's ageing record, from Silverstone 1985, of 160.925mph in FW10. In all, Montoya started from the pole seven times in 2002 – he just couldn't convert a single one.

In stark contrast, 2003 offered a refreshing and much needed tonic. From a season of one-team domination, now eight drivers won races, a tally only beaten by nine in 1975 and 11 in 1982. McLaren got off to a flier as David Coulthard won in Australia, but only after Montoya had spun ►

MEANWHILE, MONTOKA WAS FINDING HIS FEET, CREATING A FANTASTICALLY SPIKY DYNAMIC WITHIN THE TEAM BETWEEN TWO VERY DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES

Williams was best of the rest in a Ferrari-dominated 2002. Ralf scored its only win in Malaysia but Montoya managed seven pole positions



THE HISTORY OF WILLIAMS PART 5



2003 was the best of the BMW years. Ralf won at the Nürburgring with German power and Montoya was a genuine title contender



Only when the ugly tusk nose was dropped did Montoya claim the team's only win of 2004, by which time he'd already signed for McLaren

away the lead with 11 laps to go. Ralf showed his depth of character at Imola when he and his brother shared the front row, the day after their mother had died, and in Monaco Montoya ended a 20-year Williams win drought in the principality after passing Kimi Räikkönen and beating his team-mate at the stops. It was nearly always nip and tuck between the pair, as they helped lift the Williams-BMW partnership to what would be its all too brief F1 zenith.

Two back-to-back one-twos at the Nürburgring and Magny-Cours, Ralf leading Montoya in both, reprised what we'd taken for granted from Williams in the 1990s. At the same time, internal disharmony undermined the soaring achievements. In France, during an intense three-stop battle between the two FW25s, Montoya and the crew on the pitwall engaged in a colourful, X-rated exchange of views. It was a signal of the fatal fracture that was opening up between the Colombian and the team. Driver paranoia is hard enough to manage when it festers on one side of the garage, but Williams now had it coming from both cars. Ralf, too, was unsettled in a team that



New boys Mark Webber (left) and Nick Heidfeld celebrate an unlikely double podium at Monaco in 2005. It was a good as it got that season



The power but not the glory. BMW engines provided Williams with a much-needed boost on track, but without title success divorce beckoned

never had been one to offer a cuddle to its drivers.

Williams responded to Montoya's radio blast in typical fashion, with a formal reprimand – by letter. That was only going to stoke the simmering Latin fire, and from that point he decided his future would lie elsewhere. Still, there was a world championship to chase and over the second half of the season it was Montoya, not Ralf, who would lead the Williams charge. Victory at Hockenheim latched him on to Schumacher Sr's tail, and after Hungary Schumacher, Montoya and Räikkönen were separated by just two points. Then Ferrari pulled a fast one, lodging a protest against Michelin about the size of the tyres' contact patch. The moulds had been the same since 2001... yet suddenly the French company was producing illegal rubber and was forced to pull out the stops to hastily make new tyres in time for Monza, where Schumacher pulled off one of his most important wins, having not led a lap for five races. Victory put him back on the front foot. At Indianapolis, Montoya was penalised – in his view unfairly – for an early incident with Barrichello, and finished sixth.

Two races before he'd been right in the hunt; now suddenly his bid was over. Schumacher would scrape to his fourth Ferrari title with an unconvincing eighth place at Suzuka to



A NEW DEAL WAS SUPPOSED TO KEEP THEM TOGETHER UNTIL 2009, BUT BMW'S BOARD DECIDED TO GO IT ALONE AND BUY SAUBER

pip consistent Räikkönen by a point. In the constructors' standings, just 14 points separated Williams from Ferrari and a 10th constructors' title – but it might as well have been 50. The partnership's best chance, as it turns out from then to the present day, was gone.

Before the next season had even started, Montoya was announced as a McLaren driver for 2005 as he and Ralf embarked on a largely unhappy final season together in blue and white, Schumacher Jr planning his own exit to Toyota. After such an open season, 2004 turned into another Ferrari steamroller: Michael matched Mansell's 1992 tally of five consecutive wins out of the blocks and, after a blip at Monaco, he won seven more in a row. At season's end in Brazil, Williams, having long shed the ugly tusk nose of the FW26, finally hit a vein of form as Montoya won his last race for the team – at the same circuit where he'd inspired such hope four years earlier. Williams wouldn't win again for another eight years.

Now Button came back into the picture. Well, almost. Since his rejection in favour of Montoya in 2001, he'd built a head of steam at BAR after a bruising experience at Benetton/Renault and had emerged as next-best to the dominant Ferraris in 2004. Time for Frank to call him back... except BAR's David Richards already had him locked up for 2005. After referral to the Contract Recognition Board, Jenson was forced to stay put. Just as well, as it turned out. The marriage between Williams and BMW had hit the rocks.

Berger had never driven for Williams during his own career – Frank joked he could never afford him – but this old-school racer easily gelled with the team in his sporting director role. But when he left BMW in 2004 his replacement, the straight-laced Mario Theissen, never looked like a man on the same wavelength as the hardened racers at Williams.

By now Patrick Head had taken a step back, as Australian Sam Michael became technical director – but the marriage was too far gone to be salvaged. A new deal was supposed to keep them together until 2009, but BMW's board decided to go it alone and buy Sauber. In hindsight, an odd decision and an experiment that would last just four years before the company pulled the F1 plug once more. Might it ever return? Of course – but it's impossible to see why, how and with whom.

That final season in 2005, the last of the screaming V10 era, was underwhelming for Williams, even with two enthusiastic new signings in Mark Webber and Nick Heidfeld. The team slumped to fifth. A second Jenson Button contractual squabble says much about the way the wind was blowing. Early in the season, he once again signed for Williams, this time successfully – only to change his mind. Expensive decision: the man who'd been given his big break with the team back in 2000 was now forced to pay £18m *not* to rejoin it for 2006...

Crazy, but at the same time you could see why. Once again, Williams was going it alone. 

Mario Theissen (right) with Mark Webber in 2005. Theissen had, by then, replaced Gerhard Berger as BMW's sporting director within the team



Webber and BAR's Jenson Button at Spa in 2005. Button had almost rejoined Williams for 2005 but paid not to drive for the team in 2006...

NIGEL ROEBUCK'S F O R M U L A O N E HEROES

DAN GURNEY

PICTURES  **motorsport
IMAGES**

IN 2005,
A FEW DAYS
BEFORE THE
RACE...

I was invited to a private dinner attended by nine winners of the Indianapolis 500 – plus one. Although Dan Gurney's face is not on the Borg-Warner Trophy, he twice finished second, and to omit him would have been unthinkable. In the hands of others, after all, his Eagle cars several times made it to Victory Lane.

It was primarily to attend this dinner that Gurney, 84 years old, came back to Indianapolis, and earlier that day, after flying in, he suffered a heart 'event', and was taken to hospital. When he walked into the restaurant, smiling as always, the joy was unconfined. "They defibrillated me," he said, "and I'm fine – no way I was going to miss this!"

Had the experience frightened him? "Hell, no," Dan grinned. "Spa in the rain *frightened* me..."

When Gurney died in January 2018, there was intense grief throughout motorsport, for as well as being a great racing driver, this was a man loved even more than he was revered. Days later I was at Daytona, and there was many a damp eye when one of his CanAm cars made a tribute lap. No ordinary man, this.

Although he lived almost his entire life in California, Gurney was born in Long Island, New York, where his passion for racing began. "Indianapolis was a phenomenon, sure, but I read George Monkhouse's books about Mercedes-Benz before the war – from the start I was smitten with road racing. By the time I started in 1955, with a Triumph TR2, I'd done my military service in Korea, and was already 24. After that, I raced a Porsche Speedster, then a Corvette, but my big break was to drive a 4.9 Ferrari owned by Frank Arciero."

Instantly quick, Gurney was on his way. Back then the Maranello bush telegraph kept tabs, after each weekend, on who had done well in a Ferrari somewhere, and Dan's success led to a drive for the North American Racing Team at Le Mans in 1958.

Though he didn't race much, Dan stayed in Europe a while. It pleased him to see Juan Manuel Fangio's last grand prix at Reims, but that day was also the last time around for Luigi Musso, who was killed while chasing Mike Hawthorn. From there Gurney went to



Lauded as a great driver, praised for his achievements out of the cockpit, and admired as a person, Gurney was 'no ordinary man'

Silverstone, where Peter Collins won, and then to the Nürburgring, where Collins was killed, the second Ferrari driver to die in a month.

On a young man touching the hem of a career in grand prix racing, those weeks could have had a devastating effect. "It didn't put me off," Gurney said, "but it did get across to me that this was a pretty serious business I was trying to get into..."

At year's end Dan got 'The Call'. "I remember going to Modena for a try-out with the team – there were no other drivers, just Enzo Ferrari and a few other fellows, all with the big fedoras [hats] and the dark overcoats. I was sort of intimidated by Ferrari – there was a great aura around him, and I think he wanted it that way, but actually I never had a bit of trouble with him.

"My contract for 1959 said I would get the equivalent of \$163 a month, and I also got half what they called 'starting money', which was never defined, and one round-trip ticket to Milan – with an offer like that, how could I refuse? In fact, I never gave money a thought –

I was just thinking I was a professional road race driver, and it looked pretty good to me."

At first Gurney raced only sportscars for Ferrari, but in July made his F1 debut at Reims. This was only the 23rd race of his life and, though he retired, a string of good results followed. Already, though,

Gurney's delight at finally triumphing at Spa in 1967 was plain to see



he had decided to move on.

“In my great wisdom all I could see was that Ferrari was still stuck on front-engined cars. Rear-engined cars were the future, so I went with BRM, who seemed to be on the rise. Big mistake – if I’d put up with one more year of the front-engined cars, I’d have been there for 1961, when Ferrari swept the board! In my next lifetime that’s how I’ll do it...”

The season with BRM was a disappointment, but there were compensations in 1960, notably sharing the winning ‘Birdcage’ Maserati Tipo 61 with Stirling Moss in the Nürburgring 1000km.

“Stirling was just the best, wasn’t he? We all knew it. He was the guy you had to beat, and later it was the same with Jimmy Clark. I raced against a lot of great drivers in a lot of categories, but in the end for me it comes down to Stirling and Jimmy.”

For 1961 Gurney joined Porsche, and the following year scored the company’s only grand prix victory, at Rouen, before moving for three seasons to Brabham.

This was the era of domination by Clark and Lotus, but on a given day Gurney was unsurpassed. Always one to excel at circuits like the Nürburgring and the old Spa-Francorchamps, he led the 1964 Belgian GP by 40 seconds before running out of fuel on the last lap.

Albeit one with road racing in his bones, Gurney was also fascinated by Indy, first competing there in 1962. His car was not especially competitive, but Dan’s eyes were on the future, and to that end – at his own expense – he invited Colin Chapman to the race, just to ‘have a look’. The following year Lotus was at the Speedway, and, although Gurney retired, Clark finished second, going on to win two years later.

YOU KNOW, DAN, YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE JIM EVER WORRIED ABOUT...

JAMES CLARK


By this time Dan had decided to go into business for himself, and in 1966 the name of Eagle made its first foray into racing folklore, the company building cars for both Indy and Formula 1.

When it came to bad luck through his career, Dan was second only to Chris Amon, but in June 1967 the cards memorably fell his way. At Le Mans he shared the victorious Ford with A.J. Foyt – and started a racing tradition by spraying champagne on the podium – and seven days later won at Spa in the gorgeous Eagle-Weslake V12.

Through the following year Gurney continued in F1, but the pressure of building cars for two series was too much, and at the end of 1968 Dan opted to focus chiefly on the USA. When he retired from driving a couple of years later to concentrate on running his company, an Eagle became the car of choice in Indycar racing.

Gurney never lost his affection for England, and as a student of history it was natural that Lord March’s boyhood hero should be drawn to Goodwood, where he first raced in 1959. The first Revival Meeting entranced Dan, and he and wife Evi returned many times.

“That first year I played in Charles’s cricket match, in a fabulous setting on a beautiful day – and then suddenly a Spitfire came by, banking over, flying below those big old trees. It was completely unexpected, and incredibly moving to me, thinking of all those young men, all those years ago. Jimmy was often in my mind. Knowing him, I’m not sure he would have been too enamoured of the modern racing scene, but I think he’d have loved the Revival. He was a purist, and I think I’m that way, too.”

So he was, and one oft-repeated tale of motorsport never loses its resonance: after Clark’s funeral James Clark, Jimmy’s father, took Gurney to one side: “You know, Dan, you were the only one Jim ever worried about...” Perhaps those words put Gurney’s place in the racing pantheon more clearly into perspective than anything else ever said or written about him. 

A week after winning Le Mans, Gurney took his own creation, the beautiful Eagle-Weslake, to victory in the 1967 Belgian GP





NOW
THAT
WAS
A
CAR

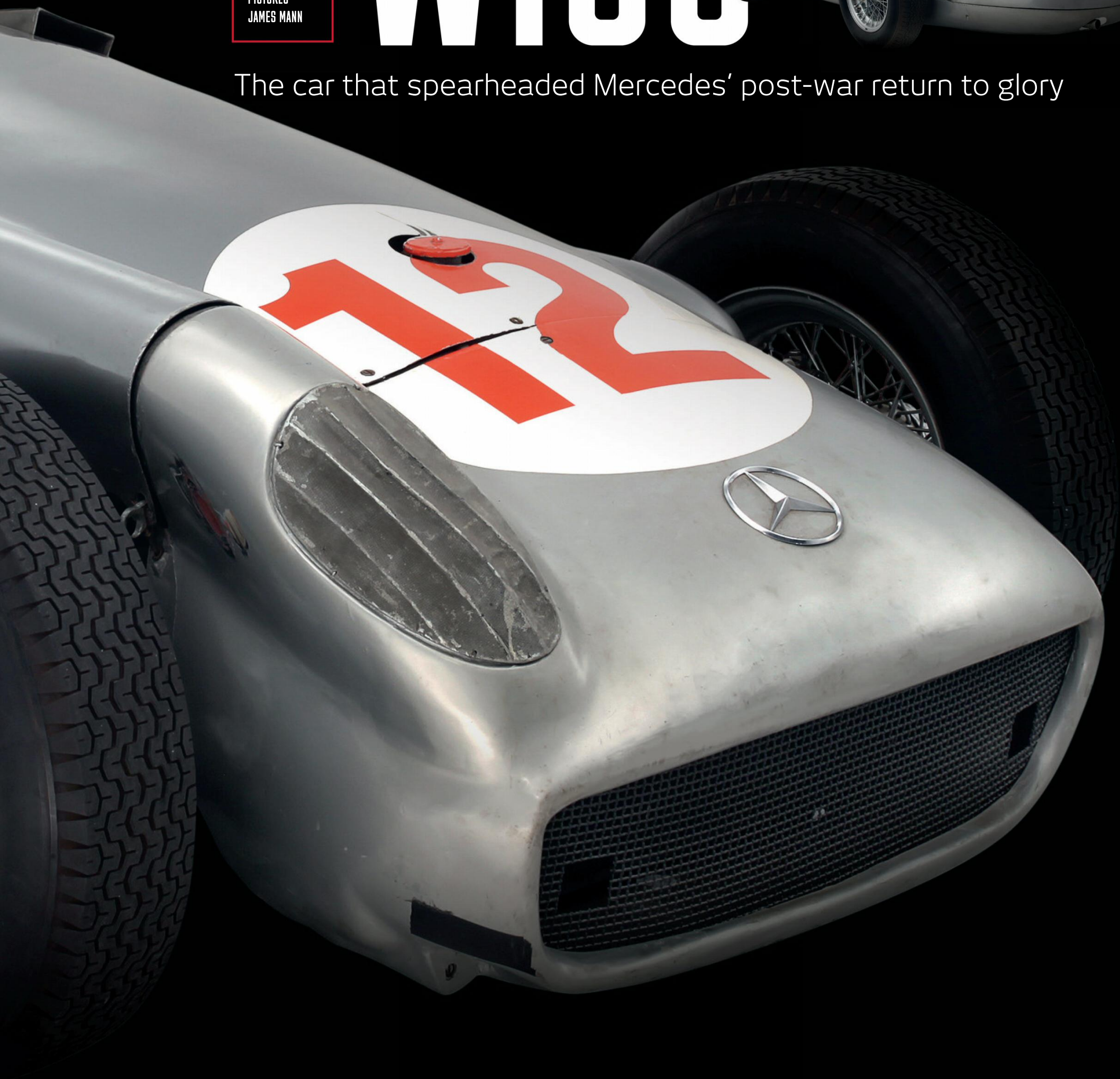
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WORDS
STUART COOLING
PICTURES
JAMES MANN

MERCEDES W196



The car that spearheaded Mercedes' post-war return to glory



After tottering, stop-start, make-do-and-mend beginnings, top-level motor racing snapped into focus in 1954 as a new set of technical regulations came into force. Their purpose, explicitly, was to encourage more manufacturers to get involved; the first two years of the world championship had been dominated by pre-war dinosaurs and then, once lack of funds and willpower shuffled those into extinction, two further seasons followed in which F2 cars filled the grids.

But the radiant ambition of Formula 1's new dawn was tempered by the return of a pre-war force which delivered a powerful lesson: be careful what you wish for. One of the manufacturers drawn back into the fray was Mercedes-Benz, and the cast of characters it deployed would have prompted its rivals to shiver with apprehension by reputation alone.

The voluminous figure of team manager Alfred Neubauer was a familiar one to those versed in the 1930s grand prix racing scene, in which Mercedes and Auto Union had humiliated all opposition. Superintending the development of the new W196 was Fritz Nallinger, protégé of Ferdinand Porsche, and head of the experimental department which had produced the seminal supercharged straight-8 and V12 which powered those 1930s monsters. Chief engineer Rudolf Uhlenhaut had developed the W125, which turned Mercedes' racing fortunes around in 1937; for an engineer he was unusually competent behind the wheel, equipping him to gain deeper technical insights in an era in which racing drivers generally just got in the car and drove.

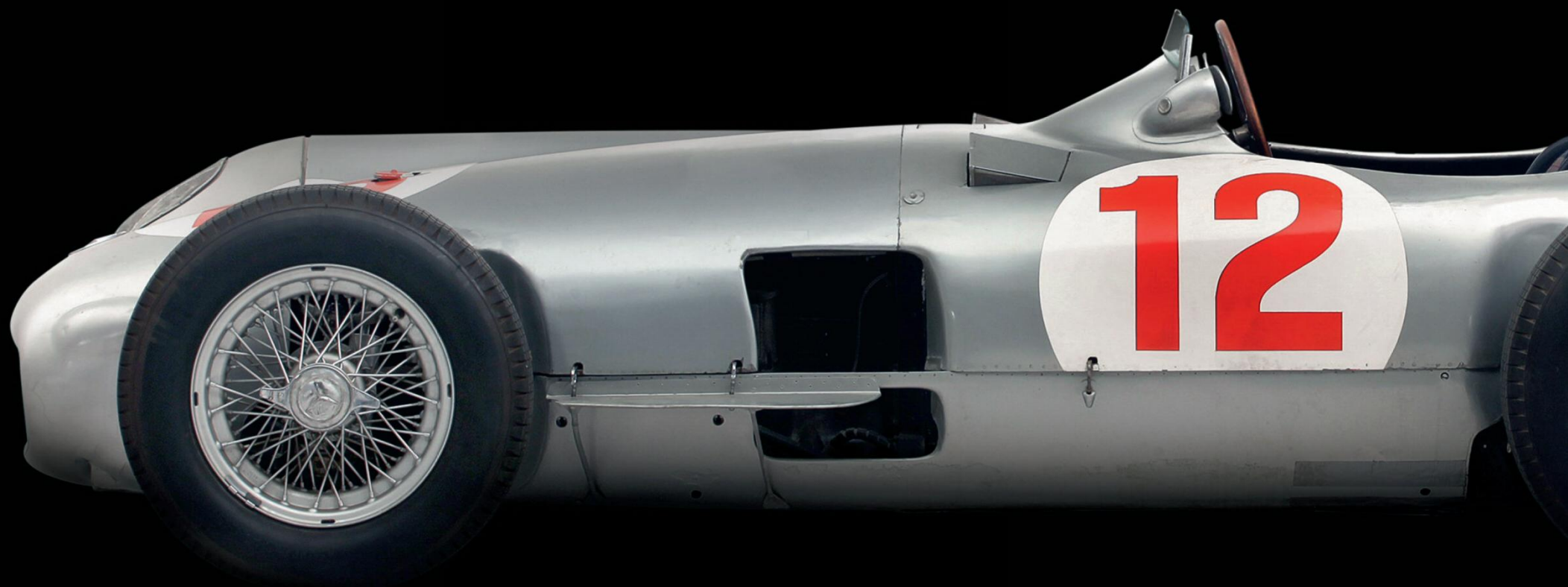
In the tangled scene of post-war reconstruction, Mercedes' activities had been circumscribed by the occupying Allied forces. By the early 1950s it was itching to return to its position of pre-eminence, and the W196 was the apex of a burst of activity which also begat the Le Mans-winning W194 sportscar and the 'gullwing' 300SL.

Reliable power ranked among the highest design priorities, and it was in the engine bay that the W196 made its biggest departures from convention. Having set the benchmark for

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MERCEDES
W196



supercharging in the 1930s, Mercedes had generally kept the faith with blown engines whenever the formula was amended during that decade. But F1's new regulations for 1954 capped the displacement of forced-induction engines at 750cc – half that allowed in 1950-51 – and at the same time enshrined a minimum race duration of three hours. Factoring in reliability and relative thirst, the calculations fell unequivocally in favour of natural aspiration.

To that end, Mercedes built what it saw as the ultimate engine design for the 2.5-litre unblown formula, one that would rev higher than any of its rivals and feature direct fuel injection for the first time in an F1 car. Many of the senior team working on the engine came with aerospace experience: Hans Scherenberg had been involved in the development of the pioneering DB601 engine which had powered the likes of the Messerschmitt 109; and Karl-Heinz Goeschel had worked on the DB601's successors before teaming up with Scherenberg to develop the first fuel-injected production-car engine (a two-stroke unit in the diminutive Gutbrod Superior). Ludwig Kraus had been an eminent designer of marine diesel engines. Johannes 'Hans' Gassmann, tasked with drawing the layout of the engine, was a time-served Mercedes-Benz employee with his name on many of the company's patents.

This talented group outlined a straight-eight which was in effect two conjoined in-line fours, with the power take-off in the middle rather than at the end, the rationale being that two short crankshafts would be more resilient to torsional forces than a long one. The central take-off also drove the camshafts, and the water and oil pumps. This was by no means a unique arrangement, but the engineers found a clever way to mitigate one of its key weaknesses, which is that engines laid out in this way usually have to be mounted higher in the chassis frame. By inclining the block 53 degrees to the right, the engineers maintained a low centre of gravity, made more efficient use of space in the engine bay, and facilitated an aerodynamically advantageous low-profile bonnet.

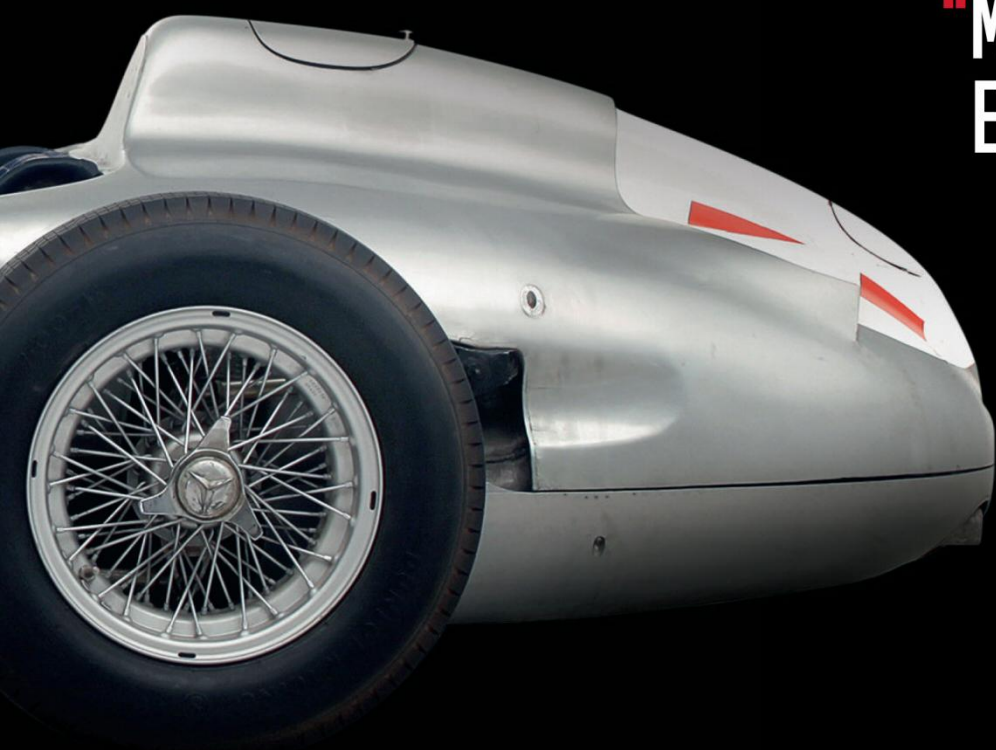
Mercedes already held the patent for a desmodromic valve system designed by Gassmann and Manfred Lorscheidt



in 1952, and the two engineers returned to this idea when initial testing of the engine – on a one-cylinder rig – revealed a tendency for the valves to 'float' beyond the 8000rpm threshold, a typical problem with the type of valve springs used at the time. By removing the springs entirely, and using a single cam to open and close each valve, the Mercedes designers could specify just two valves per cylinder, made from heavier and more durable materials.

While the Bosch mechanical fuel injection was sophisticated for its time, systems such as this were limited in their range of adjustments, and it was a challenge to calculate the ▶

“MANY OF THE SENIOR TEAM WORKING ON THE ENGINE CAME WITH AEROSPACE EXPERIENCE”



optimum fuel pressure and mixture. Having engineers versed in aerospace and diesel engine technology helped, as did a consistent fuel blend supplied by Esso: the so-called RD1 fuel was 25% petrol, 45% benzene, 25% methanol, the remaining 5% being acetone and nitro-benzine – probably the most potent cocktail of volatile hydrocarbons on the grid.

The W196's spaceframe chassis was conventional but thoroughly engineered, each element scrupulously weighed and stress-tested, while the suspension was an unusual combination of torsion bars up front with swinging axles at the rear. Uhlenhaut's rationale for preferring the swing-axle layout to a De Dion tube was arcane: he had long felt that many racing cars were too stiffly sprung and under-damped, and that independent rear suspension, properly controlled, would yield better overall traction than any live-axle configuration. On the W196 he specified a single pivot point – under the differential – for the rear suspension in an effort to mitigate the swing-axle setup's greatest shortcoming, an inherent lack of wheel-camber control. Mercedes was already in the process of incorporating this change into its flagship road cars, which might also have been a driver in the decision to prove its value on track.

In common with its contemporaries, the W196 was retarded by drum brakes all-round, though these were mounted inboard to reduce unsprung weight. Unlike them, it featured a five-speed gearbox as opposed to four, offering a greater spread of ratios to capitalise on the engine's rev-biased nature.

Mercedes wasn't ready for the start of the 1954 season, the Argentine GP in January, but then again neither were many of its rivals. Maserati had conjured a compelling-sounding package in its 250F, overseen by ex-Ferrari engineers Gioacchino Colombo and Valerio Colotti, but it was

“WHILE THE W196 WAS A HANDFUL TO DRIVE, IT ENJOYED A POWER ADVANTAGE OVER ITS RIVALS AND WAS OPERATED BY A CONSIDERABLY MORE ORGANISED TEAM”

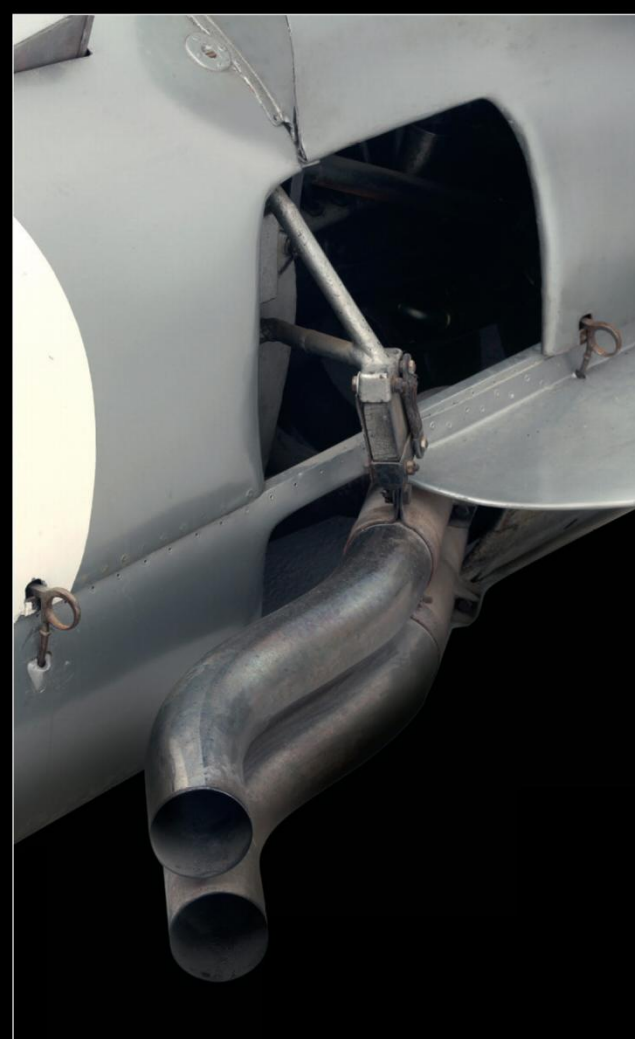
insufficiently resourced to deliver on its pre-season promise of full works support for every customer. Lancia, behind on its promising D50, would not be seen until the end of the season.

When Mercedes arrived in July it did so in force, fully prepared, with three W196s for the fourth of nine rounds, the French GP on the super-fast public roads south of Reims. Two of those opening races had been won by Juan Manuel Fangio in a Maserati, and the third was the Indy 500, so Fangio already enjoyed a lead over his rivals as he now appeared in a Mercedes, flanked by fellow works drivers Karl Kling and Hans Herrmann. At flat-out Reims, cloaked in loophole-exploiting enclosed bodywork, the W196s were untouchable and Fangio left with the winner's trophy and several cases of champagne, the traditional bonus awarded in champagne country.

The next round, at Silverstone, was an outlier in an otherwise uncompetitive season for Ferrari, as José Froilán González led team-mate Mike Hawthorn home for a 1-2 finish. Fangio set the fastest lap but could only finish fourth, plagued

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**MERCEDES
W196**

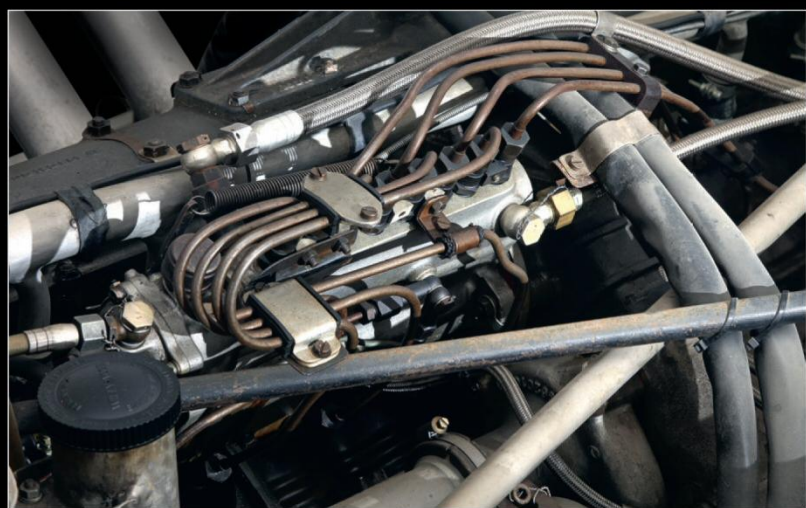


by the W196's understeer balance and struggling to place the car accurately in corners because of the 'streamliner' bodyshell. From now on, except at high-speed circuits such as Reims and Monza, the W196 would race in conventional single-seater bodywork with exposed wheels.


While the W196 was a handful to drive – initial understeer would give way to snap oversteer as the action of the swing axle diminished the rear tyres' contact patch – it enjoyed a power advantage over its rivals and was operated by a considerably better organised team, thus enjoying a reliability premium. Power was claimed to be 256bhp at 8260rpm, while developments for 1955 took that to 290bhp at 8500rpm. Of its rivals, the four-pot fielded by Ferrari in its 625 and 553 cars was (implausibly) claimed to deliver 250bhp at 7200rpm; the Maserati six-pot 220bhp at 7400rpm.

A hat-trick of victories at the Nürburgring, Bremgarten and Monza brought Fangio's total to six wins in a season in which only a driver's best five results counted towards the championship. But at the final round, Lancia's D50 appeared and set pole position in the hands of Alberto Ascari, who led until his brakes failed.

Having bagged the 1954 championship at a relative canter, then, Fangio could then reasonably have expected 1955 to be a tougher slog. Lancia's D50 was in many ways more innovative than the W196, carrying its functional fluids in panniers between the front and rear wheels for better aerodynamics and weight balance, and its compact V8 acted as a partially stressed element of the chassis as well as producing a claimed 260bhp. But it was stymied by malaises typical of Italian automotive engineering at the time: organisational disarray, lack of resources, and poor-quality materials. Lancia's bankruptcy



took the car off the table until it ended up in Ferrari's hands.

So Fangio claimed four victories for Mercedes, and new team-mate Stirling Moss one, in a seven-race season curtailed by the fallout from the Le Mans disaster which also prompted Mercedes to withdraw from motor racing. Their 1-2 finish at Monza would be Mercedes' last for 59 years. In 2013, shortly before Mercedes comprehensively ended that hiatus, the car photographed here – Fangio's 1954 Nürburgring and Bremgarten winner – fetched a record-breaking £19,601,500 in the Bonhams Goodwood Festival of Speed auction. 

RACE RECORD

Starts 38
Wins 9
Poles 8
Fastest laps 9
Other podiums 8
Championship points 132 (after dropped scores)

SPECIFICATION


Chassis Aluminium spaceframe
Suspension Double wishbones with torsion bars (f), single-pivot swing axles with torsion bars (r)
Engine: Mercedes M196R inline-8
Engine capacity: 2496cc
Power 256bhp@8250rpm (1954), 290bhp@8500rpm (1955)
Gearbox Mercedes five-speed manual
Tyres Continental
Weight 835kg
Notable drivers Juan Manuel Fangio, Stirling Moss, Karl Kling, Hans Herrmann, Piero Taruffi



 **motorsport**
IMAGES
SHOWCASE

IMOLA

It's been 14 years since it hosted a world championship F1 race, but these strange times mean Imola is back...

 The start of Imola's first world championship F1 race in 1980. Although the circuit is best known as the venue for 26 San Marino GPs and will hold the Emilia Romagna GP in 2020, this was actually the 1980 Italian GP as Imola had stepped in to hold the race while Monza underwent refurbishment





▲ After the death of close friend Gilles Villeneuve at Zolder in 1982, Patrick Tambay was drafted in as his replacement. He retained the drive for 1983 and the second of his two wins in red was an emotional affair in front of the Imola faithful that year, with Villeneuve's famous number 27 on his car

◀ From 1953 to 1972 the track at Imola changed very little but since then there have been tweaks, mainly the addition of various chicanes and enhanced runoff areas. This 1990 shot was before a further chicane was inserted at Tamburello (top right) following the death of Ayrton Senna in 1994

▶ This wasn't what the Tifosi had come to see in 1983. Riccardo Patrese leads the Ferraris of Rene Arnoux and eventual winner Patrick Tambay but because Italian Patrese wasn't driving a Ferrari he was classed as a traitor. His retirement, six laps from the end, was cheered to the rafters



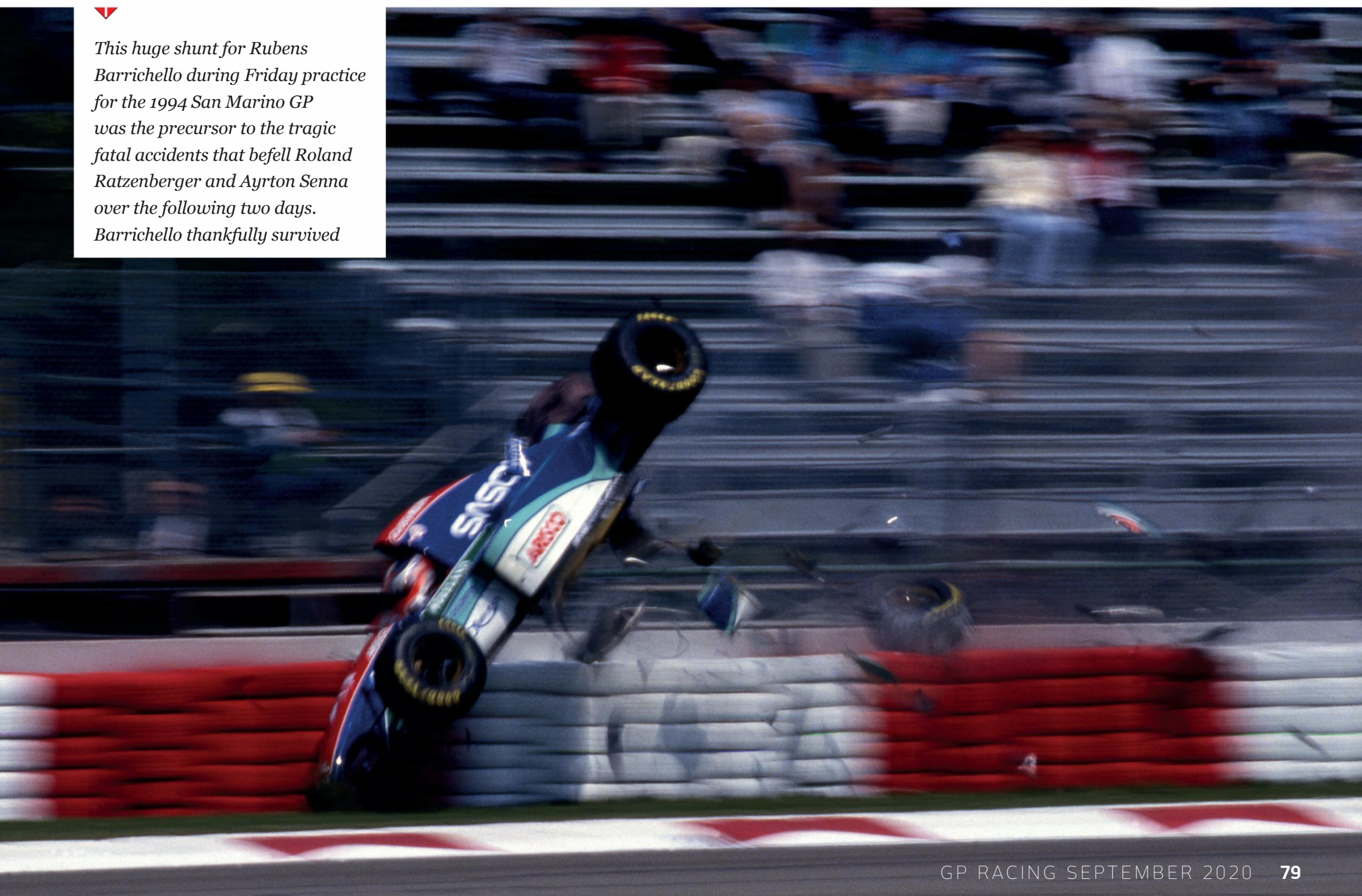


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The area surrounding Imola has a rich history in motorsport and so, naturally, the San Marino race for many years attracted huge crowds. And when the official grandstands were full the tifosi just opted to build their own temporary structures to get the very best views possible

▶ Although it had been a semi-permanent circuit since 1953, it wasn't until 1970 that Imola was officially named the Autodromo Dino Ferrari, after Enzo Ferrari's son Alfredo who had died in 1956 aged 24. When Enzo passed away in 1988 at the ripe old age of 90 his name was added



▼
This huge shunt for Rubens Barrichello during Friday practice for the 1994 San Marino GP was the precursor to the tragic fatal accidents that befell Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna over the following two days. Barrichello thankfully survived





Enzo Ferrari in his team's garage in 1985. The San Marino GP was always thought of as Scuderia Ferrari's home race and this was one of the last times Enzo saw his beloved team in action, as 'il Commendatore' only travelled to races in Italy in his later years



Gilles Villeneuve ahead of Didier Pironi in 1982. Once the two Renaults had retired from the race – boycotted by a number of teams as part of the FISA/FOCA war – Villeneuve interpreted a message for both to slow to mean he, as leader, would win. Pironi didn't and overtook on the final lap. The pair never spoke again



The only time Ayrton Senna failed to qualify for an F1 race was at the 1984 San Marino GP. Senna was driving for Toleman, which was having problems with its Pirelli tyres, and also missed out on the best of the conditions in qualifying with a fuel problem





Mika Häkkinen forlornly sits on his McLaren MP4-14 as Michael Schumacher flashes by in the 1999 San Marino GP. Häkkinen had crashed on lap 17 while in the lead and Schumacher went on to win, the first time Ferrari had won the race in 16 years



Alain Prost had qualified third for the 1991 race but didn't even make the start after this spin approaching Rivazza on the formation lap. Prost's Ferrari – the car furthest from Nigel Mansell's on-track Williams – was followed off by Gerhard Berger in a McLaren. Berger kept going but Prost stalled and had to retire



Imola was a popular venue for many years, so much so that Italy remained able to host two GPs when other countries that had done so fell by the wayside. However, crowds started to drop and by 2003 empty grandstands such as this, unheard of in the race's heyday, began to appear



The classic shot from the early San Marino GPs shows the field streaming out of Tosa and up to Piratella. This is one part of the circuit that is relatively unchanged, bar cosmetic work, from the first world championship race in 1980 and this image is from the inaugural San Marino GP in 1981





Jenson Button ahead of Michael Schumacher in the 2004 San Marino GP. Button had claimed his first F1 pole the day before and led the dominant Schumacher for the first nine laps until he made a very early stop for fuel. He still managed to bring his BAR 006 home second



The podium for the 1985 San Marino GP, with Alain Prost the jubilant winner. However, Prost's McLaren MP4/2 was subsequently discovered to be underweight and so the Frenchman was disqualified. Elio de Angelis (left) inherited the win, Thierry Boutsen (right) second and Patrick Tambay was promoted to third

Riccardo Patrese had come close to victory at Imola before. He was second – in an Arrows – in 1981 but seven years after he led the San Marino GP with six laps to go, and his retirement was cheered by the crowd, the Italian laid a ghost to rest when he won the 1990 race with Williams.



2002 was a superb year for Ferrari and the San Marino GP was just part of the domination of F1 by the Scuderia. Michael Schumacher won the race, one of 11 for the German that season, and Rubens Barrichello finished second, the first Ferrari 1-2 at Imola since 1982





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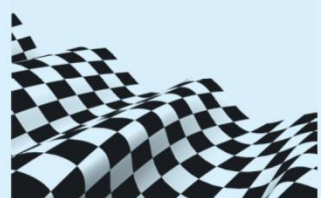
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FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 4

THE BRITISH GP IN 3 KEY MOMENTS



1 Mercedes leaves no room for complacency

"I don't think we have seen how fast Mercedes can go during the race. They just tell their drivers what I'm doing in terms of lap times and adapt to save their tyres. Mercedes didn't push yet, so we haven't seen the real gap."

Max Verstappen was adamant before the British GP that Mercedes kept performance in hand while sweeping the first three races of the season. Its average qualifying gap over the first four events was 0.999 seconds. At Silverstone, Lewis Hamilton took pole with a lap 1.022s faster than Verstappen's RB16. The signs were ominous...

Late-race tyre chaos aside, it was another dominant display. Hamilton recovered from a slightly tardy start to control the race from start to finish – chased gamely but fruitlessly by team-mate Valtteri Bottas. With just over three laps to go, Mercedes was on for another 1-2 finish with Verstappen more than 14s in arrears. No sweat. Then chaos...

As Bottas later related, if the second Safety Car period – called after Daniil Kvyat's monster shunt at Maggots – hadn't messed with Mercedes' strategy,

those hard Pirellis would have been fitted later and likely maintained their integrity. Perhaps debris from Kvyat's crash and Kimi Räikkönen's shattered front wing was to blame? In which case, just tough luck rather than any DAS-related consequence. Mercedes could also have asked its drivers to back off, but admirably chose to let them duke it out.

Hamilton limped home less than six seconds clear of Verstappen, suggesting Max might have nicked the race had he not made a precautionary stop after Bottas' left-front tyre let go. But that ignores Red Bull's fear Max wouldn't last the distance either.

"The tyre that came off the car had about 50 little cuts in it, so had been through debris," said Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. "It was right on the limit."

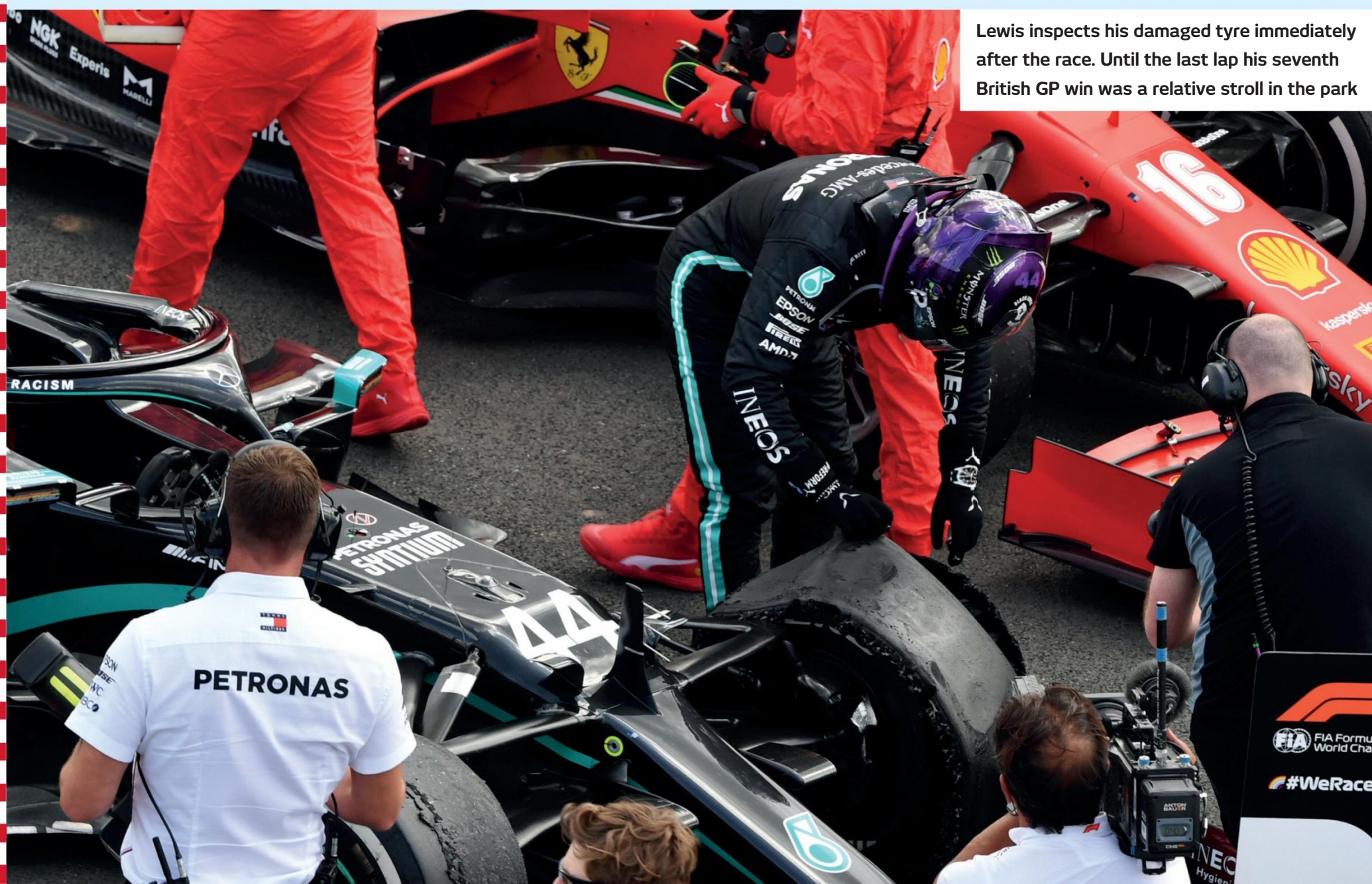
Where Red Bull can feel encouraged is Max's race pace. That 14s gap before all hell let loose was much better than the 27s he trailed Lewis before Hamilton's late pitstop in Hungary, or the monster 33.7s deficit at the finish in Styria. "I think we were within probably 0.3 to 0.4s today, as an average," reckoned Horner. "It's now our challenge to reduce that gap further."

But any joy at having begun fixing aerodynamic "anomalies" that make the RB16 such a handful was tempered by that qualifying deficit. Hamilton's Friday practice difficulties – his car lurching from oversteer to understeer between sessions, Mercedes only third fastest overall and neck and neck with Red Bull over longer runs, proved a false dawn.

Red Bull (and the rest for that matter) simply can't match the low-speed aerodynamic efficiency of the W11, and the extra power Mercedes can produce for qualifying. Ferrari's pre-FIA plea bargain shenanigans of 2019 have pushed Mercedes HPP to new heights, in turn shafting 2020's competitive spectacle.

Toto Wolff admits with this continual raising of F1's bar that his team is "not making a lot of new friends", but that's not what this game is about – it's about grinding your opposition to dust wherever you can. As Daniel Ricciardo says: "They have the ability to be the most complacent team on the grid, yet I feel they are the least complacent".

Don't be fooled by wobbly gearbox sensors and a couple of tyre blowouts. Mercedes is miles ahead.



Lewis inspects his damaged tyre immediately after the race. Until the last lap his seventh British GP win was a relative stroll in the park

2 **Pirelli tyres under the spotlight (again)**

Whenever a Formula 1 race features multiple blowouts the glare of criticism inevitably falls on Pirelli, but this is a complex scenario.

There were four failures in this race, so nowhere near as dramatic as in 2013, after which certain suspension and tyre pressure limits were imposed for safety. However, an investigation by AlphaTauri and Pirelli found Kvyat's failure was caused by the inside of the right-rear wheel rim overheating, which burned the bead of the tyre that connects the rubber to the wheel. The bead was no longer sealed onto the rim, so the tyre itself played no part in the cause of Kvyat's accident.

"As soon as you feel understeer you just back out of it," said McLaren's Lando Norris. "You end up having problems where the front tyre just pops off. Silverstone and the front-left tyre are not friends, never have been."

The majority attempted a one-stop race, with an abnormally long near-40-lap second stint. Carlos Sainz and Bottas both reported vibrations near the end. It's possible they and Hamilton were simply pushing too hard for too long, but given the cuts seen on tyres coming off cars it's possible – and Hamilton was convinced – debris from Kvyat's

shunt and Räikkönen's wing also contributed.

Pirelli's Mario Isola said the level of wear was approaching 100% of the limit for the hard compound, making the tyres more vulnerable to debris, and then "it depends on the set-up, on the level of energy, the driving style, the conditions". Blisters occurred on the right-hand side tyres, so were irrelevant.

Ultimately this will come down to teams pushing the limits of what's possible, coupled with the incredibly high speeds, forces and challenging conditions of Silverstone placing abnormal stress on the tyres. Everyone was playing with fire; unfortunately, some got burned.



Carlos Sainz was one of the unlucky ones at Silverstone as the majority of the field ran exceptionally long second stints

3 **Hülkenberg's 'wild' F1 return turns sour**

Nico Hülkenberg's unexpected return to F1 ended in bizarre fashion before he'd even started the race, thanks to a failed clutch bolt jamming the engine.

Sergio Pérez testing positive for COVID-19 on the Thursday before the race, following a visit to his sick mother in Mexico, was a stark reminder, as Christian Horner said, of the need for F1 to remain vigilant amid racing's return. This set into motion events that led Racing Point to recall Hülkenberg from a planned GT test in Germany to replace Pérez.

Hülkenberg was easily more qualified than any of

Mercedes' nominated reserves, having competed in F1 until the end of last season (Esteban Gutiérrez was ineligible owing to a new rule which states drivers without recent F1 race experience must have done at least one test of 300km). Considering his lack of match fitness, Hulkenberg acquitted himself admirably. He finished Friday 0.636s adrift of Lance Stroll and got that gap down to a miniscule 0.065s in Q2 before disaster struck.

Stroll was fastest of all on Friday and the only driver outside the top four qualifiers to make Q3 on the medium tyre, but he struggled in the race. Another weekend of missed opportunity for the team, before Renault lodged its third protest in four races against the RP20's brake ducts.

Problems before the start halted Hulkenberg's impressive 'super sub' performance



RESULTS ROUND 4

SILVERSTONE / 2.8.20 / 52 LAPS



1st	Lewis Hamilton Mercedes	1h28m01.283s
2nd	Max Verstappen Red Bull	+5.856s
3rd	Charles Leclerc Ferrari	+18.474s
4th	Daniel Ricciardo Renault	+19.650s
5th	Lando Norris McLaren	+22.277s
6th	Esteban Ocon Renault	+26.937s
7th	Pierre Gasly AlphaTauri	+31.188s
8th	Alexander Albon Red Bull	+32.670s
9th	Lance Stroll Racing Point	+37.311s
10th	Sebastian Vettel Ferrari	+41.857s
11th	Valtteri Bottas Mercedes	+42.167s
12th	George Russell Williams	+52.004s
13th	Carlos Sainz McLaren	+53.370s
14th	Antonio Giovinazzi Alfa Romeo	+54.205s*
15th	Nicholas Latifi Williams	+54.549s
16th	Romain Grosjean Haas	+55.050s
17th	Kimi Räikkönen Alfa Romeo	+1 lap

*includes 5s penalty for failing to slow during a Safety Car period

Retirements

Daniil Kvyat AlphaTauri	11 laps - accident
Kevin Magnussen Haas	1 lap - accident
Nico Hülkenberg Racing Point	DNS - clutch

Fastest lap

Max Verstappen: 1m27.097s on lap 52

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED

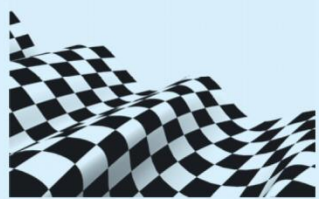


CLIMATE	AIR TEMP	TRACK TEMP
Sunny	21°C	38°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Hamilton	88pts	11 Ocon	12pts
2 Bottas	58pts	12 Gasly	12pts
3 Verstappen	52pts	13 Vettel	10pts
4 Norris	36pts	14 Giovinazzi	2pts
5 Leclerc	33pts	15 Kvyat	1pt
6 Albon	26pts	16 Magnussen	1pt
7 Pérez	22pts	17 Latifi	0pts
8 Stroll	20pts	18 Räikkönen	0pts
9 Ricciardo	20pts	19 Russell	0pts
10 Sainz	15pts	20 Grosjean	0pts





FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 5

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY GP IN 3 KEY MOMENTS



1 Red Bull outfoxes Mercedes for Verstappen victory

A popular maxim has it that the definition of insanity is to repeat an unsuccessful course of action in the expectation of achieving a different result. Having concluded that following a similar strategy to Mercedes in F1's 70th Anniversary GP at Silverstone would yield another defeat, Red Bull opted for a risky alternate strategy, which yielded an unexpectedly dominant victory for Max Verstappen.

For Silverstone's second consecutive race weekend the Pirelli tyre specification was a step softer and this, in combination with soaring temperatures, weakened Mercedes and opened strategic options further down the field.

Verstappen qualified fourth, behind the Mercedes of Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton, and Nico Hülkenberg's Racing Point, but was the only driver in the top 10 to start on the hardest tyre compound, having earned that right by setting his fastest Q2 lap on it. Max dispensed with Hülkenberg at Abbey on the opening lap and had the pace to stay with the Mercedes as the trio broke clear – running close enough to warrant a reminder from race engineer

Gianpiero Lambiase to hang back. "I'm not going to sit behind like a grandma," Verstappen responded.

It was at this point Red Bull began to realise that not only was its strategy working more effectively than anticipated, many of the risks were falling away. The original plan had been to give Max a tyre advantage at the end of the race in the event of a Safety Car; instead he was able to overcut the Mercedes hugely by running 13 laps longer than early race leader Bottas and 12 longer than Hamilton.

The Mercedes drivers were in tyre-management mode from the off, and yet were still forced to get rid of the medium rubber earlier than they would have preferred – only to find the sheer downforce of the W11 was punishing the hard compound too. By the time Verstappen pitted for mediums at the end of lap 26, he'd been on average half a second per lap faster than Bottas on like-for-like rubber and both Mercedes were exhibiting symptoms of blisters.

This enabled Verstappen to come out of the pits on the tail of Bottas and pass him straight away. Such was the Red Bull's pace that the team no

longer needed the endgame scenario of its previous strategy, so Max was instructed to forget about tyre management and pump in six quick laps on the relatively fragile medium before stopping for a fresh set of hards. Bottas pitted on the same lap, nullifying any chance of him passing Max via strategy.

Mercedes left Hamilton out until 11 laps from the end in the hope he could make something of the tyre offset. On fresher rubber he caught and passed his team-mate but was unable to catch the Red Bull.

"As a team we were sleeping," harrumphed Bottas. "My strategy was far from ideal."

2 Leclerc salvages fourth for chaotic Ferrari

Charles Leclerc vastly outperformed his machinery again to claim fourth place from eighth on the grid. That he described the result as "like a victory" perfectly encapsulates Ferrari's status.

PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; ANDY HONE; CHARLES COATES



Leclerc once again outperformed his very tardy Ferrari by bringing it home fourth

Once again the two Ferrari drivers approached the weekend with different downforce levels and took different strategies into the race, too. Leclerc had a precautionary power unit change after Sebastian Vettel's failed during practice on Friday, costing the four-time champion important track time. Vettel continued to struggle with the SF1000, as he has at every race this season, failing to make it into Q3 and then spinning to the tail of the field on lap one, negating any strategic benefit he might have had from starting on hard-compound tyres.

Ferrari said it would respond to its drivers' lacklustre grid slots by taking strategic risks and it duly did so, with mixed results. While Leclerc, who

cope better with the SF1000 in lower-downforce trim, managed to execute an improbable one-stop strategy, Vettel openly took issue with a multi-stop plan in which he completed just 11 laps on new hard-compound tyres mid-race before stopping for used mediums 19 laps from the flag.

Vettel berated the team in the race and continued after finishing 12th, saying, "We spoke this morning that there's no point pitting, knowing we will run into traffic – and that's exactly what we did. It didn't make sense. Why would you put on the hard for 10 laps and then the medium for 20 laps? I was running out of tyres towards the end. I guess not the best work we could have done today."

3 Hülkenberg leaves a calling card

Having failed to make the start of the British Grand Prix owing to a sheared clutch bolt, Racing Point stand-in Nico Hülkenberg made a searing impression second time around at Silverstone. He qualified the controversial RP20 third, making team-mate Lance Stroll look ordinary, and continued in that vein until a vibration set in late on in the race, forcing an extra stop, which left him seventh.

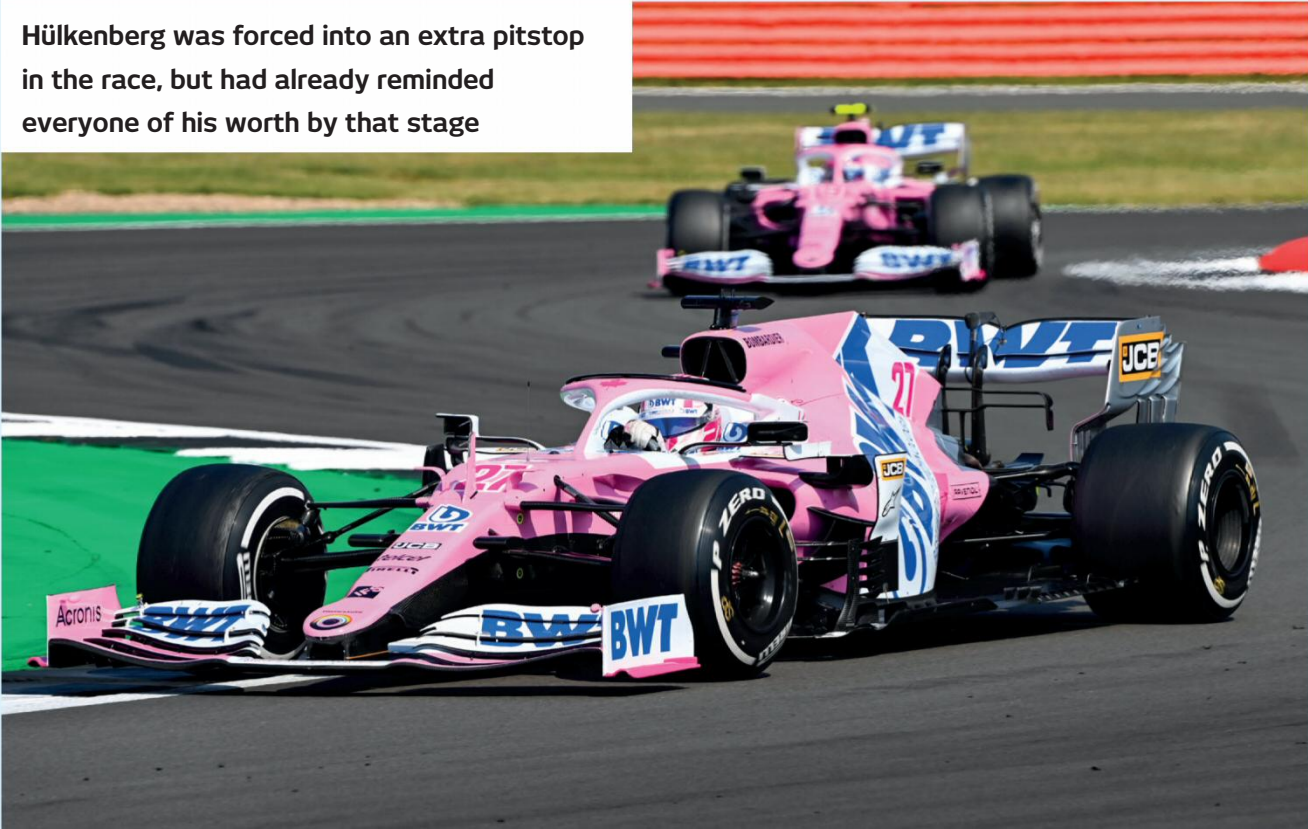
Whether Hülkenberg could have chased down Leclerc for fourth without that stop is open to question, but what's beyond doubt is that he has

left an impeccable reminder of his credentials. Already there is speculation that he would make a good plug-and-play replacement for other teams with drivers who are struggling to tick every box.

One such is Sebastian Vettel at Ferrari, the other is Red Bull's Alex Albon, who inherited Hülkenberg's fifth after an eventful drive on an alternate strategy from ninth on the grid. An early pitstop to get him off the medium tyres and into clear air left him work to do and he proved an industrious overtaker, but he needs to get more from the car in qualifying (as does Esteban Ocon, who one-stopped to eighth from a penalised 14th on the grid).

"Imagine if Alex had started in P4 or P5 with the pace he had," said Red Bull boss Christian Horner.

Hülkenberg was forced into an extra pitstop in the race, but had already reminded everyone of his worth by that stage



RESULTS ROUND 5

SILVERSTONE / 9.8.20 / 52 LAPS



1st	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	1h19m41.993s
2nd	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+11.326s
3rd	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	+19.231s
4th	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+29.289s
5th	Alexander Albon	Red Bull	+39.146s
6th	Lance Stroll	Racing Point	+42.538s
7th	Nico Hülkenberg	Racing Point	+55.951s
8th	Esteban Ocon	Renault	+64.773s
9th	Lando Norris	McLaren	+65.544s
10th	Daniil Kvyat	AlphaTauri	+69.669s
11th	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri	+70.642s
12th	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	+73.370s
13th	Carlos Sainz	McLaren	+74.070s
14th	Daniel Ricciardo	Renault	+1 lap
15th	Kimi Räikkönen	Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
16th	Romain Grosjean	Haas	+1 lap
17th	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
18th	George Russell	Williams	+1 lap
19th	Nicholas Latifi	Williams	+1 lap





Retirements

Kevin Magnussen Haas 43 laps - tyres/safety*

Fastest lap

Lewis Hamilton: 1m28.451s on lap 43

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED

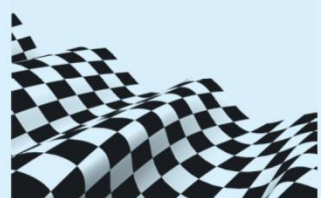


Hard (C2) Medium(C3) Soft (C4) Inter Wet

CLIMATE Sunny **AIR TEMP** 26°C **TRACK TEMP** 43°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS			
1	Hamilton	107pts	12 Gasly 12pts
2	Verstappen	77pts	13 Vettel 10pts
3	Bottas	73pts	14 Hülkenberg 6pts
4	Leclerc	45pts	15 Giovinazzi 2pts
5	Norris	38pts	16 Kvyat 2pts
6	Albon	36pts	17 Magnussen 1pt
7	Stroll	28pts	18 Räikkönen 0pts
8	Pérez	22pts	19 Latifi 0pts
9	Ricciardo	20pts	20 Russell 0pts
10	Ocon	16pts	21 Grosjean 0pts
11	Sainz	15pts	





FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 6

THE SPANISH GP IN 3 KEY MOMENTS



After a disappointing 70th Anniversary GP Lewis Hamilton dominated in Spain to claim his fourth win in six races

1 Mercedes finds its mojo again to thwart Red Bull challenge

If Red Bull's surprise victory in the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix appeared to have crowbarred open the door to teams other than Mercedes winning races this season, the German giant and star driver Lewis Hamilton slammed it shut again in Spain. Barcelona's unusual mid-August calendar slot brought the kind of sweltering ambients which have exposed Mercedes' weaknesses in previous rounds, but the nature of Hamilton's victory suggested those vulnerabilities have been eliminated.

"Sunday evening [of the second Silverstone round] the work started to overcome that problem," said team boss Toto Wolff after Hamilton completely dominated the Spanish Grand Prix from pole position.

It helped that Red Bull was unable to repeat its tactic of starting Max Verstappen on a harder tyre compound. Practice had suggested the soft tyre was fragile as usual, and the medium was a decent race tyre, while the hardest was gripless and not worth bothering with. Pirelli predicted a two-stop

race of soft-medium-medium would be the best, and the only drivers beginning the race on the medium did so from outside the top 10.

Although Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas annexed the front row, Bottas was swamped on the run down to Turn 1 and passed by both Verstappen and Lance Stroll, whose super-committed run down the inside line forced Bottas to lift briefly, baulking the second Red Bull of Alex Albon. Bottas had to hang it out all the way around the outside of Turn 3 to avoid being passed by Stroll's team-mate Sergio Pérez, who had made a sub-optimal getaway from fourth on the grid.

This phase of the race proved critical as Hamilton moved into overt tyre-management mode, running slowly enough for Verstappen to remain close (and for Max's engineer to remind him to hang back), while Bottas took until lap five to relieve Stroll of third. Buoyed by being faster on the medium rubber during Friday practice, and confident Mercedes would have to get off the soft tyres sooner rather than later, Red Bull was content to let Max wait.

That confidence evaporated on lap 10, when Hamilton abruptly lifted his pace by 1.5s per lap and bolted for the horizon. Verstappen couldn't keep up. Lap 16, the point at which Pirelli expected the frontrunners to make their first pitstops, came and went. Hamilton was by now in dialogue with his engineers about whether it would be possible to convert to a one-stop.

Mercedes elected not to take that risk and brought Lewis in for mediums at the end of lap 23, two laps after Max. Crucially, both emerged ahead of the two Racing Points, which were running long first stints (Pérez was on a one-stopper). Hamilton simply drove away into the distance as Verstappen capitulated, making the timing of their second stops academic. Bottas switched to softs for his final stint but was unable to close in on the Red Bull.

"Towards the middle of that first stint, when Lewis started to pick up the pace, I couldn't really follow so I knew that that was it for today," said Max. "I thought, 'I'm just going to manage my race from now on and try to make the best of it.'"

PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; ANDY HONE; CHARLES COATES



For the first time this season both Racing Point cars finished in the top six positions

2 Racing Point finally delivers on potential

Having taken the punishment for its tactic of cloning last year's Mercedes – though that might not be the end of the matter if rival teams have their way – Racing Point got both cars home in decent points-paying positions for the first time this season. Though Red Bull's Alex Albon executed qualifying better than he has thus far in 2020 he was still seven tenths off team-mate Verstappen in Q3, and Sergio Pérez and Lance Stroll posted their

pink cars into this gap to start fourth and fifth.

That's where they finished, too, after an eventful race, although a 5s penalty for ignoring blue flags shuffled Pérez behind Stroll in the final classification. Stroll got the better start and briefly ran third, but Pérez was able to make a one-stop strategy work and retain track position at the flag.

Red Bull's decision to stop Albon early and put him on the hard tyres – a call that left him bogged down in traffic, and on unsympathetic rubber – removed one potential challenger. McLaren's Carlos Sainz ran an unusual soft-soft-medium strategy and cruised up behind Stroll in the final laps, but fell 1.581s short of displacing the penalised Pérez.

3 Vettel salvages result for dysfunctional Ferrari

Ferrari endured its worst qualifying ever at Barcelona as Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel started ninth and 11th, a change of chassis appearing not to be the cure for the four-time champion's woes. Leclerc didn't even see the chequered flag as an electrical problem caused him to spin and stall; though he got the car going again, he had already unbelted himself and spent a further two laps trying to convince the team that he needed to stop.

Communication between driver and pitwall

wasn't going well on Vettel's side either. Starting on the medium tyres, he was able to parlay a one-stop strategy into seventh place at the finish, although the team seemed to have forgotten his existence when he radioed to verify what lap times he should be setting to make a one-stop work. Faced with radio silence he pushed for three laps before his engineer asked him if he might like to consider a one-stopper.

"Ah for f**k's sake," was Vettel's response. "I asked you this before..."

Another weekend of woe for both Ferraris as Leclerc was the race's sole retirement and Vettel could only manage to finish seventh



RESULTS ROUND 6

BARCELONA / 16.8.20 / 66 LAPS



1st	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	1h31m45.279s
2nd	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	+24.177s
3rd	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	+44.752s
4th	Lance Stroll	Racing Point	+1 lap
5th	Sergio Pérez	Racing Point	+1 lap*
6th	Carlos Sainz	McLaren	+1 lap
7th	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	+1 lap
8th	Alexander Albon	Red Bull	+1 lap
9th	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri	+1 lap
10th	Lando Norris	McLaren	+1 lap
11th	Daniel Ricciardo	Renault	+1 lap
12th	Daniil Kvyat	AlphaTauri	+1 lap*
13th	Esteban Ocon	Renault	+1 lap
14th	Kimi Räikkönen	Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
15th	Kevin Magnussen	Haas	+1 lap
16th	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
17th	George Russell	Williams	+1 lap
18th	Nicholas Latifi	Williams	+2 laps
19th	Romain Grosjean	Haas	+2 laps

*includes 5s penalty for ignoring blue flags

Retirements

Charles Leclerc Ferrari 38 laps - electrics

Fastest lap

Valtteri Bottas: 1m18.183s on lap 66

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



CLIMATE

Sunny

AIR TEMP

30°C

TRACK TEMP

50°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Hamilton	132pts	10 Ocon	16pts
2 Verstappen	95pts	12 Gasly	14pts
3 Bottas	89pts	14 Hülkenberg	6pts
4 Leclerc	45pts	15 Giovinazzi	2pts
5 Stroll	40pts	16 Kvyat	2pts
6 Albon	40pts	17 Magnussen	1pt
7 Norris	39pts	18 Räikkönen	0pts
8 Pérez	32pts	19 Latifi	0pts
9 Sainz	23pts	20 Russell	0pts
10 Ricciardo	20pts	21 Grosjean	0pts
11 Vettel	16pts		





FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE PREVIEW

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 7

BELGIAN GP

28-30 August 2020
Spa-Francorchamps



PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; SIMON GALLOWAY; ILLUSTRATIONS: ALAN ELDREDGE



RACE DATA

Venue Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps
First GP 1950
Number of laps 44
Circuit length 4.352 miles
Longest straight 0.78 miles
Elevation change 335.31 feet
Race distance 191.414 miles
Lap record 1m46.286s Valtteri Bottas (2018)
F1 races held 52
Winners from pole 25
Pirelli compounds C2, C3, C4

CAR PERFORMANCE

Downforce level Medium
Cooling requirement Low
Fuel consumption 2.3kg/lap
Full throttle 60%
Top speed 214mph
Average speed 137mph

TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

Friday 28 August
Practice 1 10:00-11:30
Practice 2 14:00-15:30
Saturday 29 August
Practice 3 11:00-12:00
Qualifying 14:00-15:00
Sunday 30 August
Race 14:10
Live coverage Sky Sports F1
Highlights Channel 4

THE MAIN EVENT

Power is the key here in the hilly, capricious Ardennes – but it's not the sole factor determining competitiveness, for Spa-Francorchamps remains a classic driver's circuit which rewards finesse and bravery. Yes, downforce and improved safety have rendered the iconic Eau Rouge and Raidillon section 'easy-flat' (on low fuel at least), but this remains an imposing venue and the tragic events of last year's grand prix weekend, when F2 driver Anthoine Hubert was fatally injured in an accident, serve as a stark reminder of the risks associated with 'old-school' circuits.

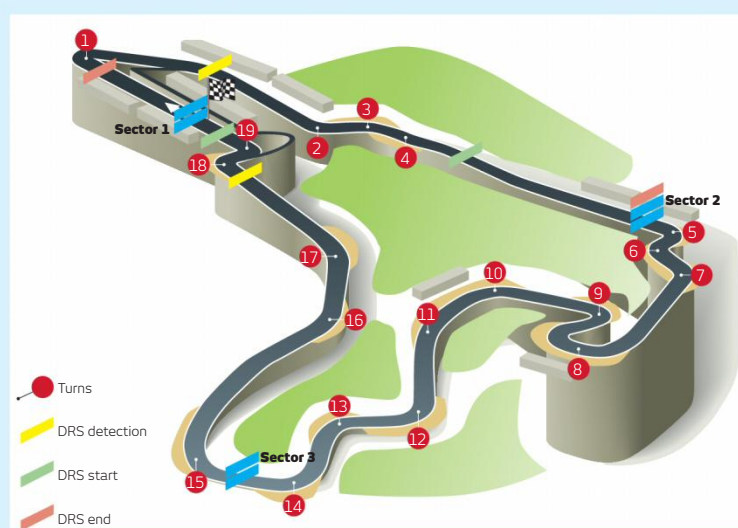
Another factor which often plays a role in outcomes here is the weather which, thanks to the microclimate in this region, remains difficult to forecast accurately. It can be sunny at one end of the circuit and teeming down with rain at the other, so expect a wild ride...

2019 RACE RECAP

Charles Leclerc took his long-awaited first win for Ferrari, leading from pole position as team-mate Sebastian Vettel fended off the Mercedes of Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas in the early laps.

Ferrari pitted Vettel early but Mercedes didn't take the bait, staying focused on a one-stop strategy which paid off when Vettel was forced to stop again. Ferrari's rivals were shaken by the force of the Scuderia's upgraded engine, leading to questions which resulted in a post-season investigation – the results of which are still being felt today.

KEY CORNER: TURN 9 Unusually for a circuit redolent with evocative corner names, this 90-degree left-hander has no official nomenclature. Drivers must nail it – riding the kerb just so – to ensure a good exit onto the downhill straight.



THE WINNERS HERE...



2019

Charles
Leclerc
Ferrari



2018

Sebastian
Vettel
Ferrari



2017

Lewis
Hamilton
Mercedes



2016

Nico
Rosberg
Mercedes



2015

Lewis
Hamilton
Mercedes



FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE PREVIEW

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 8

ITALIAN GP

4-6 September
Monza

RACE DATA

Venue Autodromo

Nazionale di Monza

First GP 1950**Number of laps** 53**Circuit length** 3.599 miles**Longest straight** 0.696 miles**Elevation change** 41.99 feet**Race distance** 190.591 miles**Lap record** 1m21.046s Rubens
Barrichello (2004)**F1 races held** 69**Winners from pole** 25**Pirelli compounds** C2, C3, C4

CAR PERFORMANCE

Downforce level Low**Cooling requirement** Medium**Fuel consumption** 1.89kg/lap**Full throttle** 75%**Top speed** 220mph**Average speed** 157mph

THE MAIN EVENT

The only sound at Monza apart from racing engines this year will be the famous whispering trees of the royal park. An Italian GP without the tifosi will be bizarre indeed, even as we've become used to empty grandstands elsewhere.

Dipping in and around the gradually decaying concrete banking of the moribund oval circuit, Monza remains a temple of speed despite the chicanes introduced to keep velocities under control. Efficient low-drag aerodynamics, great traction and resilient brakes follow in close attendance to outright power in terms of importance here.

While the present generation of F1 cars are ultra-powerful and endowed with massive downforce which yields record lap times elsewhere, their sheer width makes them draggy in a straight line – one of the reasons behind the lap record persisting from the time of the V10s.

2019 RACE RECAP

Charles Leclerc won his second consecutive race from pole for Ferrari while his team-mate made a sorry mess of things from the off. Sebastian Vettel only qualified fourth and then spun at the Ascari chicane on lap six, rejoining in the path of Racing Point's Lance Stroll.

Lewis Hamilton led the Mercedes challenge and battled Leclerc, but was unable to make a pass stick – though Leclerc received a warning for nudging him off-track. Later on Hamilton locked up under braking and Valtteri Bottas moved into second, but he couldn't get by Leclerc either.

KEY CORNER: TURN 1 Yes, it's a fiddly little chicane, the bane of drivers' lives, but involves a perfectly judged braking moment in which the cars must shed nearly 180mph in less than 100m...



THE WINNERS HERE...



2019

Charles
Leclerc
Ferrari

2018

Lewis
Hamilton
Mercedes

2017

Lewis
Hamilton
Mercedes

2016

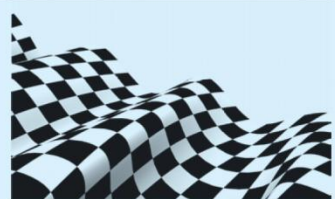
Nico
Rosberg
Mercedes

2015

Lewis
Hamilton
Mercedes

TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

Friday 4 September**Practice 1** 10:00-11:30**Practice 2** 14:00-15:30**Saturday 5 September****Practice 3** 11:00-12:00**Qualifying** 14:00-15:00**Sunday 6 September****Race** 14:10**Live coverage** Sky Sports F1**Highlights** Channel 4



FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE PREVIEW

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 9

TUSCAN GP

11-13 September 2020
Mugello



PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; FERRARI: ILLUSTRATION: ALAN ELDREDGE



THE MAIN EVENT

Picturesque Tuscany gets its own grand prix as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and this fixture on Ferrari's home turf – at a circuit it's owned since 1988, in fact – neatly coincides with the Scuderia's 1000th world championship grand prix.

That this race will take place behind closed doors brings positives and negatives, for while this area of Italy is stunningly beautiful and boasts fine cuisine, Mugello is not blessed with great transport infrastructure. We shall at least not have to suffer the blight of participants and media complaining about traffic jams.

Mugello's fast and flowing layout delights drivers but will militate against overtaking unless, as is possible, the tyres take exception to the punishment being meted out to them. It's no surprise that Pirelli is bringing its hardest compounds.

Since this is the inaugural (and probably only) Tuscan GP, every record will be a new one. In the unlikely event



of a Kimi Räikkönen victory, therefore, the oldest driver in the field would also be the youngest ever winner of the Tuscan GP. A far-fetched notion, yes, but it would be somehow apt since this circuit was the venue of his inaugural F1 test for Sauber as a callow 20-year old in September 2000...

KEY CORNER (TURN 6)

Casanova is the off-camber right-hander which leads to the sweeping downhill esses, thence to the fast Arrabbiata right-handers that follow. It's punishing on tyres and a mistake here will cost vital speed through the next three corners.

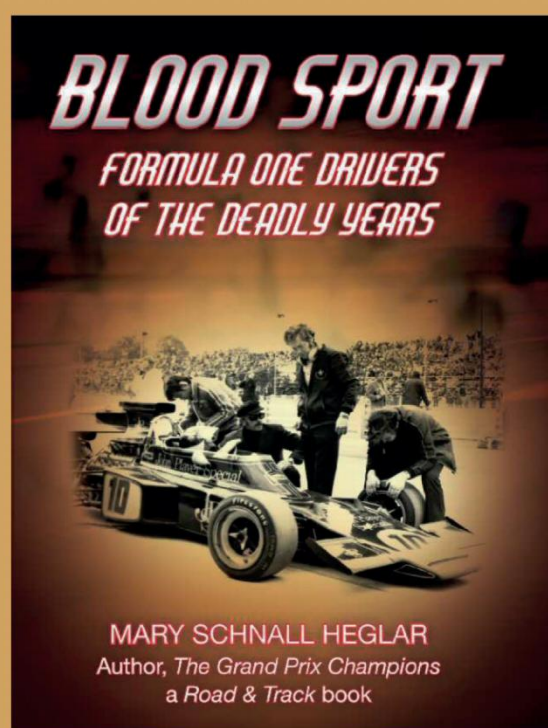


RACE DATA

Circuit name Autodromo Internazionale del Mugello
First GP 2020
Number of laps 59
Circuit length 3.259 miles
Race distance 192.28 miles
Longest straight 0.709 miles
Elevation change 135 feet
Pirelli compounds C1, C2, C3

TIMETABLE RACE (UK TIME)

Friday 11 September
Practice 1 10:00-11:30
Practice 2 14:00-15:30
Saturday 12 September
Practice 3 11:00-12:00
Qualifying 14:00-15:00
Sunday 13 September
Race 14:10
Live coverage Sky Sports F1
Highlights Channel 4



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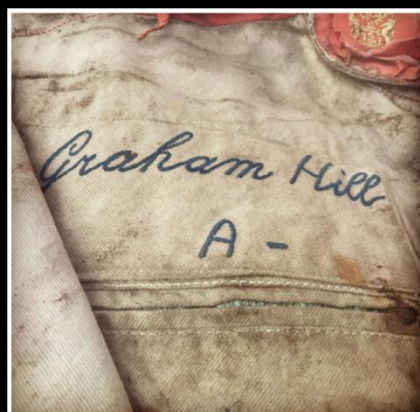
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Two new luxury leather bags from Jordan Bespoke celebrate some of the most gifted racing drivers of all time while raising funds for The Jim Clark Trust and Sir Jackie Stewart's Race Against Dementia.

The Champions of Monaco bag celebrates the 70th anniversary of Monaco's first world championship round, won by Juan Manuel Fangio for Alfa Romeo. Crafted from Scottish leather and finished in dark blue, the bag is lined with original photographs of Monaco Grand Prix winners

including Fangio, Stirling Moss, Alain Prost, Ayrton Senna and David Coulthard, as well as Sir Jackie.

The Jim Clark bag features Clark's signature and its bespoke lining features images of Clark in action, set against the backdrop of the Clark family tartan. A percentage of the sales will go to The Jim Clark Trust, which recently opened a new museum in Clark's home town of Duns, while a percentage from the sales of the Champions of Monaco Bag will go to the Race Against Dementia.

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Who Works has moved with the times and three options are available, from a hardback book to an eBook, and even a mobile app.



FORMULA 1 70TH ANNIVERSARY PRINTS

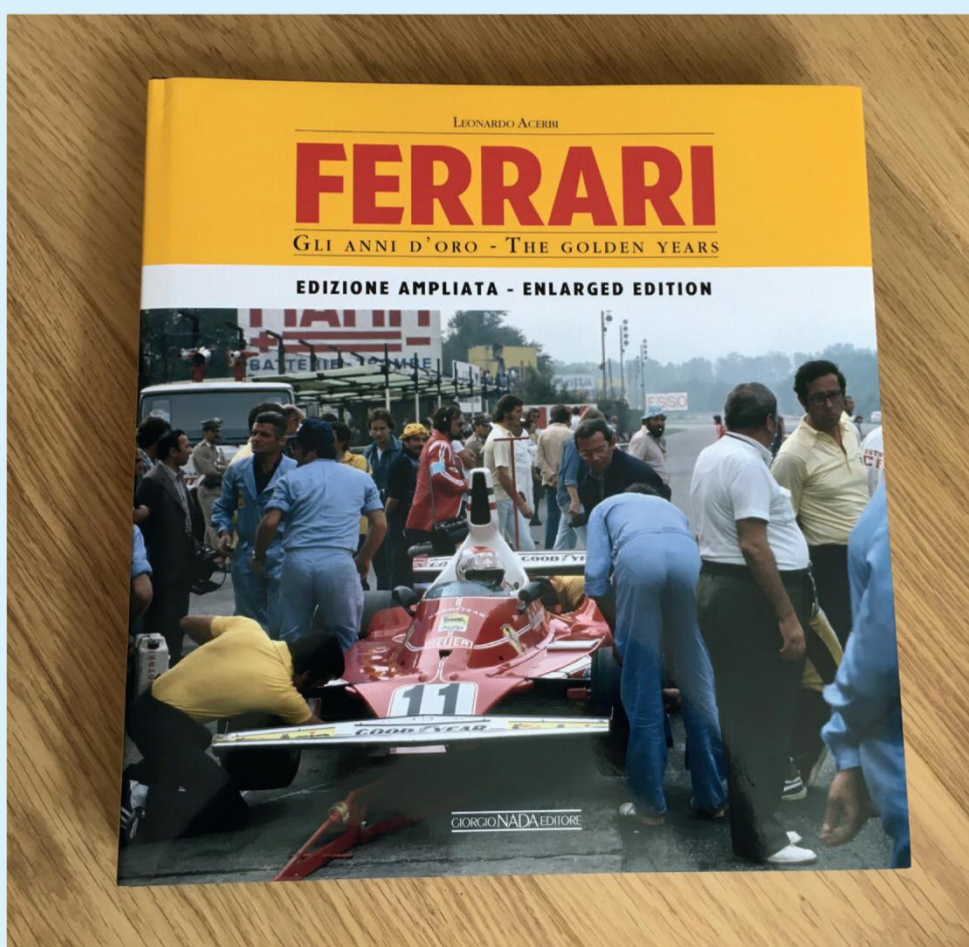
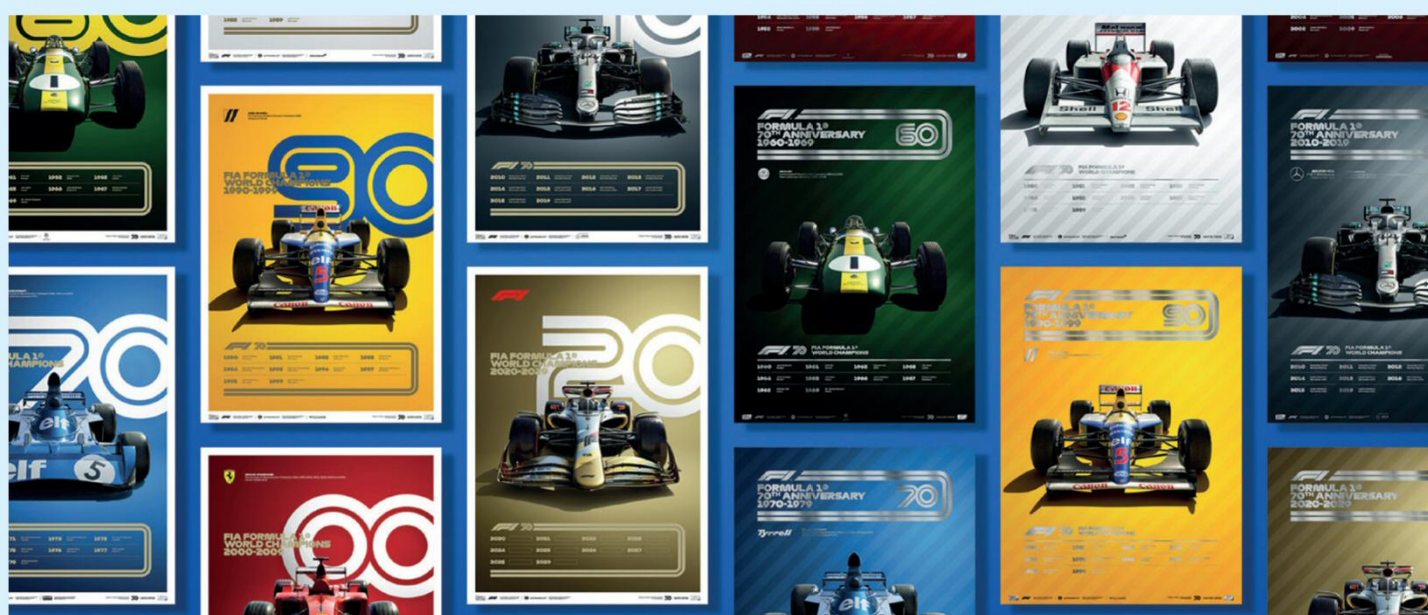
Price From £42.40

[automobilist.com](https://www.automobilist.com)

Award-winning art studio Automobilist has partnered with Formula 1 to create a series of prints to mark the 70th anniversary of the world championship. Each print features a landmark car from a particular decade, using 3D modelling technology: the Maserati 250F represents the 1950s; Jim Clark's Lotus 25 the '60s; Jackie Stewart's Tyrrell 006 the '70s; Ayrton Senna's McLaren MP4/4 the '80s; Nigel Mansell's Williams FW14B the '90s; Michael Schumacher's Ferrari F2002 the 2000s; and Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes W10 the most recent decade.

A final poster features the 'teaser' concept proposed ahead of the new rules package now scheduled to be introduced in 2022.

Available in Limited Edition and Collector's Edition form, the latter featuring an embossed silver finish, the posters are printed on 175gsm paper. The Collector's Edition prints are limited to 700 pieces each.



FERRARI - THE GOLDEN YEARS

Price €71.25

[giorgionadaeditore.it](https://www.giorgionadaeditore.it)

This absolute whopper of a book – 400 large-format pages, in hardback – will do you an injury if you drop it on your toes. First published in 2017 to celebrate Ferrari's 70th anniversary but now revised, expanded and re-issued, Leonardo Acerbi's book traces the company's sporting history from its origins to the death of founder Enzo Ferrari in 1988.

The text is presented in both Italian and English, and it follows the full chronology of Ferrari competition cars from the unbodied 125S of 1947. In this expanded edition the biographies of Ferrari's champion drivers are now joined by those of Ferrari's key lieutenants down the

years, the likes of Romolo Tavoni, Franco Gozzi, Gioachino Colombo, Mauro Forghieri and Marco Piccinini.

It's packed with photographs, both monochrome and colour, and the majority are drawn from relatively obscure image archives, making this a must for Ferrari fans who may feel like they've seen everything there is to see of the Maranello marque's history.





FINISHING STRAIGHT

THE FINAL LAP

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MOVING TESTING WON'T MAKE BETTER RACES

Among the least insightful 'hot takes' barked out by the opinionati in the wake of a Spanish Grand Prix which was, on the face of it, less than thrilling, was the claim that Barcelona's status as F1's default testing venue militates against good racing there. Some voices went so far as to suggest that F1 should abandon world championship venues for its pre-season routine, testing only at circuits that don't feature on the calendar.

All of this is predicated on several assumptions, chief of which is the trope that nobody can find an edge at the Circuit de Catalunya because the teams know it so well, and have vaults full of data covering every possible scenario. It also assumes all races there are processional – something which is occasionally the case but not uniformly. If you look beyond the business of who actually won, there were plenty of intriguing battles and daring on-track racing going on down the field – provided you were paying attention (and the TV director hadn't snoozed into automatic pilot).

While the order below the podium positions ultimately coalesced into a form not greatly removed from the grid, this doesn't mean the 2020 Spanish GP was entirely uneventful.

Sergio Pérez made an unlikely one-stop strategy work to finish fourth on the road, fifth with his blue-flag penalty; team-mate Lance Stroll, running on a more vanilla two-stop plan, inherited fourth as a result but had to cope with the challenge of McLaren's Carlos Sainz, who was on an unorthodox soft-soft-medium run plan. Sainz made great use of the tyre offset to make his way back through the pack, overtaking (among others) the one-stopping Ferrari of Sebastian

Esteban Ocon's fight with Kimi Räikkönen was exciting. It just wasn't for a top three position



Vettel. Alexander Albon also had to fight, having been lumbered with the unfancied hard rubber in an early stop which left him in traffic. Lando Norris had to get his elbows out after losing two places at the start, which put him at loggerheads with Charles Leclerc – a duel that would have delivered more entertainment had the Ferrari not broken.

The nuances of tyre management may not be the most fascinating aspect of motor racing but they contributed to intrigue at a circuit which offers pretty much every kind of corner except those that promote overtaking opportunities. Drivers enjoy the challenge of stringing together fast laps on what is mostly a fast and flowing layout – Mika Häkkinen, no less, still ranks Barcelona among his favourite circuits. But the fact remains that passing is very difficult unless one car is substantially faster than the other. Ending the practice of testing

at Barcelona would not change this.

Renault's Esteban Ocon performed one of the boldest overtaking moves of the race, straying onto the grass at close to maximum speed while putting Kimi Räikkönen to the sword, though perhaps the nature of the dispute – for finishing positions outside the top 10 – reduced the stakes in the mind of the viewer. Afterwards I asked him what effect, if any, a move to testing at non-championship venues would have.

"Obviously we know the track very well," he said, "and that made it tight in qualifying and the race. But the conditions were so different, everything we got from winter testing about tyre management and car set-up didn't really matter. The time of year we're racing made it like a different place."

The huge disparity in ambient and track temperatures between the usual test days (late February), Barcelona's traditional calendar slot (early May) and where it was this year (mid-August) created many uncertainties and fed into that wider picture of hugely differing tyre strategies. That it didn't provide the kind of topsy-turvy race which endures long in the memory suggests that testing really isn't the problem here. It's the circuit itself.

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