GP RACING JANUARY 2023

THE FERRARI THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A WINNER

GP RACING

INSIDE

"WHAT I'VE DONE IS GREAT... BUT NOWHERE NEAR WHAT I WANT TO DO"

Why **Pierre Gasly** thinks he can win again
(And why his new boss thinks he's better than Oscar Piastri)

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THE MANY FACES OF SEBASTIAN VETTEL

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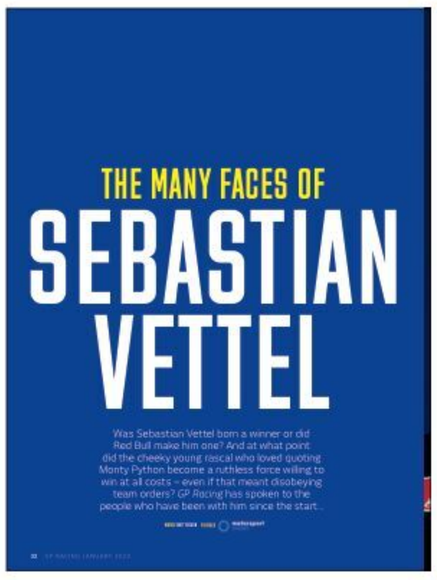

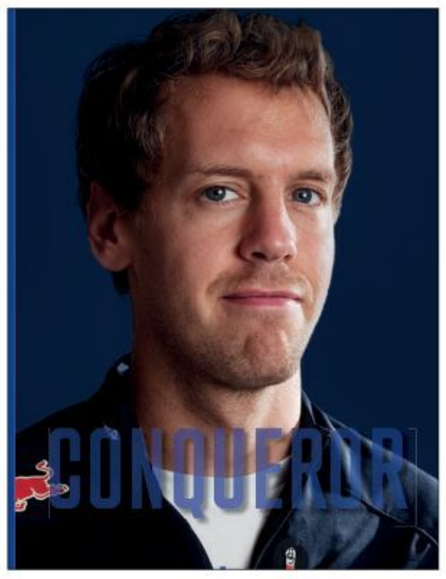

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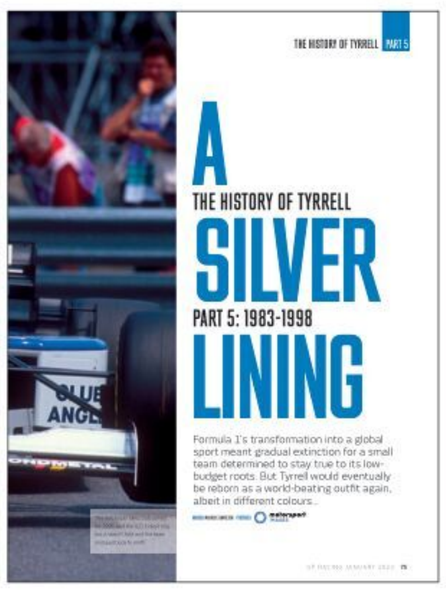

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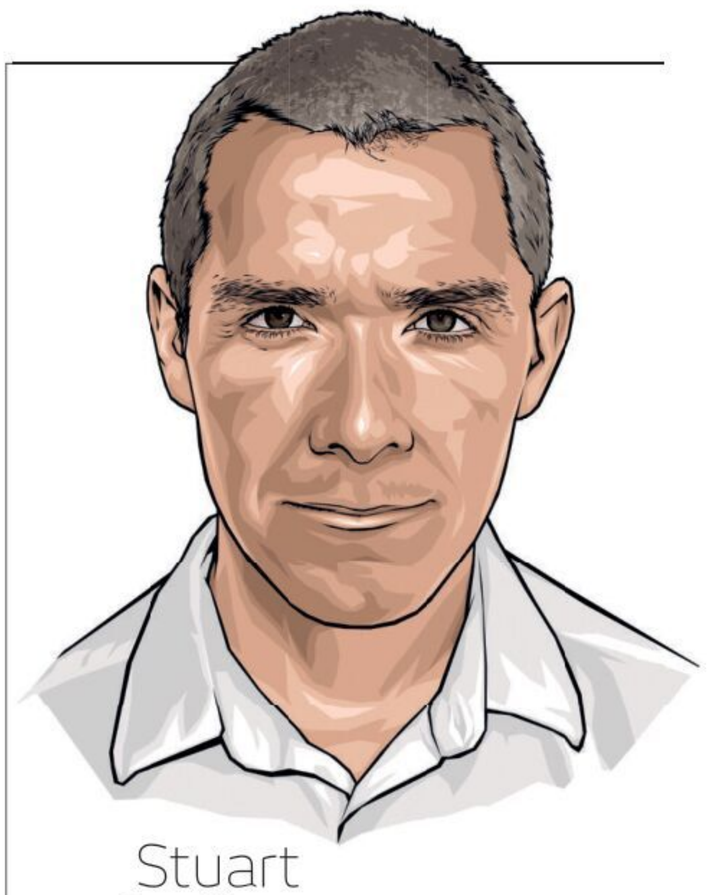
IGNITION

JANUARY 2023



Stuart Codling

Contributors

MATT YOUSON

Matt, author of *Red Bull Racing: The First 10 Years*, was in pole position to appraise the first part of Sebastian Vettel's long career (p33)

ROBERTO CHINCHERO

Roberto has the inside track on why Vettel moved to Ferrari and what went wrong, and right for him, at the Scuderia (p43)

OLEG KARPOV

A look at Pierre Gasly's time in the Red Bull family (p60) and a chat with his new boss Otmar Szafnauer (p68) have kept Oleg busy

MAURICE HAMILTON

Maurice wraps up his fascinating history of Tyrrell this month as he charts the team's sad decline until its sale to BAR (p74)

"Stop, thief!"

If any Formula 1 driver were to be halted in their tracks by a (not especially original) witticism while strolling away from an awards ceremony, trophy in hand, it's Sebastian Vettel. The majority of guests at the *Autosport* Awards had long since made for their carriages or gone a-questing for the afterparty in the labyrinthine bowels of London's Grosvenor House. Then here came Sebastian, perhaps savouring his final appearance at such an extravaganza, sauntering alone from the Great Room balcony with his lifetime achievement gong slung casually in one hand.

We haven't encountered one another much one-on-one in recent years, since his preference is to avoid the society of the Formula 1 media and its tiresome works. This time, though, he paused to acknowledge my attempt at a humorous interjection, shook my hand, wished me well, then turned left towards the Ballroom where the afterparty was in full swing.

As our triptych of cover features explores this month, Sebastian Vettel departs F1 a radically changed individual from the cheeky hotshoe who lit up the scene when he became the youngest driver to score points in a grand prix during his debut (and one-off) race for BMW-Sauber at the 2007 US GP. He's grown up in public; if you still bear him ill-will over his refusal to accept team orders in 2013, consider also that he leaves F1 a more socially mature place than he found it.

It's emblematic of the camaraderie of the racing community that, during the *Autosport* Awards, we take a moment at the beginning of the evening to reflect on those lost to our world rather than consigning their names to a montage over the closing credits. On the day of the event we learned of the passing of Patrick Tambay, a true gentleman as well as a gifted driver whose modest total of two grand prix wins was a reflection of seldom being in the right seat at the right time. Although his illness prompted him to step back from public involvement in Formula 1 some time ago, he was a great friend of and contributor to this magazine in its formative years. He will be greatly missed.

Also taking his rightful place on the big screen among the great and the good of motor racing was Simon Arron, who passed away in November. A longtime contributor to *GP Racing's* former sister titles *Motoring News* and *Motor Sport*, editing both for a period in the mid-nineties, Simon was a witty and sagacious writer as well as tremendous company on the road; a safe pair of hands, also, between the posts during weekly LAT five-a-side games. It was a privilege to share an office, sundry press rooms and an oblong of astroturf with him. Our sincere condolences to Simon's family and his many friends.

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F1 PARADE

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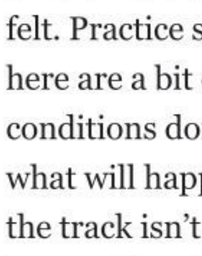
A flash of light before sunset

Around mid-afternoon in Abu Dhabi at this time of year there comes a point where the sun has gone over for the day but hasn't quite set, and the effects of the circuit floodlights are yet to be felt. Practice sessions in daylight here are a bit odd since the track conditions don't really reflect what will happen in the race, so the track isn't necessarily very busy with traffic.

The cars were moving through an interesting pool of light so, while it was fairly quiet, I thought I'd experiment. While the new Canon R3's headline feature is a 1/64,000th shutter speed, I went the other way and took it down to 1/15th, which creates a great feel of movement.



Photographer
Glenn Dunbar

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 3:17pm, Saturday
19 November 2022

Details Canon EOS R3
100-500mm lens, 1/15th @ F25

F1 PARADE
motorsport IMAGES

It's all water under the bridge

Think back to the early days of Sebastian Vettel's F1 career and that time he accidentally took out Mark Webber while running behind the Safety Car in Japan. Later, of course, there was the infamous 'Multi-21' incident in Malaysia where Seb disobeyed team orders and overtook Mark, his team-mate, to win the race. There were harsh words between them on both occasions and maybe the latter incident hastened Webber's departure.

In the last few moments on the Abu Dhabi grid Mark sought out Seb to wish him well in his final grand prix. Considering their rancorous history I found it quite a touching moment as they locked eyes.

Photographer
Zak Mauger

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 4:49pm, Sunday
20 November 2022

Details Canon EOS R3
50mm lens, 1/1250th @ F1.2

Staying sharp to the very end

One of the characteristics that marks out Red Bull from its rivals is the team's sheer relentlessness. Having put the world championship to bed ages ago, both Max Verstappen and his crew could be forgiven for straying from their policy of absolute perfectionism for the last few rounds – especially during this ultra-tiring final double-header weekend.

But no, the group was absolutely on it at every moment. From my vantage point opposite the garage I could see the crew's precision and steely focus as they prepared to send Max out in Q2. I quite like, too, the way the RB18 car's matt blue paintwork pops under the glare of the artificial light of the garage.

Photographer
Simon Galloway

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 6:28pm, Saturday
19 November 2022

Details Nikon D6
200-500mm lens, 1/500th @ F5.6

X VERSTAPP

PIT-LANE

F1 PARADE
motorsport IMAGES

Lewis and George: it's getting closer

One of the interesting stories of the year behind the main championship protagonists has been the relative performance of the two Mercedes drivers as George Russell took the hot seat beside Lewis Hamilton. You've got to say George is the closest team-mate Lewis has had in terms of pace since Fernando Alonso at McLaren in 2007.

I went to Turn 6 for the start of the race and decided to hang on for a while. After the first couple of laps I saw George closing in so I waited and got them both running together in this panning shot with a slow shutter speed. How long until George tries to assert himself? There may be trouble ahead...

Photographer
Carl Bingham

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 5:15pm, Sunday
20 November 2022

Details Canon EOS-1D X MkII
16-35mm lens, 1/5th @ F22

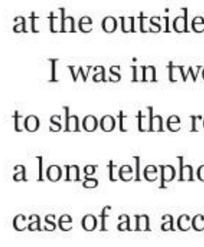
F1 PARADE
motorsport IMAGES

It all hangs on where you look

This first section of the Interlagos track is where incidents tend to happen, so on race day I positioned myself on the photographers' platform at the outside of Turn 2.

I was in two minds about how to shoot the restart: either with a long telephoto (where, in the case of an accident, you might fill the frame or miss some or all of the action) or a slightly shorter lens to get a bigger pack of cars flicking left then right [from their point of view].

I was actually following George Russell (leading) in this composition, but quickly saw Lewis and Max going side by side and moved my focus to them, just in time for the touch.



Photographer
Sam Bloxham

Where São Paulo, Brazil
When 3:13pm, Sunday 13 November 2022

Details Canon EOS R3
70-200mm lens, 1/1600th @ F4

HULK TO HAAS, MICK TO MERC?

01 **Securing a return to Formula 1** after a season-long break (let alone several seasons) is thought to be difficult. Doing it twice is extraordinary. And yet, the Haas line-up for 2023 will consist of two drivers who have both lost their full-time F1 rides twice but managed to come back. Kevin Magnussen, who spent the 2015 season on the sidelines after his debut season with McLaren, and then later missed the 2021 season as well, will be joined by Nico Hülkenberg. The German also found himself without an F1 seat after a single season with Williams in 2010, but then returned to race for several years with Sauber, Force India and Renault, until the latter eventually replaced him with Esteban Ocon. From 2020 on Hülkenberg was a reserve driver for Racing Point and then Aston Martin, and now he is back on the grid.

Reports that Hülkenberg had emerged as a prime candidate to replace Mick Schumacher first appeared in early autumn. The final decision, however, was only announced ahead of the final round of the championship in Abu Dhabi. Haas team boss Guenther Steiner explained the team had given Schumacher a chance to keep his place in the cockpit, but it seems that Mick's performances weren't deemed convincing enough. The seven-time world champion's son had a poor start to the season, then made progress, scoring points at Silverstone and Spielberg – but those proved to be his last. This can partly be explained by Haas making less progress developing its car compared with its rivals, but Magnussen still managed to score in the US and Brazil.

> "WE WAITED A LONG TIME, BECAUSE WE WEREN'T SURE WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO"
>
> GUENTHER STEINER

The final decision was influenced by Schumacher's numerous crashes, some of which – such as at Jeddah and Monaco – have been particularly severe and proved (literally) costly to the team. Insiders indicate Steiner's decision to drop Schumacher was also influenced by Steiner's conflict with German media, Sky Germany in particular. The channel's pundit, Ralf Schumacher – Mick's uncle – has repeatedly been critical of Guenther's management style, so the Haas boss stopped giving interviews to Sky Germany in the middle of the summer.

PICTURES: CARL BINGHAM; STEVEN TEE; WILLIAMS

Nico Hülkenberg's experience with a number of teams was a major factor in his return to a full-time race seat with Haas

Steiner himself insists that a key factor in choosing a team-mate for Magnussen was Hülkenberg's experience. "He [Nico] was in F1 a long time," he said, "he was with teams in the midfield for a long time, so he knows how they work, how to make them better. We looked at it – wherever he was, the team always made progress.

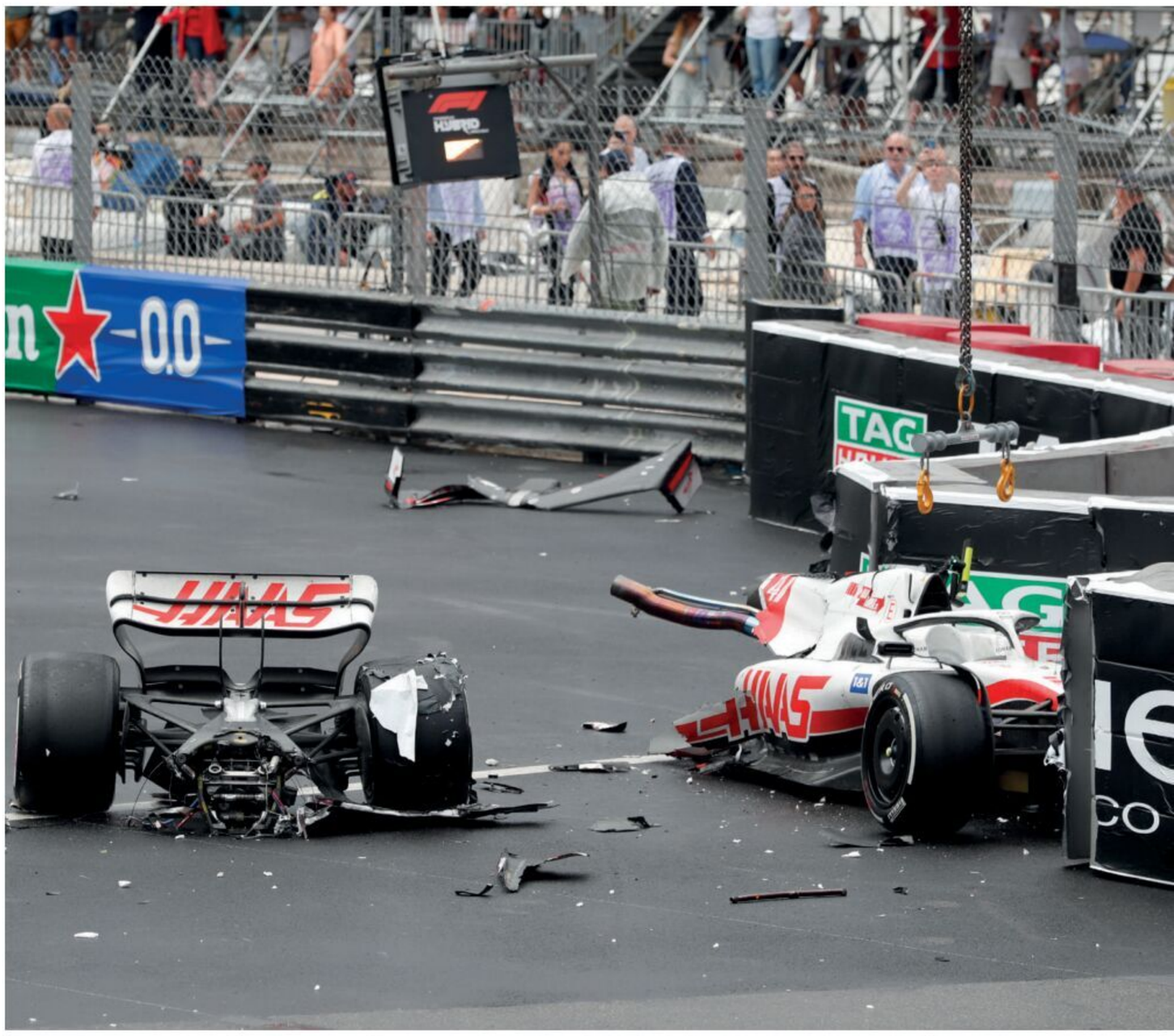
"The decision was made by analysing what is the best for the team to go back to where we want to be. And we needed experience. And we waited a long time, because we weren't sure what is the right thing to do. Over the past two years we lost momentum and we need to bring that drive back to the team with experience. People who have done that, to bring the whole team up. We need to be better in everything. And if we don't bring in people who have done it before, it is difficult.

"Mick can be a good driver – or he is already a good driver, but he can get better. But how long does it take? Because he is growing with us, he cannot make us grow."

Following Haas's decision, the only option for Schumacher

02 **BINOTTO BINNED OFF**
Ferrari team principal calls it quits

03 **CHINA CRISIS**
Shanghai off again



Mick Schumacher's crashes in 2022, such as this example in Monaco, were one of the reasons the German has not been retained by Haas

to remain on the grid in 2023 was with Williams, but this was only nominal. Team boss Jost Capito had already announced – in October at the US GP – that Logan Sargeant would become Alex Albon's team-mate on condition of obtaining a super licence. He had virtually guaranteed one before the final round of the F2 season in Abu Dhabi, and would have needed to blow it completely in the final races for there to be any doubt. In the end, Logan pulled off a solid performance, finishing sixth and fifth in the final two races and securing fourth in the standings.

Sargeant will become the first American driver in F1 since Alexander Rossi, who competed in five races for Manor at the end of the 2015 season.

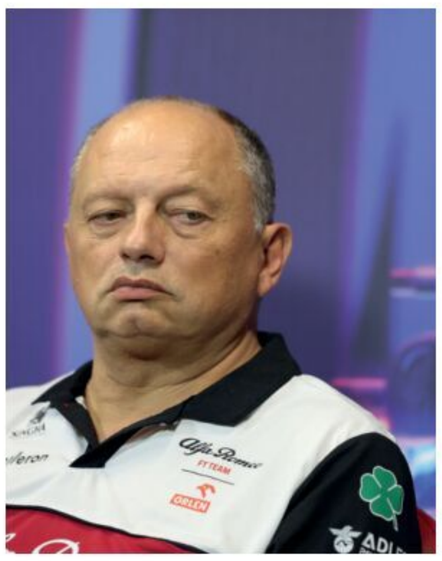
Schumacher's most likely option now is a reserve role at Mercedes. It lost both its reserves at the end of the year, with Nyck de Vries signing for AlphaTauri and Stoffel Vandoorne moving to Aston Martin as its reserve. Daniel Riccardo was regarded as one of the candidates for the Mercedes job, but he chose an equivalent role at his former Red Bull team. ▶

Now that Logan Sargeant has obtained his super licence, he will become the first American to race in F1 since 2015

F1 INSIDER

MUDDY WATERS AROUND BINOTTO FERRARI AXING

Binotto (above) has fallen on his sword and leaves Ferrari after 28 years with the Scuderia. Vasseur (below) is heavily tipped to leave Alfa Romeo to replace him



02 **Just days before the final round** of the 2022 championship in Abu Dhabi, Ferrari issued an official statement in response to numerous reports in the Italian media of Mattia Binotto's impending resignation.

"In relation to speculation in certain media regarding Scuderia Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto's position," it read, "Ferrari states that these rumours are totally without foundation."

Either Ferrari was being economical with the actualité, or some grounds for Binotto's departure suddenly emerged over the next couple of weeks.

During a press conference in Abu Dhabi, Mattia himself – even while reiterating that there were "no foundations" to said speculation – was unable to answer affirmatively when asked if he was certain he would remain for 2023.

"It's not down to me to decide but I'm pretty relaxed," he said. "The reason I'm relaxed is that I always have open, frank and constructive discussions with my bosses and my chairman, not only on the short-term, but the medium and the long-term. More than that, I think if I look back at the season, yes, we had few ups and downs, we are not the best yet, the fastest car on track, but I think we achieved our main objective which was to be back to being competitive in that new year of the 2022 cars."

Then, on 29 November, the Scuderia issued another statement saying that Binotto "will leave his role as Scuderia Ferrari Team Principal". Mattia's last working day at Maranello is due to be 31 December.

Ferrari claims in its release that the team "accepted the resignation" of Binotto, but it is understood he isn't leaving his position entirely through personal choice.

"With the regret that this entails, I have decided to conclude my collaboration with Ferrari," he was quoted as saying. "I am leaving a company that I love, which I have been part of for 28 years, with the serenity that comes from the conviction that I have made every effort to achieve the objectives set."

Binotto's departure – despite the criticism he had faced during the season – seemed ill-timed to many observers, given that under his leadership Ferrari has indeed achieved its goals for the season, returning to winning races. However, it doesn't take too much imagination to find the "foundation" for this dismissal.

Ferrari started the 2022 with arguably the fastest car but blew its shot at either title, even before the August break, through reliability issues and questionable strategy calls. The Scuderia has also lost the car-development battle, allowing Red Bull to dominate in the second half of the championship. Mercedes, having made a poor start to the season, was on par with Ferrari at the end of it.

As this issue of *GP Racing* went to press it remained uncertain who would succeed Binotto in one of the most difficult positions in F1. Early reports had mentioned current Alfa Romeo team boss Frédéric Vasseur as the most likely candidate, while around the time Binotto's resignation was made official the name of outgoing F1 sporting director Ross Brawn, a key Ferrari employee during the Michael Schumacher era, also came up. ▶

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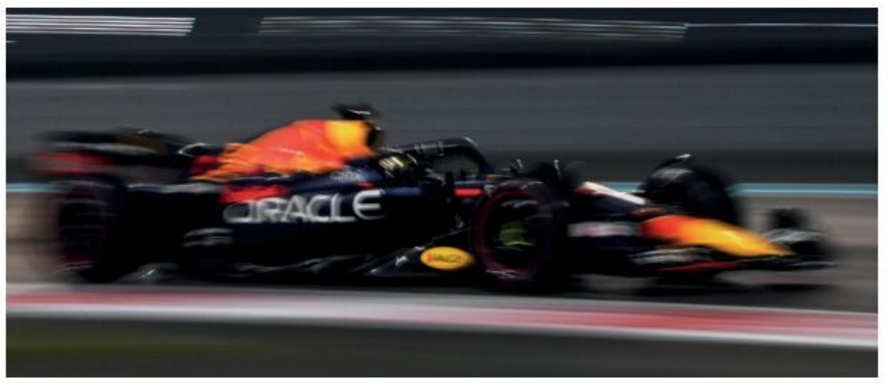

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F1 INSIDER

STAND-IN SOUGHT FOR CHINESE GP

03 **While life in many places** gradually returns to some semblance of normality the coronavirus pandemic continues to interfere with F1's calendar plans. The Chinese Grand Prix, originally included in the 2023 schedule, has been called off again.

Until very recently the Chinese government has pursued a draconian 'zero-Covid' policy under which travel restrictions remained in place and lockdowns were routinely enforced in big cities. At the beginning of December, against a background of civil disobedience and economic turmoil, the government abruptly abandoned the policy – but even so, hosting a grand prix is definitely not a priority for the country at the moment.

Lewis Hamilton's victory in 2019 will remain the last time F1 visited China until 2024 at the earliest

The possibility of the Shanghai event being cancelled has been looming ever since the F1 calendar was published in September, enshrining a 16 April date. The official confirmation of the cancellation came just as the zero-Covid policy was being unpicked.

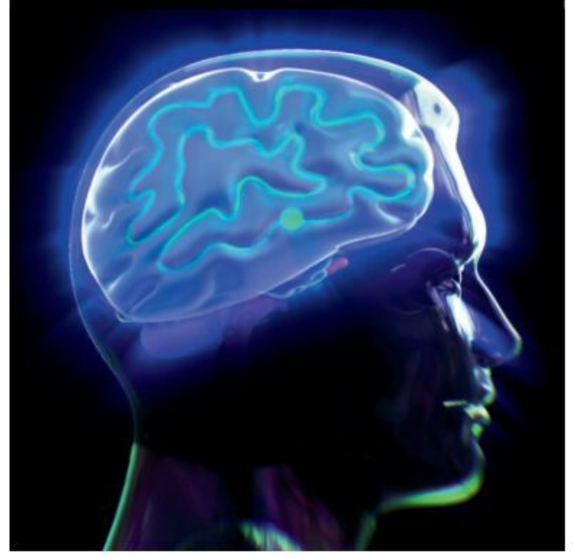
"Formula 1 can confirm, following dialogue with the promoter and relevant authorities, that the 2023 Chinese Grand Prix will not take place due to the ongoing difficulties presented by the Covid-19 situation," read the F1 statement.

Thus the return to China has again been postponed. F1's last race in Shanghai was held back in 2019. The cancellation will mean a four-week break between the races in Australia, scheduled for 2 April, and Azerbaijan, set to run on 30 April. F1 bosses are hoping to find a replacement that would keep the schedule at 24 events. But doing so may not be easy.

F1 BOSSES ARE HOPING TO FIND A REPLACEMENT THAT WOULD KEEP THE SCHEDULE AT 24 EVENTS. BUT DOING SO MAY NOT BE EASY

Among the potential candidates are circuits in Portimão, Mugello and Istanbul. However, the key factor in making the final decision will be financial. All three hosted races during the height of the pandemic, when F1 was first and foremost worried about having a sufficient number of rounds. The situation has now changed, though – and promoters have a much weaker negotiating position. Logistically a race in Turkey would be ideal, but there is considerable doubt that the event organisers would be able to satisfy F1's financial appetite.

According to credible sources, the most likely scenario is that F1 will decide not to replace the Chinese race.



F1 MASTERMIND

Your chosen specialised subject: the world's greatest motorsport

Q1 Three current circuits have hosted exactly 32 world championship GPs. Which are they?

Q2 Since the French GP returned in 2018 who is the only polesitter who hasn't gone on to win the race?

Q3 In his three seasons in F1 in which position did Nicholas Latifi finish the most: 11th, 16th or 18th?

Q4 Mike Hawthorn was the first Briton to win a world championship GP in 1953. Which was the next season a British driver *didn't* win one?

Q5 How many of Sebastian Vettel's 53 F1 victories came after he had started from pole position?

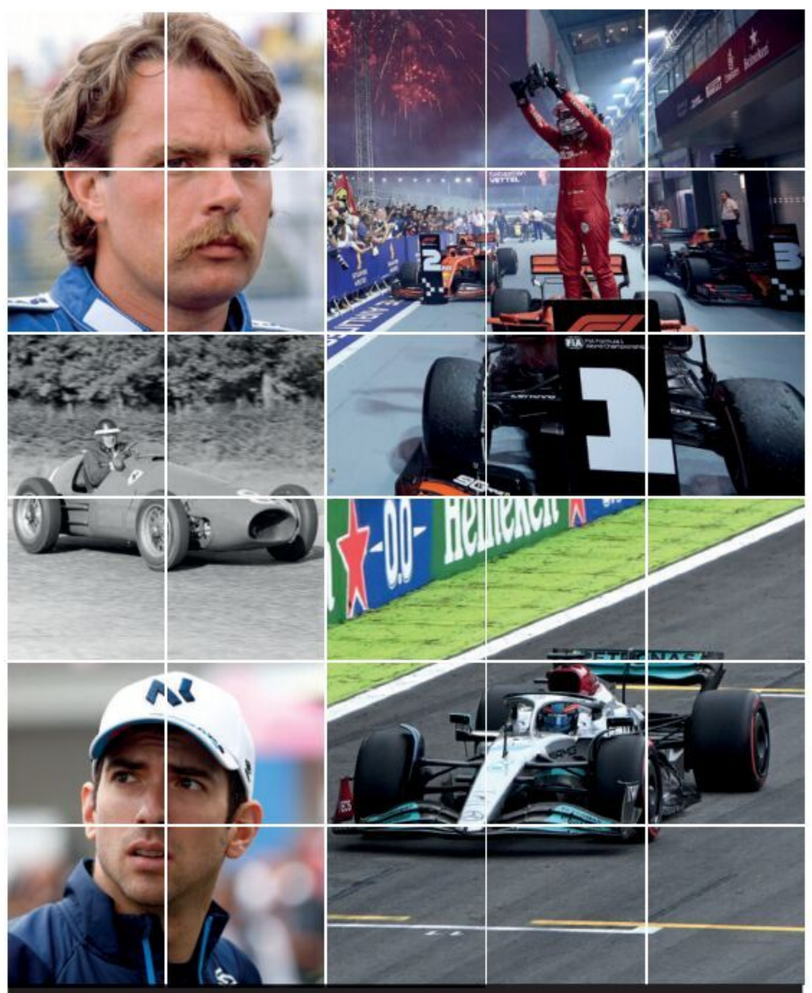
Q6 Who am I? I started 109 GPs from 1994 to 2002 for Lotus, Tyrrell, Arrows, BAR, Ferrari, Sauber and Toyota, managing two podiums.

Q7 True or false: Keke Rosberg didn't manage a single pole position in his title-winning year of 1982?

Q8 In 2022 George Russell claimed his first win but how many other times was he on the podium?

Q9 Apart from the two Red Bull and Ferrari drivers, who was the only other driver to score points in all three sprint races in 2022?

Q10 Bahrain, Australia and which other three GPs did Max Verstappen fail to lead a lap of in 2022?



PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; SAM BLOXHAM; MARK SUTTON; MOTORSPORT IMAGES ARCHIVE

1 Circuit de Catalunya, Suzuka, Zandvoort **2** Charles Leclerc **3** 16th (7 times to 6 times each in 11th and 18th) **4** 1974 **5** 31 **6** Mika Salo **7** False, he was on pole once **8** 7 **9** Kevin Magnussen **10** Monaco, Singapore, Brazil

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PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

FINDING THE LIMITS OF THE HUMAN MACHINE

Wrapping up the 2022 F1 season with smoother action on track was encouraging after the early season challenge for drivers. The new technical regulations and heavier cars with ground-effect aerodynamics were always going to provide a different feel in the cockpit, yet the aspect that leapt up was the porpoising: cars being sucked down to the track surface then released, a pattern repeated at rapid intervals when flat out in a straight line.

It was tough physical challenge. Mark Arnall is a performance coach who began his career with McLaren in 1997 and went on to spend 20 years training and assisting Kimi Räikkönen before connecting with Sebastian Vettel at Aston Martin this year. Like most people in the business, he had to deal with the new factor.

"I think the extent of it was the big surprise," Mark relates. "There's a lot of compression-related stress that goes through the spine in an F1 car and bouncing up and down obviously increases this. We had the same porpoising issues but Seb didn't actually suffer physically from it. His main problem was vision; when the car was bouncing so much he actually couldn't really see where he was going."

It was tougher for Vettel's great rival Lewis Hamilton, who reported a lot more bruising in his body and headaches in the opening months of the season. The Baku event was particularly demanding and encouraged the FIA to investigate means of mitigating the phenomenon – but the teams were already getting on top of it.

"I think the engineers started to become aware of how much they could push the setup before any porpoising occurred and the drivers gave clear feedback as to when that started to happen," Mark confirms. "F1 teams are great at coming up with design solutions and while the issue can still crop up it's certainly now well controlled."

Technical changes often affect the interaction between driver and car; a key point for Mark was the introduction of the Kinetic Energy Recovery System (KERS) in 2009. Extra weight from a battery or an electric flywheel to store energy created through braking did cause a headache for the teams as they targeted the minimum weight allowance.

"They were going to crazy lengths to reduce the weight of the car but there was also a lot of pressure on the drivers to lose weight," he remembers, "The more muscle mass you take off the drivers means more of a loss in terms of strength and stability; muscle weighs four times as much as fat and drivers don't have much fat anyway. Lighter, smaller drivers definitely had an advantage as many drivers were losing laptime just being by a few kilos heavier."

Ferrari added over 25kg to the 2009 car with the KERS system and, since fuel loads were still part of the strategic picture, the demand on drivers was intense.

"It was definitely more challenging in every sense when there was refuelling," Mark confirms. "Every racing lap was effectively a qualifying lap, with lower fuel loads. As soon as refuelling was abandoned [in 2010] and cars had to start the race on a full tank, Kimi described it more like just driving around, especially when they were told to lift-and-coast to save fuel."

While that intensity of lapping may have eased, the shift from a calendar of 17 grands prix in 2009 to a planned 24-event schedule next year with a total of 30 races including extra sprints means the performance coaches are having to readjust their schedules.

"The recovery post-race is super-important and there are treatment protocols to get rid of built-up tension in the body. The first two and a half months of the year are when we look to make physical gains if, for example, we're expecting more downforce and higher cornering speeds. As soon as the season starts, the emphasis shifts to maintaining the training and keeping the body in one piece and working on reducing the fatigue elements as much as possible."

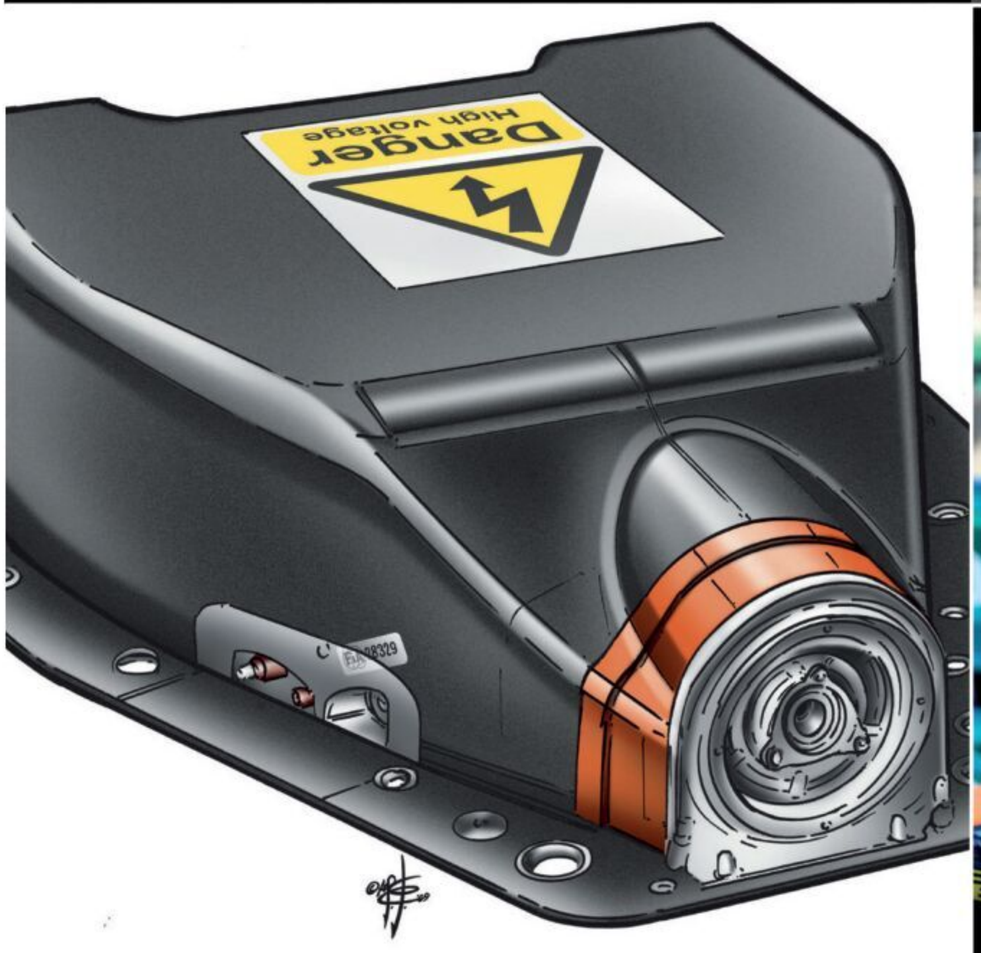
Technical scrutiny has become as important for the driver as it is for the car.

"In the past with Kimi we did very detailed blood/urine/stool analysis and measured everything that was going on inside the body. We addressed issues with food and supplements that covered all areas from reducing stress markers to improving sleep, focus and concentration. We could then see that these were working when we re-tested. Planning the travel well is also really important. I used to book all of Kimi's flights and hotels a year in advance. I could then reduce the effects of jet lag as much as possible and make sure the driver avoided the chances of getting sick while travelling."

Indeed, Mark is now working directly with some hotels in order to encourage the support they can give, not only to drivers but also to many other people who are travelling relentlessly and coping with continual jet lag. It's another element to the knowledge he has gained through interaction with some of the best drivers in the business, even if the most recent partnership with Vettel ended sooner than expected.

For the drivers who are still competing, relaxation over Christmas will be welcome but the interaction with their performance coaches over the next twelve months will be crucial throughout an even tougher season.

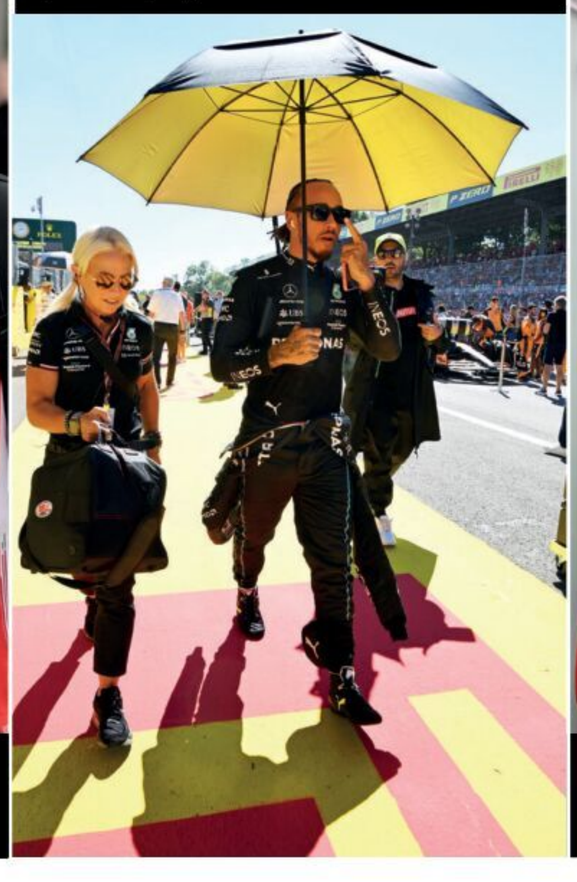
The bouncing and porpoising of this year's cars have provided an extra challenge for the physios who support F1 drivers



The introduction of KERS was probably the last time, until this year, that rule changes affected a driver's physical well-being

Lewis Hamilton found the Azerbaijan GP particularly demanding in his Mercedes

Vettel worked with Antti Kontsas (left) at Ferrari before linking up with Mark Arnall at Aston Martin



Angela Cullen (left) is the high profile physio to Lewis Hamilton

Having met at McLaren, Mark Arnall (left) worked with Kimi Räikkönen throughout the Finn's F1 career

PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; SIMON GALLOWAY; MARK SUTTON; MANUEL GORIA; GIORGIO PIOLA. ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE.

UNDER THE HOOD

PAT SYMONDS

PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

IS IT TIME TO RETHINK ENGINE PENALTIES?

The subject of grid penalties for the use of more engine components than the regulations allow is a vexed one. Until this past season it had become more of an accepted annoyance than a topic of debate.

At Monza the subject was very firmly on the lips of fans and teams alike as an unprecedented thirteen cars accumulated between them penalties of 125 grid positions. The magnitude of the problem was compounded by the provisional starting grid not being published until several hours after the qualifying session finished as the FIA debated how, and in what order, so many conflicting penalties should be applied. With three cars nominally penalised by starting at the back of the grid, one could sympathise with the impossibility of applying the letter of the law.

As it happened this very eventuality had been foreseen and a logical system devised by the late Charlie Whiting, the long-serving race director whose untimely death in early 2019 exposed many flaws in the system. While the procedure laid out by Charlie had been communicated to the teams some years ago, it had never been embodied in the regulations and hence wasn't widely known about or understood.

The multitude of penalties at Monza meant that the grid for the race wasn't confirmed for several hours after qualifying

But why were there so many penalties? Yuki Tsunoda had earned 10 of them as a result of accumulating too many reprimands in a year as well as a further three for failing to slow for yellow flags. The rest of the penalties arose from the use of additional power unit elements over and above the limited number each driver has allocated to him for the season. These latter penalties highlight the fact that teams can choose to take a penalty in return for bringing a fresh engine into the pool, the so-called strategic engine change. This is a situation that, while perfectly legal, wasn't what the regulations envisioned when they were written.

The idea of restricting the number of power unit elements each driver is allowed was a sensible move to reduce costs. I remember back in the days of V10s when we were using at least one engine a day and sometimes one just for the qualifying session. In the late 1990s this led to an engine bill at Benetton of £17m, nearly £35m in today's terms. While the work involved in engineering a high-performance racing engine from one that had to last 300 kilometres to one that now has to last nearly 5,000 kilometres isn't trivial and comes with significant cost, engine bills for customer teams today are a fraction of what they were then.

The power unit is split into a number of elements: the internal combustion engine itself; the turbocharger; the two motor-generator units (kinetic and heat or MGU-K and MGU-H); the control electronics; the battery or energy store; and each of the components that make up the exhaust system. Each of these elements is restricted in number ranging from two for the battery and control electronics to eight for the exhausts. Use of additional components attracts a penalty of 10 grid positions the first time an offence is committed and five for each subsequent over-usage.

Herein lies some of the illogical thinking. Slowing for a yellow flag is a penalty that attracts a three-place grid drop when replacing an electronic control box can send you back 10 places. Also, in most societies, repeat offenders have their sentence increased not reduced – so what incentive is there, once the initial 10-place penalty has been handed down, not to offend repeatedly?

But we haven't yet really examined why the strategic engine change appears to be more common this year. It certainly does appear engine reliability in general is worse this season. I think the answer lies in measures that were introduced as a result of the new engine which has been announced for 2026. In order to allow this engine to be developed without an additional parallel development stream having to be funded ▶

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MODERN F1

Yuki Tsunoda's Monza grid penalties came from a combination of an accumulation of reprimands, a yellow-flag offence and power unit woes

When a driver fails to respond to a yellow flag in qualifying it results in less of a grid penalty than for replacing a power unit component

The late Charlie Whiting had envisaged most scenarios in F1 but his responses often never made it into the official regulations

PICTURES: ZAK MAUGER; MARK SUTTON,

for the current engine, it was determined that the specification of the 2022 engine would be frozen for the next three seasons.

Now, even in a frozen specification, manufacturers are allowed to modify components for reliability reasons and this leads to an element of gamesmanship. Do you homologate a perfectly reliable, relatively low-performance engine and live with it until 2026 or do you take risks to increase performance at the cost of reliability in the knowledge you should be able to fix the reliability issues over time? Of course, in an intensely competitive sport, you're more likely to follow the second path.

However, looking at the number of engines used, one can see Ferrari has probably followed this thinking more than Mercedes. Ferrari acquired sixteen penalties this season, Mercedes just three.

So is it time to rethink these penalties? F1 has asked fans, through its regular surveys, this question many times and the answer has always come back that grid penalties are the lesser of several evils. Now, however, it may be opinion is changing and an in-race penalty may be considered more appropriate. This could range from a drive-through for a first offence and a stop-go with a variable stop time, and no work allowed on the car, for subsequent offences or more serious disregard of driving standards.

THIS COULD RANGE FROM A DRIVE-THROUGH FOR A FIRST OFFENCE AND A STOP-GO WITH A VARIABLE STOP TIME FOR SUBSEQUENT OFFENCES

No system is perfect but this would represent much more of a deterrent to strategic engine changes. On occasions it may break up a good battle on track but equally there will be occasions where the climb through the field by a penalised car will add an element of uncertainty. It will be easier for casual fans to understand and, if the regulations examine the inevitable unintended consequences, may provide for another degree of tactical differentiation. If nothing else, it's worthy of debate.

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F1 PRO

Essential guide to the business of F1

STRAIGHT TALK

MARK GALLAGHER

@_markgallagher

WHY FTX COLLAPSE SHOCKED F1

Twenty years ago Formula 1 suffered an exodus of giant telecoms sponsors. Companies which rode the internet wave were then wiped out when investor confidence dissolved in the face of mounting losses and appalling governance.

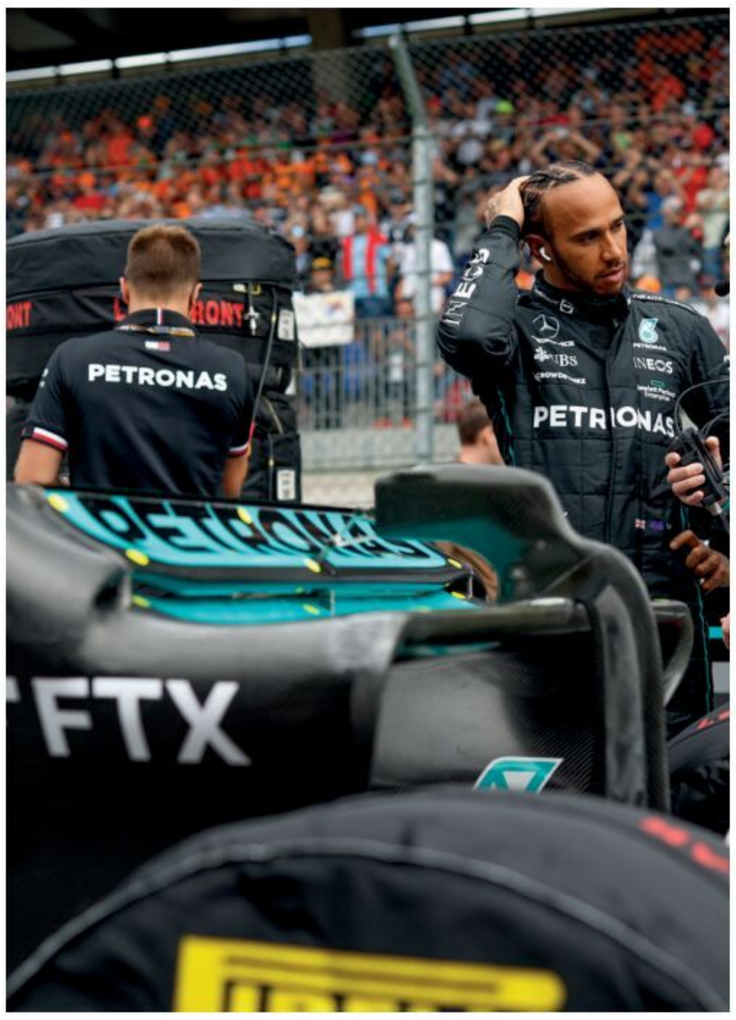
The dot-com bubble had well and truly burst.

Nortel (Williams) and Lucent (Jordan) were two such organisations. The former's value crashed from £186billion to £2bn in two years, the latter collapsed after an £86million 'accounting error' was followed by sales in one quarter being overstated to the tune of £482m.

Fast forward to today and enter the 'Crypto King'. Sam Bankman-Fried, founder and CEO of FTX, the cryptocurrency exchange which announced 'a long-term relationship' with Mercedes in September 2021.

"FTX is thrilled to partner with the reigning Formula 1 world champions..," gushed the then 29-year old, "to continue amplifying our position as the leading global cryptocurrency exchange."

FTX was just two years old, yet already the third largest crypto exchange. By January 2022 it was valued at £24bn.



Mercedes only announced the deal with FTX in September 2021. The cryptocurrency exchange filed for bankruptcy just 14 months later

In April 'trusted partner' FTX and Mercedes announced the launch of a series of NFTs – non-fungible tokens – creating race-inspired artwork which fans could collect, trade and own.

Six months later FTX hit the wall.

It imploded in the wake of a 2 November article by crypto website Coindesk which questioned the underlying financial strength of sister company Alameda Research. In essence, Alameda had borrowed vast amounts from FTX, monies which belong to customers.

Binance – sponsor of Alpine – responded by cashing in its holding of FTX's digital currency, triggering the crypto equivalent of a bank run. FTX was unable to return customers' money.

Fearing the wider implications on the industry Binance attempted a rescue, but withdrew after reading FTX's financials and noting investigations by financial regulators. On 11 November FTX, Alameda and 100 affiliated companies filed for bankruptcy.

With respect to the £6.6bn in missing customer money which had been moved to Alameda instead of retained at FTX, Bankman-Fried told the Financial Times this was done 'accidentally'.

The man tasked with untangling the mess is John Ray III. Shortly after the dot-com bubble he was appointed to clear up another corporate disaster, Enron, the oil and commodities business which, through fraud, eviscerated £9bn of shareholders' money

Even this veteran witness of the effects of corporate fraud was appalled by FTX.

"Never in my career have I seen such a complete failure of corporate controls and such a complete absence of trustworthy financial information as occurred here," he said, adding that management failings included, "the use of software to conceal the misuse of customer funds."

For its part, Mercedes acted swiftly, suspending the relationship on the eve of the Brazilian Grand Prix, later removing FTX's branding and website presence.

Toto Wolff, as astute and savvy as they come, admitted to 'utter disbelief' at the speed of FTX's collapse. He is not alone: FTX and its affiliates are said to have left one million creditors out of pocket. The top 50 are owed £2.5bn.

Sponsorship is a two-way street. Teams benefit from the partner's financial investment and the halo effect of having a well-respected brand or company support your campaign. In return the sponsors can bathe in the reflected glory of the team, its achievements and the global reach of F1. As the FTX story unravels other teams – including F1 itself – will be looking askance at cryptocurrency deals. The entire sector is under the spotlight amid the recognition that 'sportswashing' is not confined to countries eager to salve tarnished reputations through sport. Sponsors do it too.

PICTURE: MERCEDES. LLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE

THIS MONTH

Steven English

Director of Esports, Williams Racing

From humble beginnings on *Autosport* magazine's national racing desk, Steven English made the move to Formula 1 PR and marketing with Caterham and Williams – and is now spearheading the Williams team's expansion into the sim racing space. It's not just about Formula 1, either…

INTERVIEW STUART CODLING

CV

2022
Director of Esports, Williams Racing

2018
Head of Esports, Williams Racing

2015
Head of Digital, Williams Racing

2014
Digital Marketing Manager, Williams Racing

2011
Digital Marketing Manager, Caterham F1

2009
News Editor, *Autosport.com*

2005
National Racing Assistant Editor, *Autosport* magazine

***GP Racing*:** Having gone through the F1 journalism finishing school and into PR, what prompted you to make the move into Esports?

Steven English: I grew up playing racing games. As you know, when I worked at *Autosport* people on the staff would have fun crashing into each other on an Xbox of an evening. At Williams, in the marketing team, we were looking at ways to engage a newer and younger audience and be more successful with a different demographic.

We had a number of projects with that aim – at the time we didn't foresee what Esports would become, it was a digital-based marketing project and I was running digital marketing at the time. Then it's grown and evolved into a business unit in its own right.

***GPR*:** During the early pandemic lockdowns a lot of 'real' racing drivers got involved in the virtual space – to what extent do you think that helped draw attention to Esports?

SE: Hugely. There was a value and an engagement in all things gaming pre-pandemic. I remember when I used to run social and content at Williams, when we analysed our best-performing posts each year, the launch of the new F1 game was always some of the most engaged content. We had sneak previews, videos if we got one of the F1 drivers to play the game. People loved it. If we ran a competition to give away the game, it was the most-entered competition of the year. So we knew there was a fan base that had an interest in gaming. But at the same time, when we launched the Esports team in 2018, it was pretty hit and miss with the success of that content on the F1 channels.

I think what the pandemic did when it took away the real-world sport, and the F1 drivers started racing virtually, was that it provided a hook – it gave people a reason to watch. Let's not kid ourselves – it went up in the pandemic and down again afterwards when people returned to real-world activity. But the line after the pandemic was higher than the line before in terms of the number of people engaged. And we've seen a continual rise since, so can be confident it wasn't just a flash in the pan.

***GPR*:** When we did some coverage of the F1 Esports, during the 2020 interregnum when there was no real-life racing going on, we did get a few angry letters from readers saying, "Don't make a habit of this." Do you think there's a certain element of the motor racing demographic who will never engage with it?

SE: You can't make everyone happy all the time. But anything with an audience and some content to share needs the next generation. If the section of the audience that likes a particular type of content is growing then there's value in it. If 90% of the readership threatens to quit over seeing it then maybe not!

***GPR*:** It's interesting to note Williams doesn't just do F1 in Esports. How valuable is it to you as a business?

SE: We want to engage as many people as we can and we're coming to a new place to find them. If you already like Formula 1 and motorsport, and have chosen to have an affinity with Williams, we hope you'll like what we do in gaming as well. But you're not the reason we necessarily started it because we already know you. We want to meet new people in new places.

The spectrum of sim racing is really wide; the official F1 game sits on a kind of casual end of the scale – for people who play on a console with their friends on a controller, not that seriously. The other end is the super-committed sim racing club member who has £3000 worth of kit in their house, who drives nightly and studies the telemetry and engineering data to find that extra 10th per lap. The two extremes of that scale are not the same person. So for us to reach the maximum number of people, we have to have the maximum scope of activity.

PORTRAIT: WILLIAMS

chillblast
chillblast
umbro
WILLIAMS
ESPORTS

THE MANY FACES OF

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Was Sebastian Vettel born a winner or did Red Bull make him one? And at what point did the cheeky young rascal who loved quoting Monty Python become a ruthless force willing to win at all costs – even if that meant disobeying team orders? *GP Racing* has spoken to the people who have been with him since the start...

WORDS MATT YOUSON PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

CONQUEROR

THE MANY FACES OF SEBASTIAN VETTEL: CONQUEROR

THERE ARE FEW, IF ANY, FORMS OF PRAISE higher than the accolade of 'natural talent'. In the sporting arena it serves as the shorthand for greatness: a skillset seemingly encoded in DNA; physical attributes and mental acuity conferred by random chance or simple genetics. Max Verstappen is a natural talent, so too Lewis Hamilton. Go back through Formula 1 history and other names inevitably draw the appellation: Ayrton Senna; Gilles Villeneuve; Jim Clark. But there are others given that honorific rarely, if at all: Jackie Stewart; Alain Prost; Michael Schumacher. While they undoubtedly had natural talents, their descriptors tend to focus on other factors: hard work and application; people skills; shrewdness bordering on ingenuity. Where does Sebastian Vettel fit into this picture?

That he occupies a high seat in the grand prix pantheon is not in doubt. Right now, his record is being chiselled into the bedrock of F1 history. 300 races, 53 victories, 57 poles, four times a world champion. Still the youngest driver to win the world championship, one of the rare breed to win grands prix for three different teams – but how to classify him is more troubling: master craftsman or natural born racer?

A dozen years ago, coming into his pomp at Red Bull, Vettel was natural talent all the way: a teenage prodigy ripping up the record books, giggling while pretending to conduct an orchestra from the podium, tweaking the nose of his elders and making it all look effortless. But fast forward a decade, put some more miles on the clock and different stories emerge: the work ethic; the meticulous preparation, the interminable debriefs. Which is the more accurate representation?

Seb's junior career was suitably stellar: German and European Junior karting champion, Formula BMW ADAC champion and then second in the F3 Euro Series. After this, things became a bit fragmented: a few races here and there in Formula Renault 3.5 but no full campaign, and no assault on the shiny new GP2 Series. A good record and excellent timing granted young Sebastian an early promotion into F1 with BMW-Sauber, making his free practice debut at the Turkish Grand Prix in 2006, briefly occupying Robert Kubica's car. A full F1 debut followed in the 2007 US Grand Prix when Kubica was instructed to sit it out by the FIA's medical team, following a lulu of a crash at the Canadian Grand Prix a few days earlier. In his first race, as in his last, Vettel battled his way to a point.

WHY VETTEL HAD TO LEARN THE HARD WAY

Andreas Seidl was BMW-Sauber's head of trackside operations during that period. McLaren's current team principal is unequivocal that Seb's work ethic was already well-defined during his earliest F1 foray.

"He was obviously very talented in terms of speed," recalls Seidl, "but also unbelievably committed in terms of working, commitment, effort, going the extra mile every day, pushing the team. Unbelievably determined also: being clear of where this needs to end up, becoming the best in this sport – but he was a lot of fun too. The combination was very motivational for the people in the team."

That Vettel's record with BMW-Sauber is a one-race curio comes down to timing and circumstance. Red Bull had a claim on his services and could offer a seat (still warm

Vettel's first taste of F1 came when he tested the BMW-powered Williams FW27 at Jerez in 2005, a reward for winning the 2004 Formula BMW title

from the ejected backside of the recently surplus-to-requirements Scott Speed), BMW had the former but not the latter.

"We were a team on the up with two drivers – Robert and Nick [Heidfeld] who did a good job, and therefore I think it was understandable that [team principal] Mario Theissen made the decision at the time that he wanted to keep going with this line-up," says Seidl. "It was just unlucky in terms of timing, where we were with the project, where we were with Robert and Nick, that we didn't have an opening. And with Seb getting the chance of race seat, there was no chance to keep him."

Vettel's career at Toro Rosso covered 25 races and more ups and downs than his commute from Hinwil to Faenza. He's best remembered for the triumphant, untroubled victory from pole position at Monza in atrocious conditions, but there's other stuff in there too: torpedoing Mark Webber behind the Safety Car when both were running in podium contention at Fuji, and a string of four DNFs at the start of 2008, three of them early race collisions. Young Seb was quick... but raw.

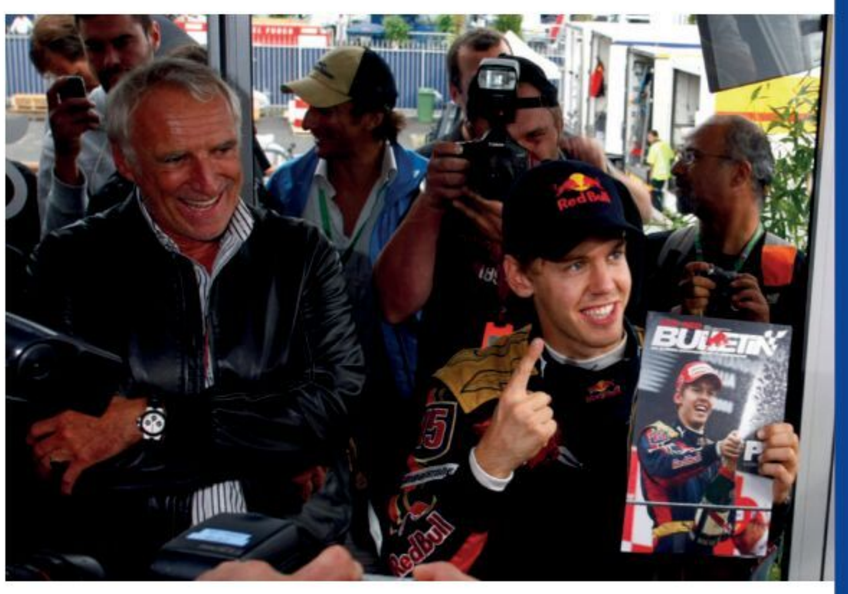
The latter incidents – and others – had Sebastian on the receiving end of some blunt

PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; LORENZO BELLANCA; CHARLES COATES

Vettel replaced Robert Kubica at BMW-Sauber for a one-off drive in the 2007 US GP. He scored a point on debut and was snapped up by Toro Rosso

In only his fifth race for Toro Rosso Vettel took out stable-mate Mark Webber when running behind the Safety Car in the 2007 Japanese GP

Vettel with BMW-Sauber team principal Mario Theissen in 2007. It was Theissen's decision not to find Vettel a seat with the team for 2008



Vettel and Red Bull founder Dietrich Mateschitz in celebratory mood after Vettel pulled off a shock victory in the 2008 Italian GP at Monza

words from famously frank technical director Giorgio Ascanelli. The imposing Italian who had worked with Nelson Piquet, Ayrton Senna, Gerhard Berger and Michael Schumacher wasn't one to mince his words – but Seb didn't object to a bit of tough love.

"He liked it," says Riccardo Adami, currently race engineer for Carlos Sainz but previously race engineer for both young Seb at Toro Rosso

China 2009: three races into his Red Bull career Vettel gave the Milton Keynes team a first F1 win – and first pole – with team-mate Webber second

and then four-time-champion Seb at Ferrari. "He liked that strong approach. Ascanelli was very tough with him – but that was instructive. Having someone to guide you through what's right and what's wrong, is positive. So he had a tough start to the 2008 season, but when we had a new car from Monaco onwards he had a much better feeling, and could prove what he was capable of."

FINDING CONFIDENCE – AND CONSISTENCY

Seb's weaknesses during his tenure at Toro Rosso were the usual faults suffered by callow youth. "You could see the capability, but he couldn't always put the puzzle together," recalls Adami. "You'd see good performance one day, bad performance the next – and, like every young driver, he wouldn't really know where that inconsistency came from. The thing which helped us help him was the honesty of his feedback. He'd be very open about explaining what went wrong, where he was struggling."

This is an easy thing to say, more difficult to do. The path to an F1 seat might generously be described as cut-throat. It doesn't encourage introspection, nor admission of personal fallibility. It takes a character very confident in their own ability to acknowledge doubts or discuss mistakes. Vettel's advantage was being in a team with the training wheels very much still attached. While Red Bull can be ruthless, there's also a tacit understanding that, so far as drivers are concerned, development rather than results is the purpose of the Toro Rosso/AlphaTauri second string. And while technical director Ascanelli might have been giving Vettel the hairdryer treatment, team principal Franz Tost was less concerned about the flying shards of carbon composite.

"For me, it's clear a young driver *needs* this crash period," says Tost. "There are unwritten rules. Principles, if you like. First, a driver needs around three years to understand Formula 1. It's not just about learning the tracks. This is the peak of motorsport and it's complex, though people on the outside rarely understand this. They look at a guy sitting in a cockpit and think, 'What's so difficult? Select a gear and go for it.' It isn't like that.

"If the driver wants to be fast – and they all want to be fast – he has to take risks and find the limit. If he doesn't crash, he'll never know; if he crashes, then he knows where the limit is and that he's gone over it. After that, it depends on how clever the driver is, and how much he learns from the experience. It's if he really studies the onboards from everyone, looks at how guys like Alonso find a hole in those few hundredths of a second and don't crash, where the successful drivers in the midfield brake. What was decisive for me about Sebastian was that he got better at it race after race."

Vettel didn't get the Red Bull-standard three years with Toro Rosso. David Coulthard's retirement in 2008 opened up a seat at Red Bull, and Vettel got the nod over the summer, shortly before his Monza spectacular. It wasn't a huge amount of experience with which to be heading into a top team – but Red Bull wasn't a top team in 2008. This, says Tost, worked to Vettel's advantage.

"They were a good team in 2008 and right on the edge of becoming a top team – but they weren't there yet, and it was just the right time because Seb was in the same position," says Tost. "He wasn't the top driver, didn't have the experience, but Red Bull wasn't there either. He and the team went through the learning process together."

Three more victories for Vettel in 2009 meant he finished a charging second in the title race, only 11 points behind champion Jenson Button

THE CRUCIAL INFLUENCE OF DAVID COULTHARD

It took Vettel three races to bring Red Bull its first pole position and first victory in 2009. The RB5 was a gem of a car and, while spirited debate over what does and does not constitute a diffuser hole or slot denied it and Vettel a real shot at the title in 2009, once Adrian Newey and his acolytes had shoehorned in a double-diffuser it spent the latter two-thirds of the year as the class of the field. Vettel added victories at Silverstone, Suzuka and Yas Marina to his win in Shanghai, finishing a strong second in the title race – but to those within the team, he was still getting to grips with F1.

Vettel inherited race engineer Guillaume Rocquelin from the departing Coulthard, and 'Rocky' recalls the transition from the experienced Scot to the 21-year-old German introduced a very different dynamic to the garage. "David had 14 years in F1, he knew it inside-out, knew how it functioned," recalls Rocquelin. "He was very specific on what he wanted, both in and out of the car, so the job

Vettel replaced the retiring Coulthard at Red Bull. The foundations that DC helped put in place in the team were of great benefit to Sebastian

engineering David was making sure he got what he wanted. With Sebastian, it was much more open-ended: he wasn't sure what would suit his style, didn't really know what would be best in terms of setup, driver interface, things like that.

"But this was only half the challenge. Remember he was very young when he joined us, there were lots of things in F1 that were still new to him, even tasks like interaction with the media

Schumacher was one of the first to congratulate Seb on his first title, and Vettel's ability to build a team around him was a classic Michael trait

or with the FIA. With David those were never an issue but with Sebastian, I had to take more a role beyond the nuts-and-bolts of running the car."

There is a very strong argument that inheriting a settled engineering setup and garage crew from Coulthard was a significant factor in shaping the final form that Vettel-the-driver became. Ole Schack was Seb's front-end mechanic – a job he does now on Max Verstappen's car, and has done for the Milton Keynes team since the days of Jaguar Racing. He recalls much of the routine simply transferred across to the new boy.

"David set us going on how we should perform, on how crucial it is that the driver finds all of us to be in communication with him about every little thing from seatbelts to throttles, and that was our way of working when Seb arrived, which he took onboard. From my point of view, he was always very relaxed and easy to work with. Right from the start, when he came in for the winter tests, he explained what he wanted, the design team made it, and not much changed over the next six seasons."

Speak to any of Vettel's mechanics down the years and there's a danger of a story degenerating into hagiography. He is very, very popular. It might manifest itself in public ways – after winning his fourth title at the 2013 Indian Grand Prix, Vettel pulled on a high-vis and baling gloves for pack down, an extra pair of hands so that the crew might get out of the track and down to some serious celebrating earlier – but he's also a prolific communicator ("He still sends me a Christmas card – what the fuck is that all about?" says Daniel Ricciardo). When Vettel announced his retirement, he outlined his reasons to Schack in a hand-written letter. The pair were, and are, very tight. Things like this are simply in Vettel's character – but undoubtedly, they contribute to building a successful environment. In Seb's case, this was perhaps not the product of random chance.

SCHUMACHER'S HIDDEN HAND

"I would say that Seb's relationship with Michael Schumacher has probably been key to developing the driver that we have now," says Red Bull sporting director Jonathan Wheatley. "He was a youngster when he joined us – and it's a long time ago now – but he still feels like family. It's a standout feature of the all-time greats, that ability to knit a team around them. Michael definitely had that ability at Benetton. Seb is probably the best I've ever seen. Even now, when we won the drivers' title in Suzuka, the first text message of congratulation I received was from Seb. That meant a huge amount."

Wheatley decided Vettel had something special at another Japanese Grand Prix – albeit in rather less complimentary circumstances. "Obviously there was always some interaction between Red Bull and Toro Rosso when it came to the drivers, so I'd had quite a few conversations with Seb – including one after his clash with Webber in Fuji. That was interesting, because it's when you realise he isn't a pushover. We were having a fairly frank conversation after the race and he came back at me. He's a young lad and you're yanking his tail but he could stand up for himself, look you in the eye, and give some of it back. I thought that was a pretty good sign."

Wheatley's three decades in F1 have encompassed more than his fair share of the all-time greats, from his years as a mechanic in Michael Schumacher's Benetton team, chief mechanic with Renault in Fernando Alonso's pomp and then team manager/sporting director for Red Bull since 2006, taking in the Vettel and Verstappen eras.

"Each one of those drivers has the ability to pull a lap out of nowhere," he says "All of them can consistently deliver in a car, even a car that's underperforming, and somehow get a result that contributes towards a championship. They all do that in a different way, they're very different people and have different motivations – but they all do it."

What, then, makes Vettel stand out on that particular list? Wheatley gives this some real consideration. "Debriefs were longer with Seb – painfully so at times, because he really, really wanted to understand the details, understand everything that went on. But because of that, he was really comfortable in the team. He knew his environment, knew what the team were doing. He was a professional in a professional world – and got a buzz from that.

"He would – does – talk to everybody because he wants to understand everything. You think about the key people he spent time with: learning about race engineering from Rocky; ▸

Vettel was always very popular with the rest of the team. Winning obviously helped but he backed it up with 'soft skills'

learning about the car with Paul Monaghan [chief engineer – car engineering]; hopefully learning about the sporting side of the regs, and people management, with me. It's all part of it."

RUTHLESS – BUT STILL LOVED

Courtesy and human nature demand nice words are said about the person retiring, but the warmth with which Vettel's former associates speak of him goes far beyond politeness. Everyone has an anecdote about a recent chat or meal with Seb; pointedly, no one voluntarily discusses the moments in which Vettel blotted the copybook. Wheatley, at least, recognises the discomfort caused by Seb's decision in the 2013 Malaysian Grand Prix to ignore team orders and snatch a victory that belonged to Mark Webber – but ascribes it to another trait common among champions. "That's your ruthlessness, showing through, isn't it?"

Another aspect of ruthlessness surfaced a year after the Multi-21 fiasco in Malaysia, when Vettel decided to abandon Red Bull and its anaemic first-effort Renault hybrid power unit, favouring the sunlit uplands of Maranello. Knowing when to cut and run has always been the hallmark of F1's most successful drivers – though some people will ascribe motives more noble.

Goodbye to all that: team principal Christian Horner (centre) and special advisior Helmut Marko with Vettel at his last race for Red Bull

Vettel inherited Guillaume Rocquelin (right) as his race engineer and 'Rocky' saw first hand the development of Seb into a world champion

"It's another chapter in the book," says Schack. "I got the feeling he saw what Schumacher did and wanted to emulate him, because he and Michael are very close. He came pretty close to winning another title with Ferrari – and it would have been different: everyone would have said: "It's not just the Red Bull car."

And that's the story of Sebastian Vettel: The Wonder Years. A hard worker, prepared to put in the hours to learn, easy to get along with and inspiring great loyalty from those around him, but also prepared to get his elbows out should the need arise. A driver in the right teams at the right times – but also one capable of understanding the opportunity was there to be seized.

And, of course, a natural talent. Because the notion of this being an either/or question is false. Natural talent is the price of entry. How far it takes a driver depends on how much work they're willing to do – and Vettel was willing to do a lot.

For most of his time at Red Bull this is what Vettel came to expect: success. The switch to Ferrari was after a disappointing 2014

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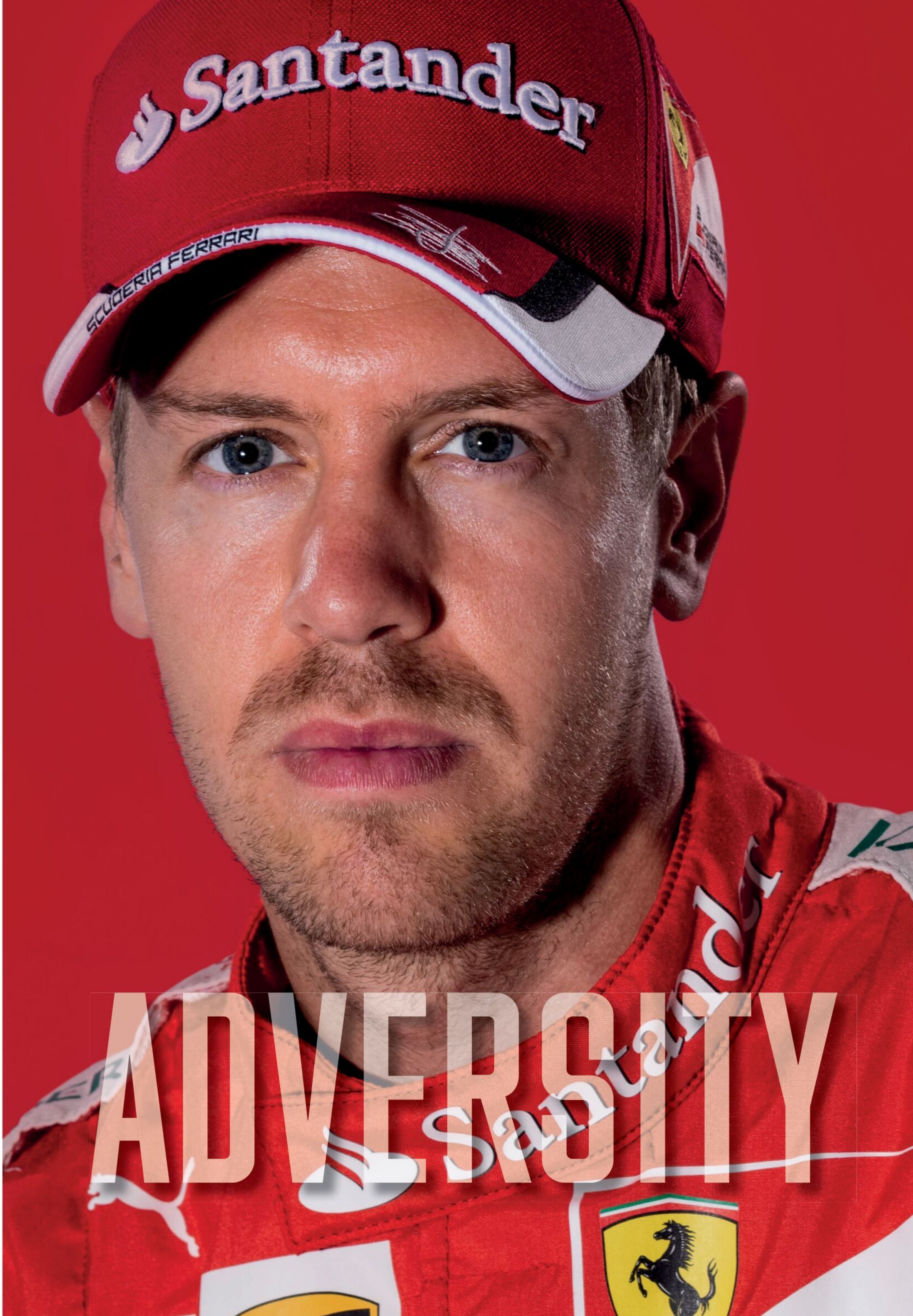
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DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

It was a different Seb Vettel who moved to Ferrari: a driver who knew what he wanted and how to get it, full of the confidence and commanding influence four world championships could bring. The mission was nothing less than to recreate the glory days of Michael Schumacher. What could possibly go wrong?

WORDS ROBERTO CHINCHERO PORTRAIT ADRIAN MYERS

LUKE SKYWALKER, George Bailey, Maverick, Neo, Captain America... even Bill and Ted. It's a trope of Hollywood screenwriting that at some point the hero is sorely tested, plunged into a transformative ordeal – and then, from the depths of despair, they rise again to be triumphant. For Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari, though, the final act in the drama didn't conform to this Aristotlean ideal.

The story of Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari was one of a professional relationship undercut by, as ever with Maranello, a strong element of passion. The relationship had moments of great exaltation and bitter disappointments, quickly reaching its first victories and slowly fading towards a divorce that wasn't without controversy. Inhabiting the story was a driver with a strong personality and a team with a complicated dynamic, constantly under powerful spotlights which amplified any success but mercilessly exposed any perceived shortcomings.

Few gestures are as potently evocative as Sebastian's first appearance at the wheel of a Ferrari, testing an F2012 nine days after the announcement, on 20 November 2014, that he would be forsaking Red Bull for a new life at Maranello. He arrived at Fiorano, Ferrari's test track, with a plain white helmet upon which was written: "My first day in Ferrari: 11/29/2014". Five and a half years later, in April 2020, the prevailing emotion was colder during a phone call with team principal Mattia Binotto during Covid lockdown, during which Sebastian was informed he was surplus to requirements at the end of the season. It was a stingingly abrupt termination of a partnership which had yielded only a portion of the anticipated glories. Vettel had won 14 grands prix, and twice finished the season in second position, but the world championship that both he and Ferrari had dreamed of never came.

Sebastian and Ferrari were drawn together for three compelling reasons. The first was Vettel's ambition to follow in the footsteps of his idol,

Vettel claimed his first Ferrari victory in only his second race for the team, Malaysia 2015, much to the delight of team principal Arrivabene

Michael Schumacher, a desire that became even stronger in 2014. The singular lack of competitiveness of Renault's new hybrid power unit had ended Red Bull's winning cycle in which Vettel had claimed four drivers' championships and, additionally the arrival of Daniel Ricciardo in the team had put Sebastian under pressure. Suddenly the team's number one driver felt like he was no longer number one, a status underlined by the results on the track. For Vettel it was time to move, and the Ferrari call came at the perfect moment.

The timing was ideal for the Scuderia too. After the 'earthquake' of September 2014, in which long-serving president Luca di Montezemolo was ousted by Fiat CEO Sergio Marchionne, a restructuring process began in Maranello. The arrival of Maurizio Arrivabene as team principal wasn't compatible with the presence of Fernando Alonso, who during five seasons had acquired increasing power within the team, over and above his role as a driver. Divorce was inevitable, and Vettel was the best replacement option on the market. Sebastian and Marchionne lived a short distance away in Switzerland, and the agreement didn't require long negotiations.

Sebastian didn't dictate many conditions: he asked for Riccardo Adami as race engineer, Britta Roeske as personal assistant and Antti Kontsas as his trainer. While Vettel didn't want to import his entire personal circle, he arrived at Maranello with a firm methodology. His first months with the Scuderia are remembered as those of the 'blue notebook', the diary in which Seb wrote down everything. After listening in the first briefings, Vettel gradually began to speak out. "At Red Bull we did it in this way" became a regular utterance in preface to his suggestions and, if at the beginning these contributions were welcome for a working group undergoing restructuring, in time they began to chafe.

The driver who arrived at Ferrari wasn't the impressionable youngster who joined Toro Rosso in 2008, willing to obey the dictats of Helmut Marko and Christian Horner without question, but a four-time world champion convinced of his vision. And he didn't hesitate to conduct any battles he believed needed to be fought, even if they were with Marchionne himself. In Singapore in 2015 Vettel observed the mechanics working in very difficult conditions and, during the regular Friday meeting with senior personnel, refused to participate until he had secured an agreement that air conditioners would be installed in the garage. Though the *eminences grise* disliked the backchat, on Sunday Vettel united everyone behind him by claiming a splendid victory, his third of a season in which Ferrari had returned to winning ways after a disappointing first year under the hybrid regulations.

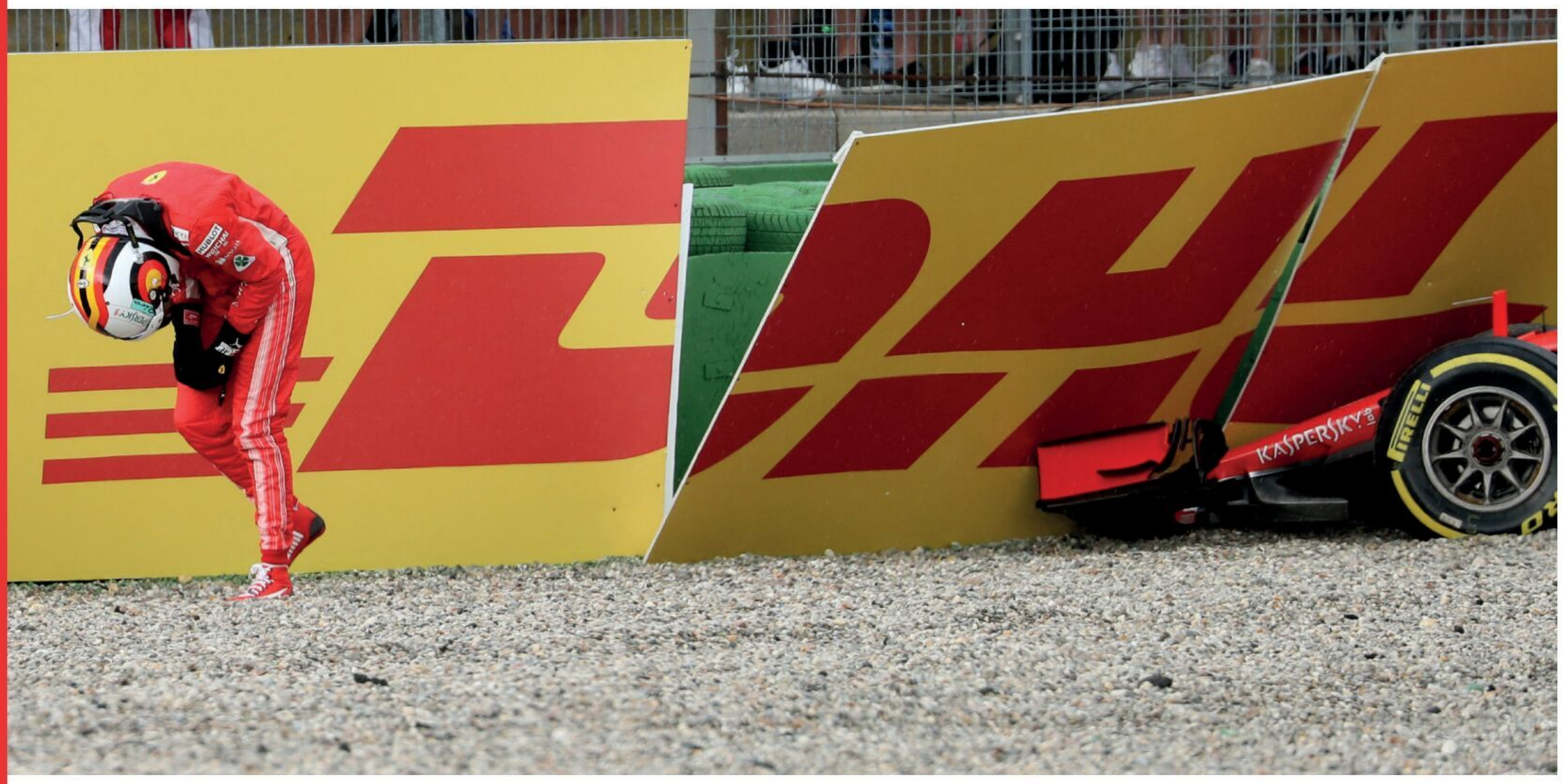
Vettel had delivered his first success in red in the second round, Malaysia, certifying his status as a driver capable of returning the team to its anointed place among the frontrunners. He ended his first season at Ferrari third in the drivers' standings and in a clear position of leadership within the team. The atmosphere within the organisation remained positive thanks to the competitive uptick, and this put him in a position to be forgiven for some behaviours not particularly appreciated by Maurizio Arrivabene, such as his frequent paddock meetings with Helmut Marko, often in view of photographers and those with idle tongues.

During the course of a difficult 2016, hindered by inefficient aerodynamics and poor gearbox reliability, Vettel was the perfect team player even as the frustrated Italian media began to take aim at the Scuderia again. There were no wins and the results were disappointing but never did Sebastian bang the table with his fists

That evocative first day in a Ferrari at Fiorano in November 2014, only nine days after he had announced that he would be leaving Red Bull

VETTEL UNITED EVERYONE BEHIND HIM BY CLAIMING A SPLENDID VICTORY, HIS THIRD OF A SEASON IN WHICH FERRARI HAD RETURNED TO WINNING WAYS

PICTURES: LUCA MARTINI; LORENZO BELLANCA; STEVE ETHERINGTON



In 2018 Seb's win at Silverstone, his fourth of the season, stretched his championship lead over Lewis Hamilton to eight points

Vettel's mistake in the 2018 German GP, when he slid off when leading (above), was probably the moment his Ferrari career began to crumble

at debriefs. From mid-season in Maranello it was evident the 2017 car project would facilitate a return to the top, and perhaps this also helped Vettel come to terms with what all believed were short-term difficulties.

The SF70H was indeed innovative and quick. During the Barcelona winter tests of 2017, Ferrari asked Vettel not to push too hard in the third sector of the track, and Seb was happy not to reveal the car's full potential. It was no bluff, because in the first six races Vettel took three wins and three second places, leading the tifosi to dare to dream of a brilliant season. What extinguished those dreams was the need to push everything to the limit as Mercedes tamed its initially difficult car, a situation that brought out reliability problems within the SF70H. It was details, such as spark plugs and connecting pipes, or unfortunate race circumstances such as the accident at the start of the Singapore GP, which derailed Ferrari's championship challenge.

Nevertheless, victory in the penultimate round of the season, in Brazil, brought back humour and confidence. At the end of 2017 Sebastian enjoyed the Scuderia's full support. Nobody could have expected what was to come in 2018, how in a few months Vettel's circumstances would change from potentially winning the world championship to fractures developing with management – and, within two years, a definitive divorce.

The 2018 season got off to a good start with two consecutive victories, followed by further successes in Canada and Great Britain. The car was fast and reliable, with no clear deficit to Mercedes. Two weeks after the triumph at Silverstone came the watershed moment.

Sebastian was leading the German Grand Prix from pole position when it began to rain and, on lap 52, he lost control in the stadium section and embedded his car in the barrier. His frustration

was writ large as he slammed his fists against the steering wheel: the anger of a driver who had made a mistake and knew it was his fault. The unexpected death of Marchionne, announced that weekend, contributed to a funereal atmosphere within the team.

There had been another significant development which undermined Vettel's certainties. From the beginning of summer it was clear Charles Leclerc would drive for Ferrari in 2019, having only needed a few races with Alfa Romeo to convince Maranello's top management of his potential. This news was a real cold shower for Sebastian. Not only would Leclerc be a less 'comfortable' team-mate than Kimi Räikkönen, but also Vettel knew a team which makes such a decision clearly doesn't have 100% confidence in its current number one driver and is evaluating a replacement. It was this sense that time was running out which likely caused him to push too hard and make this mistake – and the others which followed.

At Monza the Ferraris started on the front row with Räikkönen ahead, but Kimi assured the team he would give way to Vettel if they were running 1-2. It was decided in the pre-race briefing this would happen on lap 10. But by that point in the race Sebastian was already out of contention, having made a poor start and then collided with Lewis Hamilton at the Roggia chicane on the opening lap. More mistakes followed in Japan, USA and Brazil; he had lost his grip as team leader, a decline which would be exacerbated as Leclerc and new team principal Mattia Binotto took up their places.

From the moment of Vettel's arrival at Ferrari Marchionne was struck by his emotional nature, a different personality compared with the cool and stereotypically Germanic demeanour of Michael Schumacher. Indeed, Seb is much more Latin in temperament; after the 2018 Mexican GP, for instance, when Hamilton put a very messy mistake in the opening laps. No one was more aware than Seb that the cost of his errors had exceeded the value of his *palmares*. At one of the final races of that season he arrived in his garage on the Thursday to find his car missing. Seb well knew this was because it was being scrutineered, but didn't shy away from quipping to one of his most trusted mechanics, "Well, you can see they won't renew my contract – my car isn't even there anymore."

Vettel had smelled the air correctly. It was only a matter of time before he received the call confirming he would no longer be Ferrari's team leader – or a Ferrari driver at all. A bitter ending for Sebastian and undoubtedly one of the biggest disappointments of his sporting career. He had imagined his story at Ferrari differently, along the lines of the renaissance his idol Michael Schumacher had orchestrated. It could have been a remarkable tale but, above all, results were lacking – and in racing, beyond all the romantic aspects, great loves are certified by results.

If the final act of this story is one of disappointment rather than triumph, it does at least have an uplifting coda. When Vettel returned to Imola and Monza at the wheel of an Aston Martin he found the fans' support for him undimmed. The memory he left of himself among the tifosi is of a great driver and above all of a passionate individual, who loved the Scuderia beyond how his adventure in red ended.

NO ONE WAS MORE AWARE THAN SEB THAT THE COST OF HIS ERRORS HAD EXCEEDED THE VALUE OF HIS *PALMARES*

PICTURES: HASAN BRATIC; JERRY ANDRE; GLENN DUNBAR

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FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

Post-Ferrari, Seb Vettel has reinvented himself as a force for social justice. From litter picking after grands prix and renouncing travel by private jet to prominently supporting the LGBTQ+ community, Vettel has pursued his activism with the same relentless energy he brought to his world championship campaigns. But what prompted this change?

WORDS STUART CODLING

"IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT YOU leave behind, it's about what you take with you."

With this gnomic utterance Sebastian Vettel introduces a glossily shot video produced by Aston Martin to mark his departure from F1. As the Hans Zimmer-esque soundtrack soars to a pinnacle of glassy strings undercut by a persistent bass clef rumbling, the impression is one of a driver thoughtfully shimmying out of the door, shrouded in a fog of aphorisms.

How to parse this apparently profound and yet profoundly counter-intuitive statement? During what we might call the third phase of his F1 career Vettel has undergone another transformation, into what some may call (disparagingly) a 'social justice warrior'. But here's the thing: he doesn't care what label you might want to apply to his activism. Neither does he expect any of his now former colleagues and rivals to espouse the same causes he has championed: as he said to Lando Norris on *Sky Sports F1* after the Abu Dhabi GP, "It's for other people to decide what a legacy is but you can try to have an influence on that. You should just be yourself. As much as you have role models, you still have to learn to find your own way, stand up for the things that are important to you. They don't have to be the same for all of us."

It's been a personal mission. Vettel knows he can't change F1. He has been openly critical of its slow and piecemeal adoption of sustainable fuels. He was the first to call for a boycott of the Russian GP after the invasion of Ukraine, while the FIA and the commercial rights holder – perhaps understandably, given the reality of contracts and such – dithered. And he has undertaken one-man protests against oppressive practices in countries F1 visits, hosting an all-women karting event in Saudi Arabia and wearing a rainbow 'One Love' t-shirt on the grid in Hungary, on the eve of that nation implementing anti-LGBTQ+ legislation. Those close to him have suggested an unwillingness to return to these nations and others, such as Qatar, was a contributing factor to his decision to retire, as was the arrival of Aramco – the world's largest producer of greenhouse gases – as co-title sponsor of Aston Martin.

What Vettel set out to do was to use his profile to push for change in the wider world. But why wait until the tapering point of his on-track career? There were several reasons. Among these were his realisation, once he had received notice of termination from Ferrari in 2020, that his driving ambition to emulate his childhood hero, Michael Schumacher, was now unachievable. Another is that he has been very much his own man since unhitching himself from Red Bull, with a confidence befitting one who has won four consecutive world championships. He has also become a father.

As Seb has now explained, via a valedictory video posted on Instagram following his final grand prix, his perspective on life pivoted when, in short order, he and his wife had two daughters – and then his father-in-law succumbed to cancer. Until then he had been very much a young driver in the F1 bubble, focusing on winning races above all else.

"I was confronted with the future," he said, "holding my children in my arms for the very first time, and at the same time being confronted with death, the end of life. It really made me reflect upon my life and the future that is ahead of us, and the world we live in.

"Mine was a unique position to be in and, once I realised that, I really thought about how I could use the voice I have to try to address the things that are important for all of us. Looking at our world, our climate, I think our world is rapidly changing and it requires us to all consider what we can do."

At the end of 2021 Vettel hosted a women-only karting day under the Race 4 Women hashtag, ahead of the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix

Moving to Aston Martin not only facilitated a less high-pressure environment on track, where Vettel was less likely to be blown off by his team-mate, it also consolidated his ability to call the shots PR-wise. Media work has long been his least favourite aspect of the job. He seldom grants interviews to the F1 press and has eschewed social media until very recently. This has made him an asset of diminishing value to teams and sponsors in the modern marketing landscape. Accordingly the Aston comms team (led by former *GP Racing* editor Matt Bishop) found avenues through which Seb could perform media work in a different way, energised by causes he wished to champion rather than sitting glumly in F1 media pens answering broadly the same questions eight times in a row.

By dint of no longer representing Philip Morris tobacco products, or an energy drink likely to be banned from sale to children in several countries on account of its sugar content, Vettel could make more personal appearances in schools. Among several initiatives he became an ambassador for BioBienanApfel, a German-based campaign to preserve bee populations; during the Austrian double-header in 2021 he promoted a competition for local primary school pupils to design a bee hotel, picked the winning entry – and helped the winners build it. Last May he visited Feltham Young Offenders institution to open a workshop as part of a programme to facilitate careers in mechanics and engineering.

Following the 2021 British Grand Prix Sebastian organised a litter-picking session. It was, he said, inspired by driving to the Aston Martin factory and being struck by the dispiriting volume of filth and by the side of the motorways, a marked contrast to the environment in his adopted home of Switzerland. This being the post-truth era, naturally there were those who ▸

In May last year Seb visited Feltham Young Offenders institution in West London (below) where he opened a workshop (below, left)

PICTURES: ASTON MARTIN; RACE4WOMEN

"LOOKING AT OUR WORLD, OUR CLIMATE, I THINK OUR WORLD IS RAPIDLY CHANGING AND IT REQUIRES US TO ALL CONSIDER WHAT WE CAN DO"

During his appearance on the BBC's *Question Time* Seb spoke eloquently, knowledgeably and honestly on sometimes difficult subjects

On a visit to the Oasis Johanna primary school in 2022 Seb opened a new therapy room to assist children struggling with mental health

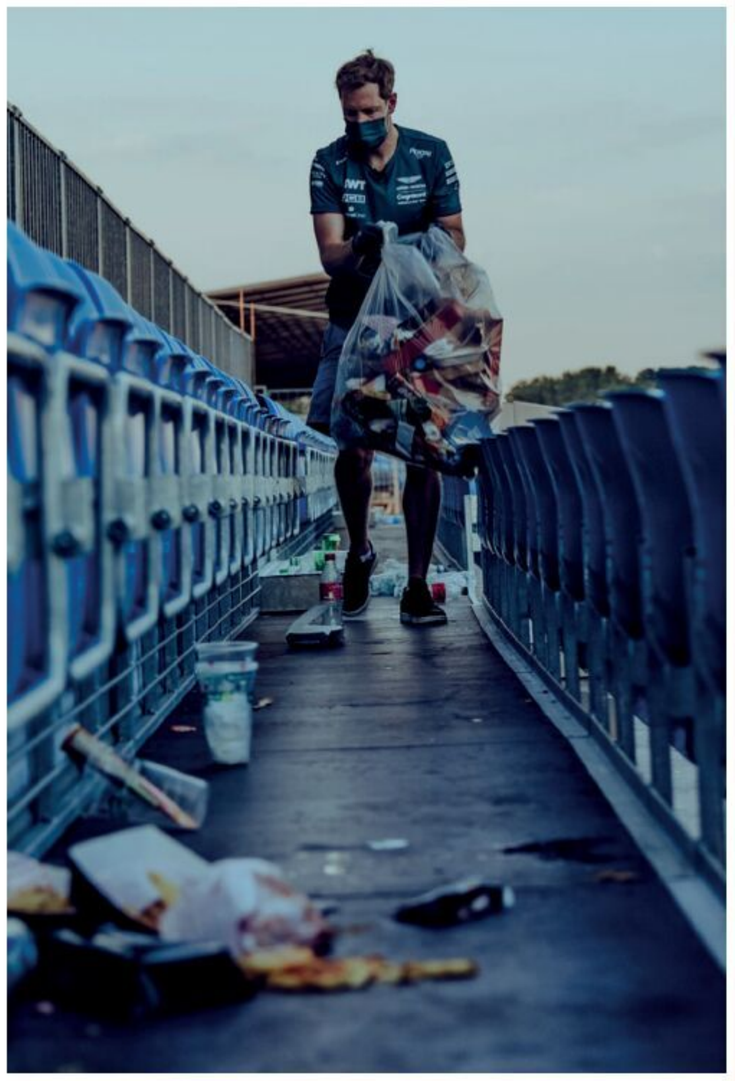
declaimed this as a virtue-signalling photo opportunity, but the work went on long after the cameras stopped rolling: Vettel laboured for several hours, even riding the bin lorry back to the depot to help sort the recycling. It was the same Sebastian Vettel who would roll up his sleeves and help his Red Bull mechanics pack down the garage so they could get on to celebrating a world championship faster.

Similarly impressive was Vettel's appearance on the BBC's *Question Time*. Brit-centric matters of moment such as the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition being papped while sipping a bottle of beer after a constituency meeting, and whether this constituted a 'social gathering' under Covid lockdown rules, must have seemed hopelessly abstruse and recherché to a Swiss-domiciled German. Nevertheless Seb demonstrated an impressive command of domestic and international matters, as well as a thoughtful eloquence which seemed to prompt host Fiona Bruce to pivot towards him rather than the bickering low-wattage politicos seated to her right. He found himself in pole position to field a question on whether Finland should join NATO in response to aggression from Vladimir Putin's Russia; most F1 drivers, with the possible exception of Valtteri Bottas, would struggle to point out Finland on a map let alone hold forth on the length of its land border with Russia and history of previous conflict.

It was here, also, he faced a germane question: did appearing in a "gas-guzzling" sport while campaigning against climate change make him a hypocrite? He could at this point have highlighted that he no longer flies to grands prix unless he has to, and certainly not by private jet; he could have explained that his daily driver isn't an Aston Martin but a one-litre hybrid Skoda Octavia Estate; he could have flagged up his admiration for Greta Thunberg and Luisa Neubauer, head of Germany's Fridays for Future organisation. Instead he said, "It does."

In hindsight it's little wonder Vettel announced his retirement a little over two months later, quietly enjoyed his last few grands prix, and then headed for the door. While other drivers may be less engaged, or vocal, in social matters, he doesn't leave a void: the likes of Lewis Hamilton, Lando Norris and Alex Albon are, as Seb said, standing up for things that are important to them. In a final interview published on the Aston Martin website he said, poignantly, "There will probably come a point where no one will remember me."

They will, Seb. They will.



Vettel organised a litter-picking session after the 2021 British GP, inspired by the rubbish he saw on the roadsides on a trip to the Aston factory

PICTURES: ASTON MARTIN

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SHOWCASE

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

After 299 race starts across 16 seasons, 53 wins, 57 pole positions and, most importantly, four world championships, Seb is finally calling it a day

All good things come to an end. Although Seb wasn't the only F1 driver at the 2022 Abu Dhabi who won't be on the grid in 2023, his colleagues thought enough of him to form a guard of honour to see him off

motorsport IMAGES

SHOWCASE | SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Highlights during Seb's two seasons at Aston Martin were few and far between but, after a poor start, in only his sixth race for the team he finished a delighted second at the 2021 Azerbaijan GP. Sadly, with his disqualification in Hungary five races later, it would be his only podium finish in Aston green

Vettel with the other four title contenders – Lewis Hamilton, Fernando Alonso, Mark Webber and Jenson Button – at the 2010 Korean GP. Seb retired with engine failure and was an outsider for the top honour with two races left. He won both, however, to claim the first of his four championships

Winning the 2008 Italian GP for Toro Rosso was when Vettel really arrived in F1. He had made an impressive debut in 2007 but hadn't been a prolific champion in lower formulae prior to that. At the time he became F1 youngest ever race winner and he remains F1's youngest polesitter

In his time at Aston Martin Vettel became much more outspoken on non-F1 related issues. Wearing this Same Love t-shirt on the grid at the 2021 Hungarian GP was a protest against Hungary's anti-LGBTQ+ legislation

Vettel is a keen cyclist and, in recent years, could often been seen pedalling into a circuit where possible. For Seb it was more about highlighting environmental and health issues, rather than a sneaky extra bit of training...

Seb's first on-track appearance at a grand prix weekend was at the 2006 Turkish GP where he was fastest in second practice. With regular BMW-Sauber driver Robert Kubica unavailable, due to injury, Vettel was then drafted into his seat at the 2007 US GP at Indianapolis. He emerged with great credit, scoring a point for eighth, less than half a second behind Red Bull's Mark Webber

After six seasons at Red Bull Vettel decided it was time to switch to Ferrari in an attempt to win a title in red, as his hero Michael Schumacher had done. His Ferrari career started brilliantly, with a victory in only his second race for the team, at the 2015 Malaysian GP. Seb would win twice more in that first season driving for Ferrari

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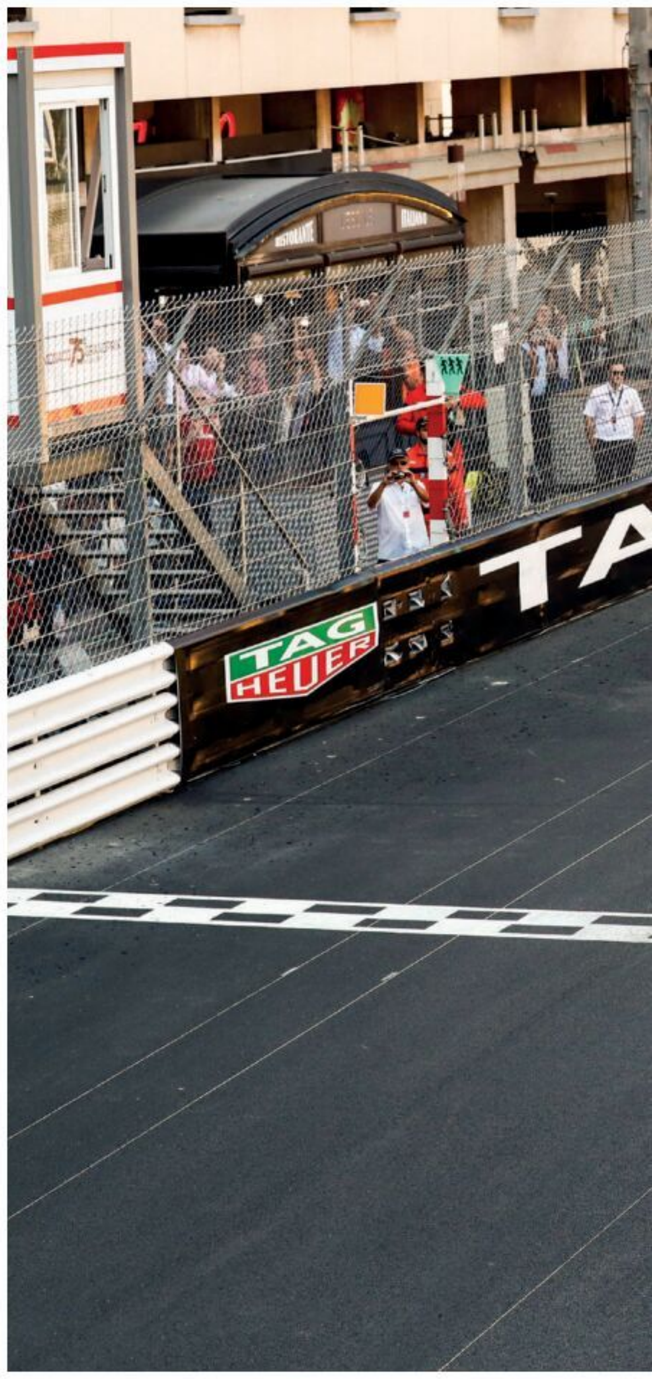
SHOWCASE | SEBASTIAN VETTEL

To prove that his 2010 title success was no flash in the pan Vettel claimed a second consecutive world championship, at the 2011 Japanese GP, when he finishing third. The German wrapped up the title with four races still left to run, built on a dominant start to the year, and he claimed 11 victories in total

When the end finally came for Seb, at the 2022 Abu Dhabi GP, he left F1 as he entered it by scoring a single point, this time for finishing 10th. He allowed himself some celebratory donuts in his Aston Martin at the end of the race, followed by a hug from his father, Norbert, in parc fermé



The most controversial moment in Vettel's F1 career came at the 2013 Malaysian GP. As the race neared its conclusion, with Webber ahead, Red Bull ordered the pair to maintain position with its now infamous 'Multi-21' call. Seb ignored it and passed Webber at Turn 4 to claim victory

Seb bowed in front of his Red Bull RB9 – which he nicknamed 'Hungry Heidi' after the model Heidi Klum – at the conclusion of the 2013 Indian GP. He had just clinched his fourth world title with a win, the sixth in a run of nine consecutive victories at the end of 2013, to add to four early season triumphs

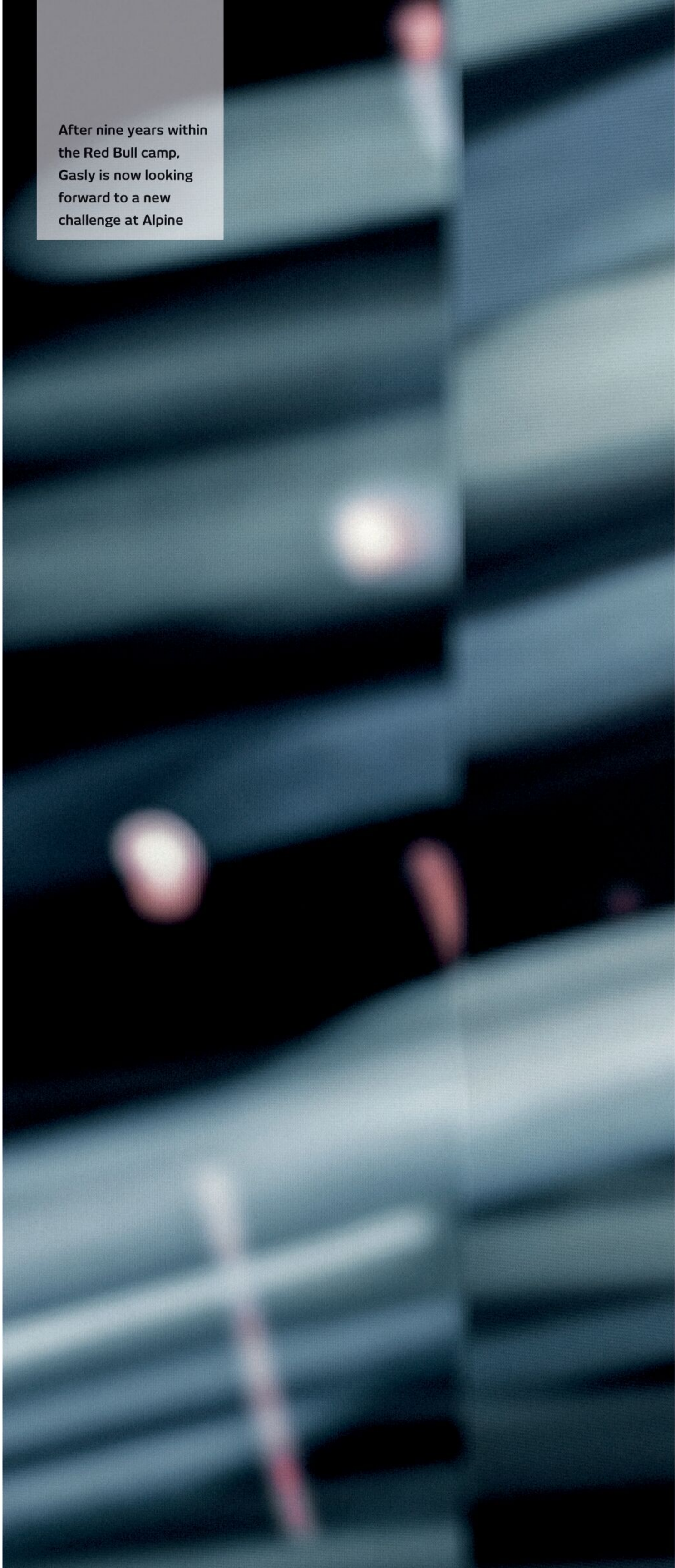
In 2017 Vettel started the season with a bang and a fifth world championship, and first with Ferrari, seemed to be on the cards. In Monaco he won for the third time in six races and, with three seconds to add to those victories, he led the title race. And then, slowly but surely, it began to slip away from him

DON'T LOOK BACK IN ANGER

Disappointed that the door to the senior team remains closed to him, **Pierre Gasly** has left the Red Bull family – but, speaking exclusively to *GP Racing*, he explains this is by no means a bitter separation...

WORDS OLEG KARPOV PICTURES motorsport IMAGES RED BULL, ALPINE

"THE FIRST THING that stood out for me when I came to Faenza, it was the fact that there were all these pictures of Seb Vettel's victory in Monza in the staircase as you walk up," recalls Pierre Gasly of his first visit to the headquarters of what was then Toro Rosso. "Walking up, I remember I was making videos and stories for my social media, and someone said to me,



After nine years within the Red Bull camp, Gasly is now looking forward to a new challenge at Alpine

Victory at Monza meant a lot to Gasly but he doesn't want it to be the defining moment of his career

'Oh, Sebastian! Numero uno.' And I replied at the time, 'He is the best. But hopefully there will be pictures of me in five years on this staircase.'"

Five years on, the second most important flight of stairs at the team's Faenza base is a gallery with photos of Pierre Gasly. Photos likewise taken at Monza, also of a win for the team. However the rest of the Frenchman's career goes, he is already one of the small Scuderia's defining drivers, along with Vettel. After all, even world champion Max Verstappen – who made his grand prix debut with Toro Rosso – doesn't have his own flight of stairs in Faenza. "Max didn't win for us – he left one race too early," is a favourite quip of team boss Franz Tost's about this.

"Actually, it wasn't five – it took me three years before I won and had my staircase with the pictures of my race win," smiles Pierre. "But it's funny, because I remember I was very impressed. Because I saw Seb's pictures and I was like, 'Wow, this is possible.' OK, when I arrived in 2017 it [Vettel's Monza win] was nine years in the past, but it's like... there's still history in this team. And they have won.

"Now to have my own one is something special... Obviously, every time going through these images always gives me goosebumps, it's a nice way to remember the emotion. So it's a great touch. And also a nice story with me kind of telling myself that I want my own gallery here in five years. And, then in the end it came even faster than that."

It is the end of an era. Gasly, unlike Vettel, couldn't get a foothold at Red Bull, although his trophy cabinet with the Faenza team is bigger, since it also includes a pair of podiums. But next season he will race for a different team, no longer in the Red Bull family, which means another return to Faenza is practically impossible.

"In a way, it is..." he begins to speak on his departure from the team, before cutting himself short. "No, let's say I'm extremely excited with what's coming in the future. It was a decision that is well thought, it's not a decision you take overnight. But at the same time, yeah, 90% of my entire time in Formula 1 has been with this team. And every single mechanic, every engineer, people from marketing, the relationship we've built over these years goes beyond just a working relationship.

"I will miss a lot of people from this team. I know their kids, I know the personal life of most of the people here. It gets very personal, so... I will clearly miss these guys."

It's also the end of Gasly's nearly decade-long journey with Red Bull. His contract was only expiring at the end of 2023, and Red Bull made a point of repeatedly confirming him as an AlphaTauri driver for next season. But it let him go to Alpine in the end, once the Enstone team contrived to lose both Fernando Alonso and Oscar Piastri. As Gasly sees it, Red Bull granted his move because he'd stayed loyal to the programme even in difficult times.

"I don't think many drivers stayed for that many years within Red Bull," he says. "And what we've experienced together, having been fighting all my seasons in younger categories for championships, for wins. And I'll be forever grateful for the opportunity they gave me before F1 and also within Formula 1.

"But ultimately they want drivers to come and kind of move up to Red Bull. This was the strategy at the start. And then also my ambition – you want to be in Formula 1 to win. I don't know anyone... or I'd be surprised if someone says they're going to F1 to do top-10s. At the end of the day personally it's not what interests me in this sport. Helmut [Marko] and I, we had conversations at the start of the year, he wasn't keen to let me go. And I know they wanted to keep me, they made me understand I'm a key player within the AlphaTauri organisation, and the brand itself, not just in Formula 1. The fact that I like fashion can really relate to what they do and their industry, and they were also not keen on letting me go.

"And then the whole thing happened in August [when Sebastian Vettel's retirement announcement triggered a series of moves],

Vettel's winning Toro Rosso car (right) dominates a staircase at Faenza but Gasly has added to the trophy cabinet (above)

Gasly with Helmut Marko in his early Red Bull days (left). It was Marko who held the key to Gasly leaving AlphaTauri early

PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; CARL BINGHAM; KIM ILLMAN

it changed the market for the next few years quite a lot. And then we had more conversations with Helmut, and I'm also thankful that he understood this is an important opportunity. I told him, 'Look, I really want to take this on, grab this opportunity and sort of move away because it's no secret that Red Bull is closed over the next few years.' And he understood that…"

Gasly admits sealing the deal wasn't easy. Marko's stipulation was that Pierre would only be released if American driver Colton Herta could be signed in his place – which proved tricky, since the FIA then ruled Herta ineligible for a super licence.

"It was a complex deal," the Frenchman laughs, nodding towards manager Guillaume Le Goff, who has joined us at the table. "It wasn't straightforward. Obviously he [Marko] wanted a replacement, and he was quite direct on who he wanted. But at the end of the day, we managed to make a win-win deal everybody was happy with. For sure, I'm grateful. And I think he recognised exactly that, over the last nine years I've always played the best way I could within the Red Bull organisation and, out of these nine years, eight and a half have been extremely successful and enjoyable. There have been experiences and lessons as well. I'll just remember the good times from these past almost 10 years."

There aren't that many teams on the grid, Gasly points out, who could have made a sufficiently attractive offer for him to consider an exit from Faenza a year before the expiry of his contract.

"I mean behind the top three, that's definitely at the moment the best team," he says of Alpine, "and to me from what I'm seeing with the new regulations, the budget cap, they're closing the gap with these guys. They recruited a very strong technical team. And for me, they have all the resources, facilities and tools and people to become, again, a very successful team, because they have been in the past. It's important, I think, to remember what they've achieved in the past.

"They know what it takes to be fighting at the front. Since they came back [as Renault's factory team], it's taking time because it's such a difficult sport. It's not like you can just be here and straightaway tackle Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull, but they have this ambition and are putting in full effort to do it. That's what they've showed with me, that they're really willing to make this team successful and, to me, it was important to feel this drive and this anger for success."

But it was just as important for Gasly that from the beginning it was him heading the Alpine shortlist, once the team realised it would have to look for Esteban Ocon's next team-mate outside its current pool of drivers. That it didn't see his existing contract as an impediment to negotiations suggests he was at or near the top of that list.

"Over the past 20 or 30 years, I don't think it's happened very often in F1, that a driver with a contract gets traded to another team," he says. "They [Alpine] definitely pushed really hard, and really made me understand that they wanted this to happen more than anything else. And there were long conversations on knowing where the team stands, what their ambitions are, their targets over the next few years, who they have recruited.

"It's a big change. I already had something secured, and then leaving something I know to take

"ONCE I TALKED WITH THEM, FOR ME, IT WAS REALLY CLEAR THIS WAS THE NEXT STEP IN MY CAREER, AND I WANTED TO GRAB IT WITH BOTH HANDS"

PICTURES: DOM ROMNEY; ALPINE

Since a return to Red Bull is unlikely (left), Gasly has decided to thrown in his lot with Alpine

on a new challenge... But once I talked with them, it was really clear this was the next step in my career, and I wanted to grab it with both hands. I saw a big potential there to have great success. So it just came naturally, quite quickly."

It really is a big step for Gasly. There are obviously more wins in the team's history than flights of stairs over at Enstone, and it will be a tough ask for Pierre to become one of its defining drivers. And, as it stands, the team isn't yet in a position to seriously challenge for victories.

Since Red Bull's junior team exists to promote young talent, it's a relative rarity in F1: a team whose brand isn't predicated on winning, although it will happily accept them. Moving to Alpine is Pierre's best route to defining a career in which he will be remembered for much more than that opportunist Monza victory in 2020. But the question of legacy isn't one that concerns Gasly much right now.

"At the moment I'm not thinking that far because, in my opinion, I haven't completed 15% of my career," he says. "What I've done in Formula 1 so far, OK, it's great, but it's nowhere near what I want to do. I had one win, I had three podiums, it's not bad... But is it good enough for me? Not at all. It is nothing yet. So for now I'm more focused on actually delivering and getting the success that I'm eyeing in Formula 1, and just focusing on these. Once these successes will happen probably later on in my career, I'll think about the legacy and what I leave behind.

"At the moment, I haven't achieved anything in F1 yet. Everything is going to happen over the next five to eight years. And this was more like a development base, construction phase and now... Yeah, now it's time to get the proper results."

"WHAT I'VE DONE IN FORMULA 1 SO FAR, OK, IT'S GREAT, BUT IT'S NOWHERE NEAR WHAT I WANT TO DO. OK, I HAD ONE WIN, I HAD THREE PODIUMS, IT'S NOT BAD..."

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IN CONVERSATION WITH

FELIPE DRUGOVICH

WORDS ALEX KALINAUCKAS
PORTRAIT ASTON MARTIN

After sealing the 2022 Formula 2 title with MP Motorsport back in September, the thoughtful and bright Brazilian will be Aston Martin's reserve Formula 1 driver next season. But he's aiming higher than that, with considered opinions on how the pinnacle of motorsport ought to assist its support category champions...

Felipe, you finished ninth and eighth in the championship in your first two F2 seasons – what changed so much for 2022?

I think in 2021 nothing really clicked for us for some reason. It wasn't a horrendous [season], but I never got wins – I just got a few podiums here and there. Four podiums, but no wins. I think the speed wasn't really there. And then I started over-pushing and a few things. But, anyway, I got a call from MP Motorsport at the end of the year and things worked out [with five wins and the title in 2022].

F2/GP2 has always been about building experience for many drivers – especially on the sensitive tyres. Was that the case for you too?

It helps, but people say it's a 'third year' [effect] but I won an F2 race my first weekend in F2 [the 2020 Austria sprint race]. So, I don't fully agree with the people who say, "Ah it's the third year, that's why he won it.' Because I won in my first weekend.

You're the first driver in Aston Martin's new driver-development project – what drew you to the programme?

Aston is a really good team with two really good drivers – this year and next year. Obviously this year they had Seb [Vettel] and Lance [Stroll] with a lot of experience I could learn a lot from. And, also, the project they gave me is something I can really progress [with] here. This is the main focus because if an F1 seat isn't available, the best thing I can get is a third seat with a lot of experience, a lot of progress [off-track], and here was the best option I could get.

It's the second year in a row and third in four that the F2 champion hasn't gone directly into F1 – how concerned should F1 be that this has happened again?

I think it's very concerning. If you see in other categories, for example Moto2-MotoGP, it's quite natural that the champion goes forward. But, it's not just one thing or not just a rule, it's a combination of many things. They have more places in MotoGP than they have in Formula 1, so it's stuff like that. But I think it's a matter for the FIA and Formula 1 to change those things to help whoever wins F2 to be in F1. Because whoever wins F2 has the level to be in F1. They have to learn a lot of things, but the potential is there for sure.

You said previously the F2 champion should be allowed back if there's no F1 seat, but series boss Bruno Michel was quite dismissive of that.

WHOEVER WINS F2 HAS THE LEVEL TO BE IN F1. THEY HAVE TO LEARN A LOT OF THINGS, BUT THE POTENTIAL IS THERE

I think the media said it a bit wrong – I didn't say that. What I said was that the F2 champion has to go to F1 and if it is impossible for some reason, they can do another year in F2. But, that's not the goal for any of the F2 champions. No one who has won F2 wants to do another year anyway. Just the main thing was whoever wins F2 should go to F1. But it is what it is.

There's a great heritage of Brazilian motorsport – how does that boost you?

Yeah, Ayrton Senna has always been my idol. I look up to him and hopefully one day I will be in a position to fight as he did. Every time we talk, Felipe Massa gives me little tips here and there. We have good relations but nothing too much. I have a little bit more with Felipe Nasr – he's been a really good friend to me and he really helped me. I think all the Brazilian community in F1 is kind of connected.

Finally, what kind of racing driver would you describe yourself as?

Let me think about it a little bit! It's difficult to describe yourself, but I would say I'm very technical – I like the technical side of the driving and also the mechanical side of the car and stuff. So, I'll just try to be very focused on what the car is doing and what I can do with it. But at the same time, I feel while I'm driving I'm very instinctive and quite aggressive. On a quali lap – if you take this year I was really good in qualifying [securing four poles] – I've been quite good on that side too.

SOME LIKE IT ’OT

Having quit Aston Martin because there were too many people in charge, **Otmar Szafnauer** moved to a role of undisputed authority at Alpine – but the hot seat has proved to be an occasionally uncomfortable one, even for a leader of his experience...

WORDS OLEG KARPOV PORTRAITS ALISTER THORPE

MANDIANT

In early September, during an interview reflecting on Alpine's particular difficulties at the time, the Renault-owned French car manufacturer's boss Laurent Rossi said something about **Otmar Szafnauer** that caught many people's attention.

Over the month and a half before that interview, the Alpine Formula 1 team had failed to secure the services of two-time world champion Fernando Alonso for 2023, and was then rejected by its own protégé Oscar Piastri. The young Australian was lured away by McLaren, and Alpine's attempts to protec its interests via the Contract Recognition Board proved an image disaster – not only was the eventual ruling not in its favour but the details of the case that had made their way into the press betrayed systemic failings in how the Enstone team's legal department dealt with Piastri.

Yet, speaking of Szafnauer, his boss offered nothing but praise. "Otmar is one of the hires I'm most proud of," Rossi said.

If casual observers schooled in the reductive thinking of the daily F1 news cycle might think Laurent Rossi is mad, he really isn't.

While a potential F1 team principal's CV should definitely include 'ability to manage drivers' in the list of skills, Rossi hadn't hired Szafnauer just to manage two – granted, very important – employees. It was Otmar's 25 years of experience in various Formula 1 roles across a wide range of projects that represented a major asset – including his time before F1 when, having bought a Formula 2000 car and set up a team for it – he found himself working for the Ford Motor Company.

TO F1 VIA THE BLUE OVAL

"It helps in being able to understand the mentality of the entity that owns us," says Otmar of that Ford experience. "It [Renault] is a big car company, very similar to Ford. The structure isn't dissimilar, and the mentality and the thinking is very much aligned with what I was used to. So that helps me be able to steer the Formula 1 team – sometimes the bureaucracy of a big company can be overbearing, and I need to be able to deflect that for good reason."

There's even something of a parallel between his projects at Ford and the essence of Alpine as Renault's performance brand.

"I was responsible for all new concepts that were related to, let's say, high-performance cars," he recalls. "One idea I had at the time was to take the Ford Explorer and make a high-performance version of it. My immediate boss liked it, but then the guys above him said, 'No, that'll never work.' No one else had it before, and they thought there's not enough people out there to like it. And now look: Porsche has one, Lamborghini has one, Aston has one..."

One project which got further down the line was Indigo, a road-going two-seat sportscar "with a lot of IndyCar technology in it", which is how Otmar came into contact with Adrian Reynard, head of the American series' pre-eminent manufacturer at the time. Ultimately Szafnauer's entry into F1 was as part of British American Racing, in which Reynard was a partner, with a limitless budget provided by British American Tobacco servicing a dream of making Jacques Villeneuve world champion again.

"Yeah, at the beginning it was a bit like that, unlimited," smiles Otmar. "Until we ran out of money. And I remember Adrian calling us all and saying, 'That's it. You can't spend any more...'"

While the biggest lesson from BAR's early history probably concerns the perils of unchecked ambition, it did offer Szafnauer – among others – the opportunity to learn a thing or two about Formula 1.

"The thing I liked most about that was all the challenges that came with starting a new team," he says. "So, building relationships, hiring people, actually building the car – that team of people had never built a Formula 1 car together. They might have individually at other places, but not together.

"I was the Operations Director, and I'd never built one. And that was my job. So it was very satisfying – in February of '98 we'd just started designing the car, in February '99 we had two cars and all the spares. So in that year of 1998 a lot happened, including hiring people, designing a car, getting it built, testing it, and getting prepared to go racing, even building motorhomes, just from scratch."

Otmar became vice president of Honda Racing Development when the Japanese manufacturer acquired BAR, with a mandate to oversee the relationship between the 'mothership' and the Brackley factory. That ended when Honda abruptly withdrew from F1 and put the team up for sale during the 2008 financial crisis. Under Ross Brawn's ownership the radically slimmed-down team won the 2009 championship, while Szafnauer conceptualised and produced what became F1's first mobile app.

FEEL THE FORCE

The team formerly known as Jordan had spent three years being passed around from owner to owner with precious little investment when Vijay Mallya acquired it – and decided to clear out a management Mallya thought lacked ambition. Otmar was hired as chief operating officer.

"When I first got there, we had 280 people, an OK budget," he says. "It was a bit depleted of

Apart from the many off-track issues Szafnauer had to deal with, he also had two drivers who were not the best of friends

some of the talent they had in the past as Jordan. But once Vijay bought it and said, 'I'm gonna be in for a long time,' I could hire.

"I took it from 280 to 405, and that wasn't just hiring 125 people, because some left, some retired, some wanted to go elsewhere to see something else, so you had to replace them too. I probably replaced 50-60% of the people there. And then once you hire the new ones, you look for a certain attitude, a certain way of working, being able to work together. And before you know it, the group works really well together."

Force India developed a reputation for punching above its competitive weight, finishing 'best of the rest' behind the leading three works teams twice. A third consecutive fourth-place finish went begging when the team was dragged into the maelstrom of Mallya's financial difficulties and went into administration in mid-2019. What's remarkable is that the group remained together both before and during the period of greatest uncertainty before Lawrence Stroll's consortium acquired and rebranded it.

"We lost no one," Otmar emphasises. "So, we went from 280 people to 405, and then when we went through the bankruptcy time, nobody left – it's a miracle. And I mean, nobody. Zero.

"I think it shows the importance of trusting the leader. When I said, 'Look, it'll be okay, but we have to stick together,' everybody trusted that."

Perhaps it was inevitable that after playing such a crucial role in holding the organisation together he should become disenchanted at that authority becoming diluted as Stroll packed out the c-suite and the executive floor with new hires such as ex-McLaren team principal and COO Martin Whitmarsh. Szafnauer left just over a year ago, saying openly that an F1 team can't be run by "two popes".

"WE LOST NO ONE. WE WENT FROM 280 PEOPLE TO 405, AND THEN WHEN WE WENT THROUGH THE BANKRUPTCY TIME, NOBODY LEFT – IT'S A MIRACLE. AND I MEAN, NOBODY. ZERO"

"VIRY DID A GREAT JOB ON IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE POWERTRAIN, AND BECAUSE OF IT WE FINISHED FOURTH. SO IT WAS A GREAT YEAR. I WOULD HAVE JUST LIKED IT TO BE A LITTLE BIT MORE COMFORTABLE THAN IT WAS"

THE OSCAR GOES TO...

Now it's time to apply all that experience at Alpine. Szafnauer's new team has some parallels with BAR in terms of great ambitions currently unfulfilled and geographically disparate chassis and engine departments.

And, much as some rival teams have protested somewhat about the difficulties of operating under Formula 1's new budget cap, the present figure is almost double what Otmar had at his disposal at Force India. He has been able to expand the staff from 850 to over 900 and a few more will join over the winter, including a certain Pierre Gasly.

August, when Alpine suddenly found itself with one driver instead of three, definitely wasn't easy for Szafnauer. Not only because it was a problem he didn't expect, but also because it was him in front of the press having to explain how Alpine had no valid contract in place to claim Oscar Piastri. Even though it was Szafnauer's predecessors who caused the state of affairs which left the CRB unimpressed.

"You know, our lawyers, when they told us we had a contract with him – although in law nothing's ever 100% – I wish their opinion would have been a little bit more robust or more to reality," says Otmar. "The right thing to do, though, is not to blame others, but learn from what we did and not repeat it. Blaming others doesn't help you.

"For me, the most important thing there was not to lose focus on what this team is about, which means on-track performance. All this stuff is about a driver in one seat for next year. So first, 'Let's not lose focus as a team, let me worry about that, you guys don't, we have to finish fourth [in the championship]'. And then secondarily, once that water was under the bridge, so to speak, I had to find the best driver we can for our open spot. And because we had good on-track performance, our open spot was attractive to a lot of drivers. At one point I had 14 different drivers calling me. And because it was such an attractive open spot, I knew we would fill it with a very competent, fast driver."

Szafnauer's claim that Alpine's line-up for 2023 will be even better than if the CRB had ruled in favour of his team could be interpreted as a cheap shot at the departed driver. But in Gasly Alpine has an experienced, proven race winner rather than a rookie. While Piastri is certainly one of the standout talents of his generation, he will face a very difficult task at McLaren next to the established and quick Lando Norris.

"He [Gasly] had all the elements," says Otmar, "which was speed, youth and experience. Mainly the speed, and he's fast. And then it became apparent that there might be a deal to be done, since with us he can have a longer-term future than was promised to him at AlphaTauri, and AlphaTauri were willing to release him if they found a replacement they were happy with. It just fell into place that both those things were possible. And we were fortunate to be able to sign Pierre.

"It was all about who's the fastest we could get, had youth on his side as well as good experience. So Pierre fits the bill. And the nationality is a bonus. You know, we're a French team. He's a French driver, and he'll now have a French team-mate. So all that's a bonus. But it wasn't the driving factor."

CLIMB EVERY MOUNTAIN

Piastri saga aside, Szafnauer's first year in the role has taken a largely positive trajectory. Alpine's risky strategy of prioritising performance over reliability paid off: while Red Bull, Ferrari and Mercedes remained out of reach, the Enstone team beat McLaren to fourth in the constructors' championship.

"It was a bit up and down," says Otmar. "The downs are that I think we deserved to score more points than we did. We didn't optimise all opportunities, we were a little bit too close in the fight for fourth than I would have liked to be towards the end. But the good news is we had a super car, Viry did a great job on improving the performance of the powertrain, and because of it we finished fourth. So it was a great year. I would have just liked it to be a little bit more comfortable than it was."

Off-track Szafnauer has put much energy into getting to know as many of the staff as possible. Instability and uncertainty has haunted the corridors of Enstone for years now as disappointments on track have begat a series of management reshuffles. Otmar needed the personnel to buy in to the new setup.

"I know them a lot better now," he says. "Still not all of them, but I like the fact that they're very experienced racers and want to continuously improve.

"We've got a good plan in place, we call it a mountain climber plan. That probably comes from the fact that we're branded as Alpine... So, yeah, we will be climbing that mountain to get better. We have to improve the tools, the efficiency of the place, and also add some skill sets we don't already have to complement the good people that we have. All that is happening."

Szafnauer has occupied many roles within and without F1. What appealed at Alpine wasn't just the question of resources at his disposal – there were plenty of those at Aston Martin – but a relatively uncluttered management structure in which he is clearly in charge, answering only to Laurent Rossi.

"I'm 58 now," Otmar says. "I've been in Formula 1 for 25 years. So I think all that experience will help me push this team in the right direction for improvement.

"Yes, I have bosses like everywhere. However, Laurent said, 'Listen, we didn't hire you for your French speaking abilities. We hired you for something else'. And that something else is my cumulative experience, which I need to apply here to take those steps forward."

Szafnauer is happy with the structure and his role, and is looking to 'climb a mountain' with the team over the next few years

MILD SEVEN
NOKIA
YAMAHA
4
Agip
FONDMETAL

The last hope? Mika Salo joined for 1995, and the 023 looked tidy, but it wasn't fast and the team slumped back to ninth

A THE HISTORY OF TYRRELL SILVER LINING

PART 5: 1983-1998

Formula 1's transformation into a global sport meant gradual extinction for a small team determined to stay true to its low-budget roots. But Tyrrell would eventually be reborn as a world-beating outfit again, albeit in different colours...

WORDS MAURICE HAMILTON PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

THE HISTORY OF TYRRELL PART 5

The inexorable and sometimes confusing decline of the Tyrrell Racing Organisation was summed by a perverse predicament at the beginning of 1983. Having won the final race of the previous year, Tyrrell was attractive to potential sponsors. Denim was very keen to expand the association initiated in such style by Michele Alboreto's popular victory in Las Vegas, the irony being that this high-profile connection had triggered the interest of Benetton, another progressive Italian company with an eye for marketing opportunities.

Going into 1983, Tyrrell appeared to have the best of both worlds thanks to a proposed livery carrying identification for the cosmetics company on the upper half of the car, with Benetton's logo beneath. When the fashion house upped the ante by choosing to cover the entire car, Tyrrell had the tricky job of explaining to Denim that its support had become surplus to requirements. The jeopardy of such apparent financial extravagance would be exposed 12 months later when Benetton unceremoniously switched to Alfa Romeo (prior to taking over Toleman) and Denim settled into a successful relationship with Williams. Not for the first time, Tyrrell had a fat zero in the title sponsorship column.

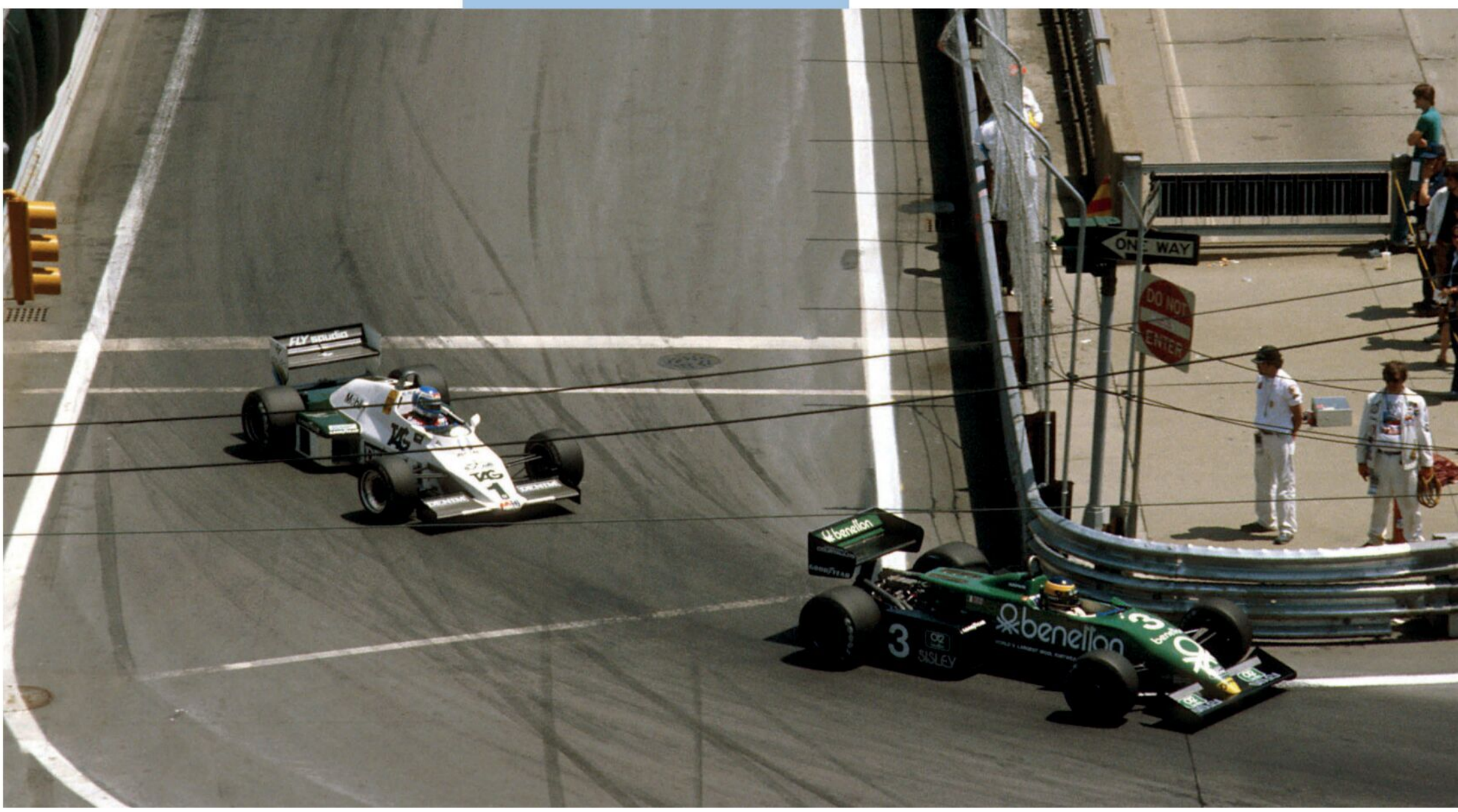
The fact that Alboreto had gone on to win the 1983 Detroit GP in the meantime would make little difference. Victory on the streets of Motown brought warm feelings as the Tyrrell proudly carried a distinctive blue oval decal on its nose. But this gesture of gratitude for past associations with Ford would actually represent little hope for the future as Tyrrell stubbornly continued with normally aspirated engines in the face of the rising turbo onslaught. Nonetheless, Ken Tyrrell's reputation was such that his team remained a highly desirable starting point for young drivers, Martin Brundle and Stefan Bellof being two such novices in 1984.

The Tyrrell 012 would prove ideal on tracks where power was not at a premium, the odds at Monaco being improved further when rain lashed the streets on race day. The grand prix was red-flagged just as the Toleman-Hart of Ayrton Senna was about to pass Alain Prost's leading McLaren-TAG. Much was made of Senna's virtuosity in only his sixth Formula 1 race, but those in the know noted that Bellof had been catching them both at over a second a lap.

There would be another podium for Tyrrell in Detroit when Brundle, pushing the nimble little car to the limit, caught and chased Nelson Piquet's turbo Brabham-BMW across the line. That thrilling drive would prove to be both a high point and a desperate low for Tyrrell.

With the weight of F1 cars being as significant as ever, it was obvious that officials had no means of carrying out checks while the race was in progress. Mid-race refuelling had been banned for 1984, but water could be added if necessary. Claiming that water pumped from an on-board tank to a spray mechanism over the engine intake trumpets would need replenishment late in the race, the Tyrrell engineers built a device that would also add, along with two gallons (nine litres) of water, 140 lb (63.5kg) of lead shot during a pitstop. Because the water was being pumped under pressure, a vent was necessary at

Michele Alboreto beat Keke Rosberg to win the seventh race of the 1983 season in Detroit. It would be Tyrrell's final victory



Stefan Bellof was catching the leaders in the 1984 Monaco GP before it was halted. He would lose the podium when the team was disqualified

Ken (with TV commentator Barrie Gill) at the 1984 British GP when he announced the team would be appealing against its exclusion

the top of the tank. Neighbouring crews began to question why small ball bearings suddenly appeared under foot after a Tyrrell pitstop.

The drivers knew nothing about this, although Brundle did say he wondered why his car felt as if it was suddenly towing a caravan as he left the pits. During post-race scrutineering in Detroit, officials found the lead shot in the water tank. Tyrrell's technically valid claim that this was ballast was sidestepped by the stewards with a series of fudges, ranging from claims that an additive had been found in the water, to an accusation that the ballast was not secured in the prescribed manner. When Tyrrell, under appeal, provided evidence to the contrary, the FIA took the unprecedented step of switching the charges to something equally vague.

The bottom line was that the Tyrrell Racing Organisation was thrown out of the 1984 championship and barred from the final three races. It was no coincidence that Tyrrell's hopes of fighting against the turbo opposition lay in a proposal to reduce fuel tank size from 220 litres to 195 litres – thus favouring the few normally aspirated runners. Meanwhile, the turbo lobby had grown so strong that a move was afoot to retain the 220 limit. With his removal from the championship, Tyrrell's lone voice against the pro-turbo lobby had been silenced.

Ken could find a way of dealing with no subsidised travel for 1985. But being branded a cheat hit him very hard. "A ban for something we didn't do was... I can normally forgive anybody anything, but I can't in this case," reflected Ken a few years later. "I felt dreadful, quite dreadful. But I never thought about giving up. What else was I going to do for the rest of my life?"

Tyrrell's love of the sport, combined with doughty pragmatism, was illustrated by what happened next. Reluctant acceptance of the inevitable meant taking a deep breath and doing a deal with Renault for 1985. This may have brought horsepower, but it also proved unmanageable in what was basically the 1984 car with a hefty turbo V6 and its ancillaries slung in the back. The team had neither the finance nor the infrastructure to refine what Brundle referred to as 'a monster of a car'. Then, in late summer, Bellof was killed during a sportscar race. Apart from having well-founded hopes for the young German, Ken had become very fond of "a nice young man; very easy to get on with". It was yet another blow for Tyrrell and his closely knit team as they sank to the bottom of the constructors' championship.

At the front of the field, eye-watering performance figures prompted plans to ban turbocharging at the end of 1988. In a poor ▸

cover-up for backpedalling by a governing body previously trumpeting the turbo, a second category for normally aspirated engines was introduced for 1987. Tyrrell jumped at the opportunity to return to an uprated Ford V8 but, while Jonathan Palmer may have won this division, it was rudely regarded throughout the paddock as no more than a B-class 'down among the dead men at the back of the grid'.

At least the Tyrrell 016 had looked half-decent with support from Data General and Courtaulds but, for 1988, this blue-chip sponsorship was reduced – in line with just about everything else. At each race, the team's woes were pecked out daily on a manual typewriter and reproduced for distribution in the press centre. There was never much to say, as reflected by Team Tyrrell scoring a season total of five points. Meanwhile, McLaren had reached 199 points in a year when Senna and Alain Prost won 15 of the 16 races.

But there was hope. Halfway through 1988, it had been announced that Dr Harvey Postlethwaite would be leaving Ferrari to replace Maurice Phillippe. It was, in one way, a backward step for the archetypical English engineer. But Postlethwaite saw it as a refreshing challenge with a team totally devoid of the artful politics that had spurred his departure from Maranello. The move was part of Ken Tyrrell's acceptance that he needed to up his game.

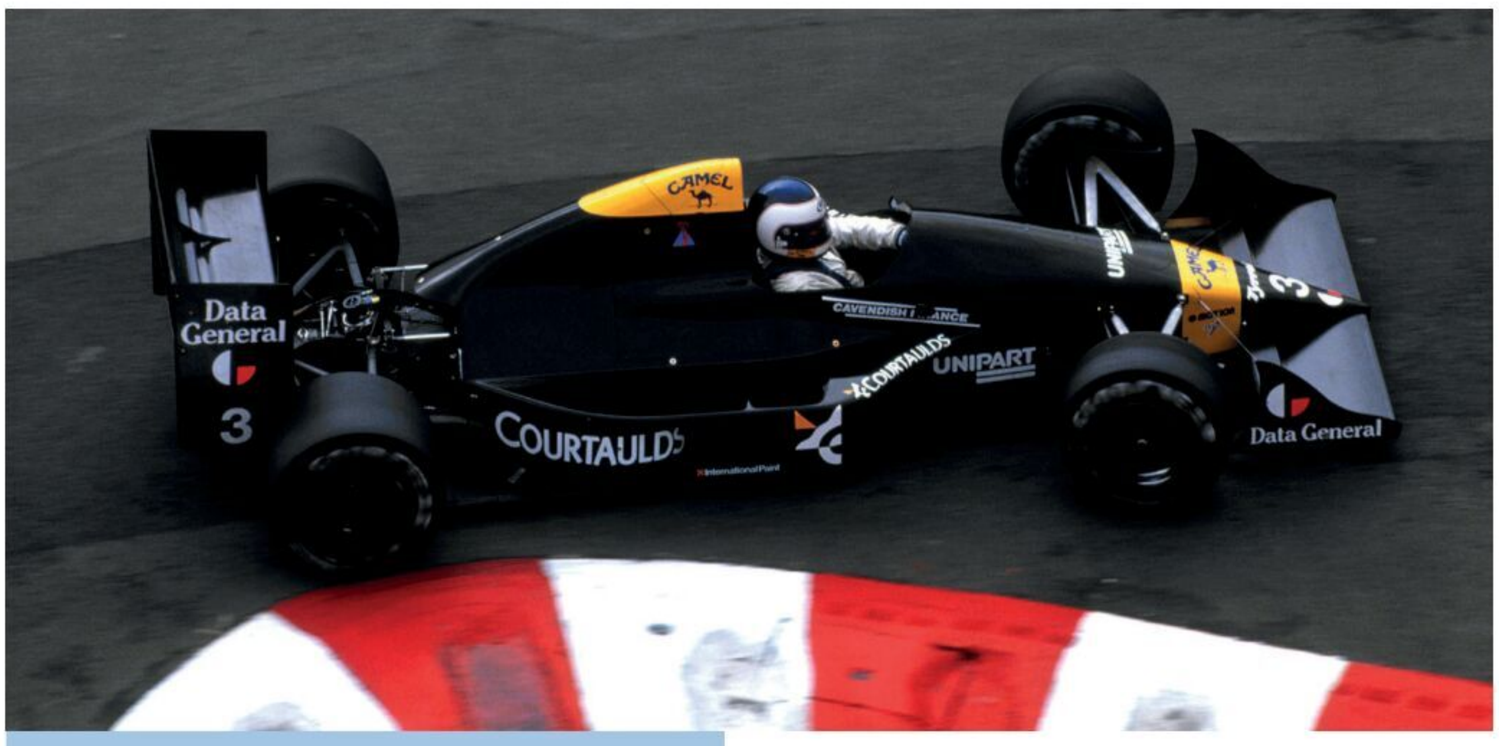
A permanent building had been added in the wood yard for servicing Tyrrell's timber lorries. Since these vehicles had long since become redundant and, with the need to install an autoclave, an application was made to convert the building's use to motor racing. The district planners went berserk. The fact that they had no idea of the team's existence said much about Tyrrell's continuing low profile in the woods at Ockham. Permission was reluctantly granted based on established use and the local residents being very happy to have this supportive employer continue in their midst.

Postlethwaite, along with aerodynamicist Jean-Claude Migeot, produced Tyrrell 018; a simple, light car with a high nose, powered by a Ford V8. A shortage of funds delayed production to such an extent that 65-year-old Ken Tyrrell, still in possession of an HGV licence, drove one of his trucks to Monaco in order to allow another to wait at the factory while the second 018 was completed. Michele Alboreto had returned to Tyrrell, but the comeback would be brief owing to a sponsorship clash as Tyrrell accepted Camel money at the expense of the Italian and his personal alliance with Marlboro.

This dilemma actually did Tyrrell a favour as he took a gamble on giving Jean Alesi his F1

A MORE TELLING STATISTIC WAS THE SCORING OF JUST TWO MORE POINTS IN THE REMAINING 12 RACES OF 1990. YET HOPE REMAINED

Philippe Streiff and Jonathan Palmer in 1987. The team won the title for naturally aspirated cars, Palmer the comparable trophy for drivers



Palmer stayed on for 1988 but Monaco was one of only three times he scored points. Team-mate Julian Bailey DNQ'd in 10 races

HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX
HUNGARORING
7 AUGUST 1988

COURTAULDS TEAM TERRELL
A disappointing weekend.

Rain on the first day of practice caught out most teams, including Team Tyrrell. When the track began to dry during the first qualifying session, Tyrrell did not make the change to dry settings quickly enough and they lost a lot of ground.

Saturday was dry and hot and Jonathan Palmer qualified in 21st place. Julian Bailey was unfortunate when the crown wheel and pinion failed on his car towards the end of the morning session on Saturday. There was not enough time to change it and he had no option but to use Palmer's car since Jonathan was already using the spare. Julian soon found out why Jonathan preferred the spare when he found Palmer's race car difficult to drive.

Jonathan's race was short. Holding 24th place on lap four, the engine suddenly cut out. He had no alternative but to park and walk back to the pits.

sorry about the quality of this hungarian typewriter.....

Tyrrell's PR 'machine' (aka Maurice Hamilton) had little to talk about in 1988, which was lucky given the tools he had available to him

debut at Paul Ricard. A remarkable fourth for Alesi triggered mutual admiration all round: Tyrrell and Postlethwaite revelled in the Franco-Sicilian's enthusiastic potential; the novice fully appreciated the benefit of Ken's fatherly advice and the pressure-free atmosphere in his team. The time would eventually come for Ferrari and Alesi to form a mutual attraction – but not before he had produced stunning drives to finish second in Phoenix and Monaco. A more telling statistic was the scoring of just two more points in the remaining 12 races of 1990. Yet hope remained.

Migeot might have been lured back to Maranello but Tyrrell 020, a development of Postlethwaite's attractive theme, would be

Tyrrell gambled on Alesi. Fourth on debut in 1989 and two podiums early in 1990 would prove to be another false dawn for the team

powered by a Mugen-Honda V10 and sponsored by Braun AG, a German electronics company. Tyrrell seemed to be going places, thanks to the assistance of Ron Dennis. When considering a move into F1 with McLaren 10 years previously, Dennis had gone to Tyrrell for advice. Things had come full circle as the boss of what had become the most successful team in F1 offered his company's commercial expertise in effectively dragging Tyrrell from the seventies to the nineties. Mugen-Honda and Braun were at the sharp end of a McLaren-inspired package that filtered down to properly painted garage walls and presenting a more professional image.

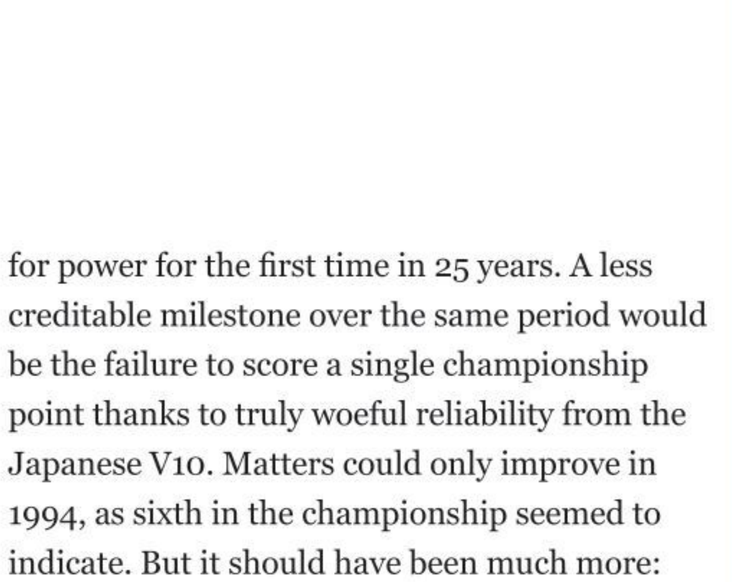
Appearance, however, would count for nothing in 1991 when the Tyrrell-Hondas driven by Satoru Nakajima and Stefano Modena accumulated ▶

23 years after its first podium as a constructor Mark Blundell scored Tyrrell's final F1 podium when finishing third in the 1994 Spanish GP

no more than 12 points during another deeply disappointing season. The gearbox had proved troublesome, the V10 was heavy, and Pirelli's inconsistent tyres were no match for Goodyear, suppliers to the first three in the championship. Tyrrell's year was summed up by the hugely talented but strangely fickle Modena putting his 020 on the front row at Monaco and challenging Senna for the lead until the engine put a rod through the side. Mid-season, Postlethwaite went off to join Sauber-Mercedes and, at the end of the year, Honda switched to Footwork. It was back to square one. A golden opportunity had been lost.

Tyrrell had become a sort of Rubik's Cube of racing. In 1991, the team had good backing but the wrong tyres. The following year, the right tyres (Goodyear), a promising if yet to be fully developed engine (Ilmor Engineering's V10 being the template for the ultimately successful Mercedes engine), good reliability but minimal financial support (Braun having moved on).

Things looked up once more in 1993 with healthy sponsorship from Japan and free engines from Yamaha, Tyrrell not having to pay for power for the first time in 25 years. A less creditable milestone over the same period would be the failure to score a single championship point thanks to truly woeful reliability from the Japanese V10. Matters could only improve in 1994, as sixth in the championship seemed to indicate. But it should have been much more: continuing problems with Yamaha prompted the



Ken (centre) and brother Bob announce free Yamaha engines for 1993 but the Japanese V10s proved horrendously unreliable

ambitious Mild Seven tobacco company to reduce its support for Tyrrell and increase backing for Benetton. And yet...

Another twist of the Rubik's Cube at the beginning of 1995 finally showed almost uniform colours on all sides. Would this be the year? *Autosport* seemed to think so with a preview predicting Tyrrell would have 'their best season in a long time.' Postlethwaite had returned (thoughts of the team's known potential being sweetened by the offer of a shareholding in the family company). Tyrrell-Yamaha 023 looked the part, particularly with the surfaces covered in Nokia identification thanks to the signing of Mika Salo, a promising young Finn. By the end of the season, a mere five points would be worth a distant ninth in the constructors' championship. 1996 would be no better thanks to 16 retirements from 32 starts. And 1997 would be even worse when the Yamaha made way for a Ford V8 that was at least reliable – if 50 bhp short.

ON 28 NOVEMBER 1997, TYRRELL WAS SOLD TO BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO (FOR A RUMOURED £30M)

The familiar absence of a respectable budget would show itself in many ways, ranging from a development vacuum to Norah Tyrrell raiding the hotel breakfast buffet each morning to make sandwiches for 'my boys' at the racetrack.

The cube, having taken a couple of turns for the worse, seemed ready to fall apart after years of twisting and turning. But that didn't stop Ken refusing (along with Frank Williams and Ron Dennis) to sign the latest Concorde Agreement unless the teams received a more generous cut. Despite Ken being desperate to remain part of the establishment, places on the F1 entry list had become so valuable that he was bound to eventually receive an offer he couldn't refuse.

On 28 November 1997, Tyrrell was sold to British American Tobacco (for a rumoured £30m) with a view to starting British American

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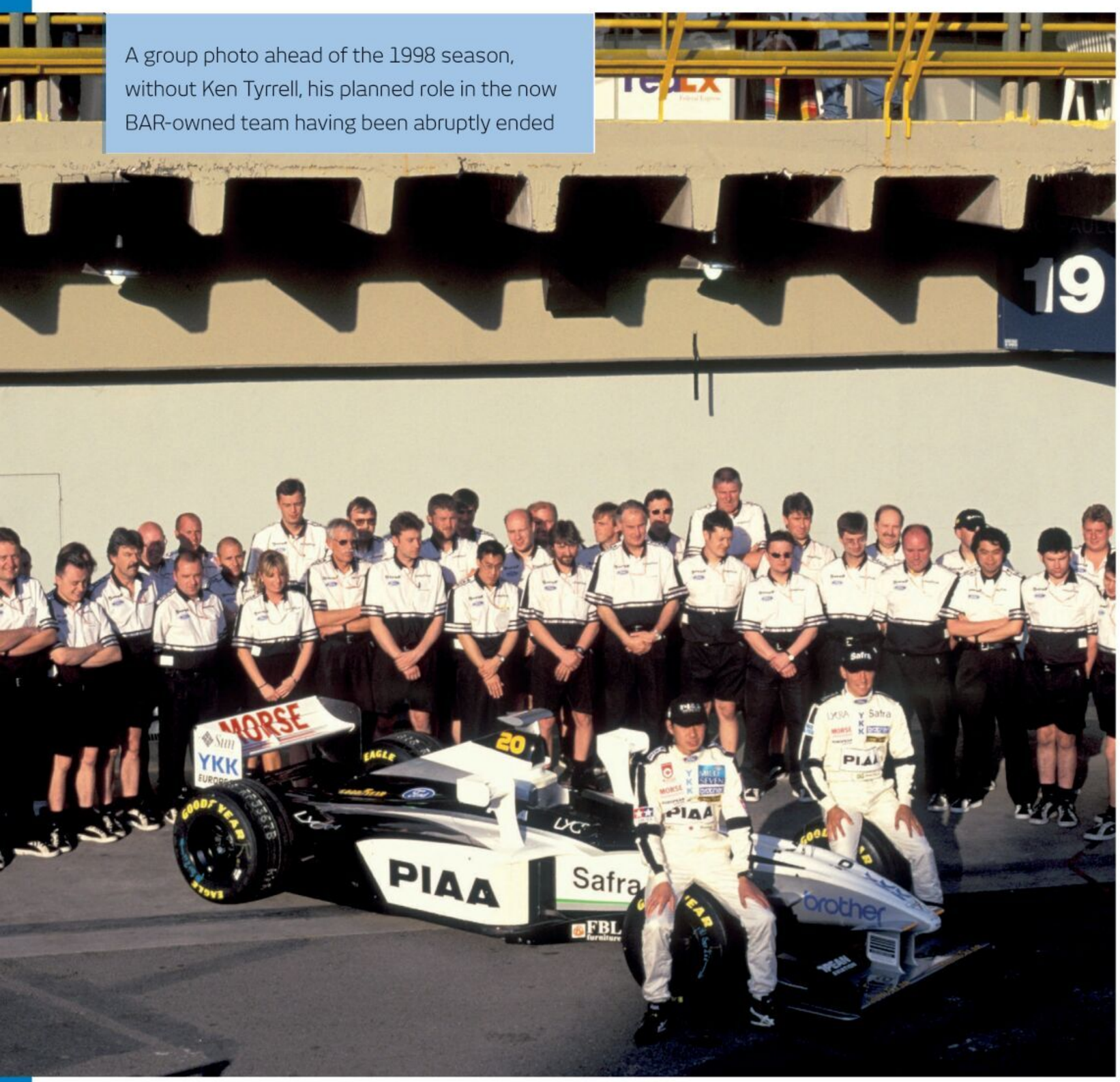
THE HISTORY OF TYRRELL PART 5

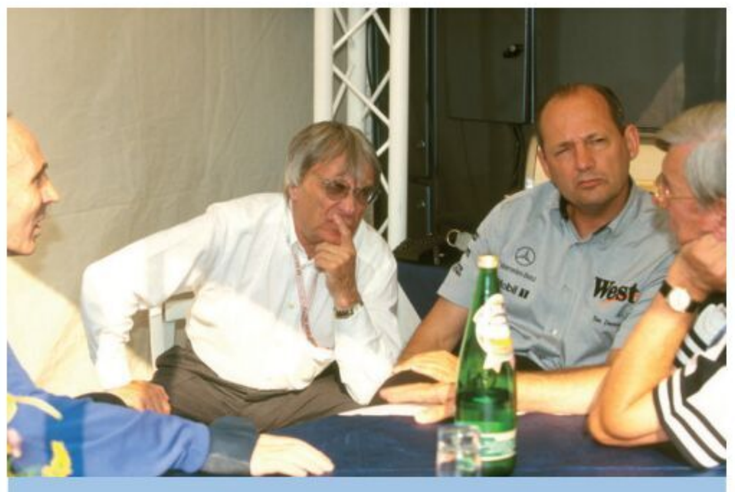
Racing (BAR). For 1998, the Tyrrell name would remain, with Ken continuing to take a hands-on role until the launch of BAR in readiness for the 1999 season. But the disintegration of Tyrrell would begin sooner than anticipated when, in early 1998, it was announced that Ken would no longer be part of an organisation entering its 31st season of F1 racing. Ironically – and not surprisingly, given Ken's reputation for fostering talent – there had been disagreement over BAR's insistence on hiring Ricardo Rosset at the expense of Jos Verstappen, who had been with Ken the previous year.

Team Tyrrell's intensely loyal employees would stumble through their final season, doing the best they could with the little they had, BAR's interest clearly being limited to making a clean break and a fresh start from new premises in

Mika Salo inspects some of the team's 1997 engines. The underpowered Ford V8 was at least reliable compared with the Yamaha V10



A group photo ahead of the 1998 season, without Ken Tyrrell, his planned role in the now BAR-owned team having been abruptly ended



Hungary 1997: Ken (far right), with Bernie Ecclestone and fellow Concorde Agreement refuseniks Frank Williams and Ron Dennis

Northamptonshire. BAR's tenure in F1 would last for only seven seasons but, after a series of buyouts and take-overs, the establishment in Brackley would form the basis of Brawn GP and then Mercedes AMG F1.

It can be claimed, therefore, that Tyrrell formed the nucleus of impressive multiple championships, starting with Brawn in 2009. Ken, a victim of cancer in August 2001, would laugh out loud at the very suggestion were he still with us. He would be too modest to make even the humblest comparison between today's mighty monolith and the industrious little team that generated such respect and affection while winning world championships from a wooden shed. Tyrrell Racing had been as unique and distinctive as its honourable owner.

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FERRARI 1512

NOW THAT WAS A CAR

The late **Mauro Forghieri** played a key role in Ferrari's mid-1960s turnaround and his pretty, intricate 1512 was among the most evocative cars of the 1.5-litre era – as well as acting as a prologue for championship winners to come...

No. 115

WORDS
STUART CODLING
PICTURES
JAMES MANN

When Mauro Forghieri passed away in November he left a remarkable body of work, for he was arguably the last engineer working in Formula 1 who was truly capable of designing a car from nose to tail, including its engine and gearbox. Almost unthinkable now, in an era in which perhaps half a dozen aerodynamic specialists might be engaged on the front wing alone.

Forghieri was but 26 and aiming to work in the American aviation industry when Enzo Ferrari put him in charge of the company's racing department. Forghieri's father had worked for the company in multiple spells since before the war and Enzo had taken an interest in young Mauro's progress, offering him an internship in 1960 and then, at the tail end of '61, the keys to the design office. A swift ascent by any measure, though in this case lubricated by the abrupt departure of key staff including engineering chief Carlo Chiti.

The clear-out – simmering angst among Ferrari's rank-and-file brought to the surface by a confrontation between Enzo's wife Laura and commercial chief Gerolamo Gardini – left a denuded technical staff facing a substantial range of tasks. Formula 1 was by no means the only show in town but it was a prominent enough element of the competitive portfolio for Ferrari's decline to have become embarrassing.

Restoring Ferrari to the sharp end of the grand prix grid would require a ground-up rethink of car design, the reasons for which were obvious to Forghieri and his remaining colleagues if not to Enzo himself, firm in his belief that the engine was the ultimate arbiter of performance. Yes, the V6 had run out of development road and now offered inferior grunt compared with new V8s from rivals such as BRM and Coventry Climax. But the malaise extended beyond horsepower: chassis design had taken a leap in the form of stressed-skin cars produced by the small British teams Enzo had dismissed as "garagistes" – organisations whose work Ferrari would once again have to emulate. The championship-winning BRMs and Lotuses of 1962 and 1963 had been lighter and more agile than Ferrari's ageing 156, and faster in a straight line because they offered less frontal area to the wind, all of which were crucial virtues in the 1.5-litre formula.

While work progressed on parallel V8 and flat-12 engine projects, Forghieri designed a new chassis which adopted key philosophies exploited by the British cars, and which foreshadowed developments they would make later in the decade. The 'Aero' chassis was a semi-monocoque like the BRM P61, with a forward section in which aluminium exterior panels were riveted to steel tubes and a pair of pontoons which housed some of the fuel. Riveted bulkheads at each end provided locations for engine and suspension mountings, with a further one amidships added rigidity while acting as a mounting for the steering column and instruments. As with the Lotus 25, the fuel tank configuration enabled the driver to be positioned at a laid-back angle which reduced aerodynamic drag.

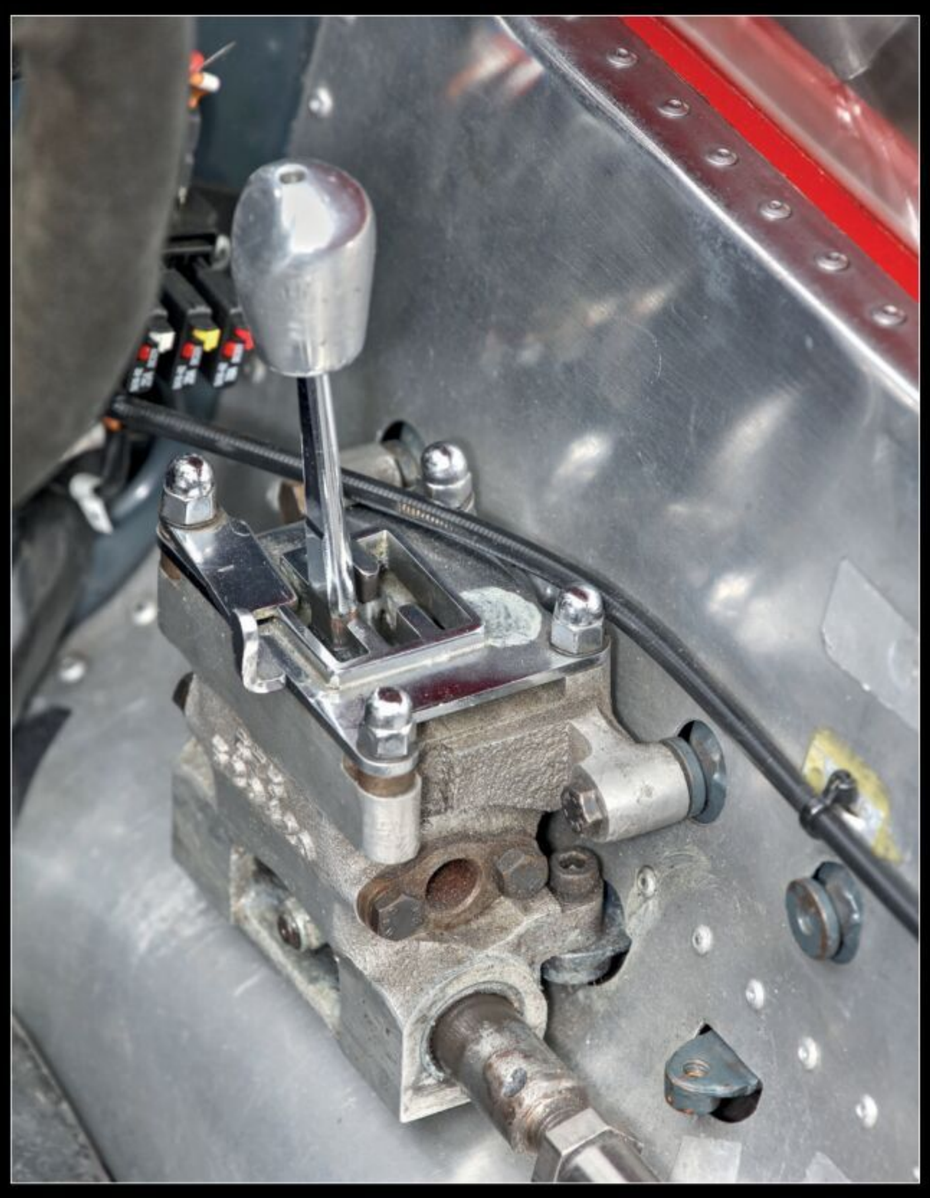
The principal of keeping the frontal area of the car minimal also informed the engine design. Under Chiti, the previous V6 had been widened from 65 to 120 degrees, theoretically producing smoother power-delivery characteristics while fitting more neatly within the car's frontal silhouette. Forghieri's 12-cylinder was more radical, essentially a flattened-out V12 rather than a true 'boxer' engine in which

RESTORING FERRARI TO THE SHARP END OF THE GRAND PRIX GRID WOULD REQUIRE A GROUND-UP RETHINK OF CAR DESIGN, THE REASONS FOR WHICH WERE OBVIOUS TO FORGHIERI

the cylinders are horizontally opposed.

Forghieri also envisioned that the V8 and flat-12 engine blocks would be strong enough to act as load-bearing elements of the chassis when bolted directly to the back of the 'tub'. Eventually this concept – adopted successfully by Lotus and Cosworth for the DFV V8 later in the decade – had to be watered down. The V8 engine was installed with a pair of steel members running underneath, connecting to a bulkhead which ran around the clutch bellhousing and provided a mounting point for the rear wishbones and coil-over shock absorbers. While the flat-12 and its gearbox proved strong enough, the engine would be mounted to the tub via an alloy plate which also located the rear radius arms, because there was neither the time nor the financial resources to design a new chassis.

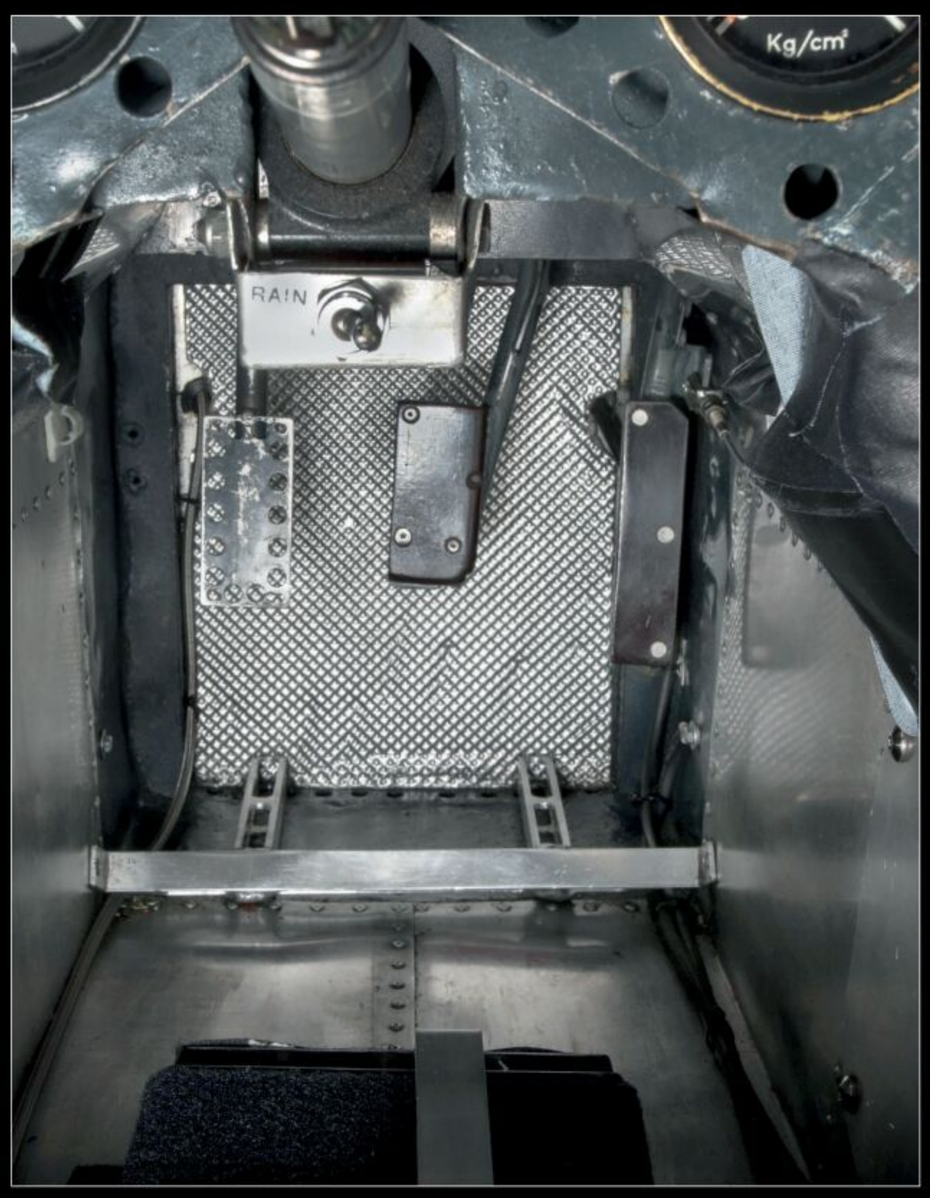
Development of the new engines lagged to the extent that Ferrari introduced the 'Aero' chassis at Monza in 1963 with the V6 installed, albeit in a subframe and with a recast block. The fuel injection system remained problematic even after Ferrari introduced the V8 and, eventually, the flat-12. John Surtees gave the V8-engined car, the 158, a victorious debut in a non-championship race at Syracuse in April 1964 and,



FERRARI 1512

NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No115

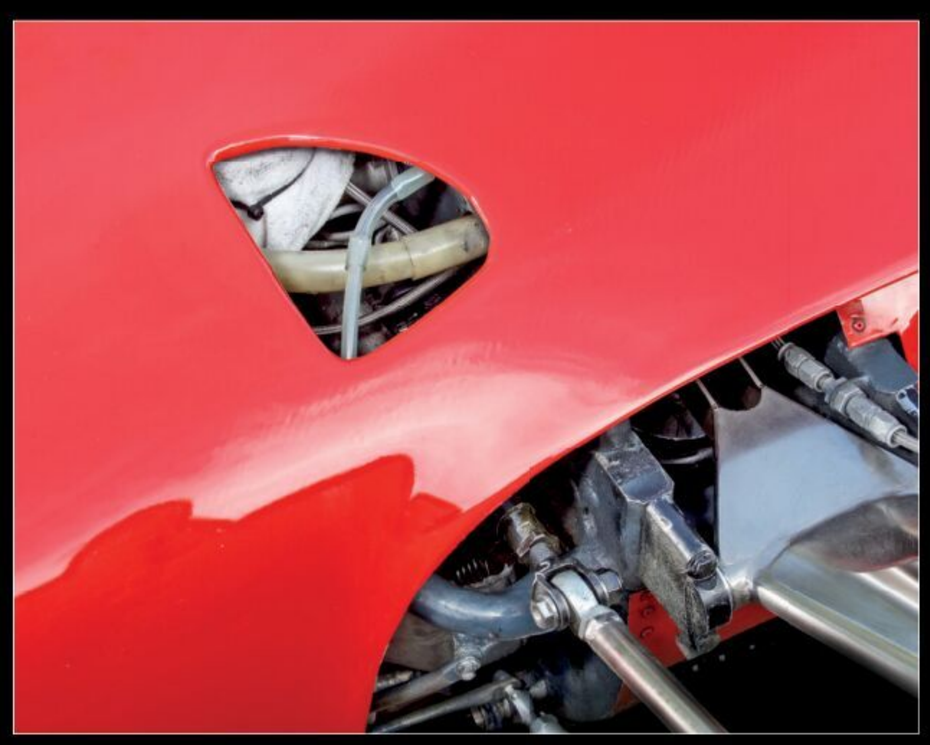


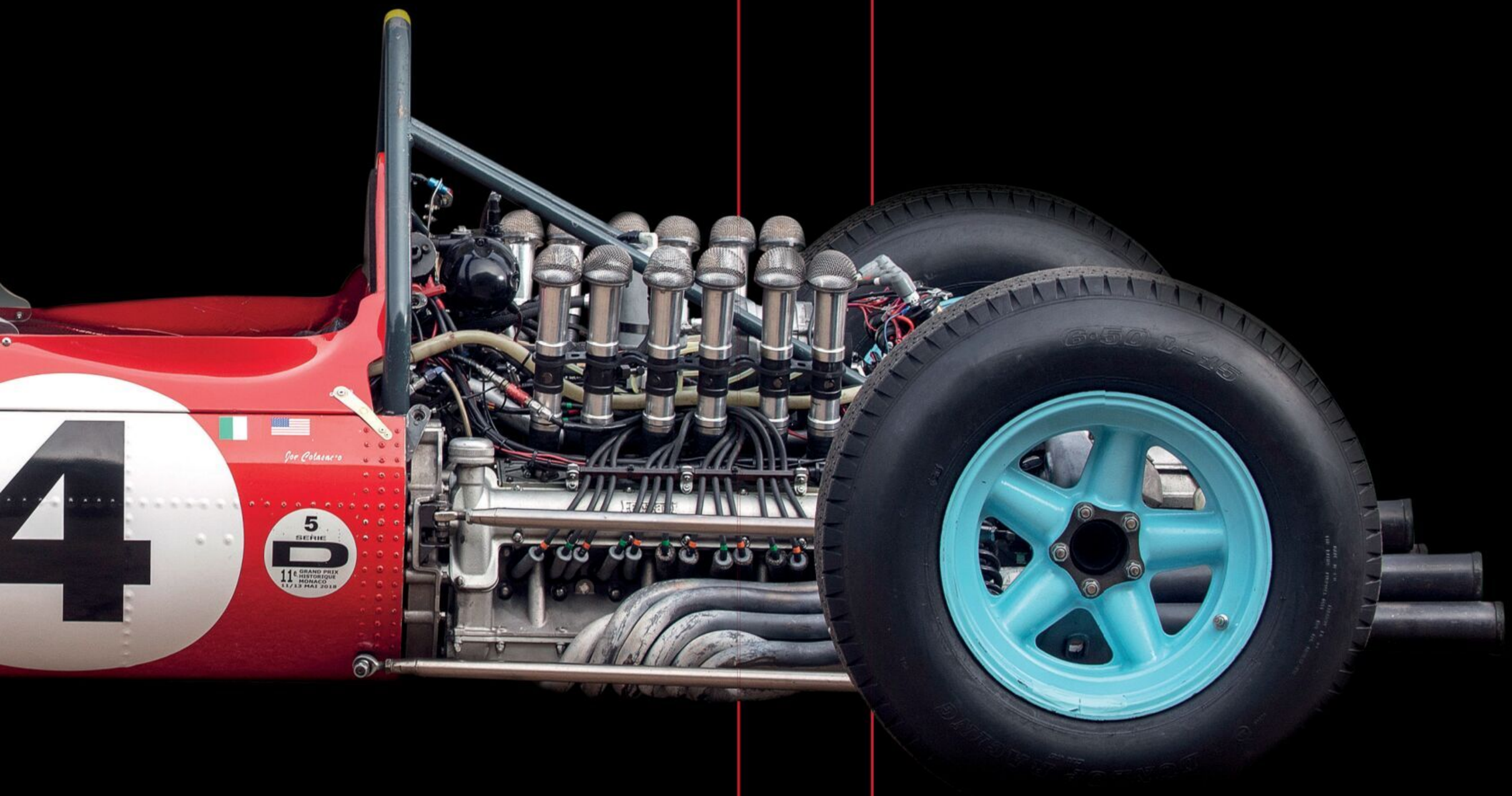
despite a few reliability gremlins, stayed in the championship fight until he clinched the drivers' title in the final round. Team-mate Lorenzo Bandini contested the majority of the grands prix in a V6-powered car until Monza, when the flat-12-engined 1512 was deemed ready enough to be seen in public – and even then he raced a 158. While Ferrari remained confident the flat-12 would be the better race engine and ultimately yield far more power, its greater complexity (24 spark plugs, four ignition coils and two distributors) rendered it troublesome. Once running smoothly it produced a most incredible noise, at once harmonious and ear-splittingly aggressive as it ascended through its rev range, but the ever-pragmatic Surtees remained unsentimental about such things.

Circumstances militated against the 1512 delivering on its potential. Surtees, in later life, would say he considered the 1512 to be among the greatest F1 cars he raced – indeed, that if he'd had access to it throughout the 1965 season he might have won the world championship again – he drove the 158 for the majority of his '65 campaign. The reasons for this are typical of Ferrari in this era, a tapestry of fraught internal politics and relatively meagre resources stretched ever thinner by fighting wars on too many fronts. Myths abound also.

It's claimed by some historians that Surtees was excluded from driving the 1512 by team boss Eugenio Dragoni, with

SURTEES, IN LATER LIFE, WOULD SAY HE CONSIDERED THE 1512 TO BE AMONG THE GREATEST F1 CARS HE RACED





FERRARI 1512

NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No115

whom Surtees enjoyed a less than cordial relationship – indeed, a row between the two would provide the catalyst for Surtees quitting in mid-1966. But the suggestion that Bandini was favoured at the expense of Surtees is ultimately unconvincing: while there were occasional instances of 'Il Grande John' being compelled to use a particular car (such as Monaco 1966, the beginning of the end of his working relationship with Dragoni), Surtees was an uncompromising character who generally got what he wanted. Bandini, meanwhile, was manifestly unhappy with having to campaign a V6-engined car for much of '64 while Surtees often had two 158s at his disposal, one kept as a spare.

The favouritism narrative also assumes the 1512 was the better car, which it wasn't definitively until right at the end of its life. When Bandini tried the 1512 in practice for the 1964 Italian Grand Prix, poor weather rendered the laptimes inconclusive and Ferrari wasn't confident the car would last the race. Bandini chafed at not getting the opportunity to try and was given Surtees' spare V8. When he was handed the 1512 for the US Grand Prix at Watkins Glen engine failure eliminated him from the race and, three weeks later in Mexico, the circuit's altitude played havoc with the flat-12's fuel metering although it contrived to run well on race day. Through 1965 Surtees generally passed on the 1512 in favour of the 158 because the two engines had broadly similar power and torque and the flat-12 was thirstier, requiring a disadvantageously heavier fuel load.

It was the workload and conflicting priorities which truly cost Ferrari its F1 chances during this period. Sportscar racing was generally more financially lucrative and Ferrari was embroiled in an intense rivalry with Ford and its GT40

FERRARI 1512

NOT THAT WAS A CAR

No115

project, with the result that little meaningful development was completed until after Le Mans each year. It's claimed, for instance, that when the 158 made its first appearance at Syracuse Surtees had to help his mechanics paint it.

Detuning the flat-12 to benefit its fuel consumption and reliability came at great cost to performance and, after Bandini laboured to ninth place – two laps down – in a 1512 at Spa-Francorchamps in June 1965, Franco Rocchi set to work on a new cylinder head design with angled rather than vertical air intakes. While this wasn't ready to run until Monza, the 1512 proved quicker than the 158 in practice for the British GP, so Surtees at last decided to race it. A podium finish was his reward, albeit almost half a minute down on Graham Hill and Jim Clark, who was nursing his sickly Lotus to the finish.

For Germany and the fearsome Nürburgring Ferrari built a new 1512 chassis (0008), which is the example photographed here, although gearbox problems forced Surtees to park it during the race. By now the revised flat-12 was developing around 220bhp on the dyno, making it one of the most powerful engines in F1 – only the Honda V12 was believed to develop more grunt. At Monza Surtees and Bandini raced it for the first time: Surtees qualified on the front row, just 0.2s off Clark's pole position time, then enjoyed himself in the leading battle with Clark and the BRMs of Hill and Jackie Stewart until his clutch failed. Bandini picked up fourth place in 0008.

It looked as though Ferrari had turned its season around. But then, two weeks later, Surtees had an enormous accident during practice for a Can-Am race at Mosport. Pedro Rodríguez took his place for the remaining rounds but neither he nor Bandini could wring enough pace from their 1512s to run with Hill and Clark at Watkins Glen. In Mexico the altitude once again caused breathing difficulties for the flat-12 but

THE 1512 PROVED QUICKER THAN THE 158 IN PRACTICE FOR THE BRITISH GP, SO SURTEES AT LAST DECIDED TO RACE IT

it was extra pitstops for mechanical attention which consigned Bandini and Rodríguez to seventh and eighth at the flag.

There would be no further development on the flat-12 since Formula 1 engines were doubling in capacity to three litres for 1966 and Ferrari remained focused on its sportscar tussle with Ford. Forghieri's new 312 chassis would be powered by an overweight and underpowered V12 which was a hand-me-down from the sportscar programme. Four seasons of only middling competitiveness ensued before Forghieri was given the go-ahead to return to the flat-12 concept – and the engine he produced would serve Ferrari until the turn of the 1980s, claiming three world titles.

Chassis 0008 was rescued from being scrapped and recycled – the fate of many Ferrari race cars of that era – by Luigi Chinetti, the marque's US sales agent, whose victory in a 166 MM at Le Mans in 1949 ranks among Ferrari's most significant early successes. It found its way into the hands of American collector Larry Auriana, who funded a comprehensive restoration in 2009 and a development programme which has enabled it to compete in historic racing. Through his passion and largesse, a whole new generation now gets to enjoy *that* remarkable noise and dream of what might have been.

RACE RECORD

Starts 15
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 0
Podiums 3
Championship points 22

SPECIFICATION

Chassis Steel semi-monocoque with aluminium panels
Suspension Reversed lower wishbone, inboard coil springs/dampers actuated by upper rocker arm (front); upper arm, reversed lower wishbone, two radius arms and outboard coil springs/dampers
Engine Normally aspirated Ferrari Tipo 207 flat-12
Engine capacity 1489cc
Power 220bhp @ 12000 rpm
Gearbox Six-speed manual
Brakes Steel discs front and rear
Tyres Dunlop
Weight 490kg
Notable drivers John Surtees, Lorenzo Bandini, Pedro Rodríguez

MAURICE HAMILTON'S ALTERNATIVE VIEW

Alpine's trump card in successfully protesting Fernando Alonso's US GP penalty was to cite the precise definition of the word 'impossible' in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED). The effect of such a significant cultural change in F1 strategy could go further than you might think...

PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

Who would have thought that the Oxford English Dictionary would become such a crucial weapon in a Formula 1 driver's armoury? Fernando Alonso, for one, probably didn't...

THE F1 SPEAKER BANGED HIS GAVEL ON

an edition of *English for Dummies* with a bespoke carbonfibre cover. "Gentlemen, could I call this meeting to order? We have much to discuss and..."

"A question, if you please, Mr Speaker," interrupted the Head of Correct Spelling at Alpine. "Could I refer you to page 197 of the OED and your use of the word 'Order'. Are you referring to – and I quote: 'The way things are placed in relation to each other', or 'Issuing a command', or 'A written instruction for the purposes of purchase' or 'A monastic organisation'?"

"Ha! Probably the latter, given the way one team principal thinks he's holier than thou!" chortled the delegate from Freedom for Outspoken Media (FOM). "I mean, what's a couple of misconstrued axioms between friends – by the way, that's axiom, as in, and I quote from page 23 of the OED: 'Accepted general truth or principle'."

"Mr Speaker! Do we have to listen to this?" groaned the delegate from Total Bull, hanging up his coat and 'Spice Girls' make-up bag. "Sorry I'm late. Had to rush from another television interview – rush by bike, I should add as, obviously, we're sticking to the cost cap, unlike some of my so-called colleagues, judging by the silver SUV Panzer tank parked outside."

"Is that – quoting page 56 of the OED – 'Bicycle' as in: 'Two-wheeled vehicle driven by pedals'?" asked the round man in papaya. "Or is it, as in 'Bike' – page 57 - 'A two-wheeled vehicle with an auxiliary motor'?"

"Look, if you really must know, it's the one with a motor – but I must point out this only gives an extra 0.025% power over the permitted limit which, as our Accepted Breach Agreement with the FIA shows, is perfectly OK if you wish to pay, y'know, a couple of million quid in fines."

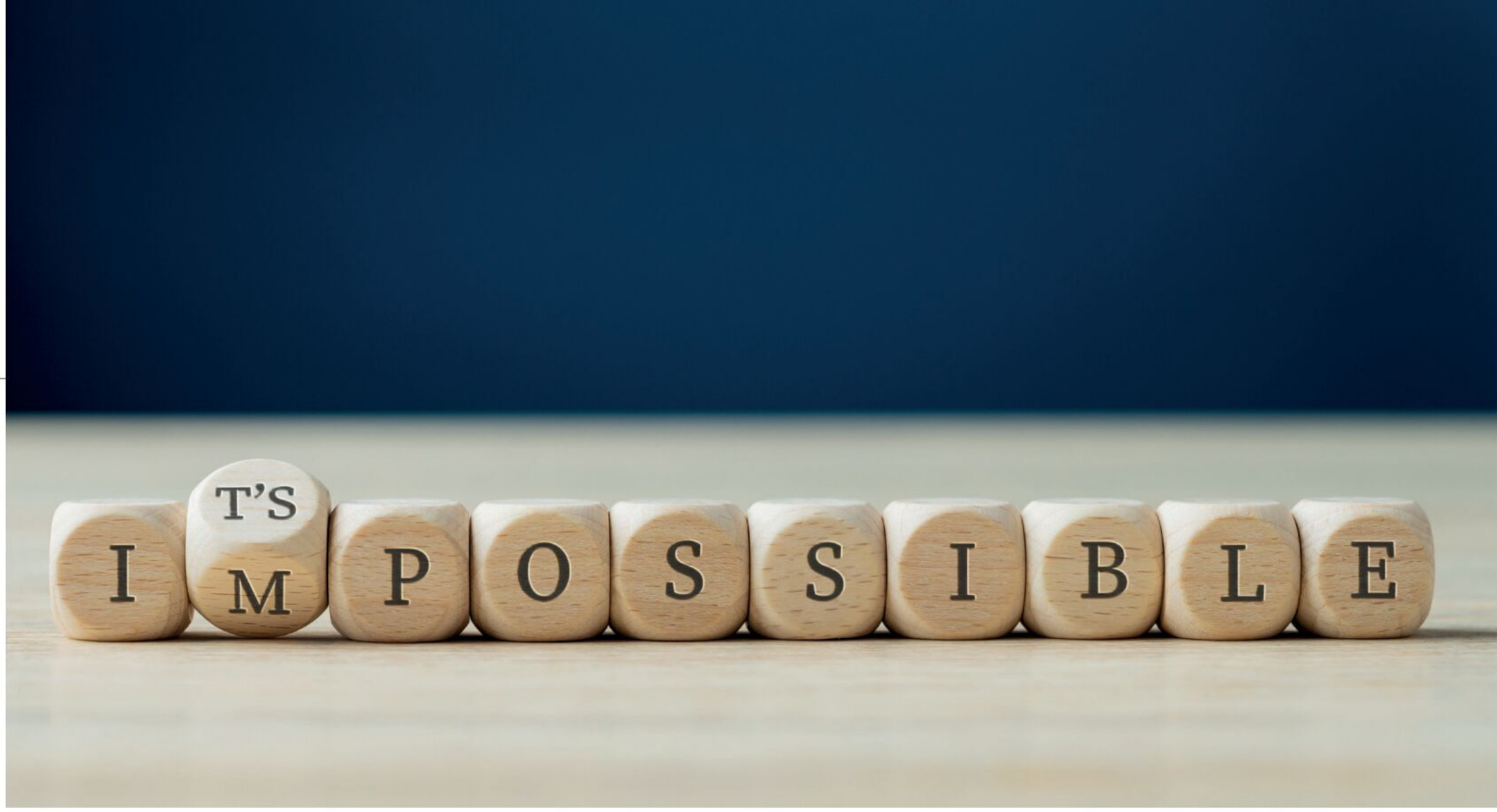
"I wouldn't put it quite like that," interrupted Mr Mohomily Pen Pseudonym, responsible for Under Carpet Affairs. "In any case, I thought these details were to be kept secret."

"They were. It was a leak! Someone owes me an apology," fumed Total Bull's spokesperson.

"Er, excuse me for interrupting," chimed in the CTO (Chief Thesaurus Officer) for Deceptive Benz AMG (Adverbs, Monosyllables and Gender) F1. "In the interest of clarity, is that 'leak', as in – page 133 – 'a hole through which liquid or gas makes its way wrongly'? Or is it 'leek', as in – page 134 – 'A plant related to the onion and much favoured by the Welsh, particularly when singing and playing rugby'? Just asking for a friend."

"Oh, for goodness sake! It's 'leak' as in 'disclosure of secret information'! You're, y'know, taking the piss."

WHAT'S A COUPLE OF MISCONSTRUED AXIOMS BETWEEN FRIENDS – BY THE WAY, THAT'S AXIOM, AS IN, AND I QUOTE FROM PAGE 23 OF THE OED...



The OED (below) came to Alpine's aid over the precise definition of 'impossible', but what's next in the world of strategy and marginal gains in the world of Formula 1?

"Is that 'piss', as in 'urin…'."

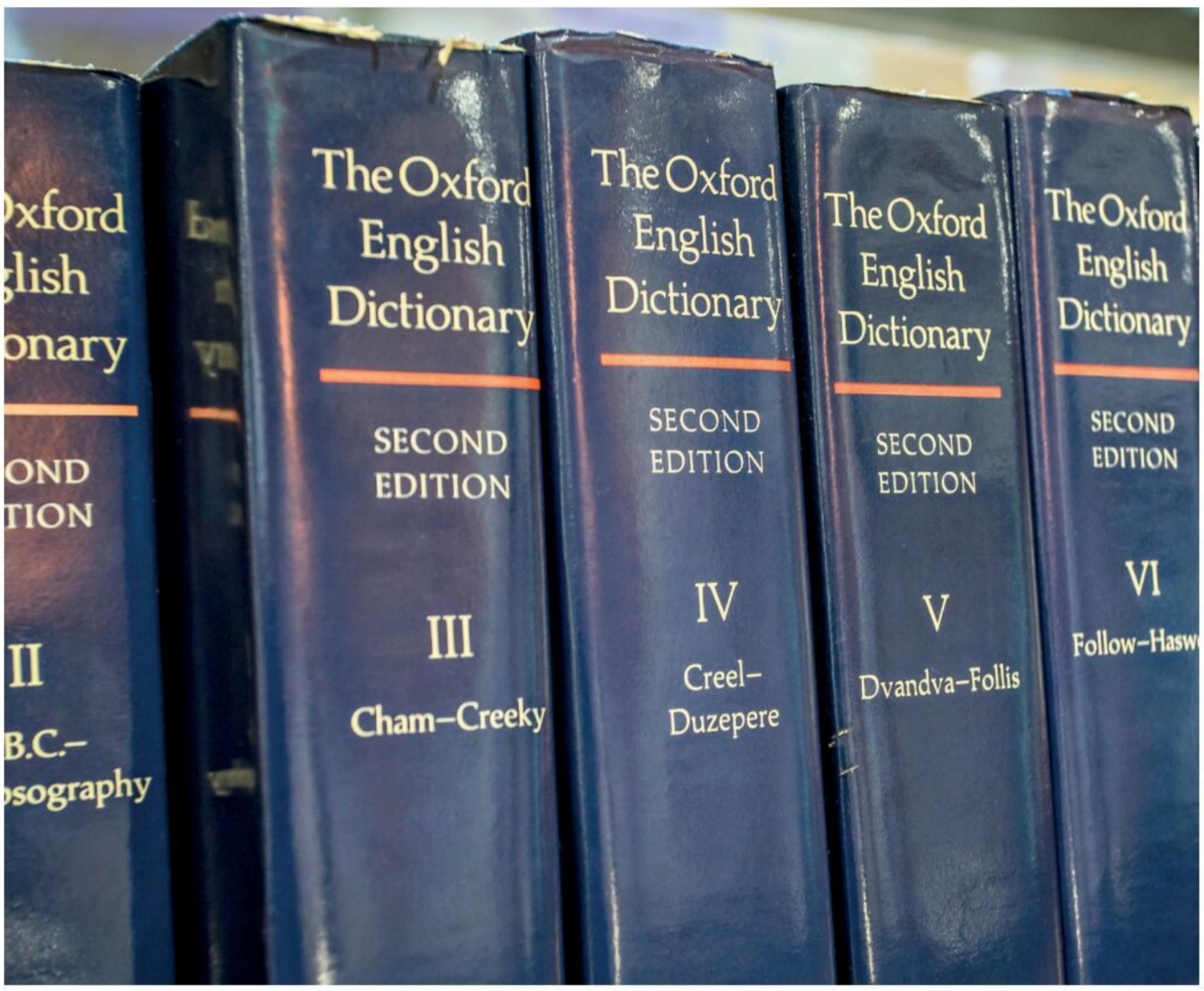
"That's quite enough!" shouted Mr Speaker. "Gentlemen, please! We must try not to continually snipe at…"

"Er, sorry Mr Speaker," whispered the Alpine representative. "But I do believe you've just split an infinitive. I think you'll find, page 137 of The Oxford Guide to the English Language, that 'to' should not be split from 'snipe'."

"Good gracious! You're quite right. How very careless. We were just talking about this very thing at a recent meeting of the Pronoun and Participle Working Group… Mr Pen Pseudonym: you have a point you wish to make?"

"This split you're talking about: could I just say we are expert at covering up. If necessary, we can arrange for the guilty party to have a new identity, quietly ship them to Australia and pretend nothing serious happened. No questions asked. That sort of thing."

"Thank you, but no. We're referring to a grammatical error…"



"I've had a few of those," volunteered Guenther Swearer, CIO (Chief Invective Officer) for Netflix. "What I said kinda slipped out thanks to all this bloody stuff caused by some of these stupid f***ing drivers crashing into our guys. I mean, shit happens. What can you do?"

"No foul language in here – if you don't mind!' snapped Mr Speaker. "Can we please focus on our agenda? We've had some trouble in Mexico with fans getting over-excited in the company of famous personalities. I believe our representative from Total Bull deals with such an experience on a day-to-day basis at home. Perhaps he would like to offer some advice?"

"Kind of you to notice, Mr Speaker. It is, y'know, difficult living with a superstar but, to be honest, my wife is coping well. Can I get back to this business of the budget cap? Can I just say, our head of Aerodynamics and Shopping went a bit, y'know, overbudget down at Tesco…"

"Hell, yes," snorted the round man in papaya. "With a front wing endplate an 'Unexpected Item in Bagging Area'."

"Mr Speaker! I demand an apology."

"A-ha!" shouted the FOM man, springing to his sandaled feet and brandishing a volume of the OED (Sky Politically Correct Edition with tick boxes). "If 'outrageous' means – and I quote page 169 – 'greatly exceeding what is moderate or reasonable', then I'd say you're bang to rights!"

"Enough!" thundered Mr Speaker. "Meeting adjourned. I want never to have to go through this again…"

"…Er, apologies once again Mr Speaker, but that seems like another split…"

"Split infinitive, my arse! Let's get down to serious matters: anyone done today's Wordle?"

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FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 21

THE SÃO PAULO GP IN 5 KEY MOMENTS

1 Russell chalks up his first F1 victory

With a convincing margin, plenty of confidence and apparent ease, George Russell took his maiden F1 win in style. Some might argue he was a bit fortunate to have his two main rivals running into each other but, even if there is some truth in that, it was only fate returning a debt it owed Russell for the race in Bahrain two years ago.

Russell's weekend wasn't perfect, but his only notable error came on Friday when he pitched his Mercedes into a gravel trap during qualifying in changeable conditions. George put a wheel on the slippery white line on his right as he approached Turn 4 after his first flying lap and went off-track. It wasn't even Russell's off that caused the red flags to fly, but his clumsy attempt to turn his car around in the escape road. He plunged the rear wheels of his W13 into the gravel and got stuck – thus effectively locking down the qualifying results since, after the marshals had towed the Mercedes to safety, the track was too wet for the positions in the timesheets to change. Russell's own mistake actually helped him, securing his third place behind Kevin Magnussen (his first pole, having nailed his first attempt in Q3) and Max Verstappen.

From that moment on George was impeccable.

The sprint proved to be important. It took Russell and Verstappen four laps to clear Magnussen, after which George had 20 more to spare to pass Max. Mercedes perhaps for the first time this season had a clear advantage over Red Bull and Russell used it wisely. A couple of initial attacks were thwarted by Max, but George finally got past on lap 15, forcing the Dutchman to defend in the Senna Esses. Russell got the better exit on the back straight and passed the Red Bull even before the braking zone into Turn 4, scene of last year's controversial incident between Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton.

Max then came under attack from Carlos Sainz, who was a little less careful, nudging Verstappen coming into the first corner; the contact left the Red Bull with a slightly damaged front wing. With five laps to go Verstappen was overtaken by Hamilton too, who then proceeded to finish third, having started from eighth. This allowed Mercedes to secure both front-row spots on the grid for

Russell was overjoyed with his first F1 win (right) and Hamilton recovered from his spat with Verstappen (above) to finish second

PICTURES: SAM BLOXHAM; MARK SUTTON; STEVE ETHERINGTON

Pérez ahead of Verstappen (above) on lap 66. Max (right) moved ahead on the following tour (below) and refused a team order to swap places on the last lap

the main race – thanks to Sainz's penalty for yet another engine change.

On Sunday George made it look easy – albeit with unwitting assistance from Verstappen and Hamilton. Russell retained the lead at the start and then did likewise at the restart after a brief Safety Car period – while behind, his two main rivals failed to peacefully coexist on the track. Max tried to pass Lewis on the outside of Turn 1, which became the inside of Turn 2. The Mercedes driver made it clear he wasn't going to leave the door open, but the newly crowned two-time world champion decided not to retreat – and the pair collided. The referees handed Max a five-second penalty, but it was an extra pitstop for the front wing change that represented the bigger punishment. Lewis was lucky to get away with the loss of a few positions, but had to forget about the battle with Russell – at least for a while.

George controlled the race from there on, keeping Sergio Pérez and Sainz at bay. Mercedes nailed the strategy – and after making his final stop on lap 49 of 71, George was set to cruise to the finish line, but Lando Norris' retirement on lap 50 brought the Safety Car back onto the track and put Hamilton back in contention for the win. Lewis had managed to claw his way back to P2 after his scrap with Verstappen and was now right behind his team-mate, but George survived the final test by holding him back for 12 laps after the restart.

2 Red Bull drivers fall out over team orders

For only the third time this year, Max Verstappen finished a race without making the podium. But that didn't stop him finding himself in the spotlight, as he refused to obey team orders to let Sergio Pérez through at the end of the race.

After his clash with Hamilton and unscheduled stop Max dropped to 17th, but was a beneficiary of the final Safety Car. After the restart, he climbed up to sixth, overtaking Pérez among others. For Checo the Safety Car came out at the worst possible moment, since he was stuck with mediums for the final stint. Had Max overtaken Fernando Alonso before the finish it would have been less awkward for Red Bull. But since Verstappen couldn't catch Alonso, the team had the option of swapping its drivers, which would have been handy for Pérez – who was engaged in a battle with Charles Leclerc for second in the championship.

You'd think that any driver, having already accomplished their title goals, would help out a team-mate, but Max isn't just 'any driver'. Having ignored his engineer's order to let Pérez through on the last lap, Max crossed the line and replied: "I told you already last time, you guys don't ask that again to me, OK? I gave my reasons and I stand by it."

Checo wasn't holding back either. "It shows who he really is," he radioed crossing the line and then came out with more scathing comments while facing the cameras. "If he has two championships, it's thanks to me," he fumed before team bosses and senior PR staff got to him and hit 'mute'.

The public reaction wasn't long in coming. Accusations of Max being a bad team player – as is customary these days – quickly turned into personal insults on social media.

Red Bull issued a statement four days later, scolding social media users, but also noting that it 'made some mistakes' in Brazil – in particular not discussing the position-swap scenario in advance. The team stated it accepted "Max's reasoning" but did not elaborate on said reasoning.

"I'm not going to go into detail about what that was," said Max himself, without refuting the widely circulated theory that he was responding to Pérez's crash – alleged to be deliberate – during qualifying in Monaco. Back then Pérez, who believed himself in title contention, had a minor shunt at the end of Q3 which prevented Max from completing his final run – and guaranteed Checo third on the grid ahead of Verstappen. Pérez dismissed these allegations, stating "everyone makes mistakes in Monaco". Many were left doubting the earnestness of his words – about Monaco and the claim he'd reconsidered what he'd said at the finish.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 21

3 Ups and downs for Alpine as drivers clash

Alpine team principal Otmar Szafnauer was furious on Saturday night at the São Paolo Grand Prix. One of the main criticisms of F1's sprint races is that drivers are too cautious, trying not to crash and lose positions ahead of the main race, but in the São Paulo sprint Otmar's two men drove as if they specifically sought to refute said criticisms.

First, they collided with each other. Then they did it again just a few minutes later. In the end, they were 17th and 18th.

It was all going well on Friday, as Esteban Ocon and Fernando Alonso qualified sixth and seventh. But then they found each other at Turn 4 on the first lap of the sprint. Alonso tried to pass his team-mate on the outside, but Ocon pushed him wide, and Fernando was unable to stop his A522 from spinning, hitting his team-mate's car and leaving a huge hole in it. Quickly Alonso was back within striking distance, but passing again proved difficult. For the second time in three weeks Fernando ran into another car from behind, but if in the US the accident was triggered mainly by a late move from Lance Stroll, then in Brazil Ocon seemingly did nothing wrong – at least in the stewards' eyes, since after reviewing the incident post-race they handed out a five-second penalty to Alonso.

Alonso himself, however, hinted he was unimpressed with Ocon's defensive moves. "I have been very close to the wall this year [on] a few occasions, in Jeddah, and in Budapest I remember as well. Now I just want to go to Abu Dhabi and test the [Aston Martin's] green car," he said on Saturday night. But the award for harshest comment of the day still went to Szafnauer. "Frankly, both Esteban and Fernando must do a better job of complimenting the fantastic efforts of everyone in the team," he said. "Today, both drivers have let the team down. I expect more from them tomorrow."

Whether it was the telling-off from Otmar or just the speed of the car that did the trick, it all worked out perfectly for Alpine on Sunday. Thanks to good strategy and a pinch of luck with the Safety Car timing, Alonso recovered to finish fifth, Ocon eighth.

The Alpine drivers were feisty in the sprint race (above) but calmed down on Sunday (below) after a talking-to

4 Magnussen goes from hero to zero

The 2022 São Paulo Grand Prix will be forever etched in the history of the Haas Formula 1 Team. It has had some pretty solid results in the past, but never before had Haas been the fastest overall in a competitive session – that is until Friday 11 November 2022 in Sao Paulo.

Kevin Magnussen was fast throughout qualifying, but produced his best effort exactly when it was really needed. As rain started just before Q3 it became clear that the decisive attempts would come at the start of the session. Haas made sure Magnussen got to lead the queue at the pitlane exit and he delivered on track. Kevin's 1.11.674s ended up being the best result of anyone who managed to complete a lap before George Russell triggered the red flags.

"The whole team has been trying hard for seven years and then circumstances let us pull this one off," rejoiced Guenther Steiner, even though Friday's pole earned the team no points and the sprint format meant Kevin had to defend not for 71 laps as it would have been on a normal weekend in Brazil, but 95.

It worked out pretty well on Saturday. Kevin achieved almost the maximum he could have hoped for. Evidently Magnussen had no chance holding the Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull

PICTURES: ANDY HONE; STEVE ETHERINGTON; MARK SUTTON

After his qualifying heroics, Magnussen was the victim of Ricciardo's error in the GP itself

cars behind, so the only regret was that he got overtaken by Lando Norris at the end. But eighth still meant a useful single point. In the main race, however, another McLaren driver interfered. Daniel Ricciardo nudged Kev's VF-22 at Turn 8 on the first lap of the race, sending it into a spin – the already out-of-control Haas car, having done its pirouette, then knocked the instigator out of the race, making it a double retirement.

5 Norris illness compounds McLaren misery

Having scored two points in Saturday's sprint, Lando Norris enabled McLaren to close the gap to Alpine in the teams' standings to just five. Since the British driver delivered such a result despite a bout of food poisoning, it looked like the papaya team had a good chance of moving ahead of Alpine in the battle for fourth place on Sunday – especially given Team Enstone's horrid sprint performance. But it just wasn't meant to be.

Ricciardo not only knocked Magnussen out of the race and ended his own hopes of scoring points on lap one, he also picked up a grid penalty for Abu Dhabi. Norris too had one of his worst races of the season. After the first restart Lando wasn't careful enough while attacking Charles Leclerc and sent the Ferrari into the barrier after clipping it on the apex of Turn 7. It earned Norris a penalty, which made an already complicated task even more difficult, since the McLaren was one of the slowest midfield cars on Sunday in Brazil. Lando was running 12th after his last pitstop, but on lap 50 his torment ended thanks to a gearbox failure.

Even if that hadn't happened, according to the driver himself, McLaren's chances for points were almost non-existent by that stage: "We were just very slow, simple as that," he said.

Already 19 points behind the Alpine after the race in Brazil, McLaren effectively lost its battle for fourth place in constructors' championship.

Norris had a poor race and tapped Leclerc into a spin after the first Safety Car restart

RESULTS ROUND 21

AUTÓDROMO JOSÉ CARLOS PACE

13.11.22 / 71 LAPS

1st	**George Russell** Mercedes	1h38m34.044s
2nd	**Lewis Hamilton** Mercedes	+1.529s
3rd	**Carlos Sainz** Ferrari	+4.051s
4th	**Charles Leclerc** Ferrari	+8.441s
5th	**Fernando Alonso** Alpine	+9.561s
6th	**Max Verstappen** Red Bull	+10.056s
7th	**Sergio Pérez** Red Bull	+14.080s
8th	**Esteban Ocon** Alpine	+18.690s
9th	**Valtteri Bottas** Alfa Romeo	+22.552s
10th	**Lance Stroll** Aston Martin	+23.552s
11th	**Sebastian Vettel** Aston Martin	+26.183s
12th	**Zhou Guanyu** Alfa Romeo	+29.325s
13th	**Mick Schumacher** Haas	+29.899s
14th	**Pierre Gasly** AlphaTauri	+31.867s *
15th	**Alex Albon** Williams	+36.016s
16th	**Nicholas Latifi** Williams	+37.038s
17th	**Yuki Tsunoda** AlphaTauri	+1 lap

*includes 5s penalty for speeding in the pitlane

Retirements

Lando Norris McLaren	50 laps - gearbox
Kevin Magnussen Haas	0 laps - accident
Daniel Ricciardo McLaren	0 laps - accident

Fastest lap

George Russell 1m13.785s on lap 61

F1 Sprint - 24 laps

1st Russell 2nd Sainz 3rd Hamilton
4th Verstappen 5th Pérez 6th Leclerc
7th Norris 8th Magnussen

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED

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

CLIMATE	AIR TEMP	TRACK TEMP
Sunny	25°C	45°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

motorsport STATS

1 Verstappen	429pts	12 Ricciardo	35pts
2 Leclerc	290pts	13 Magnussen	25pts
3 Pérez	290pts	14 Gasly	23pts
4 Russell	265pts	15 Stroll	14pts
5 Hamilton	240pts	16 Schumacher	12pts
6 Sainz	234pts	17 Tsunoda	12pts
7 Norris	113pts	18 Guanyu	6pts
8 Ocon	86pts	19 Albon	4pts
9 Alonso	81pts	20 Latifi	2pts
10 Bottas	49pts	21 De Vries	2pts
11 Vettel	36pts	22 Hülkenberg	0pts

FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 22

THE ABU DHABI GP IN 5 KEY MOMENTS

1 Dummy call shows there's hope for Ferrari as Verstappen wins

Max Verstappen led the first all-Red Bull front row since the 2018 Mexican Grand Prix (when Daniel Ricciardo was on pole – his last to date) and pulled away to a victory that never seemed in doubt. This was a far less controversial Abu Dhabi GP than the preceding one, thankfully, and ended on a slightly optimistic note – since not only did Charles Leclerc pull off one of his finest drives of the season to finish second for Ferrari, he usurped Sergio Pérez in that position via a piece of subterfuge that suggests the Scuderia now has its strategic house in order after a troubled year.

Having won the race, Verstappen uttered a masterly piece of understatement: "It was all about tyre management." Having dealt with a brief and not especially vigorous challenge from team-mate Pérez at Turn 1 on the opening lap he ran clear to the end, ceding the lead only after making his sole pitstop. It was indeed another tyre-management masterclass from the world champion.

Ferrari knew Red Bull had the advantage on pace so, in FP3, it had shifted to its lower-downforce rear wing package, its aim being to avoid over-stressing the rear tyres if Leclerc or Carlos Sainz had to push hard at any point in the race. It also quietly established whether it would be possible for one or both to run a one-stop strategy.

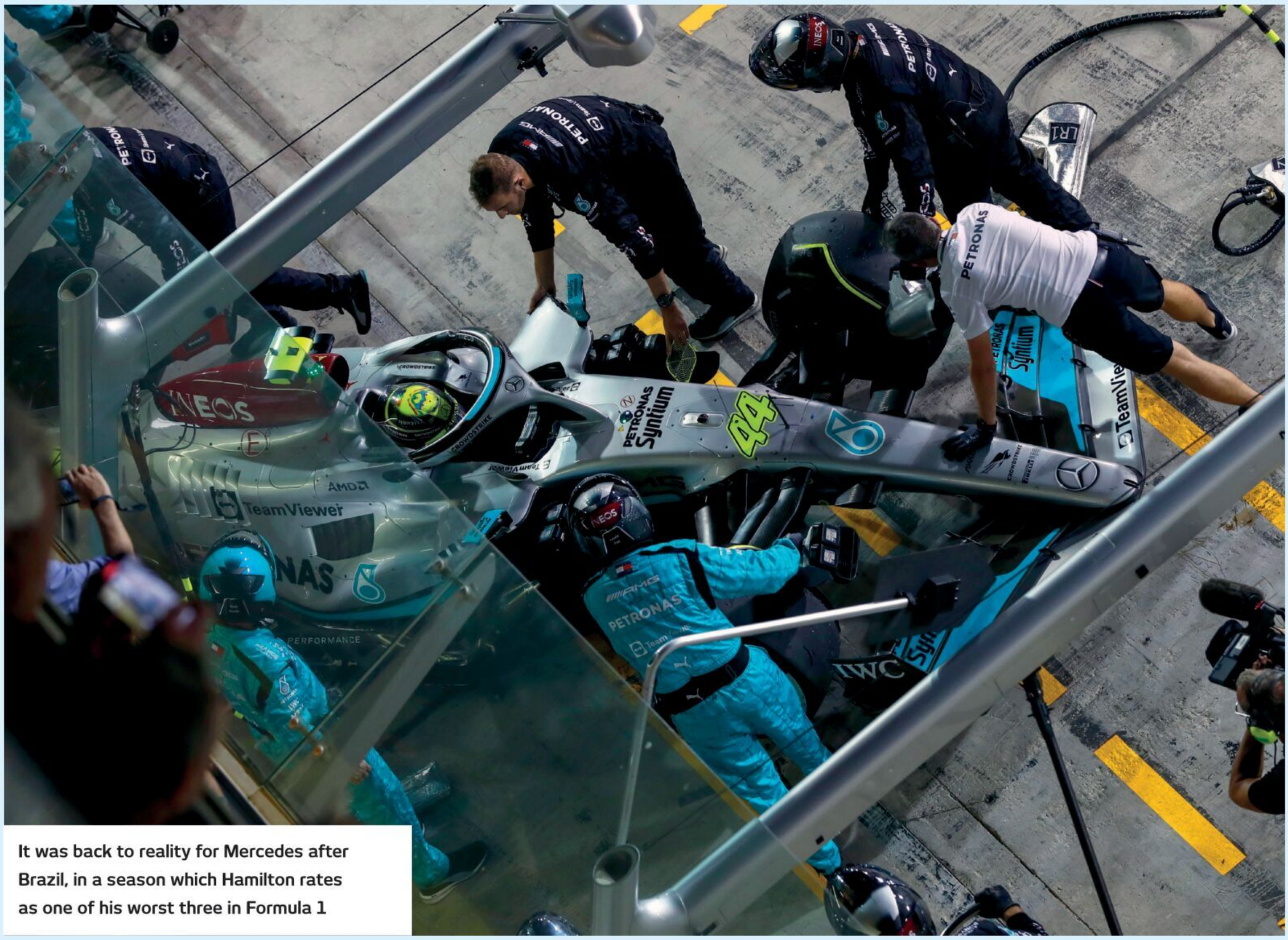
As Verstappen scampered away over the opening stint Leclerc was able to keep Pérez within sight, and Pérez was working his medium-compound Pirellis so hard that Red Bull, noticing his front-right tyre beginning to wilt, pitted him for fresh hards at the end of lap 15. While passing Sebastian Vettel's long-running Aston Martin on his out-lap Pérez locked a wheel and had to go by him again, costing time which meant he didn't undercut Verstappen when Max pitted at the end of lap 20. Not only that, Verstappen had a tidy gap which enabled him to 'introduce' his new tyres gently,

All smiles for world champion Verstappen (left) as he claimed his 15th and one of the most straightforward wins of 2022

A dummy Ferrari radio call and a great drive from the man himself enabled Leclerc (above) to wrap up second in the championship

Pérez's second stop meant he lost track position and, ultimately, the chance to finish second in the championship, to Leclerc

PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR; CARL BINGHAM



It was back to reality for Mercedes after Brazil, in a season which Hamilton rates as one of his worst three in Formula 1

setting himself up for the one-stopper.

Leclerc stopped at the end of lap 21 and emerged in third place, close enough to worry Pérez, who began to complain about being held up by the effects of Max's turbulent wake. Ferrari then sprung the trap on lap 33, telling Leclerc "Box opposite Red Bull", suggesting a stop was imminent. Red Bull immediately pitted Pérez to cover off the potential undercut but Ferrari had no intention of pitting.

Leclerc then faced the unenviable task of keeping Pérez at bay on ageing tyres until the chequered flag, which he did exquisitely, albeit with some assistance when Pierre Gasly failed promptly to obey blue flags as Pérez came up to lap him. The gap fell from 19.8s to 1.3s over the final 24 laps but that was as close as it got. Second place also enabled Leclerc to finish second in the drivers' championship, ahead of Pérez.

"I have to say that everything we've done was exactly what we wanted to do," said Leclerc. "That's what was planned. The laps where – I can say it now – where we dummied him and made him think we were going to pit opposite. He took it and went for the second stop. So we did everything perfect. I'm very proud of our execution."

"It's great having done a solid weekend," said team principal Mattia Binotto. "Ferrari, when it is making mistakes, there is always criticism. But, as well, I know that these guys can do very well."

2 Hamilton retirement "sums up our whole year"

Perhaps a more remarkable statistic than the long gap between Red Bull front-row lockouts is that 2022 is the first year Lewis Hamilton has gone without winning a grand prix. Even in the benighted 2009 campaign McLaren managed to turn around its troubled car with, among other upgrades, a new floor. This year Mercedes has been unable to perform a similar about-turn with the obstreperous W13, though George Russell's double win in Brazil will have salved some of the pain.

What a difference a week makes. After some encouraging signs in early practice the team opted for a race-oriented high-downforce setup which proved costly in a straight line during qualifying, consigning Hamilton and Russell to sixth and seventh, over half a second off the frontrunning pace. Team boss Toto Wolf would have happily deposited this session elsewhere, describing it as "one to put in the toilet".

On race day Hamilton got ahead of Carlos Sainz at Turn 1 but Russell was baulked by the Ferrari and dropped behind Lando Norris's McLaren. Later around the lap, at the Turn 6 chicane, Sainz sailed up the inside line and Hamilton, starved of room at the exit, bumped over the 'sausage kerb', damaging his floor enough to shift the car's aero balance forwards. The stewards decided Sainz hadn't forced Lewis off and, as their deliberations shifted towards whether Hamilton had 'gained an advantage' by running off, Mercedes ordered him to hand fourth place over to Sainz.

A wing adjustment at Hamilton's pitstop restored the balance and he was closing in on Russell when his team-mate made his second stop. Lewis was complaining about being left out on a one-stopper when his car "gave up the ghost" on lap 55 as a hydraulics issue fatally compromised the gearbox.

"I gave it everything and I think ultimately the last race was like the whole season," said Lewis. "It sums up the whole year. So, I'm glad it's done.

"It's up there with the top three worst seasons, but I think it's been a much stronger year in terms of myself, in terms of how I worked with the team, how we all stayed united. There's been lots of pluses."

Russell finished fifth, just under 11s adrift of Sainz. "It's a reality check for all of us," he said.

FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 22

3 Alpine clinches fourth despite Alonso DNF

The hotly contested battle for fourth place in the constructors' championship between Alpine and McLaren went Team Enstone's way even though the race ended with another DNF for a thoroughly fed-up Fernando Alonso. McLaren was 19 points behind going into the Abu Dhabi weekend.

This required both papaya cars to qualify and finish well and some form of misfortune to strike Alpine; only some of these circumstances came about. Lando Norris and Daniel Ricciardo qualified seventh and 10th, Esteban Ocon and Alonso eighth and 11th, so the race looked tantalisingly balanced. Ocon decisively bettered Alonso in qualifying and might even have pipped Norris to 'best of the rest' status but for a couple of scrappy moments in Q3. Likewise Norris continued the trend of outperforming the outgoing Ricciardo on Saturday, though Daniel ended his McLaren career by making it to Q3, something he has done only irregularly this season.

Although Norris nipped by George Russell's Mercedes at the start but the McLaren was no match for the W13 on race pace. Russell was able to get past and pull clear enough ahead not to suffer the effects of a penalty for an unsafe release. Norris did well to hang on in the final laps as he came under attack from Ocon for sixth, while Ricciardo judged his degrading front tyres well to hold off a determined Sebastian Vettel for ninth.

It was to no avail, though, since Ocon's seventh was enough to maintain Alpine's lead in the standings despite Alonso's departure with a reported water leak eight laps after his first pitstop. Like Lewis Hamilton he felt this weekend formed an effective precis of his season.

"Unfortunately another engine problem, so it has been the summary of the year," said Alonso. "Unfortunately on car 14, always these things happen, so one more.

"So I'm happy to finish and start tomorrow the seat fit with Aston, Tuesday the tyre test, and hopefully a new project with more luck."

4 Vettel bemoans strategy in final race

It was an emotional farewell but not an explosively competitive one for Sebastian Vettel as he bowed out of Formula 1 with 10th place in Abu Dhabi, having qualified ninth. Vettel had a spirited dice with Fernando Alonso in the early laps but felt that a one-stop strategy left him vulnerable as his tyres finally gave up mid-race.

"It would have been great to give the team sixth place, but we threw it away with the strategy we chose," he said. "It was absolutely the wrong strategy, so it was a shame we went backwards."

Vettel's tyre-whispering ability may have been part of the problem. His medium Pirellis appeared to be holding up well enough, prompting the team to try the riskier one-stop strategy.

"Probably that is one of the reasons," said Aston Martin team boss Mike Krack, "because had he maybe been a bit harder, we would have probably stopped three or four laps earlier. This was an ongoing discussion, you have an optimum stop lap that you define, for the fastest possible race.

Alonso's time at Alpine expired with yet another engine problem, but the team was happy to have bettered McLaren

PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR; CARL BINGHAM

Vettel scored a point in his final F1 race, but was disappointed with Aston Martin's call to put him onto a one-stop strategy. At least he totalled his final set of tyres with some goodbye donuts...

"And then it was difficult to do something compared with the guys in front, so you try to go to your fastest race. These are decisions that have to be made in very short moments. And I think, looking back, it would probably have been better to stop earlier and do two."

Lance Stroll didn't make the grade for Q3 but raced strongly – against some occasionally brusque tactics from Alfa Romeo (see below) to an eighth-place finish, overtaking Vettel in doing so. It was only enough to draw level with Alfa in the constructors' standings, which meant Alfa claimed sixth place on account of Valtteri Bottas's fifth place in the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

5 Alfa Romeo subterfuge secures sixth place

Having struggled for pace during practice in Abu Dhabi, Alfa Romeo elected to guard its slim four-point margin over Aston Martin by focusing on a strategy to frustrate the rival team. Zhou Guanyu qualified 15th while Valtteri Bottas started 18th after missing the cut in Q1.

Bottas therefore started the race on hard-compound Pirellis with a mission to "play" with the Astons and take advantage of track position once Sebastian Vettel and Lance Stroll pitted. Zhou's pitstops were timed to give the Alpines and McLarens a clear track and he raced hard to defend against Vettel after Seb had made his sole pitstop and was trying to fight through the pack.

"The whole race was quite clear with the situation," said Guanyu. "If we can't beat them on track then we sacrifice the positions to let the McLarens and Alpines clear that window."

"I stopped early, while the tyre was still fresh, but then we could be undercut by Seb and Lance, then we try to basically hold them up as much as possible to make a more clear window for others."

Bottas's long stint on the hard enabled him to be ahead of Stroll after the Canadian's second stop, and to make Lance's life similarly difficult. The net result was Alfa claimed sixth place in the championship on countback.

Alfa Romeo chose to 'mark' Aston Martin to hold onto sixth in the championship

RESULTS ROUND 22

YAS MARINA / 20.11.22 / 58 LAPS

1st	**Max Verstappen** Red Bull	1h27m45.914s
2nd	**Charles Leclerc** Ferrari	+8.771s
3rd	**Sergio Pérez** Red Bull	+10.093s
4th	**Carlos Sainz** Ferrari	+24.892s
5th	**George Russell** Mercedes	+35.888s
6th	**Lando Norris** McLaren	+56.234s
7th	**Esteban Ocon** Alpine	+57.240s
8th	**Lance Stroll** Aston Martin	+76.931s
9th	**Daniel Ricciardo** McLaren	+83.268s
10th	**Sebastian Vettel** Aston Martin	+83.898s
11th	**Yuki Tsunoda** AlphaTauri	+89.371s
12th	**Zhou Guanyu** Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
13th	**Alex Albon** Williams	+1 lap
14th	**Pierre Gasly** AlphaTauri	+1 lap
15th	**Valtteri Bottas** Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
16th	**Mick Schumacher** Haas	+1 lap*
17th	**Kevin Magnussen** Haas	+1 lap
18th	**Lewis Hamilton** Mercedes	+3 laps/gearbox
19th	**Nicholas Latifi** Williams	+3 laps/electrics

*includes 5s penalty for causing a collision

Retirements

Fernando Alonso Alpine	27 laps/water leak

Fastest lap

Lando Norris 1m28.391s on lap 44

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED

Hard (C3) **Medium** (C4) **Soft** (C5) **Inter** **Wet**

CLIMATE	AIR TEMP	TRACK TEMP
Dry/ night	29°C	34°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1	Verstappen	454pts	12	Vettel	37pts
2	Leclerc	308pts	13	Magnussen	25pts
3	Pérez	305pts	14	Gasly	23pts
4	Russell	275pts	15	Stroll	18pts
5	Sainz	246pts	16	Schumacher	12pts
6	Hamilton	240pts	17	Tsunoda	12pts
7	Norris	122pts	18	Guanyu	6pts
8	Ocon	92pts	19	Albon	4pts
9	Alonso	81pts	20	Latifi	2pts
10	Bottas	49pts	21	De Vries	2pts
11	Ricciardo	37pts	22	Hülkenberg	0pts

motorsport STATS

FINISHING STRAIGHT

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Author Crispian Besley

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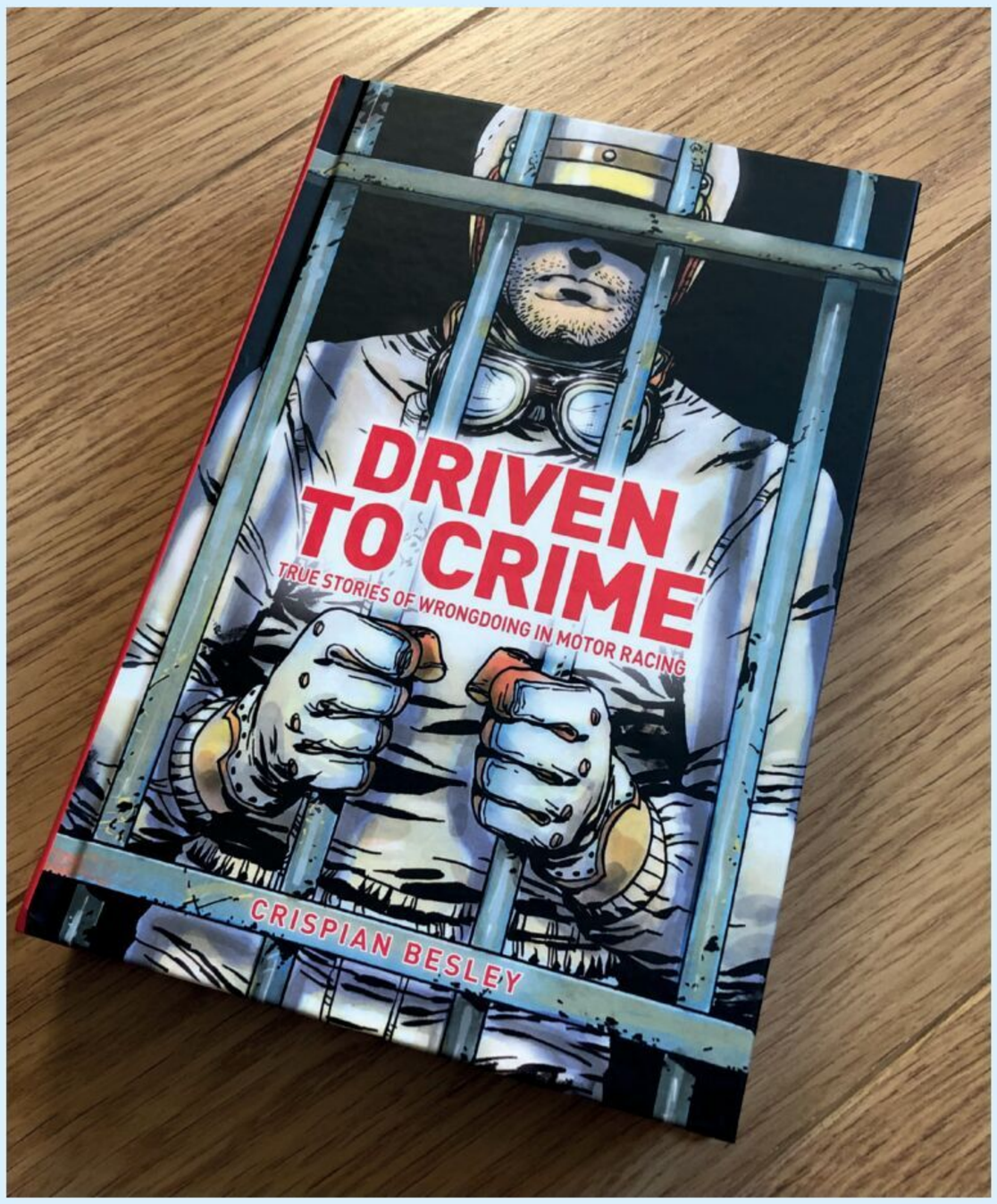
The true crime genre is bang on trend – it appears to account for about half the content on Netflix alone – so the timing is right for a look at the many rogues, spivs and crooks who have been drawn to motor racing like the proverbial moths to a flame over the years. Amateur racer and first-time author Crispian Besley has produced a chunky (480 pages) and thoroughly researched book which covers a full spectrum of criminality from murder, kidnap, drugs and fraud.

Inevitably some of the tales are fairly tangential in their relations to racing – the conviction of Alex Albon's mother, for instance – while others, such as Max Mosley's penchant for BDSM and Jean-Marie Balestre's Nazi connections, do not quite constitute criminality. Still, there are some rarely told and murky stories involving racing folk, such as the sad demise of Charlie Whiting's brother Nick.



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The legendary Soichiro Honda created the Super Cub in 1958 as Japan's two-wheeled equivalent of the Volkswagen Beetle or Citroën 2CV: a rugged, inexpensive, practical, easily maintained piece of transport accessible to everyone. The little motorcycle rapidly gained traction and has been in production ever since – total sales are well over 100 million.

Now Seiko has produced a limited-edition timepiece with retro styling inspired by the iconic scooter, featuring the Super Cub logo and time markers resembling the headlight and indicators and a fuel gauge icon on the crown. The Nato strap can be worn over a rider's clothing. Numbers are limited to 6000 pieces in green and 5000 in black.

RED BULL RACING RB16B

Price £7,495

amalgamcollection.com

The Bristol-based Amalgam Collection is rightly renowned for the no-compromise accuracy of its scale models: the company began as a specialist prototype and architectural model supplier before pivoting towards founder Sandy Copeman's passion for racing cars. Each of its scale racing models is hand-made.

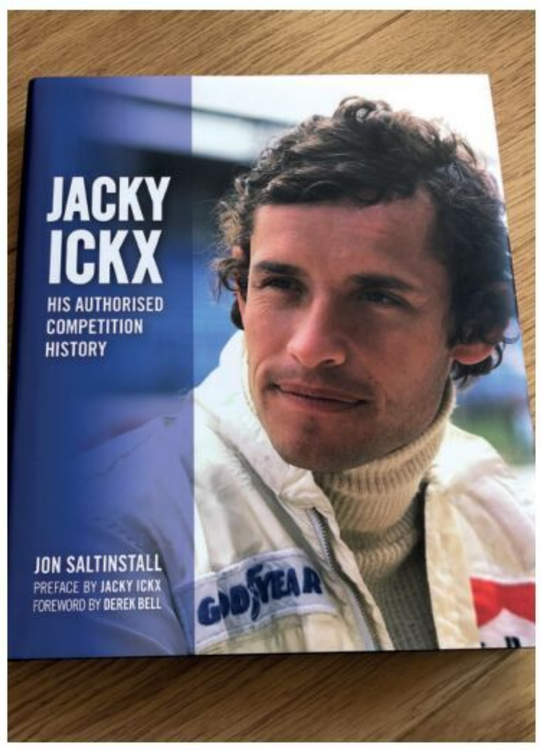
Just launched is this 1:8 model of Red Bull's RB16B as raced in the 2021 season-ending Abu Dhabi GP. Over 69cm long, it has been designed using CAD data and paint codes supplied by the team and assembled from thousands of individual components produced via CNC machining, casting and photo etching techniques. Each example takes over 250 hours to build. Numbers are strictly limited to 99 for each of Red Bull's drivers, Max Verstappen and Sergio Pérez.

JACKY ICKX HIS AUTHORISED COMPETITION HISTORY

Author Jon Saltinstall

Price £95

evropublishing.com



While Jacky Ickx might not have left Formula 1 bearing the silverware his silky talents deserved, his rich competition career included victories in pretty much every racing discipline he contested (just a meagre three podiums in the British Saloon Car Championship, though). Ickx was a national champion motorcycle trialist before swapping to four wheels, winning eight grands prix for Brabham and Ferrari and no fewer than six editions of the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Author Jon Saltinstall's previous tome covering Niki Lauda's competition history was shortlisted for the RAC's Motoring Book of the Year Award in 2019. This is exactingly researched and, given the nature of Ickx's career, makes for a more enjoyably eclectic book as high-powered sports-prototypes share the page with humbler saloon cars, interspersed with single-seaters from the halcyon days of the three-litre era.

FLAT CHAT

{ FULL THROTTLE MUSINGS WITH MATT KEW }

PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

MATTIA BINOTTO: GOING, NOT GOING, GONE

If you took Ferrari at its word, there was no concrete succession plan when Mattia Binotto handed in his resignation in late November. "The process is underway to identify Scuderia Ferrari's new team principal and is expected to be finalised in the new year," read a bulletin. But why would you take Ferrari at its word when, only a fortnight earlier, it assured everybody the boss was going nowhere. So, it either tried to pull the wool over our eyes or Binotto concluded his position had become untenable in double-quick time.

In Abu Dhabi, the Italian spoke with all the hallmarks of a football manager giving their final press conference before facing the chop. He dismissed the noise regarding his future and was intent on continuing with the job as per. 10 days later, his eventual exit was made public. As a result, come 2023 testing in Bahrain, Christian Horner will be making small talk with the sixth Ferrari team principal to serve during his time at the top of Red Bull. Toto Wolff will be on his fifth. That's not to say stability is always the best course, but the Scuderia way is at odds with the only two teams to have won titles since 2010.

Binotto arguably faced an impossible ask when he ascended to the team principal role in January 2019 – an appointment approved by now-deceased Ferrari chair Sergio Marchionne.

Binotto on the grid in Abu Dhabi. It would be his last GP for Ferrari as he eventually decided to go before he was pushed out

He was adding bureaucratic duties to his pre-existing job as the technical boss – a role he retained, if not in name, during subsequent restructures – and being spread too thin. Nevertheless, his tenure has been far from damaging. Binotto leaves Maranello as he found it: second in the points. Although that does include reviving it from sixth in 2020 after the oil-burn trick was eventually, and privately, blocked by the FIA.

THE SCUDERIA WAY IS AT ODDS WITH THE ONLY TWO TEAMS TO HAVE WON TITLES SINCE 2010

Since Binotto did split his time with leading the technical division, he can take credit for overseeing a chassis and engine programme that was well capable of beating Red Bull early in 2022. He is also responsible for dialling out much of the finger-pointing culture that has dogged Ferrari in the turbulent wake of his slick-haired predecessor Maurizio Arrivabene. But it was also on Binotto's watch that poor reliability and shocking strategy scuppered hopes of ending a title drought dating back to 2008 – even if the pre-season target to be a regular race-winner was satisfied. And because he'd worked so hard to instil a 'no-blame' culture, Binotto couldn't then pass the buck. So when the pressure from the media, the tifosi and Ferrari tsar John Elkann intensified, he jumped before he was pushed.

But that doesn't protect Ferrari from accusations of short-sightedness. All the murmurings were that Binotto was going to be forced out anyway. He just took matters into his own hands. Hence it's inexcusable if the hierarchy really hadn't got a replacement lined up. Forcing one manager out the door without a proper plan in place is a sure-fire way to get the *Sky Sports Monday Night Football* panel to lambast a Premier League club for being ill-prepared and rudderless. Ferrari might rightly face the same criticism.

Or, perhaps, Ferrari had already settled on its chosen one. The rumour mill that reckoned Binotto was ready for the high jump was the same one which linked Alfa Romeo boss Frédéric Vasseur with the top job in red. Maybe the Scuderia just wanted to give the Binotto exit bombshell time to settle before announcing a man who will surely placate the tested relationship Charles Leclerc has with the team. But, if that is the case, Ferrari has again done one thing and said another.

PICTURES: ZGLENN DUNBAR. ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE

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