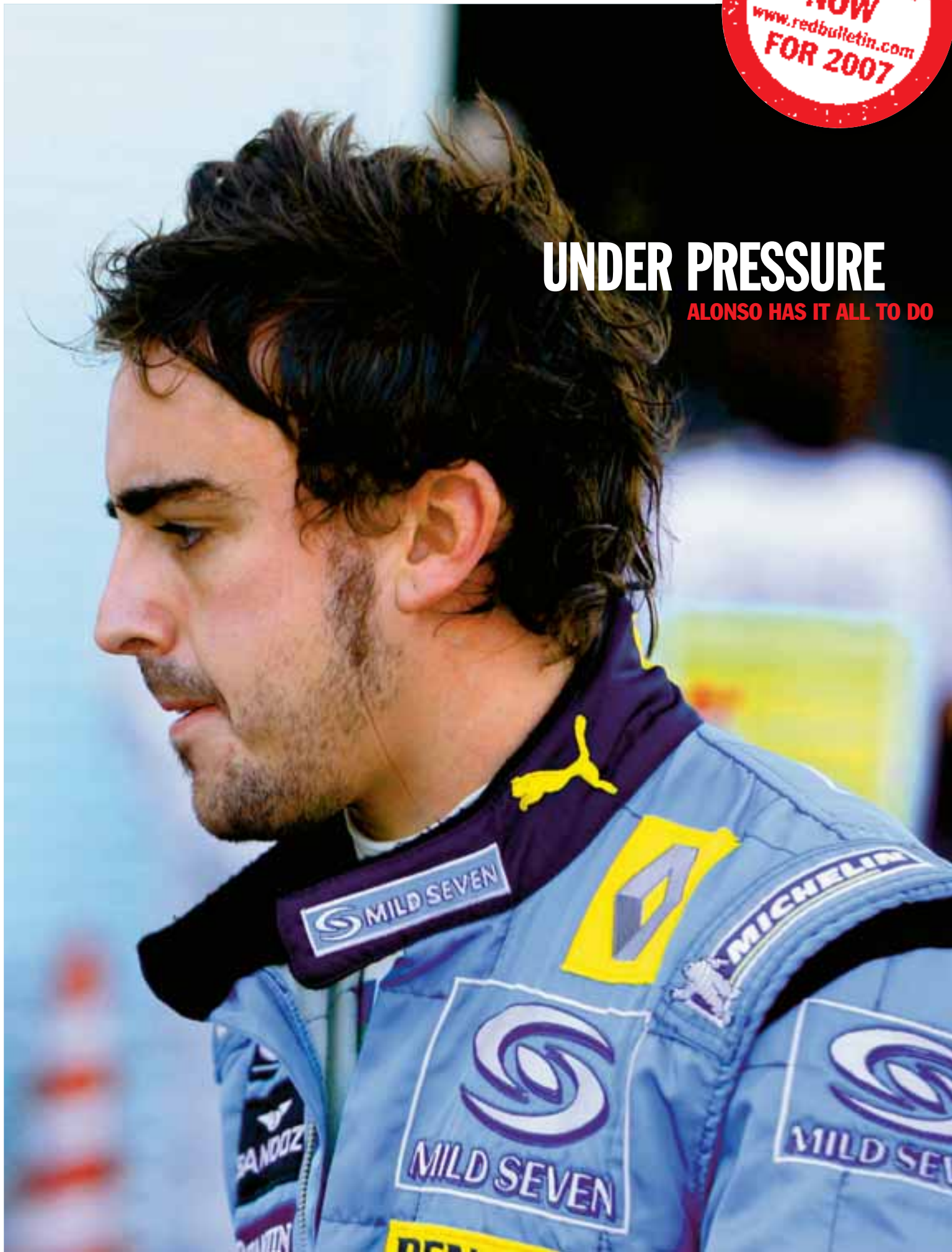


THE RED

ISSUE 121, GP JAPAN, SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2006

BULLETIN

AN ALMOST INDEPENDENT F1 NEWSPAPER



UNDER PRESSURE

ALONSO HAS IT ALL TO DO



AS AN EDUCATED MAN, Renault's F1 press supremo Bradley Lord needs no help in understanding the meaning of 'in vino veritas'. But Brads may have gone a step too far with a late-night, alcohol-assisted confession in Yokkaichi: "My hair's looking a bit like Krusty the Clown from The Simpsons. Tell you what, if we win the championship, I'm going to get it all chopped off. I'll go for a number three." As if Fernando and the boys in blue didn't have enough reason already to bring the titles home. Rest assured Bradley, your friends at Red Bulletin (and in the team and the paddock) await the results of Japan and Brazil with baited breath... Chop, chop.

RENAULT



PACESETTER

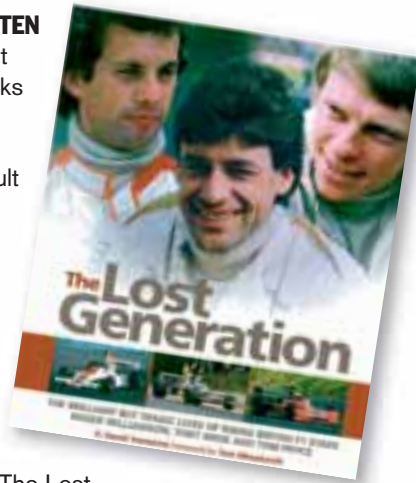


LOADING UP THE TRUCKS this evening, F1 will be forgiven for feeling like we're saying goodbye to a much loved home. But when one chapter ends, another one starts and here's an aerial photograph of our new Japanese location. Let's hope the racing is as dramatic as the view – it might not only be Flavio Briatore spitting lava next year. We'll see you there.

BOOK REVIEW

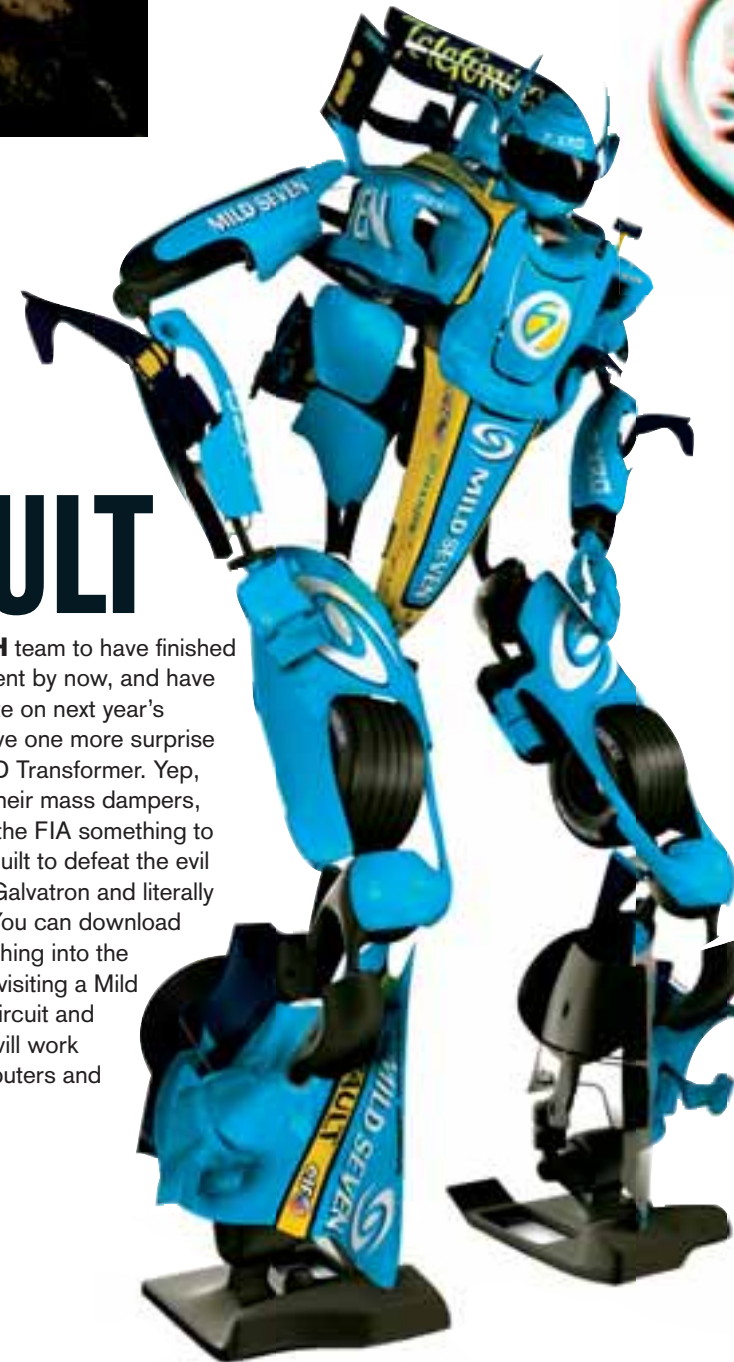
DAVID TREMAYNE HAS WRITTEN

37 books and counting, but it is his personal 'passion' books that stand out on the shelf. Books that aren't written for the advance, but are the result of 30 years of reflection on the heroes who inspired the writer and amateur racer as a young man. The first of his subjects was land and water speed record ace Donald Campbell, about whom DT wrote *The Man Behind the Mask*. His latest book, published by Haynes, *The Lost Generation* centres three rising British F1 stars from the 1970s who had the raw talent to go all the way, but died before they had the chance. Roger Williamson, Tony Brise and Tom Pryce (after whom Tremayne named a son) are names almost forgotten by time and this is an absorbing reminder.



RENAULT

YOU WOULD EXPECT EACH team to have finished their '06 model development by now, and have their designers concentrate on next year's campaign, but Renault have one more surprise in their arsenal. The 7-XRD Transformer. Yep, they're still pissed about their mass dampers, and are really gonna give the FIA something to think about. It's purpose-built to defeat the evil forces of high-tech villan Galvatron and literally eat Ferrari for breakfast. You can download the video of the R26 morphing into the robotic mean machine by visiting a Mild Seven booth here at the circuit and picking up a disc, which will work as a screensaver on computers and mobile phones.



PHOTOS: REX FEATURES, TOYOTA-F1

WHEREVER YOU'RE HEADING BETWEEN here and Sao Paulo, be sure to pick up the following essential items: 100ml aftershave, one loud shirt, 100 grams Alka Seltzer and one Do Not Disturb sign. The reason? It's the event we've all been waiting for – the end of season Red Bull party. Yes, the rumours are true, such is the scale of this celebration, the company is taking over an entire stadium: Morumbi Stadium, Sunday night, from 9pm. All team personnel and media are invited. Julia Fitzen has the team invites and Britta Roeske has the media ones. They will be available in Brazil, so go and see the girls from Thursday onwards.

PARTY!



BMW-SAUBER

BABY-FACED SEBASTIAN

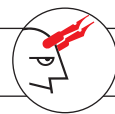
VETTEL'S a fast learner, as F1 has found out since his debut in Turkey. But all's not quite perfect. His pitlane speeding indiscretions in Turkey and Italy, which cost him \$2000 in fines, prompted a suitable response from his mechanics. Post-Monza, they modified the diagram of his multi-function steering-wheel commands (given to every new driver to help them learn the buttons), to strip them down to one essential: a big button for the speed-limiter control. Said Seb: "Just before Shanghai they brought me a 'Sebastian Vettel steering wheel special' and it had only one button left: P/L – pit limiter. I got the message." Must have done the trick: he's been fine-free since. So far...

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FOUR COMMENTARIES

THE RISING SONS

A WELCOME ADDITION
BY JUSTIN HYNES

1 This time last year, the rumours first began to circulate about an 11th Formula One team taking the grid in 2006. More than rumours, the word coming out of the Suzuka paddock was that this was actually a serious proposition, not just another fly-by-night story of hopeful Middle-Eastern potentates or clueless American financiers wanting to claim total paddock domination by the following Wednesday. As that weekend in 2005 came to a close, the words Aguri Suzuki, Honda and Oxfordshire were increasingly being mentioned in the same sentence.

And sure enough, come Bahrain there were two red and white Super Aguris on the grid. Only just, but there they were, lining up to race a country mile off the pace of even those scraping into the top 10.

The gags at the little team's expense were numerous and some were even suggesting that to run cars so slow was, in fact, dangerous. When Yuji Ide then had the temerity to act like a rookie in Australia, make a mistake in Imola and be cruelly robbed of his super licence, Aguri's team were the butt of more jokes.

But here we are, at the venue where the rumours first began to circulate and today Takuma Sato and Sakon Yamamoto will both take the grid and race proper Super Aguris. If season form is anything to go by, then sure they will almost certainly be at the back of the grid, but this time they will be only three seconds of the pole pace.

They will, barring some kerfuffle at the start or end, finish the race using the regulation number of stops (as opposed to their early season shuttle bus runs to the garage and back) and they will do so looking every inch a fully-fledged, functioning and, more importantly, surviving Formula One team.

In an atmosphere where nobody is paying a blind bit of notice to what anyone other than Fernando and Michael does, this not inconsequential victory deserves a nod of recognition.

In the current financial and sporting climate to have successfully launched and run a Formula One team and kept it going, strengthened it and improved it over the course of a long, hard, expensive season is immensely laudable.

Obviously, that survival hasn't come without several large dollops of help from beneficiaries around the paddock and some slack has undoubtedly been cut but it's still a remarkable achievement.

Indeed, Super Aguri now represent the acceptable face of Honda. Where as the parent team is aloof, insular and remote, Aguri's outfit is smiling, open and self-contained. It's an easier thing to do with a small team where agendas are few, but Super Aguri have become that most cherished of Formula One items – an underdog you actually want to root for.

It has been a rollercoaster year for the young team, but I, for one, have enjoyed watching the ride.

PIT BITCH
BY HELEN PARADYCE

2 On Thursday afternoon, some of my media colleagues were bleating that they felt Alonso had been given a hard time in the FIA press conference over his status within the team. Are you all mad? The drivers are protected, cossetted and encouraged to say as little as possible just in case they upset the status quo, irritate a sponsor or outrage some religious group. Most of these people wouldn't know the truth if it bit them on the bum. All that Fernando twaddle about being left at the bottom of the mountain with a puncture on the Tour de France. Why didn't he just say, "my team-mate is a bastard for overtaking me when he should have been riding shotgun to protect me". We might have understood.

But the Spaniard's stonewalling was as nothing compared to what the Japanese constructor men came up with in Friday's FIA Fling. A question on this being the last race in Suzuka? Honda's Mr Wada reckoned it was a very traditional course loved by many drivers and that it was a shame to miss a traditional and fun place from the calendar. Allow me to translate: F1 in Japan is Honda, we built it up, won lots

of titles, but those arrivistes from Toyota went behind our backs and gave the money men some more cash just to take away our race because they can't beat us on the track.

Toyota's Mr Tomita had a different view, reminding us that last year they fluked it to get on pole before messing up their race strategy. He didn't answer the question, but what he meant to say was that Toyota has so much spare cash in its

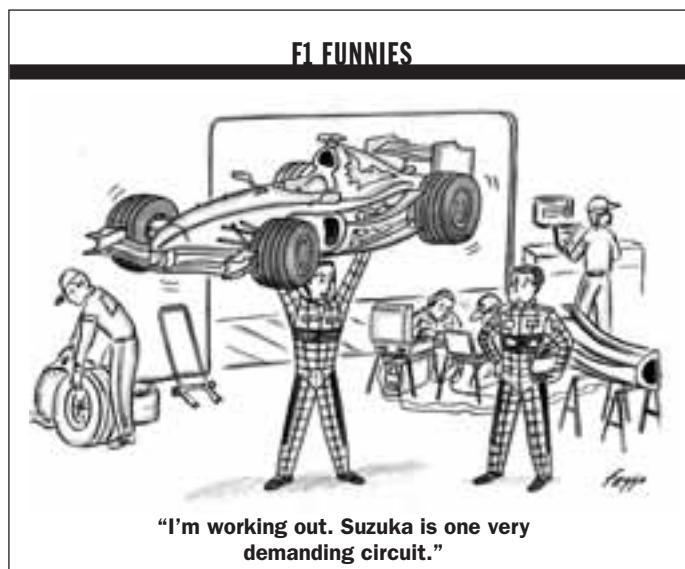
vaults that buying themselves the Japanese Grand Prix was easy-peasy and one in the eye for their homegrown rivals, not to mention the fact that the authorities were keen on handing them the race, as it meant they were more likely to go along with any FIA initiatives regarding the future of the sport. Sorry, did I say sport? I meant to say business. Admit it you team people, wouldn't life in the paddock be more fun if you answered questions this way. It's fair to say that most people I have asked would favour staying here which is why one journalist suggested Honda should give all the fans going to Fuji a rain cape branded with the 'H' logo.

Far more excitement than race venues was on offer in the town of Yokaichi on Friday night, where a group of journalists found themselves in the 10th floor bar of their hotel when the fire alarms went off.

In the spirit of Sir Francis Drake, who insisted on finishing his game of bowls at Plymouth Hoe before setting sail to defeat the Spanish Armada, the press stayed put and insisted that the fleeing bar staff produce another round of drinks before leaving the building. Of course, it all turned out to be a false alarm, but even if it hadn't, a fire in a Yokaichi hotel could only be considered a great improvement.

Incidentally, for those of you who have learned your English listening to contemporary American pap music, Plymouth Hoe is a strip of clifftop land overlooking the sea and not a prostitute based in the South West of England.

'Where the parent team is aloof, Super Aguri have become the underdog you want to root for'



3

POLE



ON FAMILIAR GROUND
BY SAKON YAMAMOTO

4

I'm sad that the grand prix is leaving Suzuka, but on the other hand I consider myself a very lucky boy to get to walk on to the circuit this morning as an F1 race driver at his home track.

When did I first come to Suzuka? I was eight years old and I came to watch the grand prix. It wasn't just my first race at Suzuka, it was my first visit to a motor race – full stop.

I watched from the grandstand by the exit of the chicane, just before the start-finish straight and it was a wonderful, delightful surprise to see the cars come through. F1 was amazing.

Like many of the children who will see their first race here today, all I wanted to do after that was drive F1 cars. When I look back over my career to date I realise Suzuka has played a huge role in letting me realise that ambition. The first step for most of us is go-kart racing.

I began my karting career right here. From there I went into formula cars when I enrolled at the Suzuka Formula Racing School. I did my

first single-seater laps here. When I got into F3 it didn't surprise me at all that the first place I competed was... Suzuka. So really I grew up at this track.

So, last year when I made my F1 debut as Jordan's Friday driver, it came as quite a surprise to realise that I didn't know Suzuka at all.

I've driven here in Formula Nippon, but the difference between doing a lap in a Nippon car and an F1 car is huge – and it isn't just the speed and the braking, the view caught me by surprise as well. It was like driving on a completely different circuit.

After the second corner you come into the

'I grew up at Suzuka, but in an F1 car it is like driving on a completely different circuit'

Esses. In Formula Nippon or F3 you swing around and in front of you is the hillside covered in grass. I'd never seen it covered in people before – it took me by surprise momentarily, fortunately it didn't lead to anything embarrassing.

As a rookie it is always difficult to drive in front of the world's best drivers. When you have a large Friday crowd, in your home country, cheering for you, it certainly was. In the garage before I went out for the first time I was pretty nervous and worried about doing the job well.

Fortunately, when I got out on the track and could concentrate on driving, the nerves went away. When I acclimatised to the car and the spectators, the sensation of driving an F1 around Suzuka was pure, undiluted joy.

When I heard the news that Suzuka wouldn't be on the 2007 calendar, I was disappointed. I can understand why this is the case: compared with the infrastructure last week in Shanghai, the facilities here look very old and tired.

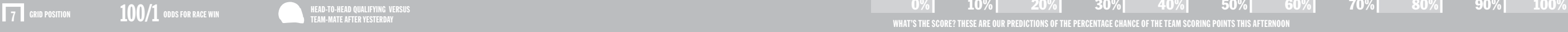
But the track! If there's a way to bring F1 back here in the future, then I will be the first to support it. ☑

ADVANTAGE SCHUMI

All smiles at Ferrari yesterday with the front row tied up and the Renaults stuck behind a pair of resurgent Toyotas. Is it all about tyres, as has been suggested by Jean Todt? If so, the front four all being Bridgestone-shod must make happy reading for the Ferrari team principal.



TEAM	DRIVER	GRID	HEAD-TO-HEAD	ODDS	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
SUPER AGURI	SATO	20	4	2000/1	3%
	YAMAMOTO	22	2	2000/1	
TORO ROSSO	LIUZZI	15	11	500/1	10%
	SPEED	19	6	500/1	
SPYKER	ALBERS	16	11	1000/1	10%
	MONTEIRO	21	6	1000/1	
BMW-SAUBER	HEIDFELD	12	4	80/1	30%
	KUBICA	9	1	100/1	
RED BULL	COULTHARD	17	1	200/1	10%
	DOORNBOS	18	1	500/1	
HONDA	BARRICHELLO	8	8	50/1	40%
	BUTTON	7	9	25/1	
WILLIAMS	ROSBERG	10	5	300/1	25%
	WEBBER	14	12	200/1	
TOYOTA	R SCHUMACHER	3	9	20/1	70%
	TRULLI	4	8	20/1	
FERRARI	MASSA	1	4	12/1	90%
	M SCHUMACHER	2	13	10/11	
MCLAREN	DE LA ROSA	13	0	30/1	35%
	RAIKKONEN	11	7	20/1	
RENAULT	ALONSO	5	12	11/8	75%
	FISICHELLA	6	5	16/1	



GREY DAY FOR MCLAREN



Despite multiple pole positions for Kimi Raikkonen, McLaren really haven't been in contention this season. Occasionally, their performance has raised hopes of a recovery, but yesterday they hit rock bottom with neither car appearing in the end-of-qualifying shoot-out.

Not Red Bull Racing's finest hour, as DC explained after his early end to qualifying. "I love this track it's a great challenge, but our car just isn't generating the overall grip that's needed here. The balance isn't too bad, it's as good as it's been during any other lap I've driven here, we just lack efficiency on this type of high-speed circuit. We're not performing as we should be."

A STRONG SECOND ROW FOR RALF AND JARNO IN THE TOYOTAS

LOTS OF WORK TO DO FOR ALONSO AND RENAULT

THE GRID

HOW WE SEE THE START

PHOTOS: SUTTON IMAGES COVER PHOTO: MSPB/GORYS



The Super Aguri pit stops still lacked a little something in terms of speed as the spiders' webs testified.



The world's biggest Michael Jackson fan, Tomita-san just loved to emulate his hero by spending hours in a plastic tent.



Bend down to fill a crack and another appears behind you.



"So this woman walks into a bar with her dog. While she's having a drink, the dog wanders across to the piano and starts to play the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto. Immediately, the old woman bursts into tears. 'Why are you crying when you have such a talented dog?' asks the barman. 'Talented? Talented?' sobs the woman. 'That dog could have been a doctor.'"

ALL WRAPPED UP

As we prepare to bid a sad farewell to Suzuka, the Bull's Eye photographers noticed that the men from the Super Express Storage Company seemed to have been a little overzealous when it came to packing everything away... or could there be another explanation?



There was an expectant hush from the journalists as Taku looked at the shots of Heidfeld and Kubica on the screen. Would he be able to tell which was which?



Karen, darling, of course I haven't forgotten your special day. I even arranged to send you... er... some flowers.



A racing driver, a pretty girl and a helmet... make up your own risqué caption.



"So this woman walks into a bar with her dog. While she's having a drink, the dog wanders across to the piano and starts to play the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto..." Wada-san laughs politely although Anthony is convinced they had just heard the same joke a moment ago up at the Ferrari garage.

10 THINGS THAT MAKE SUZUKA UNMISSABLE...

It may be our last visit to this temple of Japanese racing and we're really sad to be leaving. Here's why...

1 SHOWDOWN LOWDOWN!

A champ has been crowned at 10 of Suzuka's 19 GPs: 1987-'91, '96, '98-2000, and '03). Five of those were as calendar climaxes. The first Suzuka Japanese GP, in '87, set the tone: Nigel Mansell went flying into the barriers in practice, putting his back out and handing the title to teammate and nemesis Nelson Piquet. No sniggering at the back, please.

2 WORLD CHAMP WIPEOUTS

Suzuka 1989 and '90 – Senna vs Prost rounds one and two: chapters scorched into the F1 history book. And with two champs this year going chin to (slightly bigger) chin for the title, who's to say a clash of wheels won't once again decide the result of the Japanese GP – and the championship? If your eyes aren't welded to lap one, T1, or to the T16 chicane, you're probably not alive.

3 130R FLAT AGAIN!

For the first time since the profile of Suzuka's legendary flat-out, huge-cojones 130R corner was tweaked for 2003, it's going to be flat-bloody-chat again this year. Always one of F1's biggest challenges, it will be taken at 190-plus mph, in sixth gear, with cornering forces of more than four G. It was here, don't forget, that Alonso put the move of the year on Schumacher, during a stunning charge to third place in 2005. This year, with both in near-as-dammit equal cars, who'll win the test of wills through F1's most knife-edge curve?



4 YOU ONLY GET AN 'OOH' WITH TYPHOON

Coastal Suzuka falls victim to the vagaries of meteorological fluctuation like few other circuits on the Formula One calendar. Rain almost always has a part to play in the weekend's proceedings and two years ago nothing less than a full-blown tropical storm threatened to disrupt the whole event. Typhoon 22 ripped past on the Friday of the race weekend, barely 20 miles from the track, swamping the land under a flood of Pacific rainwater and forcing the cancellation of any Saturday running – although, fortunately, not the race itself.

6 ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

Suzuka is the only one of F1's 18 current venues to house its own funfair. Suzuka's 'Motopia' provides a photogenic backdrop to the otherwise featureless light industrial landscape nearby, as well as giving us an opportunity to have a bit of an alternative night out from the regular beers/dinner/bed routine. Honda's Nick Fry reportedly took six consecutive rides on Motopia's evil big dipper last year. Being team boss at Honda always has its up and downs, eh, Nick? (Sorry – ed.)

5 GETTING IT RON

Ron Dennis has mixed memories of Suzuka. Back in the early '90s he decided to run some demo laps in McLaren's beautiful F1 road car. With Gerhard Berger alongside, he set off... and got as far as the end of the Esses before stacking the \$500,000 gem. Turning to Berger in the smoking cockpit, Dennis intoned: "Gerhard, you must promise never to tell anyone about this." "Sure, Ron," Berger replied, before scampering back to the paddock to reveal how his boss drove "like an elephant in Wellington boots."

7 HOMAGE TO HUGENHOLTZ

It seems certain Honda-owned Suzuka will get the flick from the F1 calendar next year, having lost out to the smoother charms (and fatter wallet) of Toyota-owned Fuji. So we say 'sayonara' to one of the few remaining 'grandee' circuits on the world tour. John Hugenholtz's 40-year-old swooping figure-of-eight masterpiece hosted its first GP in 1987 when it won our hearts with such treats as the Esses, Spoon, 130R and the Degner curves. The pit and paddock area may be a concrete bunker, but thrill instead to the many joys offered by this daddy of F1 tracks.

8 RALF'S BEST CIRCUIT

Another reason to love Suzuka is that Ralf Schumacher invariably manages to look like a racing driver there (often for the only time in a season). He learned his way around Suzuka's twists in 1996, racing in Japanese F3000 and GTs; last year he took Toyota's first pole position and plugged on to eighth place at flagfall. But he has only once stood on the podium, in 2004, when he was second behind his big bro' – Michael's seventh Suzuka win.

9 ...NO-ONE NICKS YOUR BIKE

Eddie Irvine, who made his name (and a load of cash) racing in Japan from 1991-'92, discovered the remarkable extent of Japan's politeness. Having used a push-bike to shuttle himself around between paddock and circuit hotel, he left it unchained outside the hotel gates at the end of the weekend. When he returned a year later, it was still there. Same again a year later, and the year after that...

10 THE LOG CABIN

The infamous Log Cabin will this year bid a fond farewell to one of its most ardent admirers: Michael Schumacher. Seven times Michael has celebrated F1 wins within its karaoke-infused walls. Two years ago, he caused a bit of a stir by ripping off his brother's Toyota shirt and rampaging out in search of something to drive, before someone reminded him it perhaps wasn't the thing for a newly-crowned world champ to be doing. So he went off and found a fork-lift truck to charge around in instead.





1 Michael Schumacher led from pole position, maintaining his advantage even after he ran over refueller Nigel Stepney during his pitstop on lap 24. But on lap 41 he returned to the pits, just ahead of Mika Hakkinen. But while the Finn's stop was flawless, the Ferrari crew got it wrong and Michael was stationary for an extra 10 seconds. Once he rejoined the track it was clear he had a problem. The left-rear tyre hadn't been fitted properly and air was leaking out. David Coulthard got past, before Ralf Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello filled Michael's mirrors.



2 AS THE CARS BRAKED for the La Caixa left-hander, Ralf shot down his brother's port side, brushing across the sandy verge as they entered the corner. He held on, edging his Williams-BMW's nose ahead of the Ferrari.

2 WHILE FIGHTING FOR TRACTION on the dusty tarmac, Barrichello positioned his car directly in the slipstream of the side-by-side Schumachers. Ralf found himself on the outside for the approaching right-hand bend, and despite his tyre problem, Michael wasn't rolling over.



3 AS THE PAIR TURNED right, Michael drifted to the centre of the track. His tarmac running out and the angle of the corner significantly increased, Ralf was forced to lift.

'IT GOT HEATED AND THEIR FATHER HAD TO STEP IN'

CIRCUIT DE CATALUNYA, MAY 7, 2000. LAP 50

The Red Bulletin looks back at events which caught our attention. The Schumachers prove that brotherly love only goes so far when there are points to play for. The Spanish Grand Prix of 2000 demonstrated that Michael's real family is the Scuderia...



ILLUSTRATION: HERR IRRAWAN

4 IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT that Michael's team mate, Rubens, cut into the corner tight and swept through into the podium position. **Michael Schmidt (F1 journalist):** "Ralf was pissed off. The two brothers met after the race in Karl-Heinz Zimmerman's motorhome. Ralf complained that, suffering from a puncture, Michael wasn't allowed to block him. Michael said he didn't see Barrichello and that he was fighting fairly for position, as there were no blue flags. It got heated, and their father, Rolf, had to step in and calm them down." **Ralf Schumacher (Williams-BMW driver):** "Michael was very slow, and I tried to overtake him on the outside. He told me after the race that he didn't make the apex because his tyre was flat. Whether that's true or not I don't know. I was not best pleased, because I had been on course for a podium." ❏





SUZUKA STARS

One of the Unas' tasks is to record their weekend on camera. And the lovely ladies of Japan did us proud. Here is what they were up to while you were at work...





MENU

1 x BOWL OF WEETABIX

"...timing is very important in Formula One. If I'd waited another year, I may never have got the chance..."

1/2 KIWI FRUIT

"...in 1976 F1 came to Japan for the first time and raced at Fuji. The weather was awful and the conditions were terrible, but being in the crowd was marvellous..."

1 x SCRAMBLED EGGS

"...it's war out there now. I don't know how much money and how many people each manufacturer has, but it's a lot..."

1 x YOGHURT

"...my team is very private and it is simpler..."

1 x CUP OF GREEN TEA

"...sometimes I get the urge to take one of my F1 cars out for a drive..."

straight after Paul Stoddart announced the sale of Minardi, the prevalent sentiment from the paddock's non-aligned was 'so who do I cheer for now?' That was at Spa, last season. Two races later, here, appropriately, at Suzuka, there was an answer or at least the rumour of an answer: arise Aguri Suzuki, champion of underdogs everywhere.

Aguri Suzuki: Super Aguri. the names seem interchangeable and more than one person began the season accidentally referring to Super Aguri, team principal of Aguri Suzuki-Honda. Even Frank Williams isn't associated so closely with the team he founded. Aguri's Marlboro Menthols have replaced Stoddart's B&H Superkings, but the sense remains that a team at the back of the grid can be maintained by sheer force of will.

At Monza, Aguri celebrated a birthday: "Thirty-eight today," he deadpans, before grinning. "OK, 46." It isn't the only anniversary he was celebrating: "We announced the F1 team in November, but the decision was taken in September. I'd had discussions before that, but it was September when I made the decision 'OK, this is going to happen'.

"Timing is very important in Formula One. If I'd waited another year, I might never have got the chance. You have to take the opportunities presented to you."

Aguri has been racing for 36 of his 46 years, having started karting aged 10. His family home near Tokyo had the advantage of being near a karting track and Aguri became an after-school regular. "In the beginning, my father made me a go-kart: it was the start of my motorsports career. It makes me smile to think I'm still going – and that I've made it to the top."

For Aguri the real epiphany came when F1 paid its first visit to the Far East. "My big step came in 1976. F1 came to Japan for the first time and raced at Fuji. I remember the weather being awful. I don't know when they finally started the race, but it was late – maybe 4pm. By the end it was definitely beginning to get dark. The conditions were terrible, but being in the crowd was marvellous. F1 →



BREAKFAST WITH...

AGURI SUZUKI

For Aguri Suzuki, Suzuka marks the beginning and end of one career, and the birth of another. Over breakfast **Matt Youson** discusses the life and times of F1's newest team principal.

“
I'M HOPEFUL FOR
THE FUTURE. I THINK MORE
JAPANESE DRIVERS WILL
COME INTO F1 – MAYBE
NOT WITH MY TEAM,
BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER
”

→ came as a big shock. Remember, 30-35 years ago there really wasn't that much awareness about it in Japan. The information flow coming from Europe was poor, maybe once a month you might see something in a small motorsports magazine. After Fuji, I knew I wanted to be an F1 driver.

“I spent as much time in a go-kart as I could and, when I was 16, I got a contract with Yamaha as a factory driver. And suddenly it had become a serious career in motorsport. I won the Japanese championship twice and the Asian championship. I then moved into cars and drove pretty much everything: F3, F3000, GT cars, touring cars and – finally – F1.”

Aguri's first race has passed into F1 folklore. “It was a little unusual,” he concedes. “I was contracted with Fuji TV as a commentator for the 1988 Japanese Grand Prix and then the Tuesday before the race, Gérard Larrousse called me from France, and told me that one of his drivers was sick [Yannick Dalmas had contracted Legionnaires' disease]. He asked me if I was available to drive his car at the weekend... WHAT? And that was how I got my first drive. No testing, no experience of the F1 world, no problem. Thursday I had a seat fitting, Friday I was in the F1 car.”

The paddock familiar to Aguri Suzuki the team principal is far removed from that known by Aguri Suzuki the driver, and having spent a decade out of F1 allows Aguri a perspective perhaps not afforded to his peers. “Has it changed? Yes, it's completely different. Simply, it's war out there now. I don't know how much money and how many people each manufacturer has, but it's a lot. There are teams with 700 or 800 people. When I was driving, it simply wasn't like that – 70 or 80 was about it.”

“It wasn't a shock to come back to something so changed. I'm not naïve, I understood the situation and what I was getting into, but it is a little bit crazy. Too crazy, actually. Max Mosley's idea of taking F1 back to something smaller is a good one. I feel it is impossible to continue with the situation as it exists now. I don't think budgets of \$500million, and rising, is what F1 needs.”

Just as Aguri seized his opportunity, so he expects his compatriots to take theirs. The defining characteristic of the team, though Anthony Davidson might upset that appellation, has been its reliance on Japanese driving talent. In a similar vein to some memorable French and Italian privateer teams of years past, Aguri intends to give his nationals every opportunity to prove themselves at the very highest level.



“With the politics of F1 as they are, it is very difficult to find a seat. Manufacturers have all sorts of reasons for making their choices. My team, on the other hand, is very private and it is simpler. If there is a good Japanese driver who deserves his chance, I want to make sure he gets that chance. If that talent isn't available, I will have no problem looking to a South American or a European driver.”

“I'm hopeful for the future. I think more Japanese drivers will be coming into F1 – maybe not with my team, but that doesn't matter. There are good young drivers in Japan, but more than that, there are at least three good young Japanese drivers currently racing in Europe. We need Japanese drivers to get good results, we need people in Japan watching, we need Japanese sponsors paying attention to that and supporting young drivers – that's how it is supposed to work.”

With recent noises suggesting Suzuka won't get a 'Pacific Grand Prix' slot on next year's calendar, it looks as if this will be F1's last visit here for a while. As well as the place where Aguri began his F1 driving career, Suzuka is also the place where he finished that career and also the place where he stood on the podium. Leaving could be a cause of sadness, but Aguri, if a little wistful, is practical rather than sentimental. “Fuji has raised the standard with infrastructure and safety, so I think it's a good idea to hold the race there. Suzuka is more interesting, more challenging, more technical – but Fuji fits the concept of a modern F1 circuit much better. Suzuka in the future? I don't know, maybe it needs to improve its facilities and then, because it's much more interesting, maybe we'll see F1 coming back.”

Aguri himself will be back at Suzuka, however, as his expanding empire takes in much more than F1 alone. Given the attention that F1 receives, Aguri's other projects tend to be overlooked – but the Super Aguri Fernández Racing IRL team and Aguri's operations in various domestic Japanese formulae are all full-time jobs in their own right. How does he cope?

A sigh. “It's certainly very difficult these days. If I'm not at an F1 race, I'll often be in

England, or at a race somewhere else in the world, in the United States or Japan. My son and wife live in Tokyo, but I don't get to go there much. Even when I'm in Japan, it isn't necessarily the case that I will get to go home, there are lots of circuits, lots of places to be. Fortunately for me, my wife understands. We met at university, 28 years ago. I was already involved in this sort of life, so she knew that I'd always be travelling. She doesn't like motorsports herself, but she understands that this is simply what I do.”

It does beg a question: Aguri obviously gets a great deal of satisfaction from all of this, but does he really enjoy it? “Ah... hmm... well, it's my life! There are always problems, and stress and pressure – and I like it – I don't know whether you call that enjoyment or not... I think it is. For example, last year, I made the commitment to enter F1 and nearly everybody, including many of the people in the paddock, said: 'Impossible.' Coping with that sort of pressure is irresistible, it brings its own pleasures.”

Enjoyable then, but not necessarily relaxing. In fact, relaxation isn't something that figures heavily in his schedule at all. “Well, I concentrate on the motorsport, and I don't have time to give other sports or hobbies the attention they deserve. There's always another meeting or another place I need to be. I enjoy a game of golf, don't misunderstand, but now, for me, there isn't enough time in the day to play golf.”

When pressed, Aguri does admit to one hobby. “Radio-controlled helicopters.” A smile. “I used to fly a really big one, but that has its own complications – you need to go to approved locations to fly them. Now I have a small, electric model that I can fly anywhere. Near my home, near the factory, wherever I am. If I have 10 minutes, I let it loose.”

Aguri avoids any mention of driving. At 46 has he hung up his helmet for good, or does he find time to exercise the owner's right to squeeze in a few laps here and there? “Zero. In fact these days I rarely drive a road car. When I am at home in Japan, I live in the centre of Tokyo, my office is only a 10-minute walk, Honda is a five-minute walk. If I'm going to Fuji or Motegi I might drive, but most of the time I leave it to other people.”

“Sometimes I get the urge to take one of my F1 cars out for a drive. But this is fantasy, I think, not reality. I have to concentrate on management. This is my job now. Christian Danner keeps inviting me to get into the GP Masters and there is a temptation, but what if I have an accident? It's a big problem for my team. There's 150 people working in F1, 50 people in the US, 50 in Japan. If I die or get seriously injured out on the track, it will have ramifications. I've got to consider that.”

Aguri is quick to praise the efforts of everyone on the Super Aguri staff and point to the massive team effort that goes into it, but the desire and determination that emanate from the eponymous owner are the compelling forces. Things are going well. Next year's car is in progress, the team's future is secure, but Aguri Suzuki still holds it together with both hands. Maybe that's why the names seem interchangeable. ☑

PHOTOS: THOMAS BUTLER



BEST DAY

JEREZ, OCTOBER 1994

'I WISH I HAD RUNG MICHAEL FROM THE TOP OF EVEREST'

Japan's Ukyo Katayama says events in 1994 made him quit racing and climb mountains.

WORST DAY

SAN MARINO GRAND PRIX, MAY 1994



THE WHOLE OF 1994 was a very dark time for me. It started when my older sister died in childbirth because she had a rare condition that prevented her blood from clotting and they couldn't save her. This was only 10 years ago, so it is almost unthinkable that it could happen. Her death made me question my whole motivation for racing, so my head wasn't very strong at the start of the year. Then came Imola, and when Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna were killed, I really didn't know what to do. I didn't want to get into an F1 car, didn't want to drive and the whole idea seemed pointless.

I questioned what I was doing and realised I had lost 19 friends in racing. Even cars seemed to be pointless to me for a time. I would think about people who died in accidents on the road – children who lost their parents and parents who lost children and it seemed like a cancer. I found it hard to understand why people had to die like this, so you can imagine how difficult that made it for me to be a racing driver. There is a lot of stress in racing: to be always fighting a rival, or yourself, or the stopwatch is so difficult. That year I found that I didn't really want to fight any more.

When I was younger, I wanted fame and money and women, but those events in 1994 made me reconsider. I carried on for another couple of seasons, but when I stopped at the end of 1997, I knew I couldn't do F1 any longer. I still think it was good that I finished when I did. ☑

PHOTOS: SUTTON IMAGES

1 QUESTION TIME



1 Who is this (above left), what's the year and, just for fun, what was his father's racing connection?

2 Name the drivers on the podium at the 1998 Italian GP?

3 Which quartet drove for the AGS Ford team in 1989?

4 Who won the 1965 US GP at Watkins Glen?

5 Who finished second in the 1974 Swedish GP?

6 Who is this (above right)?

7 And where did he race his final GP and what happened to him during it?

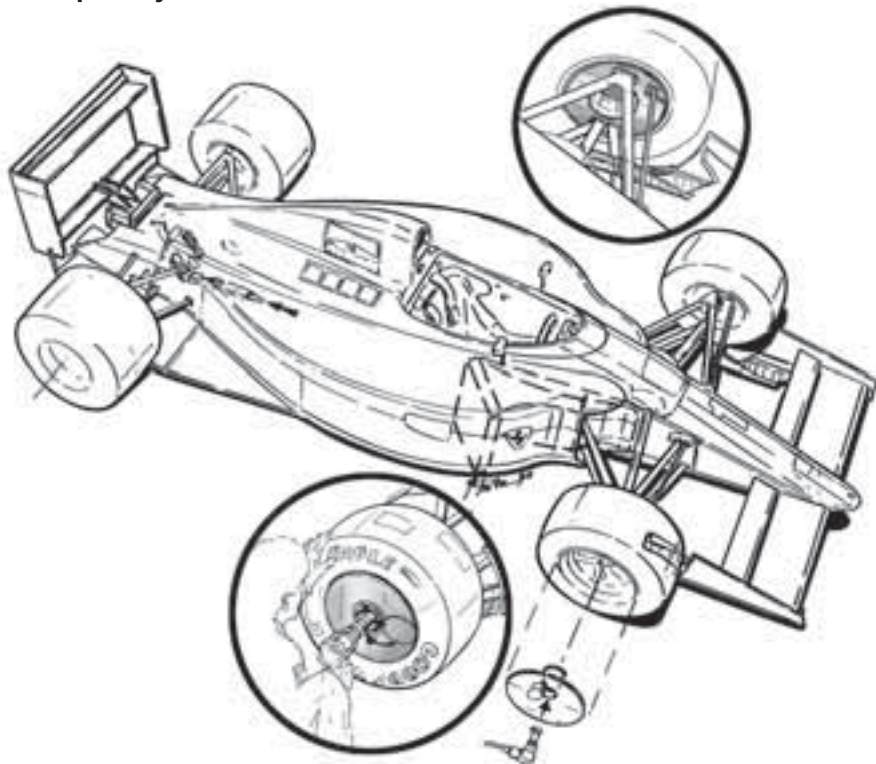
8 What mishap befell Patrick Tambay in the 1983 US GP in Detroit?

9 Which American driver won the 1967 Belgian GP in his own car?

10 What was the car called?

2 IN THE DETAIL

When did Ferrari use these completely enclosed wheels?



PHOTOS: SUTTON IMAGES; ILLUSTRATION: GIORGIO PIOLA

4 ONE-HIT WONDER

What's special about this picture from yesteryear?



5 WHO SAID THIS?

GRIDDLE

THE ULTIMATE F1 QUIZ

3 PROMISING YOUNGSTER

Who's this F1 aspirant, who spent years in Japan before getting the call to the big leagues.



6 WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?



7 CLUEWORD

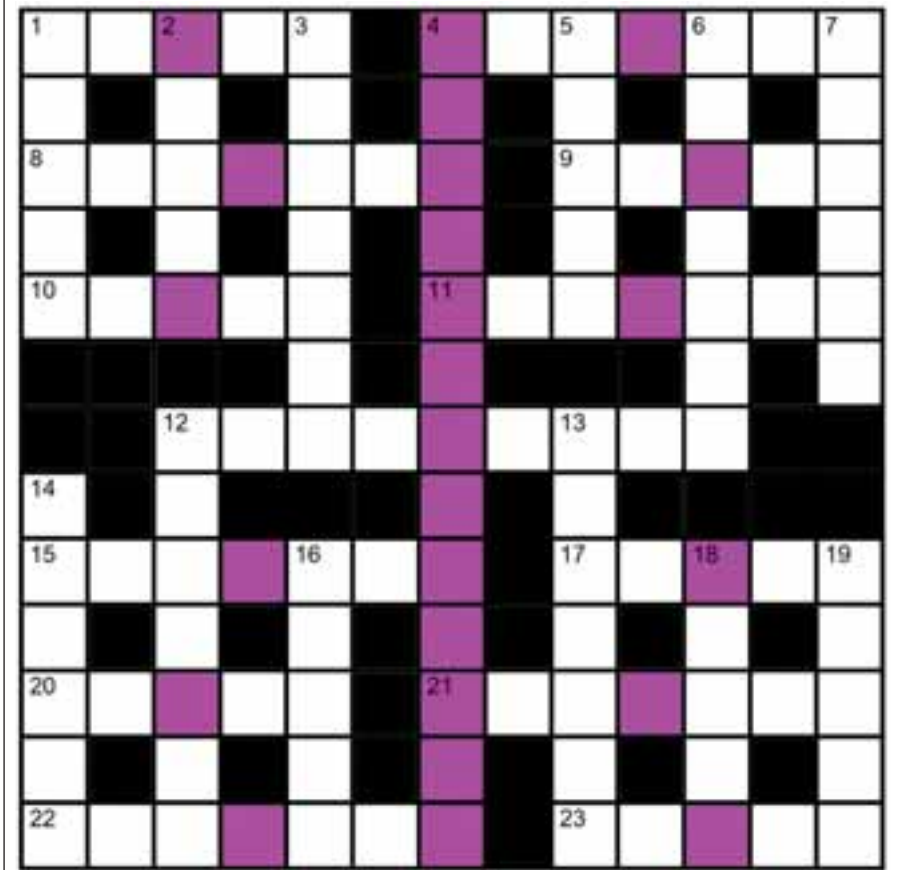
Find the F1 star hidden in the clues.

ACROSS

- 1 Thought highly of (5)
- 4 Neatest (7)
- 8 Girl's name (7)
- 9 Bird of prey (5)
- 10/21 A long life (1,4,7)
- 11 Prim and fussy person; card game (3,4)
- 12 Toed the line (9)
- 15 Settle (a problem) (4,3)
- 17 Rise from bed after sleeping (3,2)
- 20 Greek island (5)
- 21 See 10
- 22 Highest singing voice (7)
- 23 Higher than (5)

DOWN

- 1 Dance originating in Cuba (5)
- 2 The trunk of the human body (5)
- 3 New Zealand port (7)
- 4 F1 star (see above) (5,8)
- 5 Great fear (5)
- 6 Part of the United Kingdom (7)
- 7 With it (6)
- 12 Photograph taken near at hand (5-2)
- 13 Mauvish-crimson colour (7)
- 14 A sign of the zodiac (6)
- 16 Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 18 Dance originating in Argentina (5)
- 19 Fine kind of glass for making artificial gems (5)



'I WAS IN MY DANCING LESSON FOR MY WEDDING WALTZ WHEN I GOT A PHONE CALL TELLING ME TO JUMP ON A PLANE'

KEEF'S WORLD OF SPORT

Rounding-up the week's sporting action

FOOTBALL

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY

Results
(Friday)

Liechtenstein	1	Austria	2
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EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFYING

Results

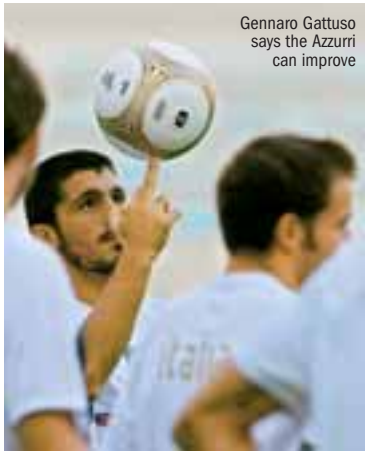
Czech Rep U21	2	Bosnia-Herze U21	0
England U21	1	Germany U21	0
Italy U21	0	Spain U21	0
Russia U21	4	Portugal U21	1
Serbia U21	0	Sweden U21	3

EURO 2008 QUALIFYING

Preview Gennaro Gattuso has been talking up the World Cup winners after they got off to a poor start in their Euro 2008 qualifying campaign. Italy are currently sixth out of seven teams in Group B with one point from two matches, five points behind joint leaders **France** and **Scotland**. The AC Milan hard man said Italy's next two matches against **Ukraine** and **Georgia** are crucial, and called on his team-mates to prove themselves. He said: "We are eager to prove that we are the world champions and deserved the title in July." Azzurri coach Roberto Donadoni is expected to field a front line of Mauro Camoranesi and Luca Toni with either Alessandro Del Piero and David Di Michele playing in the hole. Infant terrible Nicolas Anelka has been recalled to the **France** squad to face **Scotland** and the **Faroe Islands** in their Euro 2008 Group B qualifiers. Meanwhile Les Bleues former goalkeeper Fabien Barthez has announced he is retiring from the game. **Holland** will be without Ruud van Nistelrooy and Mark van Bommel for their matches against unbeaten **Bulgaria** on October 7 and **Albania** four days later. Barcelona star Van Bommel refuses to play under coach Marco Van Basten and the Holland coach is still at odds with Real Madrid striker Van Nistelrooy, who is still angry at being dropped during the World Cup. **Spain** look like they are reeling after last month's shock defeat to **Northern Ireland**. Coach Luis Aragones has dropped several players ahead of the match with **Sweden**, not least star player Raul. Also axed is Valencia winger Joaquin, who said the national team is in a state of disarray and that Aragones has no idea how to deal with it. "Right now the national team is a joke, it's in chaos and not even Luis knows which way to turn," the 25-year-old winger said. On Thursday, coach of the holders **Greece**, Otto Rehhagel, accused local reporters of trying to influence his choice of players for the national squad ahead of their qualifier against **Norway**. The press has been critical of the German for failing to bring enough new players into the squad. Rio Ferdinand has tipped his fellow Manchester United defender Gary Neville to become only the



100 Club: Gary Neville is on course to win 100 England caps



Gennaro Gattuso says the Azzurri can improve

fifth **England** player to win 100 caps. Neville, 31, has played in three European championships and two World Cups and should reach the milestone in about two years' time. England are expected to start with Peter Crouch and Wayne Rooney up front. Steve Staunton is likely to be without striker Kevin Doyle for the **Republic of Ireland's** Euro 2008 qualifier against **Cyprus** and Wednesday's tie with the **Czech Republic**. Doyle missed training in Nicosia on Thursday because of his ankle injury. **Fixtures** (Yesterday) Group A: Kazakhstan v Poland, Armenia v Finland, Serbia v Belgium, Portugal v Azerbaijan. Group B: Faroe Islands v Lithuania, Scotland v France, Italy v Ukraine. Group C: Moldova v Bosnia, Hungary v Turkey, Greece v Norway. Group D: Wales v Slovakia, Czech Republic v San Marino, Cyprus v Ireland. Group E: Russia v Israel, England v Macedonia, Croatia v Andorra. Group F: Denmark v Northern Ireland, Latvia v Iceland, Sweden in Spain. Group G: Romania v Belarus, Bulgaria v Netherlands, Slovenia v Luxembourg.

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES

Brazil are unbeaten in three games under their new coach Dunga, who replaced Carlos Alberto Parreira following their disappointing World Cup performance when they were knocked out in the quarter-finals in Germany. Bayern Munich pair Roque Santa Cruz and Julio Dos Santos have pulled out of **Paraguay's** friendly against **Australia** in Brisbane yesterday, saying it is too far to travel for one game. Australia defender Craig Moore was criticised in his national press for missing the game. **Fixtures** (Yesterday) Australia v Paraguay, Germany v Georgia, Kuwait v Brazil.

JAPAN: J-LEAGUE

Results (Friday)

Kyoto Purple Sanga	1	Omiya Ardia	1
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Fixtures (Yesterday) Kyoto v Omiya, Niigata v Yokohama FM, Nagoya v F-Tokyo, Urawa v Chiba, Kawasaki-F v Oita Todoroki, Iwata v G-Osaka, C-Osaka v Shimizu, Fukuoka v Kashima, Kofu v Hiroshima.

MOTORSPORTS

BATHURST RACING FESTIVAL

Two drivers were in critical condition after a crash on the first day of the Bathurst racing festival, where thousands of fans had gathered to pay tribute to Australia's late driving legend Peter Brock. Mark Porter from New Zealand and home driver David Clark were airlifted to hospital after the crash during the V8 Supercar race. Bathurst 1000 qualifying (Friday): Mark Skafie, Holden Racing Team, 2:06.9764; Jason Bright, Ford Performance Racing +0.1203; Rick Kelly, Toll HSV Dealer Team +0.7016; Jason Richards, Tasman Motorsport +0.7158; Greg Murphy, Supercheap Auto Racing +0.8766; Russell Ingall, Caltex Racing +0.9004.

TENNIS

JAPAN OPEN

World number one Roger Federer survived an almighty scare from 1.078th-ranked Takao Suzuki before battling his way into the semi-finals of the Japan Open with a tight three-set victory on Friday. The top seed came through 4-6 7-5 7-6 after being pushed to the limit by the Japanese wildcard. Meanwhile, German Benjamin Becker's 3.24am finish against Jiri Novak in Tokyo was the latest for a singles match in ATP history, according to ATP. Becker knocked out the Czech in 6-3 3-6 7-6 to reach the quarter-finals.

Quarter final (Friday) Benjamin Becker (Germany) beat Jarkko Nieminen (Finland) 6-7 (5) 7-6 (6) 6-4; Hyung-Taik Lee (South Korea) beat Tommy Robredo (Spain) 7-6 (3) 4-6 6-1; Roger Federer (Switzerland) beat Takao Suzuki (Japan) 4-6 7-5 7-6 (3). Tin Henman (Britain) beat Mario Ancic (Croatia) 6-2, 6-2.

Round 3 Tim Henman (Britain) beat Juan Martin Del Potro (Argentina) 7-6(3) 6-3; Mario Ancic (Croatia) beat Rainer Schuettler (Germany) 6-2 4-6 6-4.

STUTTGART GRAND PRIX WOMEN'S SINGLES

Round 2 (Thursday) Nadia Petrova (Russia) beat Anna-Lena Groenefeld (Germany) 6-3 6-4; Patty Schnyder (Switzerland) beat Shahar Peer (Israel) 7-6 (3) 2-6 6-4; Michaella Krajick (Netherlands) beat Lisa Raymond (US) 6-4 6-2; Tatiana Golovin (France) beat Iveta Benesova (Czech Republic) 6-4 6-3; Daniela Hantuchova (Slovakia) beat Dinara Safina (Russia) 6-2 6-2.

Round 2 (Wednesday) Svetlana Kuznetsova (Russia) beat Martina Mueller (Germany) 6-1 6-4; Elena Dementieva (Russia) beat Katarina Srebotnik (Slovenia) 4-6 7-5 7-5. **Round 1** Iveta Benesova (Czech Republic) beat Francesca Schiavone (Italy) 6-3 6-7(5) 3-0 (Schiavone retired); Jelena Jankovic (Serbia) beat Mary Pierce (France) 7-6(7) 6-3; Daniela Hantuchova (Slovakia) beat Sybille Bammer (Austria) 6-3 5-7 6-3; Tsvetana Pironkova (Bulgaria) beat Karolina Sprem (Croatia) 6-1 6-4.

JAPAN OPEN WOMEN'S SINGLES

Quarter final (Friday) Yung-Jan Chan (Taiwan) beat 2-Ai Sugiyama (Japan) 6-3 6-4; Marion Bartoli (France) beat Junri Namigata (Japan) 6-2 6-1; Camille Pin (France) beat Youlia Fedossova (France) 5-7 6-4 6-1; Aiko Nakamura (Japan) beat Jamea Jackson (US) 6-1 1-6 7-6 (4).

Round 2 Junri Namigata (Japan) beat Paola Suarez (Argentina) 2-4 (Suarez retired); Aiko Nakamura (Japan) beat Anabel Medina (Spain) 5-2 (Medina retired); Marion Bartoli (France) beat Vera Dushevina (Russia) 6-2 6-4 Jamea Jackson (US) beat Alicia Molik (Australia) 6-3 6-1; Camille Pin (France) beat Lilia Osterloh (US) 6-4 3-6 6-0.

ICE HOCKEY

NHL

Results (Friday)

Atlanta	2	Tampa Bay	3
Ottawa	0	Toronto	6
Detroit	1	Vancouver	3
NY Rangers	5	Washington	2
Pittsburgh	4	Philadelphia	0
Nashville	6	Chicago	8
Minnesota	3	Colorado	2
Phoenix	6	NY Islanders	3
Edmonton	3	Calgary	1
San Jose	5	St.Louis	4

HOCKEY

WOMEN'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

From Madrid, Spain

Results (Friday)

China	4	South Africa	0
United States	1	Germany	0
England	0	Japan	2

BLOWPIPE DARTS

ETHNIC MINORITY GAMES, CHINA

Competitors from all over China gathered for the Ethnic Minority Games in southwestern China last weekend. One of the highlights was the blowpipe darts in which competitors fired poisoned darts at a target, scoring points for accuracy. But other events did not run so smoothly, the results of the women's dragon boat racing event were reviewed after athletes complained of "big women with Adam's apples". Referees subsequently found that several of the competitors were actually men wearing wigs. And another dispute in the wrestling final between Zhaotong and Wenshan City was resolved after there was a brawl and the Wenshan team was chased away by an angry mob.

Big in Japan: Giant kite flying



JAPANESE SPORTS

DRIFTING

As in The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift. As motorsport goes, this is the polar opposite of F1. Very much a participation sport, drifting is fast catching on as a cross between off-roading and street racing. Instead of multi-millionaires driving multi-million euro cars around multi-million dollar circuits, drifting features souped-up road cars skidding around in the mud. Fun, eh? The rules are all the cars must be rear-wheel drive production cars and they must have catalytic converters to keep the noise down.

GIANT KITE FLYING

Kite flying is popular all over South East Asia and India, but the Japanese don't do anything by halves as shown by the Yokaichi Giant Kite Festival held every May in Higashiomi. The festival has been running for more than 300 years and records show that a kite 240 tatami mats wide was flown in 1882. These days, most kites are rather smaller but they are still elaborate and their designs, shapes and sizes are often meaningful.

EKIDEN

The first ekiden long-distance road relay race was staged between Kyoto and Tokyo (508km) in 1917 and lasted for three days. Ekiden is popular in Japan but races are held all over continental Europe, the US and New Zealand. Runners usually run a leg of up to 30km in teams of five or six, although distances can be much greater. One of the most popular modern ekiden in Japan is the Hakone Ekiden, which features teams of Japanese university students and is held early in the New Year.

TOUGE

Is a lot like drifting only more dangerous. Touge is racing street cars down mountain passes or in fact any twisting section of road on the side of a hill. Because of the narrow roads, overtaking can be very difficult and often hazardous, so just like driving into Monte Carlo then.

JUJUTSU

A bit like wushu in China, this is an all-encompassing term for martial arts, particularly those practised by the Samurai, such as judo and kenjutsu (see below). As opposed to other martial arts, which often focus on attacking, jujutsu emphasises self-defence, so many of the moves involve blocking, throwing, pinning, joint-locking and strangling. But as sport became more popular in Japan, people began to practise jujutsu to stay in shape, rather than alter other people's shapes.

KENDO

The traditional art of hitting with a big stick, about seven million people practise Kendo in modern



Drifting offers thrills and spills to racers on a budget

kenjutsu, sojutsu, bojutsu and kumi-uchi (battlefield grappling) or jujutsu.

OTHER FIGHTING DISCIPLINES

There are numerous schools in Japan teaching all kinds of methods of fighting, including one involving fighting with umbrellas. However, the best known are Kusarigamajutsu (fighting with sickles), Sojutsu (spears) and Juttejutsu (big clubs).

JUDO

In judo, two unarmed wrestlers compete with various throwing and grappling techniques. Like jujutsu, the skill lies in using your opponents weight against him but the object is to pin, smother and generally choke the living daylight out of him until he cries 'Uncle'.

AIKIDO

Aikido is perhaps the deepest of the martial arts, having been conceived by the warrior Morihei Ueshiba (or O-Sensei) who underwent a Road to Damascus conversion and wanted to combine his fighting skills with an essentially peaceful philosophy. Aikido combines elements and skills from several martial arts, including kenjutsu, using his hands to strike like a sword. As well as unarmed combat, students also train with quarterstaves, knives, swords and other weapons. But the disciplines all use principles of energy and motion to redirect, neutralise and control attackers.

KYUDO (ARCHERY)

Played with a longbow, archery in Japan is just the same as archery everywhere else, but in the 17th century they had a pretty impressive champion called Wasa Daihachiro who shot more than 13,000 arrows in 24 hours, hitting the target more than 8000 times. More impressive still was that Daihachiro shot on a 120m range with a ceiling of only 2.2m.

KEMARI

Possibly derived from Cuju in Japan, which is football played with stones, Kemari is at least played with a ball, which is made of deerskin with the fur on the inside. The game was first played in Japan in about the ninth century AD. Even today, it's played in traditional robes called kariginu and cumbersome crow hats. Like keepy-uppy, Kemari has no winners or losers, instead players are judged by their skills at keeping the ball in the air and need to be able to pass it so that it's easy for the next player to control the ball for his display.

KEIRIN

This spectacular track cycling event pits up to nine riders against one another in a short sprint from a rolling start. Riders follow the pace car, cycle or motorcycle at a starting speed of 25kph building to 50kph by the time the pace-setter leaves the track about 700 metres from the end. The cyclists then sprint up to 70kph to the end. Keirin began in Japan in the late '40s and proved a hit with gamblers before it eventually became an Olympic event at Sydney 2000.

YABUSAME

Instead of pleasing gamblers, yabusame, or archery on horseback, was developed to please the gods and ensure a good harvest. It was later perfected by samurai to train for combat. The archers gallop down a 255-metre track, controlling the horse with their knees, while he draws his bow ready to shoot. When the rider fires at the target, he shouts "In-Yo-In-Yo" (darkness and light) and the blunt arrow hits the target with a resonant thump. But the sport wasn't always so benevolent, ancient archers used to practise on dogs, until Buddhist priests persuaded the samurai to use blunt arrows so the dogs were only bruised. In the end, the samurai stopped shooting dogs altogether.

SOFT TENNIS

Tennis was brought to Japan at the end of the 19th century by a European missionary and the Japanese modified the sport by introducing a smaller racquet and soft rubber balls. The rules are more or less the same as regular tennis except that until 1992, only the baseline player in doubles was allowed to serve.

SUMO

A bit like the wrestlers, sumo is the daddy of Japanese sports. The object of the game is that a man the size of Mount Fuji has to push, grapple or otherwise force someone who could be his bigger brother out of the ring. The ancient sport has a great deal of ritual and tradition surrounding it, not least in the training and discipline of the wrestlers. Like gladiators in ancient Rome, the rikishi, to give them their proper name, have to live in a commune and live by the strict guidance of their trainer. The junior sumo literally get pushed around all day. They can only wear light cotton robes and straw sandals, even in winter, and have to help cook, clean and generally run around after the senior sumo. They are not allowed to eat breakfast but do get a very large lunch of meat, rice and beer. All this skipping meals, and bingeing on carbs and protein helps them to gain weight quickly. But once they attain senior status, it's the life of Riley. They can wear silk robes all the time, have a lie-in and have their pick of the ladies. So not that unlike top footballers. The only down side is that most sumo tend to die of a coronary at about age 60.

BENOIT BET

So we come to the penultimate round of the Schumacher bet and find Michael in top form and at the front of the grid beside his pole-sitting team-mate Felipe Massa.

And with his younger brother and Jarno Trulli behind him in their Toyotas, he should be well protected from an early challenge by his title rival going into the perilous Turn One.

Schumi has won here six times in his career and he's been on the podium nine times in total, so it's fair to say he knows the circuit like the back of his hand, and with Bridgestones performing well, Michael and Ferrari are in the driving seat.

Having surprised many with his win in China, punters reckon Michael is looking at a victory today. Of course, if it rains this afternoon, it could affect Michael's finish, but I wouldn't bet on it.

SEASONAL BET:

- 1 Pat Symonds; 2 Robert Doombos;
- 3 Franck Montagny; 4 Silvia Hoffer;
- 5 Mike Gascoyne; 6 Hermann Tilke;
- 7 Susie Forman.

GRIDDLE ANSWERS

- 1 Question Time
- 1 It's Alex Soler-Roig (ESP) who failed to qualify for the 1970 French GP. His father was the surgeon who treated Jochen Rindt after the Austrian's accident in Spain the previous year.
- 2 Michael Schumacher, Eddie Irvine and Ralf Schumacher.
- 3 Philippe Streiff, Joachim Winkelhock, Gabriele Tarquini and Yannick Dalmas.
- 4 Graham Hill.
- 5 Patrick Depailler in a Tyrrell-Ford.
- 6 American driver Bob Bondurant.
- 7 His raced in F1 for the last time at the 1966 Mexican GP where his fuel injection failed.
- 8 Tambay qualified third in his Ferrari but stalled on the grid and had to retire.
- 9 Dan Gurney.
- 10 Eagle-Weslake.
- 2 In **The Detail** Ferrari used these wheels in qualifying for the Italian Grand Prix in 1990.
- 3 **Promising Youngster** It's one-time Jordan racer Ralph Firman, who last year raced A1GP for Team Ireland.
- 4 **One-hit Wonder** It was South Africa's Dave Charlton who made a single foray into F1 in 1971 with this Lotus 72D.
- 5 **Who Said This?** It was Mika Salo on his surprise call to replace Michael Schumacher, after the German broke his leg at Silverstone in 1999.



- 6 **What Happened Next?** Ralf Schumacher and Takuma Sato collided at turn two of the 2004 Bahrain GP.
- 7 **Clewdor Solution**
- Across 1** Rated 4 **Tidiest 8** Miranda **9** Eagle **10** A good 11 **Old maid 12** Conformed **15** Iron out 17 **Get up 20** **Crete 21** Innings **22** Soprano **23** Above
- Down 1** Rumba **2** Torso **3** Dunedin **4** Tiago Monteiro **5** Dread **6** England **7** Trendy **12** Close-up **13** Magenta **14** Pisces **16** Omega **18** Tango **19** Paste

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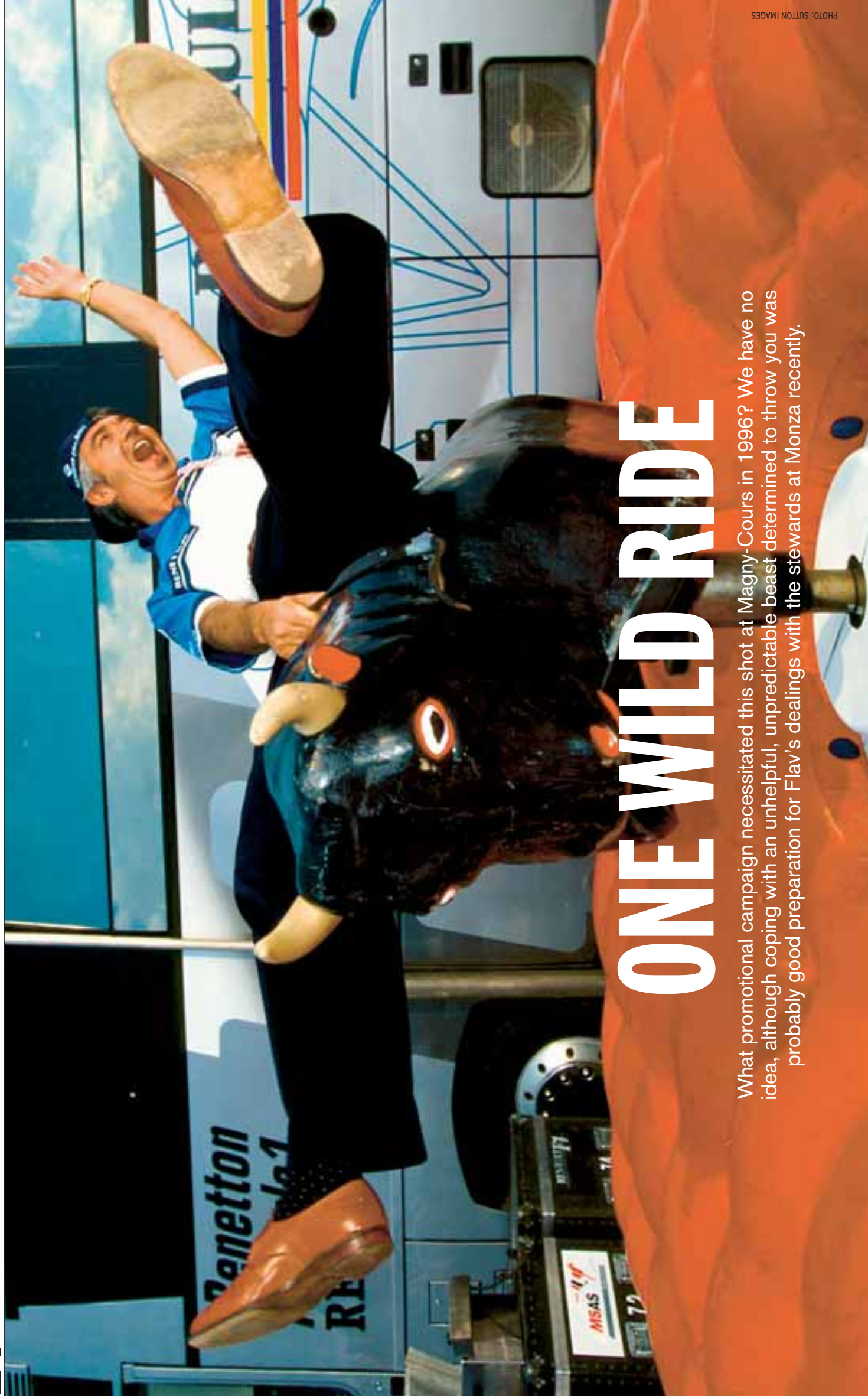


PHOTO: SUTTON IMAGES

ONE WILD RIDE

What promotional campaign necessitated this shot at Magny-Cours in 1996? We have no idea, although coping with an unhelpful, unpredictable beast determined to throw you was probably good preparation for Flav's dealings with the stewards at Monza recently.