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F1 RACING

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# Damon Hill

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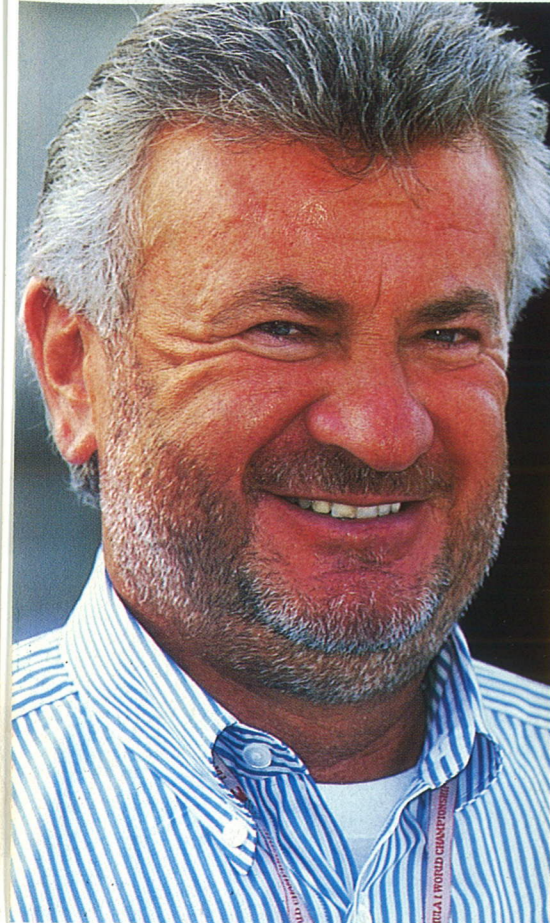
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Y84 Willi Weber is the king of the '10 percenters'. In other words, he doubles Michael and Ralf Schumacher's pay packets.

Y40 Over the Hill? Hardly. Damon has proved there's life in the old dog yet



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# F1 RACING

Cover photograph  
Robert Wilson

Contents photographs  
Daren Heath, Matt Cooke,  
Martyn Eloff/LAT, Nick Wright

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<100 His misdemeanour with some CS gas gave Schumacher a chance. Any regrets, Bertrand?

>134 A fashion accessory or a vital piece of kit for an F1 driver? Who cares? Just feel the quality

Y76 If it looks right, it is right. The Arrows disproves this rule, but who can resist those curves?



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Gachot will always be known as the F1 driver who did a stretch in the slammer. Now he's ready to confess

>56 He's been called the ideal number two, but Eddie reckons he doesn't play second fiddle to Schumacher. He's got a few plans



## Just how close is close?

EIGHTY POINTS ALL, six wins all, two races to go. Close? Yes, but not quite as close as it looks. Mika Hakkinen is still twice as likely to win the world championship as Michael Schumacher. Confused? Then consider this.

Schumacher's Ferrari hasn't had a mechanical failure since Melbourne, when its engine blew; should his excellent run come to an end at the Nürburgring – and it can't last for ever – then a Hakkinen win there would make the Finn champion. For then, even if Michael wins at Suzuka and Mika is unplaced – putting both men on 90 points and seven wins apiece – Mika would be champion by dint of having scored two second places to the German's one.

Things may not pan out like that, of course; the point is that Michael needs both races to sew up the title, while Mika could win it with one to spare. And that knowledge, in the heat of battle, could give Mika the psychological

safety cushion he needs. For Michael, a mistake at the Nürburgring could end his chances once and for all; by contrast Mika, even if he louses the 'Ring up good and proper, will have a chance to make amends in Japan.

POST-MONZA, the Mika-Michael face-off might be the sport's biggest news, but the month's best story is that which unfolded at the Belgian Grand Prix two weeks before.

We weren't planning to put Damon Hill on our cover this month. In May – after a dismal performance at Monaco, where his Jordan was barely quicker than Shinji Nakano's Minardi – we wondered whether we'd ever want to put him on the cover again. So how did it happen? How did the ridiculous become sublime in just four months? It's an epic tale – and, as usual, *F1 Racing's* Peter Windsor has the inside line. Check it out on page 40.

**Matt Bishop**



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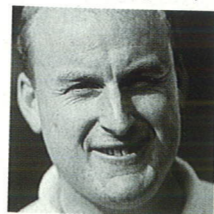
**James Allen**  
 ITV's principal racing newshound – make that pits bull terrier – Allen is as skilled with a PC as he is with a mike. He's good mates with most of the drivers too, as his chummy portrait of Mika Salo makes clear (page 48).

**Mira Stout**  
 An accomplished novelist and prolific contributor to some of the world's most prestigious magazines, Stout is a marvellous observer of nuance. Her account of a day spent with Eddie Irvine (page 56) is both insightful and funny.

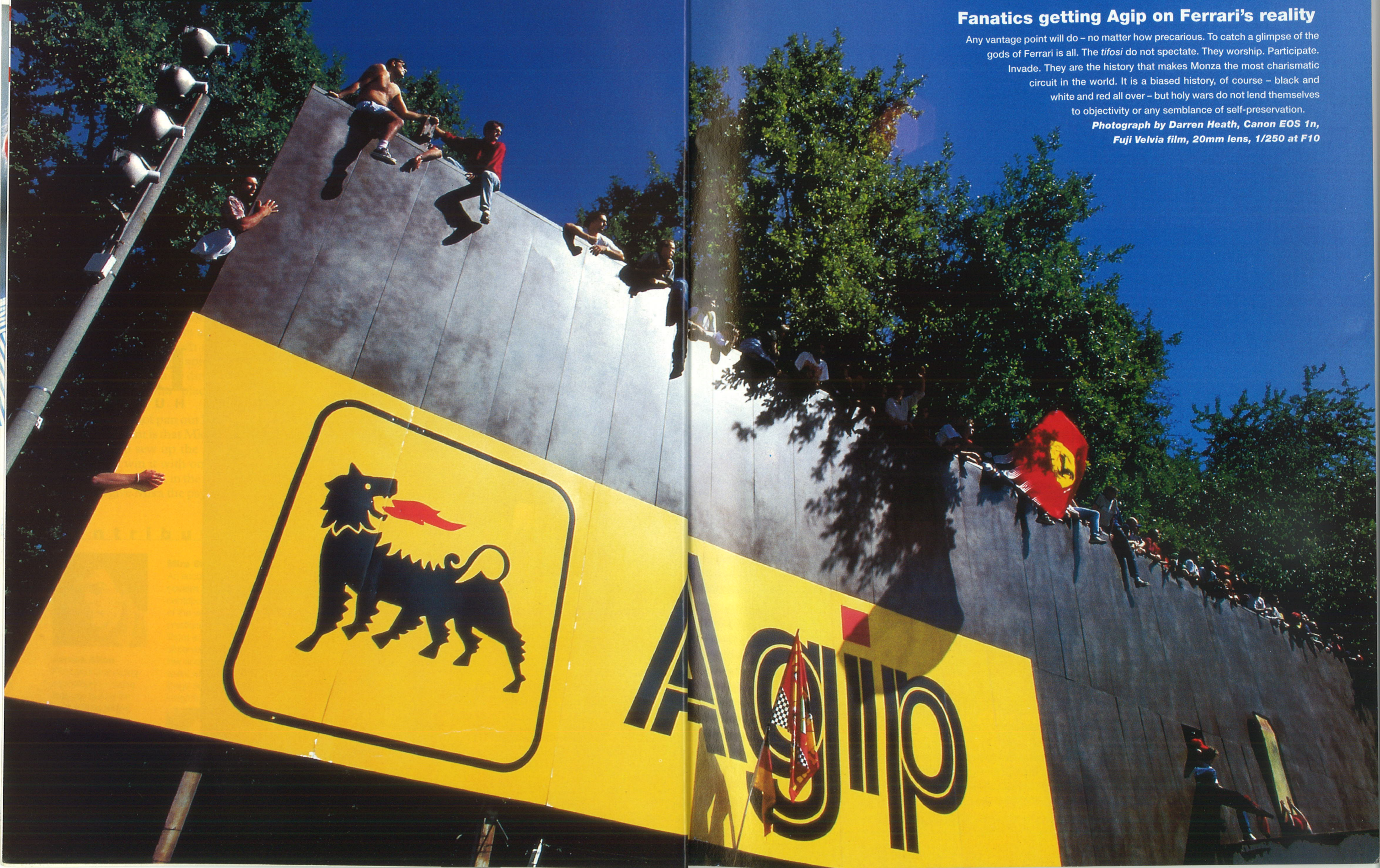


**Steve Matchett**  
 As an ex-Benetton race mechanic, few racing journalists are as technically clued-up as Matchett. Who better, then, to delve under the skin of the gorgeous Arrows A19? Beauty, in the A19's case, is not only skin-deep. See page 76.

**Charles Coates**  
 At six-foot-six, Charles is a giant among F1 photographers. A real enthusiast, he thinks deeply about the sport – and the result is brilliant and innovative pictures. Check out his superb Minardi-drivers-at-home pics (page 90).



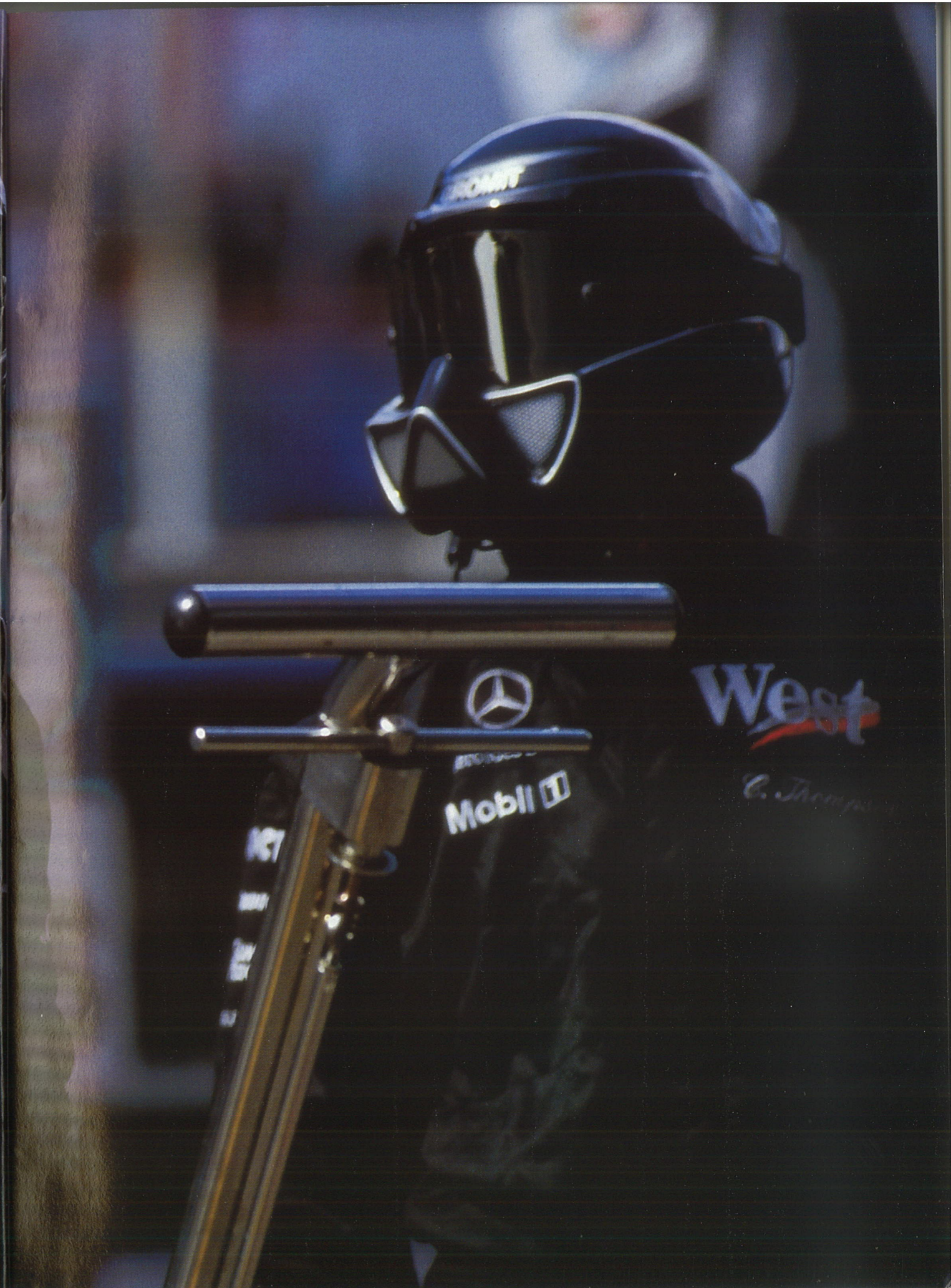
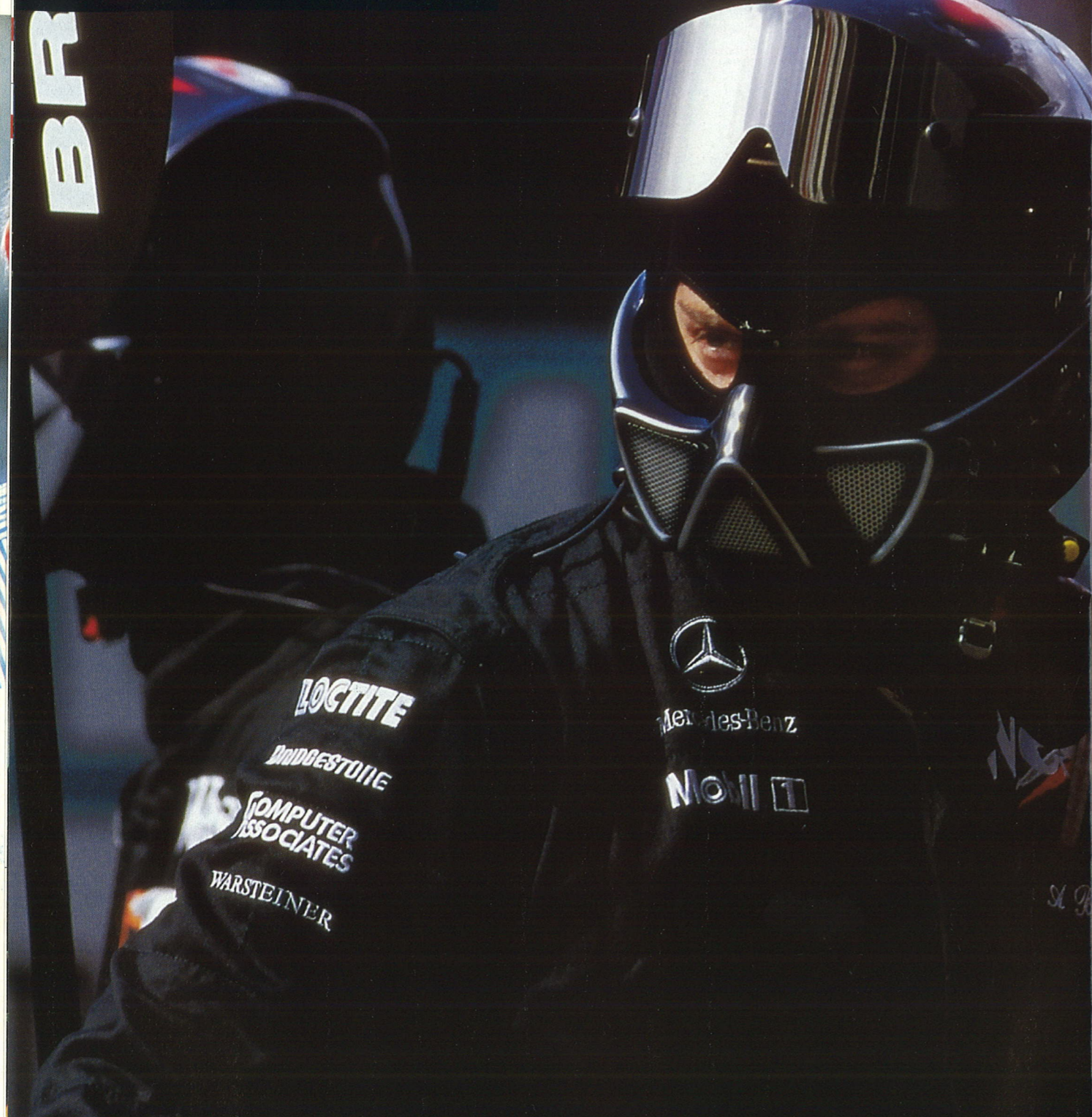
**BOSS**  
 HUGO BOSS



**Fanatics getting Agip on Ferrari's reality**

Any vantage point will do – no matter how precarious. To catch a glimpse of the gods of Ferrari is all. The *tifosi* do not spectate. They worship. Participate. Invade. They are the history that makes Monza the most charismatic circuit in the world. It is a biased history, of course – black and white and red all over – but holy wars do not lend themselves to objectivity or any semblance of self-preservation.

*Photograph by Darren Heath, Canon EOS 1n, Fuji Velvia film, 20mm lens, 1/250 at F10*



**When The Force may no longer be with you**

They did what they could. Turned Mika around in 9.3 seconds. Adjusted his tyre pressures in a bid to cure the time-consuming oversteer. It seemed to work too. For a time. But the McLaren pit crew could only look on in anguish as the closing gap to Schumacher was spun away, second became third, third became fourth, and a seven-point lead was erased. As for David, he didn't even reach them. The one-twos in Australia, Brazil, Germany, Spain and Austria meant nothing. For a time. Luxembourg is another day, another race.

*Photograph by Darren Heath, Canon EOS 1n, Fuji Velvia film, 200mm lens, 1/500 at F5*

**'Sad old man' wins as 'embarrassing' Irvine spins**

That's one win for that nice Eddie Jordan. And two fingers to that nasty Eddie Irvine. Damon flicks a V-for-victory signal to his doubters with a drive at Spa that blends the patience of experience and the need for speed that still clearly burns within him. Sure, he couldn't live with Schuey once the Ferrari had sliced by, but then no-one could. What he did do was qualify ahead of all but the Silver Arrows, keep Schumacher Senior at bay for almost eight laps and then mop up as the hotshots – his team-mate excepted – fizzled out in the rain.

*Photograph by Darren Heath, Canon EOS 1n, 200mm lens, Fuji Velvia film, 1/15 at F11*





### Coming through cloud and unclear

You grab the occasional reference point out of the corner of your eye. You listen oh-so-carefully to the changing engine note of the unseen car in front. You drive in braille, basically. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred you emerge from the cloud of spray intact. Unharméd. On the remaining occasion, a rear wing jumps at you from the murk. No time to brake. Smack! Giancarlo Fisichella got the shock of his life when his misty Spa world snapped into widescreen Minardivision. The Benetton was not intact. Its driver, thankfully, was unharméd. *Photograph by Darren Heath, Canon EOS 1n, 600mm lens, Fujl Velvia film, 1/250 at F4*



### Wheels at the Bus Stop go up-n-down

Imagine the frustration. Eighty seconds of unadulterated, exhilarating sweeps and plunges: Eau Rouge, Pouhon, Blanchimont. Bliss at 180mph. The ultimate test of a racing driver's art. Then comes the grinding full stop of the Bus Stop. What makes it worse is that it is a bus stop. The shame of it! But any golfer will tell you that a three-foot tap-in is just as important as a soaring 300-foot drive. Eddie Irvine smacks over the kerbs in a bid to shave a tenth or two. Pretty it ain't – but then neither is the corner. *Photograph by Steven Tee/LAT, Canon EOS 1n, 500mm lens, Fuji Velvia film, 1/250 at F5.6*



## johnny herbert

After three so-so years at Sauber, it's all change again. For '99, home is ... Stewart. What should we expect?

I'M NOT SOMEONE who changes loyalties without good reason, so I had been thinking long and hard about my future well before I made the decision to switch to Stewart Grand Prix for 1999.

For me, the major attraction of Stewart - F1's very own tartan army - is that Ford are a major manufacturer and are now pushing hard in the right direction. Stewart are a good team too, and they can do really well. There is terrific potential here, and if we all put our heads together there is no reason why the team cannot do a lot better.

Of course, some of my less ardent supporters think my latest move is a well paid prelude to retirement. But they thought that when I joined Sauber in 1996! I really don't see it that way at all. Retirement has always been the last thing on my mind. As far as I'm concerned, I'm looking forward to a long-term relationship with a growing team - not to winding down my career.

Remember that Stewart Grand Prix are still a young team - just two racing years old. Jordan started in F1 in 1991, and they've only just won their first race. They had a fantastic first year, but their second and third weren't exactly brilliant. I think you'd be naive to go purely on Stewart's results to date. That's very unfair on a new team. Anyone who really understands F1 knows that success doesn't come overnight. You only have to look at the manner in which McLaren struggled to get back to the front in recent years.

**'For me, the major attraction of Stewart, F1's very own tartan army, is that Ford are a major manufacturer and are now pushing hard in the right direction'**



Stewart will be making changes for 1999, and I'm sure that the revisions that they propose will improve things. That's one of the factors that attracted me in the first place. That and the connection with Ford. It's one hell of a lot better to be with a big manufacturer than to be merely a customer. It seems to me that Ford are fighting hard in Europe to make the F1 thing work. The last time I worked with the company was in my first season with Sauber, in 1996. Compared with then, there seems to be a whole different attitude. Everyone is really focused.

The detractors were also quick to point out the fate of the two previous drivers at Stewart, Jan Magnussen and Jos Verstappen. But, honestly, how can you look at things that way? If you ask me, Jan was in some ways lucky to get a second season after the disappointing way he went in the first. A lot of other teams would have ditched him far, far sooner. Obviously it's been difficult for Jos because he's only had a few races.

I'd say, with all my experience, that I was probably an obvious choice, and I don't mean that to sound arrogant. I know I can gel very well with Rubens Barrichello, and that we'll be very positive together. Of course we've got to push damned hard to make it happen. I'm really looking forward to playing a major role in the development and testing and having a recognised input into the direction that the team take.

It would be wrong for me to say anything negative about Sauber. I enjoyed my time with the team; but after a few things that have happened this year, I felt it was time for a fresh challenge.

As far as our prospects are concerned for the 1999 season, a lot will depend on what happens if and when Goodyear pull out. At present, I would say that Goodyear are doing slightly better than Bridgestone, but if there is just one tyre manufacturer that will be better for us. Right now there is only one real Bridgestone runner, McLaren, and it's around them that development is done. That would change if Goodyear leave.

Jackie and Paul Stewart know that they need a better chassis - and that is where the Ford connection will also help, because the team have other avenues within the Blue Oval to exploit which will enable them to achieve that improvement. I also know that Cosworth's planned new engine is much less of a compromise than the present unit. All in all, I think we will be well placed to surprise a lot of people. **1**

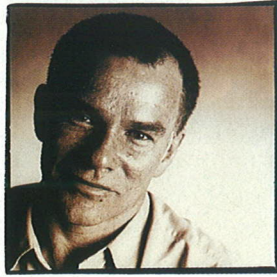
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**peter windsor**

Has 1998 been a bad year for David Coulthard? Let's put it this way: 1999 could be great

NINETEEN-NINETY-EIGHT – the year for David Coulthard that never was. Or always will be? On the minus side, he's been blown away by his teammate – the one guy you know you have to beat. I keep hearing James Hunt's words as he would have said them had he still been working for the Beeb:

"Well, there's no question about it, Murray. Coulthard has been outraced and outqualified. Simple as that. No excuses. Hakkinen has destroyed him – mentally and physically. Needs to spend a little less time analysing and more time getting on with it, does Mr Coulthard. A bit too nice to be a racing driver."

Right. Thing is, there's another side to life and it is about being yourself and, although David Coulthard will be wanting to write off 1998 as the year that preceded his great year – 1999 – he will eventually come to realise, I am sure, that there was another side to Mika's Year. It should be filed under the heading of Progress (subtitle: Reality) and he should be very ready to refer to it in racing days to come.

What 1998 has taught David Coulthard is that he can earn good money, appear on the cover of style magazines and find it difficult to walk into restaurants unnoticed – he can

**'Nineteen-ninety-eight was the year when he proved he is strong enough to take the strain'**



do all these things – and yet none of them means anything because, bottom line, he isn't winning.

View it as an inevitable sequence: first The Racing Driver struggles for recognition. Then he gets his opportunity. Then he wakes up, knowing he's a Formula 1 Driver. Then he starts to earn money, crash road cars and trade-in girlfriends. Then, if he's shrewd and lucky and strong enough, he wins races and wins world championships.

For David Coulthard, 1998 was the year when he proved he *is* strong enough to take the strain. A number of things point to this:

1. He has very rarely complained in public.
2. He has frequently praised Mika.
3. The classic purity of his driving style remains undimmed.
4. Very rarely has he been more than a few tenths slower than Mika.
5. He has re-signed with West McLaren Mercedes for 1999.
6. He still views his relatively small salary in global terms (ie: he knows how lucky he is to be paid to do something he sort of enjoys).
7. He is bright enough to know that, should Mika win the title in 1998, he (David) will have as good a chance as anyone in 1999.
8. He has been an effective team-mate to Mika, pushing him to lap times that he may not otherwise have achieved and proving an excellent foil to the Ferraris.

Don't get me wrong: I don't think that David Coulthard deliberately took Michael Schumacher out of the Belgian Grand Prix. But, just as there is this grey area between 'legal' and 'illegal' – a grey area that the top F1 engineers exploit to the full – so there is also a grey area in the drivers' code of practice. Without breaking the rules, you can either make it easy or difficult for someone else to pass you – and, to my mind, there's no way that David made it easy for Michael Schumacher at Spa.

Equally, he did nothing wrong. On that section of road, in those conditions, there's no way he could have shifted to the left, thus confusing the heck out of Schumacher. He did what he should have done – stuck to the right. Nor did he brake. He is not stupid enough to do something like that – and, besides, the telemetry would have caught him out. He did, however, lift his right foot – more than Michael was expecting him to.

Looked at from a distance, the score from Spa was: Michael and Eddie tangled/edged out Mika and David; Eddie took out himself; David proved a firm obstacle for Michael.

That's a pretty even result. Add the points that David gave Mika in Melbourne, his defeat of the Ferraris at Imola, his bad luck in Canada and Monaco, his drive back to second in Austria, his other podium finishes and his ability to live with the cheers and the smiles in the McLaren pit whenever Mika beats him to the pole by 0.1sec and you not only have the perfect teammate but also someone who is well capable of winning the world championship, 1999-style, in his own right. **1**

ILLUSTRATION BY CARL FEINT



When you need all the

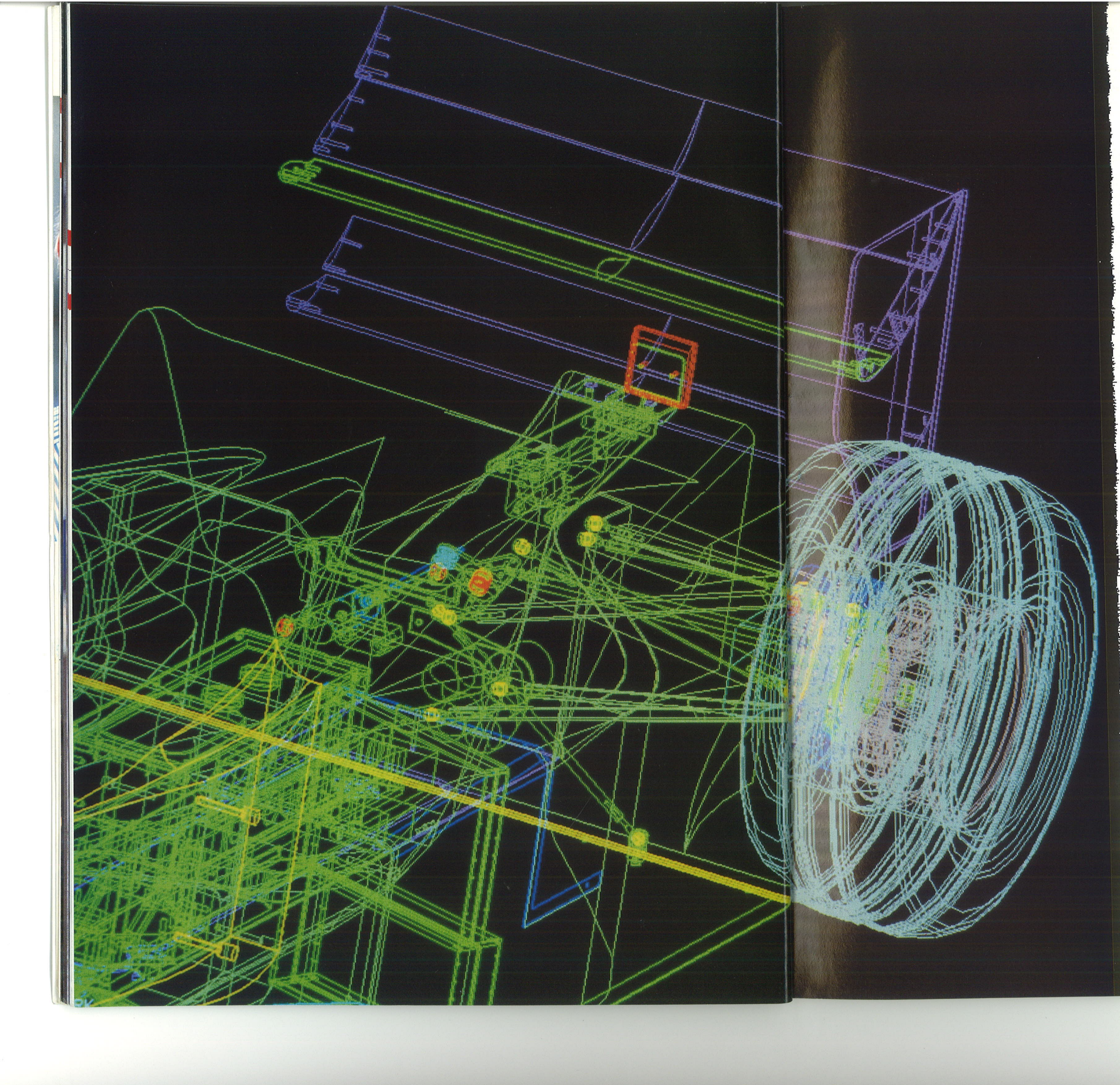
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"I AM VERY PLEASED  
WITH THE NEW  
PARTNERSHIP:  
IT PROMISES SO MUCH  
FOR ALL INVOLVED,  
AND FORMULA 1 WILL  
BE THE ULTIMATE TEST  
FOR ALL OF US."

Adrian Reynard,  
Technical Director, British American Racing

The combination of Craig Pollock, Adrian Reynard and British American Tobacco is the potent foundation of the all-new British American Racing Grand Prix team. With the pedigree of the people behind the design and construction of the BAR Reynard 199-Supertec, its debut in March next year is eagerly awaited.

Says Adrian Reynard: "Over 12 years that Malcolm Oastler has been at Reynard, I have always seen him as a fantastic gifted young designer, and he has surpassed every challenge. He deserves a new one with Formula 1!

"Craig Pollock has done a great job doing the deals. It is now up to us on the technical side to do the hard bit – produce a winning F1 car."



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**THE LOW-DOWN ON THE SHOWDOWN**



Level-pegging, two races to go. Mika (left) believes that he has the inside line

**Two to go, just one winner**

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER refuses to gloat over his world championship chances, despite his victory in the Italian Grand Prix bringing him level with Mika Hakkinen in the title chase, each with 80 points.

"With just two races left, anything can happen," Schuey said. "I had Monza down as a difficult one for us, so this win is a great result. The next race, at the Nürburgring, is very different and should be better suited to our car. There's no reason why we can't be competitive there. We will wait and see."

Of the championship protagonists, it was Hakkinen who remained the more upbeat: "Of course I can still win the title. Two races to go, 20 points left on the table – I can see all the possibilities."

Judging by the exuberant leap performed by the victorious Schumacher on the Monza podium, the significance of some of those possibilities had not yet dawned on him. Because although Schuey has the advantage of momentum, there is a statistical anomaly that favours Hakkinen. Bluntly, only the Finn can become world champion at the Nürburgring; for Schuey to triumph, a showdown at Suzuka is required (see *Team Talk*, page 6).

Typically, Ferrari technical director Ross Brawn was on top of the statistics straight away. Asked if he was confident, he replied: "No. Not confident. No."

**Schuey: not guilty, m'lud**

FERRARI STAR Michael Schumacher has spoken exclusively to *F1 Racing* about his bust-up with David Coulthard at Spa.

"I was waving my fist before the crash simply because I knew that the camera was on me [he had just passed one of the big screens by the side of the circuit] and I thought they would radio him out of the way.

"I was not losing self control in the car – if you look at the video you can see that I left about 40 metres between us out of the previous corner.

"When he didn't pull across on the straight, I presumed that he would not be letting me through before the next corner."



Coulthard had to face the music in Italy after his accident with Schuey at Spa

**Goody two Schus...**

Ralf and Michael Schumacher became the first brothers to stand together on a world championship podium at Monza. Prior to the Italian GP they had scored points in the same race on seven occasions: France, Germany, Hungary and Austria in 1997; Britain, Austria and Germany in '98. This list puts them way ahead of their nearest challengers in this unusual statistical race. The only other siblings to place in the same race are Emerson and Wilson Fittipaldi (left, Wilson ahead) – twice, both times in 1973.



**Crash, bang, hammer, pliers**

The Italian GP was a bizarre race for future Stewart team-mates Rubens Barrichello and Johnny Herbert. Barrichello's mechanics took to his Stewart with a hammer after the refuelling flap failed to open, while Herbert spun out of the race after a pair of pliers got stuck under his pedals...

I said the car was bad, but the guys didn't need to hit it that hard...



**Can Japan Bridge the Akron gap?**

At Monza it became clear that Goodyear will, after all, quit F1 at the end of 1998. We asked Bridgestone Motorsport boss Hirohide Hamashima what impact Akron's departure will have on the Japanese company.

**Q:** How will Bridgestone cope with being the sole tyre supplier?

**A:** We face a lot of difficulties because we don't yet have the tyre-making capacity to supply 11 teams next year.

**Q:** Will the pace of development be slowed next season?

**A:** It hasn't been decided. If the management want to continue with a vigorous development



programme, we will be ready; but it depends whether they want to reduce costs.

**Q:** When will you give current Goodyear teams your tyre data?

**A:** A good question. Even if we are informed right now about a change in the regulations, it will be difficult to supply tyres before

the end of December. We may even have to tell teams that there will be no tyres available until next year.

**Q:** Do you prefer competing against another tyre supplier?

**A:** Yes. Competition improves our process of development and expands our technical knowledge.

**The million-dollar mêlée**

When we asked for precise information from all the teams about the cost to them of the various accidents in the cataclysmic Belgian Grand Prix, only three teams were prepared to disclose the information. Arrows, Benetton and Tyrrell were the ones to own up – estimating their respective damages at £400,000, £500,000 and £500,000. We estimate the total cost at a cool £7 million.



**Minardi's race goes AWOL**

Minardi announced a deal to continue with Ford's customer V10 in 1999 at the Italian GP. And what better way for them to celebrate the new agreement than for Shinji Nakano to suffer the most spectacular fire of the year after his engine blew up on lap 14? Some say they got more TV coverage for the fire than for the whole of the rest of the year.



**SEPARATED AT BIRTH?** David Coulthard and Mika Hakkinen met their spitting images at the Italian Grand Prix, when West cigarettes organised a lookalike competition. Are you a ringer for an F1 star? If so, send your details and a recent photograph to the usual address. The best *doppelgänger* will get a prize.

**fact**

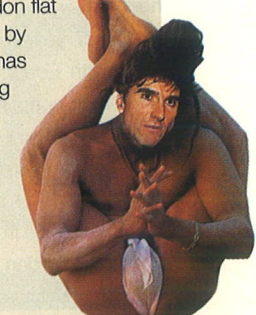


**Pedro Diniz to Sauber?**  
Pedro Diniz spent much time at Monza with Bernie Ecclestone, discussing his future in F1. The Brazilian will stay at Arrows if they get Mecachrome engines; otherwise he is rumoured to have started talks with Sauber as a replacement to Stewart-bound Johnny Herbert.



**Senna trial to begin again?**  
Williams lawyer Peter Goodman was at Monza this year, reacting to rumours that the Senna trial might raise its ugly head again. The prosecution have until 30 September to appeal against the decision to let the case lie, and Goodman said that he'd heard they might do just that.

**India to stage grand prix?**  
India is rumoured to be attempting to stage a grand prix. According to the *West Bengal Telegraph*, a company known as Grand Prix (India) Ltd, operating out of a south London flat and headed up by a Mr S Anwar, has been negotiating with the West Bengal State Government about the possibility of a Calcutta GP. Sounds iffy...



## Heinz and Ralf go switcheroo!

WILLIAMS DIDN'T GET the best out of Heinz-Harald Frentzen over the past two years – but neither did the German's next employer, Eddie Jordan, back in 1990.

In those days Jordan was running a Formula 3000 team, and Frentzen was paired with Eddie Irvine. The latter finished third in

the championship and won at Hockenheim. But poor Frentzen proved a major disappointment, scoring just three points and finishing joint 16th in the overall standings.

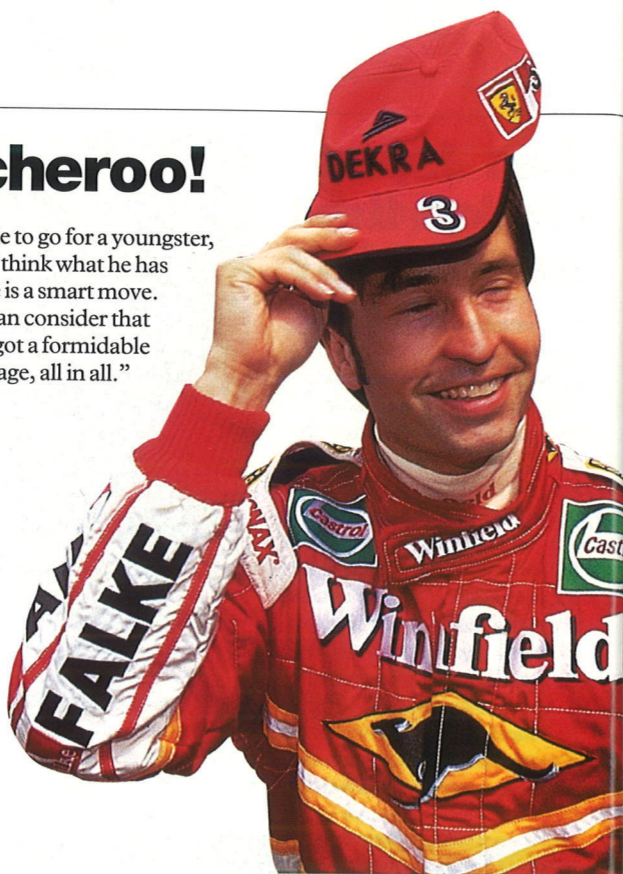
As a result, people reckoned Jordan didn't think too highly of Frentzen. But as Benson & Hedges prepare to expand their activities in the German flag market next year, all that has changed. "The addition of Heinz-Harald to the team shows just how serious we are about contesting the world championship," said Jordan. "This is without doubt our strongest ever driving pairing."

Frentzen's team-mate will be the man he replaced at Williams, Damon Hill – but the Englishman is bearing no grudges: "I fully expected

Eddie to go for a youngster, but I think what he has done is a smart move. He can consider that he's got a formidable package, all in all."



Above: HHF with EJ in F3000. Right: "So farewell then, Frank. Shame I had Schumi's cap, not his talent"



F1 is a game of two halves. And I'm coming on in the second half...



## Verstappen stuck on the bench?

JOS 'THE BOSS' Verstappen has again found himself on the Formula 1 sidelines, following Stewart's decision to replace him with Sauber man Johnny Herbert for 1999.

But Verstappen refuses to get downbeat about his job prospects, even though his chances of landing one of the remaining seats (Sauber, British American Racing or Minardi) are rather slim. The reason he continues to remain optimistic? Why, because he's F1's very own 'supersub'.

He has raced for five teams in five years, but has just two full seasons to his name. In 1994 he came off the bench to drive for Benetton... and repeated the supersub act for Stewart this year.

"I am not worried, sad or disappointed about leaving Stewart," he said. "I'll do my best in the last two grands prix to show everyone I am fast. I know I have a good reputation with all the other teams." And he still has seven more to try.

JOHNNY HERBERT, PAGE 18

## F1 Racing saves Jim Clark memorial

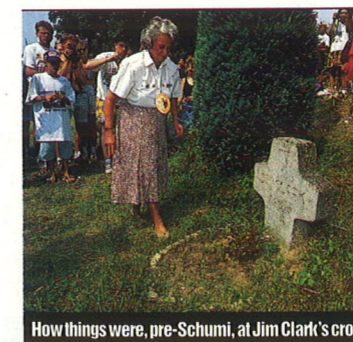
ACTION IS BEING taken to protect the Hockenheim memorial to one of Britain's greatest racing drivers – thanks to an article in September's *F1 Racing*.

At the German Grand Prix, our editor Matt Bishop was horrified to discover drunken Schumi fans sat on Jim Clark's memorial, which is situated where the Scot crashed fatally in 1968.

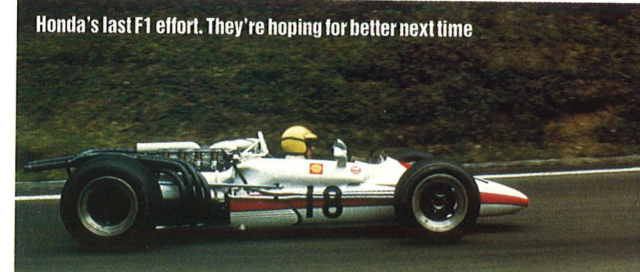
And so was Bernie Ecclestone when he read Bishop's description of the outrage. Ecclestone contacted the circuit authorities, and a protective fence will now be built around the memorial.

Hockenheim's Hartmut Tesseraux told us: "I apologise for the behaviour of these pseudo-fanatics, which we find absolutely contemptible."

Next year, thanks to the swift action by Ecclestone and the circuit's organisers, we expect to find the famous memorial used as a place of homage and not as a lager louts' retreat.



How things were, pre-Schumi, at Jim Clark's cross



Honda's last F1 effort. They're hoping for better next time

## Tyrrell-Honda return in 2000?

HONDA MAY RACE under the Tyrrell banner if British American Racing are given clearance to use the name 'BAR' in 1999. The Japanese car giant might buy the rights to the famous Tyrrell name from BAR boss Craig Pollock for their strongly rumoured return to the F1 fray in the year 2000.

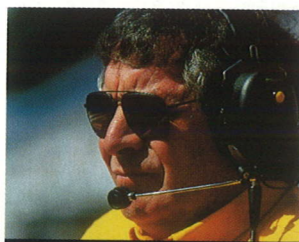
Honda are said to be keen to build their own engine and chassis. Let's hope this effort is better than their last in-house effort, the RA301, which handled like a bus and took the life of Jo Schlesser at Rouen in 1968.

## Anderson out; Gascoyne in...

THE CHOP AND change at Jordan continues with the departure of the team's long-time technical head honcho Gary Anderson.

The 47-year-old Irishman has been with Eddie Jordan's team since their inception in 1991, and designed all their Formula 1 cars.

Anderson was upset by the recent arrival of aerodynamicist Mike Gascoyne from Tyrrell – just before the Jordan team's historic one-two in Belgium.



Gary Anderson has quit Jordan; he will now technically direct Arrows

"It really has not been an easy decision but, for various reasons, I have opted for a new challenge."

That new challenge is expected to be with Arrows, who have recently lost technical director John Barnard to Prost Grand Prix.

THE ULTRA-HI-TECH world of Formula 1 can get a bit heavy sometimes – which is why Mika Hakkinen sometimes likes to swap his 770bhp mean McLaren machine for something just a tad tamer. Trouble is, if you're leading the world championship, you can't even ride your pushbike – dig the colour, by the way, Mika – around a shopping mall without drawing a crowd.



## on the inside

## EJ cashes in on years of trying...

Eddie Jordan has provided some relief from the Silver and Red Show these past few weeks.

You had him jumping up and down in ecstasy following that first win at Spa – and just plain jumping up and down at Michael's suggestion, made in the course of defending little bro', that EJ was more interested in money than success.

EJ thought it was a clear case of pots and kettles from a man with a £20 million basic, but you have to admit that Michael looks pretty close to taking both success and cash out of Maranello.

Jordan has had his run-ins over over cash in the past, as Bertrand Gachot reminded me when I interviewed him recently (see page 100). But that hardly makes Eddie unique to the paddock.

Still, with Diniz supposedly waving a massive wad in EJ's face, I was surprised to learn that he had signed Frentzen.

Why? Because he'll have to pay him, that's why.

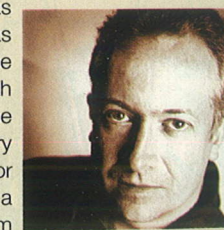
Eddie is now making noises about wanting to be viewed as a serious player, which means taking the very best drivers available to him. Signing Diniz would very definitely have sent out the wrong message to multi-million pound backers such as Benson & Hedges – no disrespect to Pedro.

**'How sad that Gary Anderson wasn't in Belgium when the win finally happened'**

At Monza, though, I was amused to discover that Frentzen, son of a Spanish mother, has dual nationality. Eddie has a house in Spain and, with a few promotions planned around HHF, he might be able to hang on to the Repsol wedge that came with Spanish test driver Pedro de la Rosa...

Jordan always was a wheeler-dealer, but he's also a gutsy risk taker and a man you knew would inevitably make it. EJ is right when he says that

this year's turnaround has been remarkable. It was great to see the faces of the guys who have been with EJ for 15-odd years. The only sadness was that Gary Anderson, a man leaving for TWR under something of a cloud, wasn't in Belgium when it finally happened.



by TONY DODGINS

# EJ: a tale of wins and losses

EDDIE JORDAN'S BOLD claim at Spa that Michael Schumacher is the most money-motivated man in Formula 1 led to much behind-the-hand sniggering and innumerable kettle-and-pot references.

The streetwise Irish ex-car salesman was angered when the elder Schu put in his two penn'orth (a couple of mill to the likes of you and me) about Ralf's battle to leave Jordan Grand Prix in favour of Williams.

To paraphrase, Eddie suggested that Michael should keep his nose out of other people's business.

In the end, things were settled by the intervention of Bernie Ecclestone. Eddie will now lose Ralf - as he did Michael and Giancarlo Fisichella before - to bigger

fish - but, as he did on these two previous occasions, he thrashed about noisily until he was suitably compensated for his loss.

The fast-talking Dubliner thrives in such boom and slump circumstances (see graphic below). Truth be told, he probably enjoys it.

Ralf's place at Jordan will be taken by Williams reject Heinz-Harald Frentzen.



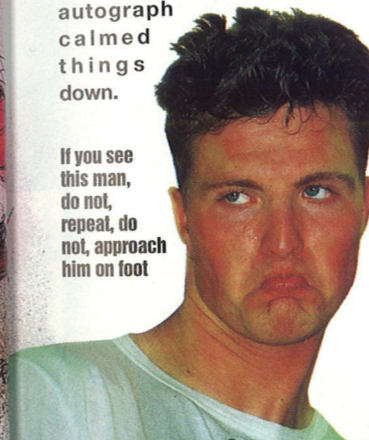
## Ralf: Spa's most wanted

THE ASSEMBLED media in the Jordan awning at Spa spat out their free tea and breakfast when a solemn Ralf Schumacher marched in accompanied by a policeman. Was the German star about to have Eddie Jordan arrested as part of their contractual wrangle?

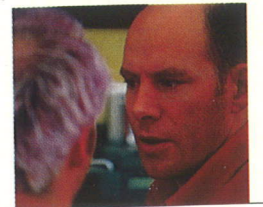
The hacks were to be disappointed. Junior Schu had knocked over a boy on the way into the circuit on Friday and was helping the officer with his inquires.

A contrite apology and an autograph calmed things down.

If you see this man, do not, repeat, do not, approach him on foot



WILLIAMS RACE ENGINEER Jock Clear is to follow Jacques Villeneuve to BAR for 1999. He accepted an offer from the new team that included a big pay rise, the promise of more responsibility and future promotion possibilities. Ferrari's senior aerodynamicist Willem Toet is also joining Craig Pollock's Brackley-based, megabuck operation.



**OUR SPIES ARE EVERYWHERE** When *F1 Racing* reader Tina Penberthy developed her British GP films, she saw something that surprised her. Look carefully at her shot of Olivier Panis's Prost under braking for Cospo (left). The rear brake disc is clearly glowing red, but the front is not - a possible sign of a performance-enhancing 'brake-steer' system.

In truth, it's unlikely: at Silverstone, Panis qualified 16th and spun off in the race. A real mystery picture then.



## Not testing, not testing, 1-2-3, not testing

TYRRELL HAVE NOW conducted their last test as a Formula 1 team. And to mark this momentous occasion those sentimental people at BAR appended a 'footnote' into a bog-standard 'testing' press release about the day.

"It was not celebrated, but everyone was aware of the significance of the event," said a spokesman. Oh sure!

This particular curtain fell at Silverstone early in September, team regular Toranosuke Takagi being joined by up-and-coming



First at the last: Lemarié ushered Tyrrell off the F1 testing stage while taking his bow in the highest echelon of motorsport

Frenchman Patrick Lemarié, who was having his first run in an F1 car.

It has been estimated that Tyrrell have tested 150 times at the Northants track in the past 30 years, during which time two

constructors' and three drivers' world titles have been racked up by them.

But time waits for no team, and BAR have scheduled to run their first chassis test on 14 October - at Silverstone.

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN BRADLEY; GRAPHIC BY ALAN ELDREDGE; PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAT; SUTTON IMAGES; DPPI

## Jordan The roller-coaster years

Team score first points in fifth race. Bertrand Gachot sets fastest lap at the Hungarian GP but ...

Michael Schumacher replaces Gachot and qualifies superbly at the Belgian GP only to suffer clutch failure at the start and be immediately wined away by Benetton

A manufacturer engine deal is secured, but the Yamaha V10 proves to be a disaster. Just one point is registered all season

Another points drought ensues until Barrichello and Irvine score in Japan, but this result is overshadowed by the latter's spat with Ayrton Senna



Barrichello scores the team's first podium finish (third in the Pacific GP) only to roll violently and break his nose at the next race, the San Marino GP

Barrichello records the team's first pole position, at Spa, but slips back to fifth place as early as the second lap

Irvine and Barrichello climb onto the podium having finished second and third in Canada, but the season tails away despite a strong Peugeot V10 engine



Nigel Mansell tests at Barcelona but says, 'No thanks'

Barrichello is on the front row for round two, the Brazilian GP, but the team subsequently have to settle for a clutch of fourth, fifths and sixths



Ralf Schumacher and Giancarlo Fisichella have a chance to win the Argentine GP until they crash into each other. Schu Junior grabs third, Benetton grab Fisichella

Damon Hill replaces Fisichella and promptly says Jordan is three years away from the title ...

... but then adds that a win is on the cards ...

Eddie Jordan loses a fight to keep his second-placed driver

Constructors position 5th, 13 points

Constructors position 11th, 1 point

Constructors position 10th, 3 points

Constructors position 5th, 23 points

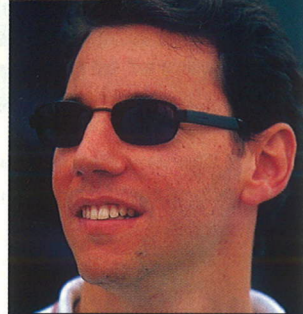
Constructors position 6th, 21 points

Constructors position 5th, 22 points

Constructors position 5th, 33 points

Constructors position (after Belgium) 5th, 26 points

hot seat



**RICARDO ROSSET**  
TYRRELL

**Do you believe in God?**  
Yes.

**Who was your childhood hero?**  
Ayrton Senna.

**What is perfect happiness?**  
Health, family and friends – and the important business doing a lot of good selling!

**Who would you most like to date?**  
Elle MacPherson.

**Are women good road drivers?**  
Average. But some are really bad. They get distracted easily.

**What's your worst habit?**  
I'm a perfectionist – I like a lot of details. I like things 100 per cent.

**Which traffic rule do you oppose?**  
Speed humps.

**Do you support the death penalty?**  
It depends on the case. For murder and rape, I do.

**What will you be doing aged 40?**  
Playing with my kids and also working in the business.

**Who's your ideal dinner guest?**  
My wife Michelle.

**What's your favourite cocktail?**  
I'm not much into drinks, but I suppose caiprinha.

**What's the most you've ever spent on a pair of shoes?**  
£130.

TV VOTE SAYS YOU'LL NEVER WALKER ALONE

**Murray goes on, and on, and on...**

MURRAY WALKER'S famed pants-on-fire style is expected to rage for another season following a massive public thumbs-up.

The 74-year-old with the tungsten voice box was a bit worried that he might be too old to jabber on for another season. But he received an enormous boost when 76 per cent of voters who took part in a recent Teletext poll on ITV begged him to call Michael Ralf and vice versa for at least one more year.

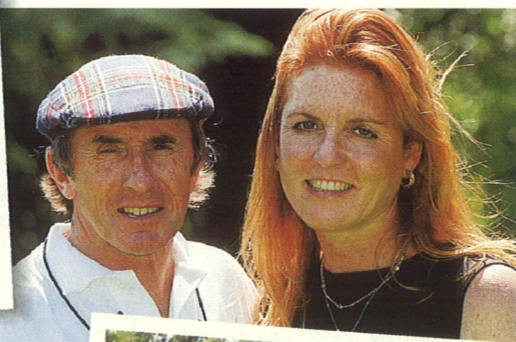
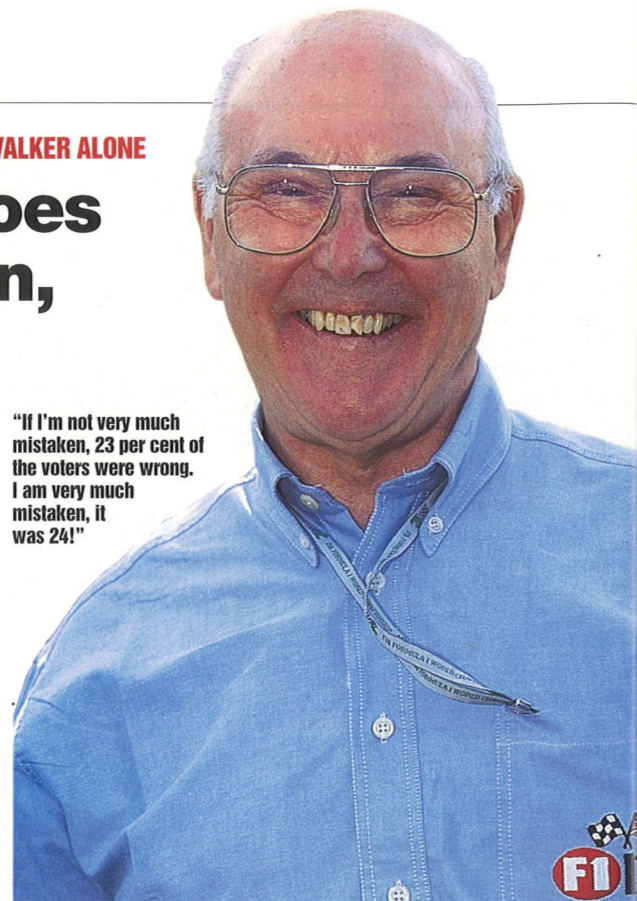
"I am absolutely delighted to hear it," said Muzza. "My contract runs out at the end of the year. I have two GPs to go and so far I have heard nothing. I hope to carry on."

He need not worry – ITV

"If I'm not very much mistaken, 23 per cent of the voters were wrong. I am very much mistaken, it was 24!"

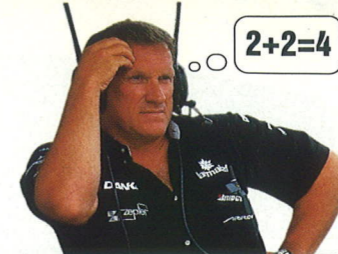
know a good thing when they hear one. "We hope he doesn't retire. As soon as the summer is over we hope to

talk to Murray," said a spokesman. "We hope our relationship will continue." Faaaantastic!



**Fergie fancies...**

IS FERGIE LURGY about to sweep through the F1 paddock? The ex-royal creator of children's classic *Budgie the Helicopter* is believed to be on the hunt for a new man following her divorce from HRH Prince Andrew. And now Fergie has seemingly switched her attentions from the beneficial health effects of cranberry juice to ... JYS. And Mika Hakkinen. And David Coulthard. She knows no shame. But, hey, that's not news.



2+2=4

**GROUND CONTROL TO DOCTOR TOM:** Tom Walkinshaw has swapped his kilt for a cap-'n'-gown. The boss of Arrows has been awarded an honorary degree by Oxford Brookes University. It's in recognition of his contribution to the design, engineering and manufacturing of road and racing cars. So, at least he's won something in '98.



**McLAREN TAKE TO THE AIR** McLaren have revealed their secret weapon against Michael Schumacher – a Hawk 200 jet aircraft in full West-McLaren-Mercedes livery. The latest addition to Ron Dennis's armoury ran in tandem with the two-seater MP4-98T and F1 GTR at Farnborough Air Show at the beginning of September.

pitlane HERO



**JAMES ROBINSON**  
WILLIAMS

**Nationality:** British

**Age:** 38

**Job title:** Senior engineer

**How did he get involved in F1?**

He joined Spirit Racing in 1983, before moving to Williams in 1985, where he stayed until the end of 1988. He's also worked for Arrows and McLaren, specifically with Ayrton Senna during 1991 and '92. He was also an engineer for McLaren's winning Le Mans car in 1995. He rejoined Williams in 1996.

**What does he do?**

He has various responsibilities within the team and, as well as being an engineer, he is involved in deciding race strategies and working in the team's drawing office.

**How has this year differed?**

He doesn't think that there has been any more pressure on him this season, although he says his job is always a challenge. He says recent results have been particularly satisfying.

**Does he work with both drivers?**

Yes, and he thinks he has a good relationship with both Jacques Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen. He says that they are very different in character: Villeneuve is still young and enthusiastic, whereas he thinks Frentzen is more mellow and laid-back.

**Will he ever give up F1?**

He hopes so, because he enjoys many other aspects of life. He has plans to spend more time on his farm.

DARREN HEATH; TIM GRAHAM; PAPPIX UK; LAT



**Esteban meets his leader**

YOUNG ESTEBAN TUERO has left barely a ripple on the surface of Formula 1 this season, but he moves among the high rollers back home in Argentina.

The Minardi racer recently had a tête-à-tête with President Carlos Menem at the latter's residential estate near Buenos Aires.

Menem is a huge fan of motorsport: he competed in numerous rallies and his late son Carlitos was a front runner in the Group N World Rally Championship before his tragic death in a helicopter accident.

El Presidente was delighted by Tuero's gift of a signed crash helmet. So delighted that an Argentine economic delegation visited Minardi's Faenza base not long afterwards to confirm Tuero's continued employment with the financially straitened team.



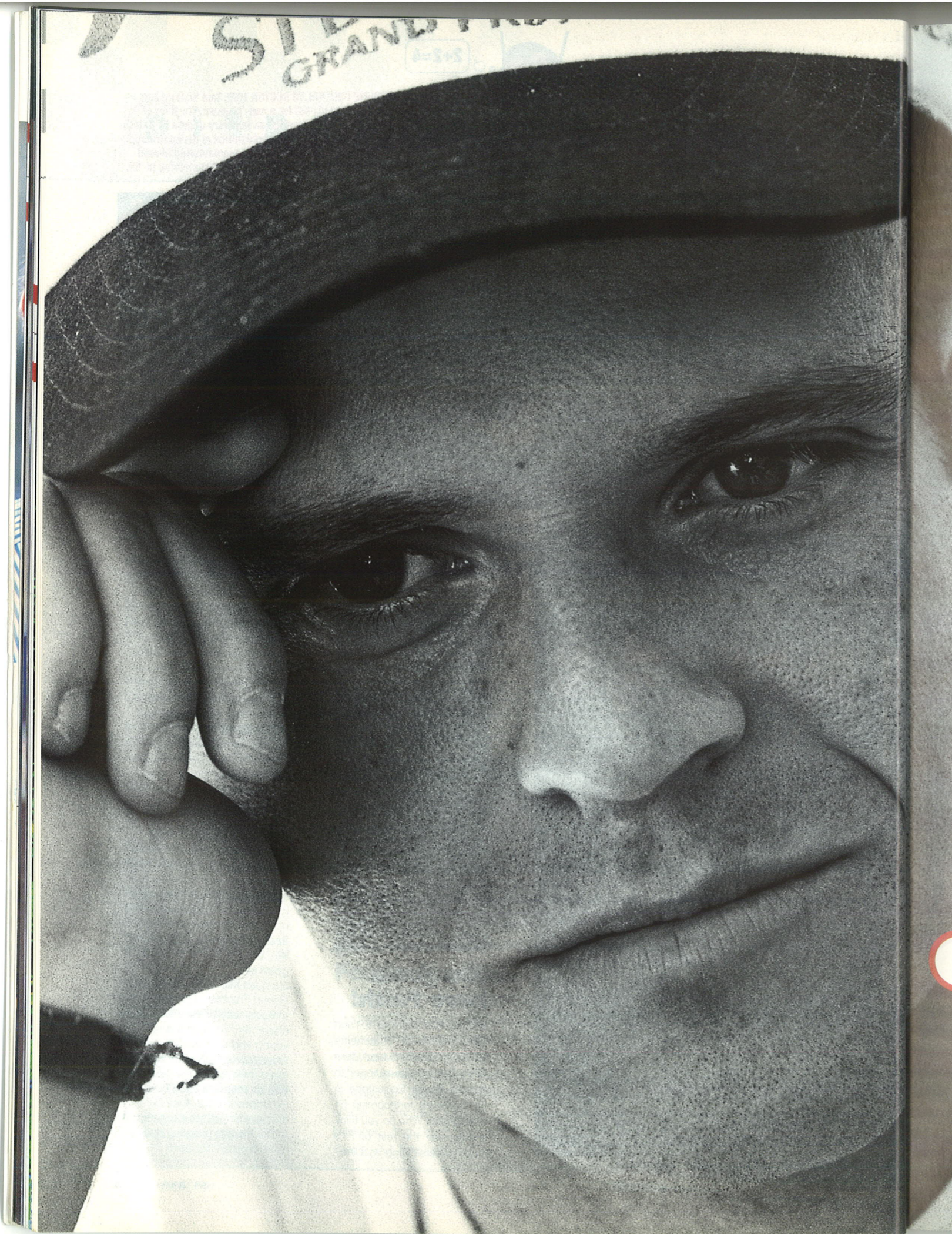
Adam Faith



Bernie Ecclestone

**You gotta have Faith!**

SIXTIES POP SONGSTER and '80s bastion of Thatcherite stocks-'n'-shares whizzkidism Adam Faith has been tipped to portray Bernie Ecclestone in Sly Stallone's forthcoming F1 blockbuster. Who do you think should play the rest of F1's major players? Drop us a line.



**How do you feel?**

Very strong. I have gained a lot of confidence this year. I just need a good car.

**You must be disappointed with the Stewart SF2...**

Yes, in a way I am. We had quite a few good expectations for this year, especially because last year was very good. Last year's car was a good car – it failed on engine power only.

**Is this year's engine an improvement?**

Much better. It has enough horsepower. But now we have problems with the set-up. We spend much time on this but, at the end of the day, we are number 13 on the grid. You have the four big teams, then Jordan and Sauber and finally us. Yes, we are in front of Prost, but what does it mean when you are 13th?

**Did you expect to qualify fifth in Austria?**

Yes, because it was raining. We have a reasonable chance when it rains.

**Do you want to leave Stewart Grand Prix?**

The press made too big a story of this. I have to think about my future, and if you can improve your situation you have to do it. I am a professional racing driver and I always want to improve. That's normal. But I have a contract up to the end of 1999 so, at this moment, I stay with Stewart.

**Would you join a brand new team again, say BAR?**

No ... not without second thoughts.

**What kind of 'second thoughts'?**

I agree that it is a big challenge, but it takes a lot of time and a lot of energy to have success in a new team.

**Would you consider a move to Indycars?**

I love Indycar and oval racing. Indycars really attracts me but, for the moment, I am focused on F1.

**You were 20 when you entered F1 ... was that too young?**

No. I had been in karts for eight years and had raced in all classes. I'd won everywhere, so it was a logical step. I ran in second place in only my third Formula 1 race. I know I can win at this

level, just give me a good car. I've never had one. But there is something else: I would have been a different driver if Ayrton hadn't died.

**Did your country expect too much of you after his death?**

I can't explain it how it was. I was 21 years old and everybody in Brazil focused on me. It was very, very difficult.

**Were their expectations justified?**

No, but I don't want to talk about it any more.

**Do you still feel that pressure of expectation?**

No, not at all. In the first Brazilian Grand Prix after the accident, I drove an inferior car. I couldn't do anything with it – it was useless. But people realised it by then and they understood. So there is no pressure any more.

**What is the highlight of your F1 career?**

My second place in Monaco 1997.

**Because it was scored with a new team?**

Yes, it was fantastic for Paul and Jackie. It was great. Very emotional.

**But was this a one-off result?**

No, it must be possible to repeat that success with Stewart.

**Do you like the new Formula 1 rules?**

No. The FIA have to do something about the safety. The grooved tyres are very dangerous. Look at Jacques Villeneuve's accident at Spa this year – it could have killed him. We want the slicks back. A racing driver wants grip. I don't mind if they want to remove wings or spoilers, but don't touch the tyres. And let's be fair, the rules have proved to be wrong.

**How does Jos Verstappen compare to Jan Magnussen?**

Jos is a good driver who keeps me awake. We have a similar driving style and prefer the same set-up. I couldn't drive Jan's car, but I have no problems with Jos's. And despite what everybody says, we have the same car.

**Would you ever consider wearing a kilt?**

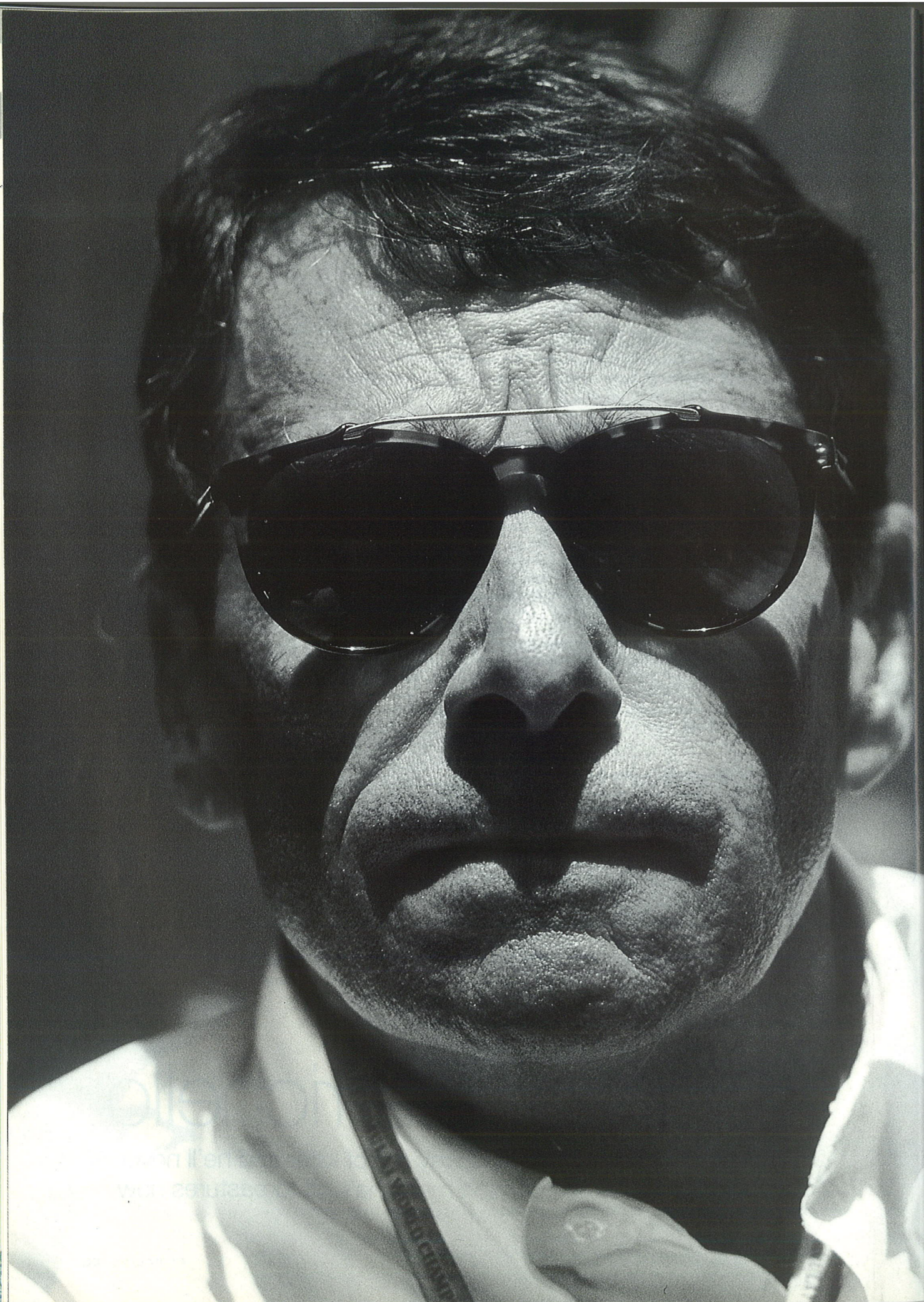
No. That sort of thing does nothing for me, I'm afraid. **1**

**F1** to o n e

# Rubens Barrichello

His season with Stewart is way out of kilter and he'll never wear a kilt, but that doesn't mean he's off to pastures new

BRYN WILLIAMS



**What is your role at Prost Grand Prix?**

I hold exactly the same position that I had at Renault Sport – I manage the technical staff. There are the same number of people in the team, about 160, and there are 25 engineers.

**But being with a team must bring some differences...**

I have a lot of things to learn, but I have many people helping me. Loic Bigois, for example, is very good. I have a lot of pressure on me, but I have been a chassis engineer before. At Renault from 1980 to '83, I did engines and chassis. In '81, '82 and '83, I was race engineer for Alain Prost, so we know each other's abilities very well.

**So what's it like having Alain for a boss?**

He learns very quickly. In the beginning he had a tendency to want to know everything I was doing on a day-to-day basis; he now delegates more and I am free to do what I have to do.

**On what do you have the final say?**

I am a people manager, but I also decide the main technical strategy.

**How much has F1 changed during your time?**

There are more technical areas – aerodynamics, tyres and structures. There is more high-tech in the engines. F1 in 1998 is completely different from before; it's much more complex now.

**Do you still get a buzz from F1?**

If I wasn't enjoying F1, I would have stopped at the end of the Renault era. It is necessary for me to work at the top level of technology. Here, I have the opportunity to work with the very best technology because we have a good budget.

**So what went wrong this year?**

I arrived at the end of last year and the present project was completely finished. We have to do a large improvement next year. My job is to rebuild the team, to build a solid base.

**Will that 'solid base' include John Barnard?**

We are using John Barnard's company, B3, as sub-contractors. They make suspensions and wings for us. It is not John Barnard, it is his company. They do just the fabrication of parts, the drawings for which come from Prost Grand Prix. We do not have a contract with John, only with his company.

**Would Prost like a contract with Barnard's name on it?**

If John left Arrows, maybe we could sort out a new situation with him in the future because he is a very talented man – but at this time I must stress that he is only a sub-contractor.

**Does it bother you that your ideas may leak to Arrows?**

There is a risk of parts also being used by Arrows, but you have to go where you can find the technology. At Renault, we used the same sub-contractors as Peugeot for some parts, and we had no problems like that.

**Do Peugeot have a problem with your Renault past?**

I try not to get involved in the engine side of things. Peugeot have a different approach from Renault. I think the Peugeot is stronger than the Mecachrome in terms of power, but Peugeot need to improve driveability. This year is a typical example of how the engine doesn't fit in a car, but this is normal because this is year one of the deal.

**Why did you retain your drivers after such a bad season?**

I am really happy with our drivers. The car has been bad, but they have tried the best they can. For them, this has been a lost season and we have decided to continue their contracts for this reason. Olivier is a very quick driver in the right car; Jarno is strong in the head, has very good technical ability and a good future.

**What is a realistic aim for the team in 1999?**

I'm not sure we can win the championship, but I want to be in a position to win races.

**F1** to o n e

# Bernard Dudot

He guided Renault to six world championship titles, but now takes orders from an ex-employee – and is happy to do so

DARREN HEATH

## backfire

### A full conference

I would like to congratulate ITV for finally realising that some of us want to see the press conferences after grands prix. For months we have been subjected to 'Athletics Jim' and his nasal analysis. I, and no doubt countless others, would prefer to hear the drivers' thoughts on the race rather than Jim's dull musings. By the way, does anyone know why he insists on the top button of his polo shirt being done up?



"So, Linford wins it. Er, sorry, it's Mika. Do you like my new shirt?"

MARTYN ERFORD/LAT

GEM MARTIN,

SWINDON, WILTSHIRE

### DC's driving error?

One cannot but question the motives of a driver who, in a supposed attempt to be lapped by the race leader, chooses not to brake early at the Bus Stop or run a little wide at La Source. Instead, Coulthard slowed down on the racing line at one of the fastest points on the circuit. Admittedly, the conditions and spray rendered his actions difficult to see; but all the same, it was inexcusable and dangerous. It made the incident between Schumacher and Villeneuve last year look rather tame by comparison.

PETER CUFFLEY,  
VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE

### DC the rookie?

Spa was unbelievable.

The Scot with the huge chip on his shoulder spins his McLaren like a rookie and causes near mayhem. Schumacher then spends the first half of the race being falsely accused by Murray Walker of



having nudged his rival off the track. Then, as a blistering Schuey performance looks likely, the rookie lifts off and causes a pretty horrific accident. If the roles had been reversed and Hakkinen had been taken out by Irvine, all hell would have broken loose and there would have been enough conspiracy theories to keep Mulder and Scully going for a lifetime. Instead, David has the temerity to call Michael "an animal" and then get back into his car in search of a point. Is Ron Dennis really this keen to win the championship?

SHAUN KELSO,  
SEASCALE, CUMBRIA

### Propping up the bar

I have noticed that British American Racing have been running a series of two page adverts in *F1 Racing*. Clever stuff, but why on earth have a non-sensical line trumpeting "a tradition of excellence" beneath the team title? The fact that BAR is a much welcomed *new* team with, as yet, no real tradition, quickly nullifies this statement. How about this instead: "Lighting up the grid." Controversial, yes, but endearing to sponsors.

DUNCAN MACLAUGHLIN,  
SHEPPERTON, MIDDLESEX

### It's just madness

Since J-M Balestre left the FIA, I have become used to some pretty poor decisions from the body that allegedly runs motor racing. I have seen something akin to madness with their rulings, the most notable of which was at the British Grand Prix. That was nothing short of a farce. Grands prix are nothing like they once were and despite (or perhaps, because of) the huge amounts of money involved, the whole system is regulated by authorities who are riddled with incompetence.

DAVID TYRRELL,  
PRINCES RISBOROUGH, BUCKS

In the house ...  
vorsprung durch  
tec, tec, techno...



CHARLES COATES/LAT

### Schuey's in the house

I've discovered the reason for Schumacher's recent patchy form - he hasn't heard the latest hit by DJ Visage called *Formula*. This (unofficial?) Ferrari club mix is so good it roused my sloth-like fellow students and even converted one F1 sceptic into a Schuey fan! A top mix of club beats and Ferrari engine noise is interspersed with race commentary and a bloke shouting "Schumacher".

Even my limited knowledge of German runs to translating the last line: "Schumacher wins - Schumacher is world champion!" My sentiments exactly. Expect a marked improvement from now on. Apparently Michael has now bought this ultimate anthem...

ALEX CARR,  
KIDLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE

### Rather F(1)rustrated

The FIA must have taken on officials and stewards from World Cup '98. The lack of consistency when it comes to interpretation of the rules is unbelievable. Stalling on the grid as the formation lap pulls away means the offending driver must start from the rear of the grid. And once on the grid, he must stay in position. And what about the team orders? Just what on earth is going on?

T WOLLEY,  
EDGMOND, SHROPSHIRE

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## BUILDING A MASTER PLAN



### Q Why did Ford purchase Cosworth Racing?

**A** For Ford the engine represents the heart and soul of our motorsport programmes. We have some very ambitious plans for the future. To execute these plans, we need to control the "beat" of all of our motorsport projects. The Cosworth Racing purchase has allowed us to control our destiny.

### Q Will Ford's ownership change the way Cosworth Racing operates?

**A** Certainly Ford's management style is much different from the previous owners. However, it is vitally important that Cosworth Racing keeps its individuality thus enabling the company to react quickly on every issue to reach our goals.

### Q Shouldn't Ford have bought Cosworth Racing years ago?

**A** Given that the relationship between Ford and Cosworth goes back 30 years or more, many people were under the impression that Cosworth was already owned by Ford! It is always easy to say that we should have purchased the company earlier but there were numerous reasons why this was not possible. I believe that rather than worrying about the past everyone at Ford and Cosworth Racing is clearly focused on the future objectives. Missed opportunities in the past are immaterial.

### Q What will be the key benefits of Ford owning Cosworth Racing?

**A** The primary benefit will be the ability to openly exchange new technologies and working practices. In the past we may have been a bit hesitant to release our full technical arsenal on Cosworth because we didn't own the operation. It's the same arsenal that helped us produce dynamic cars like the new Ford Focus and will benefit greatly the new Cosworth Racing.

*By purchasing Cosworth Racing, we will, I am certain, reach our desired goal of having the best engine in Formula 1*

### Q Now that Ford owns Cosworth Racing what improvements can we expect to see?

**A** Many of the improvements will be internal. Things like manufacturing, computer modelling and much stronger lines of communication between Ford Advanced Engineering and Cosworth Racing engineers. But the end result will be stronger overall performance, frequent engine upgrades and multi-uses for our power plants, not just in Formula 1 but also in Champ Cars, Touring Cars and possibly other formula in the future.

### Q Why buy Cosworth Racing and not take the Ford F1 programme in house?

**A** That's a logical conclusion but unrealistic in the short term. F1 is the pinnacle of motorsport competition and requires a very special mix of personnel and technical infrastructure in order to succeed. It is not something you do without a considerable amount of planning over a number of years.

### Q How will purchase affect Ford's Advanced Vehicle Technology department?

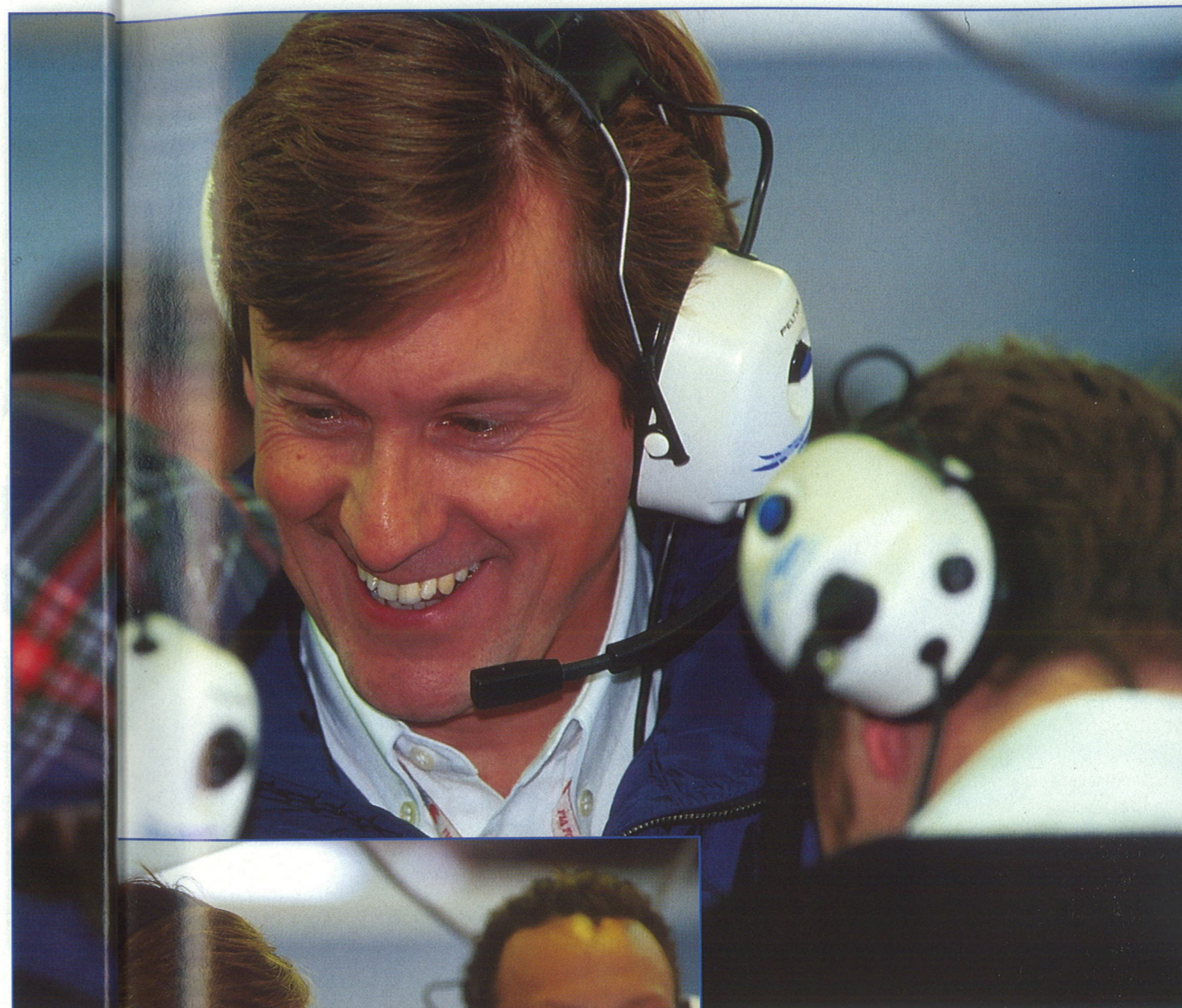
**A** The platform now exists to integrate our Advanced Vehicle Technology engineers even further in our racing efforts. Technology Transfer is a key element of Ford's motorsport strategy and our young and dynamic engineers will now be given a great opportunity to develop and hone their skills in a fast moving and highly motivated environment.

### Q What will the consequences be for the Stewart-Ford Team?

**A** By purchasing Cosworth Racing and integrating our engineers further into the programme we will, I am certain, reach our desired goal of having the best engine in F1. The Stewart-Ford team is young in F1 terms but it realises the level of effort required and the responsibility on its shoulders to be successful in Grand Prix racing. Stewart-Ford will therefore benefit from the support of a unique engine builder.

### Q Will this change the way Ford approaches its customer supply programme?

**A** This will change dramatically. Ford intends to be regarded as a serious contender in F1's future. As a result the engine supply programme will be reviewed. Ford's objective is clear – to be at the front in F1. Jac Nasser has publicly stated he wants us



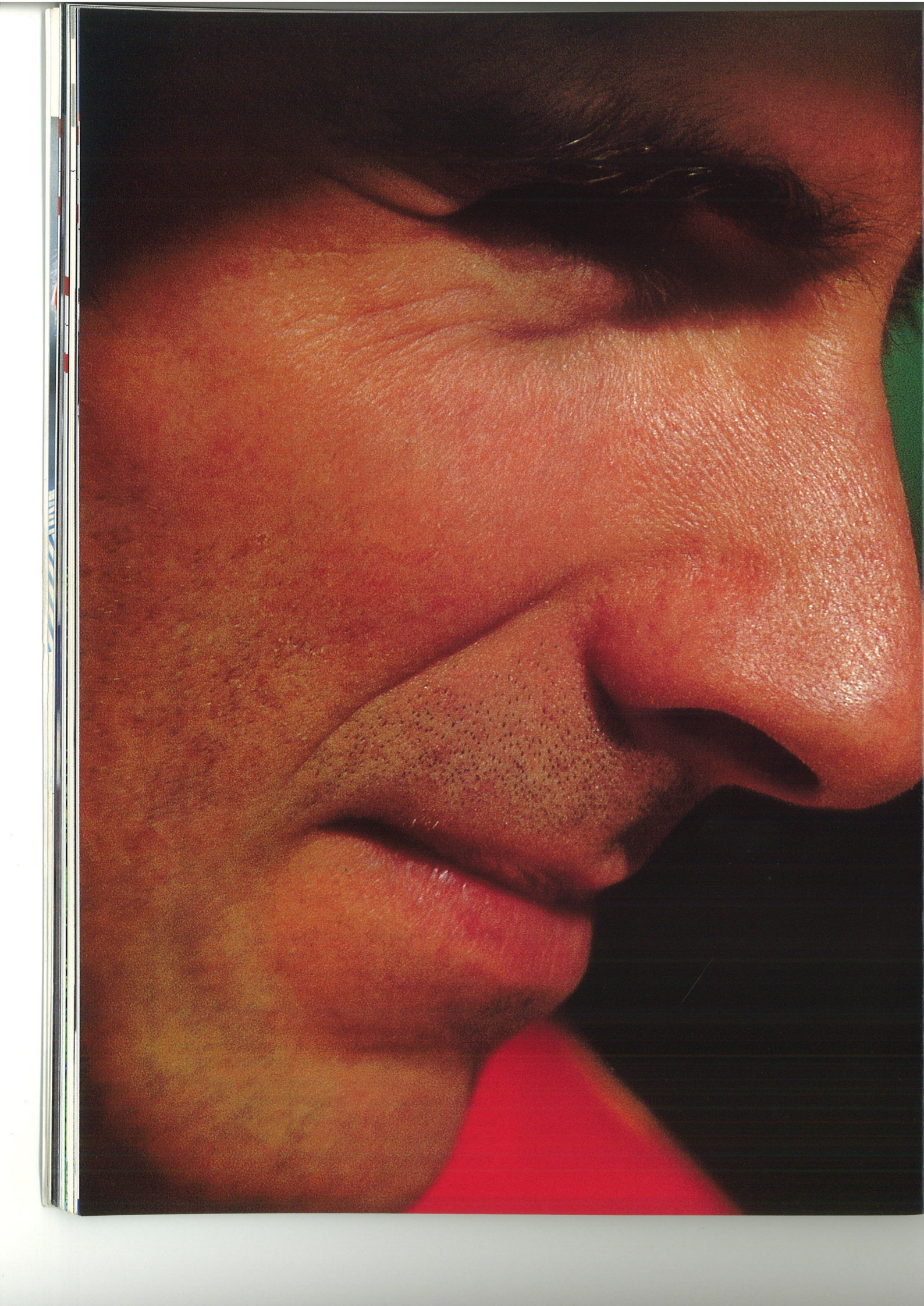
Martin Whitaker steering Ford Motorsport towards success following the company purchase of Cosworth Racing



to be in the position, when the time is right, to supply two top teams and we will have to review the nomenclature associated with "customer" relationships.

### Q Will it mean more F1 teams using Ford F1 engines in the future?

**A** We believe we currently have an extremely strong F1 engine. We have an all new engine in design which will compete in 1999 and there are further improvements to be made to the current Zetec-R V10. The F1 fraternity are taking notice of these developments and with this comes an interest in availability. This is a change from recent years and as a result we have to be cognisant of this situation and review it.



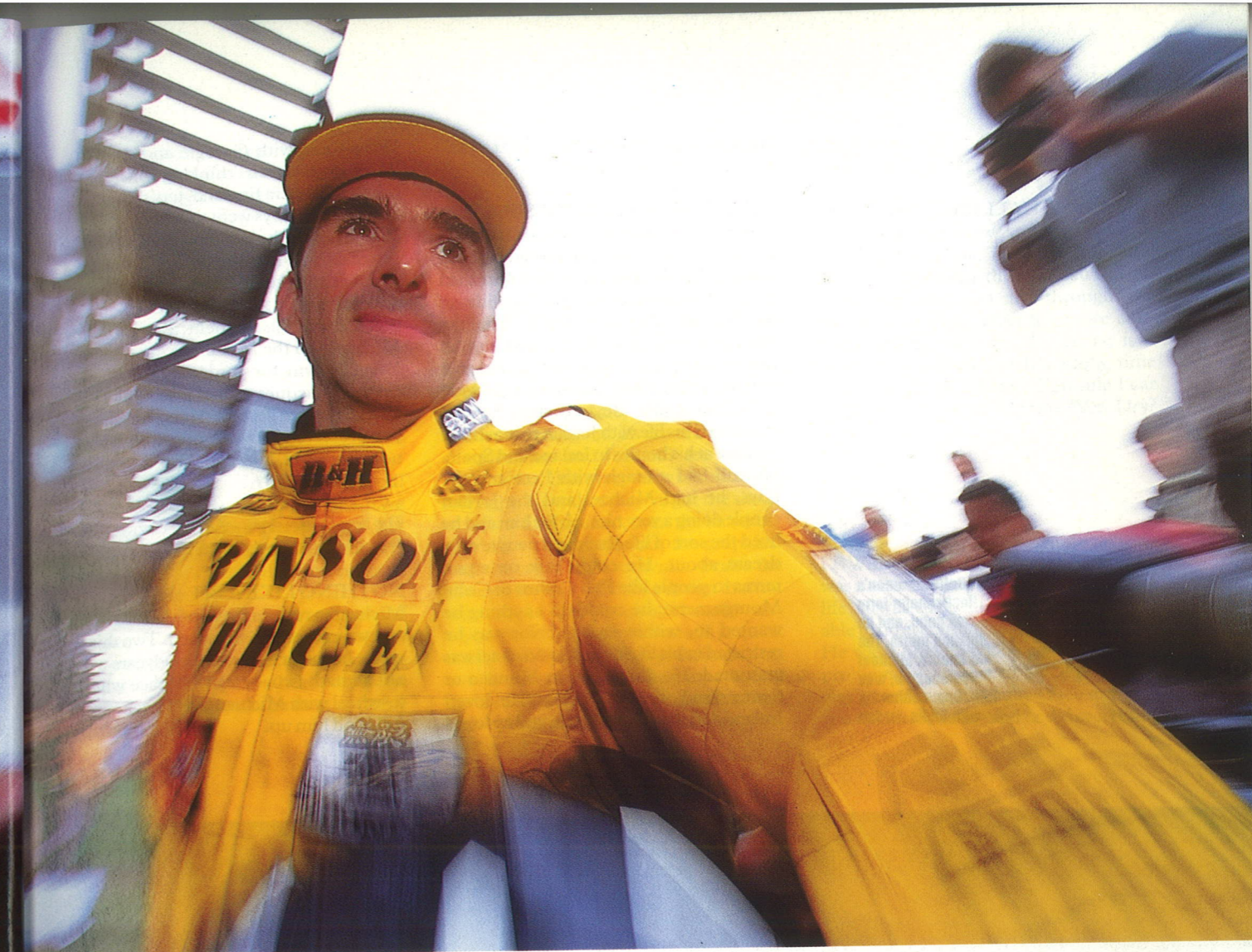
From the agonies of Monaco  
to the ecstasies of Spa.  
It's been a long time coming.  
Peter Windsor traces Damon's renaissance

# a private struggle

Photographs by Darren Heath



'If there was  
a plus side to the year  
it was that Williams, too, were in trouble.  
That always made him feel better'



Above: for most of 1998, Damon has been putting a brave face on things. Opp: in Hungary the car felt great – and a fine fourth place was the reward

The time: Saturday morning  
The place: Monaco

THE FEELING GREW on him as the weekend progressed. Was it worth it? Where was the fun? What was wrong? At least Arrows had been the year after the years at Williams. There was something in the air in 1997 and it had to do with being world champion. The Arrows was bad (everybody knew that) but the memory of racing Michael, wheel to wheel, and sometimes beating him, was still fresh. It was what he thought of sometimes, as he sat there in the car that year, waiting for a damper to be changed, or a rear wing to be adjusted. It was what he needed to be thinking about in order to keep it going.

Now, here at Monaco, the championship seemed an age away. Schumacher was still up there, as commanding as ever, but he was nowhere – back, almost, to where he'd once been at Brabham. Difference was, he had everything to prove back in 1992. Being in Formula 1, making it happen, had almost been

enough. Now, sitting in the Jordan in the Monaco pitlane, it all seemed a bit like Blackadder's broken pencil: pointless.

How could the car be so bad? How could ... a Sauber ... be so much better? Formula 1 was at the stage now where you could be so precise about the problems – so analytical of the telemetry – that nothing was left for debate. In some respects, he thought, it would be better if the mystery returned, if the passion of the engineers indeed rested on that last-minute run when the driver might magically get it right. Now, here, listening to the engineers in his ear, staring inanely at the qualifying times on the monitor, it was almost as if he was superfluous. They knew what lap time was achievable – and the lap time stank. Was this what he wanted to be? Was it worth it to be rendered so redundant?

Then there was Georgie and the kids – for safety, too, was a factor. Was it sensible or wise or prudent, or any of those things, to be thrashing around Monaco, risking the big one, when in reality he was merely

gasping for air, treading water? He had the money and the life that comes with the championship. What more did he need? More money? Another championship? Well, yes – but not this way.

He stared again at the monitor and this time he remembered to smile. If there was a plus side to the year it was that Williams, too, were in trouble. That always made him feel better. He should have been in a Williams in 1997 – and he should have won back-to-back championships. He would have raced Jacques hard and probably he would have beaten him. That little episode was now history – but the performance of the Williams, '98-spec, now gave him energy. It wasn't spite, he mused. Williams had done a lot for him – and he had given much in return. No, it was a reminder that it happens to the best of them. Here were Williams, with probably the best engineering depth in the field, struggling with Jacques and Heinz. He could imagine Patrick Head on the pitwall now, shouting at Heinz's race engineer.

"Craig? Tell Heinz-Harald that he's only got seven more minutes. He needs to find half a second otherwise he's going to drop a minimum of two more places down the grid!"

"Heinz knows that, Patrick. I can't talk to him now."

"If he knows that, then why isn't he going quicker?"

Or some such banter. Damon smiled at the thought. No-one races like Patrick Head. Brilliant.

And that was what kept him going, of course. If Williams were down, then certainly they would soon be up. Why not the same at Jordan? And where Williams' greatest quality was – is – their standard of engineering, then Jordan's, simply, is their passion and their drive: the sort of passion that only those yet to make it can generate.

It was a train of thought, nothing more. But it was what he had to remember to keep things in perspective. As recently as Barcelona he had been as quick as the Williams in qualifying. Jordan were a team on the rise. Monaco was a mere hiccup.

Hah!

The reality was that they could have improved things by switching to Bridgestones at the start of the season. It wasn't necessarily that the Bridgestones were better than the Goodyears. It was that he had spent a year working with Bridgestones at Arrows. Why not take advantage of that year and take the deal to Jordan? Bridgestone certainly had a better tyre in Melbourne and Brazil, and only Michael made the Goodyears look quick in Argentina. Imola was Bridgestone, as was Barcelona – or was it simply the superiority of the McLarens? It was difficult to tell. Certainly the new, wider front Goodyear was a step forward. Every time a Benetton beat a Williams, though, you had to assume that Bridgestone were doing a better job. Same engine, comparable drivers. And Fisichella was flying at Monaco.

Eddie Jordan and Gary Anderson remained loyal to Goodyear, however. More than loyal: they were sure that Goodyear were going to do the job. ▶

*The time: some time before Canada  
The place: the gym, Ireland*

THE MOMENT HAS PASSED. Time to expunge the thought. Yes, Monaco was a disaster. Yes, he had thought about quitting. No, he was not ready. More than that: he was actually enjoying life, if he thought about it. He'd won the championship and 21 grands prix; that much was in the record book – and that much made him very happy when he went to bed at night. Beyond that, he had structured his life with Jordan to maximise his time at his homes in Ireland and Spain. He still had a laugh with Pete and the boys, he had Michael and the Jordan people doing a very nice job for him and he lived the sort of life that most people only dream about. He could talk on equal terms to people like Phil Collins or Colin Montgomerie; he could do anything he wanted to, within reason. Nor was he restricted in his life in the way Michael was restricted. He didn't live in Monaco or Switzerland, for one thing. He loved Ireland and the villa in Spain, and he loved

living there with Georgie and the kids. They were even thinking of buying another house in England, too, to be ready for when the boys went to school.

So it is onto the benchpress and another set of 20. Motivate yourself. Motivate yourself towards the day when you are suddenly going to need everything you've got. Picture the moment: P2, L5, -3.4. Michael and the McLarens are out of it. You can win for Jordan. You've been catching Jacques at half a second a lap. You're going to get him. You stretch more, you preserve yourself more. You're older now, but wiser. You're ready.

*The time: the evening of the Canadian GP  
The place: somewhere over the Atlantic*

NOTHING LIKE A BIT of a scrap with Michael to restore the confidence! Okay, so it wasn't as real as it looked. Two things arose, however: one, the Goodyears were not all bad; two, he can still race wheel-to-wheel with Michael Schumacher and still wind him up.

Michael did a bit of ranting and raving after the race, which is good news – and a bit rich, coming from the man who nerfed him out of the 1994 World Championship. Canada had been disappointing in that he hadn't finished. After Monaco, though, it was as refreshing as a bottle of clear, cold Canadian mineral water. He'd actually raced Michael again. All was not lost.

*The time: the night of the German GP  
The place: Spain*

THE CAR IS ACTUALLY quite good! The new sidepods and other bits have been around since the Silverstone test, but today was really the first proof that they are better. No way is the Jordan slower than a Williams right now.

Okay, Jacques was quicker at the end of the race, but then the Jordan was not 100 per cent perfect. If he concentrates on set-up and they all keep their heads down, he might have a genuine chance of some podium finishes.

*The time: two hours after the Hungarian GP  
The place: Hungaroring*

PUTTING ASIDE the Brabham, he had never finished lower than second in Hungary. The record was broken today – he was fourth – but who cares? It was a great day. The car was competitive from beginning to end and he had never driven better. He got the absolute maximum from the package, split the Williams and could have beaten both of them with a touch more luck. Life, it has to be said, is suddenly fun again. Every team has its shortcomings and Jordan's are by now well known. But everything is starting to feel right. Now that they've got the shade of yellow finely tuned, even the kit seems to work – jackets, the car, the graphics. And the caps stand out a mile. Praise the London Rowing Club for a design that not only works but is also virtually uncopyable. Remember: he was still as quick as any non-McLaren driver through turn one. Someone seems to be perpetuating the myth that he struggles on medium and high-speed corners. We'll see at Spa.

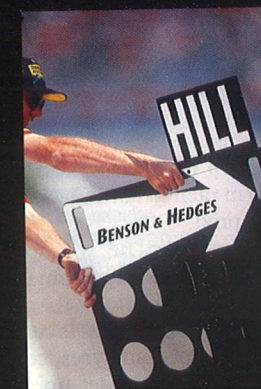
*The time: Friday, late afternoon  
The place: Spa*

THE CAR IS BRILLIANT! Forget the slow stuff; the slow stuff is always a compromise at Spa. The point is that the car is sheer pleasure through Eau Rouge, down the hill and up through the sweepers. He has never felt more confident on the high-speed corners; is it possible to be quicker? It's a long time since he enjoyed driving a Formula 1 car as he did this day in Belgium. Wet? Dry? Who cares?

*The time: Sunday evening  
The place: Spa*

IT WAS ALL SO EASY – except that it was probably the most difficult race of his life. It was easy in the sense that he was able to do everything that he wanted to do. He wasn't held back by a gear-selection problem or a misfire or a bad pitstop. It was a hard race, though, a race in which you could not relax – and he did everything ▶

**Below: Damon's Hockenheim form was good, and he finished fourth. The old enemy, Michael Schumacher, was fifth. Opp: conferring with Eddie Jordan**



'It's a long time since he enjoyed driving a Formula 1 car as he did this day in Belgium.

Wet? Dry? Who cares?'



'Because life sometimes is that simple – is a question of savouring the moment, of having fun, win or lose'



he needed to do. There are few better moments in racing. And to win Jordan's first grand prix!

In the first start he was lucky. He ducked and aimed and he came through without a scratch. Then, on the grid, with the rain easing up, they'd taken the big decision. Intermediate tyres, certainly – but which way to go on set-up? Would it rain again or would it brighten? The forecast was for ever-better weather. On Saturday, it wasn't even supposed to rain on race day. So he opted for a dry set-up – less wing, stiffer suspension.

The start wasn't his best, but he felt the grip as he flicked it into second. Suddenly he had the momentum and he could sense Hakkinen, on the inside, beginning to stammer.

He stuck to the middle of the road, found grip and decided to go for it. He crowded Mika – just enough to let him know he was there – and then he put the power down as smoothly as he knew. In his peripheral he could see other colours, other noses, but the track ahead

of him was clear. Eau Rouge was his!

His eyes flicked from track to mirror and back to track. It was a Ferrari behind – probably Michael. No problem. If he wants to take me out, so be it. Michael wouldn't be taking unnecessary risks this day, however. If he is going to pass, he's going to do it when he is sure. The job, then, is to use all of the available space and to take advantage of the clear road.

Lap one. Car feels great. No problem. Lap two. "You're doing great, Damon. Great. Irvine dropping back. Just you and Michael."

Lap three. Rain worsening. Sliding all over the place. Lap four. Michael obviously in better shape. What is it with this guy? He opts for what is obviously a wet set-up and ... almost as if he controls the weather ... it begins to rain again. In the mirrors, nothing but spray and glimpses of red. Stay on line. Let him do the work.

Okay. He has much more grip. He's alongside. Let him go. This is a long race and both McLarens seem to be out. Race to finish. Huge margin over third place.

Where are the Williams? "Frentzen up to fourth but not an obvious problem."

Oversteer. So let's take out front wing to find a balance. Onto wets. Still second. Great pitwork, boys. What a team.

Trulli in front. Sliding all over the place. Oops. We touched. Bet that gave him a fright. Big moment, but this thing is so driveable.

"Michael's out. Michael's out."  
Michael's out. Leading. Head down. Long way to go.

Eighteen laps to go – forever. Two-hour race? No way. Concentrate. Ralf second. The cars are brilliant. Villeneuve's gone off. Imagine Patrick. Concentrate.

Safety car. Safety car! Pit. Pit. Pit. Tyres. Fuel.

"Don't worry, Damon, Ralf will hold position. Repeat: Ralf will hold position."

Take forever. Come on, Oliver. Stay out another lap. That's the trouble with Spa. Laps are too long.

Head down, head down. No problem. Alesi third. Alesi and Ralf can fight each other. Raining unbelievably hard.

Is Alesi on wet settings?

Safety car in. Big moment out of the chicane. Cold tyres. Another big moment. Don't brake too late into La Source. Ralf all over me. Stay calm. Hold position. Ralf's not going to do anything stupid.

How long can half an hour take? Coulthard's catching us. No. Coulthard will not be passing us. Eddie talking to Ron Dennis on the pitwall. Concentrate. Engine crisp. Car still okay. Look for puddles. Sharp. Sharp.

Last lap. Don't think. Ralf still there. Hold position. Bus Stop. Don't brake too late. Easy on the power. Brush the kerb. The boys! Flags, arms – and the radio.

"Fantastic, Damon! Fantastic!"

Breathe. Enjoy. No slow-down lap. Pull into parc fermé. We've won. We've won the Belgian Grand Prix and we raced Michael, wheel-to-wheel. Monaco? When was that? An age ago. Georgie and the kids. Eddie. The boys. Mum. Brigitte. Samantha. Pete. Michael. Working out in the gym. All those days when we had no chance at all. What a turnaround!

In the press room they want to know about The Future. The next race. They want to know about the next race!

The answer, however, is obvious: "Let's just enjoy the moment. This is very special. Let's enjoy it."

For that, of course, is what life itself is all about and that is why Eddie Jordan does what he does and is who he is. That is why, in the days following Monaco, their thoughts turned to Canada and Damon's turned away from not racing at all.

That is why, in a wet Belgian Grand Prix, when the Ferrari and the McLaren drivers tripped over one another and the Williams and Benetton boys struggled and spun and crashed in conditions that they all described as atrocious – that is why Damon and Ralf and B&H Jordan, and Honda, too, were winners.

Because life sometimes is that simple – is a question of savouring the moment, of having fun, win or lose. Because, occasionally, and providing they are prepared for it, life does provide victories for the real people in an unreal world. ❶

Opp: minutes before qualifying, Barcelona. Above left: minutes before the off, Magny Cours. Above: Ralf wonders what might have been, while Damon sips the scene



# Saló

Historically, Hungary is a 'home race' for F1's two Finns. While Mika Hakkinen hogs the headlines, Mika Salo takes a tour of Budapest and plans his big future

Story by James Allen; photos by Pip Calvert

**h**eroes Square is the sort of proud symbol of 19th century nationalism you expect to find in a city like Budapest. It was built to celebrate the 1000th anniversary of the arrival of the Magyar tribes, founders of modern day Hungary. Part of the tribe settled, while many of their relations travelled north to Finland. Not surprisingly, there is a strong bond and affinity between these two nations.

Situated at the top of Andrassy ut (Budapest's answer to the Champs Elysees), Heroes Square is its answer to Trafalgar Square. Some pretty heavy historical moments have happened in this square, most recently the celebrations to mark the end of Communism back in 1989.

Today, in the warm glow of an August evening, the kings, saints and other heroes of Hungarian history look down wearily on the skateboarders and rollerbladers below. The sun is setting and a different kind of crowd is drifting into the square. A shattered-looking junkie eating crisps staggers across the centre, occasionally shouting something obscene and spraying the mulch of half chewed crisps from his mouth as he does so. He passes within ten feet of Mika Salo and his Japanese girlfriend Noriko Endo, who seem unconcerned by all around them as they walk hand-in-hand across the square.

**Mika and girlfriend Noriko take a stroll in Heroes Square. Will Salo be a hero in '99?**

As a Formula 1 driver, Salo is yet to become a hero. Although many believe he is gifted with the requisite speed, determination and courage, he has yet to get his hands on a car capable of challenging for glory.

It may be a tiny country with a population of just five million and an incomprehensible language, but Finland has produced some great racing talents. Keke Rosberg led the way by winning the 1982 World Championship and his protege, Mika Hakkinen, has set the pace this year. The Finnish crowd at the recent Hungarian GP was incredible. The airlines put on twenty extra flights from Helsinki to Budapest during the week, while the blue and white flags in the grandstands bore witness to the grand prix fever which is currently sweeping Finland.

Given the history, it's the nearest thing to a home grand prix for them, a chance to cheer on their heroes. But most of the shouting was for Mika Hakkinen in his dominant McLaren. Mika Salo on the other hand, will have to wait for the adulation. But he's not bitter about the success of his countryman, nor is he jealous.

"No, I don't care who the champion is if it's not me," he says airily. "I've been in F1 for four years now - every year someone has won it. It doesn't worry me. I just concentrate on my own job. I want to win it as well." ▶

**Think of Salo and  
you think of gutsy  
drives in under-  
powered Tyrrells;  
flat-out driving,  
unseen by cameras**

It's been another lean year for F1's older Finn. When you think of Salo you think of gutsy drives in underpowered Tyrrells, heroic afternoons of flat-out driving, unseen by the TV cameras, rewarded with an 8th place and a footnote in *Autosport*. Sadly, it's the lot of many of F1's also-rans, but Salo has always talked like a man who intends to break out of that drudgery. The move to Arrows in '98 was brave, and given a complicated and temperamental Barnard-designed car, Mika has often worn a brave face. On top of that, the top teams have been very reliable this season and with more cars finishing, those eighth places have become more like 12th place finishes. His fourth place at Monaco was a boost, although the way he sees it, it was disappointing not to finish third.

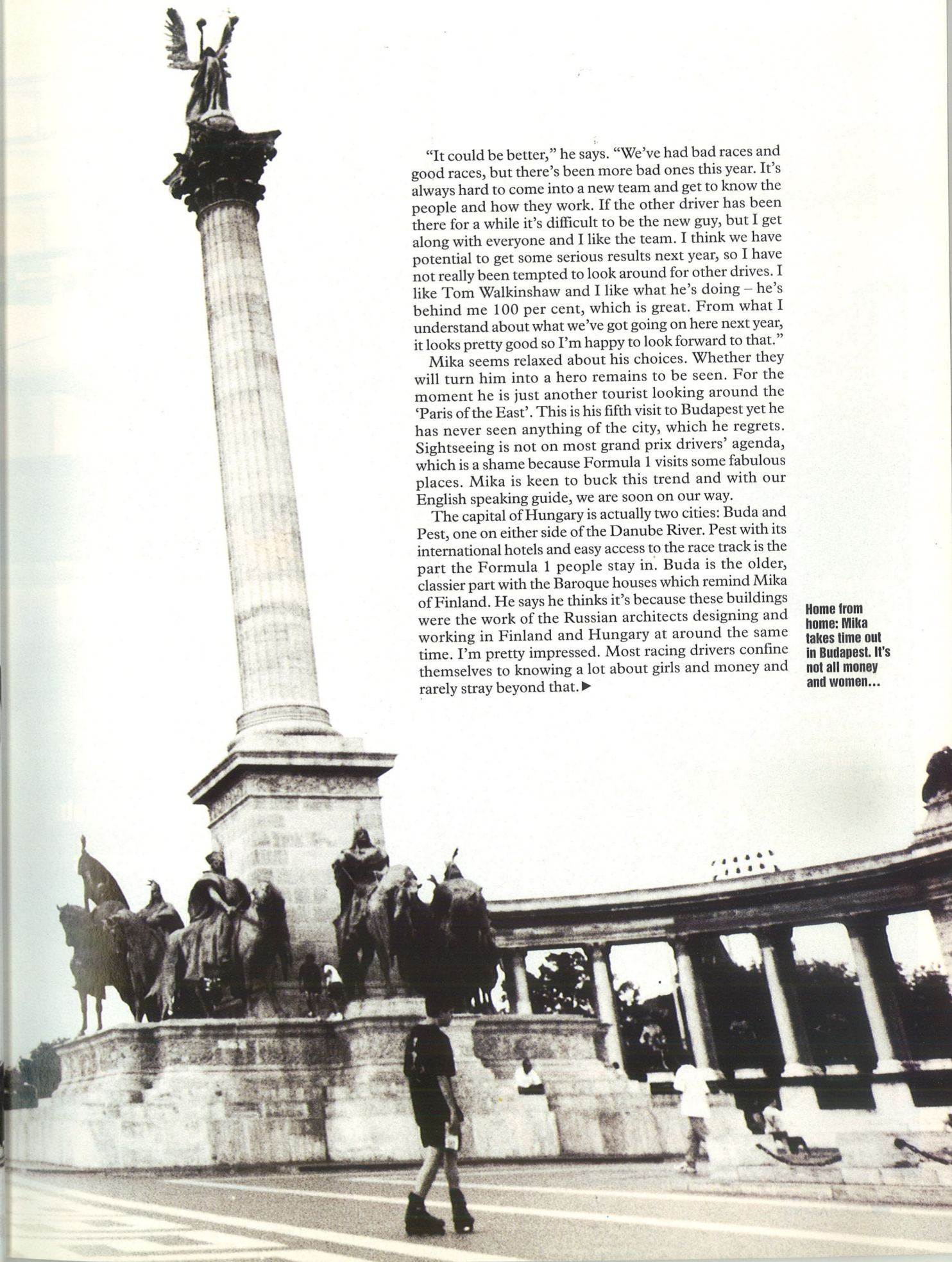


"It could be better," he says. "We've had bad races and good races, but there's been more bad ones this year. It's always hard to come into a new team and get to know the people and how they work. If the other driver has been there for a while it's difficult to be the new guy, but I get along with everyone and I like the team. I think we have potential to get some serious results next year, so I have not really been tempted to look around for other drives. I like Tom Walkinshaw and I like what he's doing - he's behind me 100 per cent, which is great. From what I understand about what we've got going on here next year, it looks pretty good so I'm happy to look forward to that."

Mika seems relaxed about his choices. Whether they will turn him into a hero remains to be seen. For the moment he is just another tourist looking around the 'Paris of the East'. This is his fifth visit to Budapest yet he has never seen anything of the city, which he regrets. Sightseeing is not on most grand prix drivers' agenda, which is a shame because Formula 1 visits some fabulous places. Mika is keen to buck this trend and with our English speaking guide, we are soon on our way.

The capital of Hungary is actually two cities: Buda and Pest, one on either side of the Danube River. Pest with its international hotels and easy access to the race track is the part the Formula 1 people stay in. Buda is the older, classier part with the Baroque houses which remind Mika of Finland. He says he thinks it's because these buildings were the work of the Russian architects designing and working in Finland and Hungary at around the same time. I'm pretty impressed. Most racing drivers confine themselves to knowing a lot about girls and money and rarely stray beyond that. ▶

**Home from home: Mika takes time out in Budapest. It's not all money and women...**





Many believe Salo has the requisite speed and courage to win a race. He just wants a decent motor. Top right: with Noriko who he met while racing in Japan. Bottom right: Mika training in water - honest

**Mika enjoys the Turkish baths, despite all the drunken Finns who are probably Hakkinen fans**

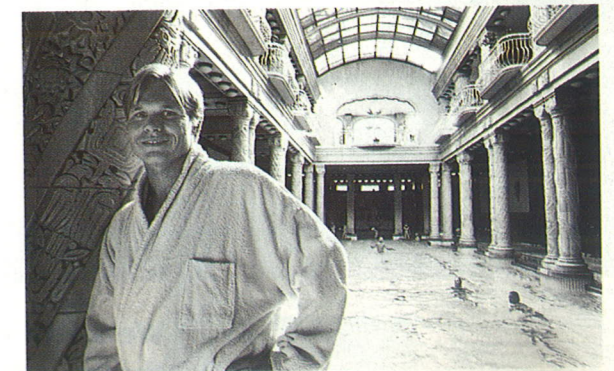


Finnish and Hungarian are from the same family of languages and both are incomprehensible to outsiders. When the F1 community first started visiting Budapest in 1986, hardly anyone spoke English and it was all a bit of a struggle. Twelve years on, taxi drivers, hotel and restaurant staff, indeed most people you come across have a good grasp of English, which has made coming here a more pleasant and relaxing experience.

Luckily, this has not stopped the hilarious mis-translations which you'll still find on menus. In one restaurant *vadspenot*, which means 'wild spinach', is translated as 'False mercury, Good King Henry'. Further down you might choose to order a 'Veal Gordon Blue'. According to the *Time Out* guide, the fault lies with a man called Laszlo Orszagh who produced an English/Hungarian dictionary in the 1940s which, during the communist years, was the only dictionary available. His translating staff included an Englishman who was paid for his work in beer. This may explain why he translated *fesztelnit* (to unscrew) as 'uncock the cock'. When you think about it, Orszagh's dictionary must have been the inspiration for the classic Monty Python sketch where Terry Jones struggles with a Hungarian phrase book in a tobacconist's shop, "My hovercraft is full of eels, my nipples explode with the light", and so on. It all makes sense now.

Notwithstanding the language issue, there is tremendous charisma about Budapest and some unusual places to be found by anyone willing to scratch beneath the surface. It is the only European capital which is also a spa town and there are some stunning original Turkish baths. Most spectacular is the Gellert, just across the bridge from the main hotel area. When I mentioned it as a possible place to end our tour, Mika leapt at the chance to go there. He loves water and does most of his training in it.

Based on a 13th century Turkish spa, the current bath house was built at the turn of the century. For 1200 forint



(about £4) you can swim in the Art Nouveau swimming pool and move around the numerous thermal baths and steam rooms, while outside is a huge pool with a wave machine. The tone of the place is a collision between the classical and the communist. In the changing room, the stern-faced attendants (who all look as though they regret the collapse of the Soviet Union) are dressed in tatty white smocks and look like the nurses from the lunatic asylum in the film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Noriko, whom Mika met when he was racing in Japan, laughs out loud. Mika is running around in a dressing gown which is so old it must have been on the original inventory of the baths. He's having a great time despite the fact that the place is teeming with drunken Finns who want to talk to him. Probably Hakkinen fans. Salo is not a huge Hakkinen fan. Although the two virtually grew up together in the sport, there is no friendship, just rivalry. I wonder out loud what would it mean to Finland to have another world champion. "It would be great," Salo chimes in. "And next year we can have another one!"

# "Can we take the long way home?"

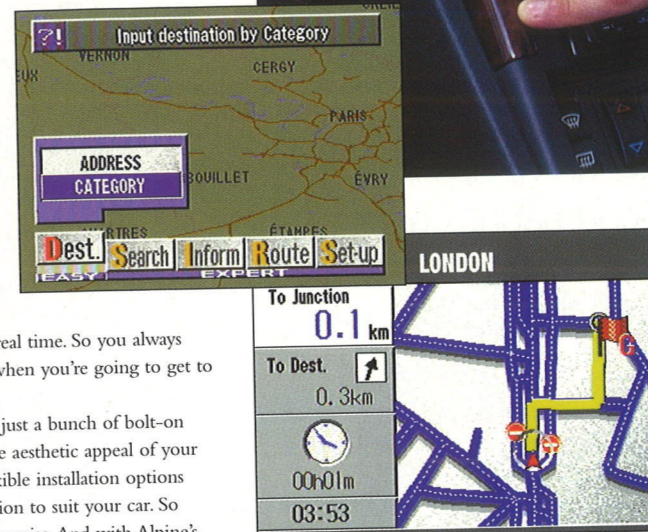


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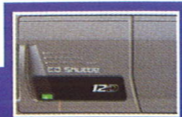
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Thing is, Eddie Irvine doesn't really mind if it doesn't. Because he's all right as he is, isn't he? Supporting Schumacher, ever the number two, earning tons of money. So what's the big idea?

Story by Mira Stout

# Smile

## ...it may never happen



MARTYN ELFORD/LAT

Arriving at Silverstone to spend the day with Eddie Irvine, I feel a little dyspeptic. Not only is it jarringly early in the morning, but already there has been a farcical kerfuffle about credentials at the main gate where Irvine's management was supposed to have left my name, but forgot. Given that it's Irvine whom I'm to interview, a bumpy ride is expected – and Eddie, bless him, is already delivering.

It's the last day of a three-day test at the Northamptonshire circuit. The car park is warming up with a practice traffic jam, and paddock is abuzz with cell-phone chat conducted in Italian, German and

MARTYN ELFORD/LAT



Middlesex-ese. The wolf-bark of the V10 engines bites the morning air.

While it might be summer elsewhere, here at Silverstone it is February – toe-numbingly cold and brooding with rain. All teams and principal drivers are present, plus hundreds of sponsors' guests known as the 'Do Come Alongs'; "Can't invite you to the race, but *do come along* to the test."

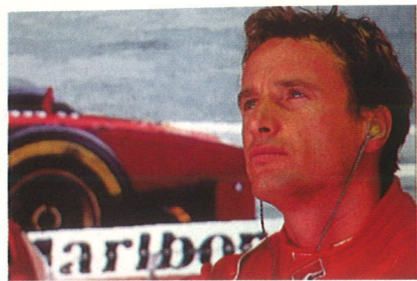
I walk towards the Ferrari garage, talking into a photographer's mobile to Sonia Irvine, Eddie's sister/physio/media minder – and she is talking and walking towards me until we virtually collide. Big smiles and coos of co-operation.

At 9.50 am, I catch my first sight of Irvine, folding himself into the cockpit of his F300 for a seat-fitting. It's the first time I've penetrated the hallowed stable of the Prancing Horse, and the experience is both exciting and demystifying, rather like peeking behind the curtain of the Wizard of Oz, or being backstage at la Scala, surrounded by legions of Tommy Hilfiger red-clad stagehands. The steel safety curtain is down, as 14 mechanics perform top-secret microsurgery on the cars' set-ups, and a mysterious lady with a deep tan, scraped-back hair and big gold earrings stands by with a clipboard.

With Ferrari on a mission to upset McLaren's ▶

Opp: author Mira Stout enjoys five minutes with Irvine in the Ferrari garage at Silverstone. His PR promised us much longer...

Opp: Irv at speed – 1998 has been a successful year for him. Right: maybe I'll beat him next year... or maybe not. Below: dig the shamrock



DARREN HEATH

dominance, the atmosphere in the darkened garage is electric. The Gypsy Kings' *Bamboleo* blares from the speakers, inspiring a similarly frenetic beat to the wing-nut tightening. At first the mechanics stare at me as if a llama had wandered in from the A40, but soon get acclimatised. I look around for Sonia Irvine to organise Eddie for a chat later, but she's busy looking busy, and Ferrari's PR Claudio Berro is closeted in the bus.

During a sizeable lull in the seat-adjustment process, I approach Irvine and introduce myself. Mildly sunburned and stubble-chinned, Eddie checks me over with a combination of wariness and aggressive curiosity. He looks a bit stressed-out, but is still on a high after a solid run of podium results, including Ferrari's first one-two victory in nearly a decade.

"What magazine are you from?"

I tell him I'm writing a special piece for *F1 Racing*. First, Irvine goes through an elaborate pretence of not having heard of it – and then he explodes.

"That complete load of rubbish? I don't believe it. You're a novelist, right? That's perfect! That magazine is pure fiction. It looks all expensive and nice on the outside, but it's total crap inside!"

We're off to a good start anyway.

With this off his chest, he's calmer.

"You're Eurasian," he says, inspecting my physiognomy like a wine connoisseur nosing a new vintage. He asks politely about my book, appearing genuinely interested, and relaxes into a different persona. Suddenly a seat-adjuster recalls him, and his hackles go up again.

When he re-emerges from tinkering, I ask him how he got his sunburn. He brightens. "I've got a boat, and



DARREN HEATH



**'Mildly sunburned and stubble-chinned, Eddie checks me over with an odd combination of wariness and aggressive curiosity'**



DARREN HEATH

I swim, dive, jet-ski, canoe, everything. It's great ... it's exhausting going from race, to testing, to race, to testing. Having the boat, I go back – to Oxford, Milan or Dublin – feeling a bit refreshed. Otherwise it can get to be a bit too much."

He still shares digs in Oxfordshire with old friends, but he's never long in one place. Are his house-mates motor racing pals, I ask?

"Nah. There are no *pals* in motor racing," he scoffs, vaulting into the car. Though surrounded by family and team members, Irvine seems a bit of a loner, and his defensive cockiness doesn't fully match his vul-

nerability and intelligence. Despite his prickly manner, I like his candour. He's no Florence Nightengale, but he's far nicer than the paddock-villain role in which he is typecast.

Contrary to Irvine's strenuous denials, he has obviously been rattled by accusations earlier in the season of his being a toadying under-achiever for resigning as contractual number two to Schumacher, and has hit back hard – partly with playground outbursts about other teams and drivers, and partly by harnessing his frustration into aggressive drives for Ferrari. Unfortunately, Eddie's talent for insult tends

to eclipse his hard work on the track, and he appears uncomfortable in his role. Despite Ferrari's glamour and money, and his boyish admiration for Schumacher, being perceived as a highly paid lap-dog grates against Irvine's lion-sized ego.

Meanwhile, the implacable Michael Schumacher has been out on the track many times this morning, and is back in the garage telling his mechanics that he'll be staying till 5.30 pm. Standing with his legs spread and arms akimbo, he gives the air of having woken at dawn, swum the English channel, signed a multi-billion dollar endorsement deal, enjoyed quality ▶



GAVIN LAWRENCE/LAT

time with his daughter, and given driving lessons to The Spice Girls – all before a breakfast of muesli and engine lubricant.

In the privacy of his garage, Schumacher is surprisingly warm and courteous rather than the cynical, flag-ignoring monster he appears on TV. When he bends down and smiles beside a little wheelchair-bound boy for a photo souvenir, tears well up rather than nausea; he's so convincingly *sincere*.

Irvine and Schumacher make good, if corny stable-mates – with smooth thoroughbred Schumacher, favourite, and bucking bronco Irvine, plucky outsider. This contrast is reinforced by their vibes and management. Where the serene German's press is handled with detached, buttery professionalism by Heiner Buchinger, irascible Irvine depends on the homespun help of his sister and a furtive moonlighting journalist, who requests anonymity.

The mysterious lady hovering nearby with deep tan and gold earrings turns out to be a reporter from *Stern*, just flown in from Rome for an extended interview with Irvine. We eye each other, as Irvine is either incommunicado on the track or obscured by a gaggle of team-mates, drilling and clanking around his longer-wheelbase car. The prospect of either of us talking with him at length looks increasingly unlikely.

"Will Eddie be available at lunch time?" I ask Sonia, prizing her away from a laughing group of buddies. She looks a bit shifty, and says yes.

It's still only 11.45, and nothing much is happening. The seat people from Lear have extracted the offend-

ing plastic seat bucket from Irvine's Ferrari, and are installing the new one – easier-on-the-back. Irvine loudly announces his need to answer an urgent call of nature resulting from last night's vindaloo. A paunchy, self-important blond man and his thrusting wife, 'guests of Shell', are nosing around the garage with junior in tow, getting in the mechanics' way. Mini-skirted girls with goosebumps and baseball caps cluster at the garage door for a glimpse of the drivers.

The steel curtain clanks down, disappointing them, as Schumacher returns from a lap. Ross Brawn re-enters from the pitlane after discussions with Goodyear technicians, and prowls around exuding owl-like intelligence. With his specs and bulky physique he has the grace to look slightly embarrassed, in the most British possible way, at having to wear the 'sporty' Ferrari jumper and tight matching slacks.

In the absence of anything else to do, I'm taken aback by the un-Mediterranean industriousness of the garage. "There's nothing laid-back about Ferrari," Irvine declares later. A stroll down the pitlane reveals this to be true: compared with the jumping Italian outfit, little overt development work is taking place among its main rivals at this point in the test. Benetton and Jordan look busy, but at Williams the garage is virtually empty, and at McLaren marketing representatives outnumber mechanics 10 to one. Mika Hakkinen takes a languid lap, unnoticed.

By 12.45, it's freezing. The *Stern* lady buttonholes me, shocked about the disorganisation. "They treat us with contempt. Like mosquitoes. I'm writing a fea-



LAT ARCHIVE

Left: Eddie in consultation with Ferrari's beaky technical director Ross Brawn. Below: powering down the Silverstone pitlane

## 'I'm taken aback by Ferrari's very un-Mediterranean industriousness'



DARREN HEATH



DARREN HEATH

**'A harassed Eddie is wolfing lunch with his mechanics; Schumacher sits in splendid isolation, doing radio, calmly spearing a forkful of *penne*'**

ture, after all. All the way from Rome. Why agree to do press if you have no intention of co-operating?" I can't answer. Formula 1 takes the biscuit for rhinoceros-skinned arrogance.

12.50: Struggling with a heavy workload, Sonia Irvine steadily ignores us.

12.55: A harassed-looking Eddie, with whom I've been promised a lunch-time chat, is already wolfing down lunch with a noisy tableful of mechanics. Schumacher sits in splendid isolation, giving a radio interview, calmly spearing a forkful of *penne*.

1.00 to 1.10: Eddie disappears into the lavatory. Chaos mounts as a small crowd of sponsors, jour-

nalists, fans and minders gathers outside the door, waiting to pounce on him with their claims.

1.25: Furtive moonlighting journalist approaches, and suggests that the *Stern* reporter and I share Eddie, interviewing him together. Eyebrows fly up in disbelief.

1.30: Irvine emerges from loo, flashes me a mischievous smile and dons a pair of shades that a sponsor has handed him, before being escorted outside for a photoshoot by an emissary from Oakley sunglasses.

1.50: Testing resumes in 10 minutes.

1.55: Irvine joins us at our table. Which Eddie will we get - charming or stropky?

The *Stern* lady, who has got to catch a plane, plunges up to her neck in stropiness. In the five minutes we are given, the journalist manages to annoy Irvine with the naivety of her questions.

The spoiled child with the pushy ('guests of Shell') parents practically jumps on the table to get Irvine's attention, while his father interrupts our interview with frequent quips like, "You'd be better off talking to Junior! Go on, talk to Junior! At least he doesn't make things up!"

How does Irvine respond to the motorsporting press calling him unambitious by staying on as number two to Michael Schumacher?

"Rubbish. It's a trade-off. I could move and be number one elsewhere, but get worse results. Ferrari are on the up. So I'm always going to be number two, but in this car at least I have a chance of matching him. Coming second to Michael [in France] was like a win for me, because Michael is just so much better than anyone else. I'm proud of my record at Ferrari."

"So does that mean that crazy Eddie is becoming more mature?" asks *Stern*.

"That's totally stupid. A totally stupid question. I've never been crazy Eddie. I'm the same as I've always been. The car has just gotten better."

Irvine hasn't changed at all?

"No!"

Has he grown used to the pressure of being under the microscope at Ferrari?

He softens a bit.

"Obviously, there'll always be demands for results

at a place like Ferrari. Of course, I don't want to be seen as useless, but I'll never get used to the pressure."

Seeing his bloodshot eyes and jumpiness, one believes him. To his credit, Irvine is not a born corporate animal, nor a natural candidate for the diplomatic corps. However, he *will* take risks on the track and make enemies, which is the sort of seat-of-the-pants chutzpah that the public admires. But, sadly, as long as he remains at Ferrari alongside Schumacher, just how good he is as a driver, we may never know.

Returning to the topic of ambition, Eddie goes quiet, and hints that he'd like to negotiate flexibility for winning into his next contract with Ferrari, but with rare caution, refuses to come out and say so.

Much has been written about Irvine's contradictions. Free spirit with restrictive contract. Work-horse sometimes capable of outqualifying Michael Schumacher. Family-boy-whose-parents-follow-him-around-grand-prix-in-caravan versus 'Irv the Perv', with his flash toys.

When I ask him what he finds most inaccurate about what has been written about him, he snaps, "Nothing. I don't care what anybody says or writes," and stalks off.

Typical Eddie.

The cliché about Irvine is that you either love him or loathe him, but I came away with a subtler sentiment; both liking and disliking him at the same time - much as anyone else. Yet it being Irvine, it hits you faster - and leaves a big red dent. **1**

STEVEN TEEZ/LAT



Opp: Eddie always uses all the road, sometimes too much. Left: waiting for mods to be carried out can get a bit boring...



MARTYN ELFORD/LAT



DARREN HEATH

Far left: a seat-fitting involves jumping in and out of the car again and again. Eddie doesn't enjoy it, but he sometimes cracks a helmet-shrouded smile (left)



Formula 1 is all about Franks and Rons and Kens – ex-drivers, ex-mechanics, *garagistes*, who were raised in the Home Counties and cut their racing teeth at places like Brands Hatch, Thruxton and Lydden. No wonder, then, that F1 has always been a bit suspicious of a man called Flavio Briatore, a dapper *Torinese* who was invited by Luciano Benetton to the 1988 Australian Grand Prix.

That November weekend, Briatore's was a watching brief. He liked what he saw. By the following March, when the Formula 1 circus reconvened in Rio de Janeiro, he had been put in charge of Luciano's (as yet) unproven team.

The rest, as they say, is history. Though the technicalities of F1 cars would always confuse him, he was politically adept. He and Bernie Ecclestone became close allies. By 1994 Briatore and his driver, Michael

# the Italian's job

You may not have heard of Supertec Sports, but you will. Matt Bishop talks to the boss, Flavio Briatore Photographs by Steven Tee/LAT



Schumacher, had built a superb team around them: men like Tom Walkinshaw – now owner of Arrows – and Ross Brawn, Rory Byrne and Tad Czapski, all now at Ferrari. They won the championship that year and the next. And, if the twitchy trajectory of a sorted-for-Schumacher GP car pulverising all comers was a sight we were soon used to, so too was that of Briatore strutting his stuff around the paddock.

A tall man, slow of swagger, menacing of mien, silver of bouffant – all designer labels and Marlboro Lights and baseball caps on backwards. A penetrating glare that led some people to say Godfather and mean it. In late 1995, Michael was lured by Ferrari's offer of even more *lire* than Briatore and all his Italian contacts could muster, and the downward spiral began. In 1996, Gerhard Berger and

Jean Alesi failed to bag a single victory in a car based closely on that with which Schumacher and Johnny Herbert had won 11 times the year before. In 1997 things were worse. By the end of the year, Berger and Alesi were on their way ... and so was Briatore.

So the 1998 season began without the man who had relished the limelight like no other, who had courted paddock paparazzi like no Frank or Ron or

Ken ever would – or could. Rumours, as ever, were rife. Briatore refused all interview requests. Maybe next month, said his assistants. Or maybe not.

The call came in July. Briatore would see me in his new London offices. He had something to say.

The something, I had already gleaned, would concern a new job. A company called Super Performance Competition Engineering, using the

brand-name Supertec Sports, had been set up, and Briatore would be running it. Early reports were vague – something to do with Mecachrome (whose engines are currently used by Williams and Benetton), people were saying. Perhaps Briatore could elaborate...

Unsurprisingly, he could. "Supertec will commission Mecachrome to assemble all-new engines which will be developed 100 per cent by Renault." ▶



Confused? Wondering whether, perhaps, the new company represents one link in the chain too many? Well, as is so often the case in Formula 1, the answer can be traced to Ecclestone.

Worried that there might one day come a time when there aren't enough competitive engines to go round, Bernie has made no secret of the fact that he would like engine manufacturers to supply more than one team each (as is currently the norm). Ferrari have followed this directive, by providing Petronas-badged V10s for the Sauber team, as have Ford (whose V10 is used by Stewart, Tyrrell and Minardi). But Mercedes-Benz, Peugeot and Mugen-Honda each confine their attentions to just one team (McLaren, Prost and Jordan, respectively) – while, in the absence of a big-name alternative, the Arrows team have been forced to develop their own V10 in association with privateer Brian Hart.

**Smoother than a polished smooth thing, Flavio was considered a bit of an outsider when he first came to F1. Now he's sorting out the engines**

“No, no. Mr Ecclestone is the main man in Formula 1. Everything in Formula 1 is because of Mr Ecclestone. Mr Ecclestone is a brilliant manager, brilliant at doing the best for Formula 1. Mr Ecclestone and I are very happy to ensure supply of engines to at least three teams in 1999.”

The three teams being Williams, Benetton and British American Racing. So what of Frank Williams' opposition to a third Mecachrome-powered team? A smile: “I have absolutely nothing against Frank. But if he wants us to supply just two teams, why doesn't he go and get his engines from somewhere else? Then we would be supplying just two teams again, as he would like!”

“No, seriously, Frank's contract says nothing about how many engines we can supply. We can supply two teams, three teams, four teams, five teams...”

“We will have a competitive engine next year – an all-new engine. We want

to win. I haven't come back to Formula 1 again after everything that has happened only to lose. I want to win.”

Winning *sans* Schumacher is alien to Briatore. Can he do it? “I believe that Formula 1 is a cycle. When I arrived in Formula 1, the cycle at McLaren was finishing – good times with Ayrton [Senna]. Then the Benetton cycle started, and we won two world championships with Michael Schumacher.

“In 1996 we had some problems – with the car and with Gerhard and Jean – but in 1997 we had a good car. We missed out on three or four victories last year. Gerhard was ill a lot and won once [at Hockenheim] but the car was capable of winning more than that.”

Berger may have been ill throughout 1997, but what of Alesi? Why didn't he win races last year? “I believe Jean is a little more emotional than some people. Look, it's simple: in Formula 1 you have Michael Schumacher on his own

at the top and everyone else below him. Everyone knows that. And Jean is somewhere in that second group.”

But, it wasn't just drivers who were omitted from Benetton's 1998 plans... “No, that's right. But I began to lose a little motivation, you know. I was tired. When you lose motivation, you lose ground. You're not as aggressive as before. Maybe you sleep one hour longer in the morning and leave the office one hour earlier in the evening. If you're honest with yourself, you know you need a change.” A shrug, a smile, a believe-me-I-don't-care chuckle.

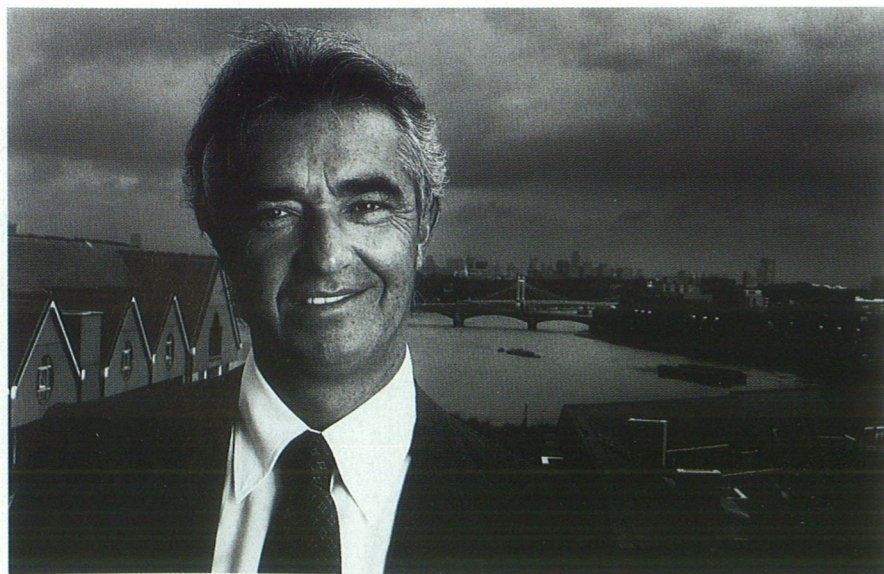
Is that the whole story? Will we ever know? Alesi, the man who is “a little more emotional than most people”, can have the last word, “Briatore was always spreading rumours – the kind of man who wants the focus on himself.”

Next year, he'll have that focus, that limelight. Cock your Canons, paparazzi: he'll be ready. **1**

‘Look, it's simple: in Formula 1 you have Michael Schumacher on his own at the top and everyone else is below’

The Mecachrome-built Renault V10 is currently used by Williams and Benetton, but Frank has publicly opposed any move to add a third team to the loop. With Flavio in control of engine supply, so goes the theory, Frank would be unable to prevent Bernie from getting his way.

Predictably, Flavio Briatore isn't keen to corroborate any of this, but his protestations serve only to confirm it.



Ralf Schumacher & Jean Alesi

# Mad, bad & dangerous..



... or smart, fast and hard to beat? The latter, says Peter Windsor

**N**ot sure why, really, but I never really rated either Jean Alesi or Ralf Schumacher. Other drivers were not a problem. Michael, Hakkinen and Jacques are obvious – Damon and Coulthard, too. Salo, Fisichella and Trulli are destined to make it big time and, beyond them, there lies the new group – Montoya, Heidfeld, Webber.

Somewhere in the middle, though, were Alesi and Ralf. For me, they just happened – quick drivers who were never going to be more than that, bland drivers both in the sense that they seemed not to be anything special. Alesi was a Sicilian who lost his cool; Ralf was Michael's brother.

Now I know better. Now I know that Jean Alesi is rare and great to watch, and that Ralf is secretive and sensitive and a star in his own right, a driver who would have made it regardless of who his brother was.

I know this because I no longer have to watch races from the pitlane or from the TV monitor, as one does when one works for a team. There is a whole new world out there and it begins with what F1 officials call a tabard. If you are lucky enough to be eligible for one, tie it up and walk out onto the circuit. At places like

Monaco, or Barcelona, it is a ticket to paradise.

The first time I really saw Alesi was in Melbourne this year. If Jacques Villeneuve is the last of the late apexers, Alesi, in Australia, was the opposite. He turned in so early that it seemed as if he was driving another circuit. It was ridiculous. In terms of the racing line, he made Michael look positively conventional. Thing was, Alesi was also very slow – embarrassingly slow next to his team-mate, Johnny Herbert, and slow in the context of the race, where he was a blue and mobile chicane.

I couldn't work it out. Brazil and Argentina were little better. Imola came and went. And then came Barcelona. And Monaco. And at last I was able to see what this guy was trying to do: he was turning in to Casino Square so early that he was leaving no room – no margin whatever – to do anything with the rear of the car. If he had grip, he was brilliant. If he hit a bump, or locked up, or lost the rear, forget it. Unlike Michael, who leaves enough room still to extrapolate even as he plugs the front, Alesi commits totally to the front of the car. He floats the car in the middle of the corner, where he is slow, but by then his time has been saved: all that matters then is that his mental image ▶

DARREN HEATH



**The Listening Team:** at Sauber, Alesi has at last found a group of engineers who are willing to pander fully to his set-up tastes

of the exit is pin-sharp accurate, because he has no chance of seeing it before it is too late. In Melbourne, obviously, he had no grip at the front. For Alesi, I guessed, this was the closest thing to hell.

"Yes, yes, I have to forget Melbourne," he said when I finally sat him down in Austria. "I had no time in the car and no set-up. I had no confidence. I could not drive the car. Sometimes we return to this point, but not often, now. Now the car is basically quite good." Which is Alesi saying that, most of the time, he has a front end that works.

Why does he drive like this? Has he always done so? "Yes, from the earliest days. I always felt that to drive with the front end early into the corner is the quickest way to drive. I do not like to go in wide, playing with the power. It is not the quickest way. It has been a long fight for me. Many times I have had arguments with my engineers, and even with myself. But now, in Sauber, I am very comfortable. This is a very good team for me in the sense that I can talk to my engineers and they listen to me and they try to help me to achieve what I want with the car. Because my style is not conventional, of course."

At the risk of boring my friends, not to mention the

readers who kindly responded to my last 'Friction Circle' article, I raised the subject with Jean. Was he aware of the concept and, if so, did it affect the way he drove?

"I know all about the Friction Circle," he said. "But it is not used in Formula 1 as a system for improving the cars. I don't know why. I think there is a certain system that the engineers operate and no-one wants to change. Many times, for example, engineers have come to me to say that I am slower than my team-mate at the middle of the corner and that I have to brake later or brake earlier or do something that to me does not make sense. The reality is that I have carried much more speed into the corner. For a very short period, maybe just in the middle of the corner, I may be slower, but this is the moment when I am just getting the car to settle. It is not an important moment. If I have reached this point, I have already taken a lot of speed into the corner. I am faster for maybe 50 metres and a little bit slower for maybe two metres. This does not show up on most telemetry systems and for me this is a big frustration."

Alesi drives with his extremities and his heart; his brain, in the Michael Schumacher sense of the word,

## 'Sometimes I follow another driver and I feel I would have taken a corner differently'

Ralf Schumacher

## 'I love the start of a race. For me it is the moment when I am what I am – a racing driver'

Jean Alesi

is maybe only third in his order of Significant Talents. As such, he has had a frustrating career, often unable to express himself and frequently accepted as a driver who lacks the mental commitment ever to be truly successful. He remembers a time at the old Benetton, when he was told to test an electronic start strategy.

"It was a very good strategy. You basically just floored the throttle and everything happened for you. But I could *feel* that, like most things artificial, it was not as good as a natural start. I love the start of the race. For me it is the moment when I am what I am – a racing driver. I love the experience and I love the problem of matching throttle, clutch and wheelspin. For me it is a very special moment. So I asked the Benetton engineers if I could make some starts without the electronics. I knew that, if I was not perfect, I would not be far away from the strategy starts. I also knew that, if I got it right, I would be better than the computer.

"They measured me, and I was right – three times out of five. But they wouldn't let me race it. This I found very frustrating."

Alesi has not been very successful, of course. I could

never understand why he asked to be released from his Williams contract to drive for Ferrari. "I just wanted to drive for Ferrari!" he said with a smile that showed that he knew he was wrong. "But, yes, it was a mistake. I should have driven for Williams. The other big problem is that I have been very, very unlucky with reliability. Every team I have driven for has had reliability problems."

He also had a rather chaotic support system – a brother-cum-manager, a Sicilian temperament, a French lifestyle. Now, with Sauber, where they listen to him, he is comfortable at last. It is probably too late, of course, but the flashes of brilliance – the speed when he has grip and comparatively good power – are becoming increasingly frequent. Pay attention. Alesi's on a lap.

I first saw Ralf at Macau, when he dominated the F3 event. He had the best car with the best team and I dismissed him as nothing more than that: Michael's brother with all the trimmings.

Big mistake.

By Brazil this year, having closely watched him twice, I was convinced. Here was the nearest thing ▶

**Schuey Junior is the latest of the late brakers. His potential is huge, but this style can make him look ragged if his car is short of front-end grip**



## 'There is the school way to drive and there is another way. I don't want to talk about it'

Ralf Schumacher

**Alesi is renowned as a man of moods. But given a touch more understanding from his teams, he would have won more often**

to Nigel Mansell since the day Nigel told Colin Chapman that the only thing wrong with his team was that he, Mansell, wasn't driving for it. Ralf's biggest problem, I suggest, is that he is Michael's brother. If he'd had to work a bit harder to get to where he is, if he'd had to prove his ability the way most of them have to prove it, Ralf would probably make fewer mistakes and concentrate more.

In terms of technique, the guy is stunning. He brakes impossibly late into an early apex, repeats the same corrective flick over the same bump, mid-corner, and then he is off, silky-smooth while others are stabbing at the throttle. Like Mansell in the Lotus years, however, Ralf's driving looks ragged when he is struggling with the car. He is not good at rescuing it and frequently he is in trouble – usually tangentially rather than circularly. He locks brakes, he runs too wide – but that is because he hasn't got the front end to work. He lacks the confidence to use the back end to tuck in the front – but for sure his brother has told him how, when the time is right, this will happen for him, too. Put Ralf in a consistently quick car, as the Jordan increasingly is and the Williams surely will be,

then get him to relax and enjoy – something he does with difficulty – and Ralf will not be far short, if he is short at all, of matching the ability of his older brother.

He doesn't like to talk about any of this, however. Sit him down under the motorhome awning and he talks about what he is programmed to talk about – the increasing competitiveness of the Jordan, his relationship with Michael, his respect for Damon, his life in the German army.

But what about your driving, Ralf, your driving? Do you think you drive differently from most of the guys out there?

"Maybe, yes, but it is difficult to say. Sometimes I follow another driver and I feel I would have taken a corner differently. But it is too difficult to judge."

Where did you learn to drive? From Michael?

"When I was young, in karts, Michael helped me a lot. But then from the age of about 12 I was on my own because Michael was up and racing Formula 3."

So everything you do is natural, unplanned?

"Look," he said, eyes alight at last. "There is the school way to drive and there is another way. I do not want to talk about it."



Why? Because secrets will be passed on? Because it is personal?

"Because of both of these things, yes. If I drive differently from most drivers then this is something I do as an individual and I must protect this. There is no point in talking about styles."

Very Nigel Mansell, as I say. Ralf spends most of his time with a Mansell-like look of irritation on his face – a face that says, "Everything is not my going my way so I'm very, very pissed off." He also has a Mansell-like physique. Where Mika and Michael and Jacques and David are razor-sharp, all pecs and sunken cheeks, Ralf looks as though his fitness runs a close race against his predilection for sweets. Translation: like Mansell, Ralf is Formula 1-fit but he doesn't need the work-out crutch to remind himself that he is good. Just give him a car that works and let him do the rest. Okay?

More or less. Ralf has a great management team. Franz Tost works for Wilhelm Weber and has been an engineer-cum-friend-cum-adviser since the F3 days. He is tough with Ralf and he has a sound racing brain. He also knows about Ralf: "In terms of talent there is no doubt that Ralf is as good as Michael. All he lacks is confidence and experience."

What Ralf needs to do now is: listen to Franz, relax, keeps his head down at Jordan until the end of the season – and then spend every waking minute understanding how Patrick Head likes to build and set up a car. Williams have had two years of drivers telling them how *they* want the car to be. Ralf is the guy to reverse the trend – and, like Mansell before him, to make the most of it.

Take Michael and Mika out of the equation and one of the best bits of driving I've seen all year came from Ralf at Silverstone, where, like Mansell in Portugal, 1985, Ralf started from the back and ran strongly into the top six. Portugal was a pivotal race for Mansell, in that it marked the beginning of a new ultra-successful phase in his career. Mansell thereafter still made mistakes and still had bad races; Portugal was the turning-point, however. For Ralf, read Silverstone, 1998.

Then there was Austria, where Ralf held off Michael for longer than he was entitled, given his friendship and kinship with the world's number one, and the difference between their two cars. That was a difficult thing to do – and Ralf pulled it off, showing the world that now, on the threshold of a new career, he is ready to beat anyone. Michael included. ❶

**Ralf must learn to relax more if he is to make the most of his talent. If he does, his older brother will have to watch out**

## 'I just wanted to drive for Ferrari! It was a mistake. I should have driven for Williams'

Jean Alesi



Easy, tiger



West McLaren Mercedes

# Black Beauty

The Arrows A19 may not be the fastest car on the grid, but it's definitely the sleekest. Steve Matchett finds out how (and why) they make it look so good



## 'Barnard's latest creation is all swoops and curves and chiselled edges'

Racing folklore has it that ugly cars are slow cars – and, consequently, that pretty cars are fast cars. Although its pace has failed to set the world's race-tracks alight this season, this year's Arrows A19 is *not* an exception to that rule. John Barnard's latest creation – all swoops and curves and chiselled edges, resplendent in layer upon layer of deeply varnished black paintwork – has been rightly hailed as *the* pitlane beauty of 1998. And while its engine has not always pumped out enough power to achieve competitive lap times, its drivers, Mika Salo and Pedro Diniz, have waxed lyrical all season long about the chassis' agility. With a bit more grunt, it would be that object of racing perfection: a fast and beautiful Formula 1 car.

Let's take a stroll down the pitlane to the Arrows garage, away from the Williams-Ferrari-Benetton-McLaren 'posh' end, to find out a bit more about this black beauty. Down here, away from the hordes of journalists and photographers jostling to capture a moment of a megastar's time, you can move about more freely, enjoy things, take your time.

The Arrows team are very welcoming. You don't need a special carbon pass to get through a myriad of electric scanners, and neither do you have to submit your credentials to half a dozen ex-US Marines guarding the garage doors. No, it's a much friendlier system. You simply walk in and say hello – after which, at the invitation of the catering girls, you pour yourself an espresso and sit down.

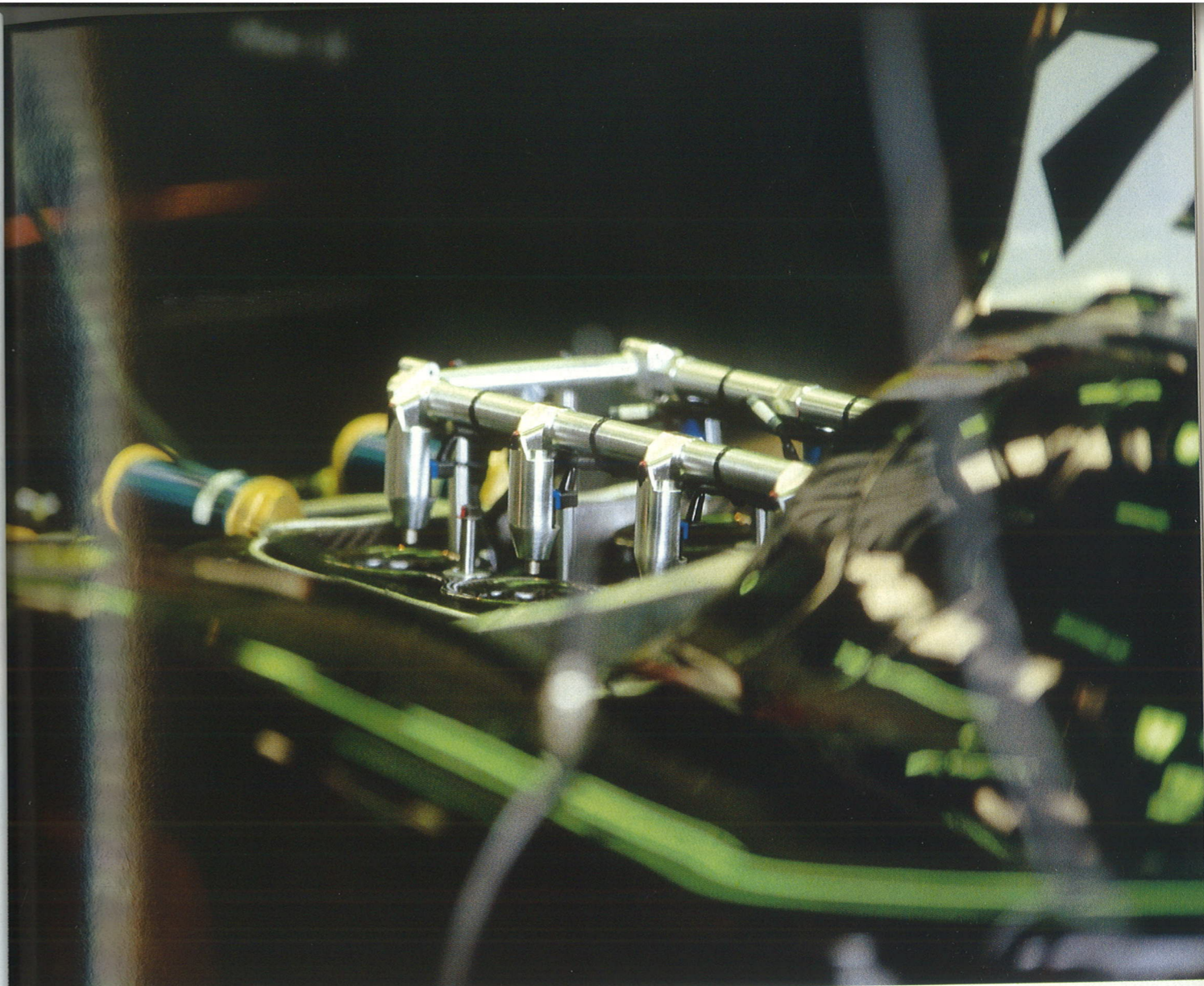
Of course, everyone at Arrows is busy – but I detect no sense of panic. Quite the opposite, in fact. For instance, chief mechanic Les Jones is happy to show me the car. On close inspection, it is indeed gracefully

detailed, a typical John Barnard creation. Eight years ago Barnard designed the Benetton B191 on which I worked as a mechanic and, as I look around the Arrows chassis, I get a distinct feeling of *déjà vu*. Naturally, the look of the car is very different from that of the old Benetton – the car in which Nelson Piquet won his last race – but certain subtleties about this chassis are similar.

For the '91 Benetton, JB had specified the use of metric bolts. Nothing too radical with that, you might think – until you realise that all the bearings used in Formula 1 suspension designs, although of aircraft-quality, are imperial; metric is not an option. Thus the machinists had to take every metric bolt and modify each one to have an imperial shank. A lot of work, but the result was that the head of the bolt, the nut, and the washers would all be metric.

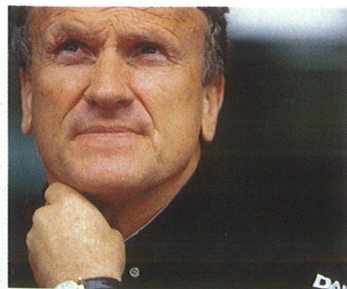
In the same way, Barnard has specified that metric bolts be used on the Arrows A19. The benefit for the mechanics is that they are working on an all-metric car, as opposed to a mixture of imperial (in the bearings) and machined metric threads elsewhere. The metric system is simpler to work with, too – as the size merely gets larger with increments of one: 1mm, 2mm, 3mm etc. Imperial, on the other hand, is nothing short of bizarre, with sizes like 5/16, 3/8, 7/8, 15/16. Confused? What about this then? Simple mathematics should reduce a 10/32 bolt to a 5/16 bolt. Er, sorry. A 10/32 bolt isn't actually a 5/16 bolt – it's much smaller than that; it's actually a 3/16 bolt, but with a much finer thread. No wonder Barnard prefers the metric system.

Despite the similarities between the '91 Benetton and the '98 Arrows, the latter's carbon gearbox is something new to me. I never worked on such a thing



# Black Beauty

Opp: even the A19's engine plumbing shows evidence of exquisite detailing. Left to right: a pensive Walkinshaw; a helmeted pits-trio; a laid-back John Barnard



and so I'm intrigued to see a little more of its construction. But this transmission is one of the team's most closely guarded projects, and it's normally kept firmly under wraps. Nevertheless, because of my past working relationship with several members of the team, I find myself in a privileged position and, on the understanding that I won't divulge any specifics, am allowed a peak. This is one of those odd situations that occasionally crops up because of my revised role in F1. My job as a writer is to inform; as an ex-colleague, however, my friendship obliges a bond of mutual trust.

Even with my assurances of discretion, I wouldn't be doing anyone an injustice by saying that the transmission is a beautiful piece of engineering. But the tag 'revolutionary' – which has been applied to its carbon case – has been both overplayed and misunderstood. Yes, the casing *is* carbon, and yes, the idea of using carbon *is* still relatively novel as far as transmission housings are concerned, but remember that carbon monocoques have been around for years. Arguably, the technology to produce a strong, stressed and rigid casing is therefore hardly revolutionary.

Clever though it is, this transmission has proved problematic. The casing has to cope with heat

generated by the friction of the gearbox internals (ratios, shafts, bearings), and heat conducted into the case from its proximity to the engine's exhaust system. The more these composite materials are used, the easier it will be to find a solution to this problem.

The carbon used in the TWR gearboxes may be terribly expensive, but its finished quality is superior to that of a 'box cast from magnesium. In testing, it is not unheard of for a team to scrap six, seven, even eight gearboxes because of stress cracks as they struggle to control the casting wall's thickness (undesirable weight), and its stress loading properties (essential strength).

The bottom line is this: do those who favour the continued use of cast magnesium boxes also favour the introduction of a cast magnesium chassis? Probably not, but it won't be long before a manufacturer conducts trials on a composite engine.

What's next? A one piece chassis/engine/gearbox perhaps? It's been three decades since NASA managed to land Neil and Buzz on the moon; surely it couldn't be such a daunting task to construct an all-composite race car 30 years from now...

While touring the pit garage with Les, we're joined by Gordon Message, the Arrows operations manager ▶

## 'In terms of the long-term structure of a team, drivers are transient players'

who used to be the race team manager at Benetton. He's a straight-talking, solid sort of chap – if he likes you he'll tell you, and if he doesn't he'll make it quite clear what the problem is. He left Benetton (in order to go sailing) at the end of 1993; but after realising that retirement didn't pay nearly as well as F1, he has joined up with Tom Walkinshaw. While at Benetton, Gordon had drawn the internal layout of their new factory at Enstone, and his first role with Arrows was to do the same at their new headquarters in Leaffield, an old British Telecom training centre.

I've been there and it's a stunning place. Walking around the design offices and the race bays, I soon realised that Gordon isn't the only ex-Benetton bod at Arrows. Tom Walkinshaw himself was at Benetton for a few years, as was John Barnard and chief engineer Mike Coughlan, who worked with JB on the B191 project. John Walton, the Arrows team manager, is an ex-Benetton mechanic (Imola 1990 was my first race with Benetton, and his last). Pete Metcalf heads up the gearbox department, the same job he did for several years at Benetton, and Ronnie Dean, who now runs Arrows' production department, used to be Benetton's composite manager. Ronnie Dean's production co-ordinator, Gary Andrews, is a former Benetton machinist.

I ask Gordon how, disregarding the drivers, he views the progress of the team. No disrespect to Salo and Diniz, but I tend to ignore drivers – because, in terms of the long-term structure of a team, they are rather transient players. Occasionally you'll find a Fangio, a Senna or a Schumacher – men capable of transforming a team overnight – but they are extremely rare. Far more often, it's the team's solid foundations which bring it forward. Jordan are a

prime example of steady progression. Eight years ago they started with nothing, but the team and the car have gradually grown stronger and now they have won a grand prix. They now have sound financial backing, confidence and stability, and have therefore been able to persuade Damon Hill – a former world champion, no less – to remain on the payroll. I'm sure Eddie Jordan would agree that, had he been able to hang on to Schumacher in 1991, his team would have been world champions two or even three times by now.

Arrows know the task ahead. "It's coming along," says Gordon. "We're at the stage Benetton were seven or eight years ago. There are faults and problems that crop up – sometimes you see them coming and nip them in the bud – but a lot of the time these things still have to happen. It's like kids playing with fire – they won't listen until they've had their fingers burned."

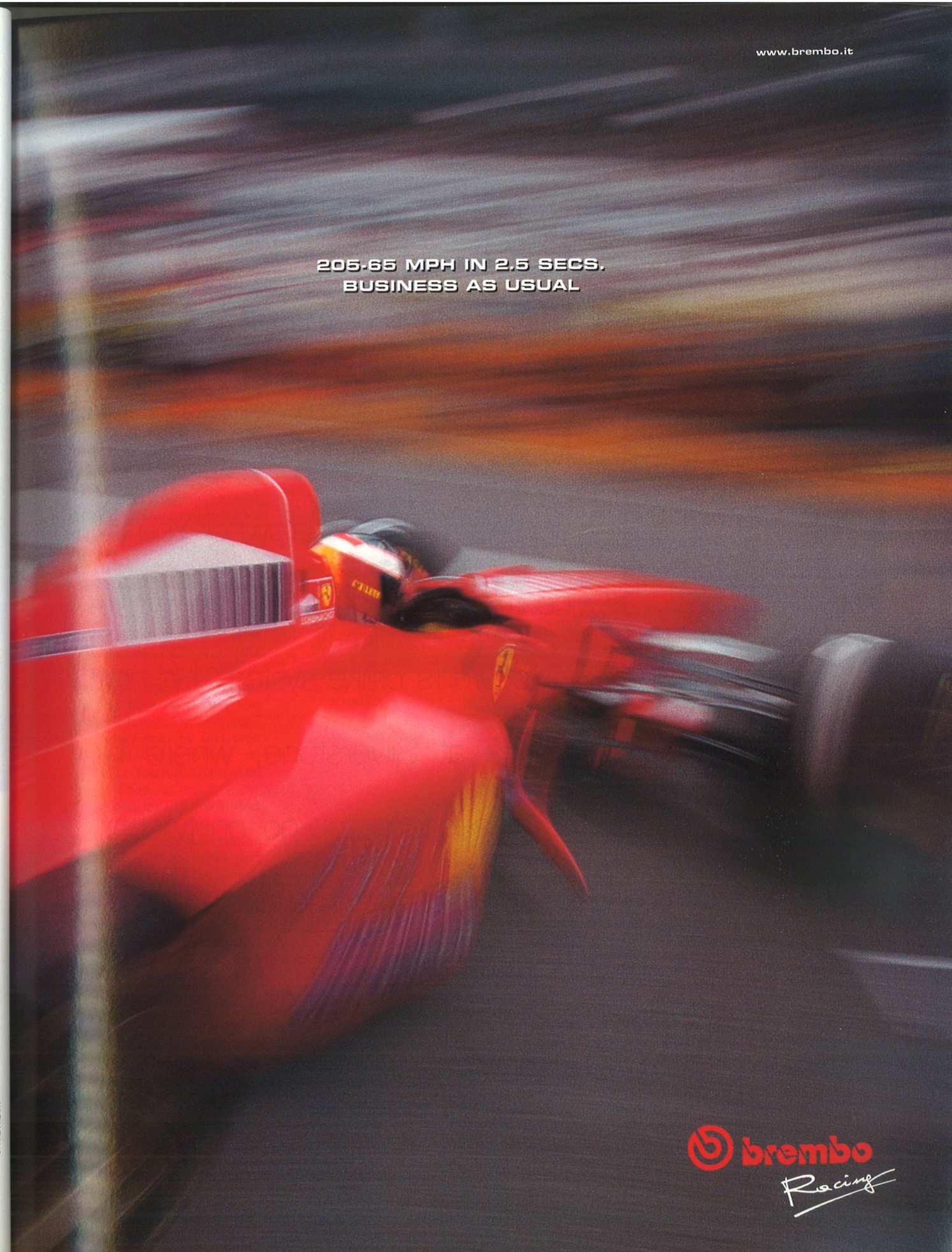
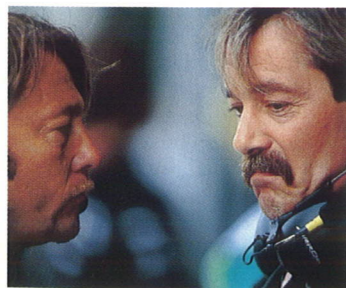
Gordon is confident Arrows can succeed: "It's early days. Pulling together a successful Formula 1 team is a complex business. We've got people from TWR and from the old Arrows set up too. We've got others from Benetton, Williams, McLaren, Jordan and Ligier. Lots of different people, lots of different ideas."

And what about the engine, the part of the A19 that has arguably prevented it going as well as it looks?

"We've made fantastic progress with the engine. Everyone knows we've struggled with it, but in the 20 years I've been in the sport, I've never seen such a dramatic improvement. We're still not quite there on top-end power, but improvement in the driveability of the car has taken us all by surprise. Next year's engine supply is still to be decided, and if you'd asked me a few weeks ago, I would have said we'd definitely be looking for something else. Now? I'd have to say I'm not so sure..." More power to your elbow, Gordon. **1**

# Black Beauty

Left to right: chief mechanic Les Jones in conference with team manager John Walton; too many cooks; chief engineer Mike Coughlan



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# Race relations



Meet Nazir Hoosein, ex-FIA steward and Bombay cinema owner. You first heard of him at Interlagos, where

he outlawed McLaren's brake system. He next hit the headlines at Silverstone, where he imposed *that* 10-second stop-go on Michael Schumacher. For this decision he was effectively suspended. Ever since, he has borne the brunt of misinformed public ridicule. This, then, is his story

Story by Christopher Hilton; photographs by Hormazd Sorabjee/Auto India

HOWEVER HURTFUL the attacks, however unfounded the sniping, Nazir Hoosein has chosen to keep a dignified silence. Until now.

First, his motorsporting credentials. Hoosein was born in Bombay in 1940 and began competing in the '60s with a Jaguar XK120 (which he still has). "The only regular motor racing was in Madras at a disused World War Two airfield," he explains. "Spectator turnout was about 45,000, all in temporary stands of bamboo and jungle wood. Regulations were almost non-existent and you drove whatever you could lay your hands on."

"In the late '60s, the first London-to-Sydney Marathon passed through India and set the ball rolling for rallying, which began to grow well because it was easier to organise and didn't need a circuit's infrastructure."

Hoosein had served an apprenticeship as a mechanic and was now a partner in a workshop that prepared cars for rallying and racing. He had his own team, too – and drove for it, winning the 1979 Indian Championship with a Brabham BT26.

"By the mid-1980s I'd begun officiating as a steward on certain European rallies. I remember meeting Jean Todt, who was then a top co-driver, on the ferry after the Acropolis Rally, and trying to persuade him to come to the Himalayan Rally. He was having none of it and was more interested in sleeping."

Simply put, by this time Hoosein was a widely experienced administrator. And racer. Then...

"A phone call from Ronnie Frost, who was chairman of the Motorsport Association of New Zealand, said they were proposing Max Mosley as President of FISA – and was I prepared to support him and muster support in Asia?"

"Jean-Marie Balestre, who held the job at that time, was doing nothing – so what did we have to lose? Japan came out openly for Max and many representatives of the Asian countries met Balestre before the General Assembly in 1991. He gave us the FIA Asian Zone, the only concession we ever got. We supported Max to a man."

Hoosein first officiated at a grand prix in 1993 – at Silverstone – and by 1996 was one of the four permanent F1 stewards. Which leads us back to *that* 10-second penalty that never was. Or was it? Is it



"During a lull in the proceedings in Brazil, where there were a number of protests, Patrick Head asked me what I did for a living – and I told him"

stewards are accountable to the Appeal Court and responsible to the competitor, who has the right of appeal. Often, regrettably, the press treat the stewards as if they were irresponsible.

"Formula 1 for me is a manifestation of the pursuit of perfection. I wish some of the reporting kept up."

Ah yes, the 'Bombay cinema owner' tag.

"During a lull in the proceedings in Brazil, Patrick Head asked me what I did for a living – and I told him."

From the headlines and innuendo that followed, Hoosein concludes, "What is insinuated is obvious, but it is wishful thinking if anyone believes Formula 1 won't be welcomed in other parts of the world. The future will bring drivers, designers and officials from a global base as surely as night follows day."

Nazir Hoosein. Silence broken. Dignity intact. **1**

possible to perform such a penalty moments *after* you have won a race?

"We had a procedural or a systems failure," concedes Hoosein. "The cause has been quickly remedied and I do not expect such a failure to occur again."

"The fact remains that, whatever the reasons, the stewards made errors – but we then rectified them. The International Court of Appeal upheld us, which means that, in the final analysis, the correct car and driver won."

"But when a driver makes an error, the result is a penalty; and so it was only fitting that we [the three stewards] should have handed in our Super-licences [which are given to people directly involved in F1]."

"This is a complicated technical sport and, unlike many others, where official decisions are final even if they're incorrect, we have our own judicial system. The

Hoosein pictured in happier times, at Imola in April. Since then, the controversies of Silverstone have turned his world upside-down...



# THE BUCKS START HERE

Tom Clarkson meets the man who doubles Schumacher's pay packet

**T**he designer beard and bouffant grey barnet give him an air of a spiv. But looks can be deceiving; there is nothing 'under the counter' about Willi Weber's dealings on behalf of the brothers Schumacher. Just lots and lots of noughts.

Weber is disarmingly urbane for a man who devotes much time to developing an unnerving aura of KGB intensity. At races he is often seen standing outside the Ferrari motorhome, silently surveying the paddock scene before him, confidence oozing from every pore.

Yet he greets you with a warm smile and, once settled in the Ferrari motorhome, espresso in hand, launches into a no doubt oft-repeated and smooth attempt to justify his millions. Like Bernie Ecclestone on a good day, Willi Weber's charm is surprisingly forthright.

"You have to be bloody good to survive in this business," he says with yet another smile. "Formula 1 is like a war – the only book you can read to prepare yourself for it is Clausewitz."

Carl von Clausewitz wrote the book *On War* in 1818 and was, arguably, the ideological father of World War One. Weber's knowledge of his existence suggests he is an educated man. His English is good too; he's never found wanting for something to say. ▶

OLIVER PECK

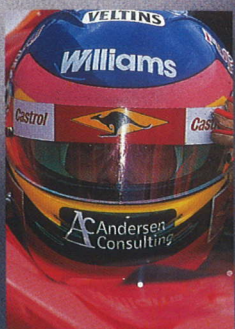
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The day of our interview at the Belgian Grand Prix is the 10th anniversary of his first meeting with Michael Schumacher, at a Formula König race at the Salzburgring in Austria. It's an evocative memory.

"You know," says Weber, "from the first time I saw Michael drive, I knew I must have him in my car, because at the time I was running a Formula 3 team. When it comes to driving, I know what I'm talking about because I raced touring cars for 20 years. I knew immediately that he was something very special. Even back then he had the car in a permanent drift around every corner. He was very fast."

A 10-year management deal was signed immediately and the result has been a bank account much healthier

than he could have ever dreamed of.

"You must remember," he says, "that when I met Michael I was already a rich man. I was a hotelier. I owned 35 restaurants, five hotels and employed 400 people. Because of that I was able to invest £800,000 into his career and

anything back then because he had no money, so to speak. I was the only one who could lose."

Getting Michael Schumacher into the top echelon of the sport has to have been one of the easiest jobs in motor racing, thanks to Schuey's huge natural

## 'People say that I have been lucky to meet Michael, but I was the one who saw his talent and acted on it'

talent. And the job of manager is a fairly nebulous one at times, everyone tackling the task slightly differently. But Willi Weber has made it an art form, his money-spinning exploration of new avenues placing him on a pedestal high above his fellow '10 percenters'. ▶

give him two free seasons in Formula 3. People say that I have been lucky to meet Michael, but I was the one who saw his talent and acted on it. And I was the one who invested a lot of money in his future – which I've never asked him to repay. He would have signed



Manager, svengali, financial consultant and friend: Weber has been all of these things to the fastest driver of the era. And, according to Weber, his partnership with Michael Schumacher is getting stronger

Left: Weber chats with Jochen Neerpasch, the man who gave Schuey his big break with the Mercedes sportscar team

TOP: MARTIN ELDORLAT; OTHERS: OLIVER RECK



SUTTON IMAGES

Middle man: if Weber gets his way, and he probably will, Ralf will become the second Schumacher to be snatched from the bosom of Eddie Jordan's team

"I always thought that there must be a lot more that I could do for Michael other than just signing his contracts. Then, in 1994, I started merchandising. I sold up all my other businesses to concentrate on this – I always hated that hotel shit anyway – and we now have 350 different products to merchandise, with 10 employees."

Over the next four years at Ferrari, Schumacher will receive a total of £80 million as a basic salary. Yet he can

A conversation with Weber is a one-way experience. The gospel according to Wilhelm F Weber comes at you like a machine gun, and he thinks that others could learn from his business ethos: "Never make quick decisions; you should always give yourself the chance to think things through. The people who make quick decisions in Formula 1 are the people who, as quick as they make them, are forced to leave."

He talks a good fight, and no-one can

So after Ralf Schumacher lands the expected four-year deal with Williams, Weber will have nothing left to prove.

He continues: "You make your own luck in life. I like Eddie Jordan, but we have a difference of opinion about where Ralf's future lies."

"Everybody is in Formula 1 for themselves. This is not a Red Cross family. I don't have any friends here – but if my drivers are happy, then I'm happy. You cannot be a nice man to succeed in Formula 1. It is not the mentality you need to succeed."

This is an interesting philosophy for a man who claims to have practised Buddhism in the late 1970s. "For many years I lived and tried to be like a Buddhist," he says. "I learned not to hurt anybody, or you will get hurt back. I try to make things happen, that's all."

Willi Weber is clearly a fighter. On occasion he hints that his conscience can be pricked, but this hasn't stopped him racking up an enviable record in the big-purse world of Formula 1.

Modest he's not.

Astute and extremely successful he most certainly is. **1**

### 'Everybody is in Formula 1 for themselves. This is not a Red Cross family. I don't have any friends here'

expect to double that sum through merchandising, and Weber Management are reputed to be worth 10 per cent of all 'Schumacher Inc' revenue.

"I am not going to tell you what our deal is worth," Weber says, "but let's say that I am a businessman, not an idiot. I work on behalf of my two drivers, Michael and Ralf, and they have the last say in all the deals I do for them – it's their life after all."

begrudge him his success with Michael, with whom he says his relationship has got stronger over time. Perhaps a better reflection of his negotiating skills is how he has taken Ralf Schumacher to F1.

"Ralf is very different to Michael," says Weber. "He has taken more time to develop. He is quick and has wonderful car control, but he takes a little longer for everything. In the final reckoning, though, he has the same speed."

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At The Syracuse Grand Prix, Italy 1965.



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They call it the beautiful game, but Nakano and Tuero just don't get it. Hotel living requires concentration - you could miss out on dinner...

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHARLES COATES/LAT

# he art break hotel

Minardi drivers Nakano and Tuero live in a hotel. But, as Tom Clarkson finds out, it isn't a life of luxury...

There are 22 drivers in Formula 1, and half of them live in Monaco. Of the others, four are based in England, two in Switzerland, two in Ireland and one in France. All of them have more than one house.

That leaves two drivers who don't have a place called home. For Minardi's Shinji Nakano and Esteban Tuero (from Japan and Argentina, respectively), 'home' is an unremarkable four-star hotel on the outskirts of Faenza, a five-minute drive from the team's base.

It's not an unusual arrangement; many previous drivers of Italy's B-team have lived 'care of' Hotel Cavallino. Team boss Gian Carlo Minardi likes to have his drivers close at hand and, after several failed attempts to find suitable rented accommodation in Faenza, he now opts to house them with his hotelier friend Aurelio Mainetti.

It's a two-way deal. In exchange for a car which sits in the reception area - what better way to get the unsuccessful Minardi-Ford M196 (driven by Italian journeyman Giovanni Lavaggi) off your hands? - Mainetti gives the team good room rates. Both drivers' rooms are leased annually, allowing Tuero and Nakano the one domestic freedom unavailable to normal hotel dwellers: the right to leave clothes in their rooms without their being sold in the local jumble. As well as this, everyone connected with the team - however tenuously - is welcomed with open arms.

"You are here for Minardi?" cries the woman on reception as I check in. "We give you a discount." Another beneficiary of this Minardi-mania is the team's

technical director Gustav Brunner who, at the time of my visit, is using the hotel as a base while he awaits the keys to the house he is buying in nearby Maranello.

Hotel Cavallino is a respectable stop-over for businessmen travelling between the port of Ancona and the city of Bologna. In the car park outside there are rows of middle-class motors - in the first two bays sit the Fiat Cinquecento Sporting of Tuero and the Vauxhall Vectra of Nakano. No Lambos here. The rooms are comfortable, the food more than adequate, but... No hotel can ever be a home: too many uniforms, too clean, too... unhomey.

"It's okay here, you know," says Tuero. "I don't have to cook, clean, or do anything like that. My family think I'm really spoiled!"

On the evening of my visit, Tuero is in a particularly vociferous mood; he has friends over from Argentina. He stays up laughing and joking until well after midnight; if he ever suffers lonely nights sipping San Pellegrino in the hotel's bar, tonight will not be one of them.

Perhaps the better case study, then, is Nakano. He doesn't speak Italian and has to cope with an alien European culture, to boot. His is an altogether less rosy evening which, for starters, sees him in bed by 10.00pm, having dined alone.

"I like not having to cook," he says, "but it's really boring in Faenza because there is almost nothing to do." But perhaps this is a common factor in the life of an F1 apprentice. This is only Nakano's second season in F1 and, at the moment, he has no need to seek tax redemption. As a result, he is unsure of where to live: ▶

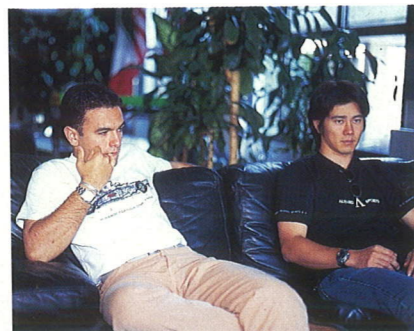
the team's arrangements are probably as good as anything else he might sort out for himself.

"Last year, when I drove for Prost, I lived in a little apartment in Nevers," he says. "That was boring, just like here. A normal day for me at the hotel starts at 9.00am, when I get up and have breakfast. Then I go to the gym to train, then visit the team in the afternoon." And what about the evenings? "I go to bed early most of the time..."

The extent of Nakano's hermitic lifestyle is made more apparent the following morning, at breakfast. When he walks into the dining room, he sees Tuero's friends – but doesn't join them. He sits alone at the other end of the room. Nakano speaks English after a fashion, but very little Italian; there is only one Englishman in the team – Nigel Copperthwaite – and no Japanese.

Consequently, the drivers are not particularly good mates. You're left with the impression that they do little together. As they show me around the hotel, there's little chat, Tuero relying on the team's PR-cum-translator Silvia Frangipane to express his opinions in English.

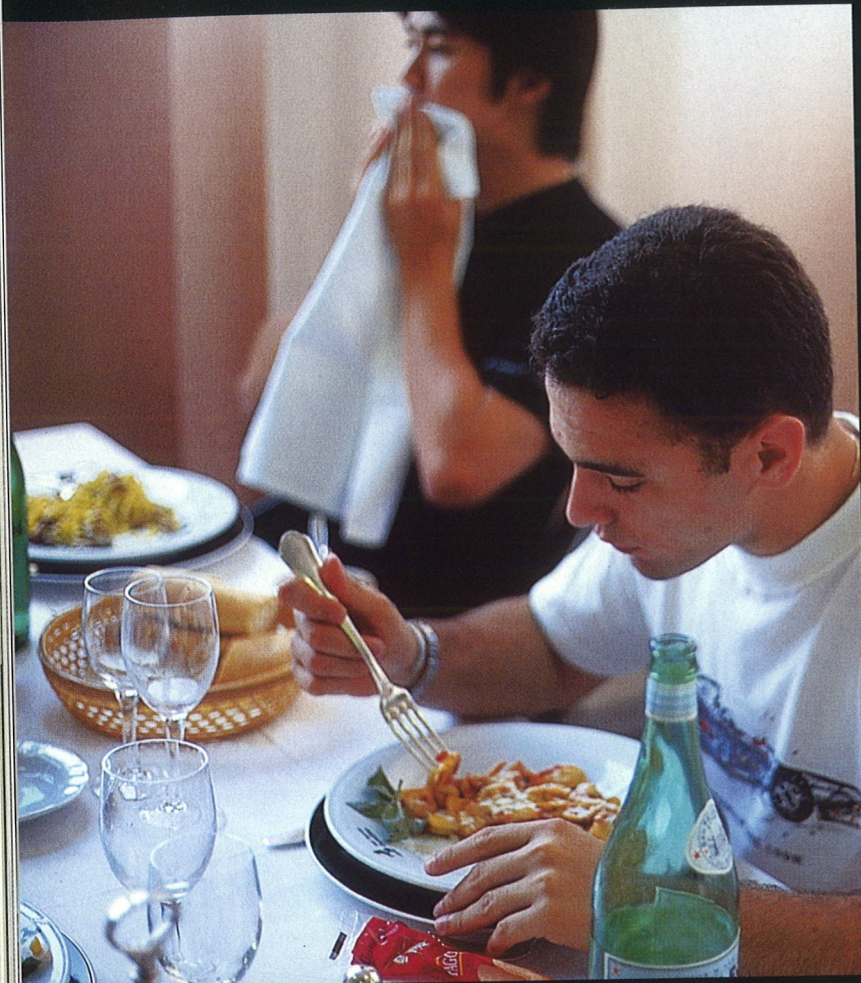
In the bar, Tuero is constantly mucking about with the hotel staff, and keeps calling one of the waiters gay. This then leads to much spraying of the obligatory mineral water. Clearly, Tuero has developed a strong rapport with the people he



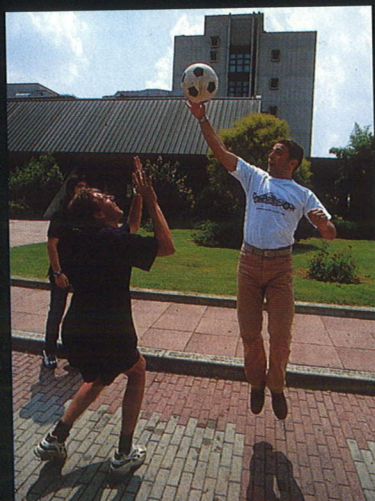
'The drivers are not particularly good mates, and you're left with the impression that they do little together'

Nakano is the only Japanese member of the Minardi team. As a result, he leads a rather hermitic lifestyle





Above: Tuero has tortellini, Nakano tries duck. Right: our man Clarkson attempts his best Shilton move as 'the Hand' strikes



Tuero has a good understanding of Argentina's racing heritage. He reckons Fangio was the best ever'

now lives with – in contrast to Nakano, who observes quietly from a distance. He doesn't even know their names.

"I don't see much of Esteban," says Nakano – despite their living almost next door to each other on the same floor. "We always seem to do things at different times."

At lunch they sit side-by-side and, during discussions about the state of play in F1, appear to relax for the first time. We are a bit early – the kitchens haven't opened yet – so we talk contemporary F1. For a guy of just 20, Tuero has a good understanding of Argentina's motor racing heritage. He reckons Juan Manuel Fangio was the best ever driver.

Tuero has his usual dish – tortellini. Nakano, meanwhile, ponders the menu and eventually chooses the duck. Both sup mineral water. The dining room is typical Italian grandiose; there's room for 200 people, the ceilings are high and there are huge friezes made up of local Italian tiles from Ceramica Pagnossin.

After we've eaten, we venture out into the 40-degree heat to see what activities the hotel has to offer. There is no gym, so the best we can do is get a football and kick it around the car park. Clearly, neither driver has done this before. Nakano shows a distinct lack of prowess on the ball, while Tuero chooses to act out Maradona's hand-of-God manoeuvre from the World Cup in Mexico '86...

A breeze-blocked hotel car park is a pretty irksome place at the best of times, and football among the manicured roses is clearly an activity frowned upon among the hotel staff. We stop after a short time (the Minardi boys will *never* be footballers) and before they depart for the factory, we say our farewells.

As a parting comment, Nakano reminisces about the time he shared a house with David Coulthard in Milton Keynes, when each was in the junior ranks of the sport. "We had a lot of fun together," he says. "David was a great guy to share a house with." Somehow you doubt whether he'd say the same now. **1**

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8. Prize details correct at time of going to press.



# It's a Winner

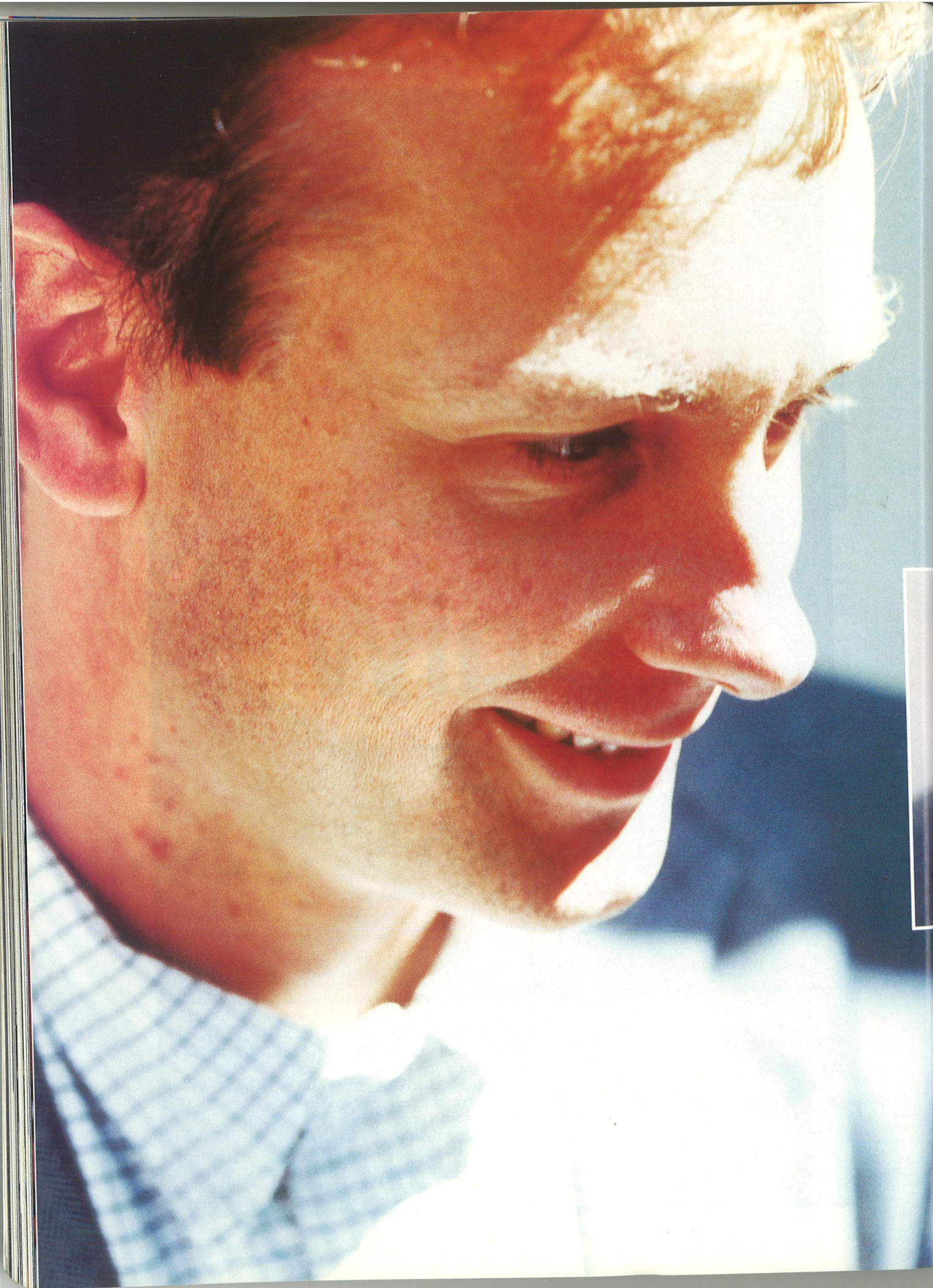
*Above:*  
Peter Callister,  
Isle of Man,  
Silverstone 1992

*Below:*  
Jon Chadwick,  
Lancashire,  
Monza 1997



*Above:*  
George Grant,  
London,  
Monaco 1982

**W**e received literally hundreds of superb entries to the "Snap Happy" competition we featured in our April issue. Our judges had an unenviable task of choosing three winners to go through to the next stage of the competition - to attend, as an official photographer, a European Test Session. Featured are the three winning shots that in the opinion of our judging panel, captured the atmosphere, excitement and glamour of Grand Prix racing. We would like to thank all the readers who sent in their photographs.



Gachot today is happy with his lot – and almost laughs off his prison experience



“You wear your heart on your sleeve...” It could have been written for Bertrand Gachot. Belgian Bert arrived on the British Formula Ford scene in 1984. He was cosmopolitan, quick, charming, engaging, animated and, some said, slightly mad. A few years on, the world at large knew him only as the grand prix driver who went to jail.

I’ll always remember going with him to the first Formula 3 test of 1987. He was driving a Ralt with an Alfa engine. He was worried about Johnny Herbert in a Reynard and, especially, about Johnny’s Spiess-tuned VW engine. The test confirmed his worst fears. He was half a second off the pace.

The drive home was an experience. “Fuck ... fuck!” he shouted as he rammed the freebie Alfa 155 into gear. Before we’d gone a mile he was on the phone to Jean Alesi in France, wanting to know how the Spiess was going there. Next it was someone in Italy and finally Holger Spiess himself in Germany. He wanted to know how soon he could have an engine: five weeks.

He was running with Dick Bennetts, the F3 guru. Bennetts was famed for his methodical approach and his care in making decisions. That’s putting it nicely. West Surrey had an Alfa contract, so I suggested to Bert that, really, he ought to speak to the team boss before changing engine manufacturer.

He looked at me as if I was mad. “The Alfa is supposed to have top end and I’m *that* far off at Silverstone,” he yelled. “By the time Dick gets around to realising it’s no good, I’ll be history. There are four races before I can have a Spiess. Herbert will be on the moon by then. Fuck!” The remainder of the journey passed in virtual silence.

You knew he’d gone off the deep end but his analysis turned out to be dead accurate. Herbert dominated the year, Bert was runner-up. The season cost Gachot his full Marlboro backing, but he made it into F3000 with Spirit and

achieved his Formula 1 goal with a seat at Onyx through sponsorship from the eccentric Jean-Pierre Van Rossem.

It didn’t last. Van Rossem ran out of money and Keke Rosberg arrived with funding for the emerging JJ Lehto. But, after Coloni, Gachot was back for 1991 with Jordan, their debut season. It is not a time he remembers fondly.

He looks you dead in the eye. “On a human level, Eddie Jordan is the lowest person I have ever met in my life. You know, they were struggling for money and, in 1990, I helped the cash-flow with my own personal money.

“What I disliked about Jordan was that a few months before I went to court for the taxi incident, he started to use it. He was really playing on it. He wanted to keep my sponsors’ money but said I’d brought the team into disrepute and wanted to be free to get more out of someone else.

“He was asking me to pay more all the time, saying that the car was too good for the sponsorship we were paying and that he wanted more. Classic stuff. But what I really hated was his way of doing it. It was the biggest disappointment of my career.”

Gachot leans over, switches off my tape recorder and says he doesn’t want to seem bitter. He knows what racing is like and that some found him less than easy to deal with. He wants to remember the good times which, for him in F1, was Larrousse and men like Robin Herd. First, you steer him back to that day in December 1990 at Hyde Park Corner. The taxi incident, in other words. You don’t need to do much prompting.

“I’ll tell you exactly what happened. I was on the way to a meeting with Fuji and I was talking to Jordan, a couple of minutes behind me, on the car phone. The taxi tried to cut me up and I wasn’t having it. We missed by *this* much,” he says, holding finger and thumb a hair’s breadth apart. “Eventually he cut in and started brake-testing me, and driv- ▶

# butter wouldn’t melt

Violent criminal or level-headed ex-grand prix driver? Only Bertrand Gachot himself knows the real story. Here he reveals all to Tony Dodgins

Photos by Matt Cooke





**'I know it sounds like a story, but we'd genuinely found something on the car. We were going to really fly at Spa.' But Gachot went straight to Brixton nick instead...**

ing ridiculously slowly. I said to myself: okay, if he does it again I'm not going to brake. He did, and I didn't. We hit, but very slowly. There was no damage. He leaped out, yanked open my door and grabbed me by the tie. He wanted a fight and I didn't even think. It was my girlfriend's Alfa, she had a can of CS gas attack spray in the car ... and I just made for it.

"You can't really direct it, and I got a lot of it in my face as well. But after half an hour it's all over and you wash your face. At least there's been no punching. The funny thing is, Jordan came up and said: 'I'd like to buy one of those for my wife.' Then he says I brought his team into disrepute!

"Anyway, by the time the police arrived, about 400 taxi drivers had stopped and wanted to lynch me. I went up to them, and said: 'I'm the guy.' I thought nothing of it. In France, CS gas is recommended as a self-defence method."

It has passed into motor racing folklore that when the case came to court nine months later, Gachot had just set fastest lap in the Hungarian Grand Prix. His incarceration gave Michael Schumacher the chance to

make that stunning debut at Spa, where he qualified seventh.

"I know this sounds like a story," Gachot smiles, "but we'd genuinely found something on the car. Everyone thinks I only set fastest lap because we put new tyres on late in the race, but I'd also been second in the warm-up. Only Prost was quicker and he was on empty tanks. As we left Budapest, I told Gary Anderson we would fly at Spa."

Sadly, he flew straight into Brixton nick instead. "I'd got advice from three different lawyers and they all said I couldn't go to jail. The judge just wanted to make some publicity for himself. And, hell, he did.

"He said: 'You are a man of impeccable record and what you did was done in the heat of the moment.' But then he gave me 18 months – and the whole room went crazy. I was waiting for the '... suspended' – but it didn't come. I thought, 'Wow!'"

"Immediately I was taken down by two screws with tattoos all over. I went through this small door like a chicken goes into a trap. It was all geezer this and geezer that. I didn't understand a lot until one said,

**Gachot walks through the streets of London with F1 Racing's Tony Dodgins. Below: he made it to only five races in '89 in the Onyx**

'Short stretch, my son. You could be out by Christmas with good behaviour.' I mean, I had the plane ticket in my pocket to go testing at Monza that afternoon!

"The first weekend in jail I thought, 'Hey, I'm a real convict!' I really thought it was going to be a fantastic experience. I never thought they'd leave me in there. I was amazed they wouldn't give me bail to appeal."



The Brixton inmates had heard about Gachot's arrival on the radio. Naturally, they were curious.

"I was 'the racing geezer'. As soon as I arrived, this bloke came up and said, 'I killed a geyser with my bare hands. If anybody touches or annoys you, you just call me. I'll sort them out.' He was absolutely enormous. 'Er, thank you very much,' I said.

"They were all asking me what I thought about Mansell because they were all fans. I said he was okay but that Senna was the best. They wouldn't have it. And there was another guy who'd done a hold-up. He told me he had a tuned Alfa and that he'd 'beat me any day at Brands Hatch'. The

problem was, he was serious.

"Some things were just so funny. You meet guys who are very intelligent and some who are not. For example, four of us were playing Monopoly. A fifth guy pushed in and wanted to play, but we were already buying property. After two or three rounds he hadn't bought a thing. We had houses and hotels and I said, 'Why don't you buy something?' He looked at me and said, 'I'd rather keep the cash.' Of course, he kept landing on our property; in the end he just stood up, threw the board over and stormed off! I don't want to seem like I'm taking the piss, because I did meet good guys in there too and ▶

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LAT ARCHIVE

I'm still in touch with some of them.

"I learned to play chess and I was reading three or four books a day. I finally had the time. There was no telephone, nothing to disturb me and I was in another world. It was actually a fantastic time."

Even when Schumacher qualified his Jordan seventh at Spa?

"I didn't even know. On the phone I could only speak to the lawyers and visiting was once a fortnight. But I found out through a screw. He was a real shit. He came up to me and said: 'They don't need you any more. This Schumacher is very good.'

"You got used to that. What hurt more was reading an editorial that said I regretted what happened and was pleased I'd been punished. I never said that and I was so angry. That was a difficult moment, but there were good points. I had literally thousands of letters. Actually it's not such a bad memory because it was such an interesting experience. I realised there were other things to life than going a tenth of a second quicker than the next guy. I also realised that freedom is something we should all enjoy every moment of. Even if I'm having a hard time, I'm always happy now. And this I will never lose, so long as I'm in good health. You have to go through it to understand it."

Gachot is now 35. He's getting married, has matured and has no regrets. He even has an appealing line in self-deprecation, something you wouldn't have found before.

"I think my life has been quite extraordinary. It just doesn't happen like that for normal people and that's what I am – a normal guy. I don't think I'm a sportsman. Just a quick driver. I shouldn't say this but when I



Left: Canada 1991, Gachot took fifth place in the 7Up Jordan. Above and below: Café Flo, London SW3, with Dodgins

was in F1, I never trained physically. I once did a cycle race in the forest with my friends. They crucified me and thought I was just messing around so as not to embarrass them, but I was in fact flat-out."

Logically, Bertrand thought that jail was the end of his racing career. Sponsors, he reasoned, wouldn't want to know. He was surprised.

"When I won the appeal and got out, I felt like they do in the movies when they make off with the diamonds. Just so good. We had a party at the French ambassador's house and then I went straight to Japan.

**'Going back into the paddock was interesting. Zanardi tried to ignore me totally...'**



"In my head I thought I was finished. I'd already decided I was going to Hong Kong or Singapore to start an Information Technology company. A clean break. But luckily the outrage about my sentence meant that nobody held any grudges. In fact one guy wanted to sponsor me because of it.

"Going back into the paddock was interesting. Zanardi, who was my friend, tried to avoid me, like he couldn't see me. Schumacher, on the other hand, came straight to tell me he was really sorry for what had happened. We've stayed good friends.

"Then there was Jordan... I'd received the contract severance in prison and he didn't want to see me. We talked eventually but you wouldn't believe just how low it all went. He even sent me an invoice for my girlfriend's food at his motorhome!"

Gachot loved driving at Larrousse and a sixth place at Monaco was a highlight. He has a Larrousse chassis which he will always keep. The team, though, went under, as did Pacific, who came afterwards. That reunited Gachot with Keith Wiggins, the man who ran him in Formula Ford, the second season of which Gachot rates as his most enjoyable year of racing.

"The scraps I had with Mark Blun-



**Above: in the 1992 Larrousse, he finished sixth at Monaco. Below: now Gachot really appreciates his freedom**

dell in FF2000 were just something else," he laughs. "In F1, though, we were just up against it too much. It was only about money. And I never realised the importance of nationality in the sport. I grew up in an environment where nationality was totally secondary. My mother was German, my father French, I was born in Luxembourg, brought up in Belgium and lived with an English girl. But sports are built around nationality, which is something I find sad. You should look much more at performance.

"We put in superhuman efforts, but the car just wasn't up to it. The sec-

now works three days from offices in Kensington and spends the rest of his time in Paris. A software company is also on the agenda.

"Building a business is now my challenge. I'm in love, I'm getting married this month and I feel very lucky. I want to have a family now. The first stage of my life was studies, the second racing and now it's business and family. I've as much enthusiasm for that as for what went before.

"If I do any racing it will be for fun. Last year I raced for Toyota in Japan but only because I had to go to Asia a lot on business. I had an IRL offer a

few weeks ago and really thought about it. But soon I'll be 40, slower and needing to be devious to beat the young kids. I don't want to be doing that. I still watch F1 and follow it, but I'm a total tourist."

If, you ask, someone had told you in 1987 that F3 rival Damon Hill would be world champion in a Williams, would you have laughed?

"That's for sure. But you know what? It would have been stupid to laugh. Because talent is important but opportunity more so. The mental side is important. Schumacher is something very special - he would have made it anywhere - but coming in at the top is priceless. He felt confident and so sure of himself. You rarely come down. And when you start at the bottom, you rarely go up.

"I was really pleased about Damon. It proved that I hadn't been chasing something unrealistic. It proved to me that if things had fallen right I could have been champion. Today it doesn't matter whether I was champion or not, but it's a shame I didn't win a race. But at the end of the day I'm alive and richer for it. As a person - not financially. I did make money but that was never my goal. I never wanted the boats and planes; a Formula 1 car is the biggest posing instrument you can have. In London now, I drive an 80cc scooter. *Je ne regrette rien.*" Not even Brixton. **1**

**'If I do any racing it will be for fun. I had an IRL offer recently but decided not to'**

ond year we had a much better car but we didn't have the engine. It had to be quick out of the box to get sponsorship. Without that, we couldn't develop. Which is what happened."

Gachot acknowledges that the Jordan was the best car he ever drove but, as he's explained, he didn't enjoy his time there. The car he actually most enjoyed driving was a Coloni.

"It had no downforce whatsoever and 600bhp. Very exciting but I never qualified. When I drove the Jordan for the first time we were quicker than Williams, but it felt slow. Then after 10 laps I couldn't move my head because of the g-forces. That's the only way you knew it was quick."

Among the positive influences on his career, Gachot recalls men like BAR leading lights Malcolm Oastler, Rick Gorne and Adrian Reynard. "They're clever," he says. "You could put them in boat racing and they'd be good. They have the right attitude."

Gachot has bought the rights to distribute the Hype energy drink,



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■ Call 0891 891810 to register your team. At this stage you'll also be asked to predict how many points this year's champion will amass. Your forecast will come into play in the event of a tie-break. You might like to note that Villeneuve became 1997 World Champion with 81 points

■ You can enter as many teams as you wish, and at any time during the season, but only one team can be registered per telephone call to the 0891 number

#### HOW TO SCORE

Just like real F1, the top six finishers score points on the same basis used in the established 10, 6, 4, 3, 2, 1 system. However, for Fantasy F1 players, all drivers finishing in the top six are awarded an extra 10 points. So, for example, the driver finishing second gets six points plus an extra 10 for being in the top six, thereby earning 16 points. Players will also earn/lose points in the following circumstances:

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- The driver making the fastest pitstop (pillane entry to exit) during the race earns five points
- At the finish, each place made up over the starting grid position will score that driver an extra point. Points are not lost for losing places

- The first driver to retire from the race will lose five points. Four are lost by the second retirement down to the forfeit of one point by the fifth driver to pull out
- The driver accredited with the fastest race lap will gain five points
- Pole position is worth another five points
- A stop/go penalty (for whatever reason) loses the driver five points

■ Five points will be awarded to the man declared by *F1 Racing* as Driver of the Day  
■ Failure to qualify will mean two points being lost. If a driver fails to take the start, but is on the FIA's published starting grid, no points will be lost

■ Drivers lose all points gained over the weekend if they are removed from the results, for whatever reason

■ The scoring for a chassis is the same as that for a top six driver or an early retirement, but only the first chassis home can score for a team. Similarly, only one chassis loses points if it's among the first five retirements

■ The rules for engines are the same as those for chassis, but without retirement penalties  
■ Any queries please write to Jacqui Weston at *F1 Racing*.

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Team entrants must be 18 or over and residents of the UK. Telephone calls are charged at 50p per minute with a typical call to register entries lasting between five and seven minutes. Once registered, teams will be eligible to score/lose points at all remaining 1998 F1 GPs. The deadline for entering a team is midday on the Friday preceding the race and teams start scoring only after they are registered. Team scores are worked out using the official FIA time sheets from GPs. No correspondence will be entered into and there is no cash alternative to prizes. Employees of Haymarket Publishing and their agents are ineligible. The nominal values of drivers, chassis and engines bear no relation to real life. *F1 Racing's* decision is final.

MARTYN ELLIOTT/LAT

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The leader of our Fantasy F1 league after the final race of 1998, will earn themselves the right to go to the 1999 Spanish Grand Prix. Together with a friend, our winner will enjoy four nights in a Barcelona hotel with travel to and from the circuit taken care of. Hosts Page & Moy will also supply grandstand tickets.



## Luxembourg & Japan

GP games producer Psygnosis and PC hardware suppliers Digital Edge are offering one of their limited-edition bundle packs to the winner after each 1998 race. The pack contains the fantastic Formula 1 1997 game (PC version), F1 Sim Compact steering wheel and pedal set.



Your chance to win a trip to the superb Catalunya track in 1999 is slipping away as you read this... but there's still time to enter a team to try for a set of these fantastic F1 Sim Compact pedal sets (below) by scoring the most points at the Nurburgring



#### Last month's F1 fantasy winners

Johnathan Leggett, 'Team Boret' Germany 56 points  
R Schumacher, Takagi, Tuero, Jordan, Mugen Honda Hungary 56 points  
Mrs S Flammare 'Team Boret Entry'  
M Schumacher, Takagi, Müller, Minardi, Sauber

## Shopping list

You have £40 million to spend creating a team. We'll update the scores every issue and you can also use the 0891 numbers below to check on your progress

Name	Fantasy Price	Germany	Hungary	Total
<b>DRIVERS</b>				
1 Michael Schumacher	£25m	18	45	273
2 Jacques Villeneuve	£23m	17	18	139
3 Mika Hakkinen	£21m	29	17	297
4 Heinz-Harald Frentzen	£21m	1	18	62
5 David Coulthard	£19m	27	21	240
6 Damon Hill	£19m	19	13	42
7 Eddie Irvine	£19m	1	-4	164
8 Olivier Panis	£16m	-4	8	22
9 Jean Alesi	£16m	1	4	64
10 Giancarlo Fisichella	£11m	1	0	85
11 Jarno Trulli	£11m	2	-2	9
12 Mika Salo	£11m	3	-3	24
13 Ralf Schumacher	£11m	21	3	65
14 Johnny Herbert	£7m	-1	5	36
15 Alexander Wurz	£7m	0	0	136
16 Rubens Barrichello	£7m	-3	-1	33
17 Jan Magnussen	£5m	0	0	25
18 Jos Verstappen	£5m	-4	4	3
19 Pedro Diniz	£5m	-5	1	13
20 Tarso Marques	£3m	0	0	0
21 Shinji Nakano	£2m	-2	4	56
22 Toranosuke Takagi	£2m	2	4	12
23 Esteban Tuero	£1m	5	-5	1
24 Juan-Pablo Montoya	£1m	0	0	0
25 Pedro de la Rosa	£1m	0	0	0
26 Jörg Müller	£1m	0	0	0
27 Luca Badoer	£1m	0	0	0
28 Dario Franchitti	£1m	0	0	0
29 Nicolas Minassian	£1m	0	0	0
30 Soheil Ayari	£1m	0	0	0
31 Nick Heidfeld	£1m	0	0	0
32 Alessandro Nannini	£1m	0	0	0
33 Alessandro Zanardi	£1m	0	0	0
34 Mark Blundell	£1m	0	0	0
35 Max Wilson	£1m	0	0	0
36 Ricardo Zonta	£1m	0	0	0
37 Emmanuel Collard	£1m	0	0	0
38 Nicola Larini	£1m	0	0	0
<b>CHASSIS</b>				
39 Williams	£21m	16	14	137
40 Ferrari	£19m	13	16	197
41 McLaren	£19m	20	16	199
42 Benetton	£16m	12	11	139
43 Jordan	£13m	14	13	65
44 Prost	£13m	0	-2	-15
45 Sauber	£11m	9	12	107
46 Stewart	£11m	-4	-1	25
47 Arrows	£11m	-5	-3	-5
48 Tyrrell	£7m	0	0	-8
49 Minardi	£4m	-3	-5	14
<b>ENGINES</b>				
50 Mecachrome	£22m	16	14	175
51 Ferrari	£19m	13	20	205
52 Mercedes	£16m	20	16	204
53 Peugeot	£16m	11	0	55
54 Mugen Honda	£12m	14	13	101
55 Ford V10 (works)	£10m	0	0	62
56 Sauber Petronas	£7m	12	12	125
57 Hart (Arrows) V10	£7m	0	11	36
58 Ford V10	£3m	0	0	36

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Let us be clear so that there is no misunderstanding. This is not Michael's 1998 car, the F300.

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bearing the markings, graphics and colour scheme for this season. It is the car presented to the media by Ferrari at the beginning of the year and the car in which the team undertook early season testing.

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Belgium 30 August

Italy 13 September

Lux'bourg 27 September

Japan 1 November

## Belgium

Damon Hill and Ralf Schumacher scored a remarkable one-two for Jordan, while the title pretenders recorded big, fat zeros. Michael Schumacher squeezed Mika Hakkinen into a spin at the restart and looked set for victory until he ran into the back of David Coulthard **p116**

## Italy

Michael Schumacher and Eddie Irvine gave Ferrari their first one-two at Monza since 1988, to the delight of the tifosi. After a picture-perfect start from the McLarens, David Coulthard retired and Mika Hakkinen bagged fourth after a race-long battle with brake problems **p122**

## Luxembourg

With Michael Schumacher and Mika Hakkinen equal on points and wins - 80 and six, respectively - the Nürburgring crowd's loyalties will be divided between Schuey and Mercedes in a race that is crucial to the world championship. Can McLaren staunch the Ferrari flow? **p130**



## Drivers

1= Mika Hakkinen	80
Michael Schumacher	80
3 David Coulthard	48
4 Eddie Irvine	38
5 Jacques Villeneuve	20
6= Damon Hill	17
Alex Wurz	17
8 Giancarlo Fisichella	15
9 Ralf Schumacher	14
10 Heinz-Harald Frentzen	13
11 Jean Alesi	9
12 Rubens Barrichello	4
13= Mika Salo	3
Pedro Diniz	3
15= Johnny Herbert	1
Jarno Trulli	1
Jan Magnussen	1

## Constructors

1 McLaren-Mercedes	128
2 Ferrari	118
3 Williams-Mecachrome	33
4 Benetton-Playlife	32
5 Jordan Mugen-Honda	31
6 Sauber-Petronas	10
7 Arrows	6
8 Stewart-Ford	5
9 Prost-Peugeot	1



Right: Damon splashes his way to emotional victory at Spa. Far right: the famous Schuey leap, Monza-style

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RACE 13 Spa, BELGIUM 30 August

# Damon ends Jordan's wait

Calm Hill avoids the splash, bash and crash

FRANTIC POST PILE-UP ACTIVITY in the pitlane. David Coulthard is being strapped into the spare McLaren. Sonia Irvine has gone to work with an ice pack on her brother's knee. The spare F300 is being converted from Michael's settings to Eddie's.

REPORT BY TONY DODGINS

Mercedes motorsport chief Norbert Haug stares impassively as the McLaren crew busy themselves around Coulthard. "Who hit him?" you ask.

Barely averting his gaze, Haug prods out a thumb to the right, like someone hitching a ride. You glance one pit down. A Benetton? He lets out one of those dismissive semi-chortles which mean you have missed the point. You look again. Ah yes, a red car...

Ron Dennis, too, admitted that McLaren were upset by incidents at La Source on both opening laps. In the first, Irvine tangled with Coulthard before David lost it and triggered the chaos. In the second, Schumacher and Hakkinen made contact - an incident which ended the Finn's race.

"I'm not going to put any more fuel on the fire, but I think that the videos are very clear," said Ron. "At each of the incidents our drivers are completely blameless. The first start was even more blatant as far as we were concerned."

Blatant? Look at it with a frame-advance video and you see Schumacher ahead of Irvine. Michael then appears to let Eddie inside of him and stays wide, out of harm's way. Then he tucks in very tight as Irvine and

Coulthard collide and run wide. Perhaps that's what Ron means.

La Source, take two. Damon squeezes Hakkinen. Seeing an opportunity, Schumacher ducks around the outside of his championship rival. As they get on the power, Hakkinen flicks on a touch of opposite lock, his left-front wheel is arrested by the Ferrari's sidepod and the McLaren's back end keeps on coming. Mika is now pointing the wrong way. Johnny Herbert swipes a wheel off the McLaren and the series leader is out.

If Dennis feels there was a professional foul, the Schumacher camp is equally adamant that Mika was attempting to force Michael wide. But if McLaren are deeply upset, motive has been established.

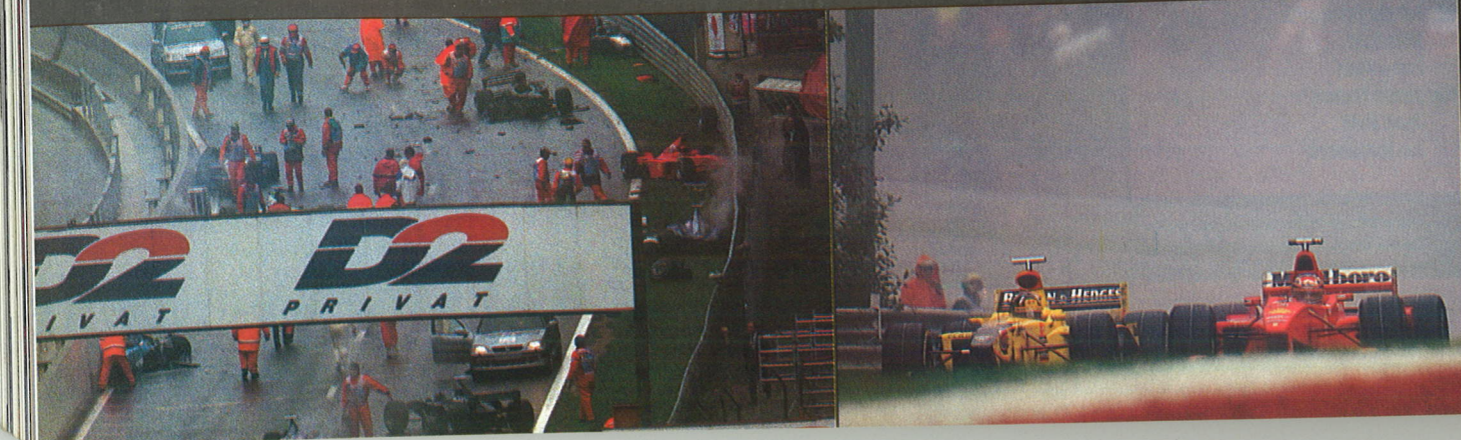
Motive then and, in time, opportunity when Schuey arrived to lap Coulthard. But did Coulthard commit the crime?

No, ran the general consensus. Not only is he the wrong sort, but

Cheer up Mika! It could have been a lot worse - Michael got all points too



Above: The jubilant Hill does his best Michael Schumacher impression on the podium. Second-placed Ralf is clearly underwhelmed by this and Jordan's one-two. Below (l-r): a first-lap pile-up allowed Hill a second chance after he botched his first start. He took the lead at the restart and held off Schumacher until this move at the end of lap seven. Another Schumacher spring-heeled celebration looked likely, but a shunt with Coulthard left him kicking his heels instead



MAIN: BRYN WILLIAMS; OTHERS: ACTION IMAGES; DARREN HEATH; BERNARD ASSET; STEVEN TEGLAT



Fisichella became a victim of the conditions when he slipped into the back of a Minardi hidden in the mist

what racing driver would deliberately let another ram him at 160mph?  
Tabloids, predictably, babbled on about the risk to life and limb.

Utter hogwash. Forget about 160mph. Closing speed is what matters. At a push it might have been 30mph. How many drivers have been hurt by someone running into the back of them?

Murray Walker was among those reminded of Didier Pironi's career-ending shunt at Hockenheim in 1982, when the Frenchman was blinded by spray and launched himself over the wheel of a slower car. True enough. But remember a few weeks before, when Pironi stalled on the grid in Montreal. He was hit by the luckless Riccardo Paletti at 120mph. Paletti died, Pironi led away at the restart. My point? Seldom do bumps from behind have serious consequences for the man hit.

"It was clear that we would have taken the championship lead," Schumacher stormed. "Coulthard seemed to be running five to six seconds slower than his real pace once I was behind him. He has the experience to know that you do not slow down on the straight like that without giving any warning. So one could think he did it deliberately."

Considering F1 cars don't carry brake or hazard warning lights, it's hard to see what sort of warning Michael wanted, but you could see his point. If David had been going to let the Ferrari through before Pouhon, you might have expected him to pull off the racing line exiting the previous corner. On the other hand, it's the duty of the leader to find a way by and, if Coulthard had done something

unexpected, that in itself could have caused an accident. Schumacher, of course, thought he had.

Coulthard thought he hadn't: "I took the decision that the safest place to let him by was down to Pouhon, otherwise I'd have to wait until the run to Blanchimont to make it safe. I didn't deviate. I didn't weave. I didn't hit the brakes. I just lifted off a bit and expected him to overtake – not go into the back of me."

Schumacher, it seems, had indeed decided that Coulthard wasn't going to let him through until Blanchimont, so ducked back onto the line to follow him.

**'I didn't deviate. I didn't weave. I didn't brake. I lifted off a bit and expected him to overtake – not to go into the back of me'** DAVID COULTHARD



Getting off the line was difficult. But getting around La Source would prove even more problematical. Twice

Schumacher's point about Coulthard's slowing lap times does not stack up. David had slowed down, but only in accordance with worsening conditions. And so had everyone else. Coulthard, in fact, radioed in to say that, in his opinion, a safety car period was required.

If you wanted to be cynical, of course, you could point out that with Schumacher about to put him a lap down, a safety car would have been extremely appropriate. You could also wonder if it was merely professionalism which was causing McLaren to keep their man so accurately informed about Michael's whereabouts. There are, after all, blue flags for the purpose.

Predictably, Coulthard was eloquent, and dismissive of his rival's accusations (see story opposite), but then he'd had the rest of the race to think about it. Schumacher's reaction was instinctive.

So do I think David was guilty? No. I prefer the assessment of superkart star Martin Hines, a guest of McLaren in Belgium. Hines is a friend of Coulthard, but not a man to let that cloud his view.

"It's just not David," Hines said. "I've made howlers like Michael's before and you are just so pissed off that you have to blame someone. You can't punch the wall or the team manager and, inevitably, you take it up with the guy you've hit, whether he's at fault or not. I know just how he's feeling." The difference is, it didn't happen to Hines while the world watched. ☺



CHARLES CORTES/LAT

## Eddie joins the winners

AT THE 127th TIME of asking, Eddie Jordan's team stepped into the winner's circle.

Damon Hill was superb all weekend. He ranked the win with Suzuka '94 when, he said, conditions had been worse. But Spa '98 had its moments too. "At one point I went past Trulli coming out of Stavelot and he didn't see me. We touched going up the hill and I think he got a huge fright!

"It's just not fully appreciated just how difficult it is to cope with those conditions. You don't know if someone is moving, is on the track, on the line, off the line, or what. All you know is that you are going at 160mph and you can't see in front of your face. To survive is great; to win is fantastic."

Hill admitted that finishing a race like this needs good fortune, but he helped his case by qualifying third, ahead of Michael Schumacher – on merit. Schumacher's best time was

disallowed for ignoring a yellow, but Damon beat it on his last run anyway.

Eddie Jordan was ecstatic: "It's been an unbelievable turnaround for us and a great testament to everyone's hard work. Ralf showed great maturity in the rain, and in keeping to the team orders which had been agreed."

Ralf was a bit po-faced on the podium because he'd not been allowed to have a go at Hill over the closing laps. In reality, though, Damon was well clear before the safety car emerged and Ralf acknowledged: "Damon was quicker all weekend and deserved the win."

Jordan's one-two lifted them to 26 points in the constructors' race. Benetton are fourth, with 32. To take up an automatic option on Ralf for a third season, Jordan had to be within four points of the fourth-placed team at midnight after the 13th race. Spa. A closer call than anyone had expected.

## Fleshy spheres, hints Coulthard

DAVID COULTHARD was seething over Michael Schumacher's accusations that he deliberately took Schuey's Ferrari out of the race. "Any implication that I did it deliberately is paranoia at its most extreme," Coulthard said. "Totally ridiculous. All the information – our telemetry, our radio conversation – was there, recorded and available to the stewards, who cleared me."

"It's disgusting behaviour from someone who's got such a fantastic record in driving. I've got a real problem with someone storming into the garage and accusing me of 'trying to effing kill' them. He really needs to get some sort of help controlling his anger after such events."

"Just before the accident I'd been on the radio asking the team to tell Charlie Whiting [FIA Race Director and Safety Delegate] that we needed the safety car out because people were aquaplaning off the road. That's why I was going slower."

"I saw the blue flags and the team informed me that Michael was behind. Just before Les Combes you have the first sector timings, so they could see how close he was from their monitors. They told me to let him past and that's exactly what I was trying to do."

"I've heard from the team that he was passing backmarkers as though he was on a qualifying lap. But with a 30-second lead, why?"

"They can allege that we did this, that and the next thing, but it's all absolute bollocks." Come on DC, speak your mind.



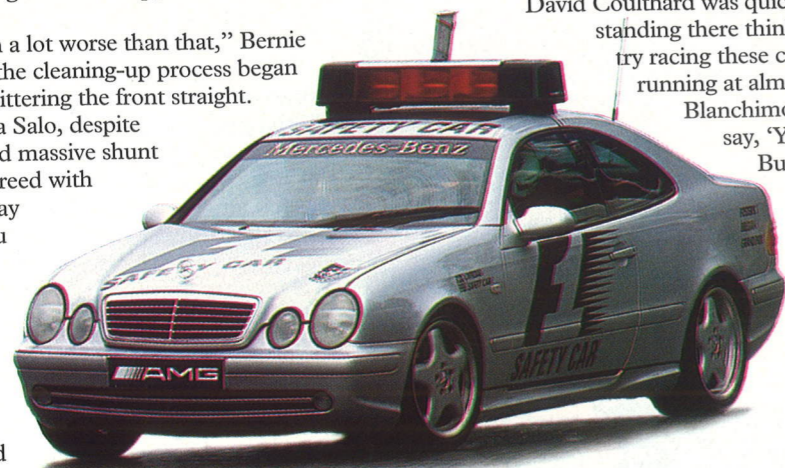
Countdown to splashdown: Schumacher closes in on Coulthard at La Source

# Why the FIA should have put safety first

BELGIUM 1997 started under the safety car as a deluge swamped the track moments before the off. This time, the persistent misty rain so characteristic of the Ardennes region arrived during the warm-up, but we still had a conventional start.

"We've started in a lot worse than that," Bernie Ecclestone said as the cleaning-up process began for the dozen cars littering the front straight. Arrows driver Mika Salo, despite surviving his second massive shunt of the weekend, agreed with him: "It's easy to say afterwards, but you can't keep asking for the safety car all the time."

Alain Prost, who lost the AP01s of both Olivier Panis and Jarno Trulli, called



the normal start "ridiculous". Trulli had qualified higher so he got the spare car, leaving Panis to reflect, "The decision is Charlie Whiting's, but for me it was very important that this race started behind the safety car."

David Coulthard was quick to back him up: "You can be standing there thinking it's okay, but go out and try racing these cars when visibility is terrible, running at almost 190mph down through

Blanchimont with standing water. People say, 'You're driving the car - lift off.'

But you can't, because it's a race. They [the FIA] have a duty to provide safe racing conditions. "At those speeds, with zero visibility, you're putting an awful lot of trust in your fellow drivers to stay flat. It's very dangerous."

Many questioned the decision not to start the race behind the safety car. It was soon called into action though

# 'My best accident' – by Jacques Villeneuve



Villeneuve was on the limit all weekend. In qualifying he white-knuckled it through the Bus Stop (above), but got it seriously wrong at Eau Rouge and Kemmel

JACQUES VILLENEUVE and Mika Salo both walked away from simply enormous accidents at Spa.

Spa, and Eau Rouge in particular, is nectar to a driver like Villeneuve. But a few minutes into Friday's second free session he discovered, categorically, that it could not be taken flat.

The Williams flicked away from him as he committed to Eau Rouge at 180mph. The telemetry showed he was 5mph quicker than his previous lap and some 8mph quicker than team-mate Heinz-Harald Frentzen's effort up to that point.

"I thought, 'Oops, this one is going to hurt,'" Jacques admitted later that afternoon as he nursed a bruised right knee. He was amazingly fortunate to get away so lightly. As F1's most daunting challenge spat him out backwards into the tyre barrier, the FW20 monocoque did its job. The rest of the car was junk. Villeneuve actually looked quite pleased with himself: "I was trying to take it flat. It's my best accident in F1 so far." He meant biggest.

Villeneuve started the race on Goodyear intermediates and by lap 17 they were

gone. "We'd been talking about doing a pitstop for two laps, but Heinz made his decision quicker and was heading to the pits. I had to do an extra lap. The lap before I almost lost it five times on the straight, so I knew it was going to be hairy." He wasn't wrong. Hill explained the big problem of aquaplaning on worn intermediates. "Fine when you're going straight, but the run to Les Combes has a kink in it..."

Villeneuve soon found out. The FW20 swapped ends as he went through Kemmel. He cannoned into the barrier, popped his belts, and trudged home.



Like Villeneuve, Salo fell foul of Eau Rouge. A big headache was his only injury

# Lucky to escape with his life ... and a fine

NOT TO BE upstaged by good friend Jacques Villeneuve, Mika Salo had two monstrous accidents he was fortunate to walk away from.

On Saturday morning the Finn lost control of his Arrows (again at Eau Rouge), completed a 360-degree spin and ploughed head-on into the left-hand barrier. A suspension problem was suspected. Flung back onto the road, the A19 pirouetted four times before a groggy Salo could climb out.

"I had a big headache and went to the hospital in Verviers for a scan. Everything was okay, but Prof Watkins told me that had it been before the days of extra head padding, I would have been in big trouble."

In the race, Salo was also involved in the first lap chaos, "I had a mega start - up five or six positions - then I saw a red car parked sideways in the middle of the track. I hit him, went straight and then smacked into Coulthard, who launched me back on the track. Someone

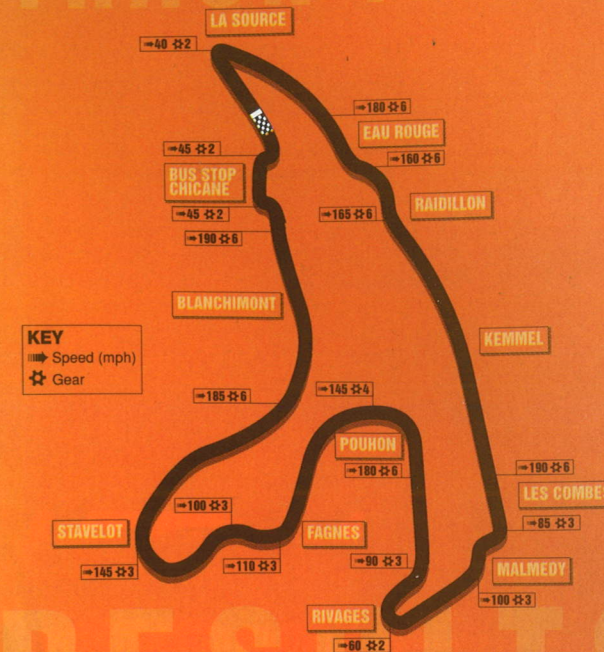
hit me hard from behind. There were tyres and wishbones flying all over the place. I had just selected fifth gear and had maybe two tenths of a second to brake before I hit Coulthard." By contrast, Ricardo Rosset, who arrived moments later, claimed he was still in second.

Salo then had a run-in with the stewards. Unable to restart, he wanted to leave the track but was told he had to stay until further investigation had been completed. "Mr Salo refused, made some abusive comments, then abruptly left the stewards' room," said an official bulletin.

Mika's version was colourful: "It was my second big headache in 24 hours and I just wanted to get out. They told me I had to hang around for two hours while doing absolutely sod all. I hadn't seen a thing but they still wanted me to stay. I said, 'Fuck off, I'm going. Send me the fine.' If it's \$10,000 it's worth it!"

Salo has now calmed down and had his apology accepted. He's been lucky. Twice.

# BELGIUM TRACK FACTS



# RESULTS

Final position	Driver	Total race time	Position after 1 lap	Qualifying lap position in brackets	Fastest race lap position in brackets	Fastest pitstop position in brackets
1	Hill	1:43:47.407	1	1:49.728 (3)	2:05.630 (2)	30.66 (1)
2	R Schumacher	1:43:48.339	7	1:50.501 (8)	2:08.399 (7)	31.51 (5)
3	Alesi	1:43:54.647	4	1:51.189 (10)	2:07.597 (5)	31.00 (3)
4	Frentzen	1:44:19.650	6	1:50.686 (9)	2:06.284 (3)	31.82 (7)
5	Diniz	1:44:39.089	9	1:53.037 (16)	2:11.331 (10)	33.35 (10)
6	Trulli	2 laps behind	13	1:52.572 (13)	2:11.701 (11)	32.83 (8)
7	Coulthard	5 laps behind	15	1:48.845 (2)	2:10.950 (9)	30.87 (2)
8	Nakano	5 laps behind	12	1:55.084 (21)	2:13.230 (14)	33.21 (9)
<b>RETIREMENTS</b>						
	Fisichella	accident	8	1:50.462 (7)	2:09.528 (8)	38.51 (11)
	M Schumacher	accident	2	1:50.027 (4)	<b>2:03.766 (1)</b>	31.15 (4)
	Irvine	spun off	3	1:50.189 (5)	2:06.561 (4)	40.14 (12)
	Tuero	electrics	14	1:55.520 (22)	2:19.996 (15)	31.60 (6)
	Villeneuve	accident	5	1:50.204 (6)	2:07.825 (6)	-
	Takagi	spun off	11	1:53.237 (19)	2:12.327 (12)	-
	Verstappen	engine	10	1:53.149 (17)	2:12.425 (13)	-
	Hakkinen	accident	-	<b>1:48.682 (1)</b>	-	-
	Wurz	accident	-	1:51.648 (11)	-	-
	Herbert	accident	-	1:51.851 (12)	-	-
	Barrichello	acc/DNRS	-	1:52.670 (14)	-	-
	Panis	acc/DNRS	-	1:52.784 (15)	-	-
	Salo	acc/DNRS	-	1:53.207 (18)	-	-
	Rosset	acc/DNRS	-	1:54.850 (20)	-	-

RACE 14 **Monza, ITALY** 13 September

# Schumacher evens score

Hakkinen in a spin as points lead slips away

IN THE LAST MONZA test before the Italian Grand Prix, McLaren found a brake material worth around four tenths per lap. But, as with most things, performance was a trade-off against durability.

REPORT BY TONY DODGINS

McLaren MD Martin Whitmarsh admitted that this Milanese track is the biggest test of brakes on the F1 calendar. And down at Ferrari, technical director Ross Brawn articulated the problem: "If you get the brakes too hot, the wear rate goes up tremendously. You have to keep them cool. Because of the size limitation this year, the brake companies have put a lot more development into material type. We have three or four different materials. We had just one before. All we used to do was make it thicker when we had a brake problem.

"It's become a big issue. We were marginal in Hungary, but at Monza it's vital to be able to go hard for 53 laps and not be backing off to look after the brakes. You have to choose the right material."

If Mika Hakkinen's race balance had been as good as David Coulthard's, he might not have needed to push so hard and his brake problem may never have arisen. But it wasn't.

You might wonder how, after such intensive testing as McLaren carried out prior to Monza, they could fail to come up with an optimal balance by race day. But these things are complex.

After Spa, Ron Dennis was seriously concerned about the status quo of the tyre war, and he banged a few tables. Bridgestone responded by manufacturing and delivering a new-construction rear tyre between the Saturday of Monza testing and the following Tuesday, for which they

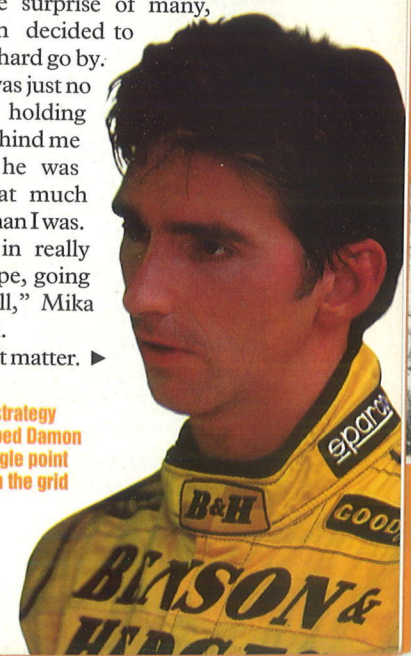
received full credit from Ron, if not from everyone else (see separate story, page 126). They had also gone back to the narrower front. So, when Friday and Saturday morning were seriously affected by rain, set-up time was compromised.

Hence, seven laps into the race, Mika found himself with a difficult car that was costing him time. The McLarens had initially been able to put four seconds between themselves and Schumacher's Ferrari, but the gap soon stabilised and then Michael started to reel them in.

To the surprise of many, Hakkinen decided to let Coulthard go by. "There was just no point in holding David behind me because he was going that much quicker than I was. He was in really great shape, going really well," Mika explained.

It didn't matter. ▶

A two-stop strategy gamble helped Damon snatch a single point from 14th on the grid



Above: Hakkinen's McLaren is a small, hazy blob in his mirrors - Schuey out front and in control. Left: Alesi put in a storming drive to be fifth for Sauber. Right: Villeneuve flattered to deceive in qualifying, tossing away fourth place into the gravel trap. Far right: It was a flag day for the super-fanatical tifosi



LEFT: CHARLES COATES; LEFT, OTHERS: DARREN HEATH



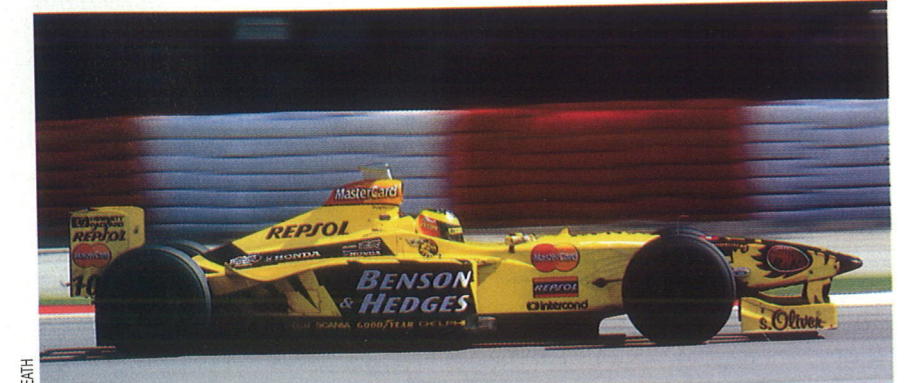
False dawn: Hakkinen blasted into the lead from the second row and Coulthard grabbed second place. But this did not lead to the expected McLaren demonstration run

## 'Even if he had caught me, getting past would have been different again. For I had enough problems passing a Minardi'

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

Coulthard has had some awful rolls of the dice this year – his Mercedes grenaded itself after just 16 laps and the hobbled Hakkinen was left to fend off Schumacher. By that stage Michael was back onto the McLaren's gearbox. Ironically, their arrival at the smoke cloud signalling Coulthard's demise helped Schumacher through (see separate story, page 127). And by the time

he made his only stop, on lap 31, he was five seconds to the good. The banner-waving, klaxon-blowing tifosi thought it was all over; but Hakkinen, now running on a differently pressured second set of Bridgestones, had other ideas. "Mika's basic problem was oversteer," Whitmarsh explained, "so you go down on the rear pressures and shape up at the front



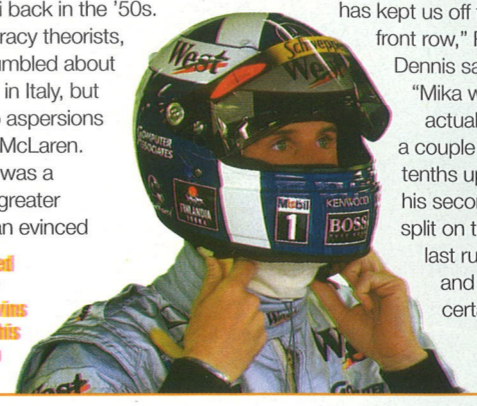
Junior Schu upstaged his more experienced team-mate to join his brother on the podium for the first time

in an effort to balance the car out. He was in much better shape after we had done that." He was, too. During the 10 flying laps from his stop until setting the fastest time of the race on lap 45, Hakkinen reduced Schumacher's advantage from six seconds to 2.5. Against Michael's quickest race lap of 1min 25.48sec, Mika recorded 1min 25.23sec, 1min 25.41sec and then 1min 26.13sec on successive laps. It was too much for the brakes. Eight laps too soon, one of Mika's front pads had gone; as soon as he touched the brakes for the second chicane, the McLaren swapped ends. "Of course I'm very disappointed," the surprisingly calm Finn said later, "but when you lose a car at that speed on this track, you normally don't come back to either the circuit or the points, so that's a bonus." It looked as though it would have been a close call, but Schumacher claimed he had Hakkinen covered. "He was taking three or four tenths a lap out of me, but even if he'd caught me, getting past would have been different again. For I had enough problems passing a Minardi!" exclaimed Michael. It was never to come to that. Whitmarsh would not confirm that McLaren were using a new brake material, only that they had tried "lots of different things". But he would confirm that oxidation occurs not far away from the optimum

## McLaren debunk Ferrari conspiracy theory

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER ensured a huge race-day crowd when he secured his first pole position of the season at Monza. He followed this up with his sixth win of the year, the first time a Ferrari has won half a dozen times in a season since Alberto Ascari back in the '50s. The conspiracy theorists, of course, mumbled about Ferrari drivers in Italy, but there were no aspersions cast by rivals McLaren. Instead there was a considerably greater bonhomie than evinced

Coulthard looked a strong bet for back-to-back wins at Monza until his engine blew up



itself at Spa a fortnight earlier. With Jacques Villeneuve qualifying second, McLaren were off the front row for only the second time this year. "Jacques' time is only quarter of a second away from Michael's, and traffic is the only thing that has kept us off the front row," Ron Dennis said. "Mika was actually a couple of tenths up at his second split on the last run, and I'm certain

that we'll be okay tomorrow..." When metal-based cones appeared at Monza's chicanes during the last pre-race test, those same conspiracy theorists figured that it was all part of a Ferrari plot to negate McLaren's supposed ability to run the kerbs better. But Dennis poured cold water on that too. "It was just an experiment conducted by the FIA, similar to the one they did for F3000 at Enna. There were mixed feelings, but six broken front wings were behind the logic of the FIA's decision to have them removed. I don't support the view that it was done to optimise the position of any one team." When Schumacher and Eddie Irvine finished one-two at Magny

Cours, there was no shortage of muttering about their getaways at the restart, which left the McLarens gasping – and more of the same was predicted at Monza, a race Schumacher desperately needed to win. The plot was not supported by the Ferrari team leader's worst start of the season. "It was just terrible," he said. "I did everything wrong that I could have done and was fifth by the first corner. Happily, I was able to get by Jacques at the second chicane on the first lap and then Eddie let me through, so thanks for that..." Hakkinen agreed about the start: "I wasn't exactly laughing, but I had a very good feeling." It didn't last.

operating temperature of the brakes. "So, if you are running not far from that critical temperature, you only need to step over the mark a tiny bit, or have a slightly different material characteristic. It's speculation until we look at it, but certainly it was a brake problem, and the way Mika went off it looked as if it was the front that had gone away. Thereafter, he had to go very easy on the brakes to the end." Too easy to stop Eddie Irvine and Ralf Schumacher demoting him to fourth, to rapturous cheers from the Ferrari faithful. Whitmarsh, though, was both sporting and honest: "It's made the championship more exciting than we would like. We've made too many mistakes. You have to give Ferrari credit. They've had uncharacteristically strong reliability and have done a good job. If we'd done as good a job we wouldn't be having this conversation. We are disappointed with that and it's something we have to sort out." After their post-Spa rev-up, the Bridgestone hierarchy were reportedly none too pleased at McLaren's gamble. But a racing car is a package. If McLaren figured out that Goodyear had stolen a march with their rubber, maybe they thought they had to redress that in another area. If Monza illustrated anything, it was the mind-boggling current competitiveness of Formula 1.



Although not yet Trulli competitive, France's Formula 1 team were much improved in Italy

## Upturn in performance boosts Prost

PROST-PEUGEOT ENJOYED EASILY their most impressive qualifying performance of the season when both AP01s wound up in the top 10, team leader Olivier Panis shading Jarno Trulli. "We had a good test where we did a lot of work with the dampers," Trulli said. "We are still struggling a bit, but at least there is progress." Panis was in trouble with a rear vibration right from the start, came in for a change of tyres but found no improvement and retired after 15 laps. Trulli, meanwhile, started to suffer wild oversteer. The resultant long, premature stop dropped him out of contention after he had run 10th early on. Once back on track, the Prost ran at the most competitive pace shown all year, allowing the Italian to set the fifth-quickest race lap behind the McLarens and the brothers Schumacher.

# Repaired Arrows fly straight but unseen



DARREN HEATH

Salo struggles through the Rettifilo – his A19 was primed for straights, not twists, and Friday's lost practice session meant the race set-up was almost guessed

ARROWS WORKED AROUND the clock to build up two new monocoques and repair a third after the carnage at Spa. But sadly for Mika Salo, he came to a stop 100 metres into Friday morning's first free practice session at Monza. "I don't believe it," he grimaced. "No testing and now no free practice. It just stopped." Mechanical gremlins prevented teammate Pedro Diniz doing any dry running prior to qualifying, and Arrows were still guessing at a set-up prior to qualifying 16th (Salo)

and 20th (Diniz). They opted for very little rear wing, recording identical 217mph top speeds through the speed trap – the quickest of all the teams. The downside was that only the Minardis and Ricardo Rosset's Tyrrell were slower in the second sector (where the road turned).

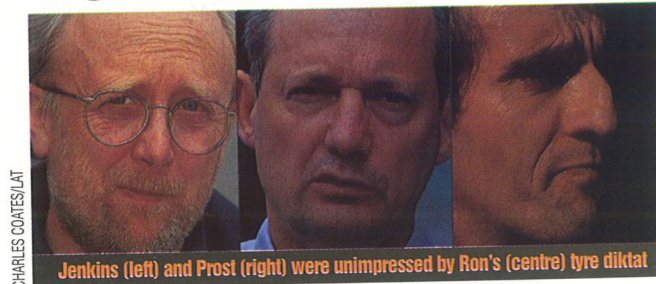
Diniz spun off at Lesmo and claimed it was due to locking rear wheels. Salo ran competitively with Damon Hill and Heinz-Harald Frentzen until halted by a throttle problem after 33 laps.

# McLaren's Bridgestone monopoly causes concern

A COUPLE OF races ago most folk thought Bridgestone would supply their wider front tyre for the remainder of the season. But at Monza the narrow-format tyre was back.

"There is no doubt that the wider tyre is quicker," explained McLaren's Ron Dennis, "but there is a durability problem."

There was also a new-construction rear tyre which McLaren had discovered to represent a step forward, so Bridgestone manufactured it in double-quick time at



CHARLES COATES/LAT

Jenkins (left) and Prost (right) were unimpressed by Ron's (centre) tyre diiktal

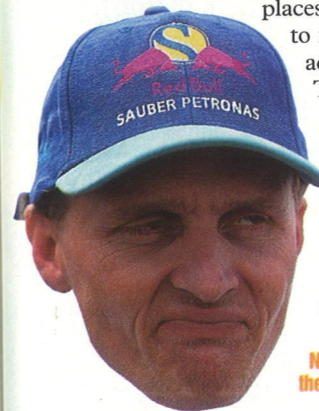
the Woking team's request. But this put some noses out of joint, including that of Alain Prost. "We've been here three times since the start of the season, and the biggest difference is in the tyres," he said. "The newly

constructed rear does not really satisfy our drivers." Stewart GP's technical director Alan Jenkins added: "During the test session last week we had a good balance and set competitive times, but the tyre available now is

different and we've had to start again from scratch." But Ron Dennis was not impressed by the sniping. "Logically, we have the right to dictate because we've done the job for Bridgestone. We've done twice as much testing as other teams – we prioritise the tyre programme. "It was our work that led to the fronts being wider in the first place. The suggestion that Bridgestone should follow the lead of anyone else is pretty naive to me."

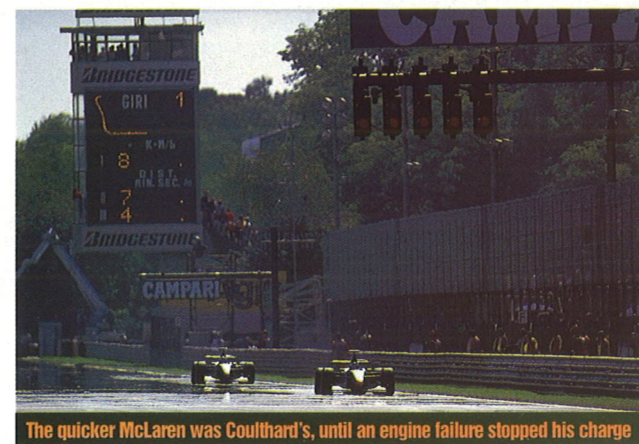
# Odd case of cross-pliers

JOHNNY HERBERT was spitting razor blades at his Italian GP demise when he spun off at the second Lesmo 12 laps in. "Unbeknown to me, some pliers had been left in the footwell," Herbert spat. "I made a reasonable start and gained a couple of places, but from the second lap the pliers began to foul the brake pedal and twice I had to adjust the brake balance to compensate. The first time I lost a place to Barrichello and then I had a couple of big moments. I couldn't be exactly sure what was going on – only that the car suddenly felt inconsistent and difficult to drive. "As I went into the second Lesmo, the pedal felt odd as the pliers interfered again and I lost it. As you can imagine, I am not at all happy." Or words to that effect...



SUTTON IMAGES

Not best pleased: Herbert's race was interrupted and then halted by a pair of pliers caught in the footwell



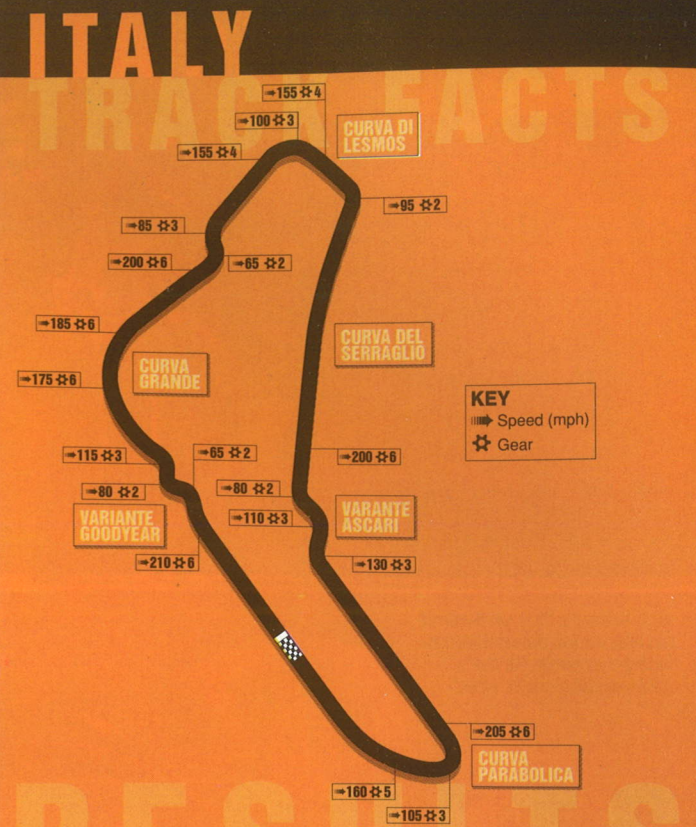
DARREN HEATH

The quicker McLaren was Coulthard's, until an engine failure stopped his charge

# DC helps Ferrari – by mistake

HOT ON THE heels of their Spa debacle, there was a sense of irony in a blown engine for David Coulthard that helped Michael Schumacher pass Mika Hakkinen. "I just couldn't believe the smoke," Hakkinen said. "You come around Curva Grande flat in fifth and take sixth on the exit. I just saw a huge white cloud and waved yellows – what do you do? You have to think about what speed to go through. If there's a car spinning in the middle of the track and you go through flat in fifth gear, you can easily say bye-bye, you know..."

"I slowed down and went to the side of the track, which was the clever way to do it. Michael overtook me soon after so he had more speed through there." Schumacher admitted it was hairy: "It was impossible to see; we had to slow down and Mika went on the grass. Through the smoke you couldn't see if the car was on the road. We both chose the outside line, and going into the next chicane he went inside to block me but lost exit speed. I accelerated quicker into the first Lesmo and got by. I thought he'd stay out longer than me and I knew I needed to build lead."



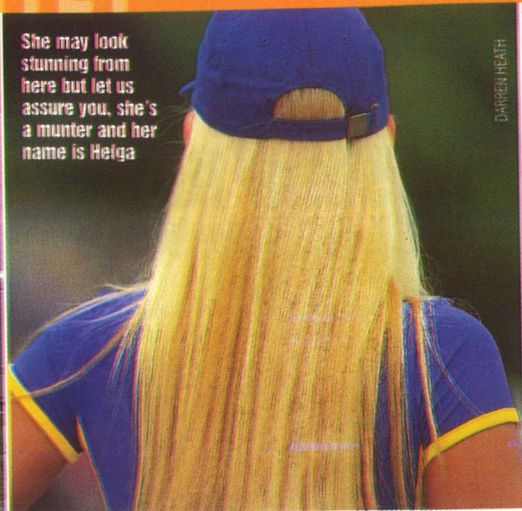
Final position	Driver	Total race time	Position after 1 lap	Qualifying lap position in brackets	Fastest race lap position in brackets	Fastest pitstop position in brackets
1	M Schumacher Ferrari F300	1:17:09.672	4	1:24.289 (1)	1:25.483 (2)	21.01 (6)
2	Irvine Ferrari F300	1:17:47.649	3	1:26.159 (5)	1:26.359 (6)	19.91 (4)
3	R Schumacher Jordan-Mugen Honda 198	1:17:50.824	7	1:26.309 (6)	1:26.194 (4)	21.49 (9)
4	Hakkinen McLaren-Mercedes MP4-13	1:18:05.343	1	1:25.679 (3)	1:25.139 (1)	20.64 (6)
5	Alesi Sauber-Petronas C17	1:18:11.544	6	1:26.637 (8)	1:26.840 (10)	19.87 (3)
6	Hill Jordan-Mugen Honda 198	1:18:16.360	11	1:27.362 (14)	1:26.730 (9)	19.15 (1)
7	Frentzen Williams-Mecachrome FW20	1 lap behind	12	1:26.836 (12)	1:26.656 (7)	31.17 (15)
8	Fisichella Benetton-Playlife B198	1 lap behind	9	1:26.817 (11)	1:26.659 (8)	41.40 (16)
9	Takagi Tyrrell-Ford 026	1 lap behind	20	1:28.346 (19)	1:27.726 (12)	20.30 (5)
10	Barrichello Stewart-Ford SF2	1 lap behind	14	1:27.247 (13)	1:27.770 (13)	26.10 (12)
11	Tuero Minardi-Ford M198	2 laps behind	18	1:29.417 (22)	1:29.093 (18)	21.54 (10)
12	Rosset Tyrrell-Ford 026	2 laps behind	22	1:28.286 (18)	1:29.393 (20)	23.20 (11)
13	Trulli Prost-Peugeot AP01	3 laps behind	10	1:26.794 (10)	1:26.285 (5)	1:44.9 (17)

RETIREMENTS						
Verstappen	gearbox	16	1:28.212 (17)	1:28.583 (16)	19.80 (2)	
Villeneuve	spun off	5	1:25.561 (2)	1:26.479 (6)	20.74 (7)	
Salo	throttle	19	1:27.744 (16)	1:27.866 (14)	26.13 (13)	
Wurz	gearbox	8	1:26.567 (7)	1:27.620 (11)	–	
Coulthard	engine	2	1:25.987 (4)	1:25.959 (3)	–	
Panis	vibration	15	1:26.681 (9)	1:28.395 (15)	29.58 (14)	
Nakano	engine	21	1:29.101 (22)	1:29.853 (21)	–	
Herbert	spun off	13	1:27.510 (15)	1:29.092 (17)	–	
Diniz	spun off	17	1:28.387 (20)	1:29.124 (19)	–	

# GRAND PRIX DEBRIEF



"Well, thank you. I know, if Saint Michael even got it wrong at Spa, what hope for us mortals? Thank you!"



She may look stunning from here but let us assure you, she's a munter and her name is Helga

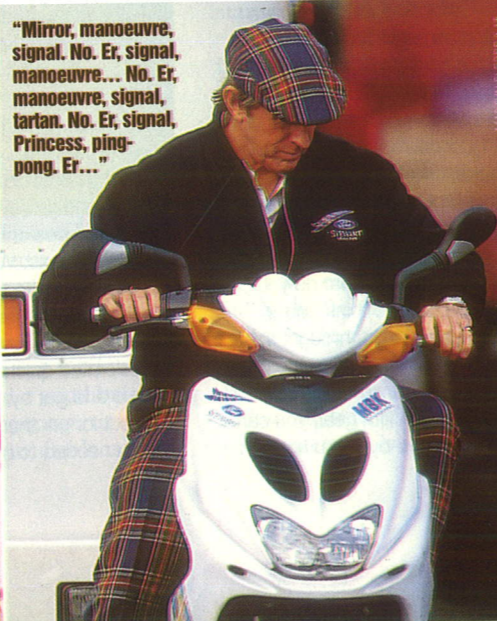
After Schuey's tizzy, Jo Ramirez decides his job description now includes enforcer. He has a gold-capped tooth for effect



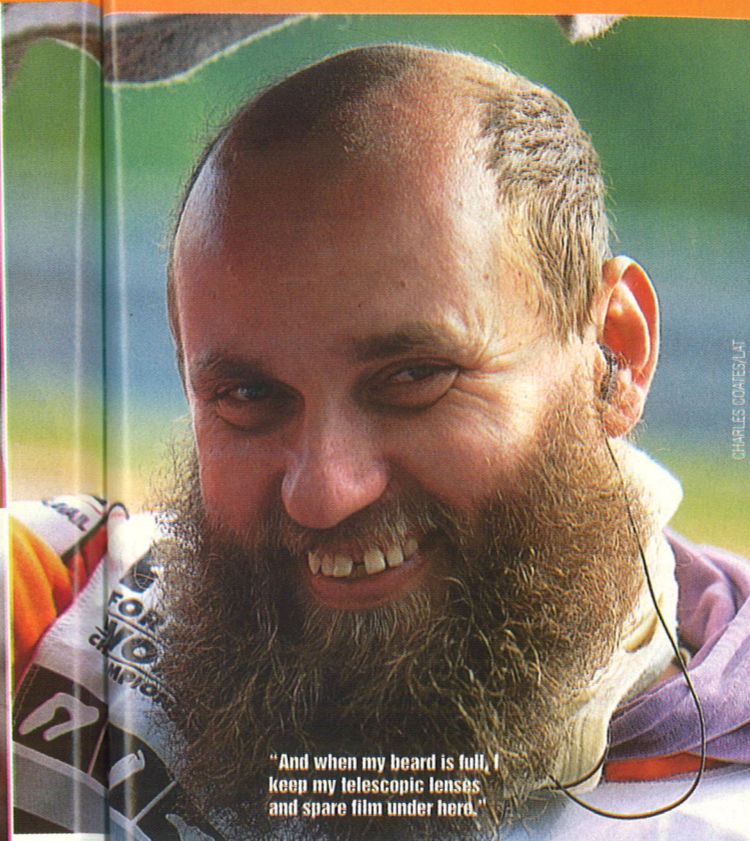
Sod licking the Blamey Stone, E.J.'s got a taste for the posh stuff. A case of ultra-high-grade screenwash...



"Mirror, manoeuvre, signal. No. Er, signal, manoeuvre... No. Er, manoeuvre, signal, tartan. No. Er, signal, Princess, ping-pong. Er..."



# POSTCARD



"And when my beard is full, I keep my telescopic lenses and spare film under here."



Return of the macks. Mark Morrison's fans are happy



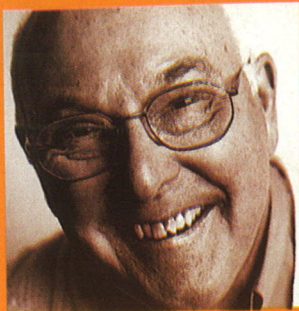
Schuey tries to slip the tongue, but even the pit girls won't fall for that old chestnut



All publicity is good and the Femidom needs loads of it



At last Coulthard is in front of Hakkinen, but David is not amused: "I know we're mates, Mika - but any chance of moving your foot now...?"



## Too close to call. Too good to wait for...

A down-to-the-wire affair looks on the cards

'After a start to the season which looked as though it was going to be a 1988 McLaren benefit revisited, there's now everything to play for'

I'M SITTING HERE IN the commentary box at Monza, looking down at a seething mass of tifosi. And I can hardly believe what I've just been talking about. After a start to the season which looked as if it was going to be a 1988 McLaren benefit revisited, there's everything to play for in both championships with just two races to go. Tough indeed on McLaren, who looked to have it in the bag, but the best thing possible for Formula 1 and Ferrari, who more than ever deserve their success after patiently building a winning team at enormous cost.

So, to the Nürburgring – which, I remind you, is Schumacher-land and close to Michael's birthplace. With Ferraris which have reliability on their side, compared with McLarens which have been suffering a surprising succession of failures, the pendulum is clearly swinging Maranello's way.

If – and I know it's a very big word! – Schumacher hadn't misjudged his closing speed in Belgium, he'd be 10 points ahead of Hakkinen right now. And with points equal after Monza, the pressure is well and truly on Mika. Schumacher has been there and done that already – championships, plus the nail-biting agony of Jerez '97 – whereas Mika hasn't. With two weeks to churn it all over again and again for the Luxembourg Grand Prix, is Mika going to be able to put it all together in terms of winning races? And are McLaren going to be able to equal Ferrari's ability to finish them? Even if they can, they've still got to overcome the Schumacher factor!

One thing's for sure: the competition in Germany in front of Schumi's army will be wondrous to behold!



Last year, McLaren dominated the 'Ring until engine failure ended Merc's fun. They'll be quick this year, but don't forget that man Schuey...

LAT



JV grabs the '97 Luxembourg GP

It is called the Luxembourg GP, but its circuit (opened in 1984) is actually situated in Germany. As a result, support for the German F1 contingent is very strong. The track has been used regularly since 1995 and is a mixture of slow corners and high-speed straights. Expect the McLarens and Jordans to run strongly.

### What happened in '97?

**Hakkinen** burst away from pole and **Coulthard** made a flyer from sixth to wind up in second place at the first corner. Behind the McLarens it was messy. **Ralf Schumacher** tapped Jordan team-mate **Fisichella** and then smashed into the Ferrari of brother Michael. All three retired. The McLaren duo pulled away until engine failures on laps 42 and 43 halted their charge. Looking good for a points finish, **Damon Hill** stalled his Arrows in the pits and eventually finished eighth. Both Stewarts ran well in fourth and sixth until driveshaft and hydraulic failures put them out. **Villeneuve** won by 11 seconds from Alesi, Frenzen and Berger – the first Renault one-four of 1997.

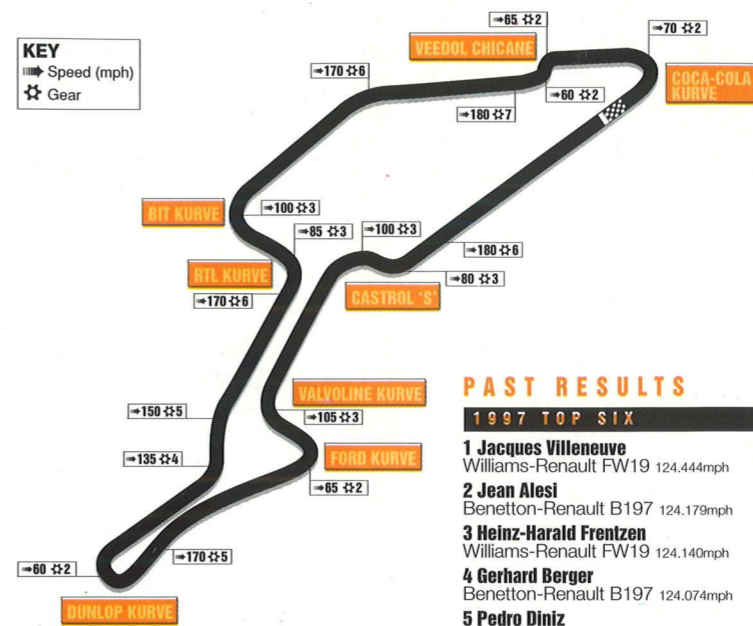
### Classic moments

**1995:** At the height of the **Hill-Schumacher** duel, Michael drove a spirited race and passed **Alesi** three laps from the end to win. **Hill** admitted championship defeat after losing his nose in a coming-together with Alesi. He then crashed out while trying to reel in Coulthard. **1997:** **Panis** got a point in his first race since his crash in Canada, and **Diniz** drove a stormer to come home fifth – his best ever result in F1.

ROUND 14 Nürburgring 27 September

## Poised on a knife-edge

The penultimate race of the year is going to be a big-time nail-biter



### PAST RESULTS

- 1997 TOP SIX**
- Jacques Villeneuve** Williams-Renault FW19 124.444mph
  - Jean Alesi** Benetton-Renault B197 124.179mph
  - Heinz-Harald Frentzen** Williams-Renault FW19 124.140mph
  - Gerhard Berger** Benetton-Renault B197 124.074mph
  - Pedro Diniz** Arrows-Yamaha A18 123.474mph
  - Olivier Panis** Prost-Mugen Honda JS45 123.461mph

### 1997 POLE POSITION

**Mika Hakkinen**  
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-12  
1m 16.602s, 133.073mph

### PREVIOUS WINNERS

- Jacques Villeneuve** 1996  
Williams-Renault  
**Michael Schumacher** 1995  
Benetton-Ford  
**Michele Alboreto** 1985\*  
Ferrari  
**James Hunt** 1976\*  
McLaren-Ford  
**Carlos Reutemann** 1975\*  
Brabham-Ford  
**Clay Regazzoni** 1974\*  
Ferrari  
**Jackie Stewart** 1973\*  
Tyrrell-Ford  
**Jacky Ickx** 1972\*  
Ferrari  
**Jackie Stewart** 1971\*  
Tyrrell-Ford  
\*German GP at the Nürburgring

### When to watch

**Qualifying** is from 11.40 on Saturday 26 September. **Murray and Martin's F1 Special** is at 16.45 later that day. **The race** is from 12.25 on Sunday 27 September. **Highlights** are at 23.15 (times subject to change).

### Anorak heaven

Fourteen miles in length and boasting 176 corners, the old Nürburgring was one of the world's toughest circuits. It's set deep in the Eifel mountains and surrounds the village of Nürburg. The Nürburgring has caught out many drivers – including Niki Lauda, whose fiery accident in 1976 ended grand prix racing there. The new track opened in the mid-'80s, but has only recently started to regularly host grands prix. Despite its being in Germany, tobacco logos are allowed because the race is called the Luxembourg GP.

### Is it too late to go?

Not if you're quick. Call Page & Moy (0116 2507007) for details. Motor Racing International (01304 612424) have a deal from £69, or a three-night stay in Koblenz from £389 per person.



Family affairs: Ralf helps retire his brother in '97

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS

IT WAS HENRY FORD who said, "History is bunk." And the modern Mercedes-Benz F1 people seem to agree. After a stirring one-two at this year's German GP, I asked when Mercedes had last finished one-two on home soil. They didn't know. I can help – it was 60 years ago when British driver Dick Seaman won the 1938 German GP at the old Nürburgring.

'When they pitted, the German's car exploded in flames when the engine spat back'

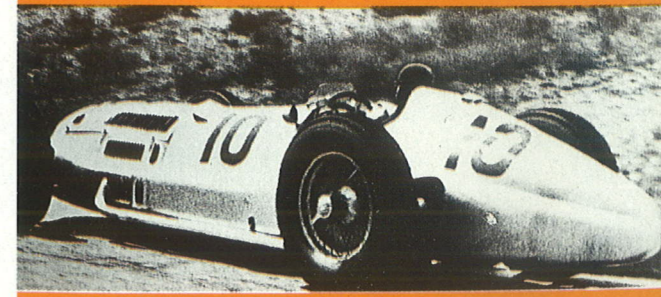
Mercedes-Benz dominated racing before the war – and then, on their return in 1954, Fangio gave them a home win. But the 1955 Le Mans disaster meant the German GP was cancelled and, by the end of the season, Mercedes

had withdrawn from racing altogether.

Mercedes had the edge over arch rival German team Auto Union in 1938, entering four cars at the 'Ring and taking the first four grid positions ahead of Tazio Nuvolari. Though the electric traffic-light starting signal failed and the green didn't come on, legendary Mercedes team boss Alfred Neubauer had briefed his drivers and they counted themselves down and into the race.

Seaman changed tyres once, whereas the flamboyant race leader Manfred von Brauchitsch changed twice. When they pitted together (Seaman for fuel, von Brauchitsch for tyres and fuel), the German's car exploded in flames when the engine spat back upon restarting. Seaman drove through the smoke and into the lead.

It was the first time since 1924 that a British driver had won a major grand prix, and the first time ever that the German GP had been won by a British driver. If you remember the climate of the time, war clouds looming on the horizon, you can understand why the huge crowd was reluctant to applaud... **Eoin Young**



Mercedes scored a Nürburgring one-two 60 years ago

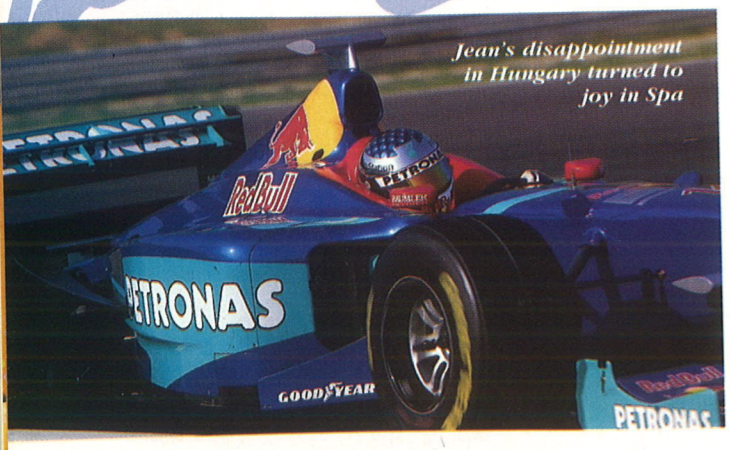


# Back to the podium!

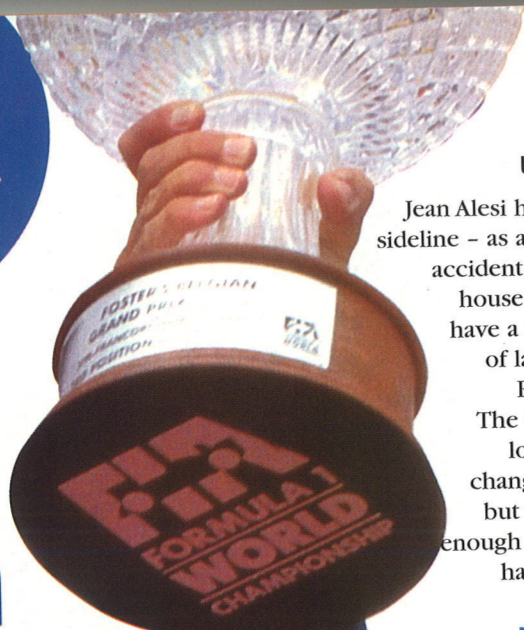
Third place for Jean in the rain-soaked, incident-packed Belgian GP was a massive fillip for the team, and a fantastic reward for all the effort that has gone into the season so far.

Frustrated to have been denied a championship point two weeks earlier in Hungary, where he finished seventh, Jean drove superbly in treacherous conditions, and challenged the two winning Jordans for much of the race before settling for the four points that meant so much. "This is a fantastic result for the team!" Jean said. "It makes up for the disappointments we have had earlier in the season when well placed."

Peter Sauber summarized the feelings when he described it as, "a profound relief. Finally - and deservedly - we achieved a great result."



Jean's disappointment in Hungary turned to joy in Spa



## Jean's new career

Jean Alesi has been developing a secret sideline - as a vintner! "It all happened by accident," he says. "When I bought my house in Avignon it just happened to have a vineyard within its three hectares of land. Now we produce 10,000 bottles of Côte du Rhône each season, under the l'Hermitage label." The vineyard dates back 100 years, and is leased to a local farmer. "He does all the work," Jean admits. "I changed the label a little, and the shape of the bottle, but the wine is his concern. I don't profess to know enough about it to alter the blend. But I enjoy wine, and have 2000 bottles of varying vintages in my cellar."



## Growing together

Engineer Tim Preston was attracted to Red Bull Sauber Petronas by the opportunity to shift the emphasis of his occupation. "In my last job I was tending to get pigeon-holed as a race engineer, when essentially I'm a design engineer. I wanted to get more involved again on car development. I spent six years in the design office at Williams, though of course if you want to design parts of race cars you have to go motor racing, so the race engineering was a bit of an experience-gathering exercise."

Tim worked with Damon Hill in his World Championship year in 1996, then Heinz-Harald Frentzen last season, before joining Red Bull Sauber Petronas to run the test team and work on research and development this season. For the remainder of the year he will be Johnny's race engineer.

"I don't seem to spend much time in Switzerland because F1 is such a constantly moving thing, but it's a lovely country with pleasant scenery," he says. "Sauber is going through a lot of change as it develops as a company, and I see the future holding many challenges. In the long-term I believe that I can grow with the team as it competes with the top four in F1."



Johnny Herbert, here showing the new front wing which the team introduced at Spa, now has a new race engineer, Tim Preston

## Motorhome music

Guests at the Red Bull Sauber Petronas team motorhome are usually greeted by music. That's hardly surprising. Hostess Karen Deblitz, a self-confessed Anglophile - "I always tell people I'm Swiss/German, with an English heart!" - is an accomplished musician with two albums to her credit.

"I was inspired by punk rock when I was 15; bands like *The Clash* and *The Ramones*. But I also liked '60s girl groups, like *The Shangri-Las* and *The Supremes*. I started out in 1982 as lead singer in a three-girl group called *Chin Chin*."

She plays bass guitar, pedal steel and a bit of mandolin, and with former boyfriend, Ernest Maeschi, formed a folk band that played gigs with *The Pogues* (in their post-Shane McGowan phase) in Switzerland. Now they play together in *Stereophonic Space Sound Unlimited*.

Their first album, *Lost TV Themes*, comprised self-penned parodies of typical soundtracks. The second is another electronic instrumental, *The Fluid Soundbox*, which includes a track dedicated to Johnny.

"Basically Ernest writes the songs," says Karen, "and then I suggest changes here and there, altering the drum grooves and the base lines, the percussion, adding my stuff to them so they become a mixture. It's an instinctive process."

Blending two careers isn't easy, especially as F1 always takes precedence. "We don't do any concerts but during the winter, when the season is over, I work in the studio. Once the season starts, the music stops! I love F1 and the Red Bull Sauber Petronas team is full of really good people. The music, though, gives me an important second interest in my life."



Karen Deblitz, Red Bull Sauber Petronas motorhome host and big music fan

## Sauber Snippets



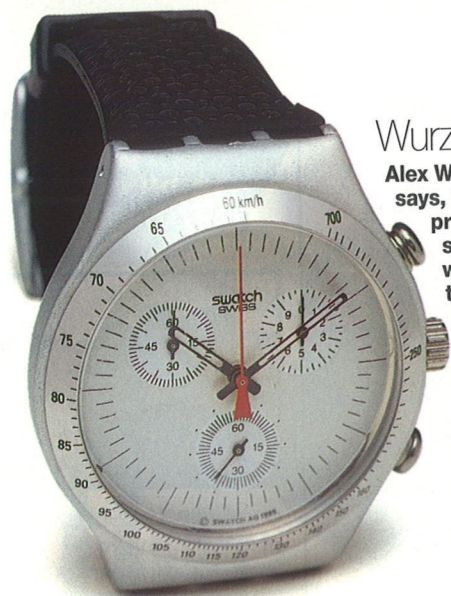
● Red Bull Sauber Petronas played host to two of Switzerland's top track and field athletes at the Hungaroring GP. Mathias Rusterholtz is the Swiss 400-metre record-holder, and Kevin Widmer is the 200-metre record-holder. Merlene Ottey, a regular friend of the team, also dropped by, as did Jean's old Ferrari team-mate Gerhard Berger, and Sylvester Stallone.

● In expectation of high ambient temperatures, the Red Bull Sauber Petronas C17s employed a revised cooling system in Hungary. This had been developed the previous week at Jerez where, at their highest point during the day the temperature reached 41 degrees C. The track was higher still, at a massive 54 degrees C.

● Team personnel changes saw Tim Preston take over from Gilles Alegeot as Johnny's race engineer from the Belgian GP (see separate story), while the team has also strengthened its aerodynamics department. Both changes are designed to further improve the team structure.

● A significant change for the race at Spa Francorchamps was a revised front wing, which reduced understeer by improving downforce, while still minimizing front-area drag.





### Wurz the time, mate?

Alex Wurz has 188 Swatch watches. He says, "Swatch is young, creative and provocative - rather like me!" With so many of the buggers, at least he won't be late. Wonder if he keeps them in chronological order? Price £75. For stockists, call 0171 8367868.

### A timeless timepiece

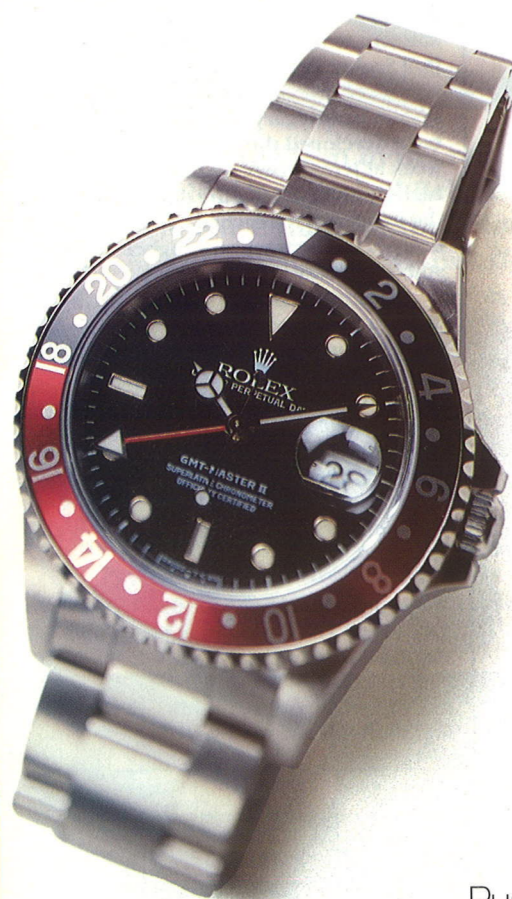
This is the Rolex Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona. It has a five-year waiting list. If you want one now it will cost you around £5500. We've got one, but we can't even begin to tell you how we got hold of it. Class. Sheer class. Price £3120. For stockists, call 0171 6295071.



## backstraight

Stop the clock, F1 drivers do have time. Loads of it...

Edited by Tatiana Okorie and Oliver Peagarr; photographs by Nick Wright

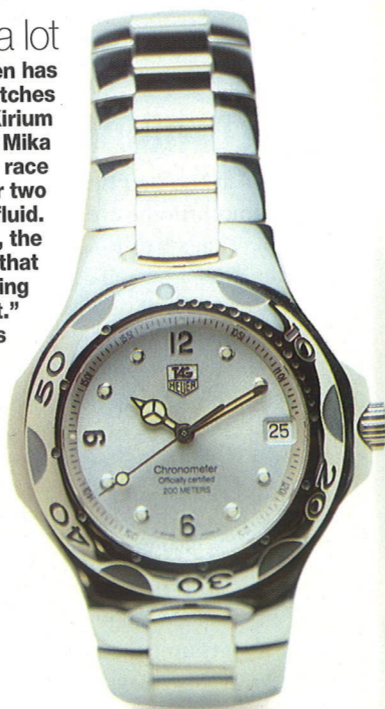


### Jackie's masterpiece

To some, they are ostentatious. To others, they're the symbol of wide-boy excess. But, put simply, Rolex is the Rolls-Royce of watches. This Steel Oyster Perpetual Date GMT Master II, with Oysterlock bracelet, is worn by JYS. Enough said. Price £2170. For stockists, call 0171 6295071.

### TAGs a lot

Mika Hakkinen has a few TAG watches including this Kirium Chronometer. Mika says, "During a race you lose over two pints of body fluid. In the end, the only thing that keeps you going is mental effort." A few prayers wouldn't go amiss now, either. Price £975. For stockists, call 0800 550555.



### Pushing for time

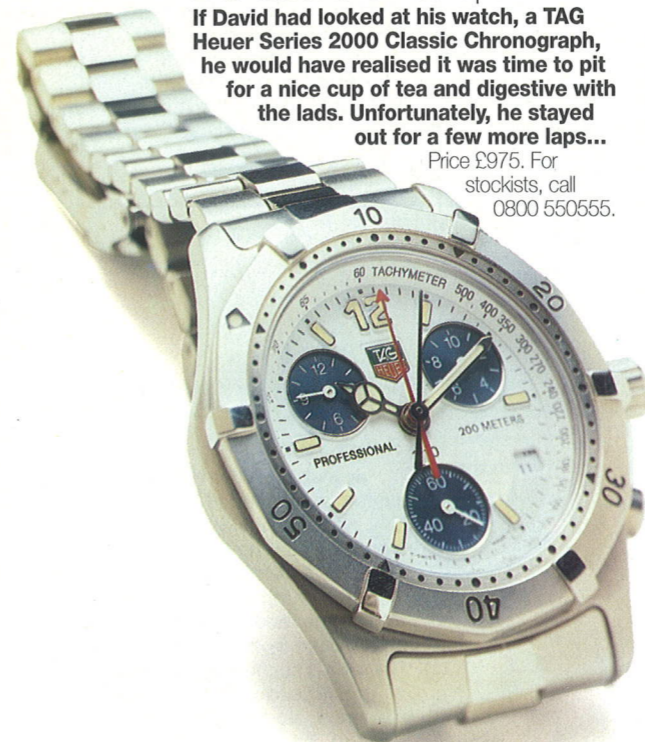
Villeneuve wears this Baume & Mercier Classima Chronograph. It might not look particularly tough, but it survived his 185mph shunt at Spa - the one Jacques called his "best ever crash". Tough. Price £995. Stockists include Selfridges and David Morris.



### DC clocks on at Spa

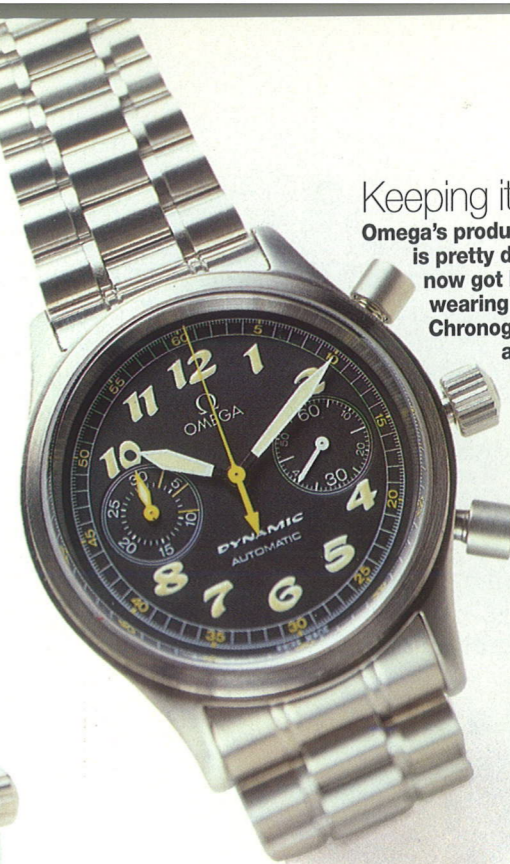
If David had looked at his watch, a TAG Heuer Series 2000 Classic Chronograph, he would have realised it was time to pit for a nice cup of tea and digestive with the lads. Unfortunately, he stayed out for a few more laps...

Price £975. For stockists, call 0800 550555.



### Keeping it in the family

Omega's product placement policy is pretty darn shrewd. They've now got Ralf Schumacher wearing an Omega Dynamic Chronograph. It looks a bit army-issue - ideal for when he joins up at the end of his career. Price £800. For stockists, call 01703 646800.

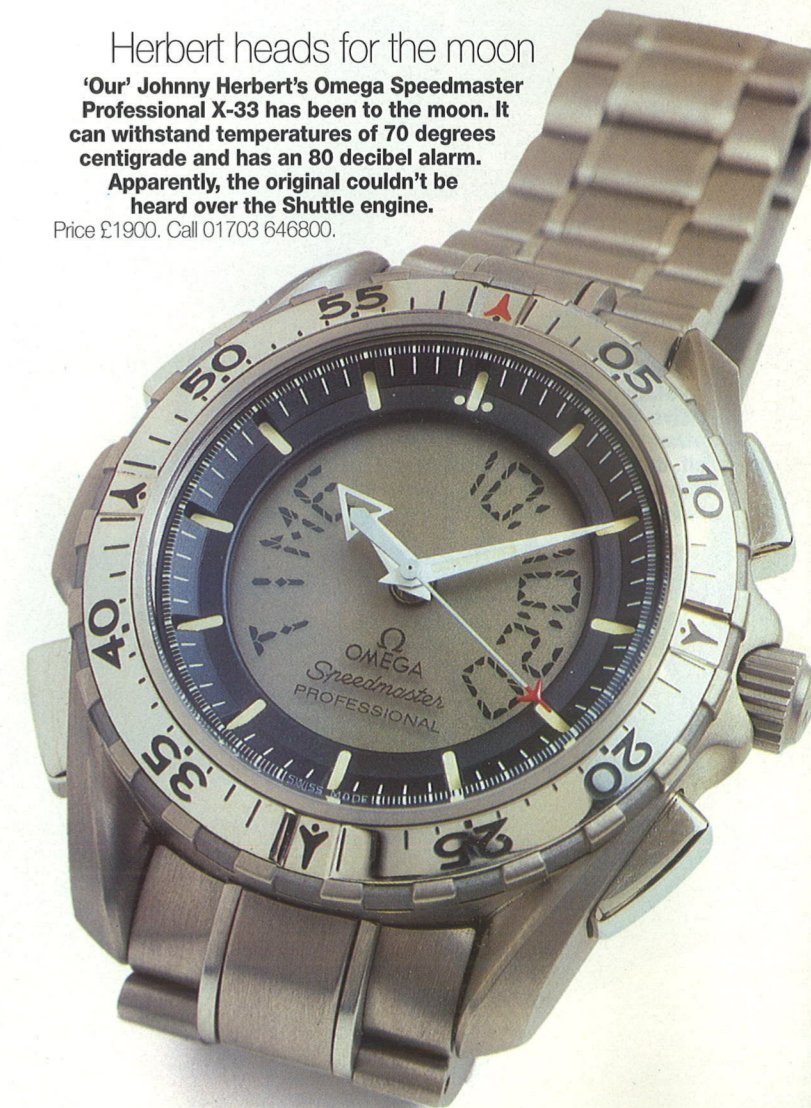


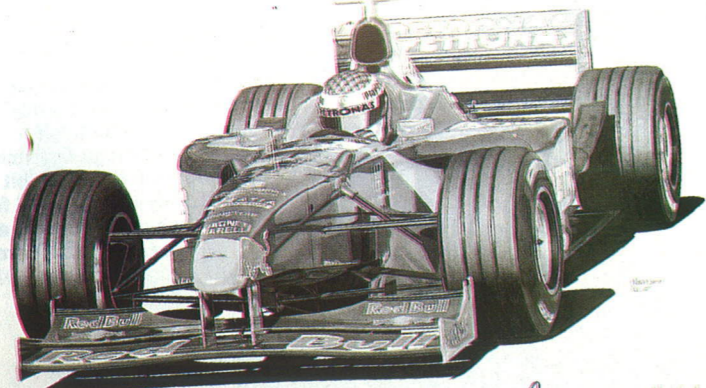
### Herbert heads for the moon

'Our' Johnny Herbert's Omega Speedmaster Professional X-33 has been to the moon. It can withstand temperatures of 70 degrees centigrade and has an 80 decibel alarm. Apparently, the original couldn't be heard over the Shuttle engine. Price £1900. Call 01703 646800.

### The original Speedmaster

In interviews, Michael Schumacher always has his Omega Speedmaster Automatic tucked strategically over his sleeve. Recent events (mainly finger-wagging and swearing), mean his watch is getting far more coverage than usual. Omega must be cheering. Price £1275. For stockists, call 01703 646800.





### Jean Alesi on a charge

Ever one to spot an opportunity, we have got this limited edition print of Jean Alesi driving the 1998 Sauber C17 to give away. Signed by both Alesi and Peter Sauber, it can be on your wall in a matter of days if you can answer this simple question. What is Jean's girlfriend called? Answers on a postcard to the *F1 Racing* address and the first correct answer picked wins. Simple. For Race Art information, call on 01322 666743.

## backstraight

### The wheels to fortune

The **F1 SIM COMPACT** is perhaps the most authentic driving system we have come across for the PC. Go on, give it some. If you spin, only your ego will be dented. Price £79.99. For further information, call 01293 538666.

Or how about this, The Official Jordan Grand Prix Racing Wheel (to give it the full name) for the PlayStation. Now Jordan has that elusive first win, why not help them to further GP success? Imagine you're Ralf, do some left foot braking and forget about team orders... Nice. Price £49.99. For information, call 01525 852900.

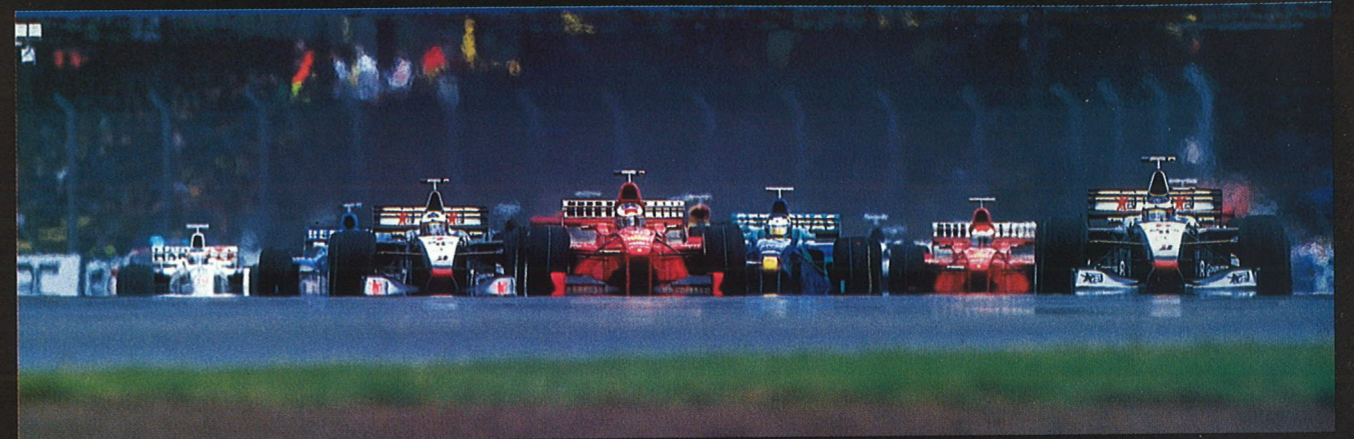


### Games for the boys

The **F-1 World Grand Prix** is available on the Nintendo 64 system. It's licensed by the FOA, (the admin side of Bernie's empire) so if he likes it, it must be good. There are five levels to test your mettle. Our fave is the Challenge mode, where you can choose from a variety of last season's scenarios and change the outcome of what actually happened. Now that's technology for you. Top graphics, exploding tyre cushions, pitstops - it's all here and we have two copies to give away. If you want a piece of the action, tell us what the 64 in Nintendo 64 stands for, and it's yours. Answers to the usual address please. Price £39.99. Call 01703 653377.



# NEXT MONTH



# THE DASH TO THE TITLE MIKA VERSUS MIKE

Hakkinen might be the champion. His fight with Schumacher might even go down to the wire. The only thing you can be sure of is that *we'll* have the best stories and shots from Luxembourg

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE

# 16 OCT

## black flag

Our man in the know – with the low-down  
on the low-down side of Formula 1

Dear Michael,

I don't suppose you get to read the British newspapers, but after your little outburst of road rage down in the Ardennes forest, I think even you would agree that it's not surprising that most of the British media got into top gear and gave you a good bruising.

After all, there was Britain's clean-cut hero, every mother's prototype son-in-law, motoring gently along minding his own business on a quiet woodland road. Then, hey presto, the Red Baron comes blitzing out of the gloom to give him the rat-a-tat-tat treatment without so much as a by your leave. And if that's not enough, he then goes crackers in the pitlane and starts shouting the odds like some hyperactive barrow boy.

Not a particularly edifying spectacle, I'm afraid. But the real problem, Michael, is that the F1 paddock is living proof of why this EU malarkey has been a dead duck from the word go.

For the past 500 years we in Britain have spent much of our time arguing the toss with Johnny Foreigner, and the mere fact that some people do it with F1 cars does not alter the fact that too many xenophobic Brits regard the English Channel as the only thing which separates civilisation as they know it from the primeval hordes.

I don't subscribe to this rather extreme view myself, of course, having enjoyed many pleasant times abroad. But professional sport these days really does seem to have taken the place of hand-to-hand combat. If you can't have a war, then let's have a grand prix instead.

A chap at the *Daily Mail* likened your behaviour to an out-of-control Dobermann, and made the point that if you'd driven like that on the public road you'd have probably been breathalysed.

Strong stuff. But I'm afraid it was a pretty typical example of what most people in Blighty felt.

Anyway, I'm glad that this whole episode was put behind you and David at Monza, and was particularly relieved to hear that you did not intend to plant one on the McLaren driver had you elbowed your way close enough to make

contact in the Spa pit garages. That said, I think you can probably count yourself very fortunate that you didn't get within range of the Haggis-basher. The way I saw it, he was poised for a pre-emptive strike. Lucky you, I say.

It was all a great shame, because nobody doubted that you were heading for one of the greatest victories of your career. But I hope you'll forgive me for saying this, Michael: winning never quite seems enough for you. In that respect, you are like the late lamented Ayrton Senna. He had to stamp his absolute mastery on every race he won, rubbing his rivals' noses in the dirt. You're a bit like that, aren't you?

When you plunged into the tail-end of Coulthard's McLaren, it reminded me of one of Senna's most celebrated wet-weather performances in the rain. In the 1989 Australian Grand Prix he vanished into the distance in track conditions every bit as precarious as those we saw at Spa.

His progress was only arrested when he ran slap into the back of Martin Brundle's Brabham which was recovering after a high-speed spin on the back straight. I recall Martin saying he'd been almost relieved when he felt the impact – at least it confirmed that he had resumed driving in the right direction!

That gives you some indication of the visibility. Senna admitted that he felt the change in turbulence – a second or so before he hit Brundle – even before he caught a glimpse of the Brabham's rear wing. In your case, of course, you had slightly more information at your disposal. At least you knew David was pretty close at hand out there in the murk. Which made your accident even more daft, to my mind.

But of course, all these unfortunate recollections were exorcised in spectacular fashion by your superb display at Monza. I even overheard a McLaren wallah

offer praise for the job that you and the Ferrari team had delivered – which, I suppose, could be as close to getting blood out of a stone as anyone could

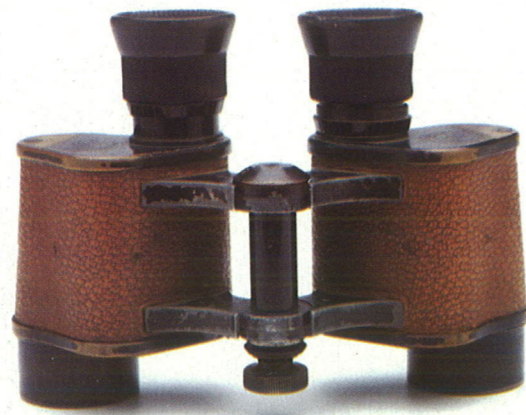
reasonably expect. Even in the F1 business.

Having spent much of this column offering what I hope you will consider to be measured, if robust, criticism of your modus operandi, I would also like to offer a word of appreciation over the way you mingled with the tifosi after winning the Italian Grand Prix. Being a conservative Brit, I would have been scared stiff of what looked to me like an uncontrollable baying mob.

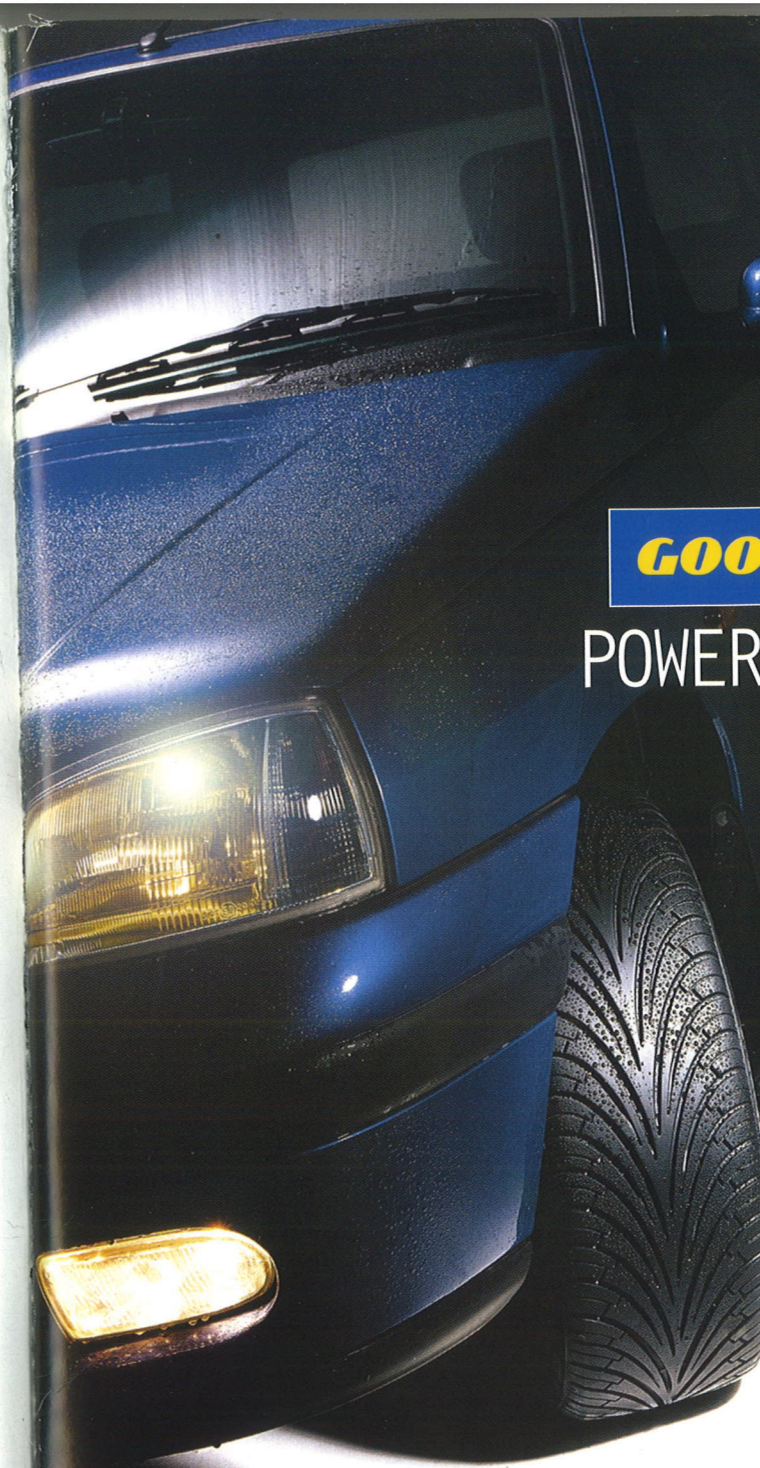
I'm glad they had a smile on their face, at least.

So now all we have to do is to wait and see whether your dream comes true. Two races to go, even stevens and everything to play for against the quiet Nordic blond. How do I feel it will go? Hmm. How do I want it to go? You'll just have to work that one out for yourself...

Yours, on a Prancing Horse,



the SCRUTINEER



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