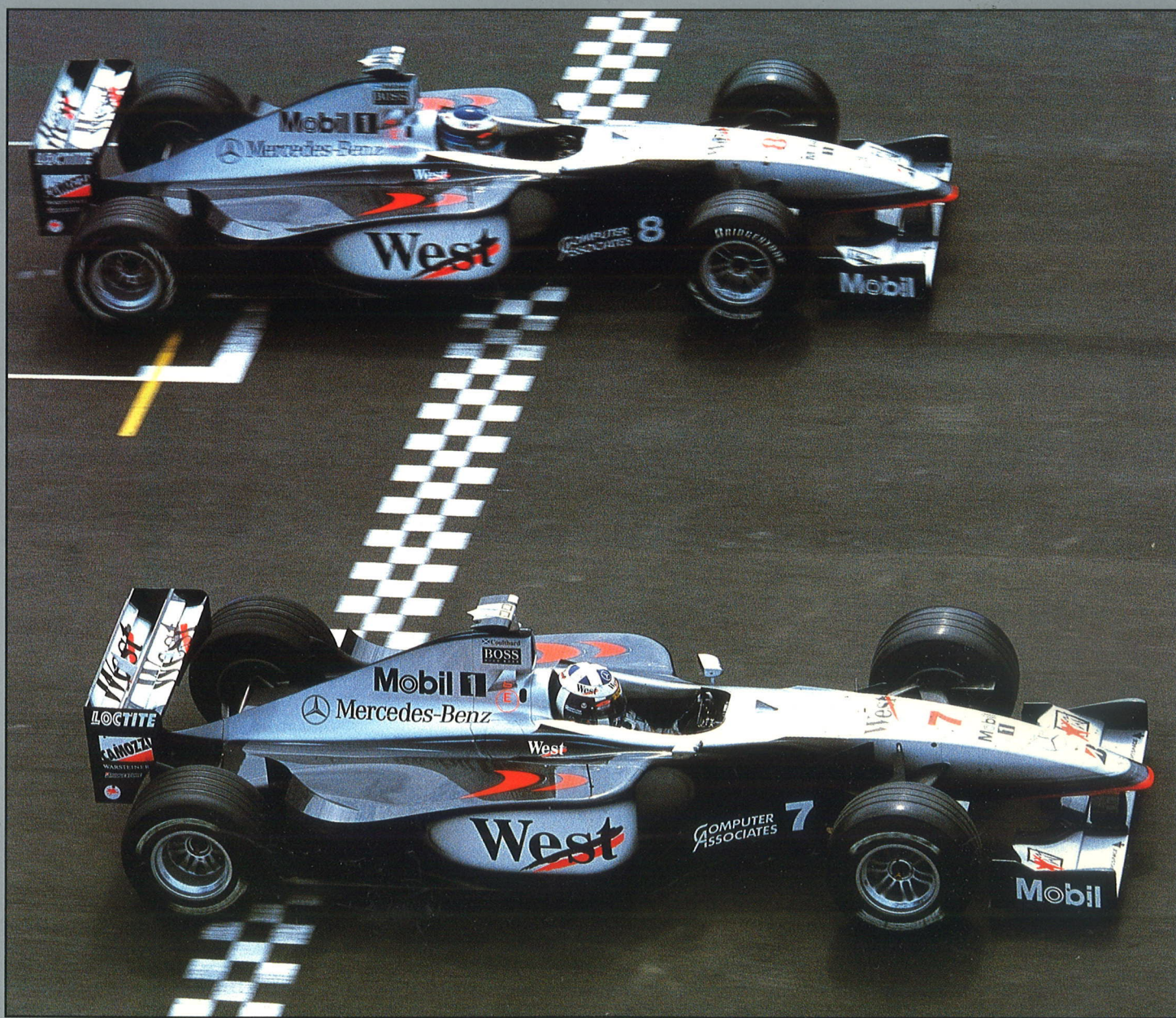


AUTUMN 1998

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# STARS & CARS

Powered by Mercedes-Benz



## THE RACE TO THE LINE

- FORMULA 1 - Two 1-2 victories in eight days
- GT - World title wins for the Team and Drivers
- AMG - The success story of the Mercedes partner



# STARS & CARS

The magazine of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport

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### It's a team sport

As the Formula 1 World Championship enters its closing stages, the tension is mounting in the battle for the world title. Every member of the West McLaren Mercedes team has played its part in building a winning combination, including the guys who refuel the car in less than eight seconds...

PHOTOGRAPH BY JÜRGEN TAP/HOCH ZWEI



GALLERY



### The colour of CART

You can see the concentration in race leader Mauricio Gugelmin's eyes as he focuses ahead and guides his colourful PacWest Reynard-Mercedes over the crest of one of Mid-Ohio's many rises. The Brazilian rates the circuit as one of his favourites, alongside the challenging track at Elkhart Lake.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYN WILLIAMS





GALLERY



**Six hours, two drivers, and victory**

The heat in Japan, and the highly challenging circuit at Suzuka proved to be no problem for Bernd Schneider and Mark Webber. August's 1000km race is one of the most energy-sapping of the year, but the pair raced through without problems to notch up their fourth victory in the FIA GT series, on the way to clinching the Championship for AMG Mercedes

PHOTOGRAPH BY GAVIN LAWRENCE



GALLERY

**All the track, and more**

David Coulthard lets it all hang out as he chases pole position at Hockenheim. Inch-perfect precision out of the corners leads to greater speed on the straights, as David proved by setting a new record of 356km/h

PHOTOGRAPH BY WOLFGANG WILHELM



### Bonjour, bonjour, bonjour...

David Coulthard swapped his traditional Scottish crash helmet for a typical French gendarme's hat in the Magny-Cours paddock. Sadly, the plan to fit blue flashing lights and a siren to his West McLaren-Mercedes failed to come to fruition.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WOLFGANG WILHELM



GALLERY

## Singing in the rain

The hills are alive with the sound of the V10 Mercedes engine as it sings the qualifying tune composed by Mika Hakkinen's right foot. The weather at the A-1 Ring made for one of the most unpredictable sessions of the year, but come the race it was dry and another great contest  
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTYN ELFORD/LAT



GALLERY



There are days  
when the ocean reminds me of her  
awesome hidden power.

In moments of tranquillity she charms me.

Then suddenly

*very suddenly*

she assumes a distinct and very definite existence.

From fathomless depths she produces that elemental sound.

That grumbling groan of pure, potential power.

As if for the first time,

I'm aware of the phenomenon that lurks beneath the surface.

All the while the current acquires a momentous velocity.

Each second adding to her speed

to her inevitable urge.

And I'm left captivated by her eternal energy.



E-class AMG



**26**  
JULY  
SUN

# EIGHT DAYS A WEEK

**2**  
AUGUST  
SUN

One week: two 1-2 finishes and 32 points for Mercedes in Austria and Germany. It was actually 10 minutes short of a week, but what a week it was. From 3:34pm on Sunday 26 July to 3:23pm on Sunday 2 August, West McLaren Mercedes drivers Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard worked through a week that encapsulated the full spectrum of their roles as Grand Prix drivers. In those seven days they raced in

two Grands Prix, spent two days on a press and publicity trip, visited the workers of the high-tech Mercedes production plant at Bad Cannstatt, and undertook their usual duties of press conferences, debriefs and, actual driving that are part and parcel of any GP weekend. But let's begin at the end. The end of the Austrian Grand Prix that is. TEXT: ANDY HALLBERY PHOTOS: WOLFGANG WILHELM



F1



26  
JULY  
SUN

A Finn, a Tyrolean hat, and the day's silverware on display for the media in the A1-Ring paddock

**SUNDAY JULY 26**

As the silver McLaren-Mercedes passed underneath the chequered flag, Mika punched the air. On the pitwall the team celebrated, waving flags and arms and anything else that wasn't bolted down. Five seconds later, a second silver blur flashed past, causing more waving. David Coulthard has driven a brilliant race. Having fallen to last on the opening lap following a skirmish at the second corner, the young Scot recovered from an unscheduled pit-stop to replace the damaged nosecone to finish second. It is time for him and Mika to celebrate.

Later that evening in the team motor home they reflect on a day's work well done. But the work isn't over yet. The photographers want their picture, and Mika obliges, emerging with his trophies and sporting a traditional Tyrolean hat. The cameras click away. Once the traffic queues have died down the drivers head for home. Mika and David have a particularly busy schedule in the following five days - the build up to the German Grand Prix - which is the home race for Mercedes-Benz. They are both going back to Monaco for a day to relax. Then they know it will be full steam ahead.

**The photographers want their picture, and Mika obliges, emerging with his trophies and sporting a traditional Tyrolean hat. The cameras click away**



F1

27  
JULY  
MON



DC checks the brakes before taking to the roads of Monaco. A stickler for tidiness, David's bike is in prime condition

**MONDAY JULY 27**

A quick work out at the gym for both drivers, which for DC includes a cycle ride around the hills of Monte Carlo. It's a great way to loosen any tight muscles, and fun as well. In the evening a rare opportunity for some peace and quiet.

LAT/MARTYN ELFORD



28  
JULY  
TUES

Back to work: A private jet takes David to Stuttgart ready for the media trip

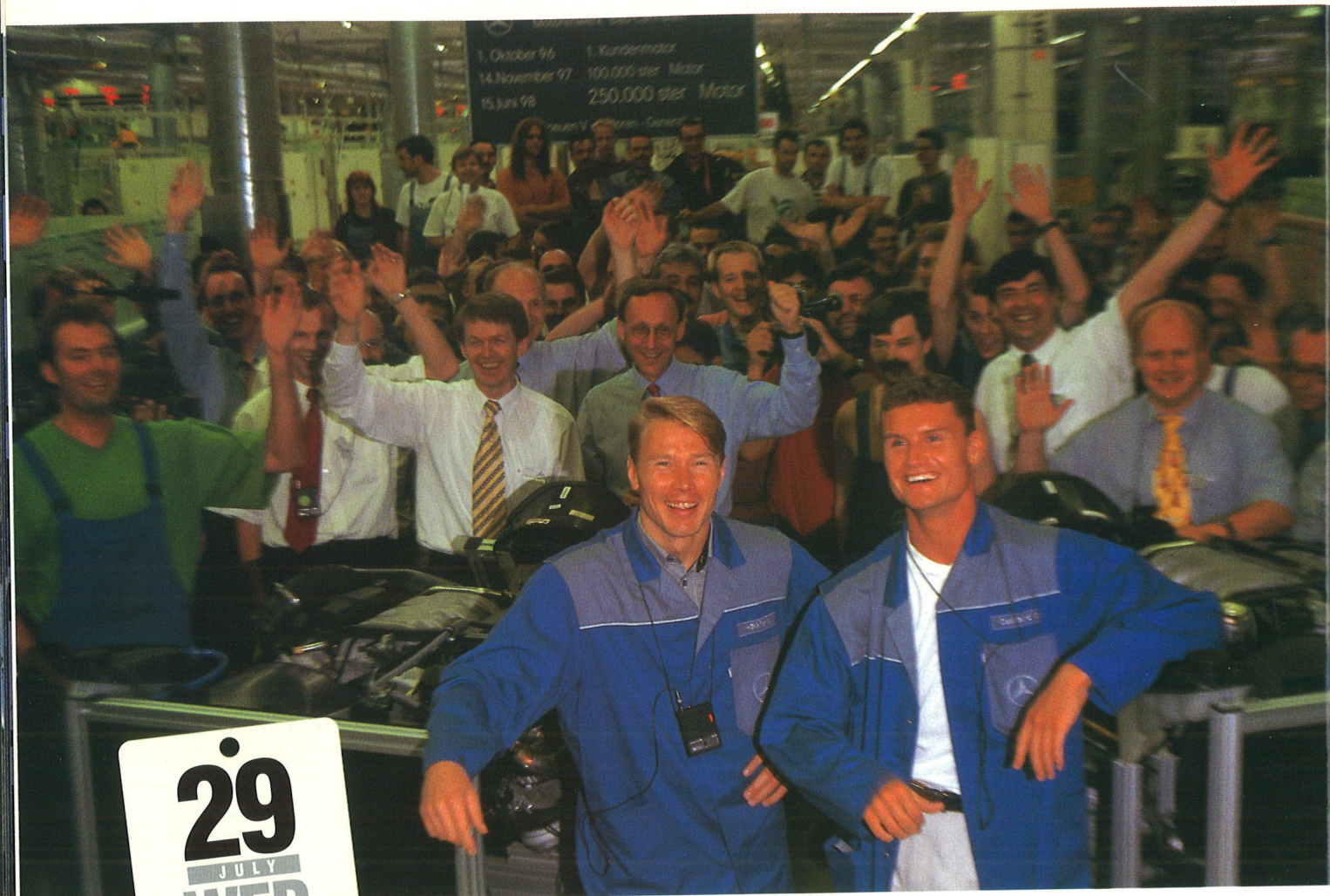
**TUESDAY JULY 28**

It's time to pack their bags and head on to the airport to catch the afternoon flight to Stuttgart. Mercedes has organised a thorough schedule for the pair, and it will be an early start on Wednesday morning.

**WEDNESDAY JULY 29**

More than 70 journalists and photographers have been specially invited to join Mika and David on the media programme. They too have come in from all over the world to spend a day and a half visiting a number of key places, and getting quality time with the two world championship contenders - something that is increasingly difficult during a hectic Grand Prix weekend.

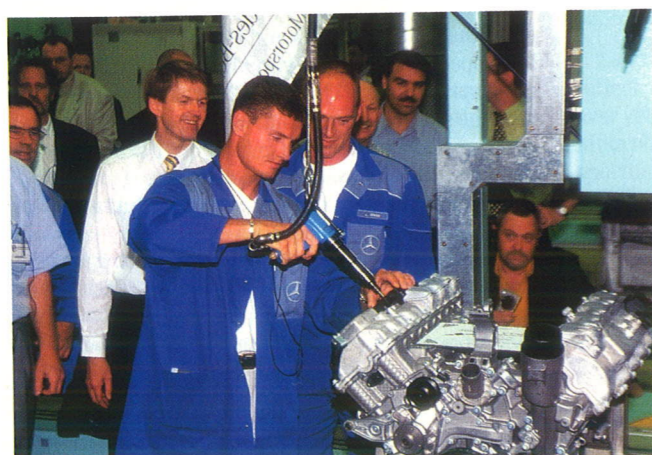
First stop is to the V engine manufacturing plant in Bad Cannstatt, a super high-tech facility which opened in October 1996. The pair are each given their own set of workers' overalls, complete with name badge. Proudly they put them on - "Where do I clock in then?!" jokes David - and set off on a tour of the factory. You can sense the incredulity as the staff suddenly come face to face with the guys they cheer for on the TV every other weekend. "Look! It's Mika, he's here, in our factory!" All the way around the ▶



**29**  
JULY  
WED

Let's hear it for the boys! Mika and David were both amazed at the support they received from the factory workers

For one lucky customer, they can claim their new car is "Powered by Mercedes-Benz, built by Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard"



Next... Both drivers helped put the finishing touches to the 300,000th engine to be built at the Bad Cannstatt factory

workers briefly down tools to get autographs, while offering their best wishes to the drivers. It's relaxed and informal, and as Mika points out, a real boost. "You can really sense the buzz as we walk round. It's a great feeling knowing that these people care so much about what we do on the track. They feel part of the team, and it gives you a little bit more of a kick when you realise how many people want you to win."

Both drivers were given the opportunity to 'get their hands dirty' - although in these high-tech robot-filled surroundings it's almost impossible to do so. With tools in hand, they put the finishing touches to the 300,000th engine to be built at the plant, connecting the ignition coil and sending the engine on its way down the production line. For one lucky customer, they can claim their new car is "Powered by Mercedes-Benz, built by Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard".

Around the corner there's a little surprise for the VIP guests: In their overtime, with imaginative use of tin foil, the staff had transformed one of their forklift trucks into a modern-day Silver Arrow. Mika quickly stepped up behind the wheel while David climbed on the forks. It didn't take Mika long to work out the controls, sending David skywards with one push of a lever... David noted that little prank down. He knew he would get the opportunity to get one back on his team mate shortly.

Outside the plant came a photo-call, with Mika and David each signing their pictures. As Mika posed for the photographers, David saw his chance, and added a moustache to his team-mate's face. One-all.

At midday it was time to head back to the main plant at Untertürkheim, where a pavilion had been taken over for some 2000 employees to have a question-and-answer session with the two Grand Prix stars, and another round of autograph signing. At 2pm it was time for a quick lunch before the pair were taken some 50km to the historical town of Bad Wimpfen, where they would team up again with their colleagues from the F1 media for a boat trip down the River Neckar. This presented an ideal opportunity for an informal chat, for the media to ask questions that maybe wouldn't ordinarily be asked. It is a relaxing environment for everyone, and the material is good. "At a race we don't have time for questions, but here is good," says Mika. "I've known a lot of these guys since my days in Formula 3, and it's nice to have the time just to chat. I know they have a job to do and a story to write, but the pressure on time during a race weekend is something else. This is why this works so well - for all of us."

The journalists are happy, they have their story to preview the German GP, and some unusual pictures of the drivers in different situations - including Mika and David taking controls of the boat named 'Barbarossa'. Everyone on board reckons they should stick to their day jobs!

The boat docked at the small town of Neckarzimmern, and the presence of two Mercedes-delivered coaches waiting in the road has alerted the locals to the fact that something out of the ordinary is happening in their home town. Sure enough, as Mika and David set foot on land, they are recognised, and



Going up? DC gets a lift from Mika on the factory's home made 'silver arrow'



"Mika... With a moustache you'd look a bit like Nigel Mansell!"



Addressing the staff at lunchtime, more than 2000 people were on hand to take part in a question and answer session

LAT/DAVID WINTER



F1

more autographs are given. One boy excitedly ran along to the coffee shop on the corner: "Papa! Papa! - Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard are outside..." The boy's father took another sip from his coffee, and smiled. "Yes son, of course they are," said the disbelieving dad, who returned to his coffee...

The coaches took the guests to Castle Hornberg, a splendid medieval castle where dinner would be taken high on a hillside overlooking the region. The guests were welcomed in a traditional manner by the hosts from the castle, and a hollowed out horn with the local drink is passed around. The drivers, wisely, pass up the offer. Their friends from the media, who should know better, each sample the special 'fuel'. For the media it's the beginning of a long night.

After a cross-bow competition - which offers another photo opportunity - the drivers take their leave, and wish their colleagues from the press 'bon appetite' and bid them farewell. It was time to get back to their hotel and get some rest.

**THURSDAY JULY 30**

No early rush for Mika or David. Their roles in the Media Programme are over for now, GT drivers Bernd Schneider and Ricardo Zonta taking the journalists (some perhaps a little more weary than they would have wished) for a ride in the AMG CLK-



"Full steam ahead Cap'n, I think the way ahead is clear"

"I've known a lot of these guys since my days in Formula 3, and it's nice to have the time just to chat. That is why this works so well for all of us"

MIKA HAKKINEN

29  
JULY  
WED



Relaxed and informal, journalists from around the world took advantage of the time available on the boat to get a story out of Mika and David



F1

MICHAEL KUINKEL/HOCH ZWEI



Driving his A Class in the West McLaren Mercedes colours, there's no missing Mika when he arrives at the circuit

30  
JULY  
THUR



Mika steals William Tell's apple. Grand Prix drivers have to stick to their special diets...

GTR to sample the performance of the GT race car at the airfield in Malmshiem some 30kms from Stuttgart. For Mika and David, their focus is now solely on the real job in hand, the German Grand Prix. They made their way to Hockenheim in their specially liveried A-Class cars. Not for them tales of disguise and hiding - there was no doubt for the fans when Mika and David arrived at the circuit.

The Thursday of a Grand Prix weekend is a strange day. Generally it is the day when the team personnel arrive, but this time round most of the Formula 1 circus have come straight from the Osterreiching.

One aspect of a 'Grand Prix Thursday' is the official press conference which is organised by the FIA. The personnel invited are rotated through the season, and at Hockenheim it was Mika's turn, along with Giancarlo Fisichella, Ralf Schumacher and Ferrari's Jean Todt. From there it's back to the team motorhome for a meeting with each driver's respective engineers to discuss their plans for the weekend, which set-ups should be suitable and any new developments that have been added to the West McLaren Mercedes since Austria. The serious business of winning a Grand Prix starts tomorrow.

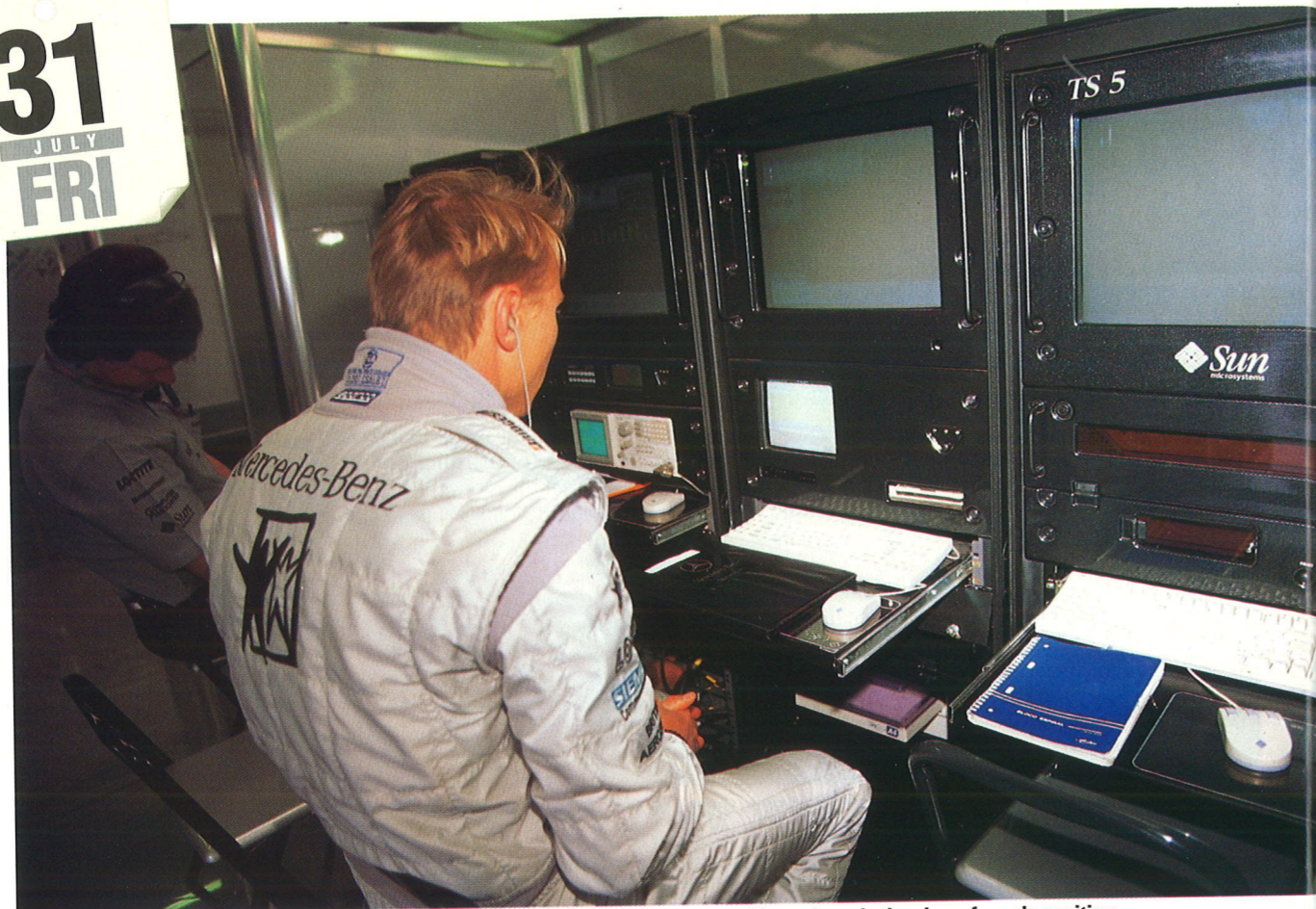


Following the 1-2 result in Austria, team spirit was running very high

**FRIDAY JULY 31.**

Friday is generally a learning day. Teams are restricted to 30 laps over two hour-long sessions. A strict programme is followed, and by the end of it, everyone at West McLaren Mercedes can count themselves happy. Mika is first, David is second. It has been a trouble-free day, and with it comes a new record: David has been through the speed trap at 356kmh a record for normally aspirated 3.0 litre Formula 1 cars.

31  
JULY  
FRI



Mika analyses the data in the back of the McLaren pit to see where he can improve his package in the chase for pole position

**"The relationship between David and me is exceptional. We have both lifted our game this year and we are determined that this will continue"**

MIKA HAKKINEN

1  
AUGUST  
SAT



Another photocall for the press came with the news that Mika and David would be staying with West McLaren Mercedes into 1999

▶ The drivers are whisked straight from their cars to debrief all aspects of their cars' behaviour at the unique Hockenheim circuit which will take a few hours. Once the official work is done each have a couple of small media requirements, and then they head back to the hotel, stopping to sign yet more autographs on the way.

**SATURDAY AUGUST 1**

Following preparations for the crucial qualifying session, both Mika and David are looking forward to the battle for pole position. Each had explored the absolute limits of their cars in the morning session, both drivers spinning off without damage.

There would be no such mistakes come the 'hour that matters'. It was a thrilling qualifying session, with the times getting faster and faster throughout the 60 minute session, aided by clouds which helped lower the track temperature. Coulthard set the early pace, but then he encountered technical problems on his third run, and had to sprint back to the pits to take over the T-car for his final run. This is where the experience of the West McLaren Mercedes team suddenly took over. The minutes were ticking away towards the end of the session, yet calmly they set

about tailoring the spare car for DC. He made it back onto the track with seconds to spare, but a brake imbalance meant he was unable to improve his best time. Even so, he retained his place on the front row. Mika took advantage of the cooler conditions, and lowered the pole time to 1m41.838s, the first time the 1998 cars had beaten the previous year's pole time.

The Flying Finn was in a naturally good mood in the post qualifying press conference: "I am very happy with pole, it is a fantastic result for the team," he said. "We worked very hard on our race set-up on Friday, and I'm confident that we have a good package." Asked what difference the sun going in had made to the conditions, Mika just smiled. "Well... It made the track a little harder to see!" He was happy with his seventh pole of the 1998 season.

Traditionally Saturday afternoon sees journalists gather at the Mercedes motorhome for a press conference with Mercedes Motorsport boss Norbert Haug and McLaren's Ron Dennis. At Hockenheim there was an additional guest; Jurgen Hubbert from the board of Daimler-Benz, who had a special announcement for the members of the media corps: "Today is a very special occasion. It is the home Grand Prix of Mercedes-Benz and I am glad to announce our driver line-up for next year. Mika and David have both proved their worth in past seasons, and in addition to their performance on the track they are supported and admired by the entire Daimler-Benz workforce."

As the drivers again headed back to their hotel they had lots of good things to think about: 1-2 on the grid, and the now-public news that they would again be team mates in 1999.

**SUNDAY AUGUST 2**

Race day. The weather is dry but overcast. It had rained immediately after qualifying, and the race-day forecast was for wet weather. Everyone had their fingers crossed that it would stay dry. The morning warm-up again saw the silver arrows top the time sheets, DC ahead of Mika by just a tenth of a second. To race day spectators there may seem like a long gap between the warm-up and the race, but again for the drivers there are precious few moments to relax. A team debrief in the motorhome sees drivers and engineers study the morning's data to decide on the best strategy for the race. In the end they both decide on a one-stop race plan, although starting with a heavy fuel load to cover a number of possibilities.

At 11 am Mika and David head for the drivers' briefing, which is followed by the traditional parade lap of the circuit to see the fans. At the 6.8km Hockenheim circuit this takes almost 20 minutes, but it's fun all the same. "On the long forest sections where there are no spectators, there was time to chat to some of the other drivers," said David. "Usually there is absolutely no time for that sort of thing - it makes a nice change!"

Back in the paddock, the drivers' preparations for ▶

BRYN WILLIAMS



Roll out the red carpet for the traditional Sunday drivers' parade. Mika leads his colleagues - a situation that would continue later in the day

2  
AUGUST  
SUN

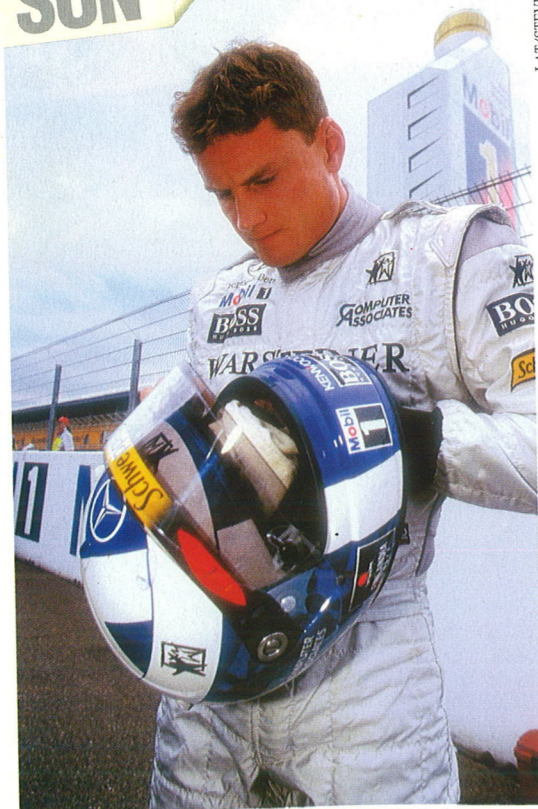


F1



Final preparations on the grid: Mika stays aboard his McLaren Mercedes, gathering his thoughts

2  
AUGUST  
SUN



Minutes before the start of the race, and David makes his own final checks on his famous crash helmet

LAY/STEVEN TEE

the race had begun. A light, specially prepared lunch is followed by a physical warm-up for the drivers. Each has their own very special routine, and it is now that they start to shut-out the outside world. While sponsors and guests have their own lunch, the drivers are gathering their thoughts, building their focus towards the moment the red lights go out, and the following 90 minutes or so that require absolute concentration, and leave no room for error.

Forty minutes before the start they climb aboard their race cars and as soon as the pitlane opens set off around the track to line up on the grid. Once there they again have differing routines. Mika stayed aboard his car keeping distractions to a minimum. David, meanwhile, hopped out to stretch his legs. A final couple of TV interviews, some best wishes from grid visitors such as Mercedes Chairman Jurgen Schrepf and board member Jurgen Hubbert, tennis star Boris Becker and boxer Henri Maske (who had just been a passenger in the McLaren two seater F1 car and so had a rough idea of what they are about to experience), and others, and then David goes into his own pre-race routine; fitting his ear-plugs, pulling on his flame-proof balaclava and finally putting on the helmet with the famous cross of St Andrew on the top. He slides into the cockpit, and with the crew's help fastens the belts as tight as they go. He's ready.

As all five red lights go off, Hakkinen and Coulthard release their clutches and charge off to the first corner in grid formation. Over the first 10 laps they remained 1-2, never more than 1.6 seconds apart, and trading fastest laps.

On lap 26 Mika brought the leading West McLaren



F1



David and Mika celebrate their fifth 1-2 finish of the season at Hockenheim – and their second in a week

Mercedes into the pits for its scheduled stop, leaving again 8.9 seconds later. DC caught traffic in the stadium section, and then overshot his pit markings by a metre or so, forcing his crew to move down the pits to complete his stop. Even so, he was on his way in 9.8 seconds, and rejoined right behind Mika.

They remained in this order to the finish, easing off in the closing stages to try and avoid any mechanical problems that are so often a factor at Hockenheim. At 3:23pm they accelerated out of the last corner and under the chequered flag to take their second 1-2 finish in a week. Two maximum scores, one of them in your home race, you couldn't dream for more.

It had been a week of hard work, but then when is Grand Prix racing anything other than hard work? And when the outcome is two perfect results, well, that's what makes it all worthwhile. ★

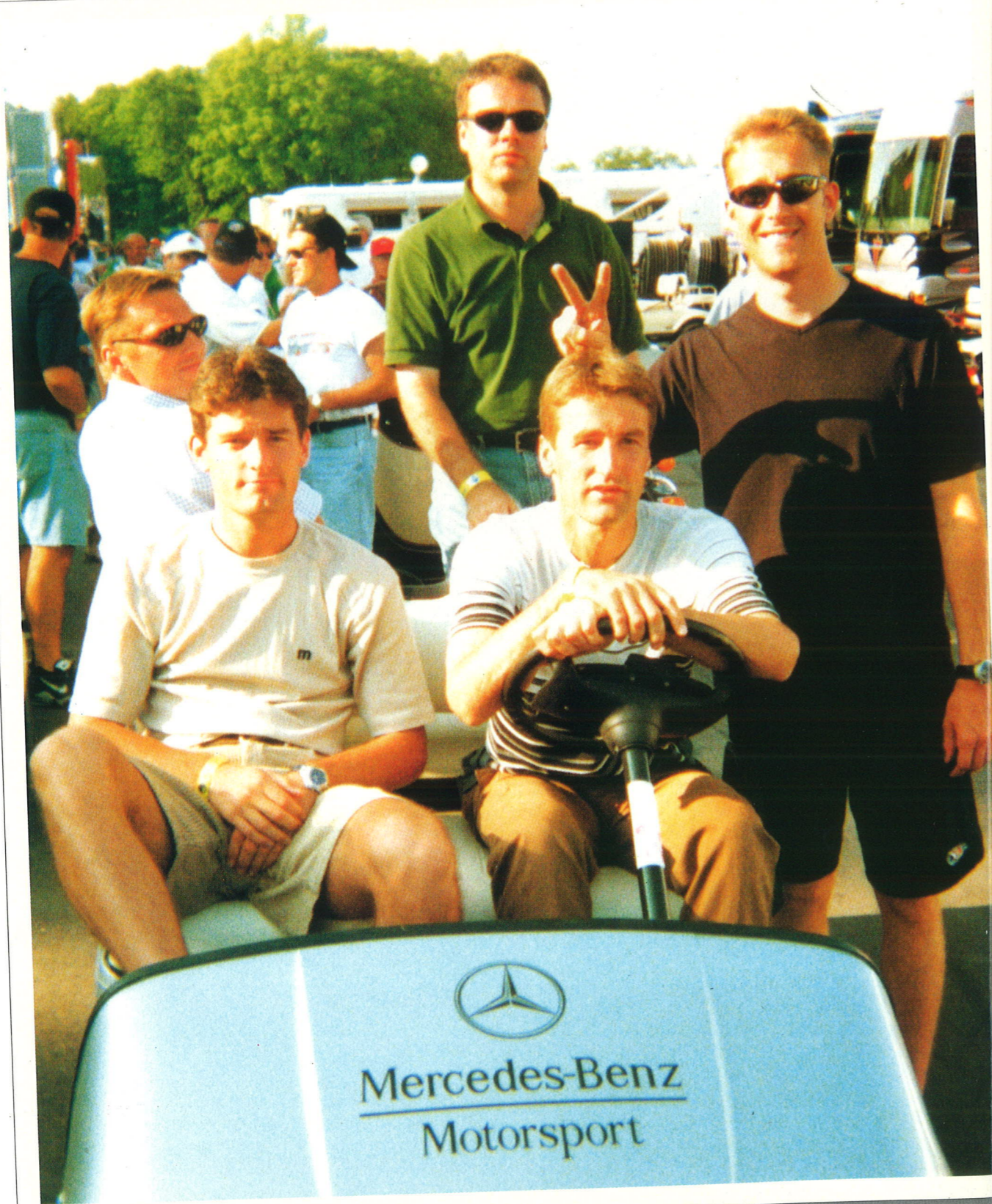
"It's great to be on the top step of the podium again, especially as it's the home race of Mercedes. All in all, a really great finish to the weekend"

2  
AUGUST  
SUN





GT



In the CART paddock Greg Moore met up with the holidaying GT delegates to indicate that a victory on raceday was on the cards



GT



# Busman's HOLIDAY



On their way to Japan a small AMG delegation decided to drop in on their Mercedes CART colleagues in America. The meeting point was to be the majestic Road America circuit, a classic among the US tracks. Bernd Schneider, Mark Webber, Gerhard Ungar and Jurgen Mattheis were in for a great time in every respect.

TEXT & PHOTOS: HELMUT DEIMEL



GT

At the sight of the wondrous Road America track, Bernd and Mark wanted nothing more than to put in a few laps with a Mercedes powered ChampCar



For Mark Webber the sixth race in the FIA GT championship at Japan's Suzuka was more or less a home run. After all, he was only a few jet hours away from his native Australia, where he was also scheduled to do a whirlwind promotion tour for Mercedes and his sponsors. So Mark decided to take a little detour by flying round the world via Europe and America. On his trip he wanted the best travelling companions imaginable, so he picked his FIA-GT teammate, team manager and engineer.

"Travelling broadens the mind," enthused Mark "and apart from that, I've always wanted to see America's CART ChampCar series first hand in the company of first rate travel guides."

The meeting place had been agreed - Frankfurt airport, at the gate for the Chicago flight. Bernd Schneider greeted his co-driver warmly. Although Webber had already had 30 hours flying behind him, he seemed as fresh as the morning dew. The only thing wearing him down was the fact that half-an-hour before take off, he still was not in possession of a ticket. Gerhard Ungar and Jurgen Mattheis had it and had still not arrived. In the ensuing fight for Webber's seat, quite a few stand-by passengers were

making pitches to the lady behind the check-in desk. Only when a purring loudspeaker voice announced the final call for the flight, Gerhard and Jurgen ran in at top speed. Now could Mark get on board... The jumbo rumbled on to the runway in time for its Atlantic crossing.

After a few feature films and some heated debates about the current goings on in F1, CART and GT, the quartet arrived nine hours later at Chicago's O'Hare Airport. On the other side of passport and customs, a friendly lady from Mercedes-Benz North America awaited the group. She handed them the keys to a dark blue Mercedes S-class. The four world travellers' luggage plus Schneider's voluminous golf bag filled the limousine's boot to the last cubic centimetre.

The drive to the race track lasted two hours, passing Lake Michigan and on through the city of Milwaukee as they headed north. A stop over at a shopping centre cost them a bit of time and also filled the Mercedes to the brim. At the sight of the wondrous Road America track, nestling in the surrounding landscape, Bernd and Mark wanted nothing more than to put in a few quick laps in the borrowed S class. Even more, they would have

Mattheis and Ungar left a trail of destruction on the 18-hole course. After each stroke a fist-sized clump of earth would fly through the air



relished slipping into the cockpit of one of the seven Mercedes teams' ChampCar challengers to savour the thrust of a good 800bhp.

In the pit lane word travelled quickly that the visitors from Germany had arrived. There were short inaugural visits to Al Unser Jr, Andre Ribeiro, Mark Blundell, Mauricio Gugelmin, Patrick Carpentier and Greg Moore - the best placed Mercedes driver in this year's championship. Greg told the visitors about the extreme ups and downs he had experienced during the year. JJ Lehto meanwhile, Schneider's old rival from GT racing, talked about the intensity of the competition. "It's something I have only experienced in the ITC before," said the Finn. Almost with humility he explained just how much will-power a rookie needs to negotiate the ovals at 350km/h.

Visiting the Penske-Mercedes team in the paddock, Gerhard Ungar and Jurgen Mattheis were well received by race engineer Chuck Sprague, who was able to give them the precise technical and logistical information they wanted.

Unfortunately, the AMG travel group concluded their CART visit without witnessing a Mercedes team victory. Even though Greg Moore led the race he had to retire because of transmission problems.

But that was no reason for the good-humoured Canadian not to bond a German-Australian-Canadian friendship that evening. Along the strand of the Elkhart Lake there are still a few lovely stylish old hotels and restaurants from the 1920s. It is said that Chicago's gangster bosses used to enjoy spending their weekends there. Siebken's bar is one favourite place, where Al Capone allegedly used to enjoy a quiet drink. These days the CART people frequent the place and can be caught discussing motorsport's emotional highs and lows. With three weeks until their next race, even some of the drivers were found there on Sunday evening, winding down after a hard day's racing. The evening's oil was beer. A beverage purported to have medicinal qualities. Many an advertising director would have warmed to Greg Moore's observation of the contents of his glass: "This one might help the gearbox when it has toothache!"

Before the 13-hour flight from Chicago to Osaka, Bernd, Mark, Gerhard and Jurgen used their Monday off for a round of golf, quickly overcoming the after-effects of a celebratory night. Both drivers are true golfers, but Mark Webber has the slight edge on Bernd. Gerhard Ungar and Jurgen Mattheis, on the

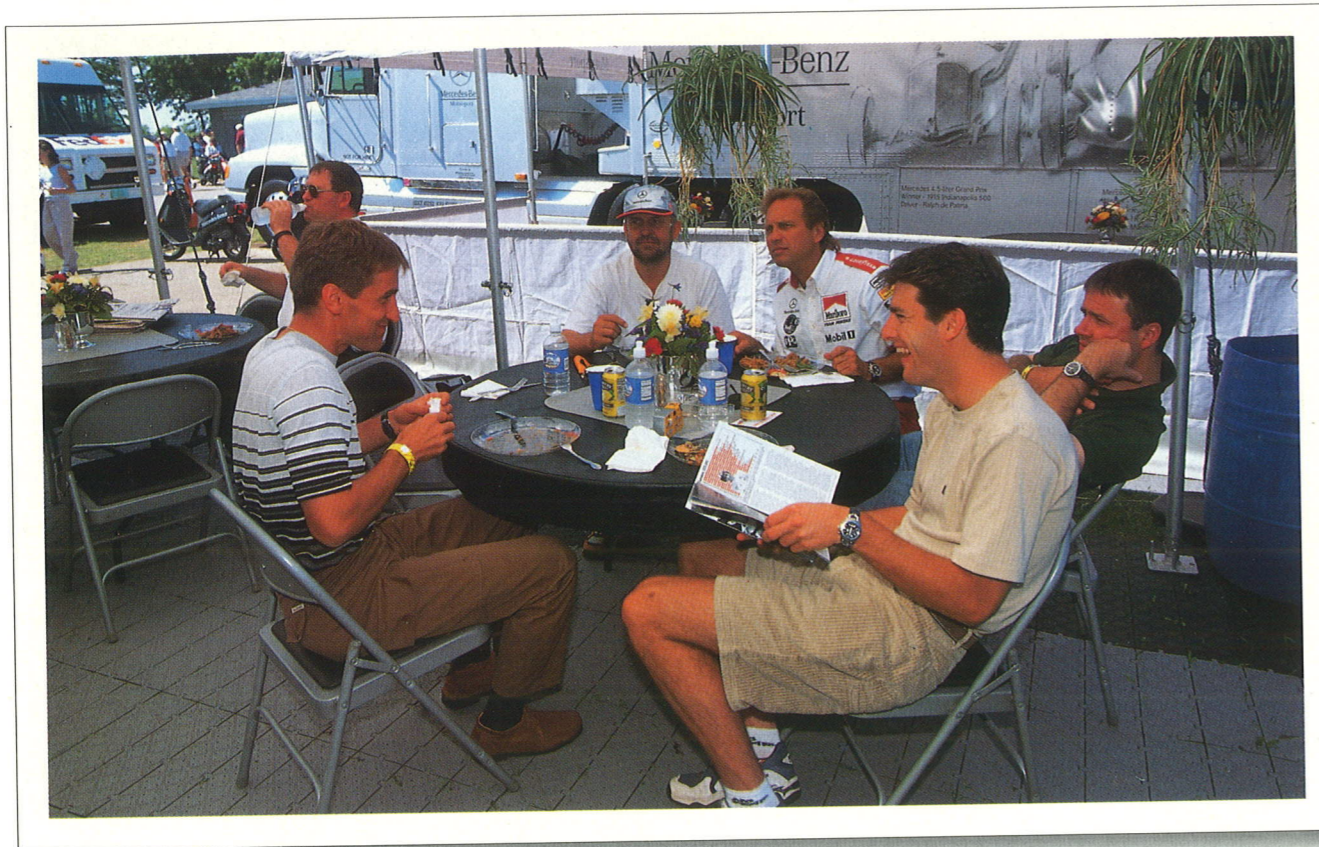


GT



GT

They relaxed over lunch in the Penske motorhome having explored the wonderful Elkhart Lake circuit on foot watching their ChampCar cousins



◀ other hand, know as much about putting the ball in motion as a cow does about gearbox torque. But their attitude to the sport is refreshingly casual. For them the most important thing is a race-tuned golf cart!

Mattheis and Ungar left a trail of destruction on the 18-hole course. After each stroke a fist-sized clump of earth would fly through the air, instead of the little white ball. Their fate is of course shared by many an unpracticed golfer. But how are people, who spent their waking hours putting CLK-GTRs and the new CLK-LM racing and street versions together in record time, going to find time to practise their swing? Nonetheless Gerhard Ungar was not to be outdone by his driver colleagues. At the helm of his golf cart, the engineer raced over the course so rapidly, that in a sharp bend on the fairway his passenger Mattheis had to succumb to centrifugal forces and slid cleanly off the cart into the rough...

Chicago to Osaka in 13 hours means crossing the dateline. By now the travellers had flown three quarters of the way round the globe. At O'Hare airport, team doctor Dr Markus Schmitt joined the group. He offered the sensible opinion that a long-distance non-smoking flight, which induced jet lag, should be countered with a therapeutic half-glass of

finest Bordeaux. Crossing the dateline he ventured another opinion and ordered a delicious desert.

Sweltering heat awaited the quartet in Suzuka. Under these climatic conditions driving in the humid confines of a GT car demands the utmost physical fitness. Most of their rivals selected three drivers for the 1,000 kilometre race, so that each driver only had to absolve two shifts in the heat. But the four Mercedes teams entered their usual two-man squads. Bernd Schneider placed the AMG Mercedes CLK-LM in pole position, after a perfect lap in qualifying. In doing so he was almost a second ahead of second-placed man Ricardo Zonta in the sister CLK-LM.

More than 70,000 enthusiastic Japanese fans came to the FIA GT Championship weekend, over 42,000 of them on raceday alone. Bernd Schneider and Mark Webber drove brilliantly, unscathed by the furnace of Suzuka. With an unblemished start-to-finish victory in front of Ludwig and Zonta, they took the lead in the championship.

Leaving Mark to his promotional duties down under, the trophy bearing trio headed back to Germany. Isn't it great when people who have been travelling come home bearing nice presents? ★

SONY



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Drive with it.



Digital. Editable. Recordable



The two men are Erhard Melcher and Hans Werner Aufrecht, the place Grossaspach. Between them they founded AMG—the company which has been a long-term partner of Mercedes-Benz

TEXT: EGON ZEIMERS PHOTOS: CHARLES BEST

**T**he memory accelerates from 0-100mph in less than three seconds, and when it races it's with a slight oversteer as it negotiates the rose-tinted bends of history. A recorded conversation between Hans Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher, the men behind AMG, guaranteed us precious insights into their successful company – and some of these things you wouldn't find in any historical records. It's like watching a slide show you wouldn't get to see even at a private family gathering.

**Aufrecht:** We met while working at Daimler. Erhard joined it fresh from engineering school.

**Melcher:** It was back in 1964. Hans Werner had already been there for some time. He knew the place well. I was a greenhorn – from the Rhine district to boot – the one with the cheeky beak. He worked in the testing department building the race and rally engines and, partly responsible for the 3.0-litre units.

**Aufrecht:** And he joined the company in the mechanical department.

**Melcher:** In our opinion, if an engine wasn't working as it should be, the mistake had to lay with the people at the testing department. My boss used to send me over there to watch them and check to make sure they were doing everything properly.

**Aufrecht:** Of course we thought that the mechanical department were the ones getting it wrong.

**Melcher:** Nevertheless we did have a certain respect for each other. He knew I had some motorsport experience and that my brother Hans-Jurgen, who raced motorcycles, and I had had some success.

**Aufrecht:** In 1964, Daimler pulled out of touring car racing because they thought the 300SE was not competitive. So, in our own time, we went ahead and built a 300SE together with a privateer driver called Manfred Schiek, who was a member of the sports department of Daimler-Benz.

**Melcher:** Schiek had bought one of the works racing cars from Mercedes – but he didn't get an engine.

**Aufrecht:** That's why he came to us. He knew we could make him one. The problem we faced with the engine was that it would only rev up to 6,300rpm.

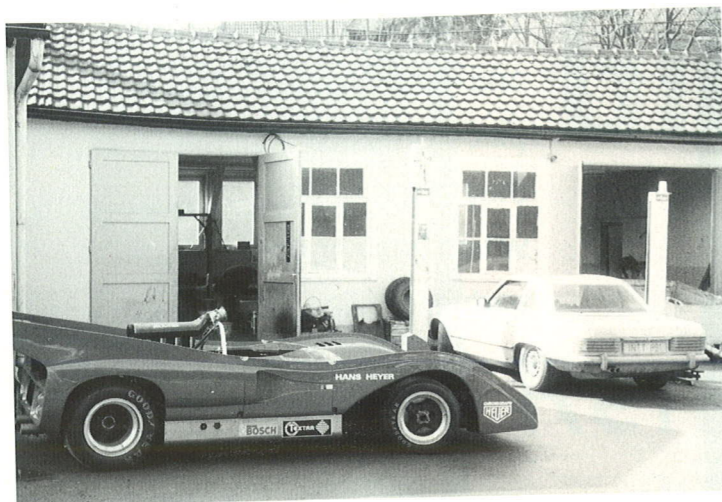
**Melcher:** But we got the engine to run considerably faster. We made the valves much lighter and built in a ▶



# Two men, one place



## HISTORY



Then and now – the Old Mill was the birth place of AMG. Today Aufrecht and Melcher, with an AMG E55, fondly remember those early days



new camshaft. Naturally, one or two racing enthusiasts at Mercedes gave us a few tips. Together we managed to find 18bhp.  
**Aufrecht:** Schiek raced the 300SE in 1965 in the German Circuit Championships and broke ten lap records, got ten pole positions and won ten times. That's why other private drivers came to us in 1966. They had also bought an old works cars from Mercedes and wanted us to build an engine for them.  
**Melcher:** An engine with direct injection. At Hans Werner's home, in his kitchen in fact, I covered the fitted cupboards with construction plans. In his basement we set up a kind of gadget which allowed us to build direct injection into a series engine without changing its casing.

\*\*\*

At the end of 1966 the two protagonists were starting to think seriously about founding their own

business, and about having their own garage  
**Aufrecht:** Just by chance we saw an advert in the local newspaper for the Alte Muehle (the Old Mill) in Burgstall.

**Melcher:** First I went there to have a look at it on my own. Hans Werner had got married and was just in the process of building a house. So he was cautious and continued to work for Daimler. I was a bachelor and could take the risk. If things worked out, he would then join me later. It wasn't without risks, in 1967 there was an economic crisis and there was unemployment in Germany. But business went well and we grew rapidly....

**Aufrecht:** ... and within one year I had made the break and gone to the Old Mill.

**Melcher:** Then we got our brothers to join us too. They were our first full time employees. My brother only stayed half a year but his brother Friedrich is still with AMG.

**Aufrecht:** From the very start we carried the company name AMG. I wanted it to combine the names Aufrecht and Melcher. G stands for the town of Grossaspach, where I live.

**Melcher:** In the beginning we didn't have any contracts because everything was done by word of mouth. On the business side of things we were pretty inexperienced. We sometimes even forgot to write down the names of the customers! They would phone and say: "Hey you guys, don't you want to send us an invoice?" When we made our first visit to the tax inspector, the man sent us home. He said we should get ourselves an accountant.

**Aufrecht:** We worked to the bone day and night. That has hardly ever changed – and still holds true of the motorsport department today.

**Melcher:** Due to the amount of racing in 1965 and 1966 we gradually became known.

**Aufrecht:** To begin with we only focused on motorsport. But then at some point, the racing drivers came to us and said: "Wouldn't it be great if you could build one of those motors of yours for street use?" So then we started to build engines for road-going cars. And then gearboxes and transmissions....

**Melcher:** .... and piece-by-piece we got into tuning.

**Aufrecht:** To begin with we had absolutely no money, so we really had to improvise. We dug out an earth pit in order to work beneath the cars.... Customers would come – we had already made quite a name for ourselves at this point....

**Melcher:** .... and they asked where the firm AMG was....

**Aufrecht:** ...and we said ... AMG, that's us!

**Melcher:** They were looking for this big company AMG and found this tiny simple workshop and two guys in oily overalls. The people were fairly – how should I put it – perturbed....

**Aufrecht:** .... but they didn't run away. It was all a big adventure.

There was one customer I'll never forget. When he saw the state of our place he nearly fell over backwards. He was thinking to himself: "For God's sake, what are they going to do to my beautiful Mercedes? Erhard began to convince him, and his wife too. Finally we were allowed to work on his car. He returned half-an-hour after picking it up. He had come back to the Old Mill to thank us for doing a great job.



**"As far as customising cars goes, we were pioneers. It had a lot to do with listening to people's wishes and implementing them in an innovative way"**

HANS WERNER AUFRECHT

**Melcher:** When people saw our workshop, they didn't think that we were capable of doing it.

**Aufrecht:** Those were very hard times. Without borrowing a single Deutschmark, and with a lot of hard work, we got the firm up and running.

\*\*\*

In 1971, the small tuning company AMG, entered a Mercedes 300 SEL with a 6.9-litre engine which produced 400bhp for the Spa-Francorchamps 24-Hour race. The car's German drivers, Hans Heyer and Clemens Schickentanz, caused quite a stir by finishing second overall behind a works Ford Capri, and winning their class.

**Aufrecht:** With the success in Spa, we gained notoriety and a larger circle of customers. Now we had to become more professional.

**Melcher:** Before Spa, people had usually only sought

us out because someone they knew had said good things about us.

**Aufrecht:** After Spa, we became famous overnight. AMG was the firm that had finished second in the most famous 24 hour race for touring cars, and we had beaten the works teams. We made it into all the papers, and we were even on the evening news.

**Melcher:** Suddenly a different sort of client was interested in us. The kind of people who expected the best: directors; lawyers; doctors.

**Aufrecht:** It meant we had to improve. These new customers were not prepared to accept anything below their own standards. They wanted a fast car and a powerful engine without a sports car's bone-hard suspension.

**Melcher:** In the early days, that hadn't mattered at all, people just wanted more power and lived with the rough ride.

**Aufrecht:** So AMG had to adapt to this new circle of clients. The early customers had only wanted to



◀ soup-up their cars. Now we had customers who weren't entirely happy with the car they had. We had to stop simply adjusting things and start creating them.

\*\*\*

**Melcher:** Hans Werner began to reshape AMG as a professional car company. That's the reason why the company is still in his ownership, even today. For me, as an individual who likes to solve fiddly problems, a big company with a big organisational infrastructure was not really my thing.

**Aufrecht:** That was why we went our different ways. I wanted to have a functional company....

**Melcher:** ....and I didn't.

**Aufrecht:** We had 12 employees at the time and I remember the day he turned round and said quite simply: "It's too much for me, I don't want all this responsibility".

**Melcher:** My star sign is Scorpio and I'm left-handed, which is about the worst combination you can get. I find it difficult to think in rigid structures or be tidy.

**Aufrecht:** We quickly found a good solution.....

**Melcher:** I became a freelance member of AMG.

**Aufrecht:** Erhard went his own way. But he always had a significant influence on the development of the firm, not only in the beginning as a partner in the business, but also later as a freelancer.

**Melcher:** I'm someone who needs to work individually. I need to be on my own in order to design, to think and to work on finicky problems, to weigh up different variations and to build wooden models. When I have worked something out in full, I then go to the specialists at AMG and they put it into practice with their modern methods.

**Aufrecht:** He is responsible for the problem solving. In particular in the area of engine design. In a company like AMG we need a lot of people who can ▶



**Hans Werner Aufrecht (above) was at Spa-Francorchamps to see Hans Heyer and Clemens Schickentanz score AMG's first major success. There AMG Mercedes 300 SEL 6.9 finished second overall and won its class in the 24 hour classic**



### 31 YEARS OF AMG

**1967** - Hans Werner Aufrecht and Erhard Melcher founded the company "Engineering Office for the Construction, Testing and Development of Racing Engines." The address is in the Alte Muhle in Burgstall.

**1971** - The Mercedes 300 SEL 6.9 by AMG finishes second overall at Spa-Francorchamps, winning its class.

**1978** - The tuning firm AMG, with 40 employees, moves from Burgstall to Affalterbach into a purpose-built factory.

**1985** - AMG opens its second workshop in Affalterbach, now employing 100 people.

**1988** - AMG enters the German Touring Car Championship (DTM) as the official partner of Mercedes-Benz.

**1989** - With a total of seven victories, AMG

wins the team's title in the German Touring Car Championship.

**1990** - The third factory, "Werk 3", is opened in Affalterbach. Four hundred people are now employed. Mercedes-Benz makes a co-operation agreement with AMG over racing car production.

**1992** - Klaus Ludwig wins the German Touring Car Championship in an AMG Mercedes 190E.

**1993** - The Mercedes C36 AMG, the first vehicle to be developed within the co-operation agreement, comes on the market. The patent office recognises AMG, by now a well-known business, as a registered trademark.

**1994** - Klaus Ludwig wins the German Touring Car Championship in an AMG

Mercedes, for the second time.

**1995** - Bernd Schneider takes the DTM and the International Touring Car Championship (ITC) titles driving an AMG Mercedes C-Class.

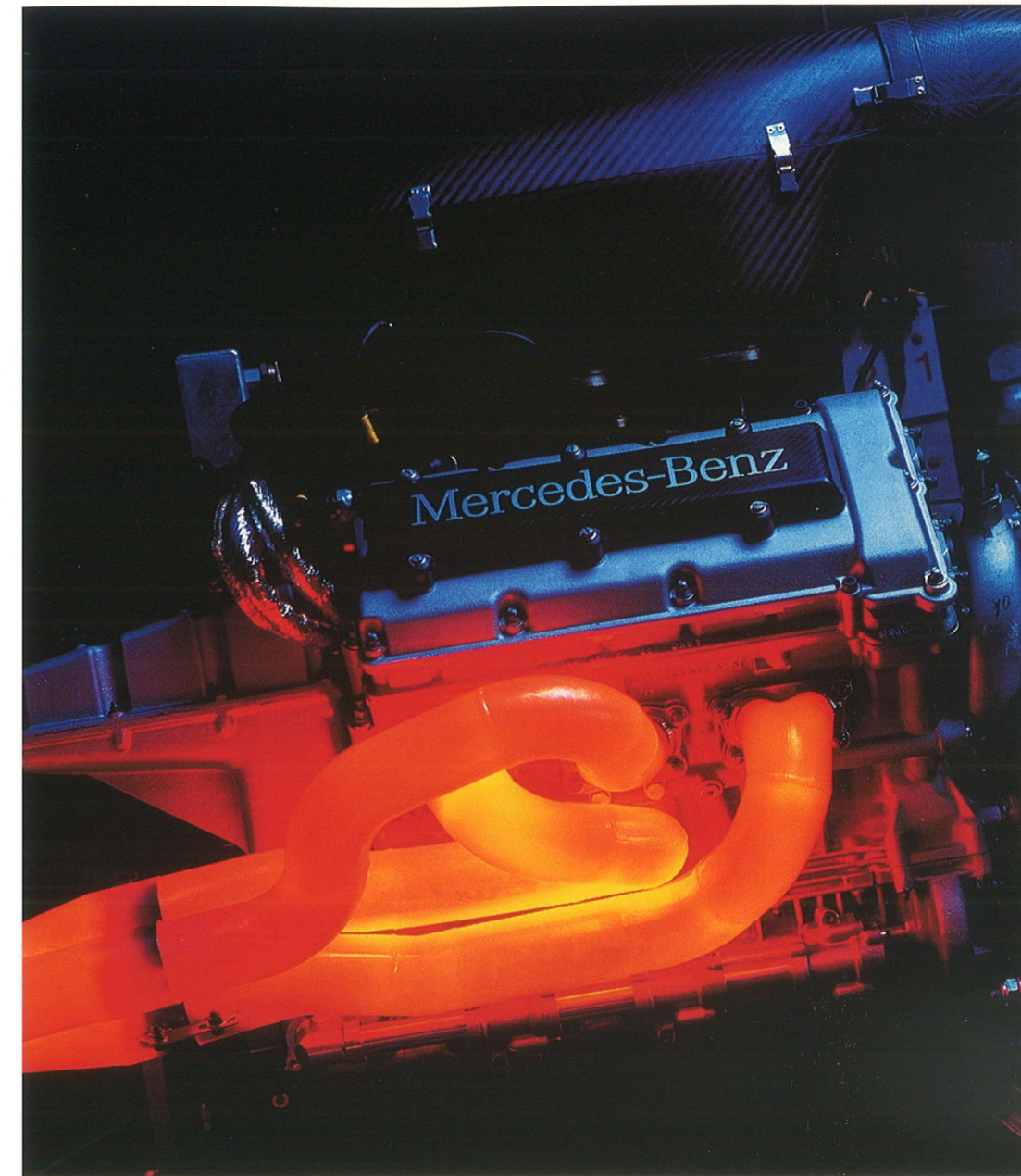
**1996** - Bernd Schneider becomes ITC vice-champion in an AMG Mercedes C-Class.

**1997** - At AMG the 5,000th C36 AMG and the 2,000th E50 AMG roll off the production line. Their successors, the C43 AMG and the E55 AMG, celebrate their world premiere at the IAA in Frankfurt. The Mercedes CLK-GTR is developed and built in a record 128 days. At first go it wins the FIA-GT championship, Bernd Schneider collects his third title for AMG.

**1998** - AMG produces the road version of the CLK-GTR in a limited edition of 25 cars.



Between them Melcher and Aufrecht built AMG from an old machine to an earth pit into a high-tech production line which produces some of the world's most desirable motor cars.



**"It was always AMG's goal to be acknowledged by Mercedes-Benz. In many ways that was my life's aim"** HANS WERNER AUFRECHT

◀ help. Erhard has helped me in no small way to make the company what it is today.

\*\*\*

**Aufrecht:** We always worked in two directions. One found out what the customer wanted while the other sought innovation. Erhard would come up with an idea and say: "Look, man, we could do this". Then I would say "OK, let's go ahead..."

**Melcher:** He always puts himself and us under pressure until a project is finished. Generally it's like this with me: until I find out if something is really going to work or not, it fascinates me. It only

starts to interest Hans Werner when we know it works and when it's finished...

**Aufrecht:** ... and can be sold.

**Melcher:** A typical example was the four-valve head for a five-litre engine. Mercedes didn't have anything like it and I thought it would be a great project for AMG. What did Hans Werner do? He headed straight off to the States and started selling the thing.

**Aufrecht:** I think we were in Chicago at a car fair when I got talking to some customers and they said: "A five-litre, four-valve engine? That would be just right for us."

**Melcher:** At this point, the four-valve design only ▶



# HISTORY

## AMG WINS

|      |     |                     |                |                 |      |        |         |               |   |
|------|-----|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|------|--------|---------|---------------|---|
| 1986 | DTM | 190 E2.3-16         | Nurburgring    | Volker Weidler  | 1986 | DTM    | C-Class | Hockenheim 1  | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1986 | DTM | 190 E2.3-16         | Avus           | Volker Weidler  | 1986 | DTM    | C-Class | Hockenheim 2  | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1988 | DTM | 190 E2.3-16         | Avus 1         | Johnny Cecotto  | 1988 | DTM    | C-Class | Mugello 1     | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1988 | DTM | 190 E2.3-16         | Avus 2         | Johnny Cecotto  | 1988 | DTM    | C-Class | Mugello 2     | Dario Franchitti                            |
| 1988 | DTM | 190 E2.3-16         | Budapest 1     | Johnny Cecotto  | 1988 | DTM    | C-Class | Norisring     | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1988 | DTM | 190 E2.3-16         | Budapest 2     | Johnny Cecotto  | 1988 | DTM    | C-Class | Donington 1   | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Hockenheim     | Klaus Ludwig    | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Donington 2   | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Mainz-Finthen  | Kurt Thiim      | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Estoril 1     | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Norisring      | Kurt Thiim      | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Estoril 2     | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Diepholz 1     | Klaus Ludwig    | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Nurburgring 1 | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Diepholz 2     | Klaus Ludwig    | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Nurburgring 2 | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Nurburgring 1  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Magny-Cours 1 | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1989 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Nurburgring 2  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1989 | DTM    | C-Class | Magny-Cours 2 | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1990 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Zolder 1       | Kurt Thiim      | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Nurburgring   | Jörg van Ommen                              |
| 1990 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Zolder 2       | Kurt Thiim      | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Diepholz 1    | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1990 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo     | Hockenheim     | Klaus Ludwig    | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Diepholz 2    | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1990 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Diepholz       | Kurt Thiim      | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Suzuka 1      | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1991 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 1  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Suzuka 2      | Dario Franchitti                            |
| 1991 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 2  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Mugello       | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1991 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Norisring      | Kurt Thiim      | 1996 | ITC    | C-Class | Hockenheim    | Jan Magnussen                               |
| 1991 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 3  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1997 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Nurburgring   | Schneider/Ludwig                            |
| 1991 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 4  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1997 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | A1-Ring       | Schneider/Ludwig/Bernd Maylander            |
| 1991 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Brno           | Klaus Ludwig    | 1997 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Suzuka        | Schneider/Marcel Tiemann/Alessandro Nannini |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Wunstorf       | Keke Rosberg    | 1997 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Donington     | Schneider/Alex Wurz                         |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Avus           | Bernd Schneider | 1997 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Sebring       | Schneider/Ludwig                            |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Hockenheim     | Ellen Lohr      | 1997 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Laguna Seca   | Schneider/Ludwig                            |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 1  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Oschersleben  | Ludwig/Ricardo Zonta                        |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 2  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-GTR | Silverstone   | Schneider/Mark Webber                       |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Diepholz 1     | Klaus Ludwig    | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Hockenheim    | Schneider/Mark Webber                       |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Diepholz 2     | Klaus Ludwig    | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Dijon         | Ludwig/Zonta                                |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Singen 1       | Bernd Schneider | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Budapest      | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Singen 2       | Bernd Schneider | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Suzuka        | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 3  | Bernd Schneider | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1992 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Evo II  | Nurburgring 4  | Klaus Ludwig    | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Hockenheim 1   | Bernd Schneider | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Hockenheim 2   | Bernd Schneider | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Nurburgring    | Klaus Ludwig    | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Diepholz       | Roland Asch     | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Singen         | Bernd Schneider | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Avus 1         | Roland Asch     | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1993 | DTM | 190 E2.5-16 Class 1 | Avus 2         | Roland Asch     | 1998 | FIA GT | CLK-LM  | Donington     | Schneider/Webber                            |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Hockenheim 1   | Kurt Thiim      | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Hockenheim 1  | Kurt Thiim                                  |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Nurburgring GP | Klaus Ludwig    | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Mugello       | Kurt Thiim                                  |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Mugello        | Kurt Thiim      | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Nurburgring   | Klaus Ludwig                                |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Nurburgring    | Klaus Ludwig    | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Diepholz      | Klaus Ludwig                                |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Diepholz       | Klaus Ludwig    | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Diepholz      | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Diepholz       | Bernd Schneider | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Hockenheim 3  | Kurt Thiim                                  |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Hockenheim 3   | Kurt Thiim      | 1994 | ITC    | C-Class | Hockenheim 4  | Bernd Schneider                             |
| 1994 | ITC | C-Class             | Hockenheim 4   | Bernd Schneider |      |        |         |               |   |

existed as a sketch, but Hans Werner had already ordered a CNC machine - an extremely precise machine which makes engine parts that have to fit together. I hadn't even got the design going and he was asking when it was going to be finished - ten times a day!

**Aufrecht:** It was a great business success. We sold that four-valve, five-litre engine over 300 times.

**Melcher:** That was the first time that AMG became a real engine maker. It was our transition from tuners to manufacturers. We had to start producing special parts for that unit. These days we make complete engines.

**Aufrecht:** In the old days we had done classic

tuning stuff: cylinder re-boring; transmission development; new pistons and other camshafts...

**Melcher:** ...we always made those ourselves.

**Aufrecht:** But the four-valve idea was the breakthrough into real engine design.

**Melcher:** Suddenly we needed real logistics and a stockroom. We had to develop pre-production. These were all things we didn't have before. It made the company grow.

**Aufrecht:** We went on to encompass bodywork and the look of the car itself. The first thing was a front spoiler, then we ended up building whole cars. We had to mount Mercedes aluminium wheels and, while today that may sound deceptively simple, back

Mercedes-Benz  
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## HISTORY



Every part of a Mercedes-Benz, from its body panels to the entire engine and drive-train gets the special AMG tuning treatment



◀ then there was the TUEV - the German Board of Technical Standards - which wanted a manufacturer's green light. A green light from Mercedes? We had to find a technical solution to get past these hurdles. The answer was to start dealing with spare parts. In the 70s we started to expand the AMG production palette. AMG grew with its products.

**Melcher:** ...The customers wanted certain things.

**Aufrecht:** And we've always listened to customers.

**Aufrecht:** As far as customising cars goes, we were certainly pioneers. It had a lot to do with listening to people's wishes and implementing them in an innovative way.

**Melcher:** What the marketing strategists were starting to do at the beginning of the 90s we had

already done at the beginning of the 70s.

**Aufrecht:** It was always AMG's goal to be acknowledged by Mercedes-Benz. In many ways that was my life's aim.

**Melcher:** From the beginning we had a vision of being a kind of motorsport subsidiary of Mercedes. For a long time we didn't understand why Mercedes didn't want to go for it.

**Aufrecht:** But we didn't lose faith, we continued to work hard. When you look at AMG's success these days, and then look around you at the rest of the car branch, it was a good thing that Mercedes didn't take us under their wing. The other car tuners didn't have the success we had. The cold shoulder from Mercedes made us strong.

**Melcher:** It made us feel independent. We had to learn how to build everything by ourselves. There isn't a single comparable firm which does as much research and development as we do.

**Aufrecht:** That's why we were able to make the transition from touring cars to the FIA GTs so painlessly. It means something completely different to make the whole car. A lot of people can hardly believe that we do it. But because they don't know enough about us...

**Melcher:** We make our own engines. We make our own cars.

**Aufrecht:** We learned it the hard way, because we had no helping hand from Daimler.

**Melcher:** Having this disadvantage was to our advantage.



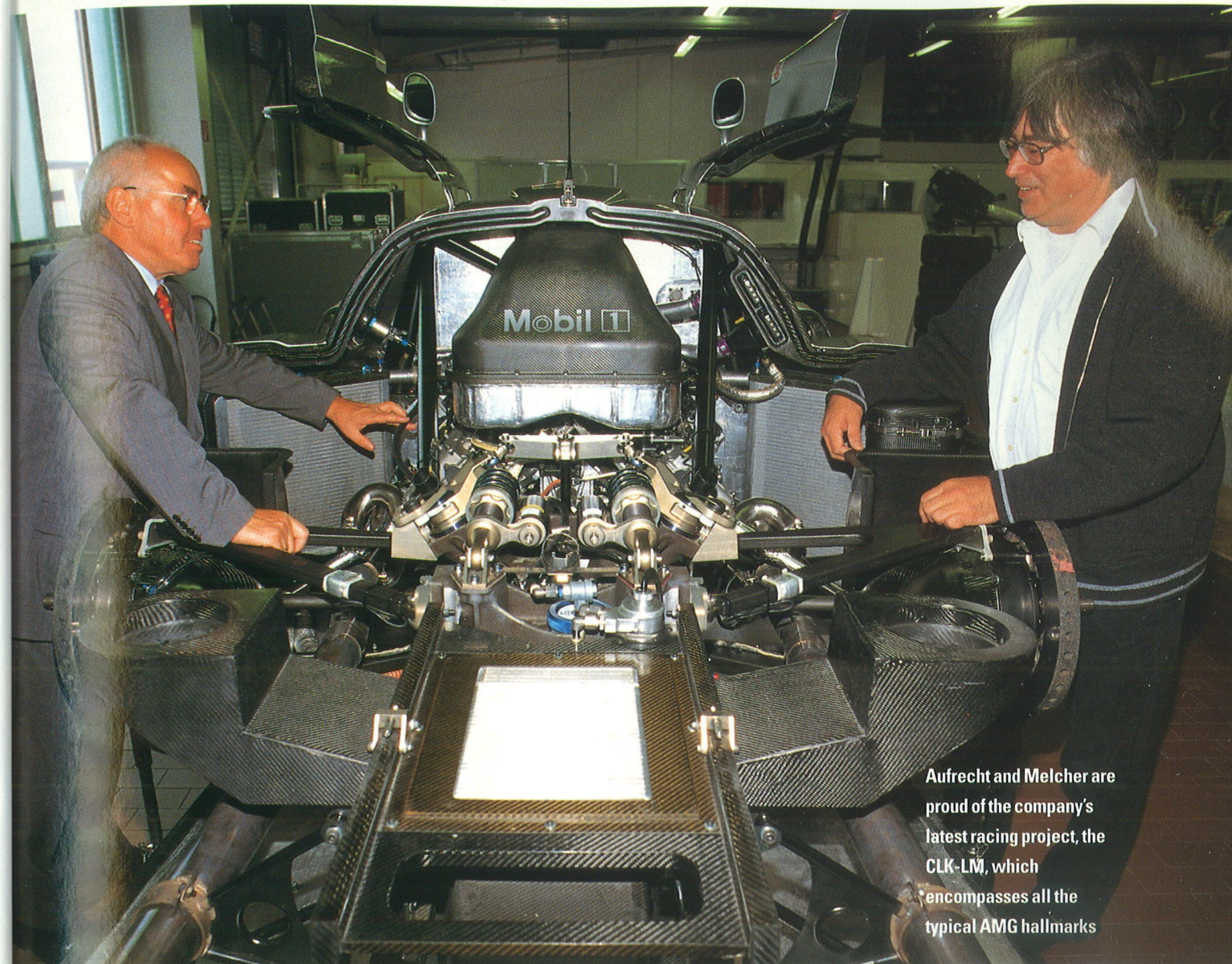
**Melcher:** Our success in engine manufacture stems mainly from the fact that we are not a hierarchical company. Foreman, engineers, constructors, mechanics - all work on one level and everyone is on first name terms. We have a very strong team and everyone mucks in when a problem comes up. That's AMG - we can solve problems fast, without the hindrance of long chains of command.

**Aufrecht:** How could we manage to build the C36 from scratch, and get it to conform to US environmental standards in only eight months?

Because we have a different structure than a large company. Our teamwork is real teamwork. There are lots of people who have great explanations when something doesn't work or can't be finished on time. People like that don't work for AMG. We know that problems arise but we know too that they have to be solved. They have to be solved because our success, and in fact the whole existence of the firm, depends on it. That is the pathway we have followed for over 30 years. We have always been successful, both in racing and with sports cars. This certainly influenced Mercedes-Benz's decision to enter into co-operation with AMG. Having proved that we can make things work, they feel that the partnership will work too.



At the International Car Fair (IAA) in Frankfurt in 1985, Professor Werner Niefer, then CEO of Daimler-Benz AG, officially visited the AMG stand for the first time. He was full of admiration for both models



Aufrecht and Melcher are proud of the company's latest racing project, the CLK-LM, which encompasses all the typical AMG hallmarks

## We have always been successful, both in racing and sports cars. This certainly influenced Mercedes' decision to enter into co-operation with AMG

on show there - a 300 E and 280 GE, both with five-litre engines. He was moved enough to make the surprising suggestion that "We could do this kind of thing together".

The German Monopolies Commission vetoed a take-over of the small firm, but in 1990, Daimler-Benz and AMG sealed an agreement on a strategic partnership. The contract dealt with racing car production and especially with the production of a limited series of sports cars. The result was the C36 AMG (and its successor the C43 AMG) and the E50 AMG (later to become the E55 AMG). AMG had become a veritable car manufacturer.

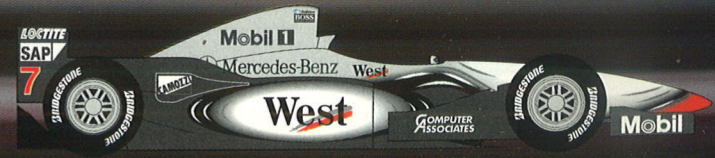
A second time round the Monopolies Commission saw its objections had been overcome and Daimler-Benz prepared to acquire AMG. The

acquisition will proceed step-by-step, 51% changing hands on January 1, 1999. By 2009 the take-over is scheduled for completion. The new company is called Mercedes AMG GmbH. Even though the racing department, with its 100 or so employees, is not part of the deal, an era will soon be coming to an end for Hans Werner Aufrecht.

**Aufrecht:** Things that belong together have come together. For our staff and for the customer this is the best solution, but for me a chapter of life is coming to a close. A Mercedes-Benz take-over was a goal worth striving for. It honours the work of all those who have participated at AMG. A dream has come true. Since the racing department will not be sold, I have a lot to do. For that reason, not too much will change for me, work-wise and emotionally. ★



Another day in the office



West McLaren Mercedes



**WEST McLAREN MERCEDES UMBRELLA**  
Black metal rod and soft rubber handle, with 65cm diameter canopy



**MOTORSport KEYRING**  
60x20mm matt finish brass plate, with embossed "MOTORSport" lettering on the back



**MOTORSport SHIRT**  
1/2 sleeve, 100% cotton mottled grey shirt with logo on left chest, and "MOTORSport" embroidered on the back below the collar



**CHILD'S JUMPSUIT**  
Knit sleeve and ankle bands, diagonal front pockets, elastic waistband, stand-up collar with Velcro fastening



**MOTORSport PURSE**  
Separate coin and note sections, five additional card slots, Velcro fastening

# Mercedes-Benz MOTORSport COLLECTION

Do you want the accessories to support your favourite driver? Then look no further

**HAKKINEN BASEBALL CAP**  
Silver, black and red cap with the number 8 and Mika Hakkinen "The Flying Finn '98" signature on the side



**MOTORSport BASEBALL CAP**  
Adjustable size, black cotton lining, "MOTORSport" lettering on the back



**COULTHARD BASEBALL CAP**  
Silver, black and red cap with the number 7 and David Coulthard signature on the side



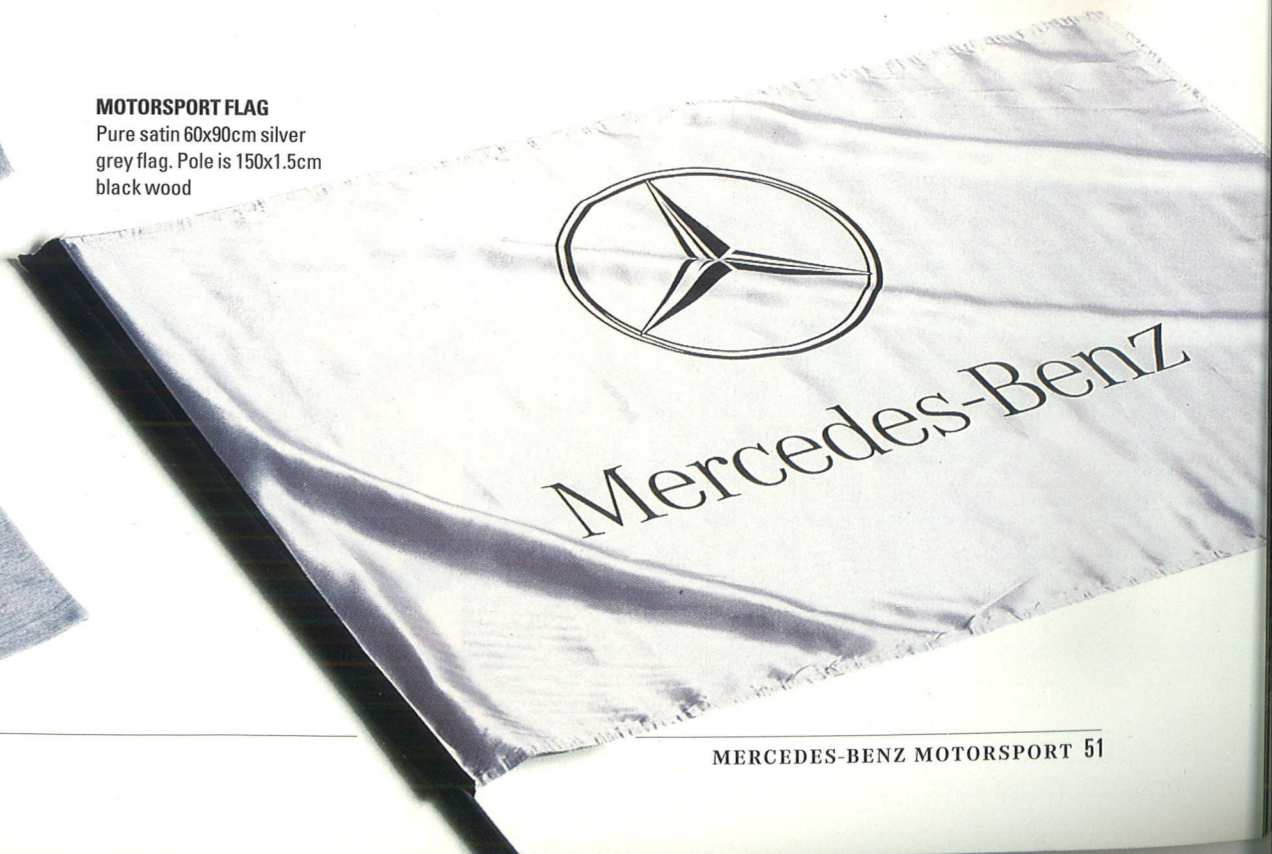
**MOTORSport DESIGN UMBRELLA**  
65cm diameter, black nylon with silver coating on the outside, and black anodised steel rod



**MOTORSport T-SHIRT**  
Pure cotton, mottled grey, with Mercedes-Benz logo on the left chest and "MOTORSport" embroidered on the back below the collar



**MOTORSport FLAG**  
Pure satin 60x90cm silver grey flag. Pole is 150x1.5cm black wood





PRODUCTS



**MOTORSPORT REVERSIBLE JACKET**  
Black on one side, silver on the other, padded jacket with a zipped hood compartment



**RAIN CAPE**  
Folds into integrated carrier bag, cords at the lower edge and around the hood

**COULTHARD AND HAKKINEN KEY RINGS**  
Nickel-plated stainless steel with choice of liveries



**MOTORSPORT RUCKSACK**  
Three zipped pockets with integrated 24x28x3cm cushion. Padded shoulder straps



**WINDBREAKER**  
100% nylon, brilliant silver, with black lining. Collar with integrated hood, and two diagonal sidepockets

**MOTORSPORT SWEATSHIRT**  
75% cotton, 25% polyester, mottled grey. Knit sleeve and waistbands



**CHRONOGRAPH WRISTWATCHES**  
Water resistant to 100m, Citizen quartz movement, screwed bezel and stainless steel back

**COULTHARD AND HAKKINEN WRISTWATCHES**  
Choice of No7 and No8 black plastic watches with quartz movement. Water resistant to 30m



**COULTHARD AND HAKKINEN T-SHIRTS**  
Pure cotton, white, car motif printed on the front, "Powered by Mercedes-Benz" on the back

THE MERCEDES-BENZ MOTORSPORT COLLECTION

| DESCRIPTION                     | ORDER NO.   | PRICE  | QUANTITY |
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| CHILD'S BASEBALL CAP, HAKKINEN  | B6 600 6753 | £9.00  |          |
| BASEBALL CAP, COULTHARD         | B6 600 6754 | £12.00 |          |
| BASEBALL CAP, HAKKINEN          | B6 600 6755 | £12.00 |          |
| BASEBALL CAP, MOTORSPORT        | B6 600 6756 | £12.00 |          |

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| WINDBREAKER, CHILD'S 140 | B6 600 6788 | £30.00 |  |
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| SWEATSHIRT, M   | B6 600 6784 | £33.00 |  |
| SWEATSHIRT, L   | B6 600 6785 | £33.00 |  |
| SWEATSHIRT, XL  | B6 600 6786 | £33.00 |  |
| SWEATSHIRT, XXL | B6 600 6787 | £33.00 |  |

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| T-SHIRT, COULTHARD, XL          | B6 600 6767 | £16.00 |  |
| T-SHIRT, COULTHARD, XXL         | B6 600 6768 | £16.00 |  |
| CHILD'S T-SHIRT, HAKKINEN, 140  | B6 600 6769 | £14.00 |  |
| CHILD'S T-SHIRT, HAKKINEN, 152  | B6 600 6770 | £14.00 |  |
| T-SHIRT, HAKKINEN, S            | B6 600 6771 | £16.00 |  |
| T-SHIRT, HAKKINEN, M            | B6 600 6772 | £16.00 |  |
| T-SHIRT, HAKKINEN, L            | B6 600 6773 | £16.00 |  |
| T-SHIRT, HAKKINEN, XL           | B6 600 6774 | £16.00 |  |
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| MOTORSPORT T-SHIRT, L   | B6 600 6810 | £19.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT T-SHIRT, XL  | B6 600 6811 | £19.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT T-SHIRT, XXL | B6 600 6812 | £19.00 |  |

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| MOTORSPORT SHIRT, S   | B6 600 6797 | £28.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT SHIRT, M   | B6 600 6798 | £28.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT SHIRT, L   | B6 600 6799 | £28.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT SHIRT, XL  | B6 600 6800 | £28.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT SHIRT, XXL | B6 600 6801 | £28.00 |  |

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|                                |             |        |  |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------|--|
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| MOTORSPORT DESIGN UMBRELLA     | B6 600 7111 | £29.00 |  |

|                  |             |        |  |
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| RUCKSACK         | B6 600 6796 | £34.00 |  |
| MOTORSPORT PURSE | B6 600 6780 | £11.50 |  |
| MOTORSPORT FLAG  | B6 600 6731 | £tbc   |  |

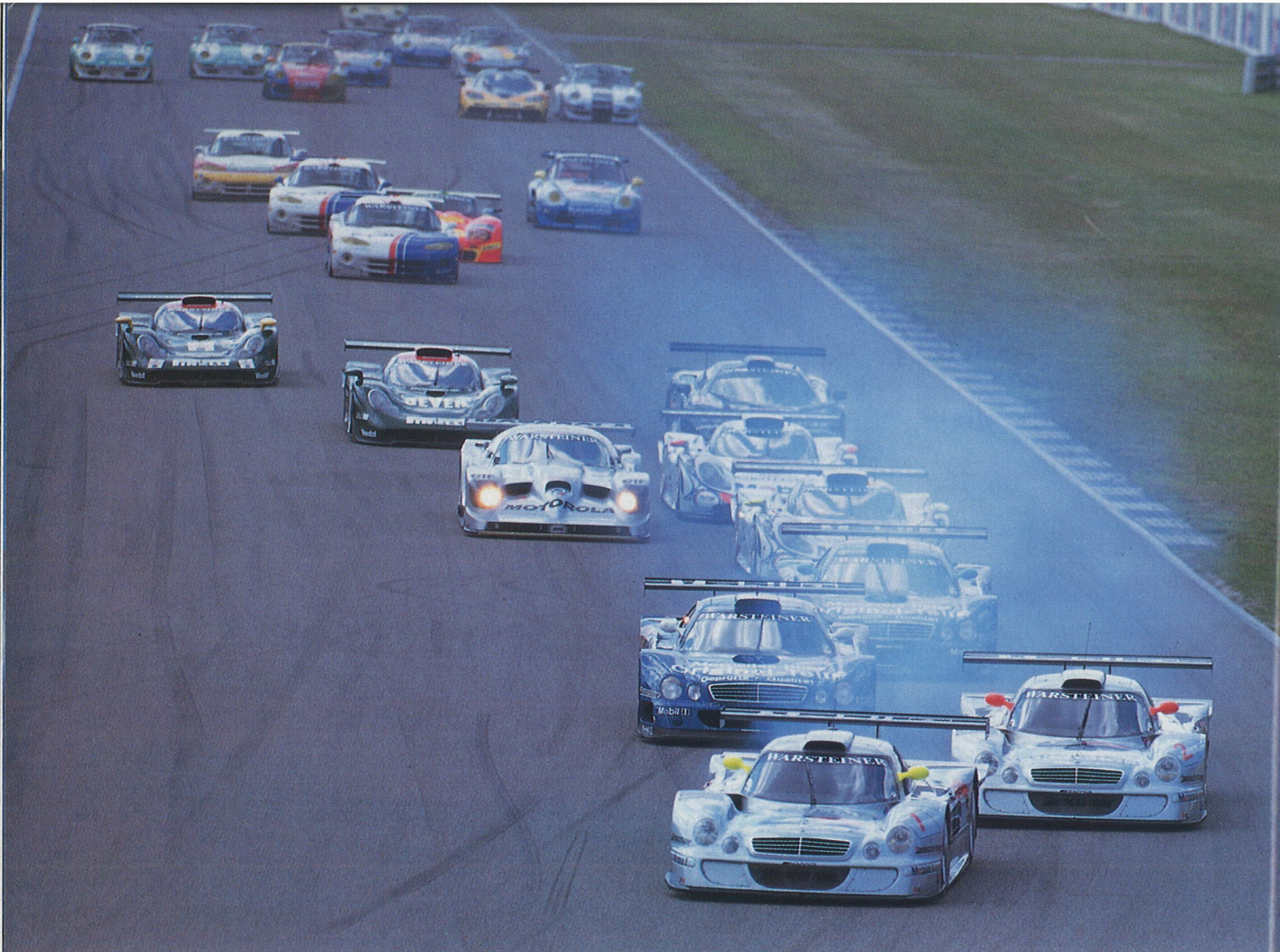
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# We are the Champions

The seventh win from seven races clinched the 1998 FIA GT Championship for AMG Mercedes in September. The driver's competition was still undecided, but one thing was sure – the coveted trophy will go to an AMG driver. The title defence was no Sunday picnic, though, as the impressive season's résumé testifies. Here are a few GT morsels from AMG's bumper hamper.

By HELMUT DEIMEL



**June's Hockenheim round of the FIA GT Championship saw the Mercedes CLK-LMs taking the front row, with their 'parents', the CLK-GTRs, filling row two...**

**L**et's start with a report from the cockpit, just so we know what we are talking about... During the unforgettable ITC and DTM era Mercedes-Benz would invite selected journalists or precious friends to play passenger on a rare journey into the no-man's-land of physics. Now the tradition was being continued in the co-driver's seat of the slender, ultra low-lying GT Silver Arrow. All the same it's not easy to fit a tall, well-nourished guest into the confines of a CLK-GTR.

The setting for this scene was the aerodrome at Malsheim, prior to the German Grand Prix. At the wheel was Ricardo Zonta from Brazil, team partner of Klaus Ludwig in the GT series, reigning Formula 3000 champion and a Formula 1 test driver for West McLaren Mercedes. As a rule he is a polite, helpful and well brought-up young man - that is until someone presses a steering wheel into his hands.

It had been raining and the concrete track was only slowly drying out. Nevertheless we found ourselves on slicks, flying at 280km/h towards the Mercedes hospitality tent at the end of the landing strip. Just when the croissants on the breakfast buffet were coming into view, Ricardo cast anchor and cornered, aiming for the red cone in a clean, long drift to the right, carrying his incredulous passenger with him.

The enormous braking power of the GT racer was by far the most impressive and comprehensible part of the little drama. The mighty 12-cylinder thrust,

the lightning fast gear-changing and steering, the galactic swerves in the chicane and the centrifugal forces threatening to separate head from body in the long corner - all of this got lost in waves of astonishment, in gasps for breath. When the carbon brakes suddenly slammed on and the Bridgestone tyres gripped the asphalt like claws, the guest was overcome by a certain lightness of being. The moment of braking was inconceivably late. Yet the driver was still not pushing the car to the limit.

At the end of the second lap Ricardo the chauffeur inquisitively glanced over to see if his passenger was showing signs of life. With a mischievous grin he asked, "Did you like it? Our new CLK-LM can do all that just a bit better," he explained as the car was being rolled off the track. "It's about 100 kilos lighter and is brimming with new ideas, making it more than ever a thoroughbred racer. The compact 5 litre V8 motor contributes a lot to the weight reduction and to better balance, even if it lacks the bullying torque of the 12 cylinder."

"Great stuff, thanks a lot," said the passenger bravely, staggering off, eyes glazed, to the hospitality tent for a stiff drink.

It was only last November, after Bernd Schneider won the FIA GT Championship in Laguna Seca, that Mercedes took the decision for a possible entry for

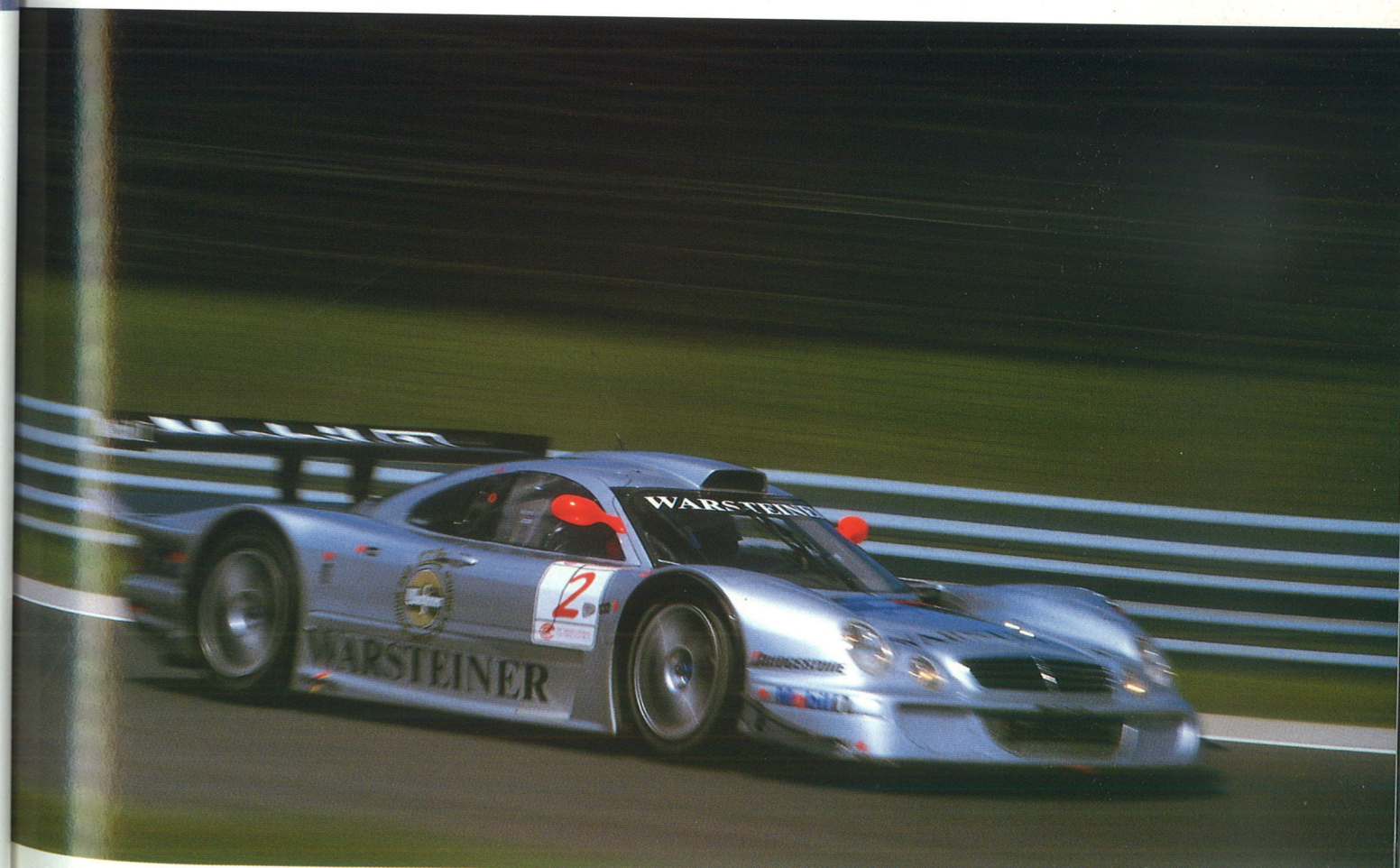
the 1998 Le Mans 24 Hours. That was the start signal for a race against the clock, something which has almost become standard practice at the AMG race factory in Affalterbach.

The task on hand was to construct a new Le Mans car that could subsequently compete in the GT series. To satisfy the homologation rules AMG was also going to have to build a series of sports car versions. The new car was to be a further development of the successful CLK-GTR, which AMG would be using for the first two races of the 1998 season. (Persson Motorsport was of course still due to race two of them throughout the GT series). The time on hand for these few turns of a screwdriver - four months!

Only the great motivation and team spirit that has grown over years in the gunpowder smoke made the sheer impossible possible again at AMG. Under the leadership of genius constructor Gerhard Ungar the team rose to the challenge and did so with enthusiasm. You will find this often in motorsport. Mercedes knows this and has shown its appreciation of the partnership.

Logistically the difficult thing was the duplicity of events during the first months of the year. The normally neat and tidy AMG racing division floor overflowed with transport cases and containers. The ▶

**The sleek lines of the AMG-Mercedes CLK-LM were introduced to the FIA GT Championship in June. By the time the title was wrapped up in September, Ludwig/Zonta (below) and Schneider/Webber had not been beaten**



GT



GT

parts supply had to be cleanly labelled 'Le Mans' or 'GT'. The common pedigree of the racing cars was unmistakable, yet under their silvery carbon fibre silhouettes they hardly shared a single component. That's how fast evolution eats up its offspring.

On March 16, barely 120 days after the first stroke on the drawing board, the new CLK-LM was rolled out of the hangar. On April 12 the FIA GT Championship began in Oschersleben with a threefold Mercedes victory. Klaus Ludwig and Ricardo Zonta won in front of Jean-Marc Gounon/Marcel Tiemann and Bernd Schneider/Mark Webber. That surprised everyone, because Porsche had brought a very strong new competitor into the field, the 911 GT1, albeit one that had yet to achieve the reliability necessary.

After a series of 24 hour tests, a successful pre-qualifying for Le Mans and the completion of the sports car version of the CLK-LM, Silverstone came along. The weather was most un-British. Where were the gusts of wind and rain that would humiliate even the sturdiest broly? Bernd Schneider and Mark Webber drove their CLK-GTR bravely, but only narrowly managed to beat the works Porsche. It was high time for the new car!

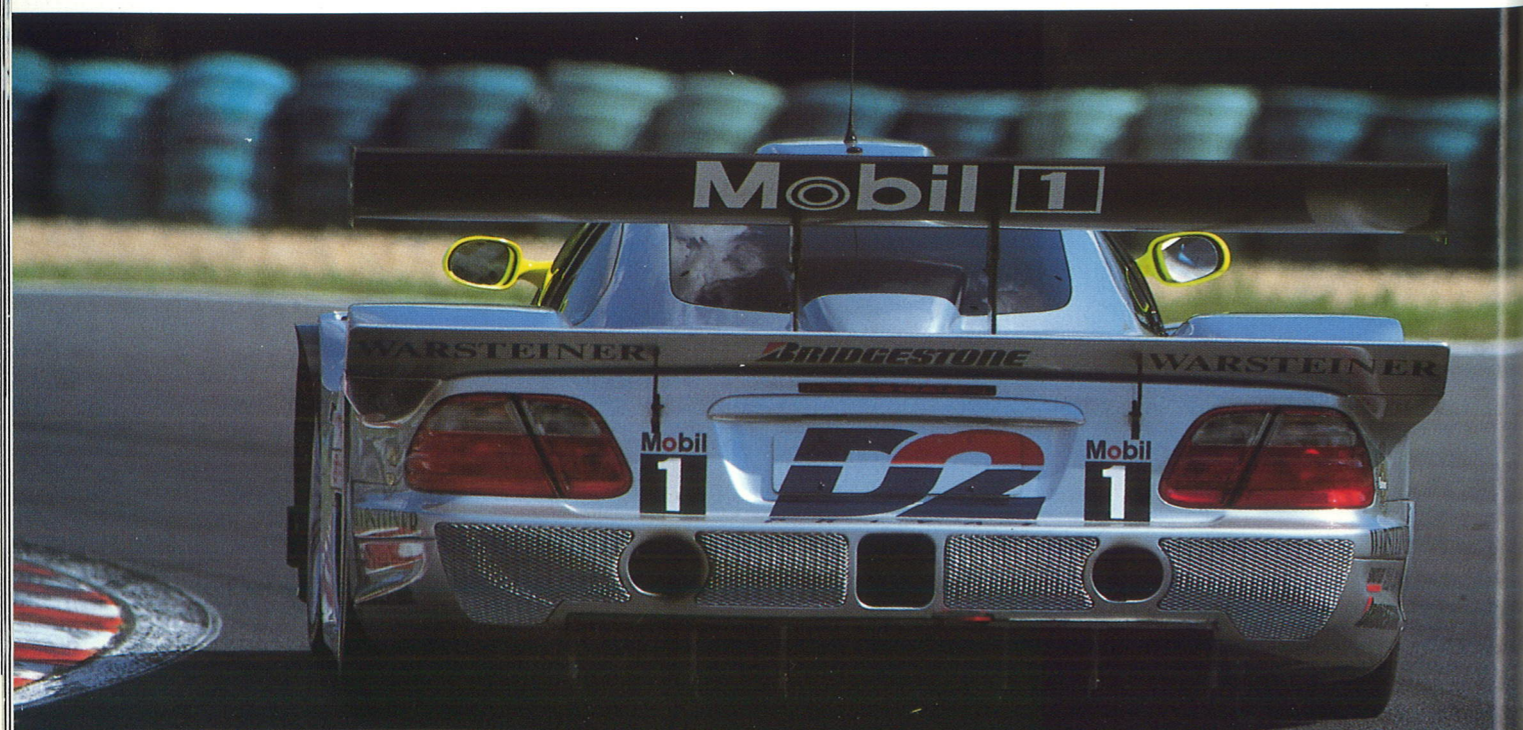
Bernd Schneider, making his debut at Le Mans, drove to pole position with a fabulous lap and indicated the strength of the new Ungar creation in front of a very strong field of BMWs, Toyotas, Nissans and Porsches.

Alas, during the 24 hour race itself, it was all over after two hours. At fault was a trifle, a mere cogwheel. Taking blows of defeat without a grimace is one of the strengths of the AMG team, led by Hans Werner Aufrecht, Jurgen Mattheis and Gerhard Ungar. After a few encouraging words from member of the board Jurgen Hubbard and collective beers in the team tent the troop shook itself like a damp dog, packed its things and started looking forwards once again.

**Teamwork has been a major factor in the AMG Mercedes success, from the day that the decision was made to build the car, the work has been practically non-stop in the team factory in Affalterbach and at race tracks around the world**



COLIN McMASTERS/LAT



GAVIN LAWRENCE/LAT

**The common pedigree of the racing cars was unmistakable, yet under their silvery carbon fibre silhouettes they hardly shared a single component. That's how fast evolution eats up its offspring**

The vanquished AMG troop would concentrate once again on the FIA GT Championship. At Hockenheim the Mercedes quartet stood shoulder to shoulder on the first four starting positions. The first row belonged to both CLK-LMs in the new, rather slimmed down GT version with a five litre V8 motor.

Things went the same way in the following races at Dijon, Budapest, Suzuka and Donington. Out front things were always glistening with silver. Four times in a row, Schneider secured pole position, except in Donington where Zonta had the edge. At the finishing flag there was a similar picture. Bernd and his Australian team colleague Mark Webber stood on the victory rostrum four times, with Klaus Ludwig and Zonta winning in Dijon. As a rule the fastest lap in each of the seven races was clocked up by an AMG driver. After the superbly weathered battle of heat at Japan's 1000km Suzuka race, Schneider and Webber put on the season's best demonstration of AMG muscle at Donington. Car, team, drivers, tyres, strategy - everything was working in harmony, like clockwork.

After Bernd and Ricardo had been barged out of the way by two Porsche drivers at the Donington



"We are the champions, my friend..." The T-shirts say it all as the AMG Mercedes mechanics celebrate their second consecutive FIA GT Championship crown in style at Donington Park in September

start, they started catching up from way behind. Ricardo lay in third and Bernd in eighth place. After seven laps both CLK-LMs were in the rear view mirror of the leading Porsche. When Allan McNish took a time penalty for a jumped start, the reassuring normality of a Mercedes 1-2 set in. Zonta was out front but was soon armwrestled down by Schneider. In front of the British fans, more than 1300 invited guests from the Mercedes family of Ilmor, McLaren and Penske as well as the TV audience, the Silver Arrows delivered a gala performance. The overtaking was worthy of a carnival.

After a change of lead at the first fuel stop, Webber grasped the top spot again in drizzle ahead of Ludwig, handing over the CLK-LM to Schneider for his final stint with a 16 second lead. Although Bernd was far ahead, and the Bridgestone tyres had not been changed for some time, he clocked up a final lap of 1.25.550 minutes, breaking the track record as he took the chequered flag. This victory secured the FIA GT Championship for the AMG Mercedes team for the second year running, a feat performed in front of the whole jubilant team. ★

In front of more than 1300 invited guests from the Mercedes-Benz family of Ilmor, McLaren and Penske, the Silver Arrows delivered a gala performance

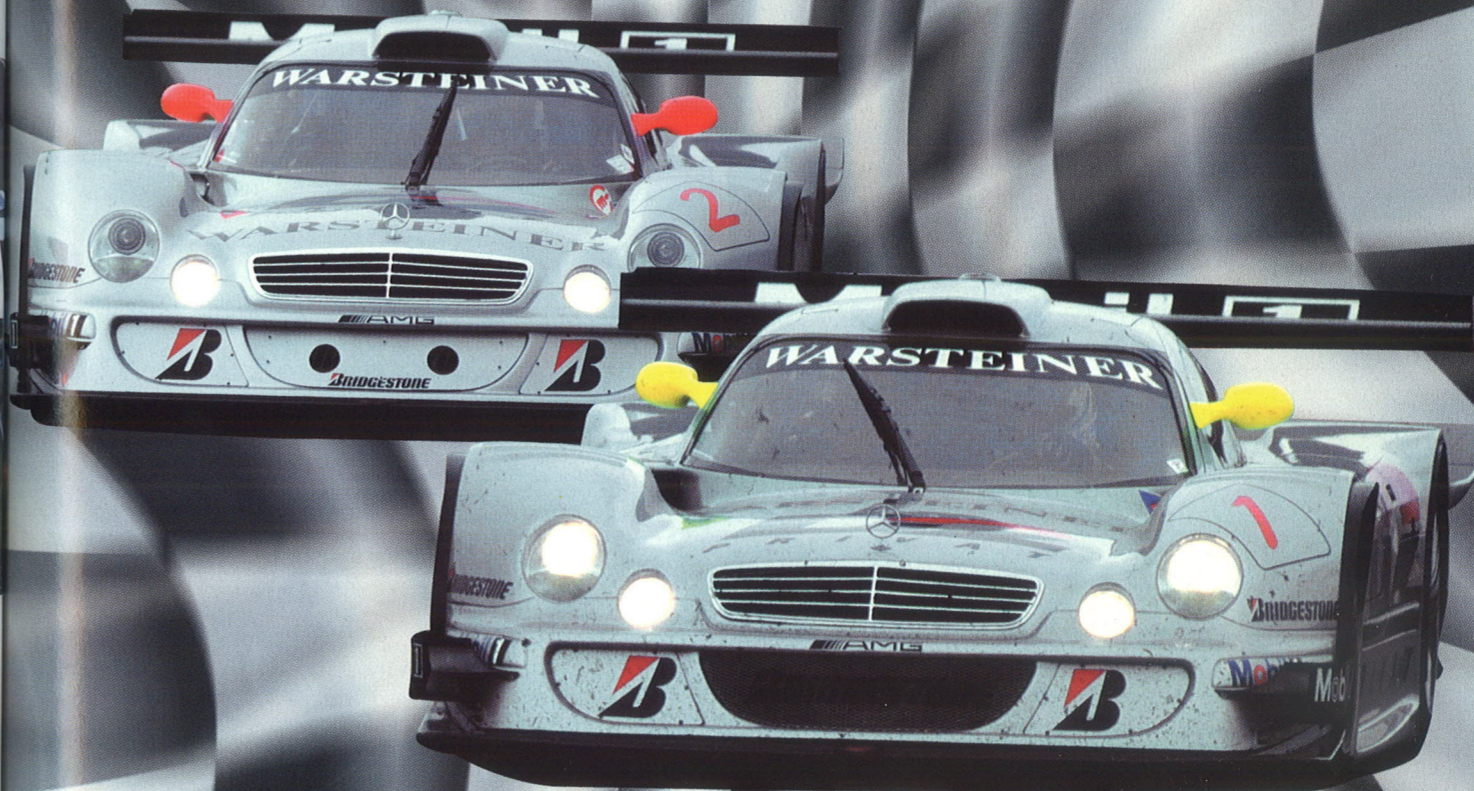
JOHN BROOKS

# The Winning Formula

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SNAPS

STEVEN TEE/LAT



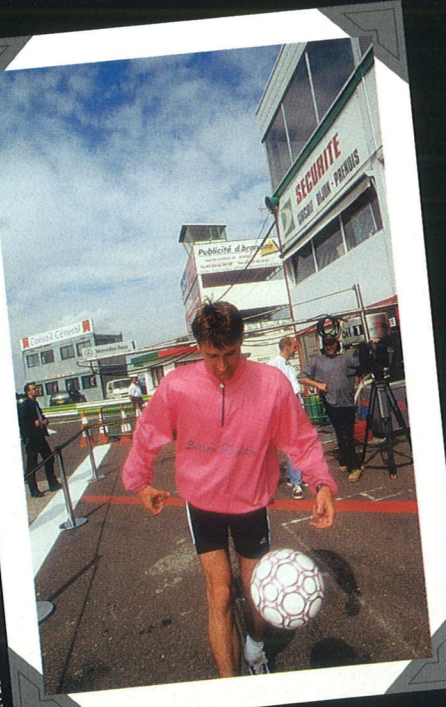
Left: As team mates again in 1999, Mika and David will fortunately have their own West McLaren Mercedes to drive!

Right: Special guests at the German Grand Prix, former boxing champion Henri Maske and former tennis champion Boris Becker with head of Mercedes-Benz Motorsport, Norbert Haug

WOLFGANG WILHELM



JOHN BROOKS



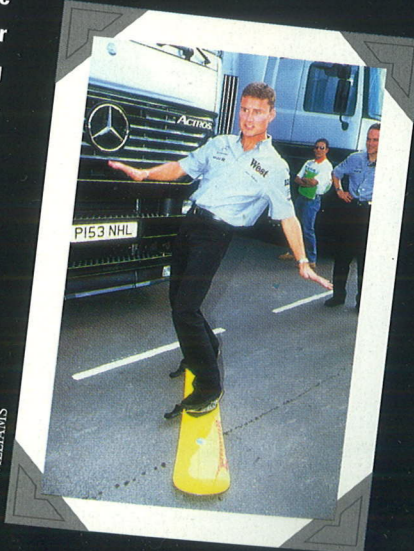
Above: Bernd Schneider has obviously been taking tips from his footballing brother-in-law Oliver Bierhoff, and demonstrates his new skills in the pitlane

HARDWICK/SUTTON MOTORSPORT IMAGES

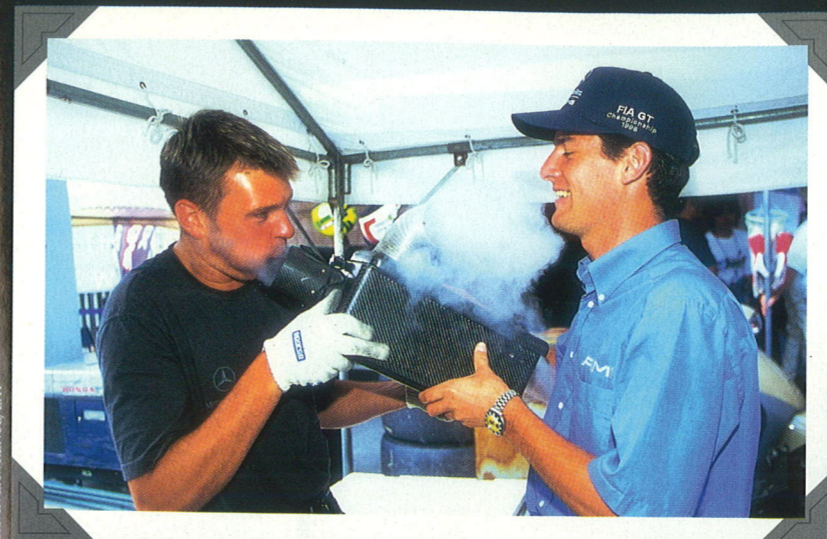


Left: Greg Moore has got the hang of watersports, but for David Coulthard something appears to be missing – the water!

BRYAN WILLIAMS



GAVIN LAWRENCE/LAT



Left: Mark Webber is given a practical demonstration of the dry ice cooling system that will help to keep him cool once fitted to his AMG Mercedes CLK-LM



SNAPS

# Every picture tells a story

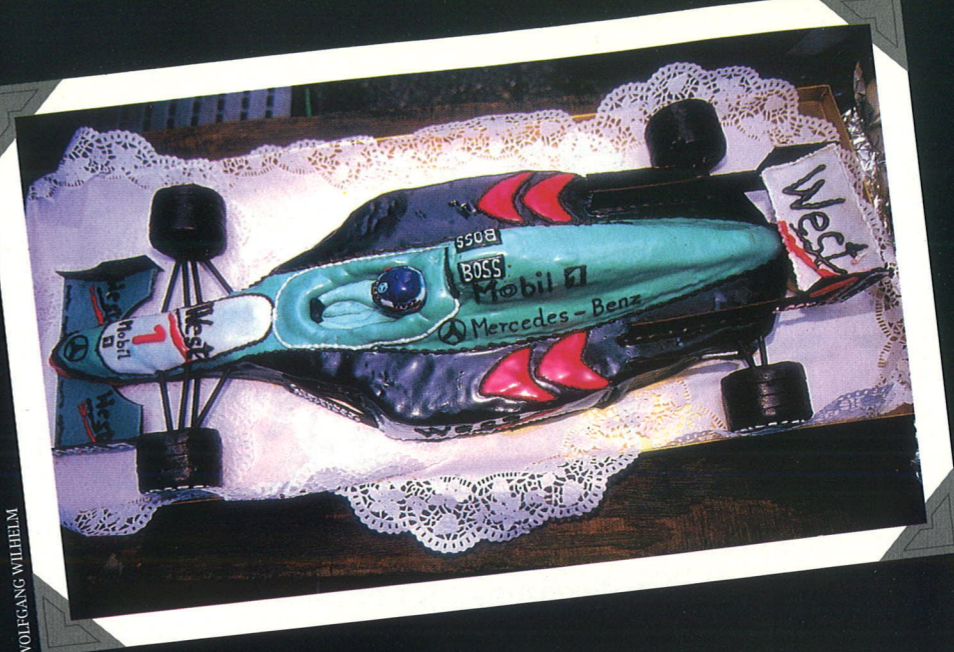


SNAPS



WOLFGANG WILHELM

Left: Mika gets on his bike to help promote road safety with Germany's Federal Minister of Transport, Matthias Wissmann the day after winning the German Grand Prix



WOLFGANG WILHELM

Above: This Formula 1 lark is a piece of cake – literally. Right Mika's fans have worked out for themselves the Finn's winning qualities...



SNAPS

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GAVIN LAWRENCE/LAT



BRYN WILLIAMS

FIA President Max Mosley sampled the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit in the McLaren two-seater driver by Martin Brundle. Windsurfing champion Robby Naish had a ride at Hockenheim – where Brundle set a time that would have put them on pole for the F3000 race!



HOCHZWEI

WOLFGANG WILHELM



WOLFGANG WILHELM

Printed by Lammberg



Left: Slovenian commentator Miran Alisic describes his passenger ride in the AMG Mercedes CLK-GTR with Ricardo Zonta



CART

# Circle of knowledge

A racing driver has to concentrate so hard when lapping at speeds of well over 200mph that it's hard to believe they can read the data on the dashboard. On the Mercedes powered ChampCars, the information is fed to the driver by the steering wheel. TEXT SIMON STRANG ILLUSTRATION RUSSELL LEWIS

As Mark Blundell's Reynard-Mercedes hammers through Turn three during Michigan's super-fast 500 mile race, the entire chassis, engine and tyre combination absorbs every stress a racing car is possibly designed to, but there is one component that he is relying on more than any other.

The most important tool that a modern racing driver needs to win a race is a steering wheel. For obvious reasons one would not travel far without it, but for the drivers in the CART Champ Car series, especially those Mercedes-Benz drivers equipped with a Magneti Marelli/Momo wheel, it has become a vital source of not only information, but also communication with the car.

The wheel performs the role of a control centre for drivers like Al Unser Jr and Mauricio Gugelmin, with everything from the pit lane speed limiter and driver drinks button to fuel mixture and turbo boost. Almost every command a driver needs to make, except pushing the throttle and changing gear, is on the wheel. It's not just a question of making the cockpit more luxurious, the easy-to-use wheel

increases a driver's performance efficiency, as well as his safety.

On some of the North American ovals a Champ Car driver like Mark will reach speeds of up to 240mph in his PacWest Reynard-Mercedes. When you are going that fast, you need to be able to access information as quickly as possible. That is why the Mercedes steering wheel now also incorporates the dashboard.

"If you look into the tiny cockpit of a Champ Car," said Paul Ray, vice president of Ilmor Engineering - Mercedes' engine partner, "the steering wheel dominates what you see. By putting the dash on the wheel, we brought the information closer to the driver so it's easier to see."

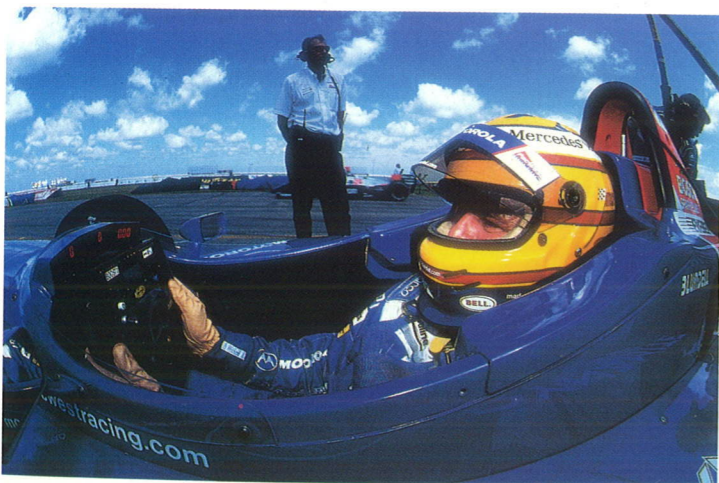
Ilmor designed the innovative wheel while Magneti Marelli developed the hardware for the dashboard as part of the new electronics and engine management system for Mercedes. The wheel itself was produced by Momo.

The way the dash displays information has also been designed with the driver in mind. In the past, the conflicting styles of driving on ovals and road circuits have been transferred to the dash read-out. "You can change the information displayed on the dash from race-to-race," says JJ Lehto.

"On a road course you primarily want to see the shift lights. On ovals you want to see the revs more than anything. Some drivers want more information and some want less. With the Marelli wheel, the driver can have it any way he wants.

Hogan Racing's Lehto is a seasoned driver with experience of Formula 1 and GT Racing before he took up Champ Cars. He feels that the new wheel is a big step forward and says that the development work done by Magneti Marelli is clear to see.

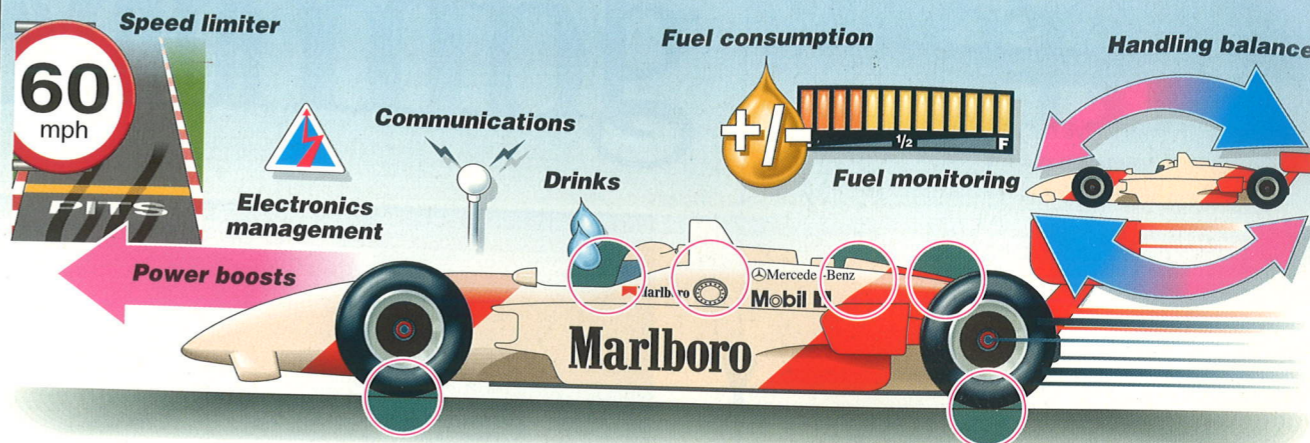
"Marelli was the first to introduce this kind of dash to motor racing," said Giancarlo de Angelis from Magneti Marelli's motorsport department. "In fact, the entire system we've developed with Mercedes-Benz in CART is more advanced in some areas than similar systems we've developed for F1, and includes technology that could appear in passenger cars in the near future." ★



Mark Blundell and the revolutionary steering wheel

SUTTON/RALPH HARDWICK

As the diagram below illustrates, modern-day steering wheels do much more than just turn the wheels...



### The CART light-show...

●●●●●●●●●● RPM lights: sequential lights are pre-set to specific 'rev' bands, determined by track characteristics and prevailing conditions

1: Pop-off valve warning - pop-off valve regulates engine's internal air pressure by releasing excess. Lamp warns driver if valve is activated

3: Warning (spare) - function can be customised to suit requirements of individual teams

2: Neutral - illuminated when transmission is in neutral

4: Pit lane speed limiter illuminated when limiter is activated

6: Weight-jacker - allows driver to alter handling characteristics of car - used during practice, qualifying and race

5: Data screen - custom LCD screen displays essential, selectable on-track 'running' information to driver

7: Push-to-pass - temporarily maximises all parameters of engine for 'surge' of maximum power when attempting to overtake

9: Turbo boost - toggle switch allows driver to increase / decrease turbo boost

8: Radio - operates radio for driver communication with team on pit-wall. Microphone is set in chin-bar of helmet and mini-speakers are set in driver's specially moulded ear-pieces

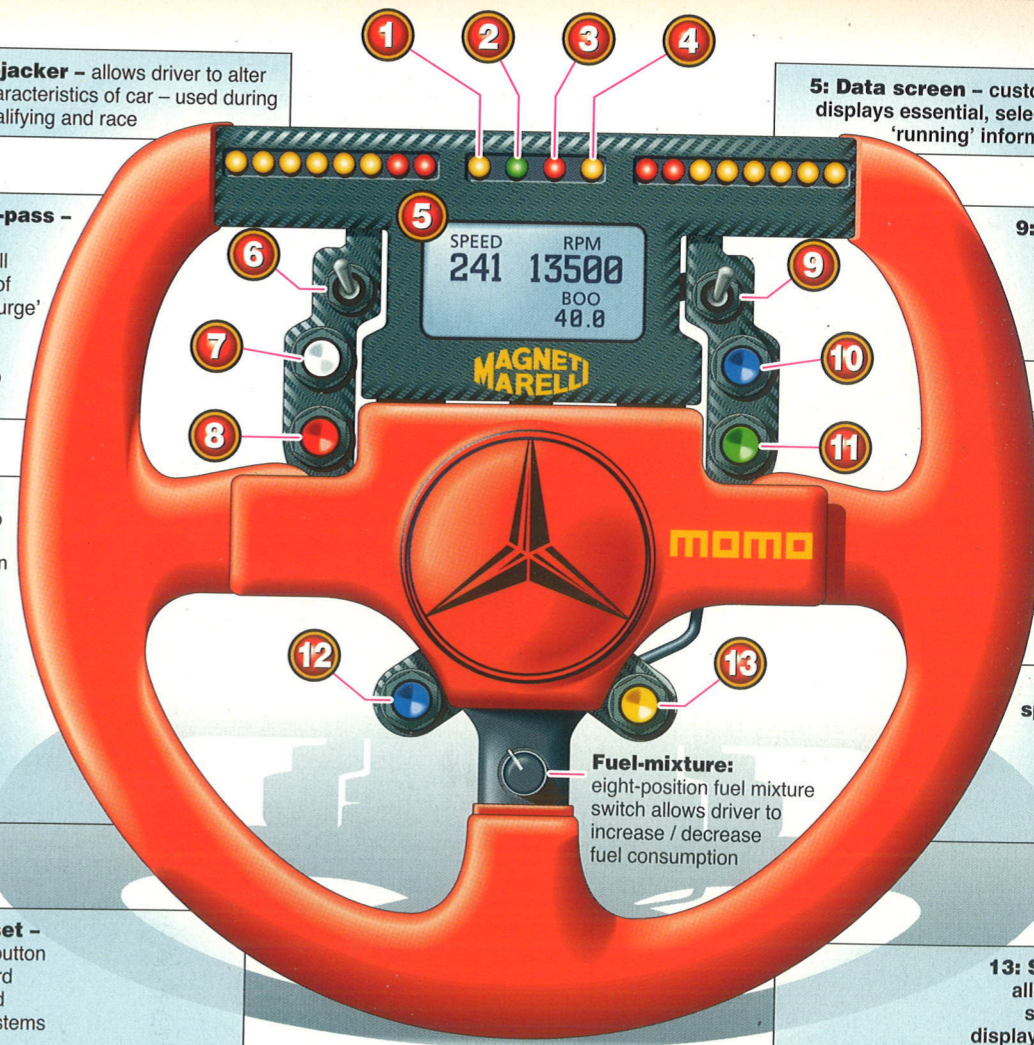
10: Drinks button - delivers pre-set volume of liquid through tube in driver's helmet

11: Pit lane speed limiter - button activates car's speed limiter (maximum 60mph)

12: Fuel reset - pressing this button resets on-board fuel gauge and electronics systems after refuelling

Fuel-mixture: eight-position fuel mixture switch allows driver to increase / decrease fuel consumption

13: Scroll LCD - allows driver to select desired display on multiple-option LCD screen



GRAPHIC: Russell Lewis



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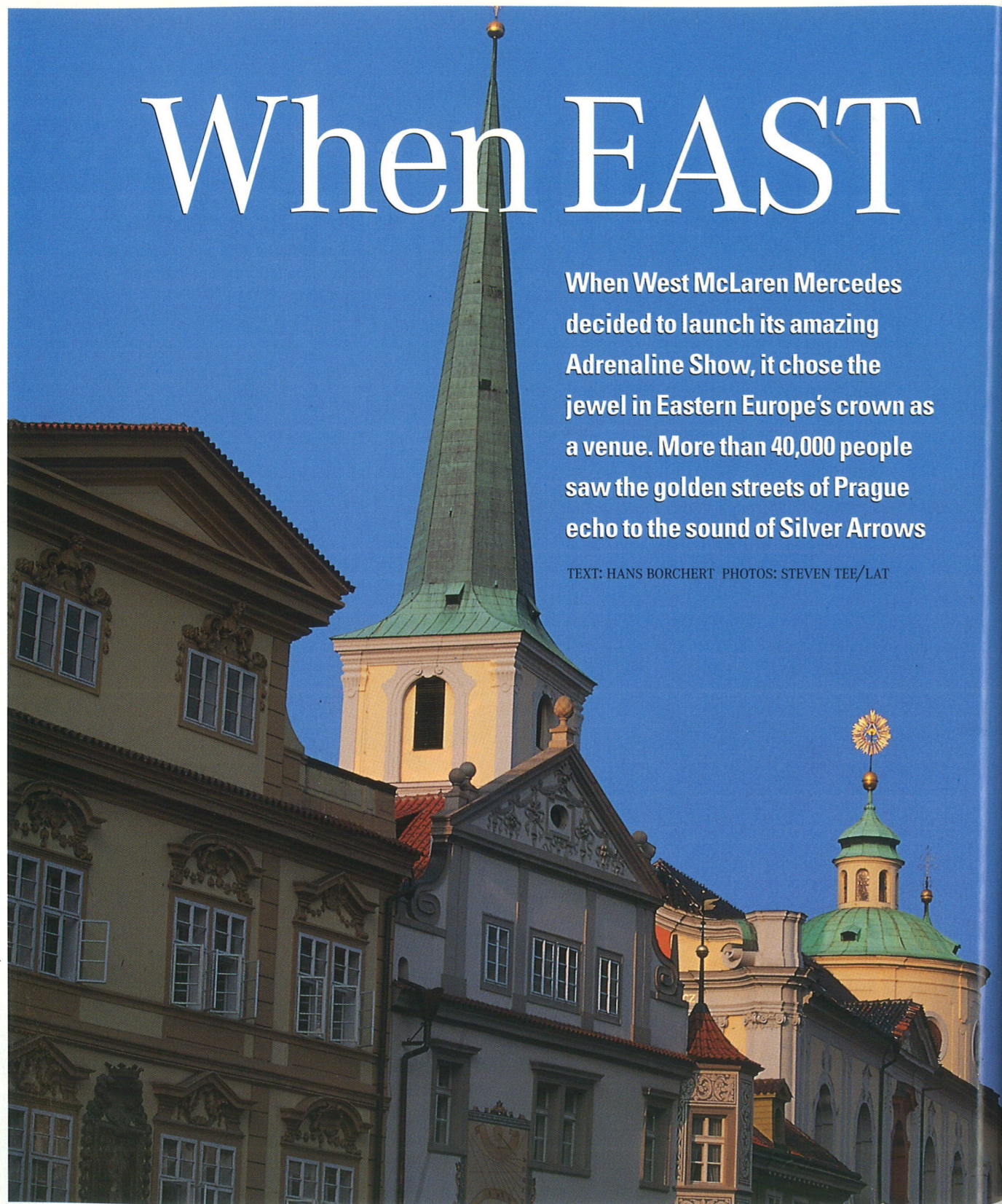


F1

# When EAST

When West McLaren Mercedes decided to launch its amazing Adrenaline Show, it chose the jewel in Eastern Europe's crown as a venue. More than 40,000 people saw the golden streets of Prague echo to the sound of Silver Arrows

TEXT: HANS BORCHERT PHOTOS: STEVEN TEE/LAT

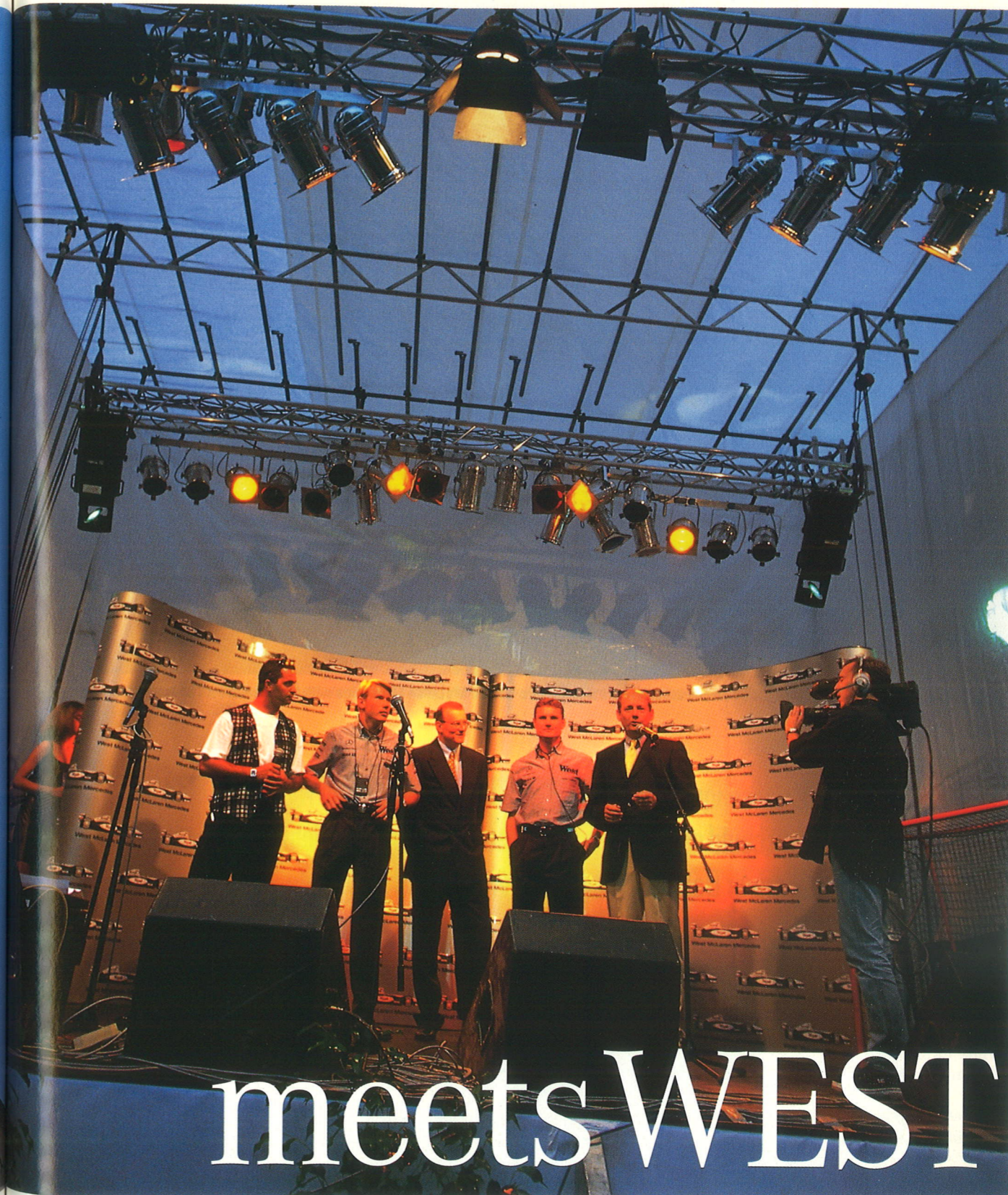


This was Summer in Prague. You could tell by the crowds on the Charles bridge; the hordes of tourists, fleeting street traders and pavement artists. Under the flashing gold city roofs there was bustling colour on every street. But the actual agenda of West McLaren Mercedes' big annual meeting was clearly defined in silver.

It was about cars, drivers, the Formula 1 World Championship and team sponsors, not to mention an aircraft. But the Silver Arrow and its team seemed to

personify the theme, East meets West, more than any of the other business on hand.

The venue for the reception and press conference was Prague's castle, the Hradshin. At such an important historical setting, everyone had to be on best behaviour - smoking was off limits. On the other hand the preparations were fit for a stately visit. On the steps leading up to the lavishly appointed Spanish hall, festooned with chandeliers and mirrored galleries, a guard of honour stood to



# meets WEST

timeless attention. It shone as an example of correct posture and stoic discipline. Ron Dennis looked on with a hint of satisfaction.

A large proportion of the global press corps present came from the new countries of Eastern Europe. Russians, Hungarians, Polish, Slovenians and Slovaks, Ukrainians and Czechs all came to see the extravaganza and were greeted by Tom Ehman from tobacco company Reemtsma. But they had not come just for the festivities. They had

questions of their own. These people knew F1 well and they drilled Mika Hakkinen, David Coulthard and Ron Dennis for well over an hour.

Far away from the sanctity of the West McLaren Mercedes motor home and the F1 paddock, Dennis spoke in no uncertain terms. He had to, because the questions came thick and fast.

"Why did you lose in Hungary?" someone asked. "Quite apart from our technical problems," Ron responded, "when Ferrari changed its strategy we ▶



F1



Former Czech prime minister Vaclav Klaus discusses driving fast in the two-seater McLaren Mercedes with his "chauffeur" Darren Turner

Among the passengers was former prime minister Vaclav Klaus, the kind of politician you could call fearless. Klaus took up his place behind McLaren two-seater driver Darren Turner and savoured "unforgettable impressions"



Prague is famous for its architecture and bridges, its streets brimming with tourists, street traders and pavement artists



F1



Vaclav joined 12 pale-faced and nervous international journalists who discovered the very limits of the West Adrenaline Show at Most



Traditional Czech puppet dolls get a West-ern make-over

◀ didn't have the right answer."

"Why didn't you sign Michael Schumacher?"

"We will never have a designated number one driver. It wasn't a question of the money. All the same, we prefer to spend our money on other things."

"Is there now a pecking order for Mika Hakkinen?"

"It's normal for drivers to help themselves. Formula 1 is a team sport, not an individual one. But we don't interfere, we don't give commands. It's all voluntary."

"Is West McLaren Mercedes going to win the World Championship?"

"We're working on it. We have the best car and the best drivers. We started off with a win, we are still in the lead, and, at the end of the day, we will come through winning." Strong stuff.

The questions didn't stop there. For example, how could one win a ticket for a spin in the passenger seat of the West McLaren Mercedes MP4-98T two-seater? Or perhaps, in a McLaren F1 GTR? The answer was a draw for 12 lucky journalists. Some of the winners looked like frightened schoolboys. But if they were worried, they could count themselves lucky that the latest addition to the new West McLaren Mercedes Adrenaline Show was still only in model form.

A scale replica of the Hawk 200 aircraft, finely painted in team colours and made by British Aerospace apprentices, posed alongside the two F1 racing cars. This Adrenaline Show promised the ultimate in thrills. With a note of discernible pride, Ron Dennis described it as "a unique opportunity to actively get to know the fascination of speed and your own limits of endurance."



F1



F1

Above: A British Aerospace Hawk 200, adorned in the West McLaren Mercedes colours, will soon take its place alongside the McLaren-Mercedes as part of the West Adrenaline experience. Left: Prague's castle, the venue of the West McLaren Mercedes press conference, was prepared to the standards of a stately visit

◀ For today though, the Hawk 200 stood still. Which is something that could not be said of the MP4-98T. A huge crowd of 40,000 race fans turned up at Most, Prague's own circuit, to see the West McLaren Mercedes two-seater in action. Among them was former prime minister Vaclav Klaus, the kind of politician you could call fearless. Klaus took up his place in the passenger seat behind driver Darren Turner and savoured "unforgettable impressions".

Nobody doubted their own courage, but still the 12 faces were chalky white before they experienced the two-seater. Their complexions changed the instant the run was over into heated, slightly red ones. Gerald Selch, the F1 correspondent for Germany's biggest-selling paper, *Das Bild*, was still bursting ▶



F1



Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard got to drive their personalised A-Class Mercedes into Prague's Most circuit – in front of 40,000 fans



The driving duo were at work all day, giving interviews and autographs, making speeches and losing themselves in the crowd. "A promotional event can be fun" said Mika. Coulthard agreed

with excitement well into the evening. He got out of the car, had a stiff vodka, called his mother, then entertained the whole bus on the way back to Prague with his favourite expressions – "sensational" and "far out". This is the effect the Adrenaline Show has on its visitors.

Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard also got in on the action. They didn't get to drive the two-seater McLaren, but they did steer their own Mercedes A-Class. The driving duo were at work all day, giving countless interviews and autographs, shaking hands, making speeches and losing themselves in the crowd. "A promotion event can be a lot of fun,"

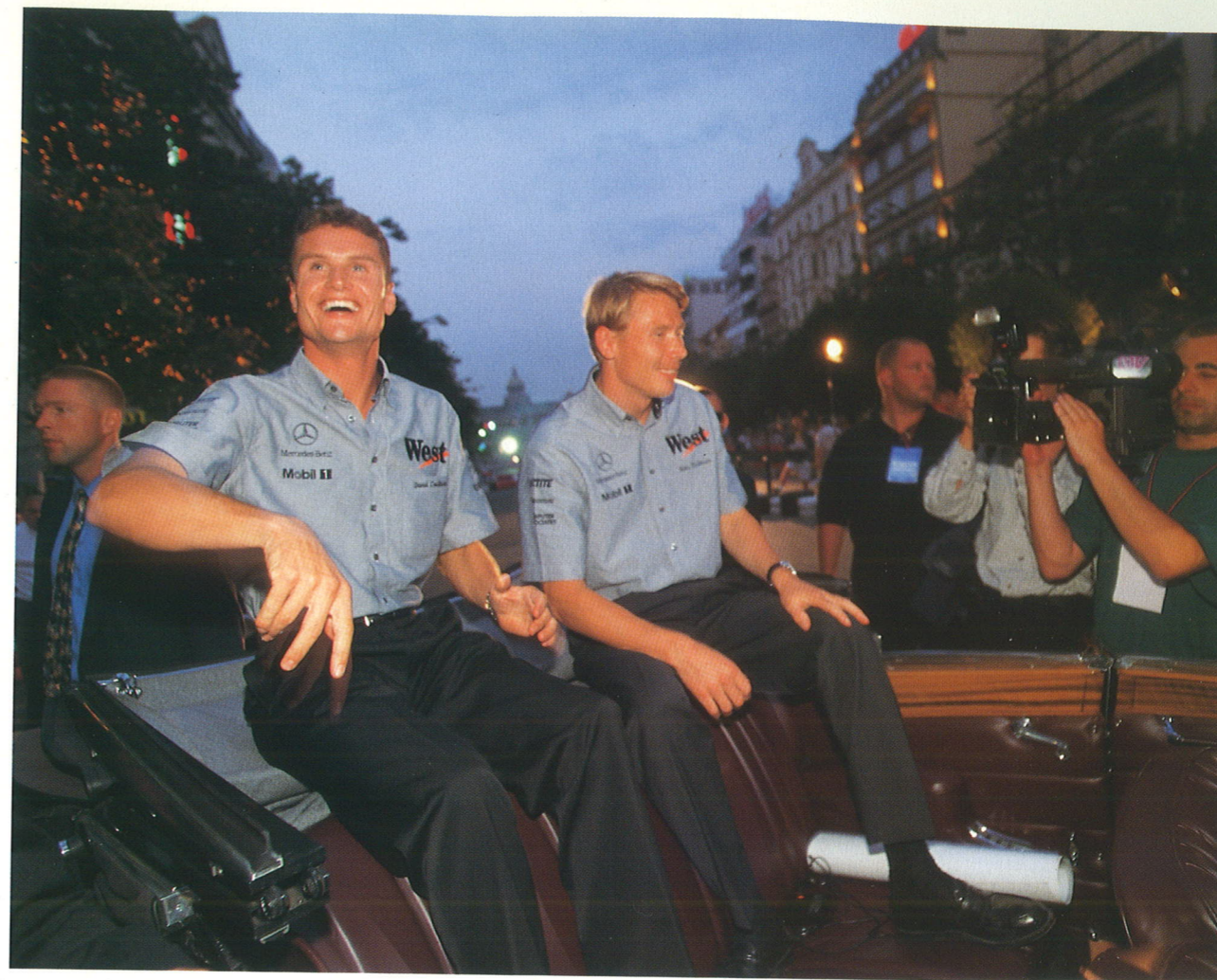
said Mika. Coulthard agreed.

The same could be said for the people of Prague. Coming out of side-streets to Wenzel square they had to rub their eyes. The square had been adorned with a stage. In front of it there was a go-kart track, enclosed in red and white tyres. Historically speaking, it was an example of the changing forces of time. Almost 30 years ago to the day, Warsaw pact troops had invaded Czechoslovakia, suppressing the Prague Spring Uprising. But today, there was the power of now. West meets East.

There must have been 10,000 people crowding the 5pm Prague performance. All of them danced to the



F1



West McLaren Mercedes' dynamic duo, Hakkinen and Coulthard, received a hero's welcome on a visit to Eastern Europe which they adored



Mika Hakkinen gets ready for action... In the goalkeeper kit given to him as a gift by local hero and ice hockey star Dominik Hasek. Coulthard received a set of bagpipes

music of native bands like Maxim Turbulence, the Rapmasters, the Yo-Yo Band and Ilona Csakova. It was an Adrenaline Show in sound. The crowning finale saw David Coulthard, Mika Hakkinen, Ron Dennis and local hero Dominik Hasek, an ice hockey star, on stage.

Presents were exchanged politely. Wine for Dennis, a bagpipe of sorts for Coulthard, a sled for Hakkinen and racing overalls for Hasek. He got his own back on the F1 drivers by handing them complete ice hockey goalkeeper strips. After the applause, the McLaren boss bid the crowd farewell with some good advice: "Don't forget, whoever works hard can reach his goal."

After a quick freshen up, there was a change of scene. A VIP dinner was scheduled at the fashionable Bazaar Mediterranée. In the vaulted roof cellar the atmosphere was candlelit, while up on the roof garden you could get a Hawk 200 pilot's view of Prague. West McLaren Mercedes had enjoyed its day in Prague, and the Czech Republic had been pleased to host the team. Ron put it succinctly when he told the Czechs, "It was a privilege for us to be here. You live in a beautiful city and you can be proud of it."

The clock said 22:50, and the day was coming gently to its end. "Can I relax now?" Tom Ehman asked chief organiser Pavel Turek. He nodded, tired, but happy. Had things worked out? Yes, they most certainly had. ★

# Go! Go! Online...

"Pit next time round Patrick" – "OK" – "Fuel and tyres. Stop on your mark Patrick... Tyres on... Fuel in... Go, Go, Go!!" You'd be forgiven for thinking this was a private pit-to-car conversation to Patrick Carpentier. In fact, it was a live audio transmission, broadcast on the internet – as are all ChampCar races

TEXT: SIMON STRANG



WHAT DOES THE FINNISH FLAG MEAN?



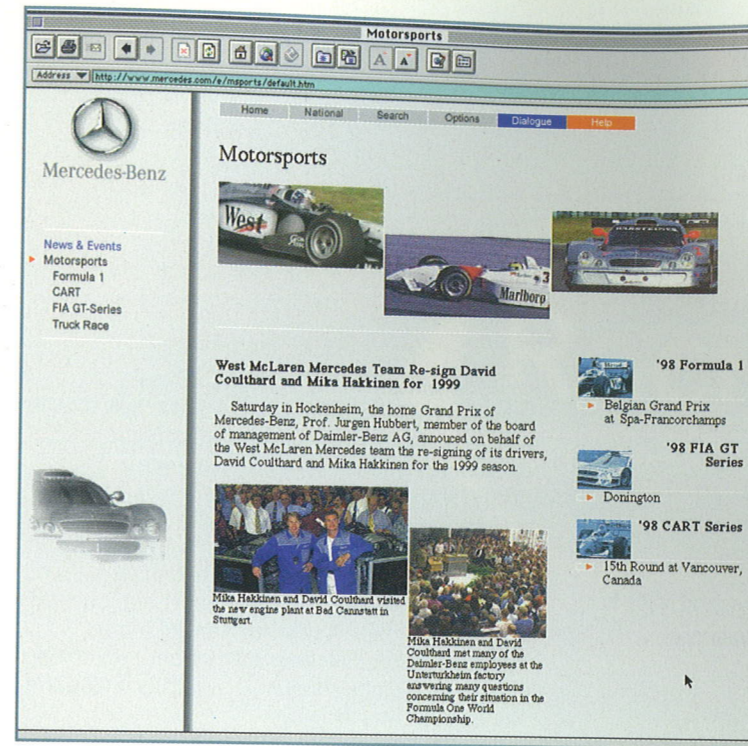
A FRESH SUPPLY AWAITS THE WINNER.  
GO FOR IT.

It takes the Finnish midnight sun for the barley. It took the Ice Age for the pure, glacial spring water. (If we run out, please allow a million years for delivery.)

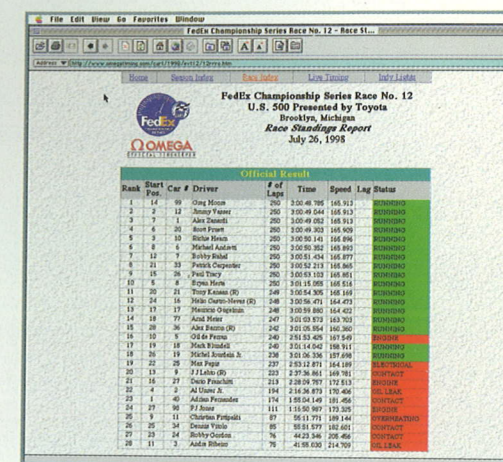
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Mercedes-Benz, and most of its motorsport partners, have websites with a whole range of interactive devices to try out – like the live timing and in-car radio transmissions on the Forsythe Racing site



A combination of the open-ness of the CART teams, and the high-tech world of the internet, means that fans anywhere in the world with a computer and telephone can join Forsythe racers Greg Moore and Patrick Carpentier every time they climb aboard their car during a ChampCar race weekend.

The importance of the internet is growing rapidly in all areas, particularly motorsport. The work that goes on behind the scenes with each team and manufacturer to spread the message is enormous. Some fans, however, can't wait for the next morning's newspaper to find out how their favourites did, so now they head straight for the internet.

The internet began as a fail-safe network invented by the United States government as a means of maintaining communication in the event of a nuclear war. It was quickly picked up by universities around the world and then developed by major software companies. Today the internet is the world's leading source of information and links millions of people from all around the globe every day.

Mercedes-Benz understands the importance of communication, after all, its Silver Arrows sound out a message of success from international racetracks throughout the summer. It has rapidly embraced the brave new world of the internet, along with its partners in Formula 1, CART and GT racing.

Therefore if you have a question about the Mercedes-Benz motorsport programme that Stars & Cars can't answer, or you want to know how Mercedes is doing in the latest round of the F1 World Championship, the FIA GT or ChampCar series, as it happens, the place to look is on the World Wide Web.

And the first place to look on the WWW is in Mercedes-Benz's own extensive website (<http://www.mercedes.com>). Updated with summaries and results after each race, it contains a detailed database with a hive of information on all the drivers and cars that compete under the banner of the three-pointed star.

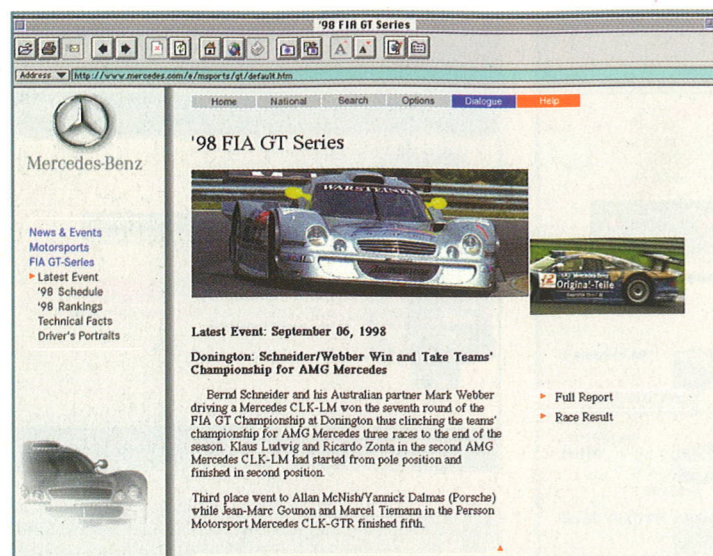
But the extent of the Mercedes website goes a lot further than just motorsport. It covers every aspect of the Stuttgart manufacturer's production line, plans for the future, archives from the past as well as keeping abreast of all the Mercedes news from the automotive world.

But the Mercedes website is only a start. If you want to delve deeper into the electronic world to find out even more about Mercedes' involvement in motorsport, there is a whole host of web sites dedicated to, and run by, the organisers, teams, drivers and sponsors of the various championships, which provide a range of amazing services to experiment with.

Much of what happens in the world of F1 is well ▶



ONLINE



**The official Mercedes-Benz website is a good place to begin your voyage through the World Wide Web**

documented on television around the world, and then in a huge array of newspapers and specialist weekly magazines. But now, thanks to the internet, it's possible to keep in touch with the CART Champ Car series 'live' from the other side of the world.

The ChampCar official website, CART On-line (<http://www.cart.com>) offers fans the chance to follow the action from free practice, qualifying and the race via a live time screen through its official

#### USEFUL ADDRESSES

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Mercedes-Benz      | <a href="http://www.mercedes.com">http://www.mercedes.com</a>                   |
| Bridgestone        | <a href="http://www.bridgestone.com">http://www.bridgestone.com</a>             |
| McLaren            | <a href="http://www.mclaren.co.uk">http://www.mclaren.co.uk</a>                 |
| Warsteiner         | <a href="http://www.warsteiner.com">http://www.warsteiner.com</a>               |
| West               | <a href="http://www.west.de">http://www.west.de</a>                             |
| CART On-line       | <a href="http://www.cart.com">http://www.cart.com</a>                           |
| Team Alumax        | <a href="http://www.teamalumax.com">http://www.teamalumax.com</a>               |
| Team Penske        | <a href="http://www.penskemotorsports.com">http://www.penskemotorsports.com</a> |
| PacWest Racing     | <a href="http://www.pacwestracing.com">http://www.pacwestracing.com</a>         |
| Forsythe Racing    | <a href="http://www.forsythe_racing.com">http://www.forsythe_racing.com</a>     |
| Players Racing     | <a href="http://www.players_racing.com">http://www.players_racing.com</a>       |
| Mark Blundell      | <a href="http://www.mark_blundell.com">http://www.mark_blundell.com</a>         |
| Patrick Carpentier | <a href="http://www.carpentier.com">http://www.carpentier.com</a>               |
| Mauricio Gugelmin  | <a href="http://www.gugelmin.com">http://www.gugelmin.com</a>                   |
| Andre Ribeiro      | <a href="http://www.andreribeiro.com.br">http://www.andreribeiro.com.br</a>     |
| Omega Timing       | <a href="http://www.omegatiming.com">http://www.omegatiming.com</a>             |
| Christophe Bouchut | <a href="http://www.bouchut.com">http://www.bouchut.com</a>                     |
| Mark Webber        | <a href="http://www.yellowpages.com.au">http://www.yellowpages.com.au</a>       |
| FIA                | <a href="http://www.fia.com">http://www.fia.com</a>                             |

sponsor Omega Timing (<http://www.omegatiming.com>). But to take it a step further and gain a real sense of being at the heart of the action, visit the Forsythe Racing site ([http://www.forsythe\\_racing.com](http://www.forsythe_racing.com)).

Here you can really be part of what's going on: besides being able to ride on board and listen to the drivers as they communicate with their crew via pit-to-car radio, you can also access the live timing site at the same time. In between sessions you get exclusive one minute long quotes from each driver about how their day is going. It is a truly interactive site, and well worth a visit.

Forsythe's pages also contain background information on the team and their fanclubs as well as an electronic shopping facility where you can buy team merchandise.

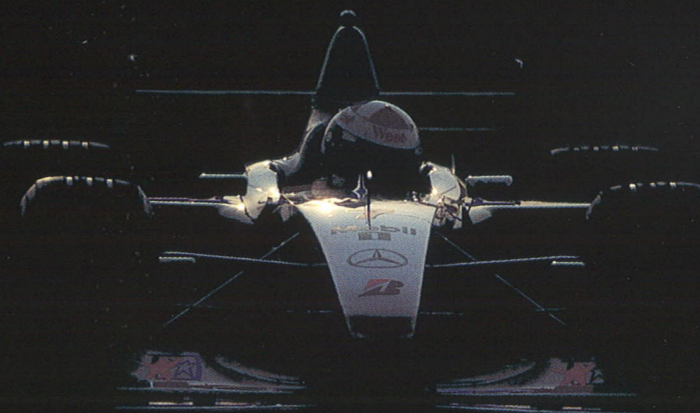
The drivers themselves have also cottoned on to the usefulness of the websites. Many of Mercedes' star drivers in the US like the PacWest duo Mauricio Gugelmin (<http://www.gugelmin.com>) and Mark Blundell ([http://www.mark\\_blundell.com](http://www.mark_blundell.com)), as well as Patrick Carpentier (<http://www.carpentier.com>) and Penske Racing's Andre Ribeiro (<http://andreribeiro.com.br>) all have official sites where you can go and find out more about them and perhaps send them messages of goodwill. Some of the drivers even hold forums where you can converse with them over the internet.

Type in 'Hakkinen' or 'Coulthard' on your search engine - the device which hunts out any relevant sites on the web for you - and you will instantly receive more than a thousand different sites to choose from. All of them unofficial, but most are made up by fans like us who read Stars & Cars.

But if you want to get the real low-down on Mercedes' F1 stars, the place to go is Mercedes F1 partner McLaren's own website (<http://www.mclaren.co.uk>). Exclusive interviews, quotes and comments from Mika, David and team boss Ron Dennis are updated weekly, while there are a bunch of audio interviews and short video clips which can be downloaded if you have the correctly-equipped hardware. The McLaren site is densely packed with information and is yet another place where you can find all that you need to know about Grand Prix Racing.

All these interactive sites and many like them allow you to get closer to the action and help you identify with your favourite Mercedes performers. And with a bit of surfing, you'll undoubtedly find your own favourite sites to satiate your thirst for up-to-the-minute news from the world of motorsport. It is a world that changes by the second. ★

# Racing On-Line



gets you closer to the action

# [www.mclaren.co.uk](http://www.mclaren.co.uk)

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