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AN ALMOST INDEPENDENT F1 NEWSPAPER



GLORY DAYS

CAN F1 REDISCOVER THE GOLDEN AGE?

GERMANY
SATURDAY 19·07·08

The changeable conditions yesterday gave us a tantalising hint of how interesting things could get this weekend. But while the teams look at the sky and scratch their heads, we prefer to focus on what's going on behind the scenes: silly-season driver speculation is getting ever sillier, the drivers are trying a new sport (tent wrestling), and guess who's coming to McLaren's dinner?

The quick and the dead
Robert Kubica took a trip through a gravel trap and into a tyre wall yesterday. As his car was rescued by track workers, his team-mate Nick Heidfeld sped past. The Pole needn't have worried though; he still managed to be quicker than the German in the afternoon's session.
Photography: LAT

Joyriding shotgun

Fans and paddock regulars got the chance to witness, up close, the awesome skills of F1 drivers and what they get up to when their bosses aren't looking. Racers, including Robert Kubica, Sebastian Vettel, Giancarlo Fisichella, Timo Glock and five-times DTM champion Bernd Schneider, threw caution to the wind on Thursday evening and endeavoured to discover at just what angle they could get through the Südkurve before stopping in the pitlane in a cloud of smoke to pick up three more passengers. And all done in a style more akin toa Hollywood stunt driver than the serious professionals we're accustomed to. The Bulletin was lucky enough to jump into a BMW M3 alongside Nick Heidfeld, who came across as a mild mannered gent until he attempted to take the first corner with no brakes. Having had a close look at the spot where Kimi buried himself in the tyre wall in 2003, Nick spent a full set of tyres on a couple of doughnuts at the hairpin as the marshals watched approvingly. No spins for Nick in Silverstone, of course – maybe he felt he'd missed out.

Action highlights

This season, F1's official website, www.formula1.com, has been evolving to include some must-see features. One of the things we like best are the video highlights packages that are available to watch on the Tuesday following every race, giving the FOM editors 48 hours to come up with something really clever. The two-minute edits feature the best action from each weekend, complete with a cool soundtrack of great tunes. At the moment, the site is producing a half-term report, but to what songs? So far, we've seen F1 accompanied by The Hives, Kasabian and Primal Scream, and we hear some heavy metal may soon be on the menu. Rock on.



SHOWING HIS SUPPORT
After recently claiming the reason he retired was to ensure that his mate Felipe Massa wouldn't be out of a job, Michael Schumacher is continuing to show his support for the Brazilian this weekend, in his role as special advisor to Ferrari.

Location, Location

Carry on camping

The German F1 drivers got back to nature this weekend when they wandered into the woods with a TV crew from Premiere. Their task: how quickly could they erect a tent? Nico Rosberg was confident he'd do well, having last pitched a tent 15 years ago, thus making him the most experienced member of the group – yes, they really were all raised in five-star hotels. Nick Heidfeld had also heard of these strange things called tents: "Don't you just throw them on the ground and they open up automatically?" he asked hopefully. No Nick, these tents required manual labour and, to add a little excitement to proceedings, the instructions had been burnt. Timo Glock's background as a professional scaffolder (yes, really) gave him a significant advantage and he had finished his tent, strolled over to the barbecue and was nonchalantly snacking on a sausage before the next two drivers – Sebastian Vettel and Heidfeld – had finished constructing their tents. Vettel was the most vocal, providing a chorus of swearing as he battled with the poles and pegs. In contrast, Nick remained serene throughout. But Adrian Sutil's preparation cost him dearly. While the others were already halfway through the build, he was still studying his apparatus much like he might look at a sheet of music before playing it on his grand piano. You just need to get stuck in, Adrian, this isn't Wagner! But he still managed to beat, by 100th of a second, Nico, who was doing well until he lost the central peg joint. So while the other tents formed igloo shapes, Nico's looked like a teepee. All too familiar, after his set-up nightmare at the British GP.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DPPI

Happy families

Mercedes-Benz hosted a barbecue on Thursday night for not just the media, but also for the competition. A number of teams showed up, and several drivers came for a mineral water. The top table had a sense of entente cordiale as Ron and Norbert welcomed Ferrari's senior management. With the criminal investigation into McLaren now dropped and Ferrari's legal expenses settled, are they all friends again or is it a case of keeping enemies closer? Nico Rosberg also attended, just hours after McLaren had denied talking to him about 2009. Could talks have started?

Another dinner rumour

Speculation is also rife about Ferrari's future driver line-up, and Fernando Alonso may have hinted at his own team preference during a cooking activity for a sponsor. According to Spanish newspaper Dario AS, the former champion was asked if he preferred French or Italian cuisine. "Spanish," said Alonso, "but if you're referring to something else, then I prefer Italian." Well, he could just be referring to renaissance painting.

Honda to keep both drivers

And what do you think about Brackley's kebab houses, Fernando? With Red Bull Racing already confirming both of its drivers for 2009, the options for Alonso are becoming fewer. Now Ross Brawn has dampened suggestions that the Spaniard might be offered a Honda berth. There has been speculation, particularly after Rubens Barrichello's podium at Silverstone, that if a driver were to leave it might be Jenson Button. Brawn has moved to reassure the Englishman, however. "If we produce a good car then they can produce from their side. We are not looking at anything major on the driver side. Our main priority is the car." If Ferrari are unable to give Alonso a seat next year then Honda could be a mutually beneficial stop-gap for both parties. But it looks like the door has closed.

Today's schedule

09:30-10:00	Mini Challenge race
10:00-10:15	BMW M1 Procar demonstration
11:00-12:00	F1 third practice
12:25-13:10	Porsche Supercup qualifying
14:00-15:00	F1 qualifying
16:00-17:20	GP2 race one
17:40-18:10	Formula BMW race

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INSTANT OPINIONS #10: SWITCHING PRIORITIES

Should the German Grand Prix have two homes?

POSITIVE: Moving around is a great idea. A GP is a national spectacle and should travel. Each circuit presents a different challenge and prevents the race becoming stale. Circuits lose money when they host F1 these days, but they make it back the other 51 weeks of the year, thanks to the 'halo effect' of having the race associated with their venue. This isn't diluted by an alternating calendar.

NEGATIVE: A grand prix needs a home. It should be held at the most appropriate circuit for the race. The investment required to host and maintain a circuit to the standards required by the FIA and FOM is huge. The best way to ensure the German GP stays on the calendar is to choose one venue and invest heavily in it. Trying to maintain two F1-standard tracks is not in Germany's best interests.

The Secret Diary of Hermann Schnell, Aged 19¾

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2ND, SILVERSTONE

There's a memo from senior management going around the factory. It suggests they think the cause of our recent poor form is... driver fatigue. It isn't that the car has the aerodynamic efficiency of a rhododendron and the reliability of a rabid weasel – no, the problem is that I'm not fit enough. I'm thinking it's no coincidence that Otto has just signed up an internationally renowned sports science clinic as a sponsor. Usually I wouldn't be bothered, but somehow the memo has been leaked to the press. Obviously when I say leaked what I actually mean is 'couriered'. I'd complain about the unfairness of it all, but something tells me I should save my strength.

FRIDAY, JULY 4TH, SILVERSTONE

Ugh! Fans! I've had to spend an hour on the merchandising stand signing things. It was horrible – they're all so ugly! I don't know who they use as an image consultant, but I'd be asking for a refund. With the filth, the puddles and the stench of frying onions, it's like being back in the Dark Ages. Why do we still have to race at places like this? It's much nicer having grands prix in the Middle East where there aren't any spectators.

SATURDAY, JULY 5TH, SILVERSTONE



Silverstone has a strange and forlorn air about it. It's bleak and foreboding, worn out and faded, and yet there's something here that speaks to a melancholy place in my soul. I wanted to capture it in poetry, but the desolation promotes a sense of hopeless ennui. With my muse rendered inarticulate, I asked Kevin if he felt it too – he nodded and said that Silverstone is, indeed, a shithole.

THURSDAY, JULY 3RD, SILVERSTONE

Günther, my trainer, isn't very happy with the suggestion that the car keeps falling apart because I don't spend enough time in the gym. For one fleeting instant, I thought the shared injustice might forge a common bond between us, but somehow he's decided that it's my fault and the only way I can atone for the gross insult is by having a heart attack on a rather soggy farm track near Milton Keynes. Anybody going on about the loneliness of the long distance runner obviously hasn't had an ex-Stasi psychopath screaming in their ear for three hours every morning. He says it's motivational, and in one sense he's correct – I run faster to get away from him. Surely there must be a better way? This is Formula One – there should be machines and sensors and technology to help me stay in shape, not a lunatic on a mountain bike. I'm not even sure he really was an Olympic champion in the 1970s. Last week he was brandishing his medal [again] screaming" "This is why we train hard." I looked closely – it said 'Olga'.

SUNDAY, JULY 6TH, LAKE SILVERSTONE

This is the worst day ever. My team-mate is on the podium – the whole team is cheering. I'm sitting in the lavatory because I think I'm going to be sick. The strain of forcing a smile onto my face was just too much. I think I've pulled a muscle. The team principal is saying it was a drive of great maturity – what he actually means is that he set his car up to go extra slowly, then filled it up with as much fuel as he could to make it slower, and then cruised around on monsoon tyres while the rest of us tried to make a race of it. I'm surprised he didn't cut out the middleman and take his Range Rover to the grid. Now, Günther has just told me I'll be running the 40 miles back to the hotel. At least it's quicker than driving.



VIEW FROM THE TRUCK: THE RIGHT STUFF

Vettel should not be seen as just the alternative.

BY JUSTIN HYNES

Formula One team press conferences are a peculiar delight – mostly because of the media's role in the whole process. The press, ourselves included, represent a strange animal to teams. Most of the time, not a very pretty animal. If you work within a team, the technical understanding available to you will dwarf that of the average journalist and thus possibly render the opinions of that writer nonsensical, which is fair enough. But, while the engineering knowledge of the average press person might not be extensive, there's one thing media people are good at that team people never seem to understand: we know what's happening.

Journalists are good at getting information, that's what they do. So on Thursday, when the Energy Station was packed to the gills with media, it wasn't for a revelatory experience but simply to have their suspicions confirmed.

There is another side to a journalist that's just as developed as inherent curiosity and that's intense cynicism. You don't get very far in the media if you wander wide-eyed into every situation. So it was fun the other day to watch the two qualities come together when Sebastian Vettel was announced as a Red Bull Racing driver for 2009. Wry smiles about why we were all there to hear the great unguarded secret were soon joined by intense speculation. "So if they didn't get Alonso, where is he going now?" was the only question on anyone's lips. Fair enough: one riddle solved, onto the next one. But that's being slightly disingenuous towards poor Seb. Is there not a case to suggest that Vettel, far from being the alternative, is the first choice?

Think about it. In just 17 races the 21-year-old German has scored 11 points. That might not seem much but he's scored all but one of those for Toro Rosso, which is a hard place from which to reach the top eight. In his first race, for BMW Sauber, he became the youngest ever points scorer with eighth in Indianapolis last year. In China last year he finished a remarkable fourth. In Monaco this year he came fifth.

Sure he's had his fair share of DNFs (five this year) but that's been influenced by where he can qualify the car and the likelihood of trouble in that environment into turn one. On the four occasions he has finished, he's been in the points twice. That might be a facile examination of just the broad statisitics, but those alone should be enough to confirm that he has the potential to be a quite remarkable talent in the right machinery.

'He demonstrates some of the same qualities as Alonso when he came to F1. He's quick, clever and convinced of his ability to get the best from his machinery'

The Fernando debate is somewhat spurious in that regard. If Red Bull Racing did indeed pursue the Spaniard (and I have no inside line there, despite the name of this magazine) then the choice of Vettel, once Alonso's terms could not be met, was no half measure and is, in fact, possibly the better bet.

He is a product of the Red Bull young drivers' programme: he's immersed in the organisation's culture, is adaptable, media savvy, immensely bankable and, most importantly, he demonstrates some of the same attributes I remember Alonso being praised for by Gustav Brunner at pre-Toro Minardi when he first came to Formula One at the same age Vettel did. Quick, clever, determined, aggressive and convinced of his ability to get the best from his machinery.

It's a long way to go for Sebastian to get to Alonso's exalted status, and two world titles do entitle you to be included in a every piece of transfer speculation, but Sebastian's step forward is the same as Alonso's to Renault in 2003. And we all know what happened then.

ON THIS DAY... 19/7/08



1903: VIVE LE TOUR
Maurice Garin wins the inaugural Tour de France.
Watch a history of the world-famous cycle race.
YouTube.com search: Tour de France + 1/12

1912: DESERT STORM
A massive meteorite explodes over the USA, scattering 16,000 pieces of debris across the town of Holbrook, Arizona.
How to find fragments if you're ever in Holbrook.
YouTube.com search: Holbrook + Arizona + meteorite

1996: OLD FLAME STILL BURNS
Muhammad Ali lights the flame to open the centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, USA.
Watch the flame finish its journey.
YouTube.com search: Atlanta + 1996 + Ali

BIRTHS

1946: ILIE NASTASE
Romanian former number one world tennis player, nicknamed 'Nasty' for his behaviour on court.
YouTube.com search: Ilie Nastase + jokes

ON THIS DAY, VISIT...

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PATH
The beautiful medieval city of Heidelberg sits on the River Neckar and boasts a 13th-century red stone castle and medieval bridge. The 'Philosopher's Path' leads up a hill with spectacular views.
Heidelberg is 20km from Hockenheim. Tourist office: Willy-Brandt-Platz 1, 69115 Heidelberg.
Tel: +49 622 119433

ON THIS DAY IN F1...



1975: GREAT BRITAIN
Graham Hill officially announces his retirement, starting lights replace a flag for the first time, and a freak hailstorm causes a pile-up of several of the front-runners.
YouTube.com search: 1975 + British Grand Prix + chaos

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PHOTOGRAPHY: ACTION IMAGES, SUTTON IMAGES. ILLUSTRATION: DIETMAR KAINRATH



Tanja continued to exert a strange hold over the young German drivers, and here we see her persuading Nico to erect a private washroom for her.





PHOTOGRAPHY: JIRI KRENEK, XPB

BABES IN THE WOODS

They get paid so much it's easy to forget that they're all so young and have much to learn…



In order to maximise its involvement with one of the biggest names in the sport, every new Mercedes now comes with a photo of Lewis stuck on the wing mirrors.



"Tonio, I've told you, you've got to limit yourself to one jam doughnut per day or you'll never lose those extra pounds."

‘It was a very fair fight – intelligent and elegant’

GP GERMANY, HOCKENHEIM, AUGUST 2, 1970

The German Grand Prix first came to Hockenheim 38 years ago, when drivers refused to participate at the event’s traditional home, the original Nürburgring. It was a graceful interlude in an otherwise chaotic season...



The Nürburgring had been a regular fixture on the world championship calendar since 1951 and the German Grand Prix had taken place there 16 times, but in 1970 the Grand Prix Drivers’ Association got tough. They had requested a number of safety improvements at the track, but as the race approached these had not been implemented – so, at relatively late notice, the race was moved from 22.8km of twisting, dipping, tree-lined asphalt to Hockenheim’s 6.8km of flat, tree-lined asphalt, much of which involved gently sweeping straights taken at 300kph.

“Those weren’t the details we considered at the time,” says Jacky Ickx, one of Ferrari’s two works drivers of the day. “Our attitude and mentality were completely different. Quite often today, we think, ‘How did they get away with that in the past?’ The truth, however, is that racing was very different – no commerce, just sport. Hockenheim was supposed to be a modern track and it was felt that it would be much easier to manage the safety criteria than it was at the Nürburgring, just because the circuit was shorter.” Hockenheim had been updated, too, and there were now guardrails to separate cars from the trees that had claimed Jim Clark’s life two years before.

‘Losing like that has never caused me the slightest moment of regret’
Jacky Ickx

Ickx qualified on pole and led away initially, but Hockenheim’s long, flat-out sweeps made it difficult to break away, because following cars were able to slipstream so effectively. The race began with a leading chain of five cars – Ickx, world championship leader Jochen Rindt (Lotus 72), Clay Regazzoni (Ferrari 312B), Chris Amon (March 701) and Jo Siffert (March 701) – and positions swapped frequently. Ickx led the first six laps and Rindt the next three, then Ickx for another eight. But out in the forest, away from public view, they were passing and repassing more frequently than the official lap chart’s simple arithmetic suggested.

“During the race, I think we realised there was no getting away from each other,” Ickx says. “We had that slipstreaming situation – which doesn’t really exist any more – and the track was extremely fast, and safety was a bit limited. Consequently, on the long straights we were giving signs to each other to indicate where we were expecting the other driver to overtake, so it was a very fair fight – intelligent and elegant, which absolutely reflected Jochen’s attitude.”

Siffert eventually dropped away from the leaders and engine failures accounted for Regazzoni (who briefly led) and Amon, so Ickx and Rindt were left to battle alone. The Belgian led for 31 of the race’s 50 laps (according to the official timekeepers, at least), but on lap 49 his rival swept ahead and opened a slight gap: it was enough to secure Rindt his fourth consecutive win – Ickx finished just 0.7 seconds adrift.

It had been an epic contest, but the German Grand Prix would not return to Hockenheim again until 1977: in the intervening years, the event was held at the Nürburgring, where it remained until its Formula One days were temporarily ended by Niki Lauda’s fiery accident six years later, on August 1, 1976.

Back in 1970, meanwhile, Rindt left Germany with a comfortable championship lead. The Austrian was 20 points clear of Jack Brabham, 25 ahead of Denny Hulme and 35 better off than Ickx, who was a lowly sixth in the standings after a difficult start to the campaign. Ickx won next time out in Austria, however, and an already painful season – Piers Courage had died during the Dutch GP, and Bruce McLaren had perished while testing one of his own CanAm cars – then took another tragic twist: Rindt was killed while practising for the Italian GP.

With four races remaining, and Ferrari getting into their stride, Ickx faced the awkward possibility of overhauling his fallen rival’s points tally. He qualified on pole position at Monza, where his clutch failed and Regazzoni won, but the final three races yielded two victories and one fourth place, which left him five points short. “That was absolutely the best way for the championship to end, and my feelings about that have never changed,” Ickx says. “There would have been no satisfaction in trying to beat somebody who wasn’t there to defend his position. Jochen deserved to be world champion. Ultimately I never won the F1 title, but losing like that has never caused me the slightest moment of regret.”

ILLUSTRATION: HERI IRAWAN



















PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER

GIRLS ALLOWED

It may be grey and dreary here at Hockenheim, but at Red Bull's Chilled Thirstday the atmosphere was definitely brighter, as the German La Formula Unas partied into the night.

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REWRITING THE RULES

FORMULA FOR A NEW GOLDEN AGE?

Formula One is caught up in an ideological battle for control of its heart and soul. Everybody has an opinion on the direction it should take, so we've gathered a range of suggestions, from the sensible to the plain stupid, and bound them together in one document. But being a publication of modesty as well as wit, we decided to run our 19-point plan past people with a bit more experience – who naturally shot it down in flames.
By Anthony Rowlinson and Matt Youson



PHOTOGRAPHY: ACTION IMAGES, DPPI, LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC, RAINER SCHLEGELMILCH, SUTTON IMAGES

2. TITANIUM SKID PLATES

Remember the thrill of seeing the field charge up the Kemmel Straight with sparks flying? F1 hasn't been quite so spectacular since ride height rules made the titanium skid plate redundant.

Crispin Thruston, photographer

"They were absolutely brilliant for pictures. You could just aim and shoot, and you'd get something fantastic. I'm sure there was some valid technical reason for getting rid of them, but why not bring them back for purely cosmetic reasons? It would improve the spectacle, for still and moving images. They were great, too, for showing up just how bumpy tracks like Monaco and Interlagos really are."

Spark it up
OK, it's a fire risk, but that never stopped other organised firework displays… And it never harmed Nigel Mansell in the 1986 Williams.

3. BANNING WIND-TUNNEL TESTING

The cars may be better, but the racing isn't. Wind-tunnel testing is ferociously expensive and adds very few positives to the sport. Everyone uses the same software and conducts the same tests, and as a result the cars have become homogenised – at least to the casual observer. Let the teams have one day a month in an FIA-controlled wind-tunnel facility, and no more.

Frank Dernie, Toyota F1 senior advisor

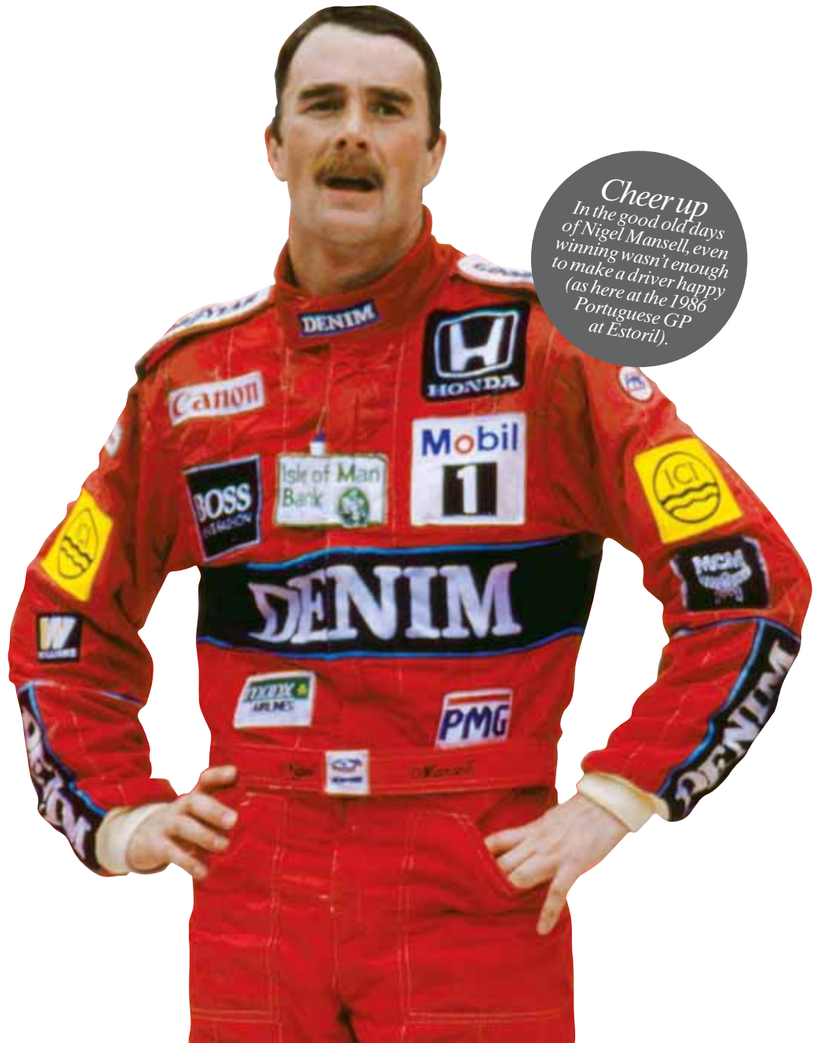
"I wouldn't like this, I have to say. My view is that motorsport is a technical sport and that it was a fantastic spectacle long before TV and magazines took any interest and teams had marketing departments or anything like that. The trouble is that they think it's their responsibility to make racing exciting and that they have the answer as to how that can be done – banning wind-tunnels for example. Well, that's pure rubbish really, isn't it? The spectacle was there from the start. I like to think of motor racing as a plant: the roots and trunk are the technology and engineering; the leaves are the marketing department and the pretty flowers are the parts of F1 that people come to see. All very well, but without the roots and trunk, there are no leaves and the flowers don't grow, and it's complete lunacy to think otherwise."

4. ALTERNATING VENUES AND MORE STREET CIRCUITS…

… because there are more good circuits and interesting locations than there are spaces on the calendar. The concept of going to the same 18 tracks every year should be abandoned in favour of alternating venues, or even alternating countries. It presents new challenges and keeps the teams guessing on the set-up. There should be at least 50 F1 circuits, many of which would only get a race every two or three years. And while we're at it, why can't more of the tracks be temporary street circuits? The racing always seems better on public roads and dusty park tracks, and, being in a city, the events have a character all of their own – which isn't usually the case with an anodyne out-of-town racetrack that could be anywhere.

Alex Wurz, Honda test driver

"Sure, more alternating between tracks, like we're now doing at the Nürburgring and Hockenheim, would be a good thing – as long as they're not the only two we alternate between! I definitely think we should go to more cities: that's what the expectation is in F1 now, with nice hotels and plenty of places to go in the evenings. If we're talking about Paris for the French GP, why not Marseille? The weather's nicer in the south of France."



Cheer up
In the good old days of Nigel Mansell, even winning wasn't enough to make a driver happy (as here at the 1986 Portuguese GP at Estoril).



5. THE ARGENTINIAN GRAND PRIX

Beef, beefy blokes, lovely ladies and a brilliant circuit. Formula One Buenos Aires-style had it all…

Darren Heath, photographer

"There was a real sense of adventure when I went there in 1997 and '98. Buenos Aires is a great city, full of beautiful women and beautiful men. That might sound a bit gay (I'm happily married, thank you), but it was true: all the F1 guys thought that Argentinian women were stunning and all the women thought the Argentinian guys were, too – big, polo-playing men on horseback. I also remember having a fantastic night out going to see Boca Juniors against River Plate – it's one of the world's great football derbies. We got there by jumping on the wagons of one of the freight trains that went past the Sheraton Hotel, where we were staying. It was like being some kind of mythical hobo, but it was a brilliant experience."

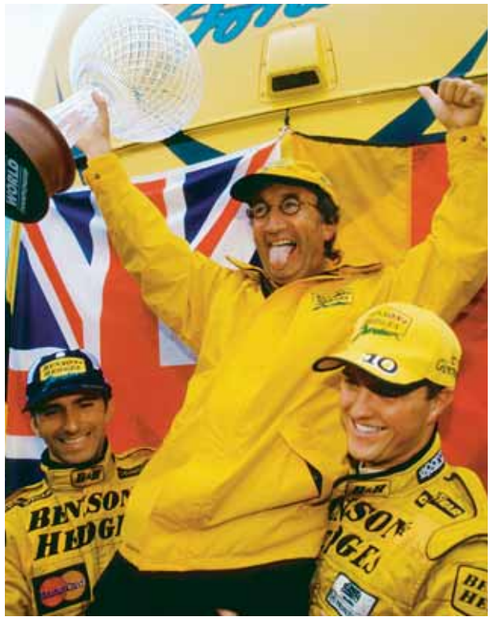
6. SOMEBODY AS ANGRY AS NIGEL MANSELL

Modern drivers tend to internalise everything, and they're way too polite and disengaged – even the ones you know are seething with rage. Press conferences need somebody with a sense of outrage, prepared to have a public moan about every little thing, thus making life so much more interesting for the rest of us.

Nigel Roebuck and Alan Henry, doyens of the F1 press room

NR: "F1 definitely misses drivers who are prepared to speak their minds. Mark Webber seems to be the only driver prepared to offer a comment on some of this year's controversies. Where the fans lose out is that they get an impression of blandness and of drivers having nothing to say – whereas those of us who work inside the sport know they have plenty of opinions when they're speaking off the record. The best driver for a quote, for me, was always Mario Andretti."

AH: "Mario Andretti? No, it's still Niki [Lauda]. He's always been in a stratosphere of his own when it comes to saying what he thinks." ➜



7. AND EDDIE JORDAN...

…or someone similar. F1 needs proper privateer wheeler-dealers to balance out the high-and-mighty corporate presence. We also miss the fried breakfasts…

Frank Williams, team owner
"I really don't ever look backwards. While the manufacturers in F1 have unquestionably driven up costs, they also bring enormous prestige, presence and sponsorship. We've had periods of privateer team ownership, but the sport has changed and we should take it for what it is, without worrying too much."

8. TECHNICAL FRAGILITY

Formula One cars should be built on the absolute limit of the possible and fall apart as they take the chequered flag. Nothing should be made to last more than one race, and engineers should be striving to wring the last rev out of the engine rather than conforming to an undemanding limit. Things would break more often, and that's always interesting.

Denis Chevrier, Renault F1 engine chief
"More unreliablity? Hmm… I don't think so! There are many better ways of making F1 more entertaining. I also think the idea goes against a true fan's enjoyment of the sport: they want to see racing decided by the drivers and engineers, not because a car goes 'bang' halfway through the race. I guess the more casual fans enjoy seeing an engine go up in flames like in the turbo days, and I'm sure they like seeing big accidents, too. But that's not the purist's view, is it?"

9. A 13-TEAM GRID

Formula One needs more teams. The current 10 have calcified into a predictable order that only very infrequently gets shaken up. F1 needs a wildcard or two just to make the sport interesting. The FIA's 26-car maximum should also be a minimum.

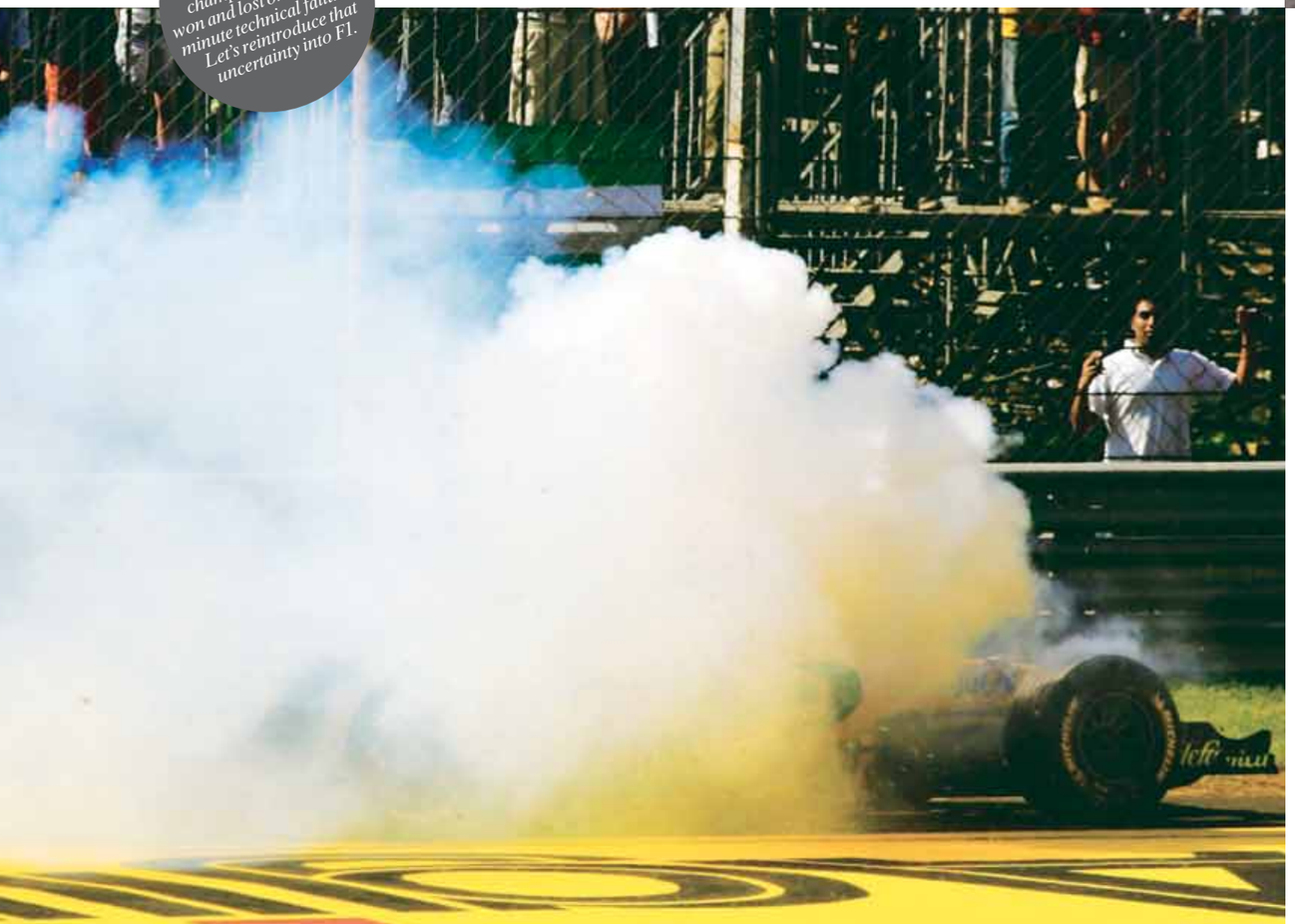
Flavio Briatore, Renault F1 team principal
"There's already so much aggravation with 10 teams – why do we need any more? OK, so we only have 10 now, but they are all good teams and that's better than having rubbish at the back. Twelve teams – 12 good teams – is about the maximum. Twenty-four cars sounds about right."

John Howett, Toyota F1 president
"I don't have anything against more teams, as long as the quality is maintained. One of the fundamental points that makes F1 different from NASCAR or Champ Car is that each manufacturer makes its own cars, and we should be wary of abandoning that. I don't disagree that we probably need to reduce the costs and make F1 more equitable across the teams – and maybe 12 is the ideal maximum number – but if you focus on that as the only solution, you would destroy many good things. Last season was great and this season is shaping up well, too."

Gridlock
Of course the established teams don't want any more competition – but F1 fans need minnows to cheer on, not just the big boys…



Bang!
Remember when championships were won and lost on tragic last-minute technical failures? Let's reintroduce that uncertainty into F1.



10. PRE-QUALIFYING THURSDAY

But why stop at 26 cars? Surely a healthy sport should have another five or six teams clamouring to get on the back of the grid, and they should fight it out on Thursdays when nothing of significance happens. Everyone is present, but nobody can go out. Let the top five teams stay at home in the garage, but make everyone else pre-qualify. If the dignity of some is jeopardised by this, make it team – rather than driver – qualifying. Let the big guns use young up-and-coming talent if they dare, and give the paying public something to watch.

Martin Brundle, F1 driver-turned-commentator, who had to pre-qualify in 1989 and 1991
"God, it was horrifying. You could go all the way to Australia for the GP and be a spectator by 9am Friday morning. If you got through, it made the rest of the weekend seem easy, that's for sure. It was a funny time, because even though you were pre-qualifying, you could still be in a competitive car. In 1989, I had to pre-qualify the Brabham-Judd, but at Monaco we ended up fourth on the grid. But it was a bit crazy, really. Do you remember that there were 39 cars at one point? That's probably a bit excessive, and it was very stressful being one of 13 cars trying to get into the top four pre-Q places. Thinking about it now, there are probably 50 things I'd bring back before pre-qualifying – although we had some fantastic parties when we didn't get through…"

11. BANNING REFUELLING

Sealed fuel tanks would make F1 greener, safer and more exciting. The authorities claim they want to make F1 more environmentally friendly, but nobody will believe them until they make fuel economy a real consideration (which is something KERS will not address). By reducing fuel consumption to a fixed volume, preferably one that reduces each year, teams will have to make efficiency gains just to finish the race. For the drivers there is another challenge – coping with a car that weighs more at the beginning of the race than at the end. Of course pitstops are exciting, and would continue to exist so long as tyre compounds stayed suitably soft – though there would probably be fewer injuries without the fuel hose around.

Mike Gascoyne, Force India chief technical officer
"I think refuelling adds a lot to the spectacle and excitement of F1. It also mixes up strategies, it looks good on TV and, really, I don't see any reason for not having it. The idea that we'd see drivers running out of fuel halfway around the last lap doesn't float any more: we know far too much about what's happening on the cars now for that ever to happen." ➜





Pointless
In a non-championship arena, teams could test out cars and drivers without the pressures of F1, and have fun in the sun at the same time.

12. NON-CHAMPIONSHIP RACES...

... because sometimes it's more interesting when there isn't anything at stake. Teams could use them to give their junior drivers a run, train engineers and test new components, instead of schlepping around cold and foggy Spain all winter.

Peter Windsor, journalist and broadcaster

"One of Bernie Ecclestone's successes has been his philosophy that less is more. By limiting supply, he has made F1 more successful and popular around the world. But I think it would be fabulous to allow F1 drivers to compete in other forms of motorsport – for example if there was a revival of the Tasman Series, for GP2 cars, or if GP2 Asia teams had to field one F1 driver. Another idea I'd love to see happen would be for the names of five F1 drivers to be drawn from a hat each Saturday and they'd then be obliged to compete in the GP2 sprint race."

13. FEATURE RACE/SPRINT RACE REVERSE GRIDS

It's fascinating to watch a great driver battle through the field, but in these days of ultra-reliability, it happens only rarely. Having a reverse grid shakes things up and lets the drivers show their skills, both attacking and defending. Instead of third practice, have a sprint race on Saturday mornings, based on finishing positions at the previous race. Award half-points, just like they do in GP2.

Bruno Michel, GP2 boss and architect, with Flavio Briatore and Bernie Ecclestone, of the GP2 race weekend format

"It's a mistake to make comparisons between Formula One and GP2. What I will say is that it was complicated and challenging to build the reverse-grid and sprint-race format for GP2 and a lot of people said it wouldn't work, then complained when the series started. Now, of course, everyone says it's great and the best drivers win… but it wasn't easy to start with. Should we try it in F1? I really don't have an opinion."

14. YOUNG DRIVER SPONSORSHIP

Because F1 is a richer and more diverse sport with the likes of Elf, Shell and Gitanes helping to ensure talent is spotted and nurtured. Without it, success in junior formulae often comes down to having a rich daddy…

Dr Helmut Marko, Red Bull motorsport consultant

"At the moment, there are so many possibilities for a young driver that it's probably easier than ever before to make it to the higher levels if you have the talent. Honda, Mercedes, Renault, Toyota and Red Bull all back junior drivers, and the only danger now is that the young guys are getting spoiled because everything's so easy for them. So we have to be really strict within the driver programmes. All of the guys are quick, so you look for all the other qualities that make a successful driver. Some of them have no idea that being part of a junior driver programme is like getting a million euros' worth of funding to race. In our own driver programme, Sébastien Buemi and Robert Wickens are both guys with talent but no cash who have been helped by a development scheme."

15. HELMET CAM

Other sports let spectators see what the player sees, so why not have the same thing for a driver?

Rupert Shelbourne, Fuji TV producer, and Anthony Woodhouse, technical director of Total World Sports (who developed prototype F1 onboard cameras)

RS: "As well as the view, we would be able to share every movement of the driver's head – if and how the drivers turn their heads during starts, racing manoeuvres and in traffic situations. But – and I think this is possibly the single main advantage – we might also start to understand more about the extreme physical demands put upon the drivers as their heads are thrown around by the incredible forces generated by hitting kerbs, accelerating, turning and braking."

AW: "It's really a non-starter on the grounds of weight, safety and aerodynamics. Driver's helmets are designed to be as light as possible, as the weight is multiplied by the G-forces when cornering. So, anything that would add weight to a helmet would most likely be rejected."

16. AN END TO FIVE-YEAR PLANS

Fixed specifications were supposed to make F1 cheaper and help the little teams: actually they do just the opposite. With frozen regulations, success becomes a case of grinding out the iterations – and the big teams grind faster than the little ones. Constant changes of rules reward the organisationally nimble, and those prepared to innovate. Invention becomes more important, and the talent of designers, rather than the power of supercomputers, comes to the fore.

Nick Fry, Honda F1 CEO

"It's necessary for a team to have a structured plan and I think it would be beneficial for F1 as a whole to have more of a structured plan for the future, too. If all the teams and participants bought into it, it would be very beneficial. Many other sports are trying to emulate F1, as we give the impression of being pretty organised. But we should be wary of rival sports series doing a better job than us."

17. THE RETURN OF PROCAR

Something for the paying public: get a big sportscar from a non-aligned manufacturer and make all the drivers set times in it. Let them have as many goes at they want over the weekend, and find out who's the quickest.

Ron Dennis, whose pre-McLaren Project Four ran the Procar F1 support series for BMW in 1979 and 1980

"F1 is so much more intensive now that to have a one-make championship supporting grands prix, but using current grand prix drivers, as Procar did, would not be commercially viable. Taking a driver from one manufacturer and putting him in another manufacturer's car just wouldn't be possible, when you think of some of the huge advertising budgets that are attached to them it's not commercially possible. But from a more romantic motor racing point of view, it's still a nice idea."

18. A POINT FOR FASTEST LAP AND POLE

With so many races becoming processional in the last third, creating an incentive to push would provide enormous added value for spectators and viewers. In the same vein, a point for pole position would be nice, giving the teams another factor to consider when deciding on qualifying strategies.

Gerhard Berger, Toro Rosso co-owner

"For me, the question with qualifying isn't about points. What I would like to see is a change to the way Q3 works. Q1 and Q2 are fine, but in Q3, you no longer know who the fastest driver is, and that used to be one of the great things about F1. When Ayrton used to drive his car around at 110 per cent, you'd know that was a real pole lap. Now you don't know if a guy is quick or just light. It's confusing and a real shame for the fans."

19. GP2 CARS ON THE F1 GRID

Win the GP2 race on a Sunday morning and get to race with the big boys on Sunday afternoon. Good for the fans, great for the GP2 sponsors – fabulous for the drivers. F2 cars traditionally made up the numbers, so why not GP2? The new car has plenty of capacity to go faster than it currently does – maybe for an F1 race the team would be allowed to use a different ECU setting to keep up with the backmarkers. Who knows? It might turn up another Jacky Ickx…

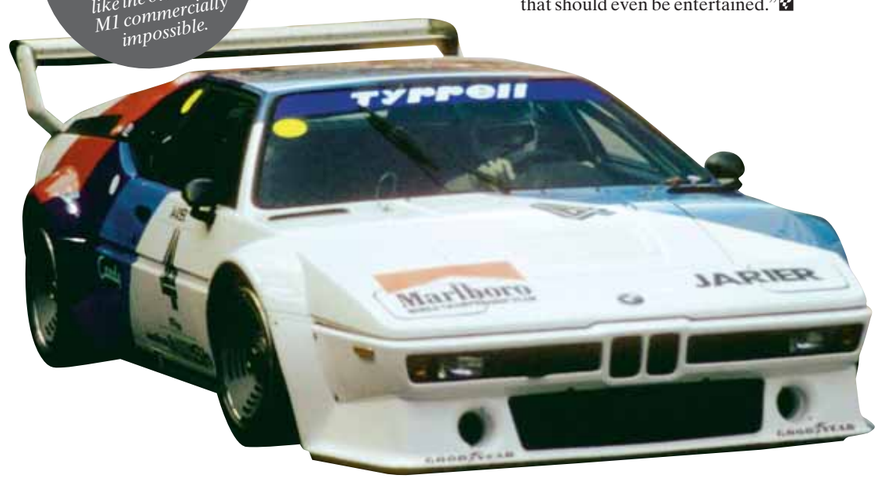
Karun Chandok, GP2 driver

"I'm not sure about putting a GP2 car against an F1 car! But I'm pretty sure that my team, iSport, could do a great job in F1 if they had a manufacturer partner. I think Bruno [Senna] and I would do a good job as team-mates because we work so well together and there's a lot of engineering talent in our team. Guys like Paul Jackson, the team manager, Gavin Jones, the technical director, and Richard Selwin, chief engineer, would do a great job in F1, I'm sure, if they were given the chance."

Christian Horner, Red Bull Racing team principal

"It's a ridiculous idea. How could you put a GP2 car with a 4-litre engine and slicks against an F1 car with a 2.4-litre V8 and grooved Bridgestones? They're totally incompatible. It's not a thought that should even be entertained."

New series
Image rights and the sponsorship of today's F1 stars make outings in a totally different car like the old BMW M1 commercially impossible.



24hr

Paddock People!



HOBBIES
FRANK DERNIE: AUDIOPHILE

Music has always been important to me. When the first Walkman came out in the late '70s it was marvellous to be able to take that travelling. Then the portable CD player came along; the player was compact, but the battery box was massive. It used to go through six D-sized batteries in one CD, but the quality was good. That was replaced by the MiniDisc, then I heard about a new piece of kit called an iPod and thought it might be interesting, so I pre-ordered one. I'm now onto my 10th. The hard-drives get bigger, which means I don't have to rip MP3s, as it can store music in the lossless format.

At home I don't use the headphones, I have some monumentally large loudspeakers. Pretty much my whole system is from Goldmund, a Swiss manufacturer I came across when working for Ligier. I've got the record player, CD, pre-amp, power-amps and loudspeakers, and I constructed a room to house it all. Room acoustics are almost the most important thing in how the system sounds: unless you're prepared to position your loudspeakers in the optimum positions, you may as well not spend much money on the stereo, because it's wasted.

I have fairly broad tastes – anything from Bach to Frank Zappa. Bach wrote the most brilliant stuff. I don't know whether I find it beautiful because it's mathematically pure, or for some other reason, but I just adore it. Then I like the classical composers, particularly Beethoven and Schubert. I've got a craze for turn-of-century music too: Mahler, Elgar, Bruckner did some just fabulous things using much more orchestral colour than the classical composers. Then there's the rock music from my youth. Zappa, Hendrix… I'm still in love with that stuff.

The music is massively more important than the medium. I'd sooner listen to Mozart on the telephone than rap on my stereo. Vinyl is great, but a lot of what people say is bad about CD comes from never having heard a good CD player.

I'm still massively interested in the engineering of record players. My last job before moving full-time into F1 was in the R&D department at [turntable manufacturer] Garrard. I was fascinated by the challenges of getting a record to turn at exactly 33⅓rpm, but there was another reason for me being there. In the late 1970s I was working part-time for [F1 designer] Harvey Postlethwaite. Harvey was based in Reading, I was several hundred kilometres away in Huddersfield. Garrard were based near Reading, so taking a job with them was quite good for my motor-racing career.

I don't like background music. If I listen to music I almost listen to it as though I'm attending a concert. I never treat it as though it's something incidental. Music is never just background for me. I wouldn't play it if I were doing something else. I'm either listening to it or it isn't on.

FOR MORE, VISIT: WWW.REDBULLETINF1.COM

PASCAL VASSELON

SENIOR GENERAL MANAGER-CHASSIS

TOYOTA



LOVE / HATE

1. FAMILY LIFE
I have lived with my wife, Marie Laure, for 17 years. My son, Thomas, is now 10 years old and is more and more switched on about F1. The race debriefs with him on Sunday night are sometimes harsher than with my boss in the team!

2. MOTORISED VEHICLES
Since I was very small, I have spent most of my time driving or riding anything with an engine – off-road bikes, karts, jet skis, skidoos, GT cars, 4x4s, single-seaters… my garage is full of these big boy's toys. However, you can't say I'm a frustrated driver, because I realised early that my road to Formula One had to be through engineering.

3. MOTORSPORT
When I was young, if I wasn't out driving myself, I was at a race meeting and, because I didn't have much money, the conditions were sometimes really uncomfortable. I remember my first visit to Nogaro when I spent a night at the track with only a team flag I collected in the paddock to keep me warm! I still cannot believe how lucky I am to be paid to attend the best motorsport events in the world.

4. BELGIUM
I commute to Cologne from my home near Spa. Although it might seem like a pain to drive 200km a day, it really isn't. When I return to Belgium after a hard day at work or for a rare weekend at home I feel really refreshed. The Ardennes look like the French Massif Central where I'm from and it's a French-speaking area, but we have a different approach to life; more relaxed and welcoming.

5. DINNER WITH FRIENDS
There is really nothing better for me than having dinner with close friends. There's no need to bother with expensive wine or elaborate dishes, I love free-flowing conversation and a warm atmosphere.

1. MAGNY-COURS POLICE
Magny-Cours is a great place, but the traffic police are not open-minded. We all know how bad the traffic is and being late on Sunday morning this year I had to use the hard shoulder to overtake a lot of fans. But I was caught after a few kilometres and couldn't escape a small fine. Still, I rejoined the queue well in front of the Red Bull guys!

2. AMERICAN MOVIES
It seems there are only two or three generic scenarios and characters available in America. If you watch those movies for about 30 seconds, you know which character is good, which is bad and what's likely to happen next. There's nothing better than an intellectual French movie like Le Gendarme de Saint Tropez.

3. PROFESSIONAL BULLSHITTERS
Some people develop a talent for telling the truth only about things you can verify, and lying about everything else. I hate intellectual dishonesty, because it can sometimes be very well hidden and misleading if the person is clever.

4. MILITARY SERVICE
I was ready to sacrifice a year of my life, but I developed a total aversion to military service, the restriction of personal freedom and the stupid tasks forced upon you. My inability to accept this seemed so genuine and profound that the doctor sent me home after three weeks on the pretext of an old judo injury.

5. NEGATIVITY
Some people seem born to see only the worst side of things and find thousands of reasons for being angry and unhappy. This seems to me like a terrible lack of common sense, as the fundamental objective of everyone's life should be to enjoy it, whatever it is, while trying to make it even better.

ILLUSTRATION: JAMES TAYLOR. PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES

LUCKY NUMBERS

DR HELMUT MARKO

The head of Red Bull motorsport consultant has a taste for fine art and shared a track with Steve McQueen during his endurance racing days.

5,335.313

5,335.313 KILOMETRES... was the distance Gijs van Lennep and I drove to win the 1971 24 Heures du Mans. It remains the furthest distance ever driven in the event, but that's only because the circuit layout has changed. Gijs and I were driving a Porsche 917 short-tail and completed the 24 hours with an average speed of 222.304kph.

33:41

33 MINUTES 41 SECONDS... was the lap record I set in the 1972 Targa Florio, racing an Alfa Romeo T33. It was really dangerous; if you went around a corner too fast you fell off the mountain. On one side was a sheer drop, and on the other were houses with the doorstep on the track itself. The organisers barricaded the doors with planks, often trapping the inhabitants inside, so no one would walk out of their house and under our wheels.

500

I HAVE 500 PAINTINGS... in my collection of modern art. This is one of my great passions, and the works are spread throughout my various hotels, homes and galleries. I have many pieces by Americans like Frank Stella, and Austrian artists like Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

1970

MY FIRST LE MANS WAS IN 1970... and I finished third. It was also the year they filmed the movie Le Mans. Steve McQueen was shown to be racing a Gulf-Porsche 917K, which was driven in the race by Jo Siffert and Brian Redman. Racing with us was a camera car, a Porsche 908/2, that finished ninth overall, despite being weighed down by equipment and having to change film reels. McQueen seemed normal; he acted like a racer, not a movie star.

6

SIXTH ON THE GRID... at the 1972 French Grand Prix was my best qualifying result. Emerson Fittipaldi got ahead of me. On lap eight, he went wide and threw up a stone that went through my visor and into my left eye. I can't tell you how painful it was, but I did everything I could to keep it open. I was on a straight with 20 cars behind me; I had to pull over safely. My team boss, Louis Stanley, put something in my eye that hurt like crazy; he didn't have a clue what he was doing. I was then put in an ambulance and actually fell out of the bed as we took the corners. First I was taken to the wrong hospital. By the time I arrived at the right one it was two and a half hours after the accident.

11

THERE ARE 11 DRIVERS... in the Red Bull junior programme, across Formula BMW, Formula Renault, F3, Renault World Series and GP2. I've been involved with driver management a long time and looked after Gerhard Berger. I remember at the beginning of his career how impulsive he was. We weren't sure if he was serious or just out to enjoy himself. His driving was wild – at the first attempt, he tried to take every corner flat.

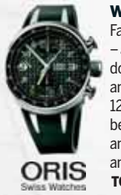
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I OWN TWO HOTELS... near Graz in Austria. One is a boutique hotel and the other is more luxurious. After I retired from F1 I needed something to do, and there weren't many nice hotels in the area. I didn't have any experience of hospitality, but it has worked out well. Now, whenever I'm at a race, if I see nice details in the hotel I'm staying in, I'll take a picture with my cameraphone and maybe steal the idea.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES

REGENSPEZIALISTEN

The 1962 German Grand Prix at the Nürburgring was delayed as a torrential downpour swept across the Eifel mountains, but what else happened that afternoon?



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TO PLAY, VISIT: WWW.REDBULLETINF1.COM

1 The number 19 car was driven by Jo Siffert. The following year he raced for his own team, but by mid-1964 had moved on to another team run by a legendary F1 figure. Whose team did he join?

2 What was car number 10 and who drove it at this Nürburgring race?

3 This is a tricky one. Who is in car number 28, the Lotus-BRM 24, and what team did he drive for?

4 Who raced the number 5 Lotus-Climax 25, and what mishap befell him at the start of the race?

5 The second Lotus-Climax 25 here, number 6, was driven by whom?

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES

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PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES

Either/Or

KAZUKI NAKAJIMA

The Williams driver knows what he likes...

WET RACE OR DRY RACE?
I'd say dry. Racing in the wet is horrible. Even when it helps you to get a good result, being out in the wet is no fun. You can't see anything in front. It's ridiculous.

SALAD OR STEAK?
Steak. I like meaty things. Recently I've been having more salad because I have to, but I prefer steak.

IPOD OR VINYL?
iPod. I don't even know how to pronounce 'vinyl'.

NIGHT ON THE TOWN OR QUIET NIGHT AT HOME?
Definitely a quiet night at home. It's nice to go out with friends in Oxford, but if I do it's probably for dinner rather than clubbing.

WINE OR WATER?
Water. I can't drink alcohol!

GOLF OR FOOTBALL?
I like playing both, but probably football more. Not so much now, but quite a lot in the winter.

MINIVAN OR MOTORCYCLE?
Minivan. I don't have a motorbike licence – and don't have any plans to get one. They look like fun, but for me probably very dangerous as well. Sometimes I tend to push too hard.

MOZART OR MOTÖRHEAD?
It really depends. When I'm relaxing I want quiet music, and classical does that. But generally, rock music would be my choice. Or pop.

YACHT OR PLANE?
I'll say plane. A private jet would be very nice. I'm not really interested in having a yacht.

SUPERMODEL OR GIRL NEXT DOOR?
Girl next door. Somehow I think a supermodel might be a bit too much for me.

SUIT OR CASUAL?
Casual... though I'm thinking of maybe buying a few more suits.



BEACH OR MOUNTAIN?
Difficult question. Maybe lying on the beach in summer. But as long as the view is good, I like both.

NEWSPAPER OR COMIC BOOK?
Hmm... I'll say newspaper as I'm a mature racing driver these days.

SHOPPING MALL OR INTERNET SHOPPING?
Shopping mall. The Internet doesn't let you try before you buy.

RACE OR QUALIFYING?
Qualifying. I get more excited by qualifying. I prefer the sprint to the marathon.

MONACO APARTMENT OR SWISS CHALET?
Swiss chalet. But I need a town nearby.

BEARD OR SHAVE?
Shave – though beard isn't really an option!

TRAINING IN THE GYM OR TRAINING ON THE ROAD?
Definitely on the road. It's much nicer to go for a run outside, especially when the weather is good. Running rather than cycling for me. It's more efficient.

BOOK OR TV?
Generally a book. I don't watch TV at home much, except football if it's on. More often I'll read.

MONEY OR GLORY?
Glory. Though a balance of the two would be good.

PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES