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AN ALMOST INDEPENDENT F1 NEWSPAPER



THE ROAD AHEAD

VETTEL ON VALENCIA & BEYOND

Having a whale of a time
Nico Rosberg will be used to the attention of adoring young fans, but a 10-year-old Beluga White Whale counts among the more unusual admirers on Nico's trip this week to L'Oceanogràfic, Europe's largest aquarium.
Photography: LAT

EUROPE
SATURDAY 23·08·08

Under the scorching Spanish sun, the drivers took to the track yesterday for their first taste of the new circuit, and despite being dusty and slippery at the start of practice, the general consensus seems to be that it's good fun and nice to drive. Away from the track most of us, like Nico, seem to be enjoying the Valencian experience, while others have taken inspiration from the Olympics and are trying their hand at a few new sports…

Armed robbery

We've been inundated with stories of paddock folk being robbed this week, so please be extra vigilant with your belongings. Many have had their pockets picked or handbags stolen, sometimes by gangs and sometimes by individuals, and it appears the airport is a particularly unsafe place to take your eyes off your luggage. The scariest story we've heard comes from Chilean photographer Patrick Leighton, who was walking to the rental car park when he was engaged in conversation by a couple he assumed were holidaymakers. "A man and a woman asked me for directions. They were dressed like regular tourists," says Patrick, still shaken. "It was so well planned. Two men came up behind me and pushed me to the ground. They were armed. I was kicked in the ribs and didn't dare move as they took my bags that held two brand new cameras, some small lenses, my passport and credit cards." Having spent the last 25 hours travelling, it was hardly the warm welcome he was hoping for, but Patrick is very grateful to all the photographers who have rallied around to help him out with equipment and photos this weekend. "It's the first time in my 27-year career that I've been mugged, and I urge everyone to stay alert this weekend."

Après-ski

Jarno Trulli is planning to demonstrate to some Olympic skiers how to go even faster. Mates with the Swiss ski team, the Italian has joined them before on the black slopes. Next week, he'll be taking them onto the tarmac when he gives them a lesson in how to drive a single-seater. Given that the lesson will take place on a runway, it seems unlikely that the skiers will learn how to take corners, but maybe they'll mark out a course with cones so they can see how they get on in a slalom.





Location, Location

Cool cameras

While fans have flocked to see Valencia's inaugural race, Getty F1 photographers Paul Gilham, Clive Mason and Ker Robertson (pictured left, on a boat) have, between them, been covering Olympic sailing, cycling, judo and kayaking out in Beijing. The high temperatures in China have forced them to each purchase a rather ingenious invention – refrigerated camera bags. They plan to bring them to Spa, where they will be filled with beer.

Lounging around

Now Formula One has officially gifted Valencia its status as the 'Monte Carlo of Spain', it seems only right that the city should also host an Amber Lounge. Sonia Irvine and her crew have arrived in town with as much champagne as Epernay could offer. Tables at the Hilton venue range from €3,950-€6,900, and individual passes are priced at €375 – a saving on Monaco and Singapore. Ladies with paddock passes can join in the fun for free this evening. Keep your eyes peeled for mechanics dressed in drag. Email your names to rae@amber-lounge.com, and to buy tickets and tables call +33 6 11 81 22 55.

Retirement party

We're still six race weekends away from David Coulthard's final race, but the Scot has already started his thankyous. On Wednesday night, he took the entire Energy Station crew out and generously treated them all to dinner at a local tapas restaurant. Then, the Energy Station crew headed to a club, picking up other paddock regulars along the way. Having been in F1 for 14 years, we imagine that poor DC's wallet will be considerably lighter by the time he reaches the mother of all farewell parties in Brazil.

Slam dunk

Can you leap on the top step of the podium like Schumi? Can you throw a coffee cup into a dustbin while sitting at your desk? Then you can probably play basketball. We're looking to get two teams of five together for a little inter-F1 competition. Fancy shooting some hoops at a race soon? Email secret.service@uk.redbulletin.com.

Lewis' water torture

Lewis Hamilton claims he always came first at school sports days, but finally he's found something he's rubbish at. Inspired by Britain's Olympians and keen to find fresh ways to train, he's taken up rowing, but found it even more unstable than a '94 Pacific – not that he's ever had to drive a back-of-the-grid car. "I completely suck at it! The balance that you need and the core stability and everything", he said. Core stability? Was it nuclear-powered or something?

Heads you lose

Having missed the theatre of competition because of the three-week break, the Williams team arrived seeking any means of battle they could find. After a few drinks at the Holiday Inn's bar, account manager Richard Lavers was only too keen to challenge all-comers to an arm-wrestling match. He lost, so his colleagues shaved his head. Bet he regrets that Philips sponsorship now.

Naked truth

After a hard day at the track, there's nothing like a stroll around a race city to clear the head, but, for Phil Gooding, nocturnal wandering is more of a worry. Phil normally works for Bridgestone at tests, but was sent to Budapest to sample the race lifestyle. His trip turned into a bit of nightmare when his sleepwalking habit resulted in a late-night sortie from his hotel room – naked. He was only awakened by the sound of his bedroom door slamming behind him, stranding him in the corridor. Locked out, he was faced with a walk of shame to the night porter's desk to beg for a new key. By morning, the entire staff had seen the CCTV footage and he was a hotel hero.

SHOWING RESPECT
Fernando Alonso led a period of silence at midday yesterday as everyone in Formula One paid their respects to the 153 victims of the Madrid air crash on Wednesday. The Spaniard, reported to be deeply affected by the tragedy, said, "It's probably the saddest approach to a weekend I have had."

Today's schedule

09:30-10:00	Formula 3 qualifying
11:00-12:00	F1 third practice
12:25-13:10	Porsche Supercup qualifying
14:00-15:00	F1 qualifying
16:00	GP2 race one
17:30	Formula BMW race one

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INSTANT OPINIONS #12: LONGER SEASON

Would more than 20 races a year be a good idea?

POSITIVE: Absolutely. More is better. If F1 wants to increase its global audience, it has to be fresh and innovative and that means racing in new places, either at the expense of old venues or via an expanded calendar. No circuit wants to lose its race, so more races it is. With a reduced testing programme and rotating team members, there's no reason 25 races a year should be more taxing than 18.

NEGATIVE: No. You can have too much of a good thing. Successful businesses excel at keeping supply just below the level of demand. More races risks diluting the F1 brand and saturating the TV audience beyond the point where it is interested. And what of the human element? There are already worries about the loss of the traditional summer break on next year's schedule. When is enough enough?

The Secret Diary of Hermann Schnell, Aged 19¾

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3RD, HUNGARY

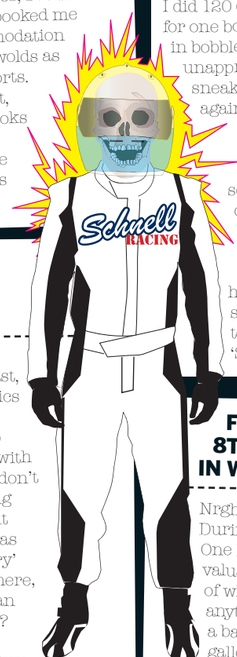
Budapest is hot and sticky. We've managed virtually no running in practice, qualified really badly and I don't think I'd decrease my chances of scoring this afternoon if I stayed in the motorhome and did some knitting. Usually I'd be annoyed about this monumental waste of my talent, but today I don't care as after this race it's vacation time! During the summer testing ban everyone gets a holiday. Unless they've got to develop the car. Or work in the wind-tunnel. Or pack containers for the flyaways. Or do team-management stuff. But basically everyone else gets to have a holiday. I was going diving in the Maldives, but the team principal says he's booked me into luxury accommodation in the English Cotswolds as a reward for my efforts. I tried to get out of it, but he insisted. It looks nice, and it can't be that remote because it has an airfield. It's called Kemble.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 5TH, KEMBLE

I should have been suspicious at breakfast, when all my mechanics stumbled into the kitchen, but I was too busy being annoyed with the team principal. I don't mind the team getting a reward, but surely it shouldn't be as good as mine. This is a 'luxury' youth hostel – if I'm here, shouldn't they be at an average youth hostel? It was only when the test-team manager gave me the schedule that I worked out what was actually going on.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 6TH, KEMBLE

The testing ban allows for a 50km shakedown run. Since we rarely get more than 50km before something explodes, we're treating this as a normal test, but using the KERS thingy for the first time. I'm a little bit nervous but everyone assures me that it's perfectly safe. My crew are all wearing rubber gloves and Wellington boots with really thick soles. They say it's a custom out here in the countryside. Yesterday they slapped a soaking wet sponge under my helmet. They said it would be a kindness, 'just in case', but it wasn't even that hot outside.



THURSDAY, AUGUST 7TH, CASTLE COMBE

This gets worse and worse. Today we moved 30km down the road to a racetrack. I was puzzled as to why, because we can't test and are all out of shakedown miles. "Demonstration run," said the test-team manager, bolting a set of GP2 tyres to the car. I did 120 demonstration laps today for one bored sponsor, three people in bobble-hats and a flock of largely unappreciative sheep. I have a sneaking feeling this might be against the spirit of the law and have tried to contact my GPDA representative, but he's busy not testing somewhere else. I'm so depressed. My crew (who claim the pile of Pilates mats they now stand on in the pitlane is part of a healthy-lifestyle initiative) say they will cheer me up tonight by introducing me to 'Scrumpy', whoever that is.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8TH, SOMEWHERE IN WILTSHIRE

Nrghh! Grrghh! HNNGGKK! During my time in Formula One I have learned many valuable lessons, the latest of which is to never drink anything that's passed around a barn in an unmarked five-gallon plastic fuel can. How can something made of apples corrode metal? I should have recognised the warning signs: this is the first time I've seen Gimlet without a lit cigarette. I didn't want to drink a liquid with the viscosity of heavy-grade motor oil, but they insisted. God knows what'll happen if I have to give a sample for a random drugs test anytime soon. I'll probably melt the container. Maybe I should throw myself on the mercy of the FIA right away? At least if they suspended me for a few races I'd get a decent vacation.

PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER, GETTY IMAGES



VIEW FROM THE TRUCK: BACK ON THE RIGHT ROAD

A return to the streets is a step forwards…

BY JUSTIN HYNES

Funny how blasé you get about life in F1. The endless cycle of airport, circuit, hotel, circuit, airport might not exactly be a comfort blanket (certainly not in France, where 'comfort' is merely regarded as a suspicious foreign brand of fabric softener), but it at least gives us something to hold on to. Staying in the same hotels and eating in the same restaurants year on year may not be the most adventurous way of seeing the world, but in an existence as peripatetic as ours, small familiarities are crucial.

So, coming to a new venue brings with it both a frisson of excitement and a hint of frustration. Where's the hire car desk? How do you get to the track from the hotel? Oh God, what restaurant are we going to?

Mostly, though, it's an exercise in big kids playing with new toys. That's what it's like for the rabble of F1; those of us who cling to the fringes of the sport, much as pilot fish hover around sharks – feeding off the crumbs left by the sport's major predators. For the drivers, it must be a much larger and more exciting new pool to swim in. Indeed, the prospect of a totally new challenge must capture the imagination of even the hardest-hearted 'it's just business as usual' driver.

The prospect of a totally new challenge must capture the imagination of even the hardest-hearted 'it's just business as usual' driver

And this one looks like it might take quite a lot of imagination to master. Even when the first simulations of the circuit were released, it looked like something a little out-of-the-ordinary. Montreal with walls was the general consensus, a sweeping blend of lightning-fast straights, slow to medium corners and walls close enough to raise the hairs on the back of your neck, especially into the swing bridge with its balance-upsetting gaps in the road.

What it seems to indicate is that circuit design has taken another step forwards. No disrespect to Hermann Tilke, but when you're redesigning existing circuits from a limited palette of options, or presented with a topographically barren site with few defining features, inspiration must be hard to come by. Combine that with satisfying the regulations and budgetary considerations, and the result is often far from classic.

However, that paradigm of the monolithic über-circuit on a flat flood plain miles from any kind of urban centre has, it appears, been abandoned in favour of something a little more ambitious. Sure, Istanbul Park seems marginally closer to Ankara than the Bosphorous, but the track is mighty – the result, apparently, of Bernie overflying the area in a helicopter, pointing to the best hillside and muttering, "There."

This one, too, is bold – Monaco in a modern context, keeping the streets and harbourside location, but discarding the too-narrow confines and the impossibility of overtaking. It still looks a little rough around the edges, but in time it could become a classic. The same could be true of Singapore and Abu Dhabi.

An age ago, in pursuit of larger and larger crowds, stadium sports in Europe and, particularly, the US, sold out their city grounds in favour of enormo-domes in vast car parks located in the blighted hinterland of cities. The things that made those clubs great – spirit, heritage, passion and a feeling of public ownership of something with character – were lost. F1's rediscovered passion for racing in the streets appears to have avoided that soulless deconstruction in the nick of time.

It remains to be seen if this one, or any of the upcoming city races, will make a realistic bid for classic status, but by bringing the racing to the people, and not the other way around, they should have a better chance than most.

ON THIS DAY... 23/8/08



1990: BREAKING DOWN THE WALLS
West and East Germany announce that the two countries will officially reunify in October 1990. The Berlin Wall tumbles late in 1989.
YouTube.com search: Berlin Wall + demolition + 1989

1305: FREEDOM!
William Wallace, leader of the Scots in the war of independence against the English, is executed.
Mel Gibson gives Wallace the Hollywood treatment in the 1995 film Braveheart.
YouTube.com search: Braveheart + freedom + speech

1954: HERCULEAN TASK
The C-130 Hercules transport plane makes its first flight.
James Bond wrestles with the KGB on board a Herc.
YouTube.com search: James Bond + vs + Necros

DEATHS

1987: DIDIER PIRONI
The French former F1 driver, killed in a powerboating crash.
YouTube.com search: Didier Pironi + tribute

ON THIS DAY, VISIT...

VALENCIA BY SUNSET
If relaxing to chillout music and watching the sun set over the city as the sea laps gently around you is your idea of heaven, this is for you. This boat trip includes cava on arrival and there's a bar on board.
Sailings depart from Port America's Cup, next to the Veles e Vents building. Trips take place Tue-Sun. Price is €20 for adults. For details, call +34 963 816 066.

ON THIS DAY IN F1...

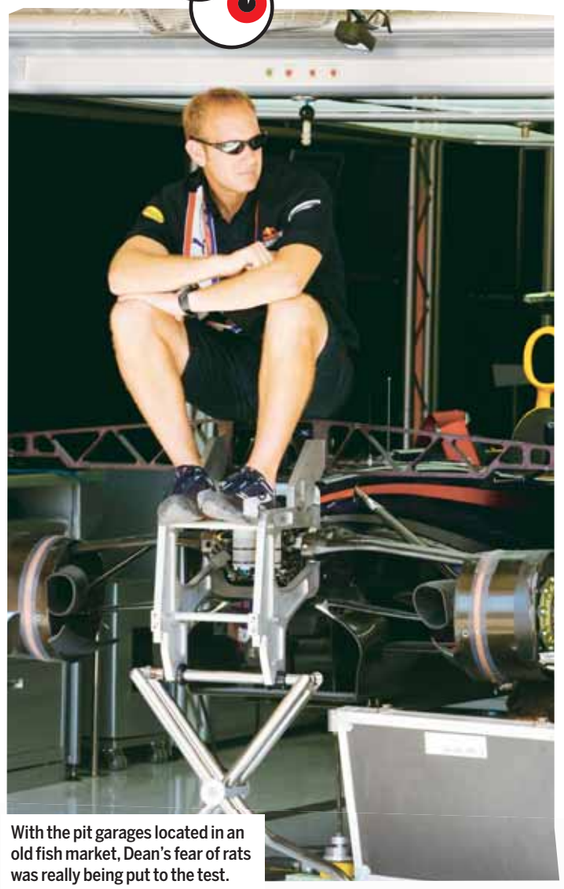


1964: AUSTRIA
Italian Lorenzo Bandini, driving a Ferrari, celebrates his only grand prix victory.
Memories of Bandini.
YouTube.com search: Lorenzo Bandini + 40 + years

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PHOTOGRAPHY: REX FEATURES, SUTTON IMAGES. ILLUSTRATION: DIETMAR KAINRATH

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, GEPA



With the pit garages located in an old fish market, Dean's fear of rats was really being put to the test.



Jarno was concentrating so hard on learning the new track, he didn't even notice he'd dropped his handbag at Turn 2.

TEETHING TROUBLES

Getting used to a brand-new location is bound to lead to more than a few embarrassing situations…



Alonso is very proud of his shiny white teeth and has invited every member of the Oviedo Dental Hygienists Association to this home race as a gesture of thanks.



Track-building is hot work, but ventilating your trainers with a 20mm hammer drill is not the cleverest of ideas, which is why we can't show you the next photograph.



"Is there much more of this rubbish?" thought Mario with a fixed smile on his face, as he had to listen to Vettel describe his every move in the nightclub while they walked the track: "So then I sort of shimmy up to this girl, laying my cool moves on her with a bit of the hand jiving like this, and I say, 'Hi, I'm Seb and I'm a grand prix driver, and you're gonna be one lucky lady tonight, and after that…"

THE LEARNING CURVE

Sebastian Vettel takes his first proper look at Formula One's newest venue and reflects on his season so far. Matt Youson goes with him. Photography by Thomas Butler

Wednesday afternoon: Toro Rosso's Sebastian Vettel has invited us to join him to walk around the Valencia street circuit – only now he doesn't seem so keen to get going. Halfway around the world there is the small matter of the Olympic 200m final. It's due to start at 4.20pm local time and, with a rather beseeching look, Sebastian wonders if we might not start the track walk a little later than planned; say, around 4.20 and 21 seconds. "I'd like to see Usain Bolt run – I think something special might happen." Happy to let the blistering Iberian sun settle a little lower in the sky, we settle down to watch. Bolt appears; Bolt runs; Bolt wins. Another Olympic gold and another world-record time is met with an enthusiastic ovation from the small crowd gathered in the Energy Station, Vettel is as animated as anyone, cheering as a fan, rather than extending a professional courtesy, one elite sportsman to another. The young guy 16th in the F1 World Championship has a long way to go to reach the level of stardom afforded a double Olympic sprint champion. But give him time.

He sets off from the pitlane with little prior knowledge of this new circuit. "I've watched videos of the GT race they held a few weeks ago, but I really don't know what to expect. It's good to walk around. Even if you know the track well, it's always worth having a look, because the surface might have changed or there might be a new kerb. In the car, you're going too quickly to pick up the details – and on a street circuit, it's the little details that might put you in the wall."

It sounds like the voice of experience, but Sebastian's F1 career spans a grand total of 19 races. Istanbul and Budapest aside, every race this year has been a new experience. But, as people are wont to remark, he has an old head on young shoulders. He doesn't seem to have changed much since an Indianapolis debut as Robert Kubica's understudy, one year ago. He still demonstrates the affable, curious intelligence and the just-pleased-to-be-here mannerisms that were noted almost as much as were his Friday times for BMW Sauber, though he insists a year in F1 is a very long time.

'On a street circuit, it's the little details that might put you in the wall'

"I'm a different driver; I think I'm more professional now. In Indianapolis, I didn't know what was going to happen. I finished that race exhausted, knowing that I had to work on myself. Today, there's still a lot to do, but I have improved, because you do. You learn as you go. Obviously I wasn't completely naïve, but there's so much you don't understand when you start out – like how to use the tyres and feel the car; how to adapt to conditions, to be aware of what is happening around you; to drive to the strategy. That first race tends to be more about driving the car as quickly as possible for as long as possible, and ➜















➜ nothing else matters. You're looking at everything; trying to be aware of everything. As you accumulate races, a lot of that stuff moves into the background; it runs on automatic and you don't have to think about it, which frees you up to focus on new things. And so you get better."

'Getting better' is a phrase that appears often in the world of Sebastian Vettel because, he argues, getting better means moving forwards. If you're not moving forwards, then you're standing still, "and in F1, if you're standing still, your time at the top is going to be limited". That pronouncement is accompanied with a self-deprecating grin. "Of course, I'm not at the top yet, so that probably isn't something I need to worry about at the moment."

Valencia's new circuit is meeting with approval. It's wide for a street circuit; Turn One looks like it will be flat; Turn Two is a possible overtaking point but a tight one; the kerbs in Turn Three are generous. The asphalt is fresh and flat, without the camber or the bumps associated with a street course. "It's just like Bahrain. But Bahrain with walls," is the early judgment.

David Coulthard appears on a moped. There's a professional discussion about the gaps between the sections of the bridge and some gentle mocking of DC's scooter-based reconnaissance. "But I'm counting my races down," says the senior driver, "you're still counting up." Seb was six years old when DC made his Formula One debut.

Signing to drive for Red Bull Racing in 2009 is, Vettel insists, not something that he's thinking about at the moment. "I'm aware of what will happen, but I try not to spend any time thinking about it, because I already have a job, which is to focus entirely on this race. When this race is over, I'll focus entirely on the next race, and the next, and the next… After Brazil, *then* I'll think about 2009; until then, I have a duty to give my full attention to Toro Rosso."

It is, insists Vettel, no great strain, he has always lived for the moment. "It's how I grew up and it's where I came from. I learned to concentrate on the thing in front of me. Obviously, even in karts you dream of being in Formula One, but you can't waste time thinking about it. I didn't race in F3 thinking, 'I have to win this within two years and make the next step; by the time I'm 24 I must have made it to F1, blah, blah, blah.' That isn't me – it just isn't."

Contrary to the opinion of many, Vettel insists that he really is moving teams, rather than simply switching cars, because Toro Rosso and RBR are very different organisations. But having been supported by Red Bull since 1998, he acknowledges that it won't be an entirely new experience. He became a full Red Bull Junior in 2000. It's difficult to imagine this much talent not finding its way regardless, but he sees it differently. "It isn't like being a good footballer. Finding budgets for karting, for formula racing… it's all very expensive. My father is a roofmaker; my mother is a housewife. Financially, I couldn't have got where I am without the support of, first, Red Bull and, later, BMW. Thanks to them, I get to enjoy myself every second weekend. And I'm very, very grateful for that."

This page: the fresh flat asphalt meets with Sebastian's approval as we make our way around the circuit: "It's like Bahrain but with walls."

Opposite page, clockwise from left: Sebastian and David Coulthard banter about DC's 'scooter reconnaissance'; one of the huge grandstands; Sebastian inspects surface gaps at the swing bridge.

The long, long straights around the back of the circuit have Sebastian likening the circuit to Montreal, albeit with more accommodating kerbs. He runs a hand over the asphalt on the exits; traction onto the straights is going to be important. In between, he stops to chat and sign tabards for contractors and marshals. The few fans beyond the fence shout questions. With no particular urgency, he wanders over and chats for a couple of minutes. What does he think of the circuit, everyone wants to know. Fast and swooping seems to be the verdict, judging from the hand gestures.

It's a little under three years since Vettel first stepped into a Formula One car. He drove a BMW-Williams in September 2005 at Jerez. It's a career-shaping moment in any young driver's life, and, Vettel says, one of the best days of his life – though there's a touch of anxiety when he says it.

"Coming straight from F3, I was surprised. I didn't expect that much power or that much grip. After four or five laps, I thought, 'OK, these are the big boys' toys I'm playing with, and I'm not ready for it; I'm never going to make it.' But, at the same time, I was enjoying it. Four or five laps after that, I started to feel more comfortable, more confident… At the end of the day I was addicted to that level of speed. I wanted to drive again, and again, and again.

"I haven't found anything else that gives me as much pleasure as driving these cars. Maybe once you don't feel that love and that passion, once you don't think it's fun any more, you can't be at your best. Maybe you can still be good, but you can't be on top. I think that's the best way of describing the addiction."

Turns 18 and 19 provide an ample demonstration. Thinking about driving through the fast combination brings a smile and a noticeable skip in the step. It's impossible to explain to anyone who doesn't drive an open-wheel racing car at 300kph, so he settles for a simple explanation. "We're really going to feel this bit. It's one of those sections that takes balls."

Walking through the final section, another flat-out run to a heavy-braking zone, the conversation naturally comes around to Vettel's expectations for the rest of the year. The target, he says, "is to meet our potential".

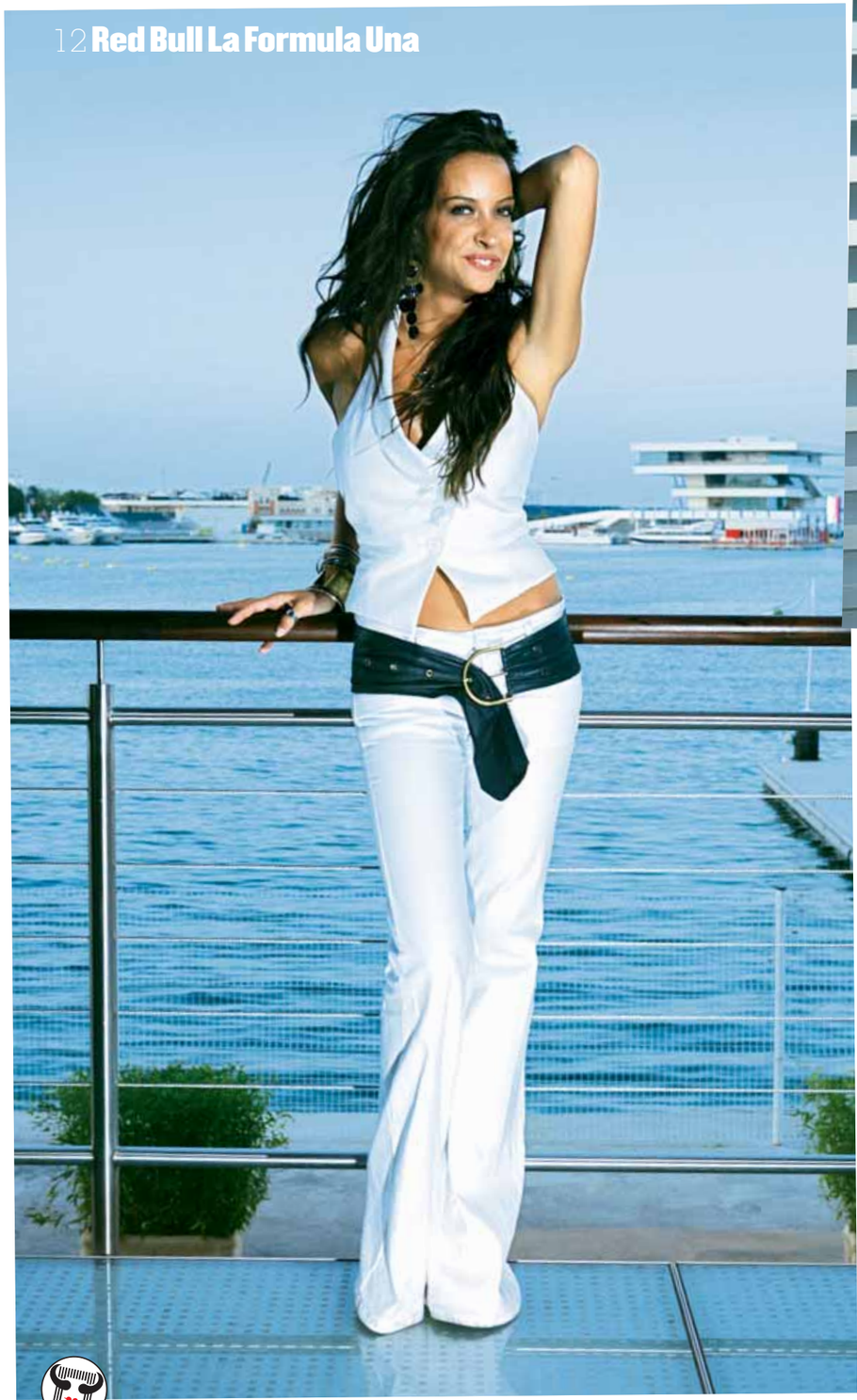
"There are seven races left and we have to use every single one. Some circuits will suit us, some won't, but that doesn't matter; it can't matter. In Hockenheim, we had a strong weekend. We scored points without there being any retirements in front of us. Some races won't be like that: some races, the car might only be good enough for 12th position, or 14th, or whatever. The most important thing is not to make mistakes, and to use all of our ability. I can finish 12th and feel good. If everything goes as it should – good pit stops, good driving, a set-up that is as it should be – then if I finish 12th, I will be happy because I will know we have done everything we can. We put ourselves in a position to take advantage of other teams having retirements. Sometimes that is all you can do. If others fall out, then you score. Maybe that's a lucky point – but you need to be there to get it."

It's the final word, the lap complete. Back in the Energy Station, the TV screens are showing re-runs of the Olympic 200m. Bolt is holding up his golden shoe. It's the same colour and even the same brand as Vettel's racing boots, but just a little more famous. For the moment… ◪

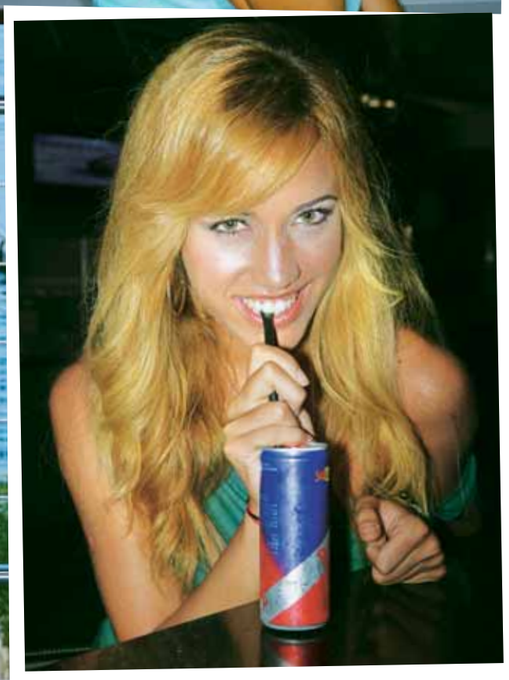
SEBASTIAN'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"It's like Montreal, at first glance. It looks fast, which is unusual for a street circuit. It has some fast combinations and long straights. Look a little bit more closely, though, and actually there aren't many fast corners. The main thing is going to be stop and go: stopping the car, turning and going again. You're going to need good braking and good traction. I think you have two or three sections that will be quite difficult, with fast sections leading into slow-speed corners. The last corner sequence before the start-finish straight in particular will be interesting, turning in from 300kph and braking at the same time.

It's actually a very wide track. There's a lot of run-off for a street circuit – which is good. It looks very difficult to find the right line. The slow corners are critical; you make or lose more in slow corners than in fast ones, and there are lots of them. The amount of risk you're prepared to take in the last corner will be important. Getting good traction onto the straights will be important too, because the straights are very long. (They're winding, but it's all flat, so I'm calling those straights.) You need a good exit, otherwise you pay. Braking for Turn Two might be an overtaking point, but it's going to be quite tight, as it comes up very quickly after Turn One. The best spots will be at the end of the straights into Turn 12 and braking for 17; possibly also braking for Turn 25, the last corner. Those are hard braking zones after a long straight – always good overtaking points. I think this circuit is going to be quite demanding – for us and for our brakes."

















SPANISH EYES

To celebrate the new circuit here in Valencia, the La Formula Unas girls made the most of the gorgeous weather and, as the sun went down, chilled out at the Red Bull Energy Station.

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PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER

‘The Österreichring was a magnificent place’

GP AUSTRIA, ZELTWEG, 1975-1977

The original Österreichring at Zeltweg was one of the finest – and most picturesque – tracks of all time, with ultra-quick corners that rose and dipped between fields of cattle. For a brief period in the 1970s, it was also a magnet for odd results...

Purists have a tendency to often refer to the ‘good old days’ of Formula One, when drivers were as likely to sip a beer as an isotonic drink, and China was something from which you drank tea, rather than a fixture on the calendar. It is often assumed that the racing was less predictable back then, but that’s not strictly true. There were sustained periods during which certain teams (Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Mercedes-Benz, Cooper and Lotus, for instance) were in charge, and it was rare for there to be more than a couple of truly competitive teams in any given season. There were occasional quirks, though, and they usually occurred in Austria.

AUG 17, 1975: WET, WET, WET

Conditions had been variable during the build-up to Austria’s seventh world championship grand prix, but the weather stabilised in time for the start: it was raining steadily.

Having clinched pole position during one of Friday’s dry practice sessions, Niki Lauda led away, his Ferrari 312T’s semi-wet set-up proving ideal for the conditions. But as the rain intensified, the leader began to struggle and surrendered positions to James Hunt (Hesketh 308) and Vittorio Brambilla (March 751). Brambilla, customarily regarded as an accident waiting to happen, was revelling in the conditions and had made steady progress from eighth on the grid. He was edging closer to Hunt when they came up to lap the Englishman’s team-mate, Brett Lunger.

The protocol of the day dictated that it was OK to assist a colleague in such situations, but Lunger couldn’t see anything in his mirrors and ended up impeding Hunt as Brambilla swept past both of them.

The race was scheduled for 54 laps, but conditions continued to worsen and the chequered flag was shown after lap 29. After crossing the line, Brambilla punched the air, but lost concentration and control in his moment of exultation, pirouetting a long way up the track before crunching nose-first into the barriers. The stoppage proved timely for Hunt: his engine had lapsed onto seven cylinders and he was on his way into the pits when the chequered flag’s appearance persuaded him to change his mind.

When conditions subsequently improved, several team principals pushed for the race to be restarted. March boss Max Mosley dug out his rulebook, however, and pointed out that this could only be done if the race had been stopped with simultaneous chequered and black flags. As it hadn’t, Brambilla’s lone grand prix success would stand.

AUG 15, 1976: A CLOSE SHAVE

“I absolutely adored the old Österreichring,” says John Watson. “It was extremely fast with some really challenging corners, some of them blind. It was a magnificent place.” He showcased his affection in splendid style on a Sunday afternoon during the summer of ’76.



For Team Penske, Austria marked a sad anniversary: it was here, one year earlier, that its driver Mark Donohue had died from injuries sustained in a practice accident. It subsequently recruited Watson to replace its fallen idol and the Ulsterman had enjoyed a decent season. The highlights included podium finishes in France and Britain, but there was little to suggest he was about to win a race any time soon. He qualified second to James Hunt (McLaren M23) in Austria, however, and led the slick-tyred field away on a damp track. The race swiftly developed into a battle between Watson’s Penske PC4 and Ronnie Peterson’s March 761, with Hunt and Gunnar Nilsson (Lotus 77) following just behind and Jody Scheckter’s six-wheeled Tyrrell gaining quickly.

The leading group swapped positions while the circuit remained slightly wet, but by lap 12 the sun was out, the surface was dry and Watson swept into the lead. He subsequently pulled away at his leisure and recorded his maiden grand prix victory at an average speed of 212.432kph (fractionally slower than the 213.003kph recorded by Michael Schumacher during the most recent Austrian GP in 2003, on a shortened version of the track).

After the race, the hirsute Watson removed his beard – part of a deal he’d struck with team owner Roger Penske in the event of them winning a race. The flipside was that Penske would grow one when they triumphed again, but this was to be his team’s only F1 success.

AUG 14, 1977: DAY OF THE SHADOW

For the third year in succession, the outcome of the Austrian Grand Prix was affected by rain. Local hero Niki Lauda managed to qualify his Ferrari 312T2 in pole position, but when the race began, track conditions were so slippery he soon discovered that he was unable to keep up with either Mario Andretti (Lotus 78) or James Hunt (McLaren M26). Nobody, however, was paying much attention to Alan Jones (Shadow DN8), who had qualified 14th. The Australian’s car was handling particularly well during the morning warm-up, for reasons not even he could fathom, but there was no hint of what lay ahead in the first few laps of the race. As the circuit began to dry, Jones rose from 10th on lap seven to second on lap 16. He gained one place because leader Andretti’s engine blew, and simply overtook anyone else in his way.

That appeared to be as far as he would get because Hunt had established a handsome lead. Then, with 11 laps to go, the Englishman suffered a blown engine. Jones went on to record Shadow’s lone grand prix win, and a bizarre Austrian hat-trick was complete.



‘It was extremely fast with some really challenging corners’
John Watson



ILLUSTRATION: HERI IRAWAN



SAILING INTO A STORM...

So, Flavio Briatore suffered a barrage of insults and wet sand missiles when he sailed his big yacht into a Sardinian bay crowded with families. "We are nice people and we get rewarded like this," he moaned. The Red Bulletin pays tribute to the 'niceness' of celebrities by looking at other backlashes by the public against their plans.

JUST PLANE SELFISH

Actor and pilot John Travolta chose to leave the exclusive residential development of Spruce Creek in Florida in 2001 after neighbours complained about the noise of his new Gulfstream II private jet. Fair enough, you might say – except that Spruce Creek is in fact custom-designed to accommodate residents' aircraft, and boasts a former US Navy runway for the purpose. We're guessing the Gulfstream II must be particularly loud. Now living in a specially designed mansion in Jumbolair, Florida, to house his five aircraft, Travolta nevertheless has his finger on the environmental pulse. "Global warming is a very valid issue," he said after dismounting from a huge fire-breathing Harley-Davidson at the London premiere of movie Wild Hogs in 2007. "Everyone can do their bit," the Qantas airline ambassador opined, but then added, "I'm probably not the best candidate to ask about global warming, because I fly jets." Some environmentalists consider Travolta's "bit" – an estimated 30,000 miles' worth of air travel each year – a crime. We consider calling your son Jett, as Travolta did, an even worse offence.

ROMAN'S RETREAT

Russian billionaire oligarch and Chelsea FC owner Roman Abramovich faced the indignity of being turned away from an exclusive restaurant in the Tuscan 'playboy' resort of Forte dei Marmi last week – because it was already fully booked. An enraged Abramovich instructed his yacht's captain to sail "full steam ahead for Sardinia" instead. "I have nothing personal against Mr Abramovich – he is a very nice, cordial man," said Bistrot's owner David Vaiani. Let's hope Roman didn't try to dock at the same place in Sardinia as Flavio.

LANCE RIDES INTO TROUBLE

With their celebrity partnership sealed at GP Monaco, seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong got a little ahead of himself in June when he turned up at exclusive New York restaurant Rao's with actress Kate Hudson. Rao's turned out to be so select that only well-heeled regulars can turn up unannounced and anyone else has to bide their time for months on a lengthy waiting list. So instead of enjoying a cosy romantic meal, Lance had to begin another arduous tour – to find somewhere else sufficiently superb and exclusive to satisfy Kate, and his own pride, no doubt. The couple broke up last month...

COUNCIL 1 ROD 0

What better way to recreate your beloved Glasgow Celtic FC than in the back garden of your home? "Instead of getting married again, I'm going to find a woman I don't like and just give her a house," the three-times-married Rod Stewart once said, but we're betting that deal wouldn't include his football pitch, which he claims to use five times a day. Rod even went as far as building changing rooms just like those at Celtic Park to go with his pitch, but planners in the English county of Essex refused him permission to add floodlights to complete the transformation in 2006, as every one of his neighbours objected to the proposals. The thoughtful Rod used the darkness, as he himself has claimed, to continue watering the pitch (which was like a 'carpet') for six hours a night during the severe drought of that summer. Well, it's only fair.

PARIS' COAT STAND

Because she's so modest, and not a spoilt heiress who made a sex video, The Red Bulletin has taken the liberty of categorising ex-Texas singer Sharleen Spiteri as an 'ordinary person' who took exception to Paris Hilton and her entourage on a girls' night out in a London club recently. Paris had emptied a chair of Sharleen and friends' coats and proceeded to dance all over them until Sharleen took a straw full of drink and gave Paris a facial treatment she wouldn't quickly forget. Sharleen's friends then began to bombard Paris with ice cubes until she screamed, "You bitch, who the hell do you think you are?" The singer calmly told Paris to f**k off or she'd kick the shit out of her. A tough Scot is who the hell she is, Paris...

RED BULLDOZERS

Many people think that, when tackled on the pitch, some of Manchester United's players go to ground a little too easily. Now it seems that some of their houses do as well. Neighbours of players living in the more fashionable districts in counties around Manchester have been complaining that perfectly usable and attractive houses in prime locations are being unnecessarily bulldozed to make way for ugly modern developments housing swimming pools, snooker rooms and private gyms. 'Guilty' players include Gary Neville, Wayne Rooney, Ryan Giggs and Michael Carrick. "I'm sure he's a nice lad – I just wish he'd shown a little more respect for the area," said one of Carrick's neighbours. Meanwhile, Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard's new backyard gym is so big that it has a different postal code from his house...

GOLF OFF COURSE

American billionaire Donald Trump cited his Scottish ancestry as one reason for his plans to convert an area of outstanding natural beauty on the Aberdeenshire coastline into a multi-billion-dollar golf complex boasting two 18-hole courses, a 450-bedroom luxury hotel, 950 holiday homes, 36 'golf villas' and 500 more permanent luxury homes. Many local residents – whom Trump claimed would benefit from a boost to their local economy with tourism and jobs – opposed the plan, as did wildlife experts concerned with rare bird species nesting in dunes that would be seriously affected by the development. The local council rejected the scheme in late 2007, and Trump has threatened to take his project elsewhere unless planners quickly change their minds. He also upset local farmer and adamant objector Michael Forbes, by describing his farm as an "eyesore". Did it have a haystack in the farmyard, we wonder – and have you looked in the mirror lately, Donald?

SIR PAUL SITS ON THE FENCE

As a longtime vegetarian and known animal lover, Sir Paul McCartney must have been in rather a quandary when wild boar invaded the land on his estate in Kent, south-east England, bringing with them both disease and the unfortunate habit of uprooting trees and doing all sorts of other damage. Luckily, a humane solution was found in 1999 – a four-mile-long, £100,000 fence around the property, ensuring that the creatures were kept out and they wouldn't have to be shot in his own backyard. Of course, some other residents of the area also had quite a vested interest in animal welfare... "He does whatever he wants because he can afford it," said one of the annoyed local livestock farmers left to deal with the problem of the invading swine.

PHOTOGRAPHY: REX FEATURES, SHUTTERSTOCK, GETTY IMAGES

THEN & NOW

Lotus boss Colin Chapman gives Jochen Rindt encouragement on the German GP grid, for what would be the Austrian's final win. Thirty-eight years on, BMW's Mario Theissen gives similar last-minute support to polesitter Robert Kubica ahead of the Bahrain GP.

Photography: Rainer Schlegelmilch

FOR MORE, VISIT: WWW.REDBULLETINF1.COM





24hr

Paddock People!



HOBBIES
MARK THOMPSON: MODFATHER

The Jam were the first proper band I saw live and they just blew me away. It was 1978 and I was 14 years old, and I saw them on the 'All Mod Cons' tour in Leicester.

I've got two older sisters and they were really into music. They were mad on 1960s bands like the Small Faces and the Kinks – I had good training really. I hate calling myself a mod because it sounds a bit of a cliché, but I just love everything about the scene. My other favourite band was the Clash. I saw them 14 times and it changed my life. I wanted to see as many live bands as possible.

I met Pennie Smith, the famous rock 'n' roll photographer, backstage at a Jam gig. I was asking, "How do you get into that? I'd love to be a photographer." Paul Weller, their lead singer, was there and he said, "Just do it then. Change your life, you don't have to get stuck in the system." So I bought my first camera and focused it on my other passion, which is sport, and I've done all right. I'm not complaining.

Because I travel in my job, I always try and seek out record shops. I own around 2,500 seven-inch singles, over 1,000 vinyl albums and 1,200 CDs. Between the Canadian and US Grands Prix I used to go to Chicago and buy lots of old stuff like 1960s soul. I like the Northern Soul scene, I'm a bit of a useful dancer as it happens.

My wife was a Style Council fan and we met through her brother, who was a Jam fan like me. We have a 13-year-old son and a daughter, who is now 10. In my house, the TV is hardly ever on, we always just listen to music instead. My son's a great guitarist and likes bands like Hard-Fi and the Kooks. Now we go to concerts together and the whole music thing just continues.

I've owned scooters since I was 17 and was old enough to have a licence. I've got a 1963 Vespa Sportique 150cc, which has been completely rebuilt. I don't put anything on them. All the mirrors and all that stuff – I can't stand all that. I just love the simple aesthetic of the shape.

All my old tickets and memorabilia were used in a book recently about Paul Weller called A Thousand Things. I've seen him in concert 138 times over a 30-year period. It sounds a lot, but people don't think anything of buying a season ticket to their favourite football team, it's no different really. If anybody's got any rare stuff out there, I'm still collecting. There's still a few discs I haven't got – and I'm always willing to pay good cash!

FOR MORE, VISIT: WWW.REDBULLETINF1.COM

JON GATES
GARAGE TECHNICIAN
RED BULL RACING



LOVE / HATE

1. FREE BEER
Fortunately, I work for Red Bull Racing, and our post-race parties are legendary. They get the best DJs around and invite the prettiest girls, but I only really go for the open bar.

2. CURRY
Curry is the food of the gods, so I am incredibly lucky to have two great curry houses on Towcester High Street.

3. MY GIRLFRIEND
My girlfriend is called Kate and I love her with all my heart. She has a neverending love for me and a bigger house than me. The bedroom has an en-suite shower and toilet, so handy after the aforementioned curry. She's my perfect girl.

4. MY PIANO
I can't play the piano at all but I love to belt out the wrong notes and inappropriate chords. I've mastered Three Blind Mice but struggle with Baa Baa Black Sheep. I can't find the right note for 'sheep'.

5. FORD CORTINAS
My 1972 two-door Ford Cortina mk3 is the coolest car ever built. In the winter it's not just cool, it's positively freezing, so I tend to use the Volvo, which has heated seats.

1. SHARING HOTEL ROOMS
At race events I have to share my hotel room with another guy. I've had the same room-mate for seven years and I can't take it any more.

2. SLOW DRIVERS
Motor manufacturers spend millions making cars go faster, stop faster and handle better, so why oh why do so many morons insist on sticking to the speed limit and braking around shallow bends?

3. CAR 10 CREW
I work with the Car 9 crew and don't believe in friendly rivalry or banter between the two sides of the garage. I hate it when Mark beats DC.

4. MORNINGS
Mornings should be banned. People who are wide awake so early in the day – I really hate it when they smile and say, "good morning". It's the morning so it can't be good. I just want to growl at them and tell them to go away.

5. GARDENING
If I had my way I'd concrete over my whole garden. I'm sick and tired of having to cut the grass every time I get back from a race. So this year I've ignored it.

ILLUSTRATION: JAMES TAYLOR. PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER

LUCKY NUMBERS

GEOFF WILLIS

Red Bull's technical director is an educated daredevil who likes his toys and always rises to a challenge – as long as he has the right padding.

260,000

I USED TO TRAVEL MORE THAN 260,000KM by air each year. When I worked it out, I thought, "This isn't right." I've always been interested in earth sciences, so the more you read about what we're doing to the planet, the more you think, "I really ought to get a grown-up attitude to this." I've got it under control now.

3

I HAVE THREE DEGREES... I started off with a BA at Cambridge University. Six years later you can apply to have it changed to an MA and you have a big meal to celebrate. I also have a PhD and I've got lots of names and letters after my name. I'm a chartered engineer and a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. It's just a combination of age and an academic background.



2

I OWN TWO DUCATI BIKES... I didn't ride bikes for a while, but got back into them a few years ago. You have to be careful – there are poor accident statistics for guys going back to them. I'd like to keep the newest one for at least six months without damaging it. I bought it on a Friday, rode it for 500 miles over the weekend and then took it to the track on the Wednesday and managed to avoid crashing it.

4

I'VE WORKED FOR FOUR FORMULA ONE TEAMS... I was a consultant for Leyton House back in 1990, then Williams, then BAR Honda and now Red Bull. I'm in my 19th year. I grew up a lot in my 12-year career at Williams. I went from focusing on a small area as a technical specialist to taking a big overview. As an aerodynamicist, you end up on this fast-track route to understanding a lot of the car.

59.55

FIFTY-NINE MINUTES AND 55 SECONDS is the time it took me to cycle 25 miles on my bike. I started doing some time trials a few years ago and set myself targets. I can still remember the first evening when I reached this one. It started because I wasn't sure if I could manage it. Maybe that's a male thing – when someone says, "I bet you can't do that," your instant reaction is, "I bet I can."

12

I'VE BEEN SNOWBOARDING FOR 12 YEARS... I've also done heliboarding, which means you go up in a helicopter to the top of a mountain and get dropped off, and you sit there and think, "Oh dear, it's very steep here and there's no other way of getting down." But it's great fun. The older I get, the more body armour I wear.

3

FOR THREE YEARS I was involved in an America's Cup yacht project called Blue Arrow, but never got to compete. I'm not a natural sailor or enthusiast, but I really enjoyed it. It was the competition and engineering, and the need to do lots of things. I think that, in Formula One, that varied role disappeared as the teams got bigger. At one point in the 1990s, I ended up in the machine shop myself, making a part for the Monaco race.

16

MY SON, ALESSANDRO, IS 16 MONTHS OLD... He's a little engineer, fascinated by things that fit into things, mechanisms... it's a bit scary actually. He'll be of a generation completely accepting of things like remote-control. It's a different world now.

PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER

MOMENT IN TIME

Valencia might be a new venue on the F1 calendar, but plenty of other Spanish circuits have hosted grand prix racing, from Jerez to Montjuïch, Pedralbes to the Circuit de Catalunya. One of the most legendary, though, is Madrid's Jarama track, where Emerson Fittipaldi won his first race of the 1972 season...



1 Emerson won at Jarama on his way to his first world title. How many more GPs would he win that year, and where?

2 Who were Emerson's team-mates during the 1972 season?

3 The race following this was at Monaco. Emerson was on pole, but where did he finish the race and which drivers were ahead of him?

4 Fittipaldi would win two world titles, but at what race did he score his final GP victory?

5 Who else was on the podium at this 1972 race at Jarama?

WIN A FABULOUS ORIS WATCH
Fancy winning a superb Swiss-made Oris TT3 chronograph – and who wouldn't, after all? Well, all you have to do is answer the questions here, visit our website and follow the instructions. The closing date is 12pm (GMT), September 3. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries and announced on the website and in a future edition of the magazine.
TO PLAY, VISIT: WWW.REDBULLETINF1.COM

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PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES

Either/Or
SUTIL ANSWERS

With three DNFs in the Force India car this season, Adrian Sutil may wish he had a few more options, so we gave him all the choices a Formula One driver could want...

WET RACE OR DRY RACE?
Wet race, there's more action going on.

SALAD OR STEAK?
Salad, because it's not so heavy.

IPOD OR VINYL?
Neither – Medion Mp3!

NIGHT ON THE TOWN OR QUIET NIGHT AT HOME?
Depends where I am, but I am always up for good parties.

WINE OR WATER?
Water.

SUIT OR CASUAL?
Suit – I like fashion and a suit is more fashionable.

GOLF OR FOOTBALL?
Golf, because I just started to play and I am not so bad at it!

MINIVAN OR MOTORCYCLE?
Motorcycle. A minivan is a family car and I am too young for this...

YACHT OR PLANE?
Plane – because you can go anywhere.

SUPERMODEL OR GIRL NEXT DOOR?
Supermodel – if she is next door, even better.

MOZART OR MOTORHEAD?
Mozart.

RACE OR QUALIFYING?
Race.

BEACH OR MOUNTAIN?
Hard to say, I am 50-50, but I would have to say the mountains as I live in the mountains and I am very happy.



NEWSPAPER OR COMIC BOOK?
Newspaper.

SHOPPING MALL OR INTERNET SHOPPING?
Internet shopping, I love it! It's so easy and you can always pay with a credit card so it's like virtual money!

MONACO APARTMENT OR SWISS CHALET?
Swiss chalet for sure. Monaco is a bit boring and I love Switzerland where I live.

BEARD OR SHAVE?
Shave.

TRAINING IN THE GYM OR TRAINING ON THE ROAD?
Training on the road. I love to do sports outside on the road.

BOOK OR TV?
TV.

MONEY OR GLORY?
They're both good, but I have to say glory. Glory is what makes you spend all of your time training.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES