



WHY CAN'T FERRARI WIN?



How **BOTTAS** will handle **HAMILTON**

FORMULA 1 BOMBSHELL

BERNIE END OF AN ERA

ANALYSIS Downfall of an emperor
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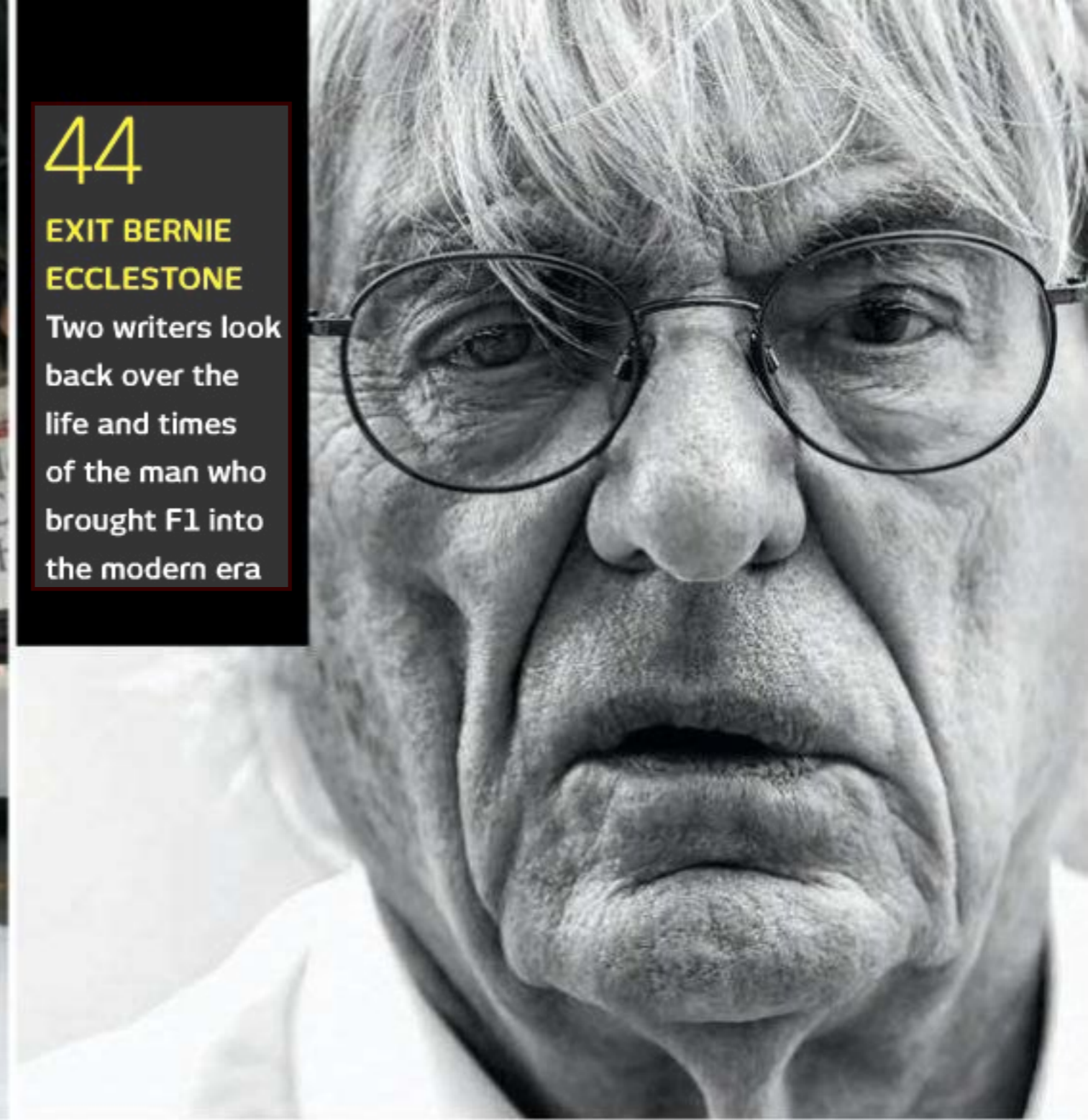
A day with Honda gives Fernando Alonso the chance to follow in the wheeltracks of John Surtees



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EXIT BERNIE ECCLESTONE

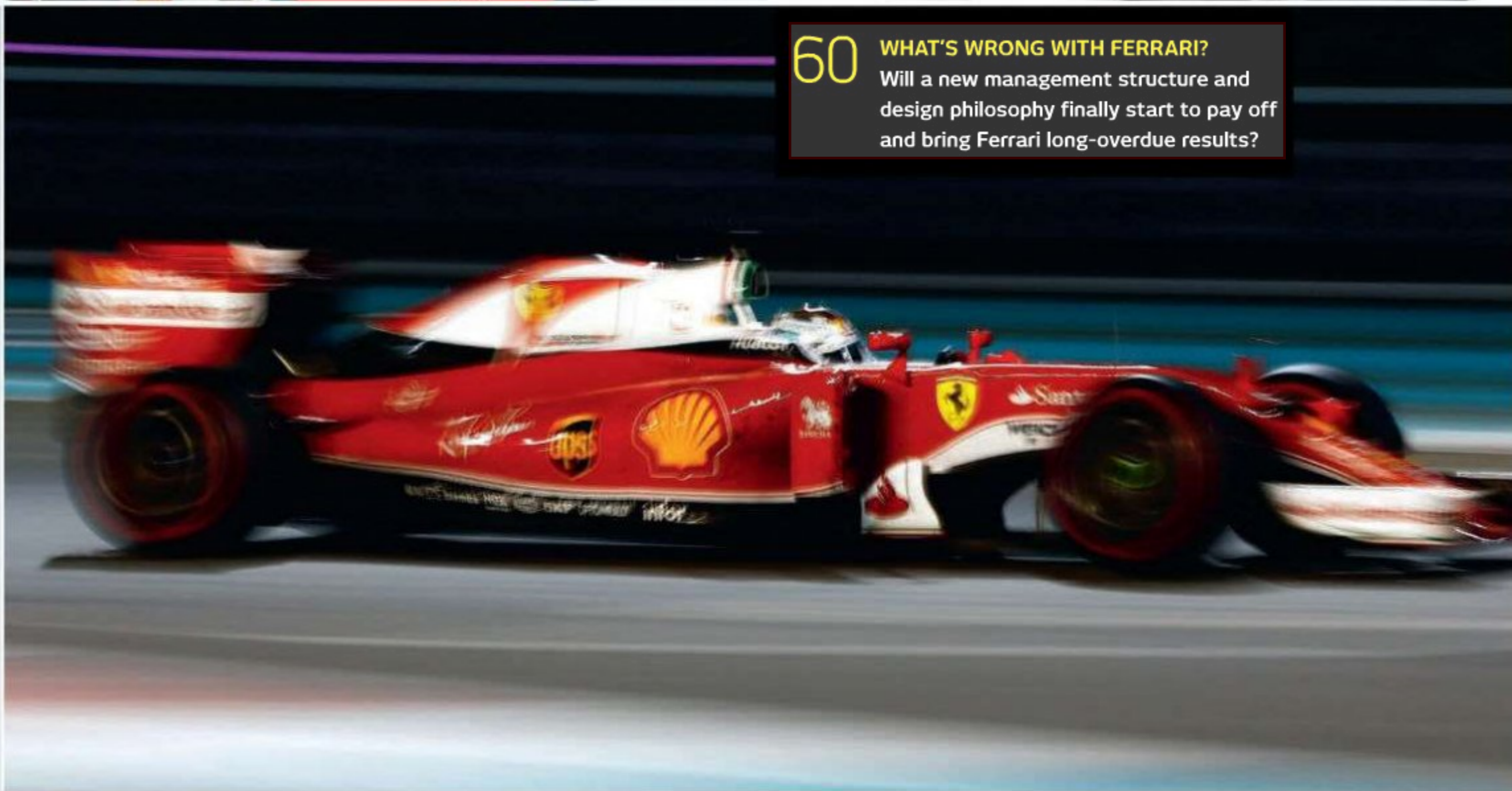
Two writers look back over the life and times of the man who brought F1 into the modern era



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SERGIO PÉREZ

Answers your questions - including the one about how it felt to race at the reinstated Mexican GP



The end of the Ecclestone era



Follow Anthony on Twitter: @Rowlinson_F1

I never thought I'd see the day. Bernie might have 40-or-so more years on the clock than I do, but that immovable presence running Formula 1 would surely remain just that.

He'd outstay us all, would Bernie – ageing, yes, but remaining *in control*. His advancing years (86, as of 28 October 2016) and ever-lengthening period in charge

were just numbers that had long ago ceased to bear any relation to conventional working lifespans.

He'd seen off his one true power rival, Jean-Marie Balestre, back in the early '80s, while outlasting peers such as Enzo Ferrari, Colin Chapman, Ken Tyrrell, Luca Di Montezemolo, Ron Dennis and others. Even when his old chum Max Mosley left the F1 scene in 2009, Ecclestone carried on regardless with an insatiable thirst for new territories and more growth.

As omnipotent emperor, Ecclestone was unbound by the humdrum shackles of conventional existence. Bribery trial? Ha! *What* bribery trial? That can be paid off (quite legally, under German law, of course). Media vilification over the latest politically incorrect outburst ("Hitler – he got things done")? So what? Another circuit deal with a regime of questionable repute? No matter. So long as Bernie was in charge, the show would go on. A little *F1 Racing* in-joke even considered that one of our past staffers – of similar stature to

Ecclestone – had been recruited to Bernie's Formula One Management operation not for his considerable professional abilities, but rather to become a 'body host' for the Ecclestone brain, when the moment of physical incapacity eventually arrived.

But time and a fast-changing global media landscape *did* catch up with him and 'Mr E' is no longer 'Mr Formula 1'. His role at the helm has been taken by not one, but three wise men: Chase Carey, Sean Bratches and Ross Brawn and, as we detail in this month's Insider pages, their plans are bold – even refreshing. Already there's talk of greater fan engagement, simplified sporting and technical regulations and an approach to business that seeks to work for the health of the sport's future, rather than focusing on short-term financial gain.

There are many who will say that Ecclestone remained in control too long, that he could easily have chosen an earlier moment to depart on his own terms, leaving a legacy as one of the most successful sporting entrepreneurs the world has yet seen.

Instead, we're left to ponder his appointment as 'Chairman Emeritus' of F1, with a consultancy role but no executive authority. It's unlikely to appeal to a man who took F1 as "a diamond in the dirt" (the words of Gordon Murray, Ecclestone's designer in his Brabham team-owning days) and polished it into something so beguiling it was impossible to resist for Liberty Media – giants of the global sports-entertainment industry.

But as Ecclestone himself would surely agree, timing is all. Sometimes you just have to know when to go.



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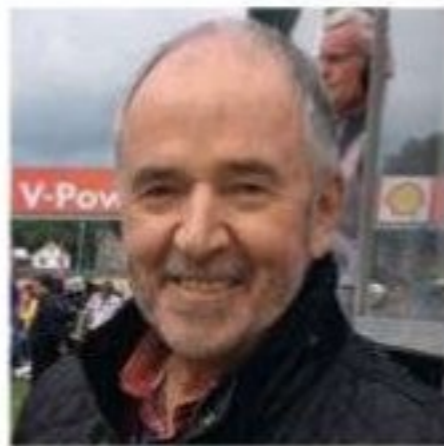
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Thomas Butler
Skilled lensman and London escapist

A portrait snapper *par excellence*, responsible for shooting Valtteri Bottas (p34), Esteban Ocon (p76) and Zak Brown (p90) this month, Thomas has recently fled the metropolis



Maurice Hamilton
Not Lewis Hamilton's Irish uncle

They say if you remember the '70s, you weren't really there. 'They' are wrong, since Maurice was there, and on p46 you can read his recollections of Bernie Ecclestone's rise in that era



Chris Medland
A capital fellow, often capitalised

Chris – or MEDLAND, as he is known to readers of a certain US website – has had a busy month, shadowing Esteban Ocon (p76) and pitching your questions to Sergio Pérez (p70)



Damien Smith
Former *Autosport* editor-in chief – now ours

Returning to the fold after a decade in another place, Damien got straight to work composing an encomium to another long-absent motorsport icon: the French Grand Prix (p94)



Thanks to Matt Bishop, Tom Cooney, Steve Cooper, Didier Coton, Ben Cowley, Peter Crowther, Ava-May Cullen, Finn-Rhys Cullen, Russell Day, Pascal Dro, Maddie Fisher, Paul Fisher, Sandrine Gomez, Darren Jones, Jane Harley, Paul Harpin, Jack Harvey, Will Hings, Amanda Hunt, Justin Hynes, Akiko Itoga, Nad Jackson, Peter Jackson, Richard Jackson, Bradley Lord, Adrian Myers, Carl Price, Ilper Sahindal, Melek Sahindal, Ana Salazar, Charlotte Sefton, Marleen Seilheimer, Susan Snelling, Deborah Tee, Rosa Herrero Venegas, Bob Wayman, Ben Wright, Alex Wurz And special thanks to Bernie Ecclestone, for 40 years of myth, madness and magic.



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Parade Williams 40th anniversary

Highly charged Massively outgunned on power by his turbo rivals in 1982, Keke Rosberg still planted his Cosworth-powered Williams on pole at Brands Hatch – and then charged from the back of the grid after stalling on the warm-up lap. Thrilling... but he didn't make the finish

Where Brands Hatch, England

When Sunday 18 July 1982

Photographer Jeff Bloxham/LAT

Details Nikon F3, 180mm lens, 1/500th @ F8

DUCKHAMMS DU





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Parade Williams 40th anniversary

High five, red five Trailing his team-mate Nelson Piquet in the championship battle on account of three retirements earlier on in the 1987 season, Nigel Mansell roared back into contention at Jerez, jumping the polesitting Piquet at the start and leaving him in fourth place, unable to catch up, at the chequered flag

Where Jerez, Spain

When Sunday 27 September 1987

Photographer Steven Tee/LAT

Details Canon F1, 500mm lens, 1/250th @ F8





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DENSO

PIRELLI

PIRELLI



Parade Williams 40th anniversary

After the 'Ring ding Jacques Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen occasionally made heavy weather of having the best car in 1997, as evinced here in 'Luxembourg' when the two banged wheels. Villeneuve's win, which was his last, left him nine points clear of his nearest rival, Ferrari's Michael Schumacher

Where Nürburgring, Germany

When Sunday 28 September 1997

Photographer Charles Coates/LAT

Details Canon 1N, 600mm lens+1.4x converter, 1/500th @ F6.3





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F1 INSIDER

NEWS ■ OPINION ■ ANALYSIS

NEWS

Why Bernie Ecclestone had to go

F1's new owners determined to overhaul F1's "ineffective and dysfunctional" management

A new era is dawning in Formula 1 following the sport's takeover by US company Liberty Media and the removal of Bernie Ecclestone as chief executive.

Ecclestone, 86, has been given the nebulous job title of 'chairman emeritus' and will theoretically be available for Liberty to call on for advice. But he will no longer be involved in the day-to-day running of the business.

New chairman Chase Carey, 62, a highly respected American media executive and long-time lieutenant of Rupert Murdoch, decided Ecclestone's continued presence as a representative of Formula 1 was not compatible with the changes Liberty wanted to make. Carey has taken on the title of chief executive and has appointed two managing directors to look after the different sides of the business.

Ross Brawn, former Mercedes F1 boss and ex-Ferrari technical director, will run the sporting and technical side, focusing on changes to modernise F1, while ex-ESPN executive Sean Bratches will handle commercial matters, including race deals, sponsorship and promotion.

Carey described the management of F1 under Ecclestone in recent years as "somewhere between ineffective and dysfunctional", adding:

"It is a great sport, but clearly it has to be improved and we do plan to improve it.

"To some degree it needs a fresh start. Bernie is a one-man team. It was not really the right organisation in today's world to follow through and build the relationships and opportunities for us in all the areas.

"On the sport's side, the decision-making is not as effective as it needs to be. Some of the organisations that have been put up to guide the sport have not worked as planned. I have been sincere in saying I value Bernie's help and advice as we go forward. But I understand this is a big change for him. He calls himself a dictator. He has run it as a one-man dictator for a long time. I think the sport needs a fresh perspective. But he has a lot to continue to offer and he will always be part of the F1 family."

Ecclestone made it clear he was unhappy about the decision, telling a favoured journalist before the official announcement was made that he had been forced out.

But while Carey was careful to pay tribute to Ecclestone's achievements in building F1 into a

\$8bn business, he made it clear that the previous way of running F1 had significant limitations that were preventing it from growing in the 21st century – particularly with reference to promotion and digital media.

"I don't know if he held it back," Carey said, "but the way he ran it historically as a one-man operation, it didn't have a marketing organisation, didn't have a digital organisation, didn't really have any engagement in the events being put on and, in some ways, the vehicles set up to govern the sport weren't operating effectively and efficiently. So if you look at the list of things, opportunities not taken, things put in place that were not working well, there is a great deal more upside than downside."

Carey's research into Formula 1 since Liberty began its takeover in September revealed several problems, all of which effectively fell at Ecclestone's door.

Prime among these was the revenue structure, which is unfairly skewed in favour of the bigger teams. Then there is the fact that the Strategy Group has proved to be an ineffective tool for governing the sport. An overemphasis on doing deals for the sake of the maximum profit, rather than looking at whether they are good for F1 as a whole has caused additional concern, as has questionable, ad hoc rule making, such as the double-points finale in 2014 and the fiasco over the change of qualifying format in 2016. Last but not least were Ecclestone's repeated,

F1's new CEO Chase Carey said of Ecclestone: "I think the sport needs a fresh perspective"





NEWS DIGEST

The month's big stories at a glance

06.01.17 Manor operating company goes into administration **07.01.17** Albert Park circuit confirms changes to accommodate faster cars **11.01.17** Frédéric Vasseur resigns from position of Renault team principal

16.01.17 Sauber signs Pascal Wehrlein for 2017 season, Valtteri Bottas moves to Mercedes, and Felipe Massa returns to Williams



18.01.17 Liberty shareholders approve F1 deal **19.01.17** Mercedes sign McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner George Russell to junior programme **22.01.17** Wet running added to schedule of first Barcelona test **23.01.17** Rue du Sapin in Nice is officially renamed Rue Jules Bianchi **26.01.17** Renault announce BP/Castrol fuel and lubricants deal **27.01.17** Ecclestone denies plans for breakaway series after leaving F1

controversial public interventions, either talking down F1 or making inappropriate comments.

In the press release announcing his departure Ecclestone was conciliatory, but in his only interview so far, he claimed he “didn’t understand” what his new role entailed.

It remains to be seen whether he goes quietly. Already there have been rumours that he plans to set up a rival championship at some point – presumably after the teams’ contracts with F1 expire in 2020 – although Ecclestone insisted in a statement to Reuters that “the last thing” he wanted was “to see [F1] damaged”.

And journalists to whom he is known to leak stories are pushing the idea that the FIA’s one per cent shareholding and its need to approve the Liberty deal represent a conflict of interest. But whatever happens, major changes are inevitable over the next few years.

Ousted: Ecclestone has claimed that he “doesn’t understand” what his new role as ‘chairman emeritus’ will entail

Brawn: "I want a fan to be able to turn on a race halfway through and know what's happening"



PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT: SUTTON IMAGES

NEWS

Liberty set out their stall for a new-look Formula 1

Expect purer, easier to understand racing, with more of a focus on digital media, and a greater emphasis on democracy

Formula 1's new owners, Liberty Media, have ambitious plans to grow the sport's audience and revenues by making major changes to many aspects of its organisation.

New F1 motor sports MD Ross Brawn, 62, has talked about making F1 "purer" and easier for viewers and spectators to understand. Although he is regarded as one of the greatest tactical engineers in the sport's history, Brawn has confessed to finding races difficult to follow when watching on television in recent years.

"I want a fan to be able to turn on a race halfway through and know what's happening, because, at the moment, unless you've followed it

from the start, you don't," Brawn said. He added that he "already has ideas of things we should study and perhaps introduce in 2018 or '19".

Brawn has dropped several hints about areas he wants to look at. He has described the DRS overtaking aid as "artificial" and has bemoaned "short-term, knee-jerk reactions" that shape poor

New F1 motor sports MD Ross Brawn is no fan of DRS, having described it as "artificial"



rule-making. The double-points final in 2014 and the fiasco over changing the qualifying format in 2016 are obvious examples.

F1 chairman Chase Carey wants to enhance the amount of promotion given to the sport. Sean Bratches, former ESPN executive and F1's new commercial chief, said he wants to strengthen the core European races and make race attendance more of an occasion. He will also look to establish new races in "iconic US cities", and in Asia and Latin America. Bratches' other mandates include better use of digital media to engage fans and promote F1's personalities, and a more democratic decision-making process.

Carey said: "I have been hearing the races are too predictable, they need to be more competitive, that the rules have gotten too complicated, that the engines need to be louder and faster and cheaper. I hear that the engineers have overtaken the drivers. They are complicated issues, but our job is to wade into them. We have a great sport and we start from a great place, but clearly we can make it much better than it is from those perspectives."



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NEWS

Meet the men who'll replace Bernie

Three key people will steer Formula 1's future in place of Ecclestone's 'one-man band' model

Following the ousting of Bernie Ecclestone as CEO of F1, a new management structure has been introduced by new owners Liberty Media.

Ross Brawn has been brought in as F1's managing director of motor sports by chairman and chief executive Chase Carey. Brawn will oversee changes on the sporting and technical side and tackle various problems. He has an opposite number on the commercial side in Sean Bratches, a former sales and marketing chief at US television network ESPN.

One of the most successful F1 engineers ever, Brawn was responsible for all seven of Michael Schumacher's world titles, first at Benetton and then at Ferrari. He ran the eponymous double-title winning Brawn GP in 2009, and then as Mercedes team boss from 2010 to 2013 he laid

the foundations for the domination that the team have enjoyed over the past three years.

The other two men charged with improving the sport over the next few years are less well known outside American sports administration circles. Carey, 62, made his name as a long-time lieutenant of media mogul Rupert Murdoch. He launched the Fox Sports and Fox News channels in the US and later became chief executive officer of DirecTV, a US satellite provider that was taken over by Murdoch's News Corporation. There, Carey added a million subscribers in six years before returning to News Corp as president, chief operating officer and deputy chairman in 2009, and then chief operating officer of Murdoch's film business, 21st Century Fox, in 2013.

Sean Bratches, 56, spent 27 years at US sports network ESPN and is described by Carey as "a driving force in building ESPN into one of the world's leading sports franchises." Carey added: "His expertise and experience in sales, marketing, digital media, and distribution will be invaluable as we grow Formula 1."

At ESPN Bratches ran sales and marketing and was responsible for the distribution of related HDTV, broadband, video-on-demand, subscription video-on-demand, interactive television, pay-per-view, Spanish-language, and sports syndication products.

This gives an insight into the direction Liberty want to take Formula 1, with a massive diversification of its offering across all forms of visual media.

The new faces of Formula 1: (l-r) Sean Bratches, Chase Carey and Ross Brawn



PHOTO: ALEX GRIFFITHS

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NEWS

Bottas is confirmed as Lewis's Merc team-mate

Lewis adds his seal of approval to a deal to move "nice guy" Valtteri Bottas from Williams to the Mercedes hot seat for 2017

Valtteri Bottas will replace Nico Rosberg as Lewis Hamilton's team-mate at Mercedes this year, as part of a cascade of deals that finally brought the 2017 driver market to a conclusion.

The 27-year-old Finnish racer had been at the top of Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff's wish list from the moment Nico Rosberg announced his retirement from the sport, last December. But it took Wolff until mid-January to finally conclude a deal with Williams to release Bottas.

Separately, Wolff secured Mercedes protégé Pascal Wehrlein another season of gaining experience in F1, with Sauber. Wolff felt Wehrlein had yet to prove himself and was not ready for a top-line drive.

Bottas has proven his consistency at Williams. But there are question marks over his absolute pace – his superiority over Felipe Massa in three

seasons as his team-mate was nowhere near as marked as Fernando Alonso's when Alonso and Massa were partners at Ferrari from 2010-13.

Hamilton gave his blessing to Bottas becoming his team-mate during a meeting at Wolff's house before Christmas, when they also discussed the fall-out from the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Hamilton had said in post-season interviews that

Wolff has helped Pascal Wehrlein (left) find a seat at Sauber, while Bottas's move to Mercedes lets Massa stay on at Williams



he felt "disrespected" by team orders to speed up while trying to back Rosberg into rivals in a vain attempt to secure the title. According to Wolff: "Lewis said he thought Valtteri was a nice guy; one of the guys he actually got along with well in Formula 1 and he felt he was a good option."

Bottas, whose contract with Williams had one more year to run, has signed for a single season at Mercedes, although there are options to extend. Wolff wanted room to manoeuvre at the end of this season, when the contracts of Alonso at McLaren and Sebastian Vettel at Ferrari come up for renewal. Wolff cannot ignore drivers of their calibre, but has reservations about how they would gel with Hamilton, since all three have very self-focused approaches to team work.

Mercedes' deal with Williams included a guarantee that they would let their former technical boss Paddy Lowe join immediately if Williams could strike a deal with him (see p22).

Massa serves as an effective stopgap for Williams, who needed an experienced and proven team leader to act as a benchmark for their other driver, 18-year-old Canadian rookie Lance Stroll, who brings sponsorship to the team worth at least £20m. They also needed a driver over 25 to fulfil the marketing requirements of their title sponsor, the drinks giant Martini.

PHOTOS: STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; SUTTON IMAGES

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Ferrari Dream Cars

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F40 - December 2016

288 GTO - December 2016

F50 - February 2017

Enzo - April 2017

Ferrari at Le Mans

250 GTO - December 2016

250 LM - December 2016

250 TR - February 2017

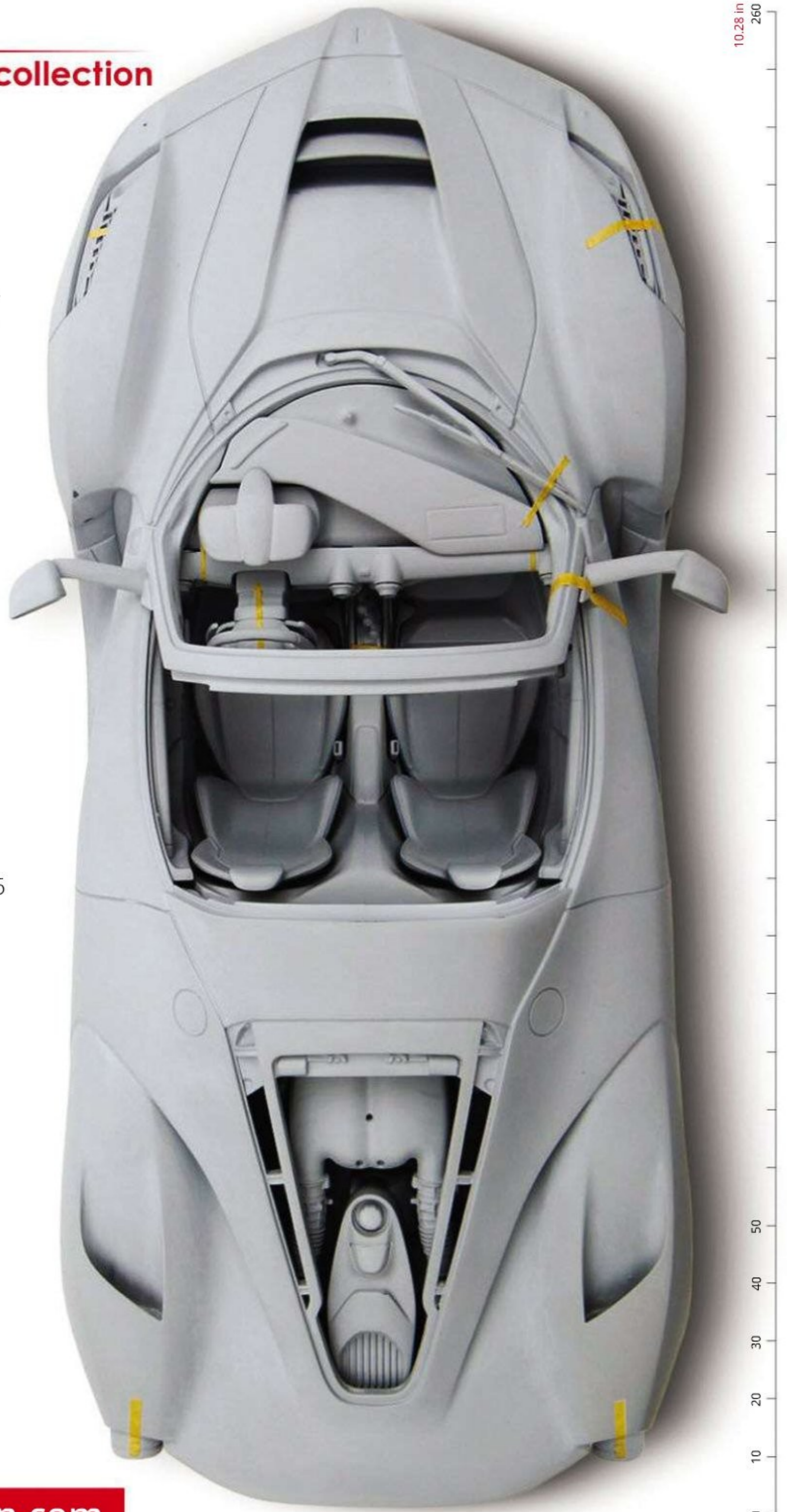
330 P4 - April 2017

375 plus - June 2017

512S - August 2017

312 PB - October 2017

333 SP - December 2017



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NEWS

Lowe set to return to Williams in top tech role

Paddy Lowe, the architect of Williams active suspension in the 1990s, will return as a shareholder and technical boss



Paddy Lowe is returning to Williams, the team where his Formula 1 career began in the late 1980s, after he was forced out of his role as executive director (technical) at Mercedes.

Lowe, 54, had been placed on gardening leave as *F1 Racing* went to press, but it was understood that he will report for work at Grove on 1 March 2017. It was one of the stipulations of Williams' agreement to release Valtteri Bottas to Mercedes (see p20) that Lowe be released to work for them immediately if they could agree a deal with him. Talks between Lowe and Williams had been dragging on, however, as the two sides struggled to reach an agreement on terms.

Insiders have claimed that Lowe will become a shareholder as part of a contract in which he will take overall technical control of the company – the Advanced Engineering business – as well as the F1 team. He will also become a non-executive director and board member.

The exact mechanisms for that to take place, his specific job title and the financial package

he requires, have been taking some time to sort out. Sources say Lowe had been asking for a remuneration that matches the £3m annual earnings he achieved at Mercedes, which included success bonuses.

It seems that Lowe will take over at least some of the nine per cent shareholding of Williams co-founder Sir Patrick Head, perhaps aided by a loan from Canadian businessman Lawrence Stroll, who has sourced major sponsorship funding for the team as part of his son Lance's new contract as one of their 2017 drivers.

The circumstances behind Lowe's departure from Mercedes are shrouded in mystery, but it seems that it was not his decision to leave. Lowe and team boss Toto Wolff are understood to have fallen out, with the suggestion being that Wolff had become unhappy about Lowe's earnings and level of seniority.

Lowe will be replaced at Mercedes by former Ferrari technical director James Allison, although that move has yet to be officially confirmed. Allison, 48, is on gardening leave following his split from Ferrari last July, and is expected to start work at Mercedes this summer.

Paddy Lowe is leaving Mercedes and is expected to start working for Williams on 1 March 2017

QUIZ

F1 Mastermind

Your chosen specialised subject: the world's greatest sport



- Q1** How many starts in total have all the drivers on the 2017 grid got to their name: 1,821, 1,871 or 1,921?
- Q2** Which three drivers made their Formula 1 debut at the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne in 2016?
- Q3** What did Sebastian Vettel win for a record seventh time in January 2017?
- Q4** What was the first team Ross Brawn worked for in F1?
- Q5** Whose record of 58 starts for Toro Rosso is Carlos Sainz scheduled to break this season?

- Q6** Which circuit will host its 50th Formula 1 grand prix in 2017?
- Q7** Daniel Ricciardo drove for HRT in how many races in 2011?
- Q8** True or false: Alain Prost never won the French Grand Prix while driving for Renault?
- Q9** For which two grands prix did Bernie Ecclestone attempt to qualify in 1958?

- Q10** Sixth, fifth, 19th, eighth. Which driver scored these results in the first four races of 2016?
- Q11** Where was Lewis Hamilton snowboarding recently when he posted a clip of himself on social media: Canada, France or Italy?
- Q12** Which two 2017 drivers have won the current version of the FIA Euro F3 Championship?

- Q13** Fernando Alonso missed a single grand prix in both 2015 and 2016. Which races were they?
- Q14** What happened to Sergio Pérez on his GP debut in 2011 that has not happened to him since?
- Q15** How many drivers raced for Virgin/Marussia/Manor during the team's eight-year stint in Formula 1: 12, 17 or 18?

1 1,821 **2** Jolyon Palmer, Pascal Wehrlein and Rio Haryanto **3** Race of Champions Nations Cup **4** Williams **5** Jean-Eric Vergne **6** Spa-Francorchamps **7** 11 **8** False **9** Monaco and Britain **10** Romain Grosjean **11** Canada **12** Esteban Ocon and Lance Stroll **13** Australia (2015) and Bahrain (2016) **14** He was disqualified **15** 12

PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

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NEWS

Hope is fading fast for ailing Manor team

The operating company has ceased trading, but there remains a possibility that the team itself could still make it to the grid



The Manor team has collapsed, and only the slimmest of hopes remain that it can be revived in time to race this season.

The team's operating company, Just Racing Services, entered into administration on 6 January and ceased trading on 27 January after administrators failed to find a buyer. Staff were made redundant on 31 January following payment of their salaries for that month.

A number of potential buyers had expressed interest, including a consortium represented by American businessman Tavo Hellmund, the founder of the US GP in Austin, and another led by Indonesian businessman Ricardo Geleal, who owns the KFC franchise in his region and sponsors a team in GP2, but ultimately neither of these deals could be completed.

Manor Grand Prix, the company that owns the rights to compete in F1 and be paid prize money, is a going concern, but would need to be bought out for the team to be revived.

Manor had permission to race with a 2016 car converted to comply with the new rules

The team were in an even worse situation two years ago, before they were rescued by businessman Stephen Fitzpatrick, who has run Manor for the past two seasons. There is a small chance that someone could purchase Manor Grand Prix and then buy the equipment needed from Just Racing Services' administrators.

Manor have been given permission by the FIA to start the season with their 2016 cars converted to comply with the 2017 rules, and work continued on these through January. Manor staff even tweeted a picture of a model of their 2017 car on the day the news of the team's collapse broke.

But the longer the delay, the less likely the team are to survive. As *F1 Racing* closed for press, there was no obvious prospect of a rescue on the horizon.

F1 BANTER

PASSNOTES

Your essential F1 briefing #36 P45



Name P45
Age Around 100 years
Appearance Black and white; largely undesirable

Surely the most abstruse choice of subject for this column yet. You know how having to illustrate this sort of thing gives the art department the heebie-jeebies.

Massively. But I couldn't resist.

Clearly not. Did you have a particular recipient in mind, or were you referring to the ongoing game of "Spin the P45" happening at the highest levels of various teams these past few months, what with sundry technical directors, etc, departing hither and thither?

It can't have escaped your notice that a certain Bernard Charles Ecclestone has just been deposed by an American with a luxuriant moustache.

Very droll! But, surely, and phrasing this delicately so as not to invite an expensive letter from the legal profession, a P45 – or 'pink slip' as our American chums would call it – is a document you receive upon leaving employ, saying how much tax you've paid on your salary so far this financial year.

Oh, I see. Tricky subject.

Tied in knots by your own wit! I'll bet you alighted on this subject purely to foist some old-hat musical reference on our benighted readers.

UB40? Do me a favour! *One In Ten* was alright but that collaboration with Pato Banton was tosh.

Anyhow, I imagine all those folk who hang out in the paddock purely on account of being Bernie's chums will be vanishing into the ether as well?

Almost inevitably.

Even the bloke with the VIP pass who hangs around Bernie's bus like a naughty schoolboy?

Unknown. But, given talk of Bernie starting a breakaway series, perhaps they'll all reform for a greatest hits tour?

Are you about to draw a parallel between this and the schism that once led to two different bands touring under the name of Buck's Fizz?

Ugh. Come back UB40 – all is forgiven...

Do say I am a One In Ten

Don't say But to be strictly accurate, the world's super-rich account for one in 3,867,403

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NEWS

F1's new owners save British GP at Silverstone

Liberty Media won't cut race fees, but will support efforts to make the event more profitable for the track's owners, the BRDC

Formula 1 boss Chase Carey has guaranteed the future of the British GP. Liberty Media, who completed their deal to buy F1 in January, want to protect historic European races, which Carey described as "the foundation of the sport".

Silverstone's owners, the British Racing Drivers' Club, were considering exercising a break clause in their contract after 2019 because they said they couldn't afford the contract they had struck with former F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone

Derek Warwick said: "We are positive we can work this grand prix and make a profit"



in 2009. That contract has an escalator clause that increases its cost by five per cent each year.

Carey said: "We are going to have a British GP. I have made it very clear that the foundation of the sport is western Europe. There are opportunities to make it much better than it is today."

Carey said he would enable race organisers to raise more money, but would not reduce fees. "I don't think we will make them more affordable," he said. "We will make them more successful."

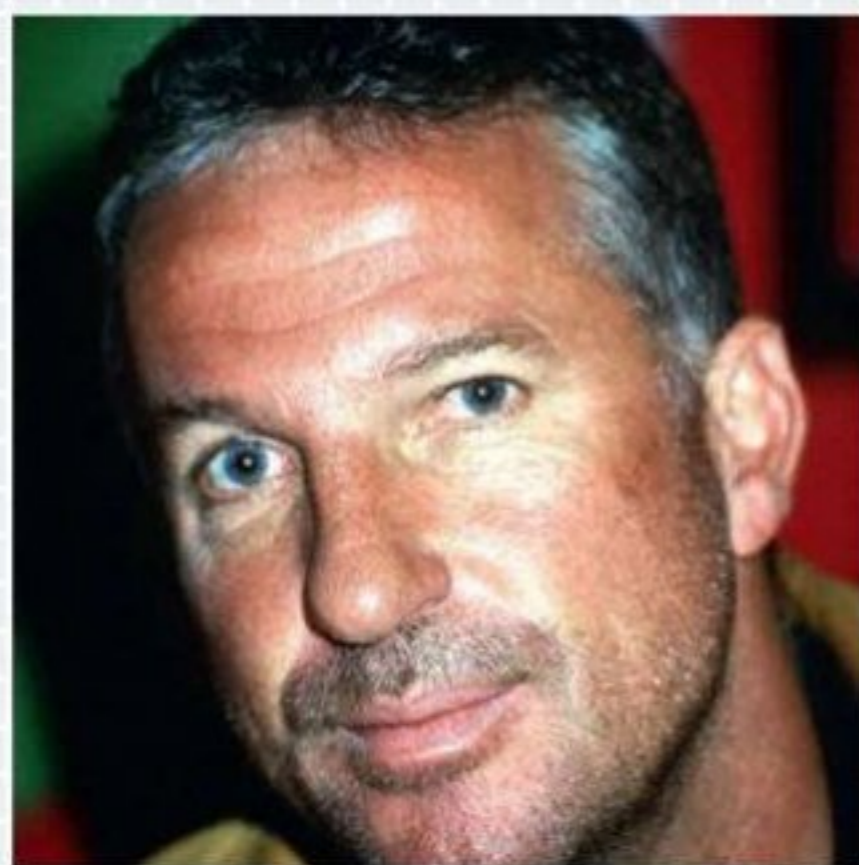
BRDC president Derek Warwick said: "We know where we're going now with Liberty, we know where we're going with Silverstone. We

are positive we can work this grand prix and make a profit in 2017. What he [Carey] is saying to us is he might relax certain restrictions that Bernie [Ecclestone] has had on us over the last few years in terms of merchandising, marketing, sponsorship, etc. Some circuits out there have more flexibility with their contract with Bernie than what we have."

MIRTH

SEPARATED AT BIRTH...

Jenson Button



Sort-of-retired McLaren racer, 2009 world champion and national treasure

Sir Ian Botham



Former England Test team captain, cricketing legend and national treasure

NEWS IN BRIEF



FORD RULES OUT F1 RETURN

While Formula 1 celebrates the 50th anniversary of the legendary Ford-backed Cosworth DFV engine's debut, it seems the blue-oval badge is unlikely to be seen again on an F1 car. "We're not really looking at Formula 1," Dave Pericak, director of Ford Performance, told *F1 Racing's* sister magazine *Autosport*. "I don't see us getting into that any time soon. F1 is so expensive."

McLAREN WIN ENGINE SENSOR TENDER

McLaren Racing's sister company McLaren Applied Technologies (MAT) have won the FIA's tender to supply standard engine pressure and temperature sensors to the entire grid for three years, starting in 2018. MAT has also been the sole supplier of standard Engine Control Units in F1 since 2008 and fulfils the same role in NASCAR.

COLLISION PENALTY RULES CHANGED

In a bid to eliminate the inconsistencies that have proved controversial during recent seasons, the FIA has revised F1's Sporting Regulations so that drivers will not be penalised unless it can be established beyond doubt who is at fault. Article 38.2a now says: "It shall be at the discretion of the stewards to decide if any driver involved in an incident should be penalised. Unless it is clear to the stewards that a driver was wholly or predominantly to blame for an incident, no penalty will be imposed."

MASSA KEEPS RETIREMENT GIFT

Felipe Massa will keep the Williams F1 car he was given as a leaving gift by the team, even though he will race with the team this year, following Valtteri Bottas's move to Mercedes. "It's mine," Massa said of the chassis, which is on display in the factory foyer. "It was a little surprise when Claire [Williams] called me to ask if I'd stop my retirement, but definitely I'm ready and motivated to come back. I was not retiring from racing, I was looking at a different category."

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Pat Symonds explains **THE SCIENCE BEHIND...** **Engine mapping**

F1 TECH

Let's start at the beginning: what is engine mapping and how does it work?

In their most simple form, the maps are an array of numbers – in effect a big table of rows and columns, such as you might see on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. These tables give values of various parameters, which determine how those parameters may vary as a function of the engine operating conditions.

To give an example, the amount of fuel that is injected into an engine will depend on both the engine speed and the torque that the driver is demanding by means of the position of the throttle pedal. For each discrete value of both these inputs to the map, there will be a specific amount of time for which the fuel injectors need to be open in order to provide just the right amount of fuel that the engine needs.

If you imagine looking at a train timetable, you look along the columns until you see the station you are interested in. You then look down the rows until you find the time of the next train. The engine maps work in a similar way in that the Engine Control Unit (ECU) will measure the engine speed and index along the table to the correct rpm, while simultaneously measuring the throttle-pedal position and indexing down the table to the relevant position to find a value that will tell it how long to hold the injectors open.

Of course there are many more maps than this. As well as the amount of fuel injected, you need to determine exactly when in the compression stroke it needs to be injected as well as determining when the spark needs to be ignited. Similarly, the turbo boost required will be determined by yet another map.

Why are they called maps?

If you imagine that in the case above we looked at it in three dimensions, with engine speed representing North/South and throttle position East/West, then the values of injection duration would represent values in the vertical dimension. The effect would be that the data would look like

a three-dimensional map of the earth, hence they are called 'maps'.

Are these maps fixed?

The base maps are fixed but they may be modified by other inputs. For example, the current Formula 1 engines run close to the point of detonation, or 'knock' as it also sometimes known. This is a premature firing of the fuel and air mixture, which can be very destructive and can cause rapid engine failure. The engines are fitted with knock sensors which, if they detect any cylinder knocking, can apply an offset from the base-map ignition timing, thereby reducing the propensity to knock.

Has it always been like this?

No, the technology was not available in the time of the ubiquitous Cosworth DFV F1 engine for example. Even some of the first-generation turbocharged engines relied on purely mechanical means to control the fuel, ignition and boost. As micro-electronics became more readily available in the early 1980s, so engine control was able to increase in sophistication.

Where are the maps stored?

They are held in the ECU. In the early days they were held in a specific sort of chip called an EEPROM. These were read-only memories, whose contents could be erased and reprogrammed using a pulsed voltage. This was done by removing the chip from the ECU and putting it in a programming device.

In 1986 when I was working for Benetton, we used the BMW turbo engine, which utilised these devices. I bought a programmer and learnt how to re-programme the chips, which were programmed in hexadecimal – a complex number system using base 16 rather than the normal decimal system, which uses base 10.

The late Paul Rosche, who ran the works engines in the Brabham cars, could never understand why we had such good performance

and often asked if he could check our chips. I was extremely adept at the sleight of hand needed to remove a chip and substitute it with an 'approved' one – which I would then hand to him for checking.

These days the maps are loaded into the car remotely because the ECU is part of the network. This is done by the engine engineers at the circuit who will hold the maps on their computers and download them to the ECU using a specific piece of software.

How exactly do the engine maps affect the performance of the engine?

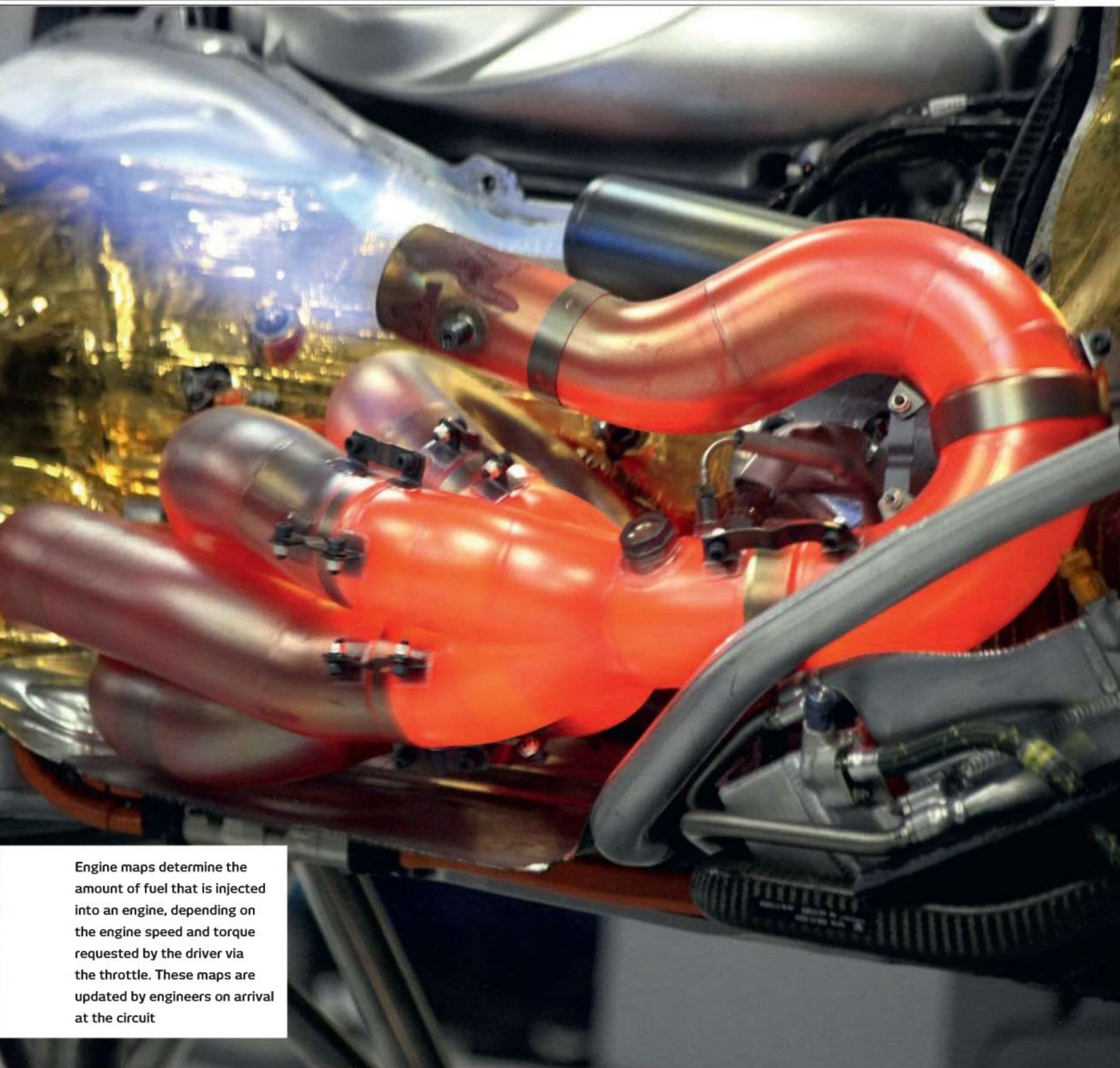
The power-unit manufacturer will determine the base map (or calibration as it is often known) by experimentation on a dynamometer, balancing peak performance with the reliability needed for acceptable life. Under the current F1 regulations, they also have to check that the fuel flow does not



exceed the regulatory limit. This base calibration will then be used at the circuit, although the engineers working at the track will also be able to make minor changes in response to specific problems or driver requests.

Do you need to use different engine maps for different circuits?

Not really, since the sophistication of the current electronics is such that the maps are suitable for all normal conditions. There may be a few exceptions, for example in Mexico where the



Engine maps determine the amount of fuel that is injected into an engine, depending on the engine speed and torque requested by the driver via the throttle. These maps are updated by engineers on arrival at the circuit

extreme altitude means increased workload for the turbo-compressor, a different turbo speed map may be used.

Can the driver alter the engine maps?

To some extent he can. While there is a base engine map on which the engine may operate, he can also select alternative maps for certain conditions. If we assume that the base map is one that is suitable to use for the entire race then there may be maps loaded that are less

aggressive and hence will enhance engine life for use during practice. Equally there will be a special map that he can select just for the hot laps in qualifying, which will push both the engine and the electrical power deployment to the maximum.

Is the power unit the only system that is mapped in this way?

The chassis engineer also has a similar mapping system available to him. These days there are

not many maps available, but brake balance and the differential locking are used extensively to optimise handling. The differential mapping is particularly useful as it can recognise corner entry from mid-corner and apply different locking in different parts of the corner. This is particularly useful since the driver can then adjust base maps in response to tyre degradation to keep the car balanced through a stint. 🏎️

NEXT MONTH SIMULATION



PETER WINDSOR

RACER'S EDGE

Authority, wit and intelligence
from the voice of *F1 Racing*

Forty years ago, almost to the very week, I stood by the revolving door of the crazy São Paulo Hilton, captivated by an ebullient Frank Williams. Dark blue polo shirt, dark blue trousers, neatly pressed. The usual Rossetti loafers, black leather belt. It was Brazilian Grand Prix Friday.

"I tell you, Peter, I've had enough," said Frank. "No more fetch and carry for Mr Wolf [Canadian oil magnate Walter Wolf, who had bought Frank's F1 team at the end of 1975]. You know what he had me doing the other day? He had me at Heathrow, picking up one of his friends and driving him into town. That's not me. I don't need it that badly."

"So what are you going to do?"

"I'm flying back to England today. I'm going to finish with Walter and start my own team again. And this time I'm going to get it right. Do you know Patrick Head? The lad who designed the Scott F2 car? He's been with us under Harvey Postlethwaite for the past year. Top man. Works so hard that I found him asleep in one of the cars before the race in Japan. Anyway, I'm doing it with Patrick. He'll be with me not just as a designer, but as a partner. That's the future. *Engineering*. I'm going to have 'engineering' in the name of the new company. 'Williams Grand Prix

A spiritual homecoming for Paddy Lowe

Engineering Team,' or something like that. Without an engineer it can't be done; I know that now. And Patrick's the man. We'll start small and grow from there and try to do our own car next year. Don't forget, though: engineering. That's what F1 is going to be all about... *engineering*."

And, with that, he was off. Soft leather bag in one hand, battered, black, square-cornered briefcase in the other. Frank Williams. Off to conquer the world. Off to pound pavements, searching for loot with which to finance the engineering.

Frank did it, of course. He and Patrick Head rose to become the most successful combo in the history of F1, a virtuoso double-act replicated in recent years only by the success of Christian Horner/Adrian Newey. The key, as Frank had explained in Brazil, was Patrick – or was it something more? Of course it was.

The real key, so obvious at the time that we all took it for granted, was longevity. Frank not only made it his business to finance Patrick's engineering (and then hire the best drivers he could – in that order) but he also made it his priority to keep Patrick happy. That was his golden rule. As logical as this sounds, consider the context: Enzo Ferrari at that time was constantly sparring with his own excellent technical leader Mauro Forghieri; Colin Chapman was forever saying goodbye to such talents as Len Terry and Maurice Philippe. Guy Ligier would strike gold in early 1979... but he wouldn't be able to keep the Brut-wearing, Gitanes-smoking, *incroyable* Gérard Ducarouge from walking out the door. So it is in Formula 1. Team owners dictate; engineers come and go.

Patrick, of course, could never sustain the same level of performance, but he grew very good at delegating to such talents as Adrian Newey, Ross Brawn, Neil Oatley, Enrique Scalabroni and Paddy Lowe, and was even

able to move gracefully aside for the likes of Mike Coughlan, Mark Gillan, Sam Michael and Pat Symonds. Always, though, he was there, in the background.

Only now, 40 years on, is Sir Patrick finally cutting his legal ties with Williams, transferring, as I understand it, his stake in the team to Patrick 'Paddy' Lowe – about the only person in the world, I should think, to whom Patrick would be happy to sell.

The irony is that Paddy began his F1 life at Williams and is now returning as a vastly more experienced engineer, but otherwise, the same plain-speaking man as before. Along the way there have been winning stints for Paddy at both McLaren and Mercedes, affording him the status – if you include being head of engineering at McLaren above technical directors like Coughlan – of being the most successful F1 engineer of all time.

The circuitous route home? I guess Paddy's original departure from Williams to McLaren was understandable: Paddy has always wanted to do much more than 'technology'; he is drawn to every aspect of racing and is particularly good at managing (ie understanding) people, be they engineers, drivers, mechanics, truckies or gofers.

Paddy had moved to McLaren in the hope that he could begin to play the larger role; McLaren failed to realise this. He ended up running the car but staring at anthracite walls rather than into the eyes of the people with whom he wanted to work.

Amazingly – and I say this because too often in F1 we see very talented, well-rounded people sinking without trace – his all-round talent was appreciated by Alex Wurz, who recommended Paddy to Williams' latest shareholder, Toto Wolff. With Patrick Head nodding in approval, Toto could see the logic of inviting Paddy back to Williams as deputy team principal under Frank. Paddy loved the concept.

Then it all changed. Toto saw an opening first at Ferrari – and then at Mercedes. He joined the Germans. Paddy wanted to maintain the Williams deal, but in Toto's absence the ground rules quickly changed. He would be technical director only; the deputy team

"There's only space at the top for one man,
and that man isn't going to be an engineer"



Frank Williams with Paddy Lowe at the 1992 Portuguese Grand Prix. Lowe was employed at Williams as joint head of electronics, and worked on the development of active suspension

principal role was no longer on the table. Egos entered the frame.

The phone rang. It was Toto. Let's do Mercedes! Paddy agreed. They would be his calls on the pitwall; it would be his factory to run. Toto would handle the Mercedes end of things. It would be Frank and Patrick, 21st-century-style. And, of course, it worked perfectly: six world championships over the course of three glorious seasons. It wasn't all Paddy: Ross Brawn's fingerprints are still everywhere at Mercedes, and many brilliant people at Brackley pre-date Patrick Lowe.

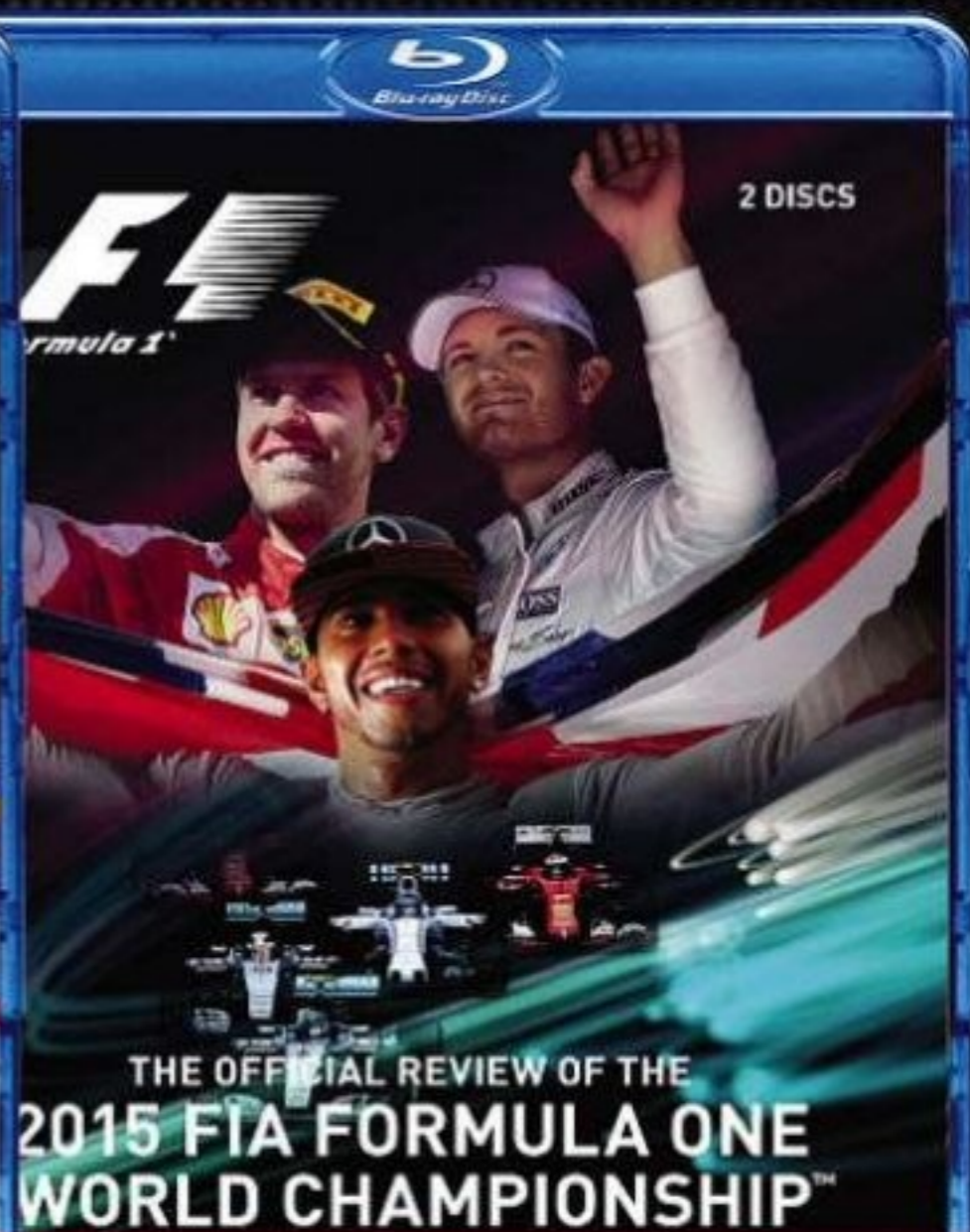
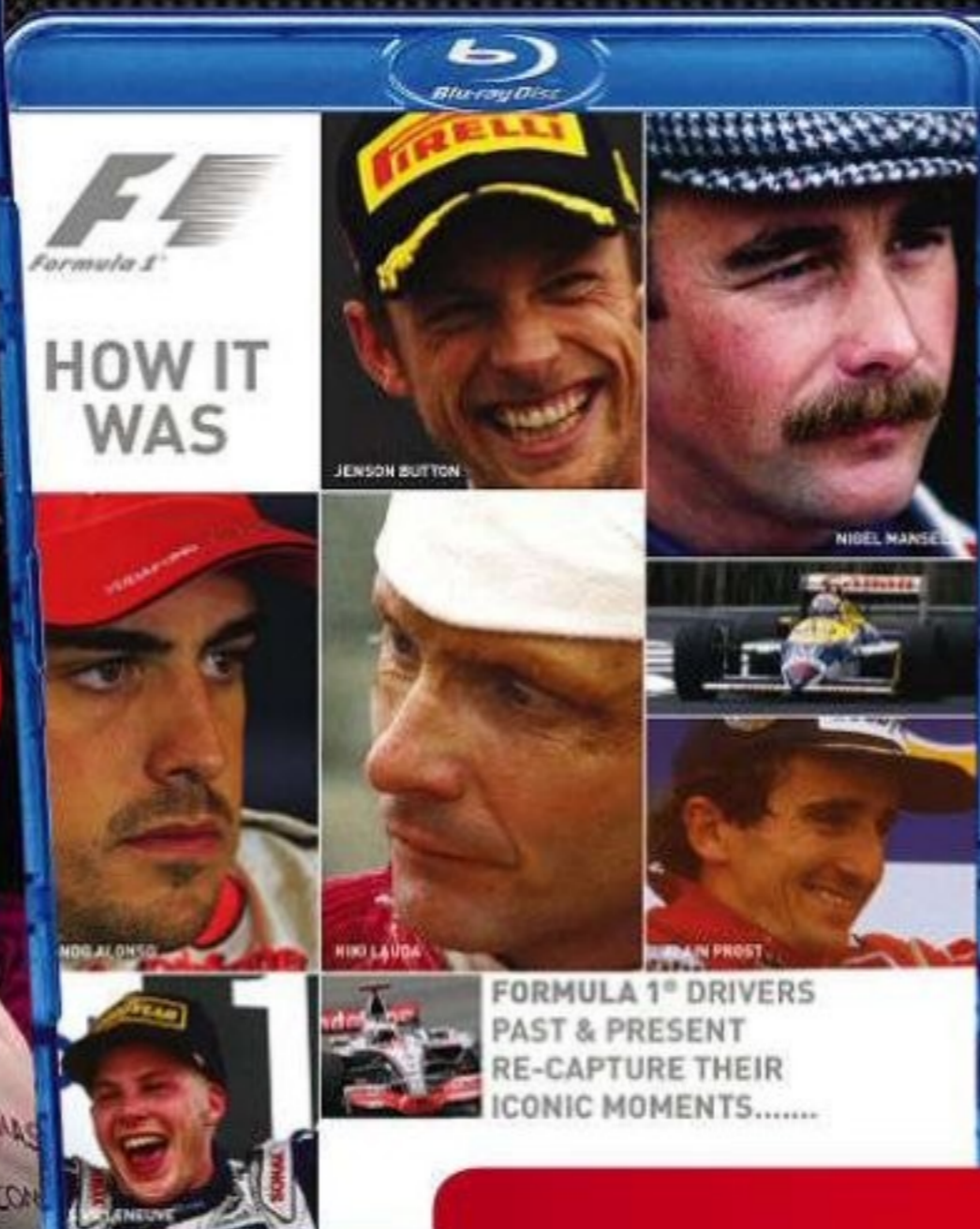
The results, though, are undeniable: part-engineer, part-manager-of-people, Paddy was able to extract the best from everyone who mattered at Mercedes. Driver spats aside, the team ran as smoothly as any F1 team at its best has run at any time in history.

Until the explosion. Until they broke the golden rule. Paddy's contract came up for renewal at the end of 2016, but inexorably the Toto/Paddy balance began to shift. By the autumn, even though he wanted to stay on and continue to win without distraction, Paddy could sense that his time was up. James Allison came into the frame as technical director and Toto clearly wanted more of Paddy's non-technical territory. Call it ambition. Call it boardroom politics. There's only space at the top for one man, and that man isn't going to be an engineer. It's the law of the F1 jungle.

Mercedes are changing something that didn't need to change. It's like the F1 Strategy Group making it easier for cars to overtake by specifying bigger tyres, higher cornering speeds and shorter braking distances.

So now Williams have another chance – and I hope they make it work this time. I hope the goal is to give Paddy everything he needs to get the whole job done through to the long-term. For that is what good management is all about. That was in the air in São Paulo, '77. That is the legacy of Frank and Patrick. 🇮🇪

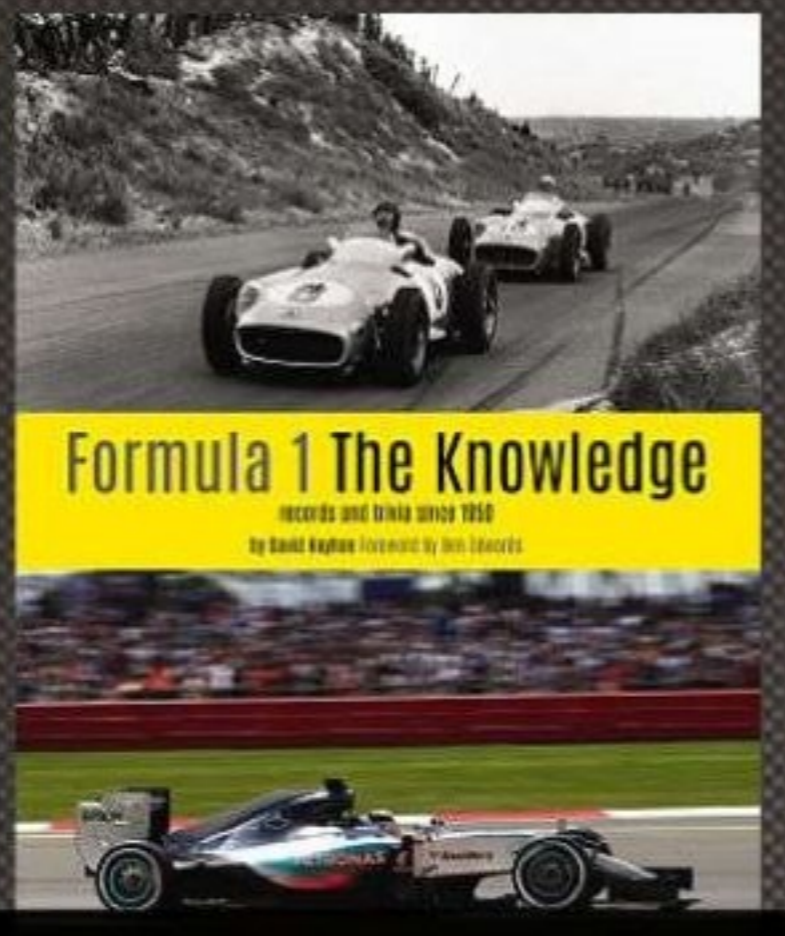
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DIETER RENCKEN

POWER PLAY

The stories F1's bigwigs would rather you didn't know...

The deal is done: following FIA World Motor Sport Council sanction and shareholder approval, NASDAQ-listed Liberty Media Corporation have acquired control of Delta Topco, Formula 1's commercial rights-holding entity (and parent of F1's operating companies). They have renamed their Liberty Media Group subsidiary as Formula One Group (FOG) and assumed the right to appoint the FOG board.

The deal, targeted for completion by the end of March, means outgoing F1 commercial managers, CVC Capital Partners, retain approximately 65 per cent of stock on behalf of existing shareholders, and a single seat on the board. The structure of voting papers, though, means Liberty's minority share provides them with management control.

Thus the global media giant will formulate F1's future strategy and direction. No longer will it be dictated to by a vulture fund with beady eyeballs focused firmly on revenue extraction. A giant 'hip, hip, hooray' to that!

Without exception, F1's heavy-hitters are welcoming this long-overdue restructure, hopeful that the sport could at last join the 21st century. It is premature to predict specifics, although F1's new MD, Ross Brawn, has offered encouraging hints about "simplifying"

The 'gift' for which the recipient pays

the sport to enhance its appeal. Yet few in the paddock doubt that Formula 1 faces a root-and-branch review – a process already begun with the lopping of the treetop.

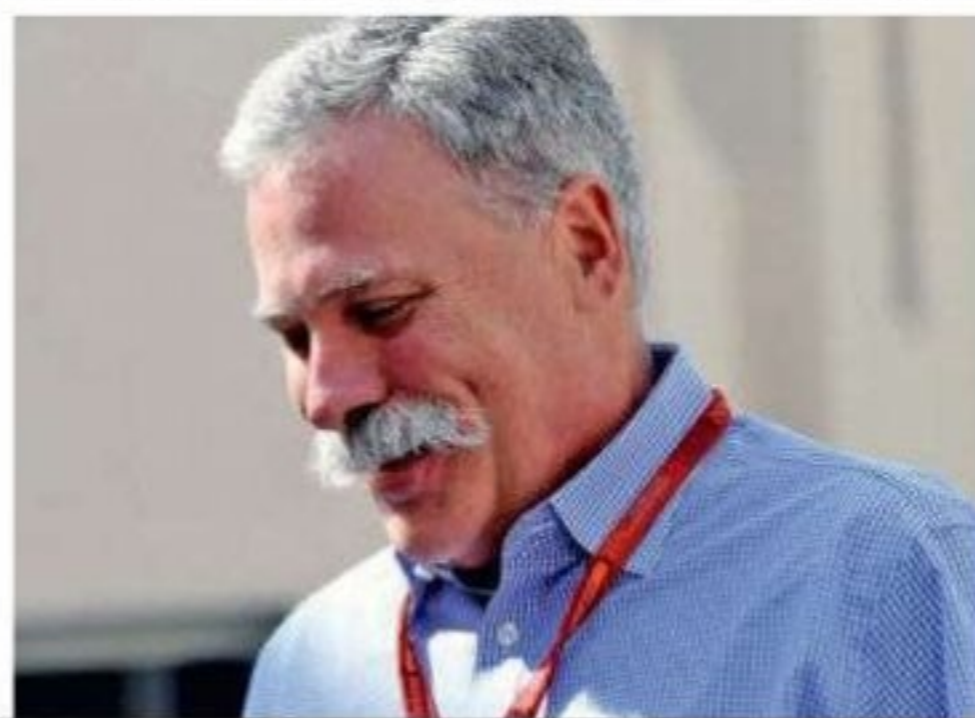
As part of their strategy to woo the teams, Liberty planned to offer them a 'goodwill gesture': the chance to acquire a \$400m tranche of shares in F1 (five per cent of F1's enterprise value of \$8bn) at the discounted price of a little over \$21 per share (\$8 down on the stock price, and \$4 less than Liberty's institutional investor price).

The top two subscribers would each hold observer status on FOG's management board, with the rest jointly represented by a third seat. Another catch was a freeze of ten years before the shares could be openly traded. Not surprisingly, the offer, which expired at the end of January, went down like a lead balloon.

"The offer as it stood was unattractive to our team unless we had input into F1's future," said a source who had studied the initial proposal, "and I believe they are going to tweak the terms and conditions." Another asked: "How can Liberty expect us to commit for ten years when we don't even know what commercial terms will be offered after 2020, or what shape the sport will be in thereafter?" A third team boss was more succinct: "The money should be flowing in the other direction..."

The crux of the offer lies, though, not in the fine print, but in its inequality: Manor have

The sport's new owners, led by Chase Carey, have offered the teams a chance to buy shares in F1



gone into administration as this column is written, and at least two further teams are barely solvent, so they are clearly in no position to consider taking up what, on the surface at least, appears to be a magnanimous offer. And of the remaining eight teams, it is doubtful whether the cash reserves of two extend to making such investments.

That leaves six, or five groups (if both Red Bulls are lumped together, which could cause complications given that purchase ceilings apply to individual teams): Red Bull, Toro Rosso, Mercedes, Ferrari, Haas and Renault. Haas, as a newcomer, based, like Liberty, in the USA, is difficult to call, while McLaren and Renault have other priorities – Renault having the additional complication of a vocal French state shareholding.

Thus three are left standing: Mercedes, the Red Bulls combined, and Ferrari. During his 2015 engine war with Renault, Red Bull boss Dietrich Mateschitz made noises about quitting the sport, so can he be relied on to keep his brand in F1 for the next five years, let alone a decade? In the meantime, the Scuderia's president, Sergio Marchionne, has repeatedly threatened to withdraw Ferrari after 2020.

Still, assuming any of this trio and/or McLaren take up Liberty's offer, such funding could be said to come directly from FOG's coffers, for, not coincidentally, they make up F1's Constructors' Championship Bonus teams, who are guaranteed up to \$100m annually in premiums over and above F1's performance-linked payouts, even if they don't finish a race through to 2020. In the meantime, dividends, plus appreciation on shares, should FOG perform as well as Liberty hope, will keep their budgets topped up for years to come. Hence affordability is not an issue; still less so if budget caps are introduced.

Those at the top table will also be party to inside information unlikely to be shared with F1's commoners – thus providing them with a head start on regulation or format changes. All well and good for those who have reached this privileged position with the assistance of F1's inequitable revenue structure, but less than great for the minnows, who seem destined to wait interminably for better days ahead. 🍷

"The crux of Liberty's offer lies, though, not in the fine print, but in its inequality"

I'VE GOT THE




The most coveted drive in F1 has gone to **Valtteri Bottas**. So what should we expect of the fleet Finn as he signs up for the sport's toughest assignment: taking on Lewis Hamilton in equal machinery? He reveals all to *F1 Racing*

WORDS ANTHONY ROWLINSON

PORTRAITS THOMAS BUTLER

SOMETIME **last year, *F1 Racing's* principal photographer,** Steven Tee, shared a gem of a tale relating to a particular TV show that had made him laugh so hard as he watched in the gym that he "almost fell off the cross-trainer". This delightful image has brought considerable joy in recent months to those of us who know Steven well and it came to mind in conversation with Valtteri Bottas, when *F1 Racing* enquired how he'd heard the bombshell news of Nico Rosberg's retirement on 2 December last year.

"I was in the gym in Abu Dhabi," he relates. "We'd stayed out to do a few days' testing with the old car, and Antti Vierula, my trainer, got a message about the news. Of course, it was surprising, for everyone, but into my mind came: 'Someone needs to replace him, and I wonder who it's going to be?'"

Granted, this wasn't quite a 'fall-off-the-cross-trainer' moment, but the news *did* pull Valtteri up short. With a drive on offer at the best team in F1, there were suddenly more important things to do than finish his workout. →





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“It wasn’t long before I called Toto [Mercedes F1 boss Toto Wolff] and asked what they were doing. I don’t want to go into too many details about the conversation, but I made it clear that I would win races and championships if he gave me the drive.”

And what, we wondered, was it like for him to make that call? Back comes the answer: “It was very natural, like an instinct.”

This reaction may come to be viewed as one of those life-defining moments around which personal histories pivot. As the F1 universe entered a phase of planetary re-alignment, Bottas made his move and got straight on the phone to his former co-manager and would-be future team boss with the clearest of messages: “Toto, I’m your man.”

Opportunity had opened up before hunger, ambition and talent, to make Valtteri Bottas the right man in the right place at the right time to display the vital competitive edge that’s always ‘flame on’ with top-line drivers, even if, as with this glacier-cool Finn, they keep their zeal well hidden beneath an implacable visage.

And boy is Bottas going to need an edge now, for while he has landed the ‘dream drive’ – a seat in F1’s latterly dominant team and certainly one of the strongest racing operations ever assembled – the guy racing alongside him will be none other than Lewis Hamilton. Triple world champion, 53-time grand prix winner, blitz-fast, ultra-competitive *Lewis Hamilton*.

Indubitably, then, there will be nowhere for Bottas to hide; no rapid-but-inconsistent Brazilian team-mate as a fickle barometer; no tyre-troubled Williams chassis to explain an anonymous weekend. At Mercedes, against Hamilton, Bottas faces the ultimate challenge – one that so drained his predecessor Nico Rosberg, he resolved to quit rather than force himself through the Hamilton mangle again.

But if there’s even a sliver of internal doubt as to whether he’s equal to this most acute task, Bottas isn’t showing it. Indeed, fresh from his first winter training camp and still only in day five of Mercedes employ as we chat at their ever-expanding Brackley HQ, he’s brimming with enthusiasm, in a manner that, by Finnish standards, is positively effervescent.

“I’m ready for it,” he enthuses, with a direct look and keen grin impossible to fake. “I feel full of energy; I’m very happy this has happened and I’m ready to work as much as it takes for the whole season, and many seasons after. That’s how I feel – ready for a big battle. →



“I made it clear to Toto that I would win races and championships if he gave me the drive”





“EVERYONE KNOWS

exactly how quick Lewis is,” Bottas continues. “He’s a really talented driver, he’s a three-time world champion, so of course it’s going to be a challenge as his team-mate – he’s a great reference for me. But I’m not going into the season thinking: ‘I’m the second driver.’ I’m going into this season to get everything out of the car and to fight with Lewis. Obviously, we are fighting for the same team and we need to work well as team-mates and to have a good team spirit. But I’m sure we can race hard and, at the same time, fairly. I’m just looking forward to everything with Lewis and I know I can do it.”

In order to function as a leading Formula 1 driver, Bottas must, of course, believe every word he has just spoken. He *has* to believe he can beat his team-mate, that he is the better driver. And until he and Hamilton begin to compete out on

track, he can remain in this briefly blissful ‘happy place’ that’s part-joy at having bagged the sport’s most competitive seat, and part-anticipation of the good things that surely lie ahead.

What is unknown, however, is the extent of Bottas’s true potential. After four years spent establishing himself at Williams, will he continue to develop and emerge as a true championship contender, in the manner of, say, a Damon Hill or a Nico Rosberg? Or is his natural gift of a fundamentally higher order? Might he be a Häkkinen-by-stealth, ready to win with the right equipment at his disposal? Maybe it’ll be neither and he’ll instead assume a ‘quick number-two’ role, in the manner of a Patrese, a Fisichella, a Barrichello, a Kovalainen.

Pat Symonds, who was Williams’ technical chief throughout almost all of Bottas’s four seasons there, offers this assessment: “He’s got a lot of talent and he’s a thinker with a really good work ethic. And the way Williams trained him was excellent. He worked in the factory and on the shop floor, and he really came to appreciate a lot more about what was required on a Sunday afternoon than most other drivers.”

As to the question of Bottas’s sheer speed, Symonds is more nuanced: “I’m really not sure,” he says. “Valtteri is very good, but Lewis is one of those rare ones who come along. Nico [Rosberg] was very good, but you cannot say that he was as fast as Lewis, and I think that Valtteri might find himself there. Although if he does, that’s good, because Nico raced Lewis on several occasions and I am sure Valtteri will do the same.”

BEST OF BOTTAS

2013 US GP – P8



2014 British GP – P2



Rosberg versus Hamilton, indeed, has been the central narrative of the past three seasons of F1. And despite, perhaps *because of*, the intensity of that rivalry, what bounty it has brought Mercedes. As the definitive team of this hybrid F1 era, they've won 51 grands prix, taken 56 poles and secured three world title doubles.

Such success has led to suggestions that, in hiring Bottas, Mercedes have opted for a near-like-for-like replacement for the 2016 world champ, late of this parish: superstar secure, let's find a swift wing-man who won't upset him.

That's a simplistic view, though, and one that overlooks the state of the late-2016 driver market. Leading players such as Fernando Alonso, Max Verstappen, Dan Ricciardo and Seb Vettel were all already under contract to their respective teams, in effect removing them as candidates without triggering a full-on contractual war, for which Mercedes had neither stomach nor need. Mercedes protégés Pascal Wehrlein and Esteban Ocon, either of whom could have been summoned to the mothership from their 2017 seats at Sauber and Force India, were judged too raw, too unproven, to merit a drive for a team that prizes the constructors' title above all else and which insists that both pilots score heavily, race-in, race-out. Mercedes F1 is not a place to be learning your craft.

Bottas, meanwhile, although already signed to Williams for 2017, was uniquely placed to jump ship, given the close relationship between the two teams. Mercedes executive director Toto Wolff is a former Williams shareholder who

has also previously been involved in Bottas's management, and who blesses Williams' coveted Merc engine deal. It was advantageous for both sides, therefore, that an agreement be settled – a 'Bottas Ultimatum', if you will. And while *F1 Racing* understands it was never the case that Williams were faced with a stark choice between keeping their driver or losing their engines, it's clear that currently harmonious relations would have been soured had an accommodation not been reached. But Williams *did* want to keep Bottas – hence their early announcement that he would partner rookie Lance Stroll in 2017 – and the rumoured \$20m consideration agreed for his departure should help fund plenty of technical development at Grove.

Not that any of these background shenanigans are truly of concern to Bottas himself, who now simply has to focus on the thing he does best: driving an F1 car to its absolute limit.

"Obviously it's a big challenge, jumping in the shoes of a world champion," he reflects. "And of course the team is going to expect a lot from me – but so am I. And I'm confident that, with a good car, in some ways things don't change very much for me. The name of the game is still to be able to extract absolutely everything out of the car, and that never changes."

He's a cool one, is Bottas, a true son of his chilly homeland, where he grew up with dreams of becoming an ice-hockey star before discovering karting. He's as unruffled in manner as he is on track, exuding a sense of being on top of things in an uncluttered way, much as he does

"Nico was very good, but you cannot say that he was as fast as Lewis, and I think that Valtteri might find himself there..."

Pat Symonds



when troubling the time-sheets with quick laps on low-grip Fridays, those moments when innate skill and feel come to the fore. No fuss being fast, this is simply *what he does*.

These qualities will make Bottas a classic counterpoint to the neon-lit Hamilton, for he's even less ostentatious than the famously composed Rosberg and possessed of something solid at his very core. Whereas with Nico, a sensitive, hyper-intelligent soul, the strain of keeping things together would occasionally manifest itself via an uncharacteristic snippiness, Bottas seems not only permanently unruffled, but *unruffleable*, with no need for the aggressive insouciance of, say, a Kimi Räikkönen.

"I'm going to be more in the spotlight," he concedes, "and people are going to talk about me more, because they will be able to see every →

INSETS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT

2015 Mexican GP – P3



2016 Canadian GP – P3





single thing I'm doing. But I need to not let any outside pressure affect me.

"I've never really had any kinds of issues with these things and I'm not expecting any in the future. What has always worked for me is to be well prepared for everything with the team, the engineers, my fitness and everything related to my performance, so I know that when I jump in the car I've done every single bit as well as I can. Everything is prepared; I'm ready for anything."

Engineers readily enthuse about Bottas's ability to learn fast and deliver concise, accurate feedback, and he's reckoned to be a master of gauging tyre life. All of these are handy attributes as Formula 1 prepares for an all-new chassis formula, with low-deg Pirellis, even if, as Symonds reckons, there's an occasional

suspicion that he might be better served by thinking less and racing harder.

Any spare 'thinking time' will be dramatically compressed when Bottas comes up against the man in the other Silver Arrow. Time and again over the past decade, we've witnessed Hamilton carve speed from his machinery on a separate plane to those around him, to leave his rivals eating his proverbial dust. Remember how Lewis forced a chasing Fernando Alonso into a thunder-shunt at Fuji in 2007, as he glided through a monsoon to victory? Silverstone 2008, British GP: a 68-second winning margin; Malaysia 2016, a 22-second lead before an engine blow-up. Sixty-one pole positions and counting. These are the mesmerising gifts Lewis Hamilton can bestow upon his team.

The improbably resilient Nico Rosberg found a way of dealing with Hamilton's towering ability and the repeated kicks in the teeth it enabled him to deliver – even, ultimately, finding a one-time-only means of beating Lewis. But how will Bottas handle it?

Symonds is optimistic: "Valtteri can be quite strong," he says, "so long as he doesn't get distracted. There was a time in 2015, when Ferrari were offering him something, and his head was turned a little bit, thinking, as a young man, what his next opportunity might be. But now that he has a Mercedes drive, he can take that as a measure of the faith they've placed in him and his confidence will grow. He's a cool character and a very deep thinker. He'll be able to handle it, even if Lewis starts to play games."

Those "games" will surely come if, as the still-close management team around Bottas predict, his pace is sufficient to demand Hamilton's close attention. Three front-row starts and nine podium places since 2014 hint at his unrealised potential; clean racecraft and a reputation for being a tough nut to pass speak of a natural racer who is more than capable of getting the job done, given the opportunity.

And what an opportunity awaits. A regs re-boot that might level the competitive playing field for a time, a perfect schooling at Williams and the keys to what's likely to be the best car on the grid. The big-time beckons.

"If it is a race-winning car, the goal is to win races," says Valtteri. "If not, then not, but we all here want to win. The championship is, for me, the only target, and this year I could have a chance to fight for it. If so, I'm ready."

And if he does, don't be so surprised that you fall off your cross-trainer. 🍌



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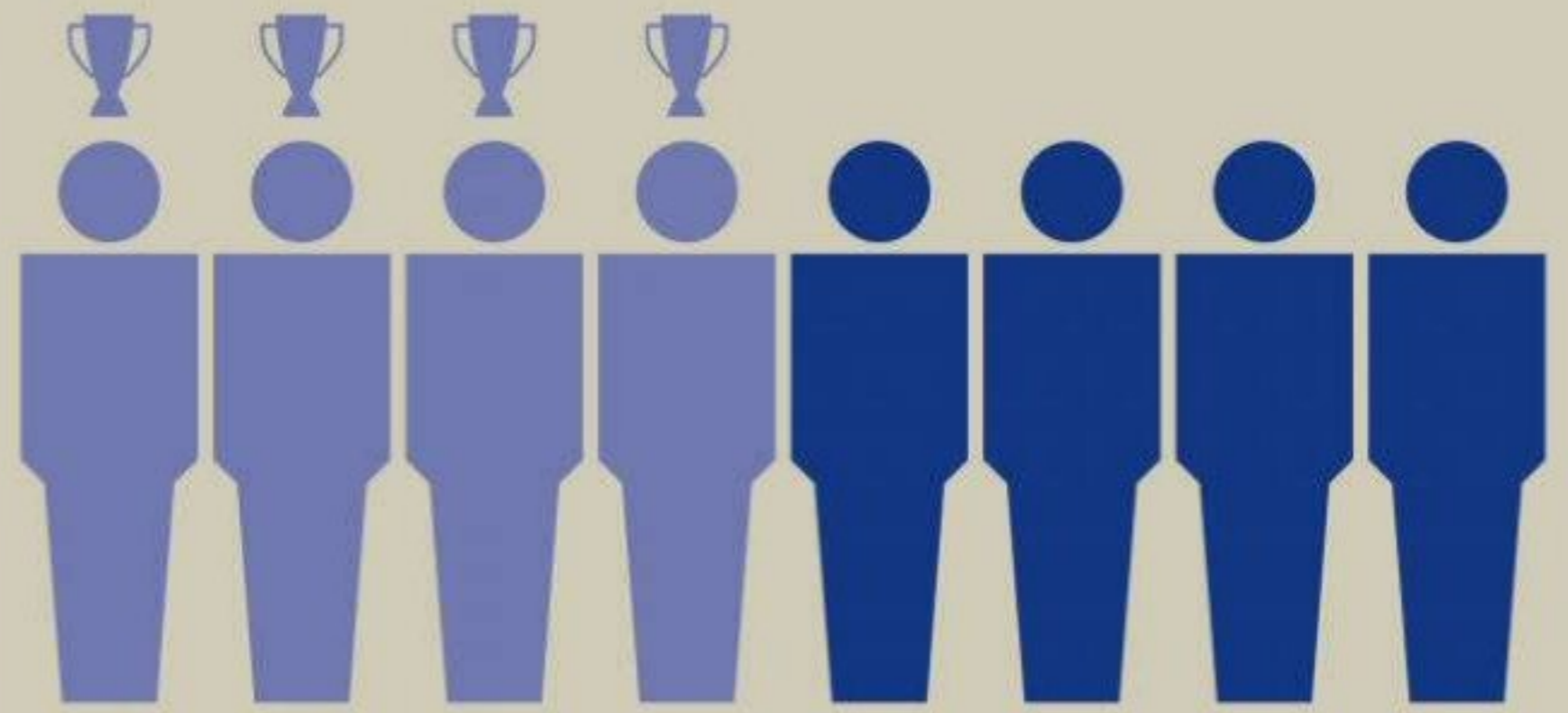


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GO FIGURE

We take a statistical look at the nation of Finland and the F1 drivers it's produced...



FIFTY PER CENT

of the eight Finnish drivers to have started a Formula 1 race have at least one GP victory to their name: Valtteri Bottas, **Mika Häkkinen**, Leo Kinnunen, **Heikki Kovalainen**, JJ Lehto, **Kimi Räikkönen**, **Keke Rosberg** and Mika Salo



100

years since Finland declared independence from Russia



in Formula 1 have been achieved by Finnish drivers, putting the country fifth behind Britain, Germany, Brazil and France on the all-time list



908 MILES

from Helsinki to Budapest – the GP of choice for Finnish F1 fans



SEVEN



The number of teams that Mika Salo drove for in F1: Lotus, Tyrrell, Arrows, BAR, Ferrari, Sauber and Toyota

43

The number of fastest laps set in F1 by Kimi Räikkönen

14 World rally titles
VS 4 F1 world titles

The number of times the World Rally Championship has been won by Finns, compared to F1 world championship winners

77

The number of races Mercedes driver **Valtteri Bottas** has started so far – and his permanent F1 race number

2

The maximum number of Finns ever to be on the Formula 1 grid at the same time: Häkkinen and Lehto (1991-93); Häkkinen and Räikkönen (2001); Räikkönen and Salo (2002); Räikkönen and Kovalainen (2007-09); and Bottas and Räikkönen (2013-16)

TWELVE YEARS

between Keke Rosberg's last F1 win in 1985 and Mika Häkkinen's first in '97

269,000

The population of Espoo, the city that has furnished F1 with two drivers: Kimi Räikkönen and JJ Lehto

1 **Leo Kinnunen**, was the first Finnish F1 driver, and the only one never to have claimed an F1 podium

2006

The year that Toyota demonstrated their F1 car on the streets of Helsinki in front of a crowd of 45,000 fans

FIVE

Nigel Mansell (aka 'Red Five') was team-mate to both Keke Rosberg (1985) and Mika Häkkinen (for two races in 1995)

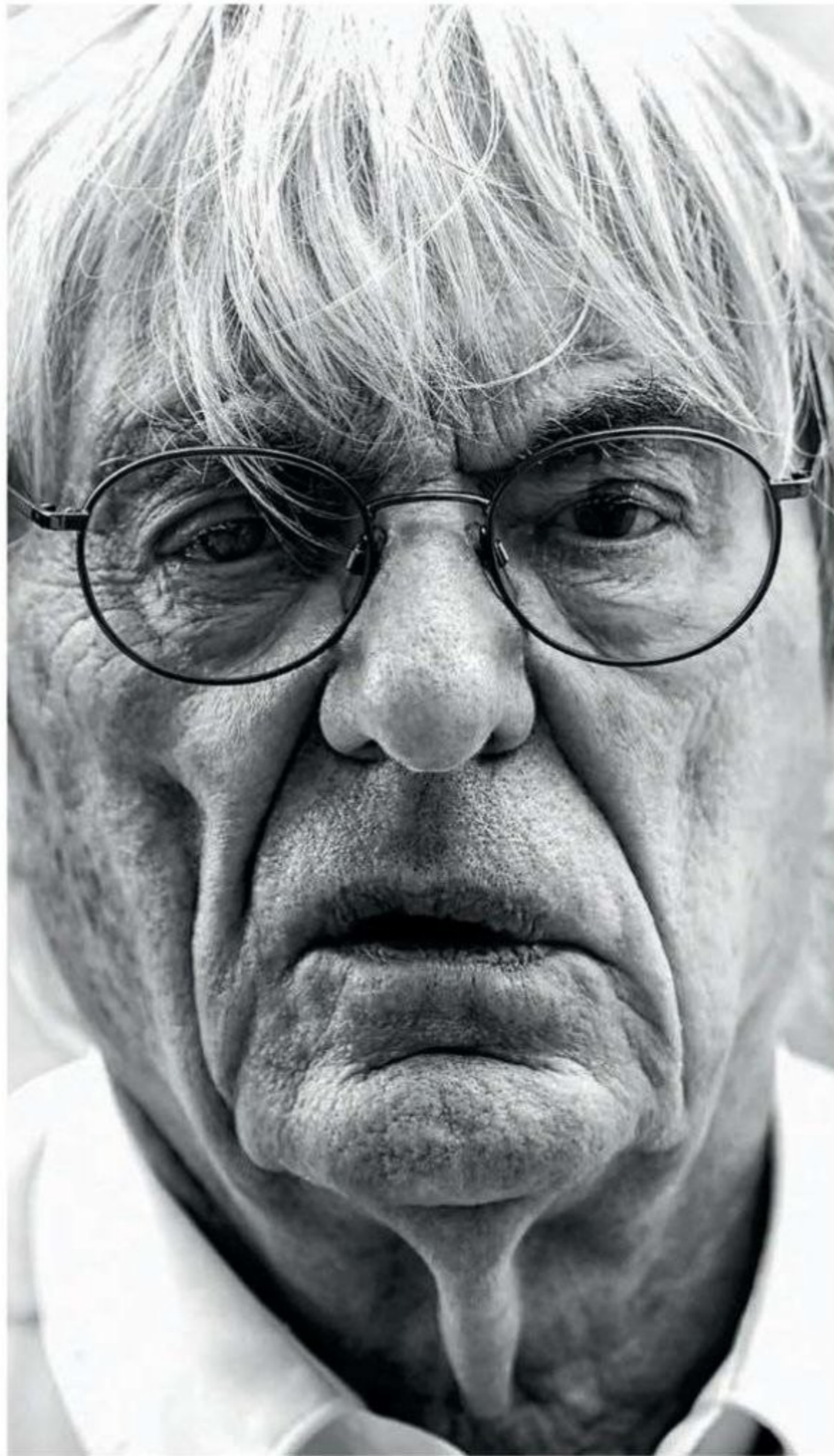
BERNIE



PHOTOS: SUTTON IMAGES

After 40 years spent ruling the sport with a mixture of cloak-and-dagger subterfuge and an iron fist,

END OF AN ERA



Formula 1's leader, premier dealmaker and King Piranha has been deposed. Here, **Maurice Hamilton** and **Peter Windsor** offer up their own personal reflections on the truly remarkable career of Bernard Charles Ecclestone



A BOLT OF

Ecclestone's furious drive and intent was obvious from the very beginning.



Monza '86: Brabham boss Ecclestone with chief mechanic, Charlie Whiting, early on in a long association that would see Whiting rise to the position of FIA Race Director

Autocratic FIA president Jean-Marie Balestre was one of the few prepared to go toe-to-toe with Ecclestone, but was eventually ousted by Ecclestone's chief ally, Max Mosley

Bernard Ecclestone's purchase of Brabham at the end of 1971 amounted to more than the straightforward acquisition of a struggling Formula 1 team. Sure, it put him on a level footing with the owners of Lotus, Ferrari and Tyrrell, the leading entrants of the day. But it also provided fertile ground for an incisive business mind operating several gears higher than those of fellow competitors only interested in racing and finding a means of covering costs. The thought, nice though it was, of making a small fortune from racing was subjugated by his rivals' overwhelming love of the sport.

Make no mistake, Ecclestone was also a racer, but in the sense of coming first in anything, from a sporting contest to a business transaction or a game of wits. He had applied all three when using money made as a second-hand car and motorcycle dealer to race a Cooper single-seater in the 500cc formula – the equivalent of Formula Ford in the 1950s.

Peter Ashcroft, later to become head of Ford UK Competitions, competed against Ecclestone and recalled a race at Brands Hatch.

"In those days, the grid was settled by names drawn from a hat," said Ashcroft. "I 'won' pole. I didn't know Bernie at the time and he was drawn directly behind me. I'm sitting on the grid and suddenly there's a rap on top of my Herbert Johnson crash helmet and this contorted little face is staring straight into mine. It was Ecclestone. 'If you don't move over, I'm coming over the top!' he snarled, and then walked away. What did I do? Moved over, of course! Bernie blasts by, leads for a while – and then spins off. That was normal for Bernie in a race."

Ecclestone's ready acceptance that he was better at dealing than driving led to the management of drivers and, eventually, the move into team ownership. Appalled by the amateurish and haphazard negotiations between individual teams and race organisers for starting money, Bernie

LIGHTNING

There could be no doubt: it was "my way or the highway" **WORDS MAURICE HAMILTON**



Ecclestone always had a keen eye for talent. Here he is at Monza in 1978, briefing his technical protégé, upcoming design ace Gordon Murray

introduced the thought of collective bargaining. He also found an ally in Max Mosley, who was then running the March F1 team. Diverse characters they may have been, but Mosley's background in law was the perfect match for Ecclestone's streetwise nous. They each possessed a sharp sense of humour, to the point where an agreement would be made before a meeting to see which of them would be first to prompt a particular team principal to do or say something silly.

Nonetheless, the serious intent of the Formula One Constructors' Association (FOCA) was gradually formulated as Mosley relished the politics and Ecclestone the business potential. First, however, they needed to tackle the FIA and the bias of its elderly (and incompetent, according to Mosley) members towards race organisers.

It was a young and ambitious blood, Michel Boeri, who would cause problems for FOCA in his role as new president of the Monaco Automobile

Club (ACM) in 1972. When Boeri overruled a previous agreement to allow 25 starters by limiting the number to 18, the teams refused to practise. With an underground car park acting as the paddock, the ACM sealed off the entrance as a means of forcing an agreement. Typically, Bernie tested the strength of the impasse by climbing into a Brabham and having his mechanics push the car to the entrance – where he ran over a policeman's foot. The subsequent running of 25 cars in practice was down to Mosley's deft legal footwork rather than Ecclestone's more direct approach.

While the power slowly but surely shifted in FOCA's direction, Bernie was gradually knocking his own team into shape. Showing an awareness of talent beyond the cockpit, Ecclestone gave the job of designer to Gordon Murray, then a virtual unknown.

Murray's striking 1974 car, the BT44, was a potential winner at the Nürburgring that August when, as a wannabe journalist, I met →

Ecclestone for the first time. Having befriended Gary Anderson, then a Brabham mechanic, at the Tip Top bar at Monaco the previous May and explained a wish to follow a team for a race weekend, I was introduced to Bob Dance, the chief mechanic, who agreed to let me accompany Brabham in Germany. The final and most important hurdle would be winning the boss's approval on the day.

When Ecclestone arrived at the 'Ring, Bob introduced me and explained the plan. Bernie looked me up and down, eventually nodded, touched my arm, gently dismissed my mumbled thanks and moved on. He didn't say a word. It was like the laying on of hands. I was shaking in my boots.

This was on the Thursday afternoon. Ecclestone was wearing a smart two-piece suit with a three-button front (fashionable at the time), white shirt and kipper tie. The cars were equally immaculate; pure white and bearing only the names of trade support, Ecclestone refusing to accept piecemeal sponsors (a brave business methodology rewarded by the distinctive presence of Martini colours the following year).

Having dealt with me, Bernie fussed over the black pin-striping on the Brabham's sidepod, insisting the bottom lines were perfectly parallel. In his left hand, he held a triangular piece of blue-and-white plastic. This was a prototype FOCA pass, due to be introduced at Monza and subsequent races, much to the displeasure of organisers who, until this point, had issued accreditation to each team as a matter of personal preference (a whimsical routine to be favoured by Ecclestone during the next four decades).

I had gained access to the Nürburgring paddock thanks to German GP media pass, inveigled from the press office by means of a forged credential and a lot of talking – a fact I kept from Mr E. When we next came face-to-face five years later at Long Beach, I was a *bona fide* journalist. But the greeting was altogether different.

Earlier that weekend I had met Alan Woollard, who was responsible for FOCA's logistics. Not having given much thought to the problems involving shipping the F1 circus (then 50 cars, 600 people and 90 tons of freight) to flyaway races, I was intrigued when, over a drink, Woollard explained the process. Thinking this would make a fascinating feature, with notebook in hand I began chatting to Alan in the paddock. This was situated in a massive conference hall with, at its centre, a motorhome.

Barely five minutes into our chat, the motorhome door burst open and Bernie stormed out, demanding to know who I was and what I was doing. When I explained, he said it was none

of my business and gave the hapless Woollard a bollocking. My earnestly articulated opinion that this was a great story (in other words, a good story for F1), was met with the scary and quietly articulated reply: "I *don't* care." Then he roughly examined my pass, stared into my face – and disappeared back from where he had come, slamming the door as he went.

I have never seen Bernie that cross, either before or since. His calling card is usually a silent entry and soft speech, accompanied by that menacing half smile. This may have been a bad day, but it was an indication of the sense of self-obsessed secrecy with which Ecclestone was beginning to cloak his affairs; a far cry from his openness in 1974.

Bernie was extending his business tentacles into every aspect of a sport he was clearly considering to be his own. Having the teams pay him rather than an outside supplier for transport was part of a doctrine driven by a

hatred – and that is not too strong a word – of someone other than him making money off the back of F1. *His F1.*

In 1979, no one minded. Certainly not the teams, for whom life under Bernie was becoming exceedingly profitable. On their behalf – and for eight per cent commission – Ecclestone was moving beyond deals with race promoters and mining the rich potential of television, turning that working relationship on its head. Where once broadcasters had been able to cherry-pick the races in the belief that they ought to be paid for helping advertise the event, Ecclestone forced them to sign annual contracts to cover every race – and pay a substantial fee for their trouble.

During all of this, FISA (the sporting arm of the FIA) had acquiesced, happy in the knowledge that someone else was doing the donkey-work in promoting the sport for which they were supposed to be responsible. But the situation was about to change dramatically in 1978 when FISA elected a new president, Jean-Marie Balestre, a successful businessman, who vowed to wrest back power from FOCA and the predominantly British teams.

Matters became so intense that it seemed there might be two championships in 1981. FOCA stole a march on FISA by running their own race in South Africa. The fact that it was televised prompted Renault to be the first of the manufacturers aligned with FISA to jump ship. Little did they know that they were leaping aboard a vessel that would have run out of financial steam had FOCA been forced to go it alone for a second race. Ecclestone and Mosley had cheekily won the day.

The standoff led to an uneasy truce and the foundation for the so-called Concorde Agreement, outlining terms and conditions that, in effect, gave Ecclestone everything he wanted. On behalf of FOCA, Bernie retained the right to negotiate contracts and distribute the proceeds which, in 1981, amounted to about half a million dollars from each of the 15 races.

The path was set for the making of money on a previously unprecedented scale – with Bernie's percentage having risen in some instances to more

Bernie was extending his business tentacles into every aspect of a sport he was clearly considering to be his own. Having the teams pay him rather than an outside supplier for transport was part of a doctrine driven by **a hatred of someone other than him making money off the back of F1. His F1.**

than 20 per cent, plus his share of earnings from previously untapped sources such as the Paddock Club and circuit advertising.

Much to Bernie's mounting frustration, the written media remained the only F1-related branch who were managing to avoid his personal Value Added Tax. At the 1984 German Grand Prix, he called a meeting of the press and proposed a unified association run by FOCA. To his fury, he was laughed out of the room. He would have the final say, however, when accredited media (governed by the FIA) required guest passes and were forced to join the long queue begging at Ecclestone's door.

Meanwhile the show was becoming more polished and precise with each passing year, the paddocks immaculate if increasingly sparse as Bernie refused admission to all but the workers and a chosen few within what had become his personal fiefdom.



As Brabham team boss, Bernie's steadfast refusal to put piecemeal logos on his cars, brought him iconic full Martini sponsorship

Having gone from poacher (selling Brabham in 1987), the role of gamekeeper was adopted when, thanks to the arrival of Mosley as president of the FIA, Ecclestone became vice-president in charge of promotional affairs for an organisation he once despised. Ecclestone had come full circle; in its way an official recognition of his good work in safety. In 1978, Bernie had persuaded Professor Sid Watkins to knock the inadequate on-circuit medical backup into the world-class condition taken for granted today. Watkins' extensive demands were backed up by Bernie's genuine threat to withdraw teams from those circuits who would not comply.

Watkins, a man with a twinkle in his eye, enjoyed Bernie's sense of fun and often told stories that summed up his good friend's personality.

"Bernie is a shocking driver," Watkins recounted one night. "His eyesight's not great. We were out to lunch the other day. The spaces in

his car park are neatly marked – as you would expect – and, when we returned, he got it wrong and tapped the back of a car parked in front. The woman who owned the car saw this and rushed out. 'You've hit my car!' she shouted. Bernie looked – there was no damage – said nothing and began to walk away. 'You've hit my car!' she shouted again – and made the mistake of grabbing his shoulder. 'Just a minute,' says Bernie quietly, handing me his briefcase. He goes back to his car, starts up, reverses back and then – Wallop! Drives straight into the woman's car, gets out, says, 'Now I've hit your car,' and we walk away. The woman was stunned. So was I!"

Bernie may not have been a great driver in the physical sense, but there has been no one like him – and there never will be again – when it comes to driving not just Formula 1, but any sport, to levels so high that eventually, the only way is down. 📌

STRICTLY

Bluff, humour, charm and sometimes menace was the Ecclestone method.

If I think of Bernard Ecclestone – and I refer to him as Bernard because that was explicitly how he wanted to be known in 1974, when he first started to win – I think of a genius of an actor. Vivid in my memory is the day he asked me to his office (adjacent to the Brabham factory, in Chessington, Surrey) to play the role of the innocent journalist.

“I’ll be here at my desk and the other guy will sit over there,” he said in that sultry way of his. “You sit next to him. I’m going to talk about nothing for a while, then I’m going to shock him. I want you to be outraged and storm out the door. Just wait outside. Go and have a coffee or something. Come back in 40 minutes. The other guy’ll be gone. Then we’ll talk about your future...”

It was exactly as he said. I was jolted by Bernard’s outburst. I stammered my disgust. I left in a hurry. And, when I returned, Bernard was as nice as pie. We lunched down at his pub, The Star. Somewhere out there a deal had been done.

Bernard creates images – make that moods – that nudge second and third parties into saying and doing things that are fully contrary to their natures and their intentions. He is a brilliant mover and reader of people. I attended only two FOCA meetings in Bernard’s era and at each of them he produced a masterstroke. There’d be the usual flap and bluster about rule changes or prize money or transport costs... and then it would be time to leave. As we were jostling through the door, Bernard would add: “Oh yes, and there’s just this other little thing about the new Paddock Club idea. I know you’re all in a hurry, so I’ll take it as read that you’re all in agreement. We’ll handle it all ourselves...”

I can only guess, but I imagine that Bernard’s greatest achievements – enticing many governments of countries to underwrite the losses of an F1 circuit/event from which all the major rights income goes to the F1 industry (in other words, breaking every maxim in the sports promoter’s book) – have been achieved by similar means since the mid-1990s. He controlled world motorsport from his own desk and from that of the FIA president, Max Mosley; the F1 teams, thanks to the money he’d made them, were putty in his hands. He had created rights to things like TV, hospitality, circuit signage, circuit construction and logistics while everyone else was still thinking of things like filling the grandstands, reduced ticket prices, outside broadcasters and cheap merchandise. He invested heavily in digital, interactive TV production; he smiled inwardly when the F1 teams refused his offer to sell them a piece of the action.

So be it. He would do it alone. He would produce and control the world TV feed and it would be the best TV production on the planet. Let no one subsequently complain.

By the late 1990s, then, he owned and controlled the complete show – and the legal rights to that empire were all in his briefcase: now all he needed were the stages on which to perform.

The traditional circuits – Monaco, Monza, Silverstone – he would grudgingly allow; the real money would come from the new ones – from the governments of the new frontier countries with money to relocate and allocate. No matter if this meant that these new-generation races would be staged in places like China, Korea, Malaysia, Russia, Kazakhstan or Turkey.

This was Bernard’s unique and irreplaceable business model: convince them outwardly that they needed to be on the F1 map; in reality, find the right people to be worked; work them personally and then “Do the Deal”, as Carl Haas used to say.

I can only guess; all of us can only guess. What I *can* tell you is that sometime in the late 1980s, when I was planning a new F1 team with Walter Brun, I happened to mention to Bernard that I had a soft spot for Frank Sinatra. He mumbled something then scribbled a phone number on a scrap of paper.

“Ring this number,” he said, handing it to me.

A couple of days later I climbed a steep, narrow staircase in darkest Edgware. The landing smelt of wayward cats. I knocked on a door.

A wizened man in a dressing-gown peered out. “Yes? What is it?”

“Mr Ecclestone sent me.”

“Oh yes. Here. This is for you. From him.”

It was a brown envelope. Inside were two front-row seats to Sinatra’s next concert at the Albert Hall.

If Bernard was similarly deft with all those government people with whom he wanted to deal for all those years then all I can say is: “you did it”.

And herein lies his true legacy. Short of Donald Trump, I can’t think of anyone in the world who could have done with those dark-suited, and presumably bland, government officials what Bernard did with them. The team owners all complained when they heard that the British GP was in doubt while Korea was the next big thing, but they all went quiet when Bernard told them about the money that the new race would generate. It was fashionable to diss Bernard behind his back; no one, though, would do it to his face. He was putting too much cash on F1’s bottom line. →

BUSINESS

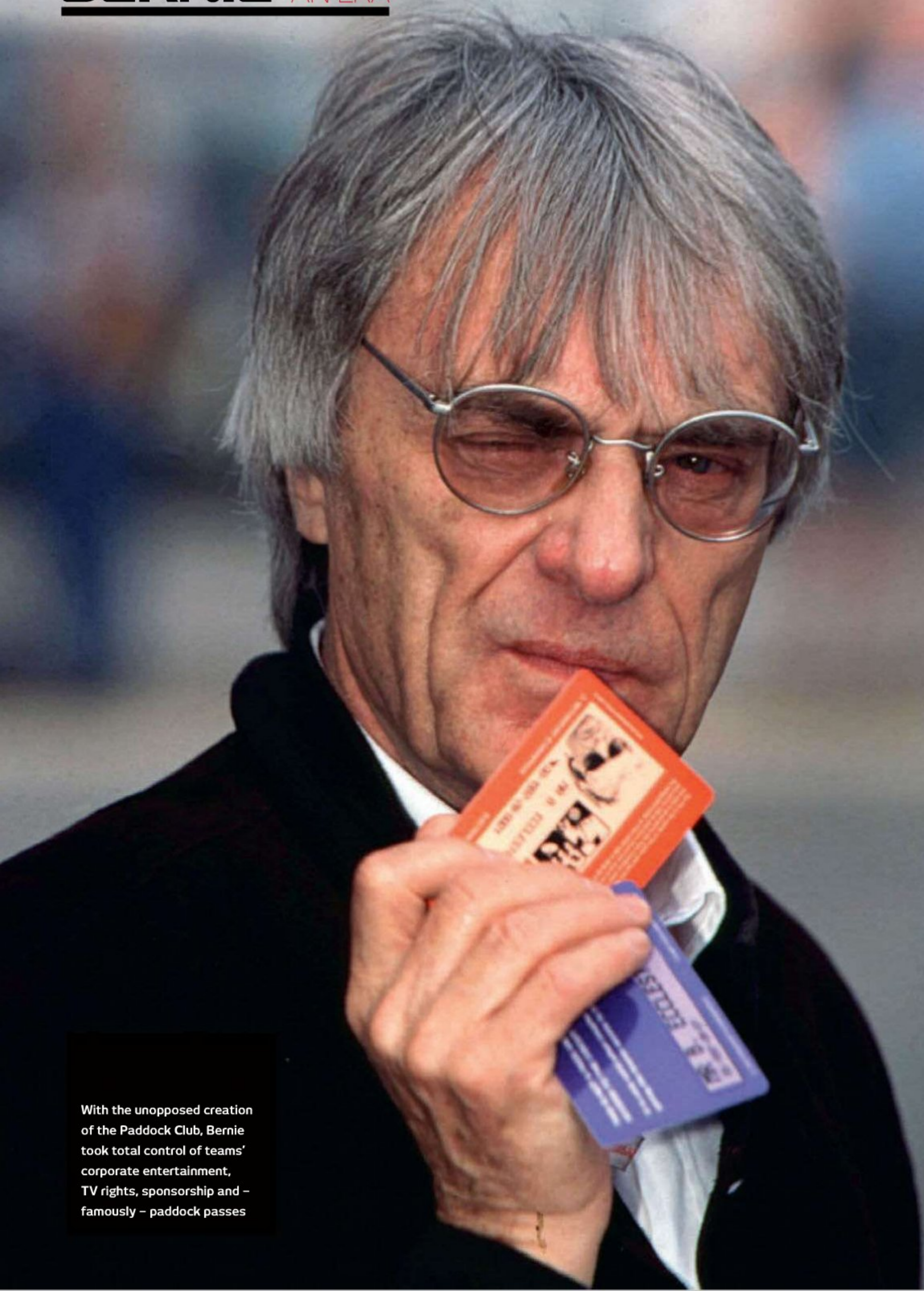
But also a business approach of unique ferocity and guile **WORDS** PETER WINDSOR



Bernie Ecclestone and Max Mosley were the driving force who between them reshaped F1 and dragged it into the modern era

BERNIE

END OF AN ERA



With the unopposed creation of the Paddock Club, Bernie took total control of teams' corporate entertainment, TV rights, sponsorship and – famously – paddock passes

His currency in this new economy was the Formula 1 paddock pass. Years ago – way back in the 1980s – Carlos Reutemann told me he had pinpointed Bernard's nirvana.

"It is on the Wednesday afternoon at Monaco. Bernard is in his motorhome, looking at the line of people, stretching all the way to Nice, wanting a paddock pass from him. He's told them all to 'come and see him at Monaco' and there they are – all lined up to see him. None of them will get a pass, of course. It is seeing the line from his motorhome that makes his year."

Team owners gave Bernard his pass control in their usual, it-doesn't-really-matter sort of way. Too late, they understood that Bernard had control not only of the media but also of the way the teams went about their racing and their sponsorship procurement:

– "The CEO of Intel wants to come to Monaco and we need four passes for him and his family. He'll be on the grid. Good for F1. Good for America and Silicon Valley."

– "Sorry. Impossible. All the passes have been issued..."

Bernard's other trademarks: why spend money on promoting the F1 brand, with an expensive, in-house PR department, when the teams will do it for you merely by their presence at races and by the PR campaigns of their sponsors? And closed-plan business: the less everyone knows about the big picture the better. Let Bernard run the show. Open-plan is for wimps. Then there's the deal itself: if it isn't for the taking, ensure no one else has it. Hurting the opposition is just as satisfying as winning the deal.

I first met Bernard on the last occasion he *did* see the need for PR. It was 1972 and Bernard had just bought the Brabham Racing Organisation (including Motor Racing Developments) from Ron Tauranac for £750,000. Bernard asked David Phipps and me down to his new workshop in Bexleyheath to see the new F2 and F3 Brabhams that he was producing for sale. He asked us to photograph them and dispatch press releases about them to the media (or 'motoring press', as it was known back then).

We took our notes and our pictures and returned to the premises a week later with the final drafts and a selection of prints. To my total astonishment, the workshop was now completely stocked with sofas, chairs, tables and wardrobes. Bernard was still in the front office, on the phone, but there was a new sign on the front of the building: "Scandinavian Furniture of Bond Street".

"W-w-where are the cars?" I stammered. "W-w-what happened?"

"Sold this place. Bought a new one in Chessington. Now let's have a look at what you've written..."

From time to time I wrote speeches for Bernard. He was never into it, though: quickly I understood that Bernard's concept of oral communication was basically to say the opposite of everything you expected to hear.

Which is the art of the sale, of course. Disarm the target. Take control. Convince them you're uninterested. Then Trump them.

It's probably folklore but I'll repeat the stories, just the same, because they ring true. On the day Bernard was due to complete his multi-million-pound purchase of 6 Prince's Gate [to become HQ of Formula One Management] from Adnan Khashoggi, his deputation arrived well before he did, apologising for a short, upcoming delay. "Mr Ecclestone," said a spokesman, "was gambling last night and was kind enough to buy a gold Rolex from the chap next to him who was a little down on his luck. He's currently just over in Hatton Garden, selling the watch, but he'll be along shortly..."

In the early 1990s he was in New York to discuss a potential deal with PepsiCo for F1 global sponsorship. Bernard's opening gambit: "Now let's get one thing clear from the start. I'm not interested in having some bleeding carbonated water company putting its brand name all over my championship..."

That deal didn't happen, of course, but I suspect that many contracts *were* signed from similar, initial salvos.

It always made me smile, too, when yet another F1 team owner complained about Bernard's intransigence over passes or his fastidious attention to paddock detail or his total control of the TV feed and its ancillary rights. If you wanted Bernard Ecclestone's Guide to F1 and How To Run a Team, all you needed to do was look

at the way he ran Brabham from 1972-88 *and* for much of that time, the Formula One Constructors' Association.


He secured sponsorship from companies like Martini, Parmalat and Giorgio Armani but in every case dissuaded the key players of these brands from attending races. He wanted personnel in the paddock and pitlane to be kept at a minimum; he disliked – and probably still dislikes – crowds, smells, too much colour or too much noise. He was an open book back then and has been an open book ever since; he is easy to read. And yet his F1 team owners often failed to take note.

The end game was The Sale. In 2000, to the astonishment of the world, Bernard sold all the rights he had created for €2bn. It was a staggering amount of money – a sum large enough for Bernard to take the gamble of *maybe* also losing control of F1. For 16 years, though, the gamble paid off: he took his money but remained CEO. Now, finally, it's *quid pro quo*. Bernard has the loot but is no longer in charge. It was going to happen one day; it always does when you sell out – as Ron Dennis recently discovered.

I wrote my first feature about Bernard in July, 1977, four months after the death of his star driver, José Carlos Pace, in a light aircraft accident in bad weather in Brazil.

"Ecclestone shed no tears," I wrote. "No one was closer to Carlos at the time – and no one stood to lose as much because of his death. Ecclestone's attitude was that it had happened and that nothing was going to bring Pace back. 'If I felt anything, it was that he shouldn't have been fooling around with light aircraft,' he said. 'He took enough risks as it was, without having to fly as well. Of course I was upset, but I wouldn't allow myself to show it, not even inwardly.'"

"The logic is there if you look for it," I wrote. "Elation and despair are foreign to Ecclestone. At all times, his emotions take a back seat to logic and opportunism."

I asked Bernard at the end of that interview what he thought about James Hunt becoming F1's next dictator (James having just turned down Bernard's offer to 'buy' the sponsorship rights to his overalls for \$1m). Given James's stature as a world champion, plus his intelligence, eloquence and fondness for F1, this wasn't a completely stupid idea. "A love of racing is the last thing you'd need for that job," replied Bernard, eyes staring into the future. "You need a business brain. That's what it's all about." 

The day Alonso drove Surtees' Honda

The RA301 was the last Honda car to race in F1 for almost 30 years – and it was driven by the legendary John Surtees. No wonder Fernando Alonso was so keen to have a go in it

WORDS ROBERT HOLMES **PICTURES** HONDA

The sky itself has given its blessing to this auspicious moment. Winter this far north of Tokyo usually brings leaden skies and a chill in the air, but today the sun's rays are gracing the Twin Ring Motegi complex as sundry Honda-affiliated racing drivers and riders entertain a crowd of more than 20,000 fans with some of the prime contents of Honda's toy box, from veteran race cars to the latest road-going NSX.

For Fernando Alonso it's difficult to choose which of today's treats he's been most keenly anticipating. A karting face-off with MotoGP stars Marc Marquez and Dani Pedrosa? Judging by the banter in Spanish between the three of them, and the rather forceful nature of the racing once they get on track, it's certainly up there. Getting a chance to ride the RC213V, Honda's fire-spitting MotoGP bike, winner of eight races in 2016? Well, he's ordered a new helmet with a custom paint job featuring the rising sun for the occasion.

But then there's the 1960s Formula 1 car, immaculate in creamy white, around which a number of neatly →





McLAREN HONDA

Shell 1

JOKER

Driven by John Surtees in 1968, the Honda-powered RA301 collected podiums in Rouen and Watkins Glen and set a fastest lap at Spa



attired mechanics are working quietly but with some urgency as they prepare to fire up its mighty three-litre V12. Yes, this is it. F1 drivers love the power and drivability of modern machinery, but they can't resist the chance to sample one with a manual gearshift and a considerable surfeit of power over grip. You can see it in Alonso's eyes as he walks into the garage and drinks in the elegant simplicity of the cigar-shaped machine, the word 'SURTEES' picked out in bold capitals in the red stripe along each side.

It began over at Honda's Sakura R&D facility many months earlier, when Fernando was on a grip-and-grin mission to meet the boffins at the engineering sharp end. The ex-John Surtees RA300 on display there caught his eye. This one-off machine, a temporary marriage of convenience conducted by Surtees between Lola's chassis expertise and Honda's quad-valve three-litre V12, won on its debut at Monza in 1967 and contested just three more races before being retired in favour of the lighter RA301 in 1968. Fernando insisted on being allowed to sit in the car for a photograph before he progressed further into the building.

"Fernando knew he had to drive one of these legends, and savour the roar of the mighty V12 through that intricate tangle of spaghetti-like exhaust pipes"

As he settled into the bucket seat formerly occupied by 'Il Grande John', the only world champion on two wheels and four, Fernando knew he *had* to drive one of these legends of the 1960s racing scene and, perhaps even better, to savour the roar of the mighty V12 through that intricate tangle of spaghetti-like exhaust pipes.

Fernando's mount today is one of only two RA301s built for the 1968 season. It's Surtees' own car, in which John finished on the podium at Rouen and Watkins Glen and led at Spa (setting fastest lap in the process) before retiring. In period, the company's engineering priorities had been refocused on developing an air-cooled V8 and a new magnesium-chassis car – raced just once before Honda withdrew from F1 – so the RA301 was assembled at Honda's UK facility in Slough with an updated version of the V12. Its exhausts are less flamboyantly ornate than the RA300's, but snake around the engine in a more aerodynamically optimal way. The dive planes around the nose and the high rear wing offer a hint of the downforce mania that (literally) gripped F1 that season, and the intricate sipes on the period-correct Firestone tyres are a reminder that we're firmly in pre-slick →

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All work and all play: Alonso's Honda duties for the day include trying a Honda RC213V MotoGP bike and competing with Marc Márquez and Dani Pedrosa



territory. A mechanic shines a torch into the engine bay to check for oil seepage before signalling to fire it up.

Alonso adjusts himself in the cockpit with great relish as the mechanics put in their ear plugs and connect the starter. This engine is *loud*. Having the power take-off at the centre of the crankshaft – in effect running two shorter shafts rather than a single longer one – enabled it to reach higher revs more reliably, but at a cost of greater weight and a higher centre of gravity.

The benefit to a modern audience is a simply extraordinary noise: an angry and percussive chatter as it settles into a fast idle, the revs rising and falling quickly as Fernando prods the throttle. More torchlight in the engine bay – keeping these old cars going is a constant challenge, given the scarcity of spare parts – and then the mechanics peel away, the last one putting a hand over each exhaust pipe in turn to check it's firing sweetly. Most of the Sakura crew who attend to the veteran machinery in Motegi's 'Collection Hall' are older, seasoned Honda engineers, for whom oily fingernails and skinned knuckles are a vocation to be cherished. As Fernando selects a gear – using a lever once gripped by 'Big John' himself, still capable of a knuckle-cracking

"As Alonso backs off the throttle for the first corner, the revs sink with a musical wail, like a classic Ferrari V12"




handshake at the age of 83 – the crew look on with a mixture of joy and apprehension.

Tentatively letting out the clutch, Fernando guides the RA301 out onto the track and, as the revs build, the sheer noise of internal combustion begins to drown out the background chatter of the valve gear and ancillaries. Then, as he backs off the throttle for the first corner, the revs sink with a musical wail, like a classic Ferrari V12.

Fernando is out of sight, but not out of mind, as the sound echoes around the Twin Ring circuit's grandstands and the surrounding woodland. People stand on tiptoe and crane their necks to spot him coming into sight again, then thrust fingers into ears as he roars past.

With two laps in the bag, Fernando – with enormous reluctance – feeds back into the pitlane, comes to rest outside the garage, and flicks the engine's kill switch. Photographers gather once more as he's pushed back; he unbelts and climbs out, and then, with a lingering look back towards the car, he allows himself to be guided on to his next engagement.

Now the only sound of the garage is the slow tick-tick-tick of metal cooling and contracting as the beast prepares for hibernation once again. 

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WHAT'S WRONG WITH FERRARI?

Judged by their own starry standards, Ferrari's 2016 performance was woeful: thumped by Mercedes, overtaken by Red Bull, no wins and a lacklustre third in the championship. But, worse still, there seems little immediate prospect of a turnaround in their ailing form

WORDS PINO ALLIEVI **TRANSLATION** ANTHONY PEACOCK



Maurizio Arrivabene (far right) is the most recent in a succession of Ferrari team principals, following hot on the heels of Marco Mattiacci and Stefano Domenicali

“**This rule – the one that says** whoever finishes first is the winner – is definitely penalising us.” Those surreal words were spoken by Italian comedian Maurizio Crozza in a perfect parody of Sergio Marchionne on a popular TV show in Italy. The Ferrari president was sitting in the audience for Crozza’s show, and enjoyed witnessing his alter ego – although, as he later elaborated to the assembled media at Ferrari’s traditional Christmas lunch: “Crozza’s good, but I definitely prefer it when he imitates Luca di Montezemolo instead!”

What this proves is that F1 in general, and Ferrari in particular, remain as present in the Italian public consciousness as ever, despite

the fact that the Prancing Horse haven’t won a world championship in ten years. After the Schumacher era, despite the fleeting ecstasy of Kimi Räikkönen’s 2007 drivers’ title, Ferrari have been missing in action, having failed to rediscover their title-winning ways. It’s a common feature of the cyclical history that characterises not just F1 but *all* forms of sport.

One reason for this failure is, perhaps, that there have just been too many changes at the heart of Ferrari in recent years. These ranged from Marchionne, who took over di Montezemolo’s role as president, through a succession of team principals (Stefano Domenicali, Marco Mattiacci and now Maurizio

Arrivabene), to the technical directors who have come and gone like football managers: Aldo Costa, Pat Fry and James Allison, with Mattia Binotto the present incumbent. Last but not least, there are the drivers: brought in successively to take on a challenge that has so far failed to yield the desired results, due to the fact that not enough time was taken for everything to stabilise. Yes, Fernando Alonso finished second in the championship three times in five years for Ferrari, but the result expected on each occasion was one better than that. As Enzo Ferrari famously said: ‘Second is first of the losers.’

And Sebastian Vettel? Third in 2015, fourth in 2016, and 2017 a leap into the unknown. It →



Sergio Marchionne, Ferrari chairman as of 2014

“I definitely prefer it when he [comedian Maurizio Crozza] imitates Luca di Montezemolo instead!”

Sergio Marchionne



Luca di Montezemolo, Ferrari president for 23 years

PHOTOS: SAM BLOXHAM/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT



Ferrari pitstops are usually well executed, but on Räikkönen's final stop at the 2016 US GP he was called back and Ferrari were fined for an unsafe release

could all come good, but it might also be the year – which would not surprise anyone, if the car is again uncompetitive – that Vettel decides to leave Ferrari to seek his fortune elsewhere.

At 29 he still has time on his side, and remains true to himself, ambitious and competitive. He's unlikely to wait as long as Fernando Alonso did for the Prancing Horse to break into a gallop. Alonso's relationship with Ferrari's powers-that-be deteriorated rapidly between mid-2013 and 2014, due to a car that fell short on performance and a tense working atmosphere that was felt by every member of the team. Yet today, there are some who would still turn back time: Alonso's undeniable speed allied to his implacable calm

in moments of crisis, not to mention his astute set-up skills, left their mark, and, to some extent, a hole in the current structure.

Factors leading to the certainty that Vettel would not be adding to his collection of titles in 2016 have been well documented. And nobody has tried to deny them. First and foremost, this was down to the car: the SF16-H, which, on paper, initially looked as if it could take the fight to Mercedes. The first race in Australia, atypical in that aerodynamics have a lesser influence at Albert Park, flattered the illusion: Vettel was running third, 9.64 seconds behind the Mercedes – but a tyre strategy error cost him a chunk of time. As the season progressed,

despite the podiums that were picked up along the way by both drivers, it became increasingly clear that the gap to Mercedes was just as big, if not bigger, than in the previous year. Developments were introduced that didn't work, and suspicions grew that the car had already reached its ceiling. Meanwhile, Red Bull gallingly went from strength to strength – to the point where Vettel's former team actually managed to overhaul Ferrari in the end-of-year standings. It was a shock for the Scuderia, who never believed that the cars of Ricciardo and Verstappen could become such a thorn in their side.

Maurizio Arrivabene's unfortunate quote in Monaco ("If I think that Red Bull is going to be a problem for us, I may as well go home now") not only came back to haunt him, but was also the first sign that the SF16-H was full of hidden limits that nobody had anticipated. The first was down to aerodynamics, either directly or indirectly, because the simple truth was that the car just never felt very balanced. Then there was tyre strategy and management, areas where Ferrari were never quite as good as their rivals: less reactive and a little bit behind when it came to trying out new ideas. These factors influenced both qualifying and races.

And finally there was a series of technical failures that should never have happened: from Vettel's broken valve in Bahrain, to the two gearbox swaps for Räikkönen, plus the three for Vettel that sent him towards the back of the grid in Russia, Austria and Great Britain, as well



Arrivabene hadn't guessed the SF16-H's limitations

"If I think that Red Bull is going to be a problem for us, I may as well go home now"

Maurizio Arrivabene, May 2016



James Allison was pushed out in the summer of '16...

as the anti-roll-bar failure in Singapore, which meant he started from 22nd place.

With the gearbox, the biggest mystery was why no long-term solution had been put in place over the course of ten months, given that its problems were first noted in pre-season testing last February. There was nothing wrong with the design and it coped fine with torsional load. It was more down to defects in certain components, meaning a number of external suppliers were unable to react quickly. This is one of the many problems that Ferrari are now trying to solve.

Some of the solutions were put in place during the restructuring that followed Ferrari's break with their British technical director, James

Binotto was duly put in charge of implementing the team's new horizontal structure

Allison, who was subsequently replaced by one of their home-grown engineering talents: Mattia Binotto, 47, who has spent the past 16 years at Ferrari, having joined fresh from Lausanne University in Switzerland, where he had graduated in mechanical engineering. Binotto, a man whose actions speak louder than his words, was propelled to the top spot by Sergio Marchionne, who had noticed that in recent years it was the engine department, under the leadership of Binotto, that had made the most progress, coming closest of all to the high standards set by Mercedes.

Binotto is not a designer. Rather, he is an able manager who also has a good knowledge of architecture; it was he who decided where all the different departments should go in the Scuderia's



...and immediately replaced with Mattia Binotto

impressive new headquarters. He also conducts himself with a phlegmatic calm that allows him to get on with everybody, so he was duly put in charge of implementing the team's new 'horizontal structure' that had been designed at length by Marchionne and Arrivabene.

But that management structure was really an enforced choice, made at the moment when Ferrari realised they couldn't hire a technical superstar so had to rely on the many young talents already within the team. Each one of these people was given a chance and fully involved from the design to the production phases. Then, after a few months, the first signs of improvement started to show. →



When drivers tried to push the car past its limits, it led to errors such as Räikkönen's collision with the barriers and subsequent broken wing in Monaco

PHOTOS: SAM BLOXHAM/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; FERRARI



Despite making a terrible start, Räikkönen put in an exceptional drive at Bahrain in 2016 to finish second, between the Mercedes of Rosberg and Hamilton

Small steps, but the potential was clear. Whether or not that trend will continue and some proper results will emerge is something we will know only in a year's time and not before. If things go well, then perhaps Ferrari are on the verge of another cycle of success. If they don't go to plan there will be yet another restructure, with more new management, engineers and drivers. And this would inevitably be a painful process.

"In 2016 we were weak on aerodynamics, but I really don't believe that English engineers have a monopoly in that area," pointed out Marchionne. "We've got some excellent engineers in Italy and we have complete faith in them."

As part of the shake-up, Dirk de Beer, who had arrived at Ferrari at the same time as

Allison, was removed as head of aerodynamics. Under the new management structure, the new chief aerodynamicist is David Sanchez, a Frenchman who has been at Ferrari for a number of years and has remained in the shadows up until now. He and his colleagues will report in to Enrico Cardile, who now heads up the whole department, having moved over from Ferrari's GT racing division.

Ferrari could have pursued other leading engineers, but the very best generally have at least one year of gardening leave written into their contracts. And at Maranello, things need to happen right now. What's more, their ethos has changed: Ferrari no longer want foreign mercenaries to swoop in with the latest

technology, get paid a fortune, and then depart after a couple of years without leaving any kind of cultural mark as had sometimes happened previously. Which is another reason why Ferrari have placed their trust in these comparatively new names, who have grown up within Maranello's unique atmosphere, relying on the notion that there is sufficient existing expertise to help them develop as leading engineers.

Much has also been said about James Allison's departure. On the human side, the tragic death of his wife last March, and the needs of his three children living in England, were, of course, his priority. But there is another, less well-known factor on top of that, which is that Allison never really clicked with either Arrivabene or Marchionne, probably because he didn't feel that either was qualified enough for him to talk to at a professional technical level. Those on the receiving end soon detected that attitude. And when, between the grands prix of Spain and Azerbaijan, Marchionne began to ask Allison exactly *why* the car wasn't competitive, the explanations given weren't sufficiently expansive. As a result, Allison's fate was determined before the German Grand Prix: Marchionne didn't accept being kept in the dark for so long about the real problems affecting the SF16-H. One of the things Marchionne wanted was for development lead times to be shortened, particularly in the light of the relentless progress from Red Bull. He also didn't like the fact that Allison wanted to be responsible for the chassis



Jock Clear joined as head of race activities in 2016

"In 2016 we were weak on aero, but I don't believe the English have a monopoly in that area"

Sergio Marchionne

in addition to the aerodynamics. But, most of all, he felt tricked after Allison told him at the start of 2016 that the car about to make its debut would be highly competitive.

“Obviously there was a blockage in the flow of information somewhere, which is no longer the case,” Marchionne said. “If one of my guys tells me, for example, that we’ve got a car that is four seconds quicker than anything else, I have to believe him. Intellectual honesty is essential. And so I admit, I looked stupid. Since August, our way of working has changed: now we are expending money and resources in the right direction. Yes, we’ve lost a few engineers who we didn’t want to lose, but that always happens in any team. Paddy Lowe? The idea was talked about, but we’re sufficiently covered and what we don’t need is a superhero to step in and solve all the problems. I’m confident that our own engineers will come up with the right results. But if things go badly, there will be only one person responsible – and that’s me.”

When it comes to on-track organisation, with Jock Clear now confirmed as head of race activities, there will be a few detail changes, including a new chief mechanic in place of Francesco Uguzzoni, who, after 21 years, is giving up all the travel to work back at the factory. But what happens on the track is not felt to be the problem. Despite a few strategy errors – which Mercedes, and to a greater extent Red Bull, have suffered from as well – Ferrari are happy enough with their on-site line-up. It’s enough to look at

“At this point it’s vital that Vettel has a competitive car... that’s what he deserves”

Sergio Marchionne

the time taken to change a gearbox, engine or other component, which Ferrari manages even quicker than Mercedes, according to those in the know. The same is true of the pitstops, which are nearly always executed with consummate skill – Kimi Räikkönen’s unsafe release at the 2016 US GP being the notable exception.

So will Sebastian Vettel be able to rely on the latest Ferrari to help him take a fifth world title? The answer is as uncertain as his future following the expiry of his current contract at the end of this year. Marchionne pointed out: “We owe Vettel a lot but at this point it’s vital that he has a competitive car, because that’s what he deserves. And, in return, Seb must drive with serenity.”

His comment refers to the Mexican Grand Prix, where Vettel unleashed a tirade of insults directed at race director Charlie Whiting. The



Vettel needs his team to help him to a fifth title

incident didn’t please Ferrari at all, although the team stood by their driver as far as the FIA was concerned. To tell the truth, Ferrari were not overly impressed with Vettel’s manoeuvre at the start of the Belgian Grand Prix either, in which he closed the door on his team-mate. The matter was played down, but it revealed a questionable aspect to Vettel’s nature that hadn’t been particularly evident before. In the same way, Ferrari didn’t quite expect Vettel to lose his *sang-froid* during the SF16-H’s weakest moments and push beyond the limits of the car, leading inevitably to some ill-judged mistakes.

It happened a lot last year, but nobody really blamed the German superstar despite the collision with Rosberg at the first corner →



A broken anti-roll bar – just one of many unforgivable technical failures in 2016 – meant Vettel started from P22 on the grid at the Singapore Grand Prix

PHOTOS: ANDY HONE/LAT; FERRARI



With the hopes of a country riding on them, Vettel and Räikkönen were just P3 and P4 respectively, behind Mercedes, at Ferrari's home race at Monza in 2016

in Malaysia (and a subsequent penalty for Japan), the other clash with Räikkönen in China, the shady move on Ricciardo in Mexico, and the spin on a waterlogged track in Brazil. Those who took Arrivabene at his word though, when he said in Japan that "Vettel needs to earn his seat at Ferrari as well", were making a big mistake. The point he was explaining was that *everybody* at Ferrari needed to do enough to guarantee their future employment – himself included.

Arrivabene thinks extremely highly of Vettel, but would prefer him just to carry out his role as a driver rather than try to be an engineer or PR man, which goes beyond his remit. And a number of entirely innocent chats Vettel

had with people from Mercedes and Red Bull, during some of the most delicate moments of the season, were taken the wrong way: perhaps deliberately so. In any case, just as Mercedes called Lewis Hamilton to heel a number of times and asked him to focus calmly on his job, why should Arrivabene not do the same with Vettel?

Yet it's undeniable that we saw an agitated Vettel last season, committing the sort of indiscretions that invariably happen whenever victory takes a sabbatical. He's undoubtedly got a deep-rooted desire to prove he can win with Ferrari as well, having formerly triumphed with a Red Bull team that enjoyed a notable margin of superiority over their rivals at the time.

Allison's departure would have been hard for Vettel to stomach. But it's worth making the point that when Michael Schumacher arrived at Ferrari he brought with him all his most trusted lieutenants from Benetton, whereas Vettel came to Maranello on his own. And with the benefit of hindsight that was a mistake, because the cracks in the structure at Ferrari were already evident back in 2014, when Vettel was negotiating his move. Schumacher had the advantage of being able to convince Ross Brawn and Rory Byrne to join him, whereas Vettel wasn't able to do the same with Adrian Newey and Peter Prodromou, regardless of their contractual situations.

But all of that is in the past. Looking ahead, Vettel is hoping that 2017 will be different. Right now, Ferrari can judge from their dyno tests, simulations and windtunnel numbers exactly what can be expected of their latest challenger.

During the restructuring, some creative thinking and original ideas emerged: in the last few races of 2016, Ferrari bridged the gap to Red Bull, and in Abu Dhabi clearly beat their direct rivals. Yet nobody knows exactly what sort of Ferrari we will see in 2017. So there will be no great proclamations, no hopes manifested this time. The current Ferrari is a different animal to that of the past. And what if the revolution finally emerges from this new, tight-lipped incarnation? Stranger things have happened. 

Pino Allievi is the distinguished Formula 1 correspondent of Italy's La Gazzetta dello Sport

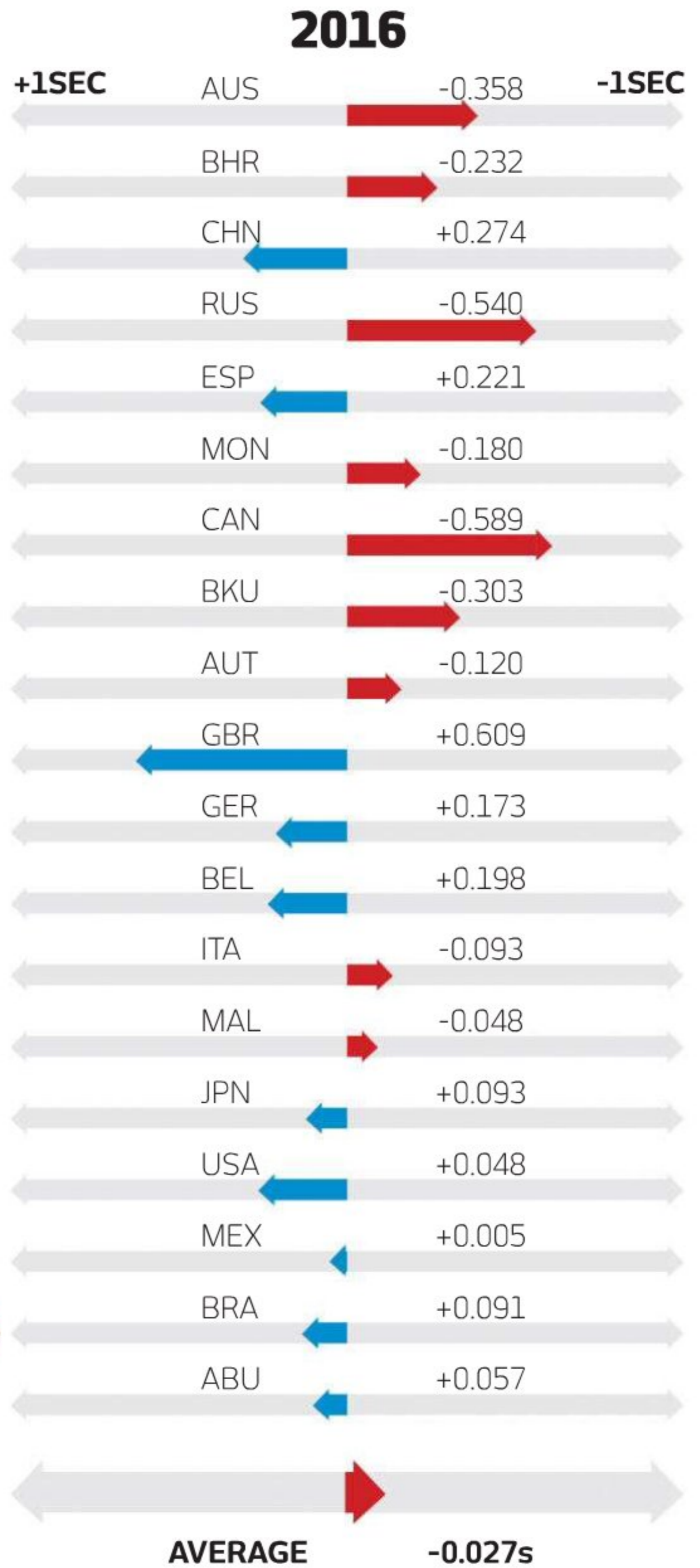


They know how 2016 went. So what next in 2017?

Arrivabene would prefer Vettel just to carry out his role as a driver rather than try to be an engineer

Did Kimi Räikkönen really manage to get on terms with Seb Vettel last season? Not if you look closely, argues BBC Sport F1's Andrew Benson.

The graph shows Vettel's qualifying gap to Räikkönen when they have competed in the same qualifying segment. Negative values are quicker; positive values show Vettel is slower than his team-mate



Let's not get too carried away with Kimi Räikkönen outqualifying Sebastian Vettel eight times in the last ten races of 2016, and in each of the last five. After all, from those ten races, Räikkönen finished ahead in just two – and they were as a result of Vettel starting at the back in Singapore and crashing out in Malaysia.

The roots of Vettel's relative drop-off lie in car behaviour and psychology. They sound separate, but are in fact related.

Vettel requires a particular kind of car to deliver his best – or his "tricks", as Red Bull's Helmut Marko used to describe them. He likes to rotate the car early into the corner, and get on the power early as well. Key to this is a secure rear end in which he can be confident.

Last year's Ferrari lacked this, but what it *did* have was a better front end than before – just what Räikkönen needs to be fast. Vettel fell into the same trap in 2014, his final year at Red Bull, against Daniel Ricciardo. He tried

to make the car do things it would not do, overdrove and, as a result, made mistakes.

The pressure to do this, rather than accept its limitations and drive accordingly, came because of Ferrari's slip in form, and rising tension within the team. Vettel, assuming the role of team leader, took this on and tried to make amends. It got him into trouble on the track, while off track he was admonished by his team for getting too involved in non-driving-related matters.

RAGE

AGAINST
THE
MACHINE

Cucumber-cool on the outside, but with volcanic fury bubbling beneath the lid, Sebastian Vettel isn't one to hold back when things aren't going his way, as these choice highlights from his radio transcripts reveal...

WORDS MATT YOUSON



"I made contact. I

had no choice. I had the Red Bull coming on the inside like a madman.

And I hit Kimi... Kvyat's attack was suicidal. There was always going to be a crash."

2016 Chinese Grand Prix

Driving into your team-mate in Formula 1 is the cardinal sin. But should such calamity strike, the usual response is to deploy the Teflon shoulders and make absolutely certain that the blame is diverted elsewhere. Good if you can stick it to your team-mate; better if you can hang it on a third party. Seen from the onboard cameras, Vettel may have had a point with this one; he does appear to be the filling in a Räikkönen-Kvyat sandwich and was thus faced with very few options – though the stewards went down the route of 'racing incident'.



"What the f* are we doing here? What a stupid accident! I'm going home!"**

2010 Turkish Grand Prix

Istanbul Park in 2010 was the race where the wheels first came off at Red Bull. Mark Webber and Seb Vettel started the race level on points at the top of the table – and something had to give. Irresistible force attacked unmovable Aussie and Vettel's squawks before he climbed out of the broken RB6 were those of a man very keen to swiftly dispel any notion that he might bear the responsibility for their coming together.



"Mark is too slow, get him out of the way. He's too slow."

2013 Malaysian Grand Prix

If the wheels came off in 2010, then the Malaysian Grand Prix of 2013, fixed in the memory thanks to Red Bull's catchy mnemonic 'Multi-21', is the one where the reattached wheels came off along with the hubs, the uprights, the tethers and wishbones. The great thing about Vettel's comments before he controversially passes Webber, is his tone of voice: he tries to convince his team to let him attack by sounding thoroughly bored when he raises the issue.



"I mean he must really hate me, I don't know what's wrong with him. I'm losing a second just because of that."

2015 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

Of course, a backmarker need not necessarily be inexperienced to rub Sebastian's rhubarb the wrong way. This particular remark was aimed at Fernando Alonso, driving a desperately slow McLaren in full Black Knight mode.



"**'s sake!
Who the ****!
Oooh. I'm out.**

CRASH!

He hit me in the **ing rear at Turn 2 and then somebody hit me in the rear again in Turn 3.**

For **'s sake.**

What are we doing here?"

2016 Russian Grand Prix

Kvyat was exonerated in China, but one race later in Russia he became the villain of the piece, launching an overtaking move from a different time zone that sent him clattering into the back of Vettel's Ferrari. And on the next corner he finished the job. Vettel's exasperation on the radio is matched only by the fact he's obviously very surprised. The 'Ooh' is pure Frankie Howerd.



"If I don't avoid that he's just going straight through my car. Honestly, what are we doing? Racing or ping-pong?"

2016 Spanish Grand Prix

Seb took exception to Daniel Ricciardo steaming up the inside into T1 as the pair tussled for what could have been a win. Ricciardo later responded to Vettel's comments with a one-word answer: 'typical'.



"I'm losing tyre temperature like crazy because Alonso is taking a bus tour around Baku!"

2016 European Grand Prix This seems a little harsh – although, on reflection, no worse than the opinions voiced by Fernando himself about the woeful pace of his McLaren-Honda.



Ferrari pitwall: **"Charlie said..."**

Sebastian Vettel: **"Here's the message for Charlie:**

****** off! Honestly, **** off!"**

Mexican Grand Prix 2016

Taking a pop at your peers is all part of the entertainment, but F1 has particularly low tolerance when it comes to active dissent involving the officials. Vettel did a good job of post-race damage limitation, talking and writing himself out of anything more serious than a stern telling-off. Though the person he should really be apologising to is the guy operating the bleep machine for FOM, who may never regain full use of that finger...



"He's a **, that's what he is. Am I the only one or are you not seeing what I'm seeing? He's just backing me off into Ricciardo!"**

Mexican Grand Prix 2016

More efficient use of the bleeper means we'll never know what Seb was calling Verstappen. A rascal? A scamp? Red Bull and Ferrari were closely matched all year and naturally it's drivers in close proximity on track who come to blows...



Ferrari pitwall: **"Box, Sebastian, box for new option."**

SV: **"Negative. I'm going to take a couple more laps. Tyres are still good."**

Ferrari pitwall: **"It's the only way we have to undercut someone. Box now."**

SV: **"They're miles away... who do you want to undercut?"**

Ferrari pitwall: **"Oh, okay, stay out."**

2016 German Grand Prix

There's nothing new in Ferrari's strategy calls puzzling the paddock denizens. But when their star driver starts to treat them with the suspicion usually reserved for a letter from the Inland Revenue, then they have a problem. Vettel wasn't above questioning strategy calls while at Red Bull – but he generally did as instructed and then asked why. For all his protestations to the contrary, his current team don't seem to have his full trust. Here he moves from cautious questioning, to mild dissent to simply ignoring instructions and running his own race. 🚩

YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS

Sergio Pérez

The proud Mexican racer talks popes and presidents, explains why he turned down Renault to stay on at Force India, and insists he has no regrets about his time at McLaren

WORDS CHRIS MEDLAND PORTRAITS ANDY HONE/LAT

You have to get your elbows out if you want to speak to Sergio Perez these days. He's a man in demand, having helped secure Force India's best championship finish in the team's history.

He was offered a Renault drive, but after much deliberation, turned it down to stay on at Force India. It's a sign of his growing confidence in his ability to shape his future. Should his impressive form continue this year, he'll no doubt have even more offers on the table come November.

No sooner have we sat down and presented the question cards, Sergio is back on his feet again, introducing himself to a pair of promotional ladies from team sponsor Hype. We'd better get this interview rolling – who knows who'll come along next wanting a piece of his time.

Which driver would you go on holiday with – and where would you go?

Pam Berryman, UK

I have to pick a driver?

FIR: You can take more than one if you like...

SP: I would like to pick Jenson, I'd pick Fernando, I'd pick Sainz, and I would definitely go to a beach in Mexico.

FIR: Jenson wouldn't understand the three of you most of the time, though!

SP: He would have to learn Spanish. But with a couple of beers he'd be speaking good Spanish!

What do you like to eat after a good race?

Demijan Juric, Croatia

Something heavy! Maybe a burger. You feel really hungry, especially because you don't eat through the race.

FIR: Is that the only occasion when you're allowed to eat something bad?

SP: Yeah, you're really hungry and you just want something big! Especially if you're taking a long flight or something, you just want a burger or something nasty. That's when you're allowed to drink the most as well!

Is it true that your dad gets too emotional when you race, and so in the past Sauber asked him not to come to the races?

Rob McAlees, UK

[Laughs] It was true! But not because he got too emotional, it was because he caused a bit of trouble around the paddock. But he's calmed down and now it's okay.

FIR: What sort of trouble did he cause?

SP: Just taking pictures of things he shouldn't and stuff like that. He was just excited.

What was your first ever experience of motor racing?

John Verhaert, UK

My parents borrowed a kart for me with a kind of NASCAR cockpit and they let me do a few laps in a supermarket where there was a karting track. I didn't want to stop. I remember the owner trying to stop me on the track to give the kart back, and I was just avoiding him and carrying on! →



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Sergio Pérez



Tacos, burritos or quesadillas? Or all three?

Martin Levers, UK

I'll go for tacos. I can't eat too much!

Why don't you admit you moved under braking when you crashed with Felipe Massa at the Canadian GP in 2014?

Michael Hajjar, USA

Because I didn't move. I feel that I braked in a straight line and that my car was fully straight. I still don't agree that I moved under braking.

When was the last time you heard from Martin Whitmarsh?

Lee McEleny, UK

Wow... I think the last time was when he wrote to me when I got the podium in Monaco this year. I don't think he follows F1 too much any more. He just said "well done". He was happy for me.

Why did you reject the offer to drive for Renault? And why do you feel it was so attractive to Nico Hülkenberg?

Kevin Hayes, USA

The reason I didn't go there is because going into a new generation of cars, it's important to see where everybody is. I had a really bad experience with McLaren and the rules were not changing a lot, so I think my next move has to be really solid for the good of my career.

Can you describe the feeling you get driving through the stadium section at the Mexican Grand Prix?

Robert Wood, USA

The last time I raced in Mexico before the GP came back in before 2015, was maybe 15 years ago. Then coming back, driving in F1 with the support of my home crowd was something very special for me. It will stay with me for many years and I look forward to standing on top of that podium in the future.



FIR: So do you think that Nico has taken a risk by making that move?

SP: It's definitely a risk but I think it's a good shot for Nico. It could work out well for him.

FIR: You must be going to watch that closely because you know it could have been you...

SP: Yeah, I'll watch for the good and the bad!

Which configuration of the Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez do you prefer: the old one or the new one?

Albert Legutko, Poland

Well I never drove the old one, but looking at the TV it was probably a bit more challenging. To be honest, having the stadium section with all the people makes it really special, so that kind of compensates for the loss of the Peraltada.

What is Vijay Mallya like to work with?

Melodee Ghosn, USA

He's a great person, great fun. I really enjoy working with him. He's come to Mexico a few times and it's always fun to have him around. It's a shame that he couldn't be with us more last year [Vijay's travel has been somewhat restricted because his passport is currently in the hands of the Indian government], especially when we've been having such good results, so I look forward to having him back with the team soon because he's a great asset. →

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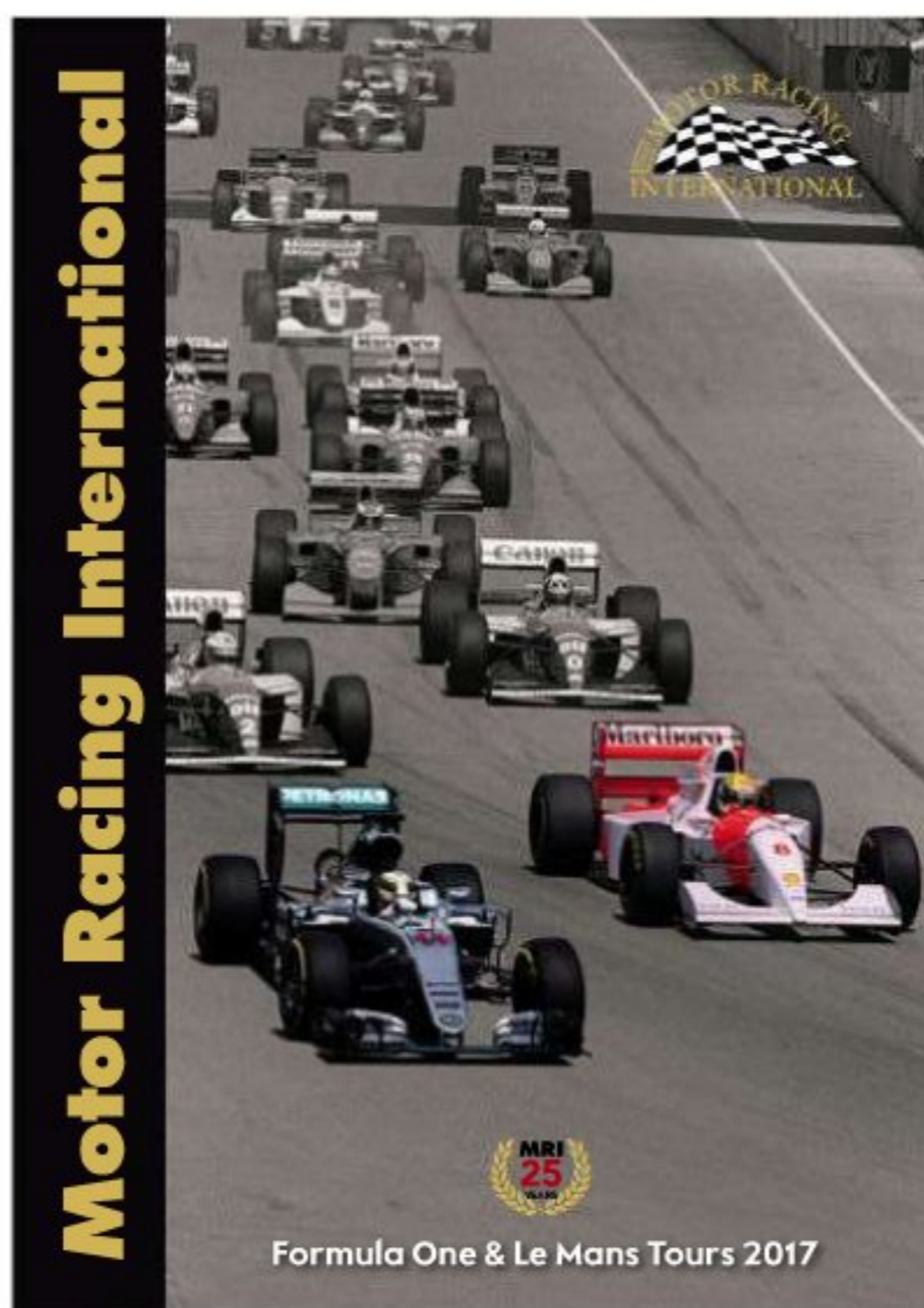
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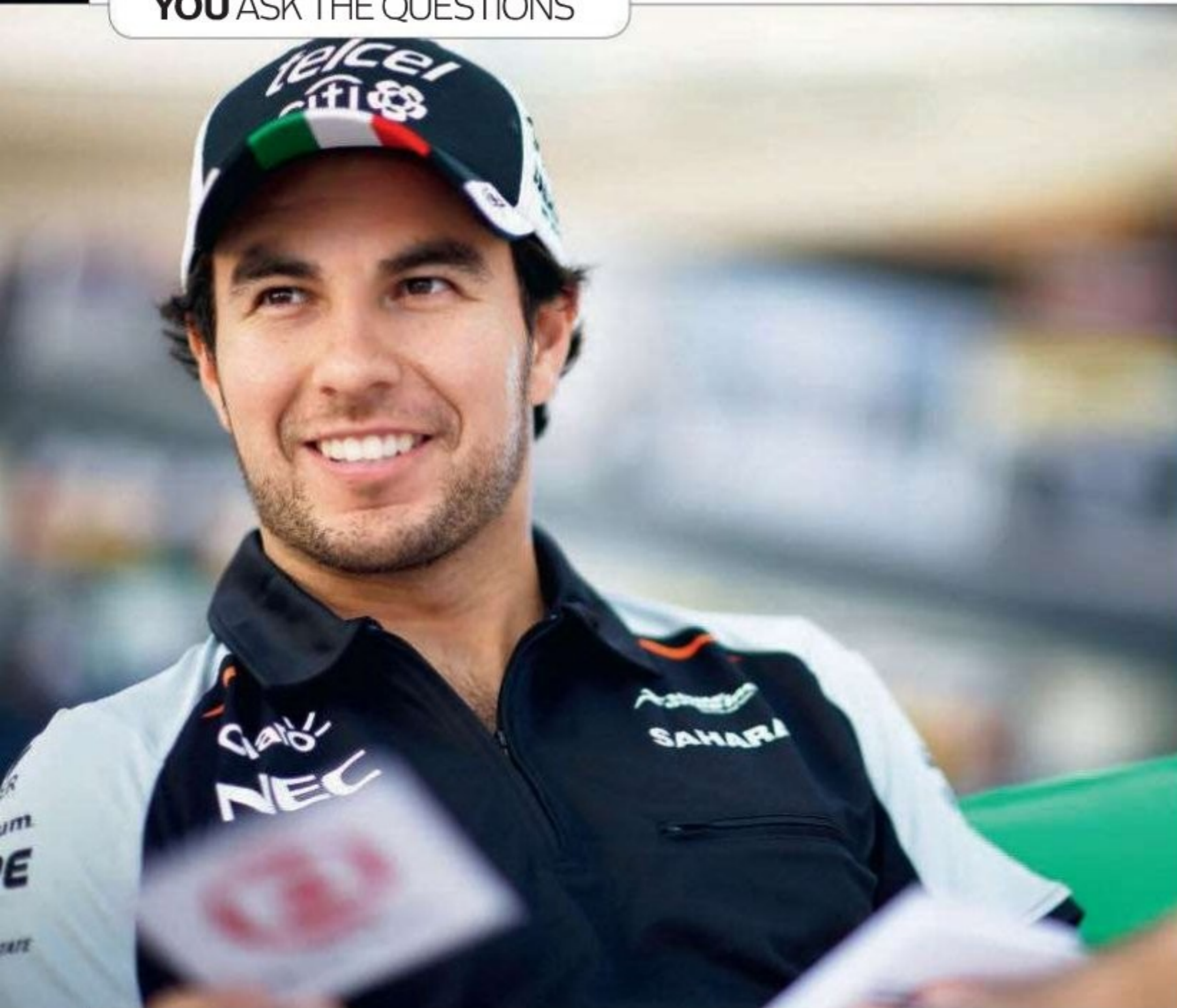
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What thoughts are in your head before the lights go out and the race begins?

Justina Jakubauskiene, UK

You want to have as clean a start as possible, getting the procedures right, and positioning yourself well for Turn 1. You get very nervous, but once the lights go out it goes really fast.

How well do you know Esteban Ocon? How will he fare at the team next year?

Steven Julian, UK

I sometimes speak to him but I don't know him well. It will be interesting to work with a new guy, and it's the first time I will work with a younger guy than me. I think he has the right attitude, the right mentality, and he will be a good force for the team, so hopefully we can keep moving the team forwards.

FIR: Are you looking forward to being the senior guy? At least in terms of age?

SP: Yeah, I was always the younger one but now it will be different. But Esteban is rated highly, he has the credentials and he can be really quick.

Do you enjoy playing computer games? Do you have a favourite?

Tomasz Zwolinski, Poland

Yeah, I always play FIFA. I play it with my brother and my friends, we gamble on who is best and I've been winning the most money!

FIR: Who do you play as?

SP: Barcelona. But maybe they're the best...

What's the story behind the picture of the pope in your car?

Karol Piatek, Poland

I have a lot of faith in him because when I was young my father took me to the Vatican and I touched his hand at the age of six. So I feel a really strong connection to him.

"My Monaco podium was really special last year. Being in a difficult race and getting the podium was really something"



How do you feel now Trump has been elected president of the USA?

Dr Paul Cheung, UAE

Well, we'll see. Let's see what he really does. I don't fear anything. Mexico is a great country and we can do things by ourselves, so let's see what happens in the near future when Trump starts to work as president. I worry what happens with my country. The States obviously have an impact on us, but I think we are a big enough country to look after ourselves.

Who is the toughest driver to pass and who is toughest to keep behind you?

Tom Siegner, Canada

They are all difficult and all fight hard. Most difficult are the youngest ones. When they do something unexpected, it can cause trouble. The toughest to keep behind is the fastest. The faster the car, the harder it is to keep it behind.

Which one F1 racing moment will you always hold most dear to your heart?

John Giordano, Canada

That's tough. My Monaco podium was really special last year. Being in a difficult race and getting the podium was really something.

FIR: Were you dreaming of winning when you came out after your final stop in P3 on soft tyres?

SP: Yeah, I was on the softs and Ricciardo and Lewis were battling really closely. Who knows what could have happened if they'd crashed...

How much money do you have?

Antonio Hewitt, UK

Nice question! I have more than I ever imagined to have, but I have less than you think I have. So it's up to you to imagine what that is.

What do you think about the new rules and will they make the racing closer?

Mark Scanlon, Ireland

I don't think it's the right way to go in terms of racing closer, because we're going to have more downforce, so it's going to be harder to follow the car in front – but we'll see. I don't want to be too negative at the moment.

Do you have any regrets about moving to McLaren when you did?

Liam Higgs, UK

Regrets? No. It put my career in a hard situation but without that move I wouldn't be the driver I am today. I'm grateful to McLaren; it was a great chance to learn how they work and how different a top team is. So I'm happy with that.

FIR: Would you go back there?

SP: If they had a competitive car and could give me a chance to fight for a title, then definitely. 🏆

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INDIAN WINTER

In the January chill of the English countryside, *F1 Racing* joined rookie **Esteban Ocon** as he got his first taste of his new life as a Force India driver

WORDS CHRIS MEDLAND **PICTURES** THOMAS BUTLER

Understated is not a word that springs to mind when thinking of Vijay Mallya, but the Force India setup at Silverstone is certainly that. It's a cold and damp Thursday morning at the team's Dadford Road factory, just across the road from Silverstone; a modest setting composed of red brick and green corrugated metal, hidden near the home of the British GP. The scene is far removed from F1's glitzy image, as staff arrive to a muddy car park, marked out by temporary fencing panels, and cross a pothole-filled lane before walking towards the tinted-glass entrance.

There's no recognition of Force India's most recent achievement in the team's reception. While a small cabinet highlights their five podiums to date, there are no trophies for fourth in the constructors' championship. But F1's most efficient race team are too busy preparing to follow their best-ever season to worry about mere baubles.

And there's a sense of anticipation in the air: not for the forecast snow, but for a rather more significant arrival. New regulations aside, Force →



India have one key change to deal with in 2017. The highly successful driver partnership of Nico Hülkenberg and Sergio Pérez has been disrupted by the Hulk's move to Renault – and Esteban Ocon has the task of stepping into his race boots.

Frenchman Ocon, 20, has already got to know Force India, having tested for the team in 2015 – his run in Austria proved crucial in his earning a seat alongside Pérez. But Ocon still needs to settle into his new home, and *F1 Racing* is here to see how he approaches his next challenge.

You wouldn't know Ocon has come direct from a training camp in the Pyrenees as he walks through the double doors – only to be told he must return outside for a photoshoot. The Mercedes protégé follows instructions to the letter, but immediately after the final shot he bolts for the warmth of the factory once again.

In reception sits a VJM01, the team's first F1 machine, which was turned into an 'art car' by Dexter Brown. It's apt that the day starts with

a discussion about the team's origins, as Ocon prepares to get his own journey started at Force India. "That's the first one, it looks so cool," Ocon enthuses. "Just look at all the aero, it's mega. It's a bit more like that this season."

In an era when many people appear to spend every spare second staring at their phone, it's refreshing to see that Ocon is completely engaged by his surroundings. Not that the 2015 GP3 champion is going to have much in the way of free time today, since he faces a busy schedule on his first factory visit of the year. And he's remarkably relaxed considering it's the first time the team's press officer will have heard Ocon's statements as a Force India employee.

"I'm less nervous than when I came here for the first time," Ocon admits. "It was nice to see familiar faces, and faces I'd had a good time with when I tested. I'd say around 50 per cent of the people I met during the test I know here now, but there are still a lot of people I need to meet.

"It's a big responsibility, because these people work for me at the end of the day. They work to give me a good car to get results and so I, in turn, need to deliver out on track because they have worked so hard. It's a big responsibility and I want to do well for them."

Ocon's rise has been rapid. Since securing the GP3 title in Abu Dhabi just over a year ago, he moved to DTM and took on a Renault reserve role before commencing racing for Manor. And even before his first season as a professional driver was over, he had been given a two-year Force India contract, earned ahead of fellow Mercedes youngster Pascal Wehrlein after just nine races as team-mates.

"I've learned that results aren't the only thing that people look at," says Ocon. "It's the full package. It's feedback; how you work with the team; how you get along with the team. I'll always be myself. It's always worked so I will make sure I don't change on that side.



"I've always naturally been like this. If I start to change I think my dad will be unhappy and he will slap me in the face!"

Ocon's sprightly demeanour this morning is largely down to having had his fun on Force India's new simulator the day before. It has been upgraded since he last used it back in 2015, and testing the "mega-quick" new car has made a big impression on him.

It's a good job he's full of energy, because a busy day awaits. After our chat, Ocon heads straight through two small doors to the race bays for a seat fit. He's greeted by a car-build mechanic who introduces himself as 'Monkey' (full name: Paul Hateley) before his race engineer, Bradley Joyce, joins the group. Ocon tests Monkey by opening their conversation in French, but the mechanic's language skills quickly desert him.

The 2017 car – the tub having been built in-house for the first time – sits covered from

prying eyes behind the chassis being used for the seat fit. For our benefit, this is a much more laid-back approach than usual, but as soon as Ocon settles into the cockpit and notes the lack of pedals, he suddenly switches to full-professional mode, telling Joyce how he didn't like the OMP seatbelts at Renault. Fortunately, Force India uses belts made by Schroth.

Ocon's arrival is the first driver change at Force India since 2014, but it's a fresh injection of youth that Joyce relishes. "Young ones tend to be easier to work with," he admits.

"They don't get any easier as they get older!"

Following the seat fit, there's a quick trip to the travel office. Two pre-season tests and 20 races requires a lot of planning, but even the winter is tricky. Ocon is spending the pre-season

away from home as he alternates between the factory and his training camp at 321 Perform, in Fort Romeu, set up by rally driver Sébastien Ogier's former physio.

"During the next two months I will come to

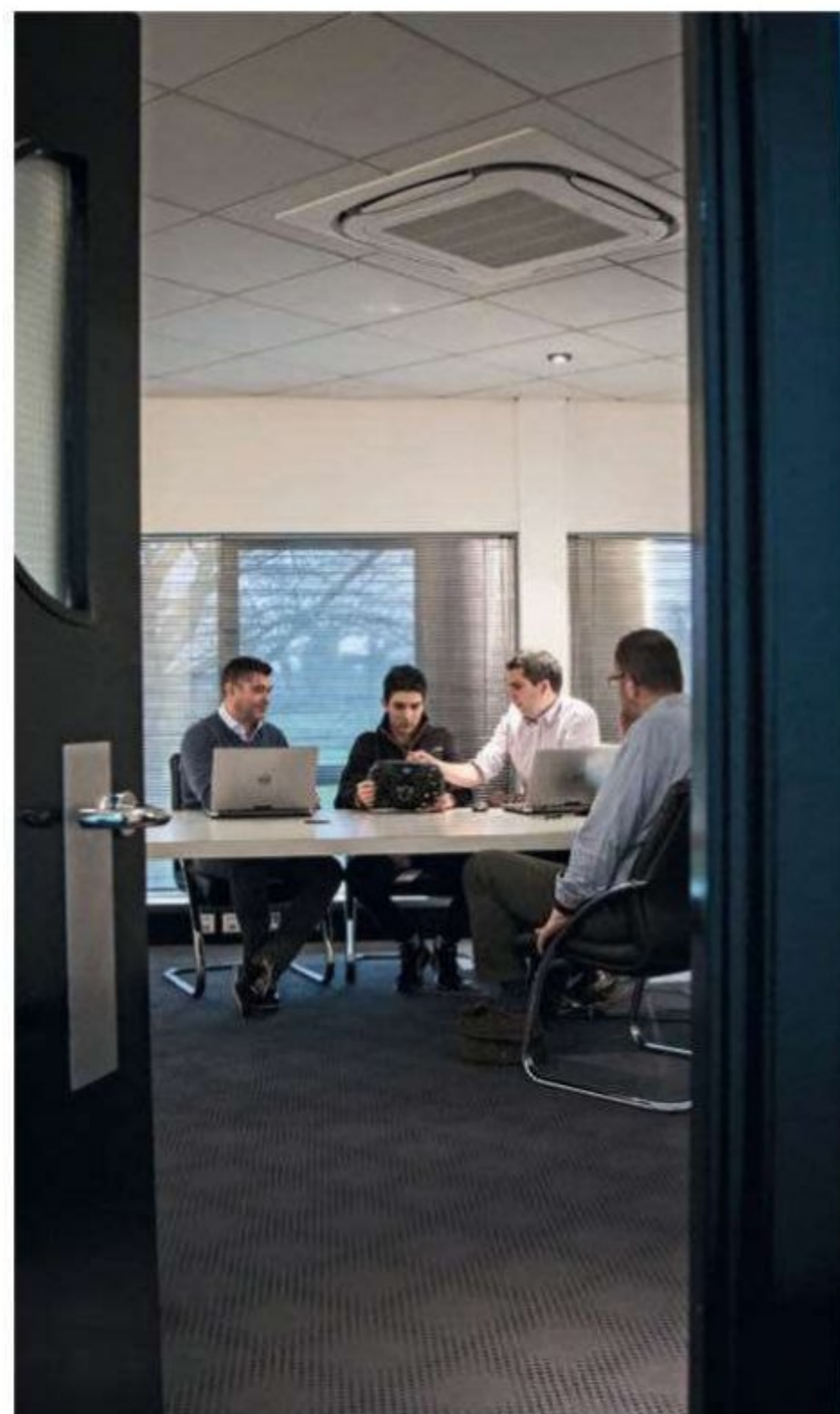
the factory maybe six or seven times," Ocon explains. "I will stay for a couple of days at a time, and they will be long days. So I'll be in the UK and then I'll go back to the Pyrenees for the training. It means I won't get to go home for two months. And I'll be doing that, going back and forth, each time."

Ocon appears naturally at ease with other people, freely chatting to anyone and everyone as he moves around the factory. When asked a question, he pauses and gives a serious answer, but nothing he says feels forced. "I don't try to impress, I just stay myself," he →

"I've learned that results aren't the only thing that people look at. It's the full package. It's feedback: how you work with the team; how you get along with the team"



Left: Ocon has a seat fitting with his race engineer, Bradley Joyce.
Right: A lunchtime engineering meeting with (l-r) Bradley Joyce, Chris Cronin and Tom McCullough, in VJ Mallya's office



explains. "I want to give my best. They don't say it, but I think the team see that I'm motivated. I will be here quite a lot and I will be here when they need me, whenever that is. If they call me up at midnight I will get the message and take the first plane to come here. So I'm not trying to impress anyone, but I want them to see that I will do anything to reach the target."

Next stop is an engineering meeting in Mallya's office. Before his crew of Joyce, data engineer Chris Cronin and chief race engineer Tom McCullough arrive, Ocon orders "a big plate of beef and pasta" for lunch. Training 2017-style takes its toll. Ocon reveals this is the very room where he had the first meeting to secure the Force India drive. With Mallya elsewhere, it's rather empty – and sparsely furnished. "Who cares?" Ocon responds as *F1 Racing* references the lack of extravagance. "You don't need any of it as long as you deliver on track..."

Cue nods from his engineers.

There's a limit to how much sensitive data can be discussed in our presence, with a French TV crew also following Ocon around, but Esteban never misses an opportunity to learn. Questions about Albert Park's brake duty, fuel consumption and Safety Car likelihood (high due to unreliability at the start of the season on a temporary circuit), are followed by a suggestion from the driver to have the 2017 steering wheel placed in the sim so he can start to cement procedures.

Joyce is then asked to explain Ocon's development plan in the run-up to testing, but struggles in front of a camera. "It's hard, huh?" Ocon reassures his engineer. "It's just training..."

With the meeting over and done with, there's finally some downtime until COO Otmar Szafnauer becomes available. "Hello boss," Ocon

grins, betraying his youthful exuberance as Szafnauer walks down the stairs into reception. Here is someone he really wants to impress. The pair exchange a hearty handshake before heading over to Szafnauer's office to discuss the previous day's simulator run and preparation plans.

"This team's a bit of a dichotomy," Otmar notes. "Sometimes it looks as if we're joking and having fun, but we're a bit like a duck on the water – we're paddling like hell beneath the surface. We don't take ourselves too seriously, but seriously enough to perform. It's

all about performance for us.

"Everybody's pleased that we've got another driver who fits the team well. There are some out there – I won't mention their names – where if you were to bring them in, maybe their talents →

"They don't say it, but I think the team see that I'm motivated... I'm not trying to impress anyone, but I want them to see that I will do anything to reach the target"



Signing the vital bits of paperwork with Force India's COO, Otmar Szafnauer

Remember the last Frenchman to win an F1 grand prix?

The 1996 Monaco GP is remembered as one of the craziest races in F1 history, with just three cars making it to the chequered flag. And it was Ligier's Olivier Panis who emerged victorious that day – a dream result for French driver and team.

There was certainly a huge amount of luck involved, but Panis was undeniably quick. Engine problems struck in qualifying, which meant a car with top-six potential started 14th. To prove that point, Panis set the fastest lap in a dry warm-up on Sunday before the heavens opened.

The rain delivered a chaotic race, but Panis was imperious. Aggressively pulling off a series of overtaking manoeuvres to make his strategy work, he rose through the field as others faltered to become the 12th French winner in 46 years of the world championship.

The wait for next French winner goes on. Romain Grosjean came close, twice finishing second – but only nine other Frenchmen have started a grand prix since Panis was dealt his winning hand.





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are immense from a driving perspective, but as a fit to a team they can be disruptive.

“We think that the team is greater than any one individual, including the driver, and another reason Esteban fits in well. The whole team are delighted to have somebody with his passion, attitude and willingness to learn.”

Tellingly, Szafnauer looks Ocon straight in the eye when delivering his last point, a reminder that this is a young driver to be developed. And Ocon certainly knows it, asking if he can spend some one-on-one time with Szafnauer during lunch to maximise his learning time.

After lunch, it's time to go to the gym at nearby Whittlebury Hall, so Ocon can continue his preparations for the rigours of the new regulations. He's gained 3kg since the end of

2016, and aims to put on another two so he can reach 70kg by the time testing begins. Proud of his weight, the six-footer mocks *F1 Racing's* extra 12kg despite the obvious height deficit.

A spa filled with retired couples in white robes is the last place you'd expect to spot an elite sportsman, but Ocon needs to make the most of his opportunity to train. After a short, sharp workout, he's back in more familiar territory, with another photoshoot and a television interview.

After that, it's time for the paperwork, as Ocon signs a series of waivers relating to the

upcoming season, before conducting a number of phone interviews as darkness falls. Anyone could be forgiven for feeling a bit tired by this stage, but the new recruit is still laughing and joking, even amid concerns the impending snow

“We think that the team is greater than any one individual. The team are delighted to have somebody with Esteban's passion, attitude and willingness to learn”

could impede his return flight to the Pyrenees. It's only when starting his final job of the day – a scheduling meeting – that Ocon finally lets out a yawn. The past jam-packed eight hours are starting to take their toll on his energy levels, but not on his mood. “You have to do it all and enjoy it if you want to be successful,” he points out. “I'm not here just to participate.”

On leaving the factory, Ocon is greeted with a typically British scene of wet roads and heavy traffic as the snow begins to fall. It's a far cry from what lies ahead. Soon he'll be wringing the neck of Force India's 2017 challenger around the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, preparing for his first full season of Formula 1 with one of the most impressive teams of the past decade.

Right now it all seems a long way away, but Ocon exudes the confidence to match his very obvious potential. And it's more than enough to convince us that he has every chance of making his Force India stay a successful one. 🍷



Left: A workout in the luxurious surroundings of the nearby Whittlebury Hall gym, as Ocon sets about upping his weight to 70kg, to help him handle the new regulations. Right: His final photoshoot of the day, before he heads back to the Pyrenees





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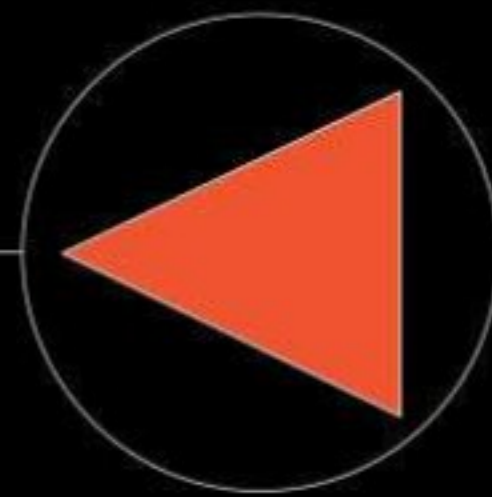
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Now that was a car



No. 59: The McLaren MP4-13

Newey magic got Woking winning again



WORDS STEWART WILLIAMS PICTURES JAMES MANN

F1 in the 1990s tended to be a battle for supremacy between McLaren and Williams. McLaren had dominated the early part of the decade, but the baton passed to Williams when Adrian Newey's creations began to bear fruit. Benetton then came briefly to the fore, but Williams resumed their dominance in 1996-97.

Towards the end of 1996, McLaren chief Ron Dennis shrewdly poached Williams designer Newey. Amid contractual wranglings, Newey was placed on gardening leave, which meant he had no input whatsoever into the 1997 car. But he was finally unleashed, along with Neil Oatley, on the 1998 challenger, the MP4-13.

Regulation changes for 1998 stipulated that the cars would be much narrower, with a reduction in track from 2.0m to 1.8m, which, along with the introduction of grooved tyres to replace slicks, was intended to reduce cornering speeds. Of course, all the teams did their best to find ways around this, and McLaren's engine partner, Mercedes, concentrated a massive amount of effort into their V10 FO 110G, trimming more than 20kg from its weight. McLaren also chose to drop long-time tyre supplier Goodyear in favour of Bridgestone, while their closest rivals, Williams and Ferrari, stayed on Goodyears.

The MP4-13 featured a new front suspension that used pushrod-actuated, longitudinally mounted torsion bar springs, and this allowed for a slimmer monocoque. With Newey's usual focus on aerodynamic efficiency and a very clean aero look all round, the result was an ultra-

compact car. Despite the FIA-mandated reduction in car width, there was no similar reduction in wheelbase, so rather than shorten it McLaren actually increased it slightly from the MP4-12.

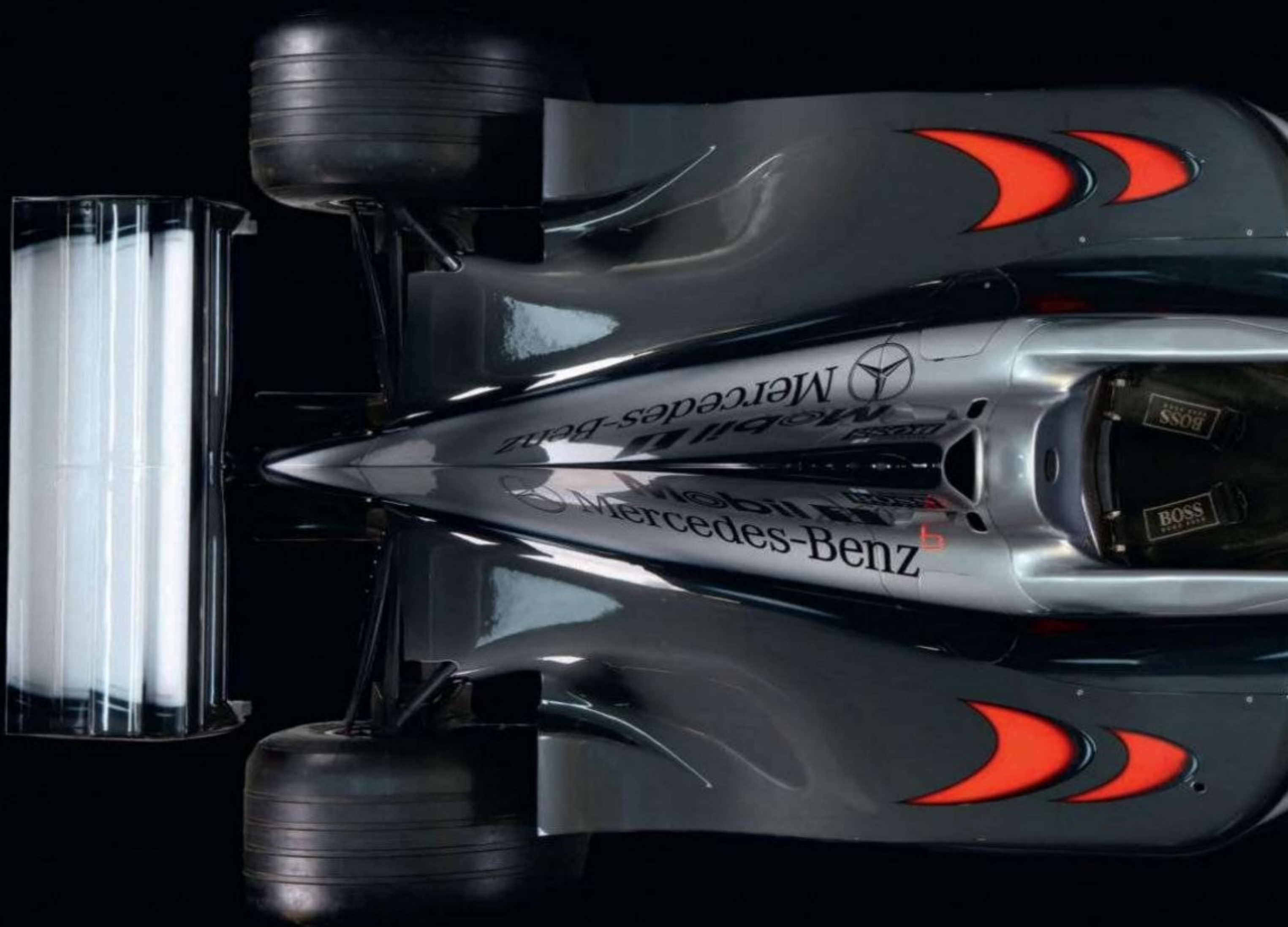
The car was initially launched in an interim orange livery, which was later replaced with McLaren's usual red and silver colourway, and the team's expectations for the car were modest – until testing began. "We didn't really expect to be so competitive," said Oatley. "At least until the car went to Barcelona and literally the first run we did was quicker than anyone else had done all week. That gave us an inkling that we had a reasonably competitive car."

While it was by no means a radical machine, the MP4-13 was clearly a winner from the start. It was, however, dogged by controversy. At the season-opening Australian GP at Albert Park, everyone knew that McLaren's two drivers, Mika Häkkinen and David Coulthard, would be the men to beat, and they duly monopolised the front row with Häkkinen just 0.043s ahead of his team-mate. Both McLarens made good starts to hold off the Ferrari of Michael Schumacher, and they remained one-two after the first round of stops. Then, inexplicably, at the end of lap 35 Häkkinen returned to the pits as a result of a misheard radio message. This put Coulthard in the lead where he remained until lap 56 of 58, when he let Häkkinen past on the main straight as part of an agreement that whoever led at the first corner should be allowed to win the race if they were in a position to do so. →



McLAREN MP4-13 TECH SPEC

Chassis	Carbon fibre/honeycomb monocoque
Suspension	Front: Double wishbones, pushrod-actuated torsion bar springs and dampers Rear: Double wishbones, pushrod-actuated coil springs and dampers
Engine	Mercedes-Benz FO 110G 72° V10
Engine capacity	2,998cc
Power output	760bhp
Gearbox	6-speed semi-automatic
Tyres	Bridgestone
Weight	600kg
Wheelbase	3,060mm
Notable drivers	Mika Häkkinen, David Coulthard



Third-placed Heinz-Harald Frentzen was a lap behind in his Williams, making a McLaren one-two almost inevitable, and so it was Häkkinen who started the season with maximum points instead of Coulthard. The team, and Häkkinen in particular, were unrepentant.

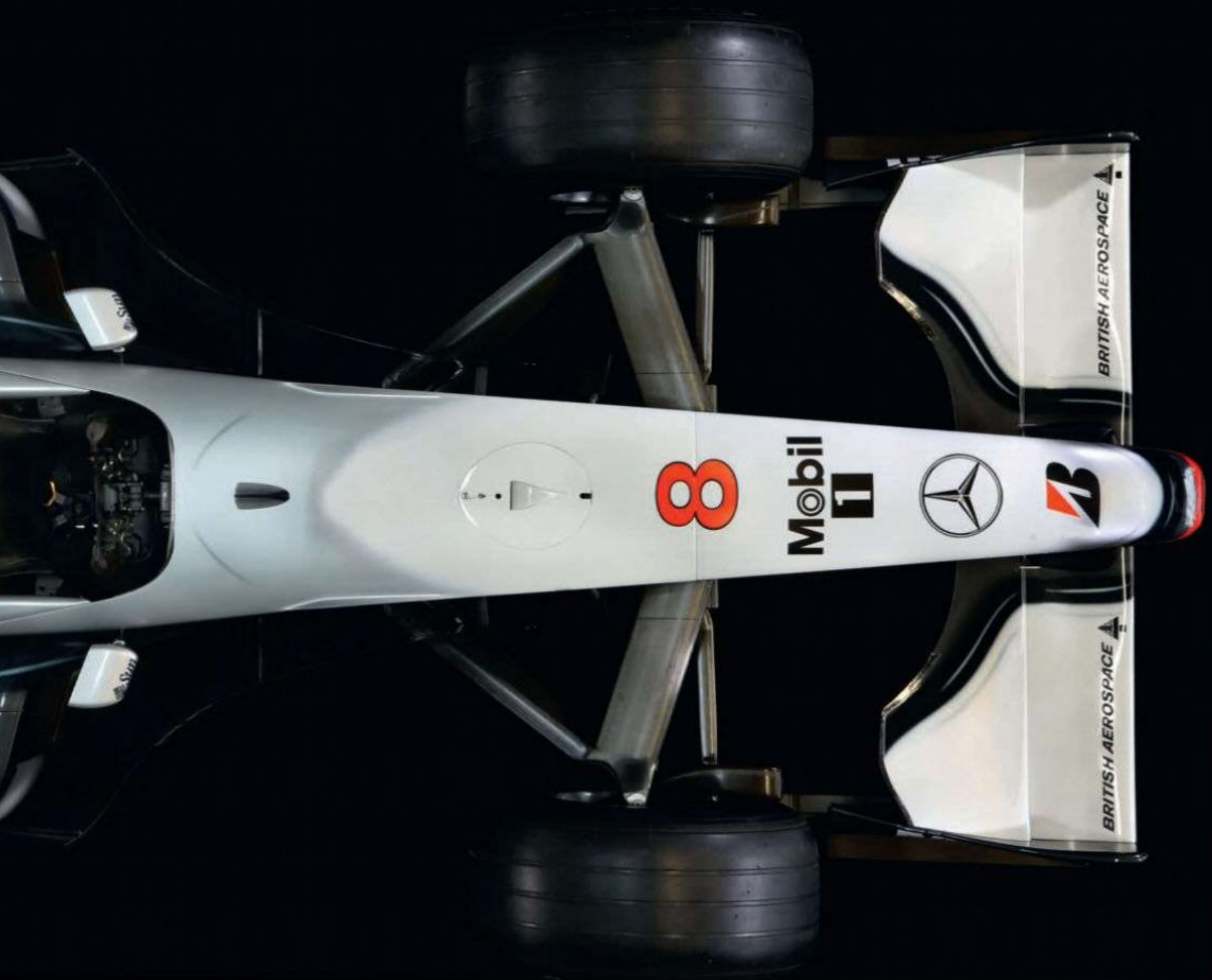
“Every single member of the team in the garage contributed to my victory today and I especially appreciate David’s sportsmanlike conduct,” said Mika. “What David did today was remarkable. What he did was really gentlemanly, unreal and fantastic.”

Criticism outside the team, however, was heavy, although whether the situation constituted team orders was open to interpretation. Ron Walker, chairman of the Australian GP Corporation, complained to the FIA, and the matter was eventually heard by the FIA’s World Motor Sport Council. McLaren were told that “any future act prejudicial to the interests of competition should be severely punished”.

The next race, Brazil, was a straightforward lights-to-flag victory for Häkkinen, with Coulthard in close attendance, and Schumacher more than a minute down. This time the controversy had occurred before

the race, when the stewards declared McLaren’s braking system illegal. Their innovative third-pedal arrangement, which had been photographed at the Luxembourg GP (held at the Nürburgring) and exclusively revealed in the November 1997 issue of *F1 Racing*, enabled the driver to brake one rear wheel independently of the other into a corner. McLaren continued to use the system into 1998, but because they were now frontrunners (and despite the fact that the system had been approved by FIA technical delegate Charlie Whiting), rivals campaigned to get the extra pedal banned. Once the stewards had decided, McLaren dropped the system for the rest of the season.

Schumacher won round three in Argentina, but Coulthard took his first and only victory of the year at the San Marino Grand Prix. Back-to-back wins for Häkkinen in Spain and Monaco were followed by three wins for Schumacher. Another pair of Häkkinen victories in Austria and Germany, and Schumacher wins in Hungary and Italy, meant that with two races to go, Häkkinen and Schumacher were level on 80 points. Coulthard trailed behind them, a distant third.



McLAREN MP4-13 RACE RECORD



Starts	32
Retirements	7
Wins	9
Poles	12
Fastest laps	9
Other podiums	11
Points	156



When McLaren most needed Häkkinen's A-game, he delivered. At the Luxembourg GP he started P3, and in the early part of the race was held up by Schumacher's team-mate, Eddie Irvine. A great move on Irvine at the Veodol Chicane on lap 14 promoted Häkkinen to second and he then closed in on Schumacher. Häkkinen stayed out for an extra four laps after Schumacher had pitted to emerge ahead, held on to his lead at the second round of pitstops and subsequently extended his lead to five seconds over Schumacher by the finish.

The title was now well within Häkkinen's grasp, and although Schumacher set pole at the season finale in Suzuka, his Ferrari stalled on the grid and later retired with a puncture. Häkkinen, meanwhile, claimed his eighth win of 1998 to secure the first of his two world titles. McLaren also won the constructors' championship for the first time since 1991, and this was also the first title for the team's engine supplier Mercedes, main sponsor West, and tyre supplier Bridgestone.

For a car that started out mired in controversy, the MP4-13 came out on top in a clash of the F1 titans. And that was just the start... 🏁

ZAK

THE MAN WHO CAN

BROWN

The renowned commercial ace with a reputation for making things happen has jumped into one of the hottest seats in F1: co-running McLaren's race team. Is he up for it? You bet...

WORDS ANTHONY ROWLINSON

PICTURES THOMAS BUTLER

Zak Brown has the jitters. Like so many in F1, he's a restless bundle of energy, constantly on the move, seeking a deal to nail, a problem to solve. So for *F1 Racing* to be granted an hour of his time is quite a coup.

But it's making him twitchy. As he stands, briefly stock-still, before the lens of photographer Thomas Butler, he admits that the thought of his inbox growing like Japanese knotweed in his absence is making him feel distinctly uncomfortable. "I'm a 'clear-out-my-inbox-every-day' guy," he says, in his trademark gunslinger drawl. "At the moment I'm probably getting 250 emails a day. So it's times like these that I get the jitters because I know my inbox is going 'doink-doink-doink...'"

He has been overwhelmed – though not surprised – at the amount of team affection he has encountered since taking up his role as McLaren's executive director on 11 December last year, a fondness manifested through a flood of e-communication via Facebook, Twitter and

direct to that insomniac inbox that replenishes like some kind of self-flipping egg-timer.

"And I want to get to it all..." he grins with apparent relish, before pausing once more and posing again at Butler's request.

"I don't know when he sleeps," comments one aide. Anyone who's experienced the Brown style of business will know he's a 24/365 operator, seemingly oblivious to time zones or circadian rhythms. 'Always on' is both his mantra and method, and, for this great team, latterly rudderless, a full-beam blast of commercially driven focus is probably just what they need.

One of Brown's first actions, indeed, has been to re-jig the structure of McLaren's commercial department, as befits his brief to oversee the team's marketing and 'business' functions. And while he will admit that 2017 is effectively "over" in terms of new sponsorship acquisitions, he insists that 2018 is the year on which fans should pin their hopes for a true revival in McLaren's fortunes across the board.

"I think 2017 is going to be a transition year," he says, "even though, given my background, everyone is going to wonder when the title sponsor is coming..."

Indeed, Zak, when is the title sponsor coming?

"Ha! Not till '18. And there's no guarantees it's coming in '18, either, but it's definitely not coming in '17 because we haven't really gotten started yet. I think we can do a better job of selling the McLaren proposition."

Sponsorship and commercial matters are the lifeblood of the global 200mph soap opera known and loved the world over as F1. And it's encouraging to hear Brown declaim optimistically on opportunities for title backers, as might be expected from a man who has previously brokered F1 deals with the likes of Diageo, UBS, Epson, Bose and Qualcomm. "The sport is still very attractive to sponsors," he says, "but the way the costs have escalated, no sponsor is going to pay half your bill. You heard Ron Dennis make the comment a year or so ago →





'there's no such thing as a title sponsor any more' – I think what he really meant was that a title sponsor used to pay half your racing bill, but now there is no £150m title sponsor out there. There *are* title sponsors, but there is a limit to what F1 is worth. What has happened is that our cost base has outpaced the value."

Ah, the tricky 'costs' question – an issue that cuts to the very heart of F1's current troubles, be they the parlous state of Manor's finances, the car-manufacturer-funded domination of one silver superteam, or the relentless pursuit of profit by former F1 commercial rights holders CVC, at the expense of the sport's wider wellbeing.

These are not footling matters, nor are they within the power of one man to remedy. Yet the presence of a newer generation of a 'fixer' at a totemic team, at a time when F1's new owners, Liberty Media, want to tear up the sport's model and its relationship to its fans, is surely positive. For Brown is not alone: alongside colleagues Jonathan Neale and Eric Boullier, and across the table from Toto Wolff, Christian Horner, Cyril Abiteboul, Bob Fernley, Claire Williams, Gene Haas *et al*, a new generation of team boss/racers has emerged, who should be able to re-mould F1 into a format that chimes with Liberty's ambition to make it simpler, more accessible, cheaper and more fan-focused. Dare we suggest there might be a new, more collaborative era about to begin for the sport that spawned The Piranha Club?

"It's not going to be *Sesame Street*," says Brown, an instinctive competitor, like so many of his peers, "but more collaborative? Yep, 100 per cent. It's good that we want to run each other off the track at the race weekends. That's what everyone wants. But we need to do a much better job of working together for the good of the sport, and then leaving the competition for on the track with technical staff and sponsors and drivers. That's something I think the industry has done a very poor job of historically, and now is the time to change that. Be sensible, work together and then fight like mad on Sunday."

First, though, the matter at hand: dragging McLaren back from their lowly constructors' position of P6 last season (itself an improvement on 2015's nadir of P9, ahead only of *nul points* Manor). So far, Brown says, the signs are encouraging, with positive reports from technical partner Honda on power-unit development and healthy numbers being quoted by the aero and chassis teams.

"Fans can look forward to progress," he says, "and we need to finish better than sixth. We feel our chassis will be as good as anyone's and we're very happy with our internal targets. Honda



"IT'S NOT GOING TO BE *SESAME STREET*, BUT MORE COLLABORATIVE? YEP, 100 PER CENT. WE NEED TO DO A MUCH BETTER JOB OF WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THE SPORT"



continue to make progress and they will get there. I'm not a miracle worker, but for 2018 people should raise their expectations for on- and off-track performance."

Corner-speed analysis showed the MP4-31 to be regularly F1's third-most competitive chassis in 2016, and privately McLaren have pencilled in P4 as an achievable 2017 constructors' goal. In the meantime, Honda, now in year three of their F1 return, have re-drawn their designs and gone in pursuit of a Mercedes-rivalling specification.

It's understood that the 'size-zero' philosophy that dictated the architecture of Honda PUs in 2015-16 has been ditched for 2017 after the scrapping of the derided 'tokens' system. Honda will now ape the pioneering Mercedes design that places turbine and compressor at either end of the ICE V6 cylinder bank, but connected with a shaft. This design concept, although less compact, has underpinned the success of the Mercedes PUs since 2014. Honda are also believed to have lowered their unit's centre of

gravity without forcing compromises on the rear aerodynamics of the newly designated MCL32.

So as F1 prepares to embrace a technical reboot, there's realistic hope of a McLaren podium for the first time since 2014: something a little more befitting of F1's second most-winning team (182 victories to Ferrari's 224).

Regardless, Brown is determined that McLaren, once notoriously austere, start to give off more warmth and connect with their followers in a manner that for decades has been the sole preserve of their great red rival from Maranello.

"We're listening to the fans," he says, "and they will see a new way of working from us – an openness they've maybe not seen from McLaren before, because we can totally control the way we engage with our fans, whereas track performance always depends on what other teams do."

And how might this openness manifest itself? An optimistic McLaren insider, cognisant of the team's brightly liveried origins, might wish to suggest that the future's bright, the future's...

FRENCH CORRECTION

After a ten-year absence, the French Grand Prix will return to F1 for 2018, at the fondly remembered Paul Ricard circuit. It will fill a gaping void in the European 'tour' – but should we care? **Damien Smith** argues that we ought to, for the French GP might just be the most important race of them all...



Out of the blue, the oldest grand prix of them all is set to return. The announcement early last December that the French Grand Prix will be back on the F1 calendar for 2018 offered a welcome bit of off-season cheer, especially since so few had seen it coming. In an era in which the German GP has bitten the dust and the British continues to exist in a state of constant peril, here is a European 'grandee' – arguably the most illustrious of them all – enjoying a surprise revival after a decade spent missing in action. The politician and ex-racer behind its return almost burst with Gallic pride at the announcement, when he described why this matters: "Because we love France."

But does Formula 1 love France? Have we *really* missed the original home of motor racing since Magny-Cours sunk from the schedule after 2008, to the familiar gurgling burp of a

and is now president of the regional council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur.

"Estrosi is a very straightforward guy," says French motorsport journalist Pascal Dro. "You need a dictator to be able to get something like this together, and as the president of the region, that's what he's been."

Nice-born Estrosi set the wheels in motion for this revival. He proposed the idea to Stéphane Clair, general manager of Paul Ricard, the region's obvious choice for a race venue and the host of 14 French GPs between 1971 and 1990. Supported by the weight of regional backing and France's motorsport authority, they approached Bernie Ecclestone with help from McLaren's racing director Eric Boullier. As usual, the response was clear: if you have the money, a date can be found – especially at a time when so many venues are feeling the pinch of Formula 1's eye-watering hosting fees. The announcement

underestimated – especially since it will mark a return to French free-to-air F1 TV coverage.

"Any time there's a new grand prix everyone gets excited," he points out. "But the return of such a historic one doesn't happen often in such a big market. The country is important, but you could argue the television audience it generates is equally if not more important. From an overall global viewership it'll be massive."

"We keep being told we need to go to emerging markets for the growth of the sport, but let's not forget where we grew up: it's the Italian GP, the British, the French – and the German, which unfortunately we have lost, at least for the time being. France is one of those core races. By all means the US and Singapore are critically important for F1 to be a global championship. But yes, France matters, 100 per cent."

What about the drivers? Will they care about the French GP or will it be just another

"BECAUSE WE LOVE FRANCE"

financial whirlpool? There was little to love about that particular circuit, and for all the obvious charms of the surrounding Burgundy region it was remote from major towns and always struggled to conjure much of an atmosphere. Traditionalists who care that grand prix racing began in France – at Le Mans, back in 1906 – occasionally lament its loss, but F1's once-passionate love affair with this country has wilted. Yes, there's Renault, but the race team is based in the UK, and the last Frenchman to win a grand prix was Olivier Panis – in 1996.

So is the French Grand Prix really such a big deal? Christian Estrosi, 61, the man behind the plan, clearly thumps the tub in the affirmative. He might be a politician, but don't hold that against him. He's also a former motorcycle racer who finished fourth in the 1978 500cc French Grand Prix. More recently he served as a minister in Nicolas Sarkozy's government

of a five-year deal to revive the race at Ricard in the balmy heat of a late July date was the culmination of Estrosi's hard work, carried out under a veil of impressive secrecy.

So who cares? Renault? You bet.

"It's extremely important," explains Cyril Abiteboul, managing director of Renault Sport F1. "Of course, we are not racing in F1 just for the French or European market, we are looking to those that are away from our historic base, such as Asia, South America and so on. But we still need to be strong at home. We also look forward to being in a stronger position in performance when the race comes round in 2018. It will be a fantastic moment for everyone at Renault. It's a great place, a great venue, at a great time of year."

The enthusiasm spreads beyond those with an obvious national interest. Zak Brown, ace F1 marketer and McLaren's new executive director, says the significance of the French GP cannot be

race, come 2018? Certainly not for new Force India signing, Frenchman Esteban Ocon, 20. Pleasingly, Ocon has even watched a French GP first-hand despite his tender years. He was a nine-year-old Michael Schumacher fan at Magny-Cours in 2006. "The cars were so quick in the corners, it was crazy back then," he enthuses. "And the sound was amazing."

Ocon was as surprised as anyone when the return was announced. "I heard talks about it but I was not expecting it to happen," he says. "I thought: 'Oh, it's not going to be true.' But when I heard, I was like: 'Oh my god, it's happening!'"

Paul Ricard has a special place in Ocon's heart. He scored his first podium and then his first win there, in Formula Renault. He offers some insight into its challenge: "Everyone says it's no problem to go off track because of the large run-off areas, but it's not true. If you go off, you break the monocoque straight away, the kerbs and →



Patriot games: (l-r) Christian Estrosi, the man behind the French GP's revival; Renault F1 boss Cyril Abiteboul; and 20-year-old French F1 racer, Esteban Ocon



Michael Schumacher on his way to victory at the 2006 French GP at Magny-Cours – a race attended by a nine-year-old Esteban Ocon

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the bumps are so big. And it's a great track. I would have preferred them to keep the long straight – the very long Mistral Straight – without the chicane, but they chose the normal track. It's still okay and there will still be overtaking there because the straight is quite long. I look forward to it. It's a shame that it is not already here for this year."

He compares Paul Ricard to the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya and even to the Hungaroring: "It's a track that turns all the time. After the long straight you have a flat-right that is mega-hard for the neck, and then you have this double-right, which is five or six seconds in length. Also it degrades the tyres, so it will make for an interesting race."

There's much to like about summer at Paul Ricard and it's already a tantalising prospect. But how will it work out from a financial point of view, when money woes have been at the root

In the past 15 years, Ricard was known for a time as Paul Ricard High Tech Test Track, and was in particular demand from Le Mans teams, who were attracted by its useful Mulsanne-like mile-long Mistral Straight. Racing was eventually reintroduced here despite the lack of spectator facilities and grandstands. A main stand on the pit straight has since been added and extra seating will arrive in time for the grand prix. In all, €80m has been invested since the track reopened in 2002, with a further €2m pledged for this year alone. It's a ready-made F1 venue.

Beyond the circuit's quality, Estrosi has compiled evidence that the race will be of economic value to his region – hence a level of investment Silverstone's owners, the British Racing Drivers' Club, would envy. The local tourism committee commissioned Deloitte to undertake a study, which reported that an annual budget of €30m to run the race will be justified

to the strained French economy, modern environmental sensitivities now cloud France's love for *l'automobile*.

"The French people are very strange," admits Dro. "They have complained about the lack of a French Grand Prix for a long time. When it was announced, there was a lot in the press for two days – then nothing. Because it's not happening until 2018 it's forgotten already."

"It is important for the country," he insists. "In France there are three major car manufacturers – Renault, Peugeot and Citroën – between them employing three million people. And yet our four-time World Rally champion Sébastien Ogier is barely known."

At the time of the announcement of the French GP's return, general manager Clair was bullish – as you'd expect. "I think it will change the lives of a lot of local people and of the French people as a whole," he enthused. "We have really done

"REIMS, ROUEN & DIJON"

of hosting troubles for the likes of Hockenheim, the Nürburgring and Silverstone?

Well, the project has had an advantage from the start: the circuit is already in near-perfect condition and requires relatively minor work to meet the notoriously tough demands of an F1 GP.

Paul Ricard, named after its founder, who died in 1997, has become renowned for leading the way in circuit design and technology since it was sold in '99. The track is part of the assets of the family trust controlled by Ecclestone's ex-wife Slavica – an important distinction from the widely held belief that 'Bernie owns Paul Ricard.' In 2002 it was relaunched as the most sophisticated test track in the world; the high-tech sprinkler system installed to simulate wet-weather conditions, and its signature blue- and red-striped high-abrasion run-off areas are just two of the circuit's groundbreaking developments and safety features.

by a spin-off evaluation of €65m per annum to the region, and the creation of 500 jobs.

The single access road will need to be developed to avoid snarling congestion on grand prix weekends, but that won't be a problem for the privileged few whom F1 values beyond any humble fan. Ricard is but a short helicopter hop to the French Riviera, while the Le Castellet airport, situated adjacent to the pit straight, will welcome the F1 world's squadron of private jets.

But as anyone at Hockenheim will tell you, fans are still important to a GP. Will Ricard draw a crowd? "No question it will," says Dro. "Those who go to Monte Carlo and travel to Barcelona for the Spanish GP will be attracted – and the ticket prices will be lower than Monaco, too."

The French motor racing community has understandably embraced the news. As for the public at large, the response is harder to gauge. Despite the importance of the car industry

it; F1 is coming back to France, at the Circuit Paul Ricard. It's wonderful news."

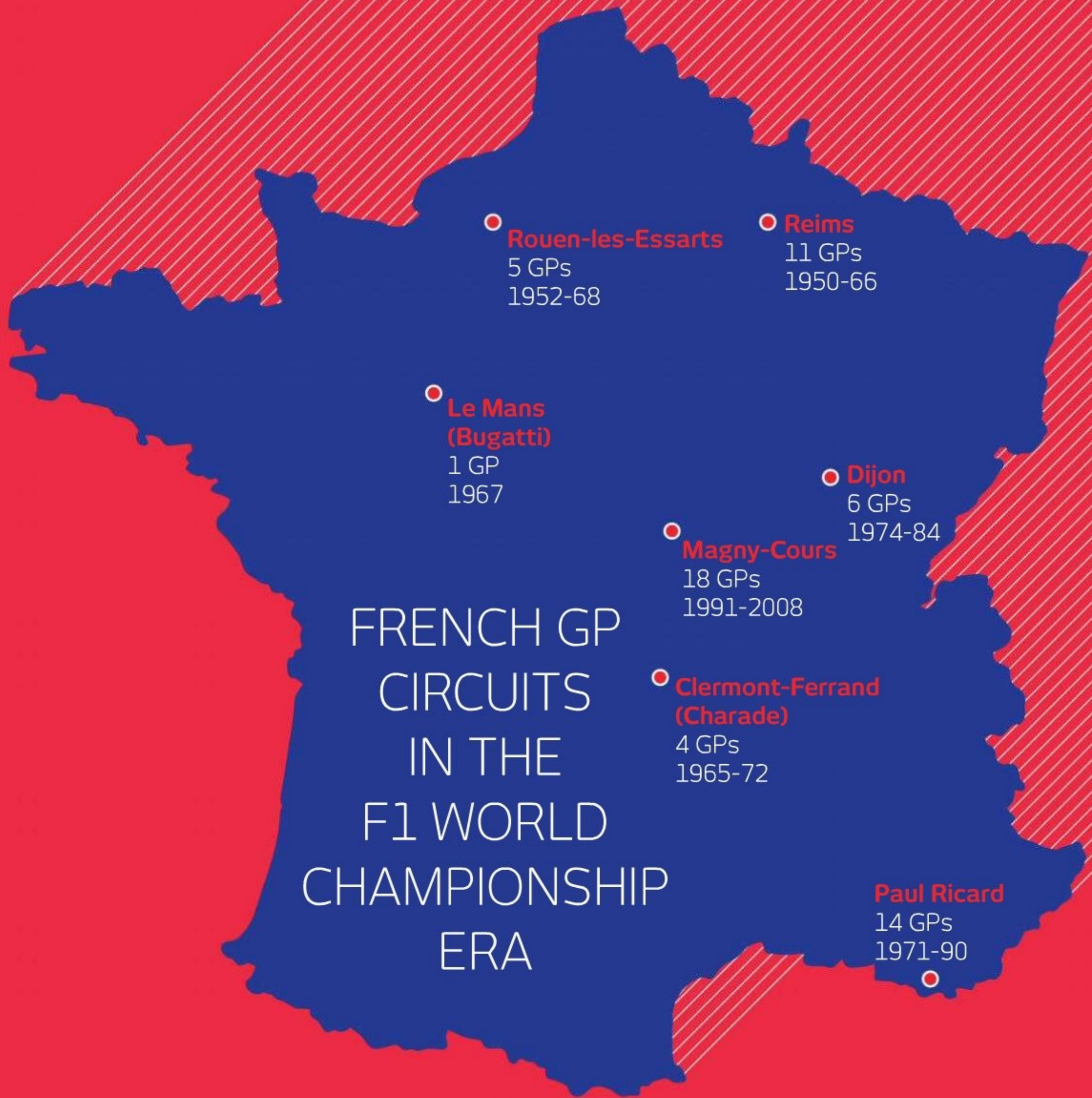
That it is. For those who care little for history and tradition, it is just another race in the middle of a long season. But *all* sport requires the context and perspective that only the passing of time can decree if success is to count for anything worth remembering. That's why drivers and teams chase records, or why a win at Monaco, Monza or Silverstone instinctively means more than one at Baku.

Economics and fruitful financial markets are what count to those who turn the F1 wheels. But for the rest of us, the French GP comeback has a value without a price. To those for whom Reims, Rouen, Clermont-Ferrand and Dijon are more than just French provincial towns – and instead stir thoughts of Fangio, Moss, Clark, Amon and Villeneuve – this news really matters.

It's good for the soul. 🍷



End of an era: Senna on his way to P2 at Paul Ricard in 1988 (right); and Mauricio Gugelmin's huge shunt in '89 (left). The last GP to be held here was in 1990



PAUL RICARD FRENCH GP WINNERS

1971	Jackie Stewart	Tyrrell-Ford	1983	Alain Prost	Renault
1973	Ronnie Peterson	Lotus-Ford	1985	Nelson Piquet	Brabham-BMW
1975	Niki Lauda	Ferrari	1986	Nigel Mansell	Williams-Honda
1976	James Hunt	McLaren-Ford	1987	Nigel Mansell	Williams-Honda
1978	Mario Andretti	Lotus-Ford	1988	Alain Prost	McLaren-Honda
1980	Alan Jones	Williams-Ford	1989	Alain Prost	McLaren-Honda
1982	René Arnoux	Renault	1990	Alain Prost	Ferrari



HERO's HERO

Marcus Ericsson

on

Ronnie Peterson

ILLUSTRATION DAN 42

'SuperSwede' Ronnie Peterson's on-the-limit sideways style made him the hero of his homeland – and the inspiration for his young countryman, the Sauber racer Marcus Ericsson

Ronnie Peterson was, without doubt, one of the most outstanding racing drivers of the 1970s, finishing as runner-up twice in the Formula 1 world championship. And, of course, like me, he was Swedish. He died young, at the age of 34, after an accident on the first lap of the Italian Grand Prix in 1978. What happened that day set in motion a lot of the safety protocols that we now take for granted in Formula 1.

Obviously I'm far too young to have seen him race in person. But, for me, Ronnie Peterson is a legend. He's the biggest racing hero in Sweden and, even today, people still know his name. In fact his reputation extends way beyond the borders of Sweden. Ask pretty much anyone in the sport about Ronnie and they'll rank him as one of the greats, even though he was never the world champion. What they liked about him, and what

they remember him for, was his speed and his spectacular driving style. Whenever you read an interview with someone who worked with him, like Lotus's Colin Chapman, or drove against him, like Jackie Stewart, they always say that while he maybe wasn't the right person to develop a bad car into a good

one, he could get into pretty much any car and drive it on the limit – usually sideways.

He didn't always have the best cars, but he drove a lot of interesting ones – the red March with the 'tea tray' front wing, the six-wheeled Tyrrell, and he had two stints with Lotus when they were at their most creative. The six-wheeler was certainly a funny-looking car; Jody Scheckter won the 1976 Swedish Grand Prix in it and finished third in the world championship, but by the time Ronnie got his hands on it for 1977, it had lost its competitive edge.

Whatever car he had, it was always the *way* he drove that endeared him to the fans. Even in an era when it was easier to go sideways – on cross-ply tyres you would always have been adjusting the car to stop →

the back overtaking the front – he was *really* sideways; it was spectacular. Drivers behind him would think he'd lost it, but he'd still be in control. You can see it in action photographs; he's always a bit wider than the guy following.

Out of the car, I'm told he was a nice, honest, loyal guy as well, with great integrity. He might have been a little wild out on track, but he never crashed into anyone deliberately. When he was at Lotus the second time, it was in his contract that he was number two to Mario Andretti. Even though he was often quicker than Andretti he didn't take points away from him in the races.

In those days, F1 drivers didn't just race in F1; Ronnie raced in Formula 2 and sportscars as well, sometimes even rallies. He did Rally Sweden in a Porsche 911 once. It must have been a great time, driving different cars in different countries every weekend. If you could do that now, you'd learn so much more. Even though we've got a long and busy season now in F1, with 20 races a year, I wouldn't mind putting on a few other races in between. Bring it on!

When you look back at old photographs, you can tell that the racing scene in Ronnie's day, in and around the paddock, was just a bit more chilled out. There weren't so many security gates and you worked on your car wherever there was a spare space, even if it was under a tree. The

drivers hung out with each other a bit more. If I'd been around back then, I'd definitely have had sideburns!

I come from the same area as him, so to follow in his footsteps is something special. There's a statue of him in his home town of Örebro, which is where I now live – I was born in Kumla, which is only 12 miles away – and my house is about five minutes' walk from the statue. I'm often asked by magazines and newspapers to do photoshoots there, and you see plenty of tourists coming to look at it. I see his daughter Nina a couple of times a year as well. He's still a big name in that area and, for me, he's right up there with other Swedish sports legends such as Ingemar Stenmark and Björn Borg – he's definitely in the top five.

I did a tribute at the Monaco Grand Prix in 2014, wearing a replica helmet in Ronnie's colours to mark the 40th anniversary of his win at Monaco in the Lotus 72. That was very cool. The helmet design was proper. I liked that. It went down really well back home, and also with the older people in the paddock who still remember him fondly. Above all, Ronnie was famous and highly regarded because he was super-fast. In my mind, there's no doubt that if he hadn't died after his accident, he would eventually have become world champion.

Certainly it's because of him that F1 became such a major sport in Sweden, and I think he did a lot to advance the cause of motorsport there. He made it possible for other people to come through after him. So when people hear that I'm Swedish, and they mention Ronnie, even just to be associated with him is a big honour for me. 🇸🇪



"Out of the car, I'm told Ronnie was a nice, honest, loyal guy as well, with great integrity. It was in his contract that he was number two to Mario Andretti. Even though he was often quicker than Andretti he didn't take points away from him in the races"

A photograph of Ronnie Peterson in a blue Lotus Formula 1 car on a racetrack. The car is in the foreground, with Peterson wearing a blue helmet and a blue racing suit. The car has 'Texaco' and 'John Player Special' branding. In the background, there are wooden bleachers and two people in white suits and orange hats standing near a fence.

Ronnie Peterson

Born 14 February 1944,
Örebro, Sweden

Died 11 September 1978,
Monza, Italy

1966 Made his F3 debut in a Svebe chassis co-designed by his father, Bengt, and Sven Andersson

1967 Abandoned Svebe for a proper Brabham, and finished joint fourth in the Swedish F3 championship (won by Lotus F1-bound Reine Wisell), despite somersaulting the car in his first race at Karlskoga

1968 Won the Swedish F3 championship for Tecno

1969 Became Swedish F3 champion again, and gave March their F3 debut, finishing third in the new 693 chassis at Cadwell Park, one place ahead of James Hunt. However, he then rolled his car at Montlhéry and suffered severe burns. Went on to make his F2 debut in a Roy Winkelmann-run Lotus

1970 Made his F1 debut at Monaco, driving a new March 701 run by Colin Crabbe Racing

1971 Won the European F2 championship with March and joined their works team in F1, leading the Italian GP and missing out on the win by just 0.1s in the five-car dash to the line

1973 Moved to the works Lotus team in F1, winning in France, Austria, Italy and the USA


1974 Won three more GPs, including Monaco, in the ageing Lotus 72 after the 76 proved troublesome

1976 Quit Lotus for March after one win at Monza

1977 Moved to Tyrrell, taking one podium in the six-wheel P34 car

1978 Returned to Lotus as number two to Mario Andretti. Won the South African and Austrian GPs, but died in hospital from a fat embolism after crashing at Monza, and finished a posthumous second in the drivers' championship

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Will Bottas prove to be the next Mika Häkkinen... or a Heikki Kovalainen?

Simply the (fifth) best?

The decision from Mercedes to sign Valtteri Bottas is somewhat underwhelming, given that he was effectively the fifth-choice replacement for the retiring world champion, Nico Rosberg.

I know contracts are binding, but everything and everyone has a price. Maybe Sebastian Vettel and Fernando Alonso are biding their time for 2018, but will they regret not ruthlessly pursuing a drive in a potential world championship-winning car? Remember the three-way scramble for the Williams drive in 1992-93, with at least one champ offering to drive for free?

Maybe there is a new *entente cordiale* among the teams not to poach drivers, or maybe Mercedes' desire to placate Lewis has ultimately driven the decision.

Is it history repeating itself, similar to when McLaren recruited Heikki Kovalainen to replace Alonso back in 2008, or will Bottas turn into the new Mika Häkkinen? Either way, good luck Valtteri – for 2017 and beyond.

Michael O'Neil
By email

Chin up, F1!

In recent years, F1 has entered into a spiral of negativity. Rather than focusing on the incredible achievements of drivers and teams alike, far too much media attention is now being placed on the sport's shortcomings. Thankfully, as shown by your piece on Force India's 2016 success (*F1 Racing*, February 2017) brilliance is being recognised, but we must go further.

In addition, negativity could be prevented: why did the sport's new owners not pay Manor the money they needed to carry on, thereby ensuring a healthier sport? All is not lost, but there needs to be a sharp change in thinking.

Imandeep Hansra
London, UK

F1 enters a brave new world

I have never been so excited for Formula 1 as I am now that Liberty Media have taken over.

Hearing Ross Brawn's vision for the future of F1 is inspiring. Here is a thoughtful man who *gets it*. I can think of no better qualified candidate for the role. All of his points around revenue sharing,

cost control, the historic races, rule making and, most importantly, the fans, are just spot on. The sooner these goals become reality, the better it will be for our sport.

Jim Factor
Austin, USA

Out with the old

The news of Bernie Ecclestone's 'removal' as CEO of Formula 1 last month came as no great surprise.

As soon as the Liberty Media deal was announced in 2016 it seemed unlikely that an 86-year-old with an inability to grasp social media, and an almost vice-like grip over the sport, would have any future with a modern-day media company.

Sensibly, as soon as the buyout was confirmed, Liberty acted swiftly, moving Bernie aside and replacing him with a trio of people to take the sport into a new era.

I can't wait to see what Liberty bring to the table, but let's hope they strike a balance between necessary improvement and retaining the essence and history of what made F1 great in the first place.

Steve Walker
By email

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Dear Bernie,
Not sure which I found most disturbing: news of your change of professional circumstances arriving in the form of a press release, or a quote from you in said epistle in which you ended a sentence with a preposition.

This, Bernard, is something up with which I will not put!

While my own gast was well and truly flabbered, word reaches me that in the chilly corridors of Prince's Gate (you really should have got that glass door fixed; still, I suppose that ship has now sailed), this re-enactment of the morting of Julius Caesar has been anticipated and prepared for by some of your more Machiavellian functionaries, who have been quietly empire-building while they wait for Chairman Chase to swing the axe. Or should that be 'thrust the knife'? I really should get my literary allusions to agree with one another, shouldn't I?

If memory serves, it was Caesar's appointment as *dictator perpetuo* that kicked off all that nastiness on the Yuji Ides of March. As in your case, he was laid low by a coming-together of previously submissive dignitaries, who, on an individual basis, didn't dare attend to their daily ablutions without his say-so. Seems that while the Liberty Media folk were going about their due dil on the F1 business, and canvassing opinions from the

Apparently, cometh the clear-out at Prince's Gate, the Yanks want to keep you sort-of around so that they can 'consult' with you



PHOTO: CHARLES COATES/LAT

other stakeholders on how to 'take the business forward' (dread phrase!), a number of those being canvassed took the opportunity to whisper that things might be better with someone else's hands on the steering wheel.

Such ingratitude! Still, you can draw some succour from the fact that Julius managed only a few years in the top job before the senators got terminally uppity, while you've been dividing-and-ruling for the best part of forty. Some senior burghers of the fourth estate have been predicting your downfall on a regular basis for what feels like the best part of that, and are now giving themselves generous pats on the back on account of their sagacity. Bet a busted clock wishes it could do the same for being bang on time twice a day, what?

One inky-fingered cove palpably not doing the 'I was right' dance, I observe, is your preferred media outlet. Poor fellow has had to slam the brakes on all those news stories predicting that the Liberty takeover wouldn't happen. Last seen barking at sundry dissenters on social media while hurling fresh ordure at the Liberty bandwagon as it rolls into the distance. I find the website in question a rich source of bemusement, especially when one reaches the 'From around the Web' section at the bottom of the page, wherein one is informed that "Hairdressers in Chipping Norton don't want you to know this" and whatnot. Is this the root of your aversion to digital media, Bernard? Somehow I can't imagine you giving a fig about provincial crimpers and their supposed trade secrets.

As to your new title of 'chairman emeritus', I understand this is something that academic institutions and American corporations bestow upon folk who show no inclination to sail off into the sunset after a lifetime of service, and therefore need to have the gold watch forcibly clamped to their wrist before security is summonsed to escort them to the door. I hope for Chairman Chase's sake it's not a revolving door, since you have form there, and might contrive to have it eject you back into the foyer! Here, Bernard, we are very much brothers in arms, for I am imminently to become 'columnist emeritus', in order that something of greater merit(us) can occupy the off-ramp of this august title from next month onwards. Perhaps we should form a breakaway series? Just an idea.

Apparently, cometh the clear-out at Prince's Gate, the Yanks want to keep you sort-of around so that they can 'consult' with you. One wonders if this is the old keep-your-friends-close-but-keep-your-enemies-closer routine. Still, I know what your response will be – consult the hand, 'cos the face ain't listening any more!

Yours, regarding the annuity rates with a rheumy eye,

the SCRUTINEER

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