

182 PAGES BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE!
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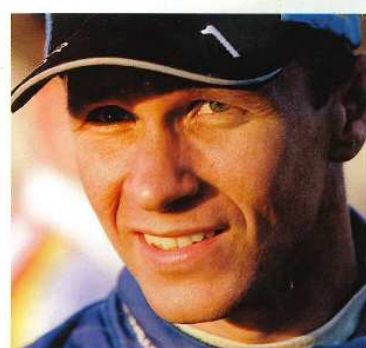
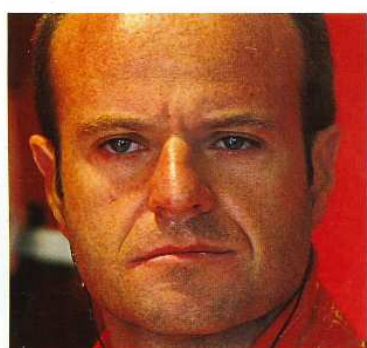
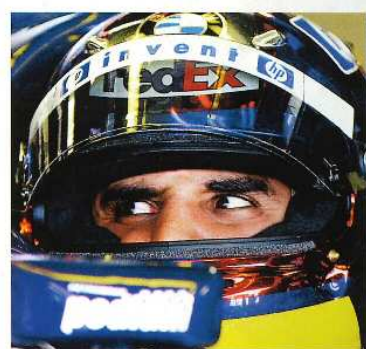
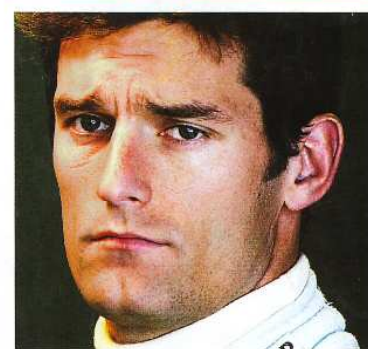
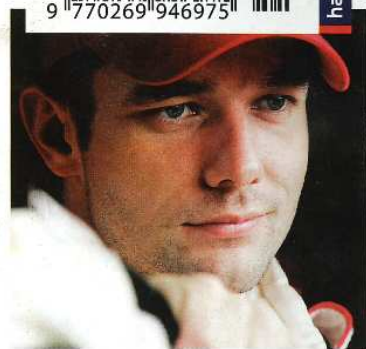
Bumper issue £3.95 December 16/23 2004

Autosport

THE WORLD'S BEST-SELLING MOTORSPORT WEEKLY



» EXCLUSIVE
TOP 50
DRIVERS
OF 2004
FI WRC IRL BTCC LE MANS
OUR EXPERTS GIVE
THEIR VERDICT P41



LATEST NEWS:
HOW BRITISH
GP WAS SAVED
FULL WRC DEAL
FOR BRIT HOPE
GUY WILKS

THE WORLD'S FASTEST MAGAZINE

SILVERSTONE RESOLUTION



HAPPY CHRISTMAS, Silverstone. One would assume that even the most cynical of BRDC members has downed a celebratory glass of mulled claret to recognise the fact that after what seems like a lifetime of wrangling, the British Grand

Prix is secure for at least another five years.

The race is only the beginning, though. As you'll see in *Top Story* overleaf, the new deal kick-starts a huge programme of redevelopment at Silverstone, including (at last) the new pits complex and a string of innovation and design centres.

But beyond the colossal investment that is now ready to be sunk into a few hundred acres of Northants, the fact that fans can continue to make their annual pilgrimage is what we'll be raising our glasses to. We share the excitement in 'Motorsport Valley' at the idea of innovation centres and millions of pounds of development grants. But it's just as important for the general public to have the chance to see the pinnacle of the sport in action, too. Somehow, a Formula 1 season without it just wouldn't have been the same.

● The country might grind to a halt to make room for the Queen's Speech and mince pies, but motorsport doesn't stop for long. We'll be back on December 30 with another special issue, including an A-Z Directory and a SEAT calendar to see you through 2005. And all at our normal price of £2.80. Until then, have a great Christmas.

JOHN McILROY
EDITOR

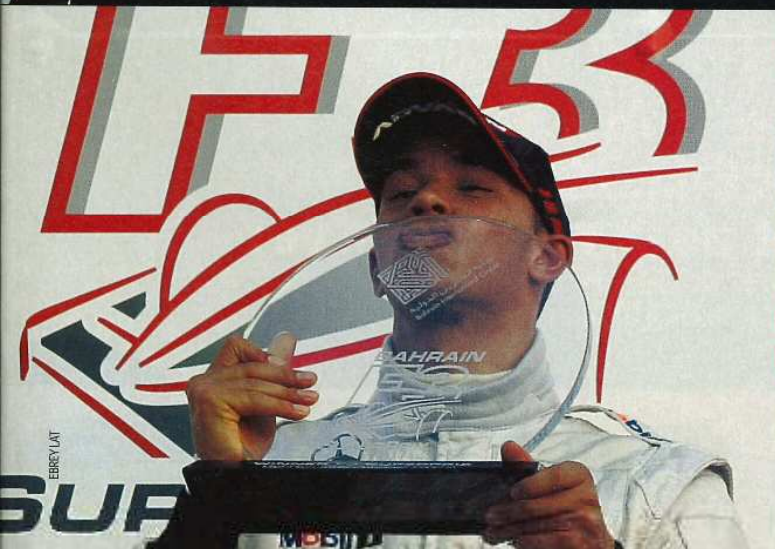
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THIS WEEK ➔ **138**

BAHRAIN F3 SUPERPRIX
After missing out at Pau and Macau, Lewis Hamilton made sure of victory in the desert ↓

➔ **41**

CLASS OF 2004
Autosport's annual countdown of the top 50 drivers of the year. Get ready for the debate! ↓





FERRARI/LAT

It's red, it's got plenty of power, but this ain't no Ferrari! Jody Schecchter lets us have a spin in his tractor, p126

Autosport
TOP STORY



CUBESIGN LIMITED

Silverstone will get its long-awaited new pit and paddock complex after its grand prix future was finally secured, p6

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SILVERSTONE FIVE-YEAR DEAL HELPS SECURE RADIO

LONDON CALLING

BUT CITY RACE COULD COST £100M TO RUN



More than 200,000 spectators saw the F1 Regent Street parade

BERNIE ECCLESTONE has been told that a London Grand Prix—widely touted in recent months as an alternative British F1 race—would have to raise up to £100 million before it could go ahead.

Ron Walker, chairman of the Australian GP Commission, was brought in by Ecclestone to evaluate the possibility of a London GP. He concluded the costs and logistical challenges would be immense.

Walker, who has promoted the hugely successful Australian GP at Melbourne since 1996, told Autosport the likely cost of staging the first event would approach £100 million.

He said: "For the first race at Melbourne Park, we spent £60m on drainage, removing lamp-posts and a million other improvements. You'd have all that expense if you ran the event through Hyde Park, as has been suggested, and the cost of erecting and dismantling 40-50 tons of equipment would be at least £30m."

He added that London, unlike Melbourne, had no need for the global profile afforded by staging a GP.

"Melbourne gains AUS\$150m (£60m) in direct economic benefit for the GP every year and the same amount through free promotion," he said. "London is an economic capital. It doesn't need a grand prix."

The success of a one-off F1 street parade through the capital last summer, which attracted more than 200,000 spectators, suggested a London GP had the potential to become F1's biggest event.

Ecclestone said: "I would sign a deal with London today if I could. Ken [Livingstone, London mayor] knows that. The problem is getting the money together."

Autosport FIRST PICS



Work will start on Silverstone's new pit and paddock complex after the 2005 race

"THIS HAS BEEN FRUSTRATING BUT NOW WE CAN MOVE FORWARD" **BERNIE ECCLESTONE**



SILVERSTONE is set for a period of dramatic redevelopment after a deal was agreed to secure its future as the home of the British Grand Prix until 2009.

Plans obtained exclusively by Autosport show how land around the track could be remodelled to make Silverstone a centre of motorsport excellence, which should help safeguard its position as Britain's premier race venue.

The ongoing uncertainty over the future of the British GP at Silverstone had made it impossible for the plans to be given the go-ahead. But under a five-year agreement reached with Formula 1 commercial rights holder Bernie Ecclestone, Silverstone's owner, the British Racing Drivers' Club, has

committed to transforming the circuit into a state-of-the-art facility. It has done so on the understanding that should it fail, its F1 race deal will not be renewed. The plans include:

- £4.2million motorsport innovation centre.
- New 25,000sq ft motorsport academy.
- New multi-million-pound pits and paddock complex.
- New visitor centre.
- Series of "incubator" business units for new motorsport companies.

The innovation centre was opened last week by sports minister Richard Caborn, who praised Silverstone for having "developed tremendously" in recent years.

He said: "There's been a lot of criticism but that doesn't stand up when you look at some other circuits in the world. With this and the

continuing development programme, Silverstone is hopefully a sustainable circuit."

The plans seen here are part of the so-called Silverstone 'Masterplan' which is due to receive local authority approval next week. Autosport can reveal that the spectacular new pit and paddock complex—which was not demanded by Ecclestone in return for granting a five-year deal—could have been ready for 2005, but contractual difficulties prevented the scheme being signed off. The BRDC is nevertheless hopeful that work can begin after next year's grand prix.

BRDC chairman Alex Hooton said: "It's a massive relief to have secured the agreement. The negotiations started in early summer at Monaco and ended in the middle of December in London. It's been a long and

A LONG STORY CUT SHORT > THE RECENT BRITISH GP SAGA

SEP 16 Two months after a successful British Grand Prix, Silverstone still has no deal with Bernie Ecclestone for 2005. "The BRDC don't want to pay for it," declares the Formula 1 supreme.

OCT 7 Around £1.5 million per year is now said to be the shortfall to a deal being struck. "The BRDC said, 'Take it or leave it,'" says Bernie. "They should have known that I would be prepared to leave it."

OCT 13 British GP gets a provisional date on the 2005 calendar. "I'm more optimistic now than I was this time last week," says British Racing Drivers' Club chairman Alex Hooton.

5-YEAR GP DEAL MEDICAL REVAMP

F1'S TIGHT FIT

MOSLEY WORRIED ABOUT IMPACT OF '05 CALENDAR

FIA PRESIDENT Max Mosley has warned that the 19-race 2005 F1 calendar is getting "near the limit" of the teams' capacity.

Speaking as the calendar was announced after a meeting of the FIA world council, he said: "There's no question the teams, or some of them at least, will find it difficult. We can cope, but it's getting near the limit."

Mosley added that his preference was for more races to satisfy growing demand from countries to become an F1 host nation—but that race weekends should last only two days.

The bumper calendar—F1's biggest ever—includes the British and French grands prix after the agreement of a last-minute commercial deal (see main story). It also features the all-new Turkish GP on August 21, and a record six back-to-back events: Monaco and Europe; Canada and the USA; France and Britain; Germany and Hungary; Italy and Belgium; Japan and China.

Mosley said the teams' desire to incorporate a three-week summer break, between the Hungarian GP on July 31 and the Turkish GP, plus Bernie Ecclestone's wish to include more races, had forced the calendar to be compressed.

McLaren technical director Adrian Newey said he feared the pressure on families that would be caused by the tough schedule: "Some of our guys are saying 'where does this leave us? People have got wives and children.'"

Williams technical director Sam Michael said teams might have to cut test sessions from three days to two.

troubled journey. We are pleased that we have secured the grand prix for five years on terms which make it financially viable."

The innovation centre, which will be located within the Silverstone Development Park, is designed to house up to 40 hi-tech engineering companies and has been jointly funded by the East Midlands Development Agency. Sue MacDonald, director of EMDA, which invested £1.8m in the project, said: "This initiative aims to build on the sector's global reputation for innovation excellence and knowledge generation. It also aims to stem the industry's creeping loss of technology leadership from this country."

The latest developments, which will be funded through partnership projects with local businesses and land-lease deals, come on top of extensive investment in the road network around the track over the past two years, which has largely cured the traffic congestion that traditionally blighted grand prix weekends.

Hooton ruled out any dramatic changes to the track's fast, sweeping layout. "We don't want Silverstone to become like some of the tight European circuits which turn endlessly back on themselves. It has

a particular nature, which drivers have always enjoyed. It is important that is maintained."

Hooton conceded, however, that minor changes could be made if development plans around the circuit edges required it to be remodelled.

Last Friday's announcement brought to an end more than four years of strife over Silverstone's place on the F1 calendar. Since the debacle of the rain-lashed April 2000 event, the BRDC has been on the receiving end of frequent attacks from Ecclestone.

In the final round of negotiations, Ecclestone was responsible for brokering a deal between the

teams and the BRDC which will allow the race to go ahead. The teams will receive an estimated \$30m (£15m) for racing at the British and French GPs—both of which were on the draft 2005 calendar. The teams had previously been offered \$13.5m (£7m) to race at the British GP by the BRDC, which is looking after the event since the departure of former promoter, Interpublic Group. Ecclestone wanted to offer Silverstone a one-year deal, with an option to stage the race for a further six years; the BRDC had insisted on a two-year deal with a five-year option.

Ecclestone said: "I never wanted Silverstone off the calendar, but I don't think they knew what they wanted. It has been frustrating, but now we can move forward."

He is understood to have been keen to tie Silverstone to a multi-year contract to help head off the threat from rival F1 series the GPWC. The more circuits Ecclestone agrees deals with, the harder it becomes for the GPWC to stage events at top venues. But GPWC sources indicated the new agreement made no difference to its plans to hold a round at Silverstone. It is understood the track's contract with Ecclestone allows the BRDC to be released from the deal if leading teams are not present for a grand prix. The GPWC is backed by Renault, Ferrari owner Fiat, Mercedes and BMW—engine suppliers to McLaren and Williams respectively.

Hooton said: "It would not be in anybody's interest to hold two similar F1-type races in one year at the same track."

Tickets for the 2005 race go on sale today (Thursday), and are available online at www.silverstone-circuit.co.uk or by calling 08704 588300.

"IT'S A MASSIVE RELIEF TO HAVE SECURED THE AGREEMENT" ALEX HOOTON



Telemetry test centre proposed



New units to boost technical firms



National College for Motorsport plan



Sports minister Richard Caborn opened the £4.2m innovation centre last week

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BRDC

OCT 21 The deal falls flat on its face because the BRDC says it cannot commit to an accumulator of the fee to Ecclestone. "I'm tired of the whole thing," admits Bernie.

NOV 4 GPWC representatives start talks with Silverstone about it holding a race for the new series, possibly as early as 2006. The F1 teams, meanwhile, commit to race at the British GP for a reduced cost.

DEC 6 Ecclestone loses his court case to three German banks over the control of F1. An agreement is reached with the BRDC to stage the Silverstone race within four days of the High Court decision.

2005 Formula 1 calendar

Australia	March 6
Malaysia	March 20
Bahrain	April 3
Imola	April 24
Spain	May 8
Monaco	May 22
Europe	May 29
Canada	June 12
USA	June 19
France	July 3
Britain	July 10
Germany	July 24
Hungary	July 31
Turkey	August 21
Italy	September 4
Belgium	September 11
Brazil	September 25
Japan	October 9
China	October 16



Work is progressing on the new Turkish GP circuit at Istanbul

ILMOR GETS NEW BOSS

MERCEDES ILMOR, McLaren's Formula 1 engine supplier, has appointed a new MD, 35-year-old Swede Ola Kaellenius, to replace Hans-Ulrich Malik.

Malik, who left the company last April, was made a scapegoat for a series of engine failures at the start of 2004. The move comes amid continued reports of behind-the-scenes tension between Ilmor technical director Mario Illien and CEO Martin Whitmarsh, who now controls the company.

McLaren-Mercedes' lack of success in recent seasons—it has only won four of the past 51 grands prix—has put strains on the partnership, leading to rumours that Honda may be preparing to snatch Illien away from the company he co-founded.

Mercedes motorsport boss Norbert Haug said: "What we have here are normal frictions which happen in every team. I would not attach too much significance to it."

For all the latest news log on to www.autosport.com

BERNIE: NOTHING'S CHANGED

BERNIE ECCLESTONE reckons last week's court judgement, which forced him to change the composition of the board of Formula One Holdings, "will change nothing".

A judgement at the High Court ruled that three German banks which own 75 per cent of the shares in FOH must now have the greatest say in the running of the company.

But Ecclestone was defiant: "The board has changed but nothing else has. Their problem is that they didn't know what they were buying when they got control of the shares."

The banks gained their shares in FOH when German media giant Kirch group went bust.



Bernie on the phone: "I'm still in charge"

COURTESY/LAT



LAT

MAX IN CRISIS TALKS



FIA PRESIDENT Max Mosley has warned that Formula 1 could be in grave financial peril in 12 months' time if dramatic action is not taken to cut costs.

He has called an urgent meeting of team principals at which cost-cutting proposals tabled by F1 technical directors will be discussed. The meeting will be held on January 28 and Mosley said that without it, "Formula 1 will be in a worse position this time next year than it is now."

Mosley indicated that the teams' proposals would contribute to a wider-ranging package of measures to be unveiled by the FIA, designed to reduce the level of expenditure needed to field a competitive F1 team.

"This year we nearly lost three teams and two of those appear to have only just survived," he said. "If we don't do something soon we will find ourselves back with seven teams and then we will have the situation where major manufacturers are coming last. That, of course, will threaten their participation."

The FIA's measures will include moves to restrict

aerodynamic development and a significant reduction in testing mileage—most likely by restricting tyre development. Between 50 and 60 per cent of the Michelin teams' testing mileage is dedicated solely to tyre development.

Mosley said teams currently have no choice other than to spend in excess of £150 million per season in order to be competitive—and that threatens the sport's survival. "If you have unlimited budgets you have unlimited

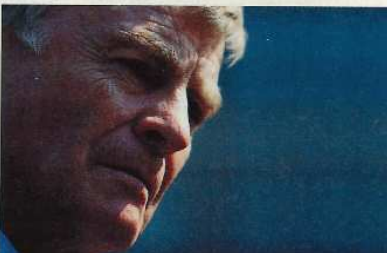
costs and that's what forced Ford to pull out," he said.

The FIA's soon-to-be-unveiled proposals come as teams are independently trying to agree measures to cut costs. Nine teams, excluding Ferrari, agreed at the Brazilian Grand Prix to cut the total number of test days to 24 and move towards having a single F1 tyre supplier.

Autosport has learned this week, however, that Honda has split from the nine in the wake of its acquisition of a 45 per cent stake in BAR. Ousted team principal David Richards had signed up to the measures for BAR-Honda, but the change in team structure brought a change in position.

Honda's withdrawal has made the teams' situation more difficult as they had previously hoped to 'shame' Ferrari into backing their proposals. With two of the most powerful F1 teams now standing apart, the eight remaining teams' power to act as an F1 pressure group is diminished.

But Minardi boss Paul Stoddart, unofficial spokesman for the 'nine teams', said: "Losing Honda is unfortunate, but that doesn't mean the end. We're not going to give up."



Mosley says that if the F1 grids fell to seven teams, that would cause further pull-outs

COOPER/LAT

MIDLAND EYES JORDAN

RUSSIAN BILLIONAIRE Alex Shnaider has emerged as a candidate to buy Jordan Grand Prix, Autosport has learned.

The backer of the Midland-Dallara Formula 1 project, which is due to enter the 2006 World Championship, has made early enquiries as to Jordan's position amid speculation that he might prefer to buy out an existing team rather than continue with his plan to build one from scratch.

Buying Jordan would guarantee Shnaider an entry into the 2005 championship and he would avoid paying the \$48 million (£25m) deposit required as a new entrant.

Shnaider's office would not comment on his position in relation to Jordan, but sources confirm he visited the Silverstone factory last week with a handful of close aides.

The future ownership of Jordan remains unresolved. Christian Horner, boss of Formula 3000 champion team Arden International, is still in talks with

Eddie Jordan, but the two sides appear unable to agree financial terms. A third potential buyer is also understood to be holding talks.

Jordan, who owns 51 per cent of the team, with the remaining 49 per cent held by the Irish Merion consortium, is believed to be unwilling to sell for less than £30m.

Midland's putative 2006 rival entrant, Team Dubai, insists its plans for a launch in early '05 as a McLaren customer team remain in place. Spokesman Russell King said a launch planned for November had been put back after the death of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, president of the UAE.

Sources had suggested the team, which plans to base itself at McLaren's old Woking factory, had missed a November 30 deadline to formalise its contract.

But King insisted: "The deal is signed. There's no change in what's going on with McLaren and we are looking forward to 2006."

McLaren was unavailable for comment on the matter.



Midland reps Gary Anderson, Salvatore Cuccu, Mario Domínguez and his manager Henri Luzet visit Dallara's HQ



Argentinian racing legend Carlos Reutemann stepped back into the cockpit of a Formula 1 car when he tested a Ferrari F2004 at Fiorano last week. He last raced for Ferrari in 1978

AUTOSPORT SIGNS WEBBO

MARK WEBBER will join Autosport next season as our star Formula 1 columnist, writing about his experiences at Williams from every grand prix in 2005.

Webber, 28, said he was "tremendously excited" about the opportunity to share his

thoughts with Autosport readers and promised he would pull no punches.

"I think you'll find I'll be telling it like it is," he said. "There's not much point in doing it otherwise, is there?"

Mark's column will appear in every grand prix report issue of

Autosport. Editor John McLroy said: "Mark's one of the straightest-talking guys in the pitlane and I know he'll give our readers a great insight into what's bound to be a dramatic and exciting year for him at Williams."

For all the latest news log on to www.autosport.com

PIT AND PADDOCK...

HEIDFELD TO TEST AGAIN

WILLIAMS is almost certain to test Nick Heidfeld and Antonio Pizzonia early in the new year before deciding who will partner Mark Webber in 2005. Both drivers have tested extensively over the past fortnight as the team attempts to pick one for a race drive and one for a testing role. Technical director Sam Michael said both had impressed — Heidfeld for his speed and for adapting quickly to the team, Pizzonia for rising to the challenge of a fast rival. He said: "It's been fascinating and valuable to compare them. What has emerged is that we will be choosing from a position of strength. They're both fast, quality drivers." Williams is due to announce its driver line-up in Bahrain on January 6.

McLAREN WILL RUN THIRD CAR

McLAREN is set to run a third car on the Friday morning of grand prix weekends in 2005, Autosport has learned. The team will take advantage of the regulation that allows teams finishing fifth or lower in the World Championship to run third cars in Friday free practice. A spokesman said: "At races where we consider it will be to the team's advantage to run a third car, we will do so." Alex Wurzi is likely to take the third-driver role, but the Austrian is having trouble fitting into the monocoque of McLaren's 2005 MP4-20 chassis — the departure of David Coulthard has allowed technical director Adrian Newey to design a monocoque around the shorter Kimi Räikkönen and Juan Pablo Montoya. McLaren has denied its 1998 and '99 World Champion Mika Häkkinen will test for the team.

MERC DROPS ARBITRATION

MERCEDES has abandoned plans to participate in an arbitration action against the FIA over changes to the 2005 and '06 engine regulations. It had joined forces with BMW and Honda to protest against the introduction of long-life engines in 2005 and 2.4-litre V8s in '06. It believed the FIA had acted outside its remit in introducing the changes on the grounds of safety. BMW wants the V10 format to be retained, while Honda wants the '06 regulations to allow greater technical freedom. Mercedes would not comment on its decision.

DUPASQUIER'S RETIREMENT

MICHELIN'S motorsport division is to undergo a wide-ranging restructure in anticipation of the retirement of its competition director, Pierre Dupasquier. He will be replaced as director of motorsport at the end of next season by his deputy, Frédéric Henry-Biabaud. Michelin F1 manager Pascal Vasselon, who was recently given new duties with Michelin USA, is to be replaced by Englishman Nick Shorrocks. Dupasquier said: "I am very happy to see that we are putting teams in place early to whom I can pass the torch."

REPSOL IN RED BULL LINK

SPANISH oil giant Repsol is close to agreeing a deal with Red Bull Racing to be its 2005 fuel and oil supplier. The company is increasing its motorsport involvement and will sponsor a GP2 team next year.

SCHUEY BUYS JORDAN!

World Champion Michael Schumacher has bought the first Formula 1 car he ever drove. The German has purchased the Jordan 191 (below) he tested at Silverstone prior to making his debut at the 1991 Belgian Grand Prix. Team boss Eddie Jordan said: "I'll never forget him coming around Stowe with all four tyres squealing."



DC FAST IN RED BULL TEST

DAVID COULTHARD is edging closer to a deal with Red Bull Racing in 2005 after a successful test at Jerez.

Coulthard drove 113 laps in the hybrid RS-R6 chassis (above), which features a 2005-spec rear transmission and suspension. The Scot said he was encouraged by the test, during which he easily outpaced Christian Klien, the driver considered most likely to get one of two race seats, and Formula 3000 Champion Vitantonio Liuzzi, who is tipped for a third-driver role.

Coulthard set a best time of 1m18.108s compared to Klien's 1m18.614s and Liuzzi's 1m18.786s.

THIS WEEK IN PICTURES

FITTIPALDI: THE THIRD GENERATION

The 1972 and '74 world champion poses with his eight-year-old grandson Pietro, who made his kart debut at Interlagos last weekend. He qualified second in the Cadet category, but loose bodywork relegated him to seventh in the race



"ONCE I GOT IT SORTED, IT WAS THIS LONG AGAIN"

Stirling Moss has joined the campaign to promote 'SortED in 10', helping men with erectional disfunction

PLU CH
The rally time 307 Pirelli don't Marcu finish gearb

'NOBODY EXPECTED ME TO WIN. I'M OVERWHELMED'

> LEWIS HAMILTON ON HIS AMAZING VICTORY IN THE BAHRAIN SUPERPRIX. REPORT - P138

BEEN THERE, DUNE THAT

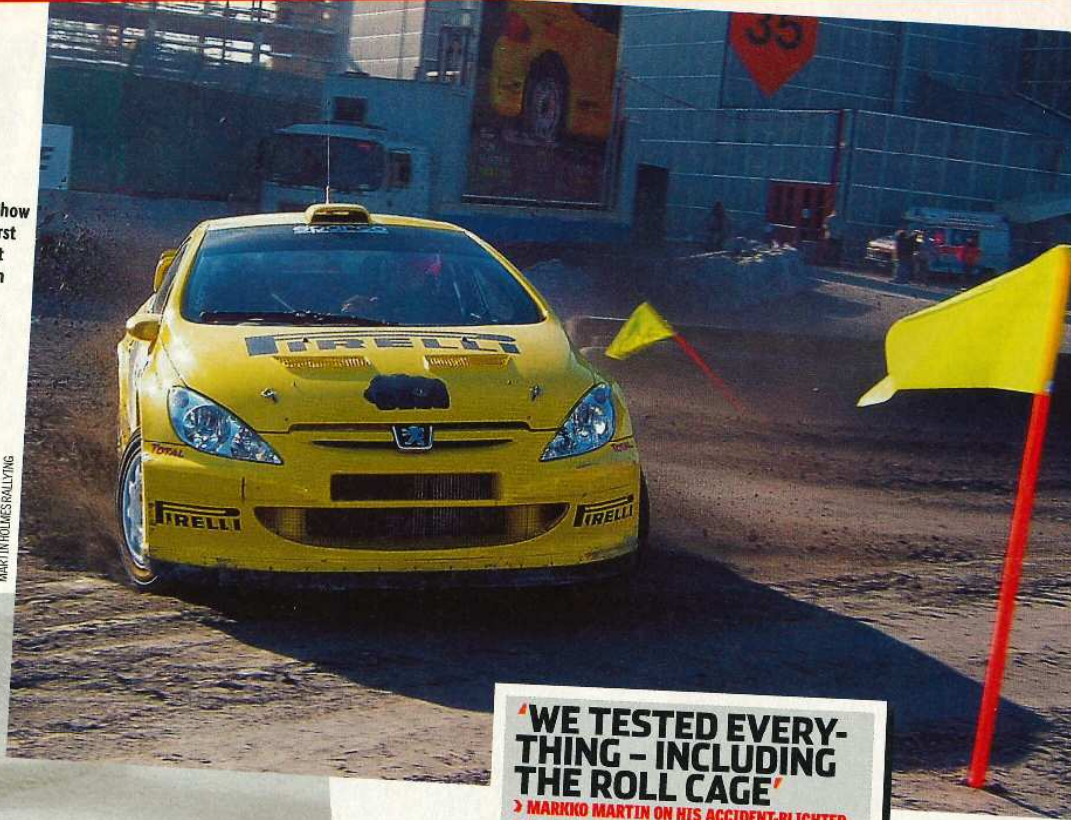
The Sakhir sand provided ample run-off area for the inaugural Bahrain F3 SuperPrix. Just as well, really. Here Frank Perera (14) runs wide, Alexandre Premat (9) attempts to dodge past the Danilo Dirani/Ross Zwolsman collision and Ho Pin Tung and Rob Austin try not to get involved at all



PLUS CA CHANGE...

The Bologna Motor Show rallysprint was the first time a works Peugeot 307 had been seen on Pirellis. Some things don't change though: Marcus Grönholm finished second after gearbox difficulties...

MARTIN HOLMES/RALLYING



'WE TESTED EVERYTHING - INCLUDING THE ROLL CAGE'

> MARKKO MARTIN ON HIS ACCIDENT-BLIGHTED FIRST TEST IN THE PEUGEOT 307WRC - P16

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"My team-mate is going to be David Coulthard. It said so in Autosport..."

SEAT touring car star Rickard Rydell. Well we did say: 'DC BACK IN THE FRAME FOR '05 RED BULL SEAT.'

"I look forward to working with Buddy. He was a very successful driver who knows what it takes to go fast round a racetrack."

Travis Kvapil understates the case for Buddy Baker, the first NASCAR driver to lap a circuit at over 200mph.

"I could sit back for the next five months but I wanted to get back to racing because I intend to take back that Vanderbilt Cup that is currently on loan to Sébastien."

Paul Tracy explains why he is warming up for the '05 Champ Car World Series by competing in the Rolex Daytona 24 Hours.

"It was a big shock at the time. I was wanting to spread some happiness around the world! Luckily, there was an attractive nurse who helped me out quite a bit."

Stirling Moss on dealing with erectile dysfunction, legacy of his career-ending shunt at Goodwood in '62.

"The safety car driver was impressively bad."

Jamie Green explains one of the contributory factors behind his nodding off before the restart at the Bahrain SuperPrix.

"It's clear Pizzonia and I have a very good chance of the seat, but I was not nervous at all in the test. Now I just have to wait by the phone."

Nick Heidfeld on waiting for Sir Frank Williams to decide who gets the team's second race seat for 2005. Good luck, Nick.



WHEN IT'S OKAY TO LOOK THIS SMUG

Michael Schumacher and Jean Todt picked up yet more vases from the FIA Awards. Still, they'll make lovely Christmas gifts for their families

THE THIRD MAN

Jenson Button's trophy for claiming third in the world championship. Nice to see he dressed properly for these awards. Sadly, Louise overdressed again



IDIOT!

Just to prove marshals falling over comically isn't just a UK phenomenon, this fellow was spotted in Bahrain. But clearly his years of training weren't wasted: look how well he saved his tasty roll.

ELLERY TO TRIPLE 8

AUSTRALIAN TOURING Car racing's equivalent of Matt Neal has finally secured a ride with one of the big teams in the V8 Supercar ranks.

Popular V8 underdog Steve Ellery, 30, has a two-year deal to partner former champ Craig Lowndes in the Triple Eight Ford Falcon team after six seasons running his own Ford as a privateer.

"Triple Eight are poised for huge success," said Ellery. "They have shown initiative in the sport and taken the knowledge gained from their UK touring car wins to develop a first-rate team."

Triple Eight, which will use engines from champion team Stone Brothers Racing, has dropped 2004 drivers Paul Radisich and Max Wilson.



Ellery gets his chance to smile at Triple Eight in '05

HORSBURGH/LAT

OPEL DROPS DUMBRECK

SCOTSMAN PETER Dumbreck is facing an anxious winter break after losing his place in Opel's DTM touring car line-up.

Opel has chosen veteran Manuel Reuter to join 2002 title winner Laurent Aiello, ex-Formula 1 star Heinz-Harald Frentzen and Swiss ace Marcel Fässler in its depleted four-car team. After five years in the series with Opel and Mercedes-Benz, the 1998 Japanese F3 champion's options are limited.

"I kind of gathered that that [Reuter's signing] was the most likely outcome," he said. "I've got a chance in Japanese GTs, but nothing concrete."

Next year will be Reuter's 14th season with Opel. The 43-year-old claimed the ITC title for the marque in 1996 — its last significant success. His signing also casts doubt over the futures of German Timo Scheider and Dutchman Jeroen Bleekemolen.

Reuter said: "I'm delighted to be a member of the Opel team again next year."

Opel sport director Volker Strycek said: "I regret that Jeroen, Peter and Timo will no longer be in the team."

MG TO RACE IN DTM



An artist's impression of the new rival to the Mercs, Audis and Opels



MG WILL be on the grid in next year's DTM touring car series in a surprise move that could secure the championship's long-term future.

The series organisers announced early this week that a fourth manufacturer will be joining Mercedes, Audi and Opel in the German-based championship in 2005. Autosport can reveal that the extra manufacturer is MG Rover.

Sources indicate that British racing car constructor Zytek Engineering is already designing a DTM silhouette racer around the Rover 75-based ZT260. Work is believed to have started on the project as long ago as September and the first car should be up and running well ahead of the likely series opener at Hockenheim in early April.

News of a fourth manufacturer was broken by ITR boss Hans Werner Aufrecht. "There will be a fourth manufacturer in 2005," he said, "but we

will leave it to them to reveal themselves."

That revelation has yet to come from MG Rover and no comment was forthcoming from MG Sport & Racing, the company's motorsport and performance division.

Although the ZT260 project will be labelled a factory programme, the funding to design and build the car is coming from the ITR. The DTM organisers have persuaded MG's top brass to put its name to the project so that it can lay claim to another manufacturer at a time when Opel has announced its intention to pull out of the series at the end of the coming season.

The ITR's motives appear twofold. It must be hoping that the potential takeover of MG Rover by the Chinese Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation will provide the British manufacturer with the funds to re-enter motorsport. A second motive could be to persuade another car builder to replace Opel,

or even to coerce the GM brand to perform a U-turn on its decision to quit the series.

Four MG ZT260s are expected to be on the DTM grid, equal to the number of Opel Vectras. Which teams will run the cars has yet to become clear, although it is almost certain that the ITR will find German-based squads.

It is also not known if MG will have any say in the choice of drivers. The only driver with an ongoing relationship with MG Sport & Racing is Anthony Reid, who drove a privately-funded MG in the 2004 British Touring Car Championship.

The MG will be the first complete design by Zytek's chassis division, which was set up in 2003. The car is likely to be designed by ex-Formula 1 engineer Tim Holloway.

The engine will be based on the Zytek V8 that has seen service in the Panoz LMP-07 and the company's 04S prototype.

For all the latest MG DTM news, log on to www.autosport.com

WTCC ON TRACK FOR LONGER RACES

THE LENGTH of World Touring Car Championship races could be increased in 2006.

The series organisers have floated the idea of increasing the second race at each double-header event from 50 to 75km (31 to 47 miles). They feel that the present race duration of the second event, for which the first

eight places on the grid are reversed, is too short.

A spokesman for the WTCC organisers said: "This is something we are thinking about. There is support for the idea, although we haven't reached the stage of finding out who is for and against."

The idea would need the support of Eurosport, which

controls the SuperRacing Weekend package of which the WTCC is a part. That could hinge on a cut in the length of the FIA GT Championship event, which shares the bill.

● Plans for an FIA European Touring Car Cup, which will bring together the best cars from national Super 2000 series, have been given the green light.

BMW and Alfa may have to fight for longer than 20 minutes



LAT

BRITISH VETERANS IN HUNT FOR BRILLIANCE

BRITISH TIN-TOP veterans Tim Harvey, Anthony Reid and David Leslie are in contention to spearhead China's entry into the World Touring Car Championship next season. The trio are in contact with former British Touring Car Championship entrant John Batchelor, who is heading up Brilliance's attack on the WTCC. Harvey, Reid and Leslie, all former BTCC race winners, are fighting over two seats and will be joined in a three-car line-up by an up-and-coming driver.

Batchelor refused to be drawn on potential drivers. "I can't comment on drivers except to say we are aiming to have two experienced touring car racers and one youngster," he said. All three Britons have, however, confirmed that they are in contact with Batchelor. Harvey, BTCC champion in 1992, said: "I'm excited to do



The Brilliance takes its place alongside its WTCC rivals

BLOOMHAY/LAT

this. It would be good to race in the WTCC and to be involved with a new manufacturer." Favourite for the young-driver spot appears to be 23-year-old Tom Ferrier, who drove a factory-assisted Alfa Romeo in the European Touring Car Championship in 2002. "I'm delighted to be considered for this opportunity," he said. "I'm eager to

get back into touring cars." Brilliance aims to have one Chinese driver on its books for 2006 and three by the end of a programme expected to last four years. Brilliance revealed the car it will race in next year's WTCC at the official launch of the series last week. The show Zhonghua M1 was built by Team VLR.



ILLUSTRATION: JIM RAMBERG

DI RESTA SHINES IN BAHRAIN

Paul di Resta shone on his F3 debut in Bahrain last week. The McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner qualified fourth for the end-of-season all-star event ■ FULL REPORT ON P138 ➤

INGING IN DOME MOVE

CHAMPIONSHIP-WINNING Japanese Formula 3 team Inging is the first team to switch from Dallara to Dome chassis for 2005. Dome now has a top Toyota team to add to its works-backed MTech Mugen-powered squad. Inging boss Hiroshi Fushida said that the team hopes to sign a non-Japanese driver alongside reigning Formula Toyota champion Hideto Yasuoka.

ROSBERG COULD JOIN VISO AT BCN FOR GP2

VENEZUELAN Ernesto Viso will race for BCN Competición in the new GP2 series next year — and he could be joined by Nico Rosberg. Formula 3 Euroseries race winner Rosberg and British F3 veteran Rob Austin are set to test with the squad at Spanish track Valencia this week. Viso, who contested a half-season of Formula 3000 with Durango this year, was confirmed as a BCN driver ahead of last weekend's F3 race in Bahrain, where he finished 10th. "They're a good team and they've got the experience to do the job," said Viso. "I know I'll have

a quick team-mate at BCN — maybe Rosberg. That's a good thing because I want to have a quick partner who I can learn from." Viso had been tipped to join his old F3 team, P1 Motorsport, for GP2, but team boss Roly Vincini has scratched its entry from the series. "We had planned on running Viso and Fairuz Fauzy," he said. "But Fauzy wasted so much of our time. We were unable to make the second payment, so we have pulled our entry." Vincini says he is now concentrating on his F3 plans. P1 has been linked with running Lolas in British F3 next year.



ANOTHER THOMPSON IN AN ASTRA!

British Formula 3 racer Andrew Thompson experienced his first run in a Touring Car when he tested a Tech-Speed Vauxhall Astra Coupe at Donington Park last week



EX-F1 BOSS GETS ROLE AT HOLDEN

TOM WALKINSHAW, the ex-boss of the Arrows Formula 1 team and head of the TWR automotive engineering empire, has been handed a managerial role at Holden Motorsport for the Australian V8 Supercar Championship. The Scot (pictured) has been on the fringes of the sport since TWR collapsed in 2002, but retained a majority holding in Holden Special Vehicles. It is through his ties with the marque that he has found his new position.

Walkinshaw, the former owner of the Holden Racing Team, will be responsible for overseeing the research and development of the V8 Supercar programme as well as supplying the technology to the Holden-backed teams — HRT, Kmart Racing, PWR Racing and Tasman Motorsport. Walkinshaw has been offered a contracted role within the organisation, which will continue to be wholly owned by Holden. His appointment has been made to "strengthen the existing management structure". A new chief executive officer, who will work alongside the former European Touring Car champion, will be appointed in the new year.

PIT AND PADDOCK...

NEXTEL BLISS FOR MIKE Former NASCAR Craftsman Truck champion Mike Bliss has been handed a full-time Nextel Cup drive for 2005. Bliss, 39, retains the Haas CNC drive he took over from Ward Burton at the tail end of this season.

TRAVIS GETS HIS TURN Another ex-Craftsman Truck champ, Travis Kvapil, has secured a move into NASCAR's premier series. The 2003 champion takes over from Brendan Gaughan in the Penske-Jasper Racing Dodge Intrepid.



HIT THE ROAD JACK

Richard Childress Racing has struck a sponsorship deal with legendary American whiskey distiller Jack Daniel's (above) for the Nextel Cup. Dave Blaney will carry the famous brand on his No 7 Chevrolet Monte Carlo.

KNIFE OUT FOR KNEIFEL Champ Car competition director Chris Kneifel and technology director Lee Dykstra have been ousted in a restructure of the series' management. Ex-British F3 race winner Derek Higgins, who assisted Kneifel in race control this year, also had his contract terminated.

JOEST TO RUN YEAR-OLD CARS Audi has relegated the Joest team to running its quartet of 2004-spec cars in next year's DTM touring car series. The crack sportscar outfit will run series newcomers Rinaldo Capello, Pierre Kaffer and Frank Stippler alongside Audi stalwart Christian Abt. Team Abt Sportsline has been entrusted with the development of the new car, which defending champion Mattias Ekström will campaign alongside Tom Kristensen, Martin Tomczyk and new signing Allan McNish.

BTCC DATES CHANGE The British Touring Car Championship has re-arranged the dates of two 2005 rounds to avoid clashing with the revised Formula 1 calendar (see page 7). The meeting originally scheduled for Brands Hatch's Indy circuit on May 29 has been shifted to June 5, while the Croft round scheduled for July 10 will now take place a week later.



O'HARA SOLID IN BAHRAIN

Irishman John O'Hara (left) joined the international Formula 3 field at the Bahrain Superprix and, one week after claiming the runner-up spot in the Asian F3 series, finished 13th in a TME Racing Dallara-Toyota. Others to join the action included: Japanese Kohei Hirate, who replaced fellow Toyota protégé Katsuyuki Hiranaka at Prema Powerteam to finish 12th; Australian Barton Mawer, the sometime British F3 Scholarship Class racer who replaced Danny Watts at Hitech Racing; Aussie F3 champ Karl Reindler, who turned out for Swiss Racing Team; Dutchman Ross Zwolsman in the second TME entry; and Italian F3 racer Davide Mazzoleni, who drove for Ombrà.

CONWAY TO TEST '05 DALLARA Fortec was due to become the first UK team to run a 2005 F3 Dallara yesterday (Wednesday), with Mike Conway testing the F305 at Pembrey. The team is also expected to run at Donington Park today. Conway will do further tests at Valencia next week.

KERR'S WORLD SERIES RUN Ex-British F3 champ Robbie Kerr and Macau GP runner-up Robert Kubica will both get a run-out with leading World Series by Renault team Epsilon Euskadi at Paul Ricard this week.

BRITSGO INTO ORBIT

BRITISH sportscar racers Guy Smith and Johnny Mowlem could team up for February's Daytona 24 Hours sportscar classic.

Smith and Mowlem, who finished second in the US enduro in 2002 and 2004 respectively, are in negotiations with the Orbit squad about driving one of its Crawford-Pontiac DP03 Daytona Prototypes. They would share the US-built car with amateur Jim Matthews and, most likely, Joël Camathias.

Smith, who won the Le Mans 24 Hours for Bentley in 2003, said: "The deal's not done yet, but it would be great to do Daytona with Johnny."

NEW-CAR PUSH TO BOOST GT2

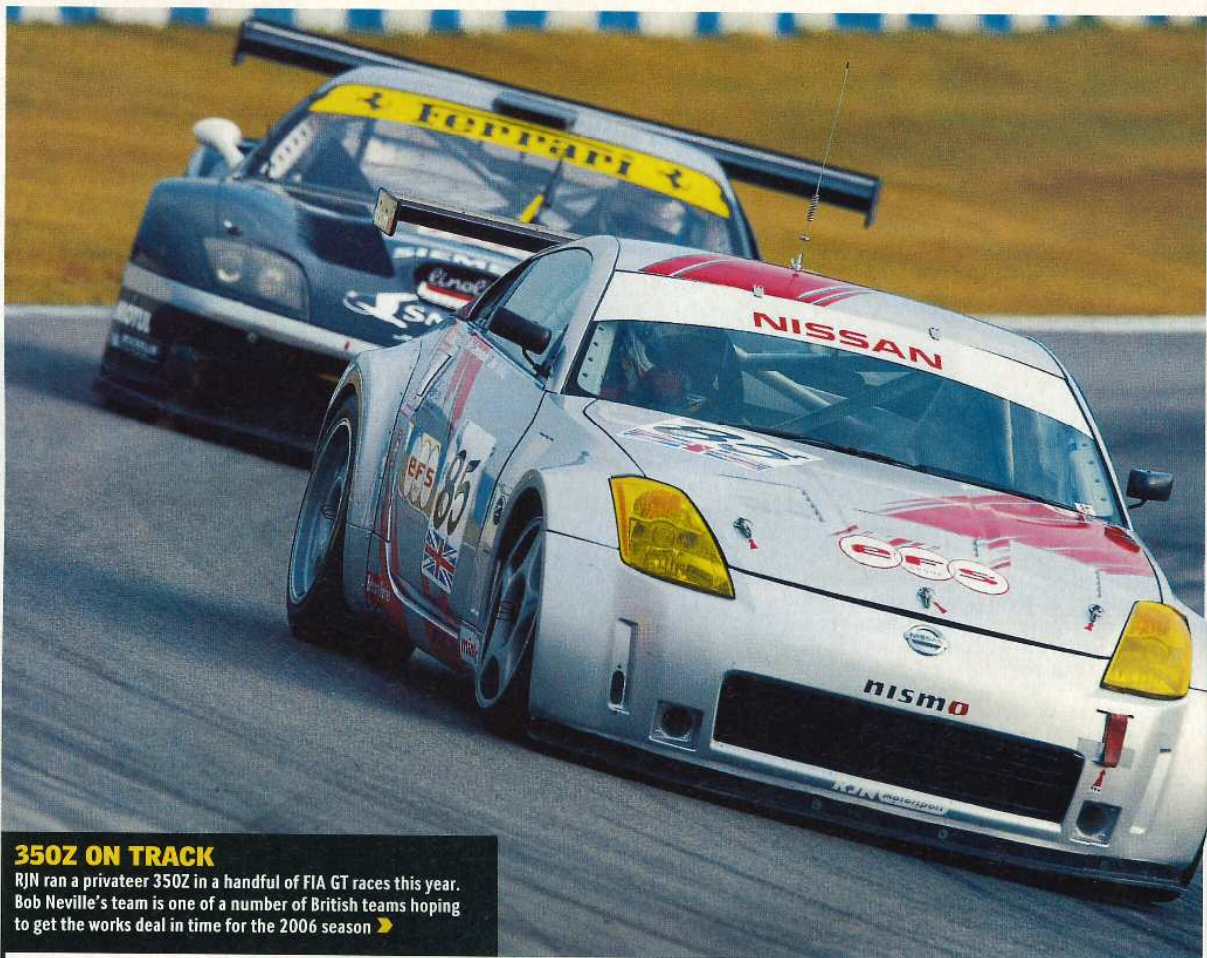
THE SECOND division of the FIA GT Championship will be opened up to all comers for next season.

Series promoter Stéphane Ratel will invite machinery that does not meet the letter of the rules to compete against Porsche and Ferrari in the new GT2 class. He envisages teams running the TVR T400-R, the Mosler MT900-R and the Gillet Vertigo taking up his offer.

Ratel explained that he had made the decision because of a lack of entries in the class known as N-GT in 2004. "We have been going through a tough time with entries and we have to be open-minded," he said. "We hope this will give the GT2 class a boost."

The new entrants, who will not be eligible for points, will be equalised in performance with the existing Porsches and Ferraris by a combination of weight limit and engine air-restrictor changes. These will be applied at the discretion of the organisers.

The Mosler raced in the 2003 Spa 24 Hours round



350Z ON TRACK

RJN ran a privateer 350Z in a handful of FIA GT races this year. Bob Neville's team is one of a number of British teams hoping to get the works deal in time for the 2006 season >

BRIT TEAMS LINKED TO NISSAN 350Z DEAL

NISSAN COULD team up with a British race specialist as it bids to take on Porsche and Ferrari in international GT racing.

The Japanese manufacturer is working on a plan to develop the 350Z for the renamed GT2 division, which next year will be fought out by the Porsche 911 GT3-RSR and the Ferrari 360GTC. At least five British companies are believed to have been approached about developing the car in time for a debut at the beginning of 2006.

RML, Lola and WSR (formerly West Surrey Racing) are believed to be the most likely organisations to join forces with Nissan's in-house motorsport department, NISMO. Others in the running are Pilbeam and RJN Motorsport, which has already built a 350Z with input from the factory for the FIA GT Championship.

Other candidates include Solution-F in France and Dome in Japan, which are both presently working with Nissan.

With the exception of WSR, all the British organisations have worked with Nissan in the past. RML masterminded its successful British Touring Car Championship campaigns in 1997-'99; Lola developed its Group C racers of the late 1980s and early-'90s; Pilbeam built an unraced second-generation Primera Super 2000 tin-top; and RJN is run by former Nissan Motorsports Europe employee Bob Neville.

No comment was available from any of Nissan's potential partners. NISMO boss Kunihiko Kakimoto said: "We have a plan to return to international sportscar racing, most likely with the 350Z, but we do not yet have approval. Carlos Ghosn [boss of Nissan parent company Renault] will make the final decision."

Kakimoto explained that NISMO is seeking a partner for the programme because its resources are focused on the Japanese GT Championship Fairlady Z silhouette racer. "We are looking at the possibility of

working with someone in Europe, but we are also talking to Japanese companies," he said.

That company would likely be Dome. Although Japan's leading racing car constructor is best known for its links with Honda, it undertakes commissions for a number of manufacturers in Japan.

Kakimoto explained that Nissan would like to take a leaf out of Porsche's book and produce a 350Z GT2 car for sale in large numbers to customers. "We hope to be like Porsche, but first we must run a works team to develop the car and show its potential," he said.

Nissan will not push the green light on the programme until September 2005, but it has a limited budget to undertake preparatory work so that a definitive 350Z racer could be seen in anger at the start of 2006. It can also fall back on experience with a prototype 350Z, which raced in the GT300 class in the 2003 JGTC, and knowledge gained from the privateer RJN project.

INFINITI GRAND-AM

NISSAN IS the latest engine manufacturer to sign up for Grand-Am's Daytona Prototype category.

The US arm of the Japanese manufacturer, which pulled out of the IRL IndyCar series in 2002, announced last week that it is developing a 4.5-litre V8 in conjunction with Menard Engineering. The engine will be badged an Infiniti after the marque's luxury brand.

Nissan North America motorsport boss Ron Stukenburg said: "The number of manufacturers involved in Grand-Am is appealing to us." The first team to sign up to run an Infiniti V8 is HyperSport.

DPP

PORSCHE FABCAR AID

THE PORSCHE factory is set to undertake development on the FABCAR Daytona Prototype chassis for the US Brumos Racing team.

One of the Brumos FABCAR FDSC/O3s, which run works-built Porsche engines, has been shipped from the US to the German manufacturer's Weissach R&D facility. Porsche's engineers are working out what needs to be done to the car to make it competitive with the Riley, Doran and Crawford chassis that have led the way in Grand-Am's Daytona Prototype class this year.

Porsche North America motorsport boss Uwe Brettel said: "Brumos have asked us to have a look at certain aspects of the car and we are happy to help them."

Brettel would not go into detail on development of the car, but he hinted that it would likely focus on aerodynamic testing in Porsche's full-size wind-tunnel.

At a time when Porsche North America is stepping up its support for its representative in Grand-Am, it is reducing its factory effort in the American Le Mans Series. Alex Job Racing, Porsche's works ALMS

squad since 2001, will run only one factory 911 GT3-RSR next season.

Brettel explained that the move was motivated by a desire to allow Porsche's customer teams a greater chance in a class won by Job for the past three seasons. "We don't want to dominate—we want to open up the class to our customers more," he said. "This is going to give a strong signal to our customers that they can compete on equal terms with AJR."

Brettel said it was important for Porsche to still have one car in the series for development.

PAPIS OUT OF GANASSI

MAX Papis is leaving the team with which he won this year's Daytona Prototype crown.

The Italian is parting company with the Lexus-backed Ganassi squad because of his links with General Motors. He already races its Chevrolet Corvettes in the American Le Mans Series and is tipped to make a switch to a Pontiac team in the 2005 Grand-Am series.

PAUL NEWMAN TO RACE WITH BOURDAIS

MOVIE legend Paul Newman will team up in February's Daytona 24 Hours with the two drivers who race for his Champ Car squad.

Newman, who turns 80 before the race, will drive with Champ Car title winner Sébastien Bourdais and fellow Newman-Haas racer Bruno Junqueira in the US classic. They will share a Ford-powered Crawford DPO3 with long-time Newman partner Michael Brockman.

They will drive a car hired from expatriate Brit Chris Hall's Silverstone Racing Services team.

It will be run by personnel from both Silverstone and Crawford.

Max Crawford, whose DPO3 designed much of last year's race, said: "It will be pretty cool to have Paul in one of our cars. Our whole team is motivated by this."

Newman, who raced a FABCAR in this year's race, was due to drive the car for the first time at the Kershaw test track in South Carolina yesterday (Wednesday).

The Oscar-winning actor is a regular at Daytona and finished second overall in 1995.



PESCA TESTA

Pescarolo Sport has unveiled its 2005 Le Mans 24 Hours challenger. The car, built to the new aerodynamic rules, has been undergoing straight-line testing with team boss and sportscar legend Henri Pescarolo at the wheel

FIA GT CHAMP LEAVES SERIES

DOUBLE FIA GT Championship winner Scuderia Italia is switching to the Le Mans Endurance Series for 2005.

The squad has opted against dropping the Prodrive-built and developed Ferrari 550 Maranello in favour of Maserati's new MC12. Instead it will move over to compete in the LMES and at the Le Mans 24 Hours in search of what it is calling a "new challenge".

A desire to go back to Le Mans for the first time since 1997 was also behind the decision. The continuation of its relationship with Prodrive is significant and a move to run its new Aston Martin DBR9 now looks certain for 2006.

Drivers for the programme have yet to be announced, although the team has stated that it is talking to everyone who has raced its 550s since 2003. That list includes FIA GT champions Matteo Bobbi, Thomas Biagi and Fabrizio Gollin.

Larbre Compétition, which took LMES honours with the Ferrari last year, is still looking at swapping the other way. Team boss Jack Leconte wants to run a pair of 550

Maranellos in the FIA GT series, although he is unlikely to finalise the deal until mid-January.

Scuderia Italia's decision to stay with the Ferrari means former DTM racers Uwe Alzen and Michael Bartels look increasingly likely to spearhead Maserati's FIA GT assault. Insiders are predicting that the deal will be sealed before Christmas.

Alzen and Bartels will race under the AB Racing Performance banner, which will run two cars, both with front-line driver pairings. They will line up together in the lead entry, while ousted Opel DTM driver Timo Scheider (see page 12) is tipped for a seat in the second car.

Up to five MC12s could compete in FIA GTs next season. The others are likely to be purchased by collectors and raced by a mix of professional and amateur drivers. Teams tipped to run these cars include JMB Racing, AF Corse, Ecosse Motorsport and Barron Racing.

Top US single-seater squad Team Rahal has abandoned its plans to run a solo Prodrive Ferrari in the American Le Mans Series.

PIT AND PADDOCK...

JOUANNY IN GT HONDA

Ex-British Formula 3 Championship and World Series by Nissan ace Bruce Jouanny will race a Honda NSX in this weekend's showcase non-points Japanese GT event at Fontana in the USA. Jouanny will share the Mooncraft team car with Hiroki Kato. He is keen to race in Japan next season if his GP2 aspirations come to nothing.

SHORT'S LONG PROGRAMME

Martin Short's Rollcentre Racing squad will run both its Dallars in a programme of events incorporating the Le Mans Endurance Series, the Le Mans 24 Hours and the Sebring 12 Hours in 2005. Confirmed drivers for the programme include Short himself, João Barbosa and Patrick Pearce.



M6 GETS ALL-CLEAR

BMW's M6 has been given the all-clear to compete in the FIA GT Championship, as predicted in Autosport, left. The FIA has accepted the German manufacturer's proposals as to how the car can be incorporated into the GT1 class.

TRACY CONFIRMS DAYTONA DEAL

Champ Car star Paul Tracy has firmed up his deal to contest the Daytona 24 Hours in February in the wake of a try-out in the Bell team's Doran-Pontiac JE-4 at Homestead earlier in the month. "I'm excited to be part of the team that's coming back to defend its victory at Daytona," Tracy said.

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MARTIN IN 307 SMASH

PEUGEOT NEW BOY Markko Märtin endured two accidents during his first test in the 307 WRC last week.

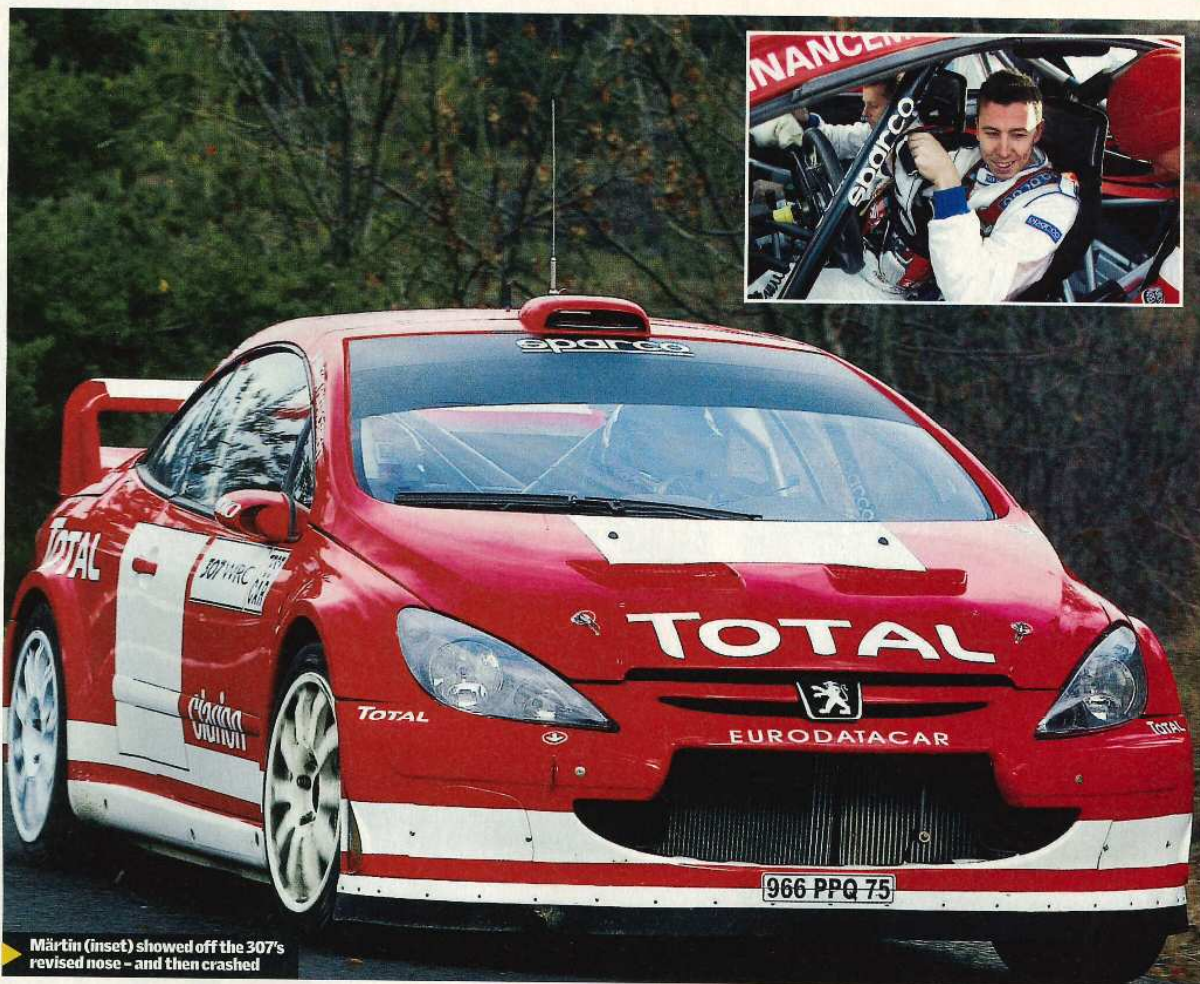
The Estonian was driving the car in the south of France as part of a two-day development test. But running ended 30 minutes early after Märtin put the 307 on its roof.

"The test was fine. We tested everything—including the roll cage," he said. "We could have carried on driving as the damage wasn't too bad. The other accident was unavoidable. A deer ran out into the road when we were going too fast to do anything about it."

Märtin was reluctant to talk in detail about the test, saying: "It was positive. There are some areas where I think we can put in some more work, but I'm not going to go into specifics."

He will be back behind the wheel of a 307 for his pre-Monte Carlo test starting today (Thursday) and running for two days.

The 307 WRC Märtin drove was running in 2005-specification with a heavily-revised aero package at the front and rear of the car.



Märtin (inset) showed off the 307's revised nose – and then crashed

SARRAZIN FOR SUBARU



STEPHANE SARRAZIN will become the first Formula 1 driver to make a full-time switch to the World Rally Championship when he starts his Subaru career in Monte Carlo next month.

The 29-year-old Frenchman signed for the Banbury-based Subaru World Rally Team late last week. His deal confirms him as a starter for the squad on at least eight rounds of the championship alongside regular number one and former world champion Petter Solberg.

Sarrazin will tackle the opening two rounds of the WRC, meaning his first experience of loose-surface rallying will be in Sweden at the wheel of an Impreza WRC. Until now he has only contested asphalt events.

SWRT's deal with Sarrazin was thrashed out last month after his fourth-place finish—ahead of Solberg—on the Catalunya Rally.

"It's an amazing opportunity for me," said Sarrazin. "After Germany where I was ninth the team congratulated me, but we did a lot more talking after Spain. It is a one-year contract with options, but for me this is just the start of my career in the world championship."

Sarrazin's priority is to build up as much gravel and loose-surface experience as possible before he heads north to Sweden.

"Before I started driving on race tracks I was driving on gravel," he said. "I have always really

enjoyed it, but now it's a bigger challenge. Right now I am looking at the short term. I'm not thinking about trying to get a full season, just the next test and the Monte Carlo Rally. I don't think there will be any extra pressure on me in Monte Carlo. And if there is, then it's a good thing: pressure forces you on—it forces you to perform higher and stronger."

Sarrazin attended Subaru's development test in Chateau Lastours last week, where he drove the car on gravel for the first time.

"I sat alongside Pasi Hagstrom to start with," said Sarrazin. "Normally I am not such a good passenger, but this time it was no problem.



Sarrazin got decked out in Subaru blue last week after signing to drive for the team in 2005

Then I drove the car and it felt fantastic on gravel—it was exceptional."

The identity of Subaru's driver on the eight rounds on which Sarrazin will not compete is expected to be revealed this week. Among the candidates are Britain's Kris Meeke, Australian Chris Atkinson and Solberg's team-mate from this season, Mikko Hirvonen—although the Finn's hopes of staying at Subaru are fading fast (see separate story).

Subaru operations director Paul Howarth said he had been watching Sarrazin since he landed a deal to drive a Subaru France/FFSA-backed 2003 Impreza WRC in this year's French Championship.

"We have been impressed all the way," said Howarth, "not just with his driving, but with everything—Stéphane is very professional. To be fair, you would expect that; he's been groomed to be a professional driver virtually all his life. Stéphane is the complete package and that was what we were looking for to team up with Petter next season."

Howarth denied that the team was taking a gamble on Sarrazin's lack of gravel experience.

"We are confident he will perform at the right level," he said. "It's way too early to say how we expect him to perform in Sweden, but this is a very serious part of our strategy for next season."

● Don't miss Autosport's exclusive interview with new Subaru star Sarrazin in the December 30 issue.

DREAM DEBUT

STEPHANE SARRAZIN forced the watching WRC team bosses to take notice of him in Germany. It was the first round of his three-event 2004 programme and he bagged a top-10 place early on.

The Frenchman's season would get better thereafter. Most assumed that if ninth on Rally Deutschland wasn't going to be his highlight, then sixth in Corsica would be.

Wrong. He went two better on an extraordinary Catalunya Rally. Sarrazin's most memorable moment of the year came on a dry Saturday in Spain, when he passed official Subaru driver Petter Solberg and never looked like relinquishing his fourth place.

On top of his WRC success, he has dominated the French National Rally Championship at his first attempt. Sarrazin's first outright rally win was on the Alsace-Lorraine in May, and he won a further two rounds on his way to the title.

HIRVONEN TARGETS PRIVATE FORD DEAL

MIKKO HIRVONEN is likely to return to driving a Ford Focus RS WRC in the world championship next season, but without a full programme of events.

The 24-year-old Finn drove a semi-works Focus RS WRC02 last year before switching to an official Subaru — where he was a late 2004 replacement for Richard Burns. There remains an outside chance that Hirvonen could drive for Subaru in 2005, but a private deal with M-Sport is more likely.

Hirvonen's manager, Timo Jouhki, said: "Things don't seem so bright at Subaru. It's not Mikko's driving, they [Subaru] say it is his personality which is not tough enough. I don't agree. I have had a lot of psychological assessments done with Mikko: he's tough enough. I don't think there is a driver around who could do a better job than Mikko."

Jouhki confirmed that he had been in negotiations with M-Sport



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Hirvonen is likely to be back in a Ford Focus for some of 2005

boss Malcolm Wilson.

"I always have good talks with Malcolm," he said. "Financing all 16 rallies privately is not going to be possible. I would be surprised if Mikko was in anything other than

a Ford or a Subaru next year.

"This season I would have expected Mikko to do better in some events. He made a silly mistake in Finland, but on the last day was second fastest."



REGIS ACCEPTS FIA ROLE

NEW WRC Rallies Commission president Jacques Regis was formally introduced by the World Motor Sport Council last week.

The Frenchman (above), previously a president of his home nation's governing body, has been given carte blanche to make recommendations for changes to all aspects of the world championship.

A source within the FIA said: "Jacques is a rally man. He's been talking more and more about the changes he would like to see and now he's been given his chance."

Regis replaces Shekhar Mehta, who has suffered ill health recently.

"Shekhar remains actively involved," said the source.

Regis will spend the next four months looking at every aspect of the WRC before putting forward his proposals to the next meeting of the World Council in March.

"He is taking a root and branch look at the sport. But he's doing it alongside the stakeholders — the teams, International Sportsworld Communicators and the rallies — and any proposals will be discussed fully."

WILKS GETS 16 RALLIES

BRITISH RALLY hopeful Guy Wilks has been confirmed in Suzuki's expanded plans for the 2005 season, including a full assault on all 16 rounds of the WRC.

The Briton, who came close to winning this year's Junior WRC title with the Japanese manufacturer, will team up with the eventual champion, Per-Gunnar Andersson, in a pair of works cars. The team will use the Ignis Super 1600 until the new Swift arrives in the middle of the year.

Suzuki has been widely tipped

to start a World Rally Car programme within the next few years and a company statement confirmed that its 2005 programme was designed to "evaluate the possibility of participation at the highest level".

Wilks' deal will be seen as an indication that he features in Suzuki's future plans. But in the shorter term, it will allow the 23-year-old to gain valuable experience of all events, as well as mounting another challenge for the Junior title. The JWRC counts six

scores from seven rallies, so Wilks and Andersson will count Corsica as their dropped score, even though they will contest the event.

Suzuki has also confirmed that two other drivers, Urmo Aava and Kosti Katajamaki, will tackle all but one round of next year's Junior WRC. They will use Mexico as their dropped score.

With his increased schedule Wilks is not likely to defend his British Super 1600 title in 2005. Suzuki is still said to be considering a one-car entry, however.

XSARA RUN OUT FOR DUVAL



Duval worked on a Monte Carlo set-up during his first Xsara test

FRANCOIS DUVAL began his career as a Citroën driver when he tested the Xsara WRC in France last week.

The Belgian refused to discuss his first outing in the car, which has won the manufacturers' title for the past two seasons, due to contractual reasons.

Duval's test provided a base set-up for his first competitive outing as team-mate to world champion Sébastien Loeb on next month's Monte Carlo Rally.

The 24-year-old is expected to drive the car again before Christmas, although it is not known when Duval will get his first taste of loose-surface action in the Xsara.

NEWS ROUND-UP

HAKKINEN'S ARCTIC CIRCLE
Double Formula 1 World Champion Mika Häkkinen will tackle the Arctic Rally at the end of next month. This will be the Finn's third attempt at the European Rally Championship-qualifier. A source close to Häkkinen said: "This remains very much a one-off. It's just part of Mika's warm-up for the new season. He really enjoys driving these different kind of cars."

NAVARRA WINS BETTEGA
Italian driver Andrea Navarra won last weekend's Bettega Memorial Rallysprint after Marcus Grönholm's Peugeot 307 WRC was slowed by gearbox problems in the final. The Finn had been fastest until that point. In Colin McRae's return to a factory Subaru Impreza WRC (above), the Scot secured third on the event, which was run alongside the Bologna Motorshow.

BETTEGA CO-DRIVER DIES
Rally fans attending last weekend's Bettega Memorial Rallysprint were saddened to hear of the death of former co-driver Maurizio Perissinot, who lost his fight against cancer last Sunday. Perissinot, 53, had been co-driving for Attilio Bettega when the driver was killed in a crash on the 1985 Tour de Corse. Autosport extends its sympathies to Perissinot's family and friends.

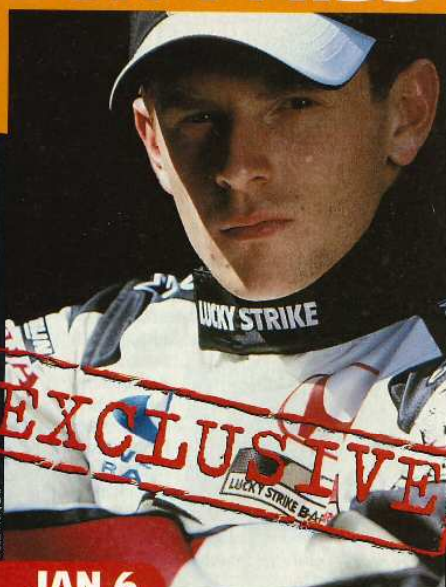
PAASONEN IN SWEDISH BID
Skoda driver Jani Paasonen is close to a deal to contest next February's Swedish Rally in a factory Fabia WRC. The Karlstad-based event is not part of Paasonen's programme with the Czech Republic team, but given his strong showing on the rally previously he is keen to add it to his schedule. "The deal for Sweden is not done yet," said Paasonen, "but I hope it is not far away. It would be a big opportunity where I have to take a risk to show what I can do." Paasonen's chances of an extended programme appear to have been hit by his countryman Janne Tuohino's arrival at Skoda. Tuohino is said to have brought cash to the team.

WRC DATES CHANGED
The final two asphalt rounds of the 2005 World Rally Championship will run back-to-back as they did this season. Date changes announced at last week's World Motor Sport Council meeting mean the teams will only have four days between the end of the Tour de Corse and the start of the penultimate rally in Catalunya, Turkey, Acropolis and Argentina have also been moved back by one week.

LOEB'S CHARITABLE ACT
World Rally Champion Sébastien Loeb is still enjoying life at the top of the sport — despite the look on his face here! Loeb signed a Citroën Xsara WRC replica which is being auctioned on ebaymotors.co.uk near his home in France last week. Bids for the car, also signed by Citroën team boss Guy Frequelein, are being taken until December 21, with all proceeds going to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for children.

SKODA: RESULTS, NOT POINTS
Skoda will target specific rally results rather than an overall championship position in 2005. Motorsport boss Martin Muehlmeier said: "We are looking for proper results next year. The exact targets are not set yet, but events like Sweden and Finland, where we will be running three factory cars, are obviously going to be where we want results." A decision on plans for 2006 is not expected until next autumn.

DON'T MISS



JAN 6

WHERE NEXT FOR DAVIDSON?

SuperBrit bares his soul to reveal his battle to earn the race seat he craves – and deserves

ON TRACK ON SCREEN

RACING/EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL AND UK

FRIDAY DECEMBER 17

■ **Trophee Andros Rd2/7**
Alped'Huez, France
Ends Saturday
www.tropheeandros.com

SATURDAY DECEMBER 18

■ **Japanese GT AllStar 200**
Fontana, California, USA
www.jgtc.net

SUNDAY DECEMBER 26

■ **CLUB AUTOSPORT New Era/BARC Meeting**
Mallory Park, Leicestershire
Single-Seaters, Caterhams.
Practice: 1000. Racing: 1130.
Admission £10. Tel: 01455 842931.

MONDAY DECEMBER 27

■ **CLUB AUTOSPORT 500 MRCI Meeting**
Kirkistown, County Down
Formula Ford, Sportscars, Formula Libre, Formula Vee. Practice: 0930.
Racing: 1330. Admission £5.
Tel: 028 4277 1325.

MONDAY DECEMBER 27

■ **CLUB AUTOSPORT 500 MRCI**
Kirkistown, County Down

NATIONAL ACTION

KIRKISTOWN race circuit stages its final fling of the year which promises plenty of single-seater and sportscar drama.

SUNDAY DECEMBER 26

■ **CLUB AUTOSPORT New Era/BARC Meeting**
Mallory Park, Leicestershire

NATIONAL ACTION

TRADITIONAL Plum Pudding meeting that not only boasts some four-wheeled action, but also two-wheeled competition.

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	THURSDAY 16	FRIDAY 17	SATURDAY 18	SUNDAY 19	MONDAY 20	TUESDAY 21	WEDNESDAY 22	THURSDAY 23
Terrestrial and radio	0340-0405 European Drag Racing (CS)				1325-1400 Race of Champions (BBC2)		0030-0120 V8 Supercars (CS) 0535-0600 Motorsport Mundial (CS)	
Sky Sports	1330-1600 World Motor Sport (SS2) 1900-2000 Race World (SSX) 2200-2300 Race World (SS3)	0100-0200 Race World (SS2) 0700-0800 Race World (SS1) 1300-1400 Race World (SS3) 1830-1900 Moto + (SS3) 2330-0000 Moto + (SS3)	0330-0400 Moto + (SS2) 0800-0830 Moto + (SS3) 1200-1230 Moto + (SSX) 1200-1300 Max Power (SS3) 1700-1730 Moto + (SS3) 1900-2000 Max Power (SS2)	0100-0200 Max Power (SS2) 0500-0600 Max Power (SS2) 0700-0800 Max Power (SS2) 0900-1130 World Motor Sport (SS3) 1530-1800 World Motor Sport (SSX) 1800-1900 Rally Sport: Killarney Historic Stages (SS3) 2300-0000 Rally Sport: Killarney Historic Stages (SS3)	0100-0200 Rally Sport: Killarney Historic Stages (SS2) 0600-0700 Rally Sport: Killarney Historic Stages (SS1) 1100-1200 Rally Sport: Killarney Historic Stages (SSX) 1330-1600 World Motor Sport (SSX)	0700-0800 Max Power (SS2) 1200-1300 Max Power (SS3) 1500-1730 World Motor Sport (SS1) 1730-1830 Rally Sport: Killarney Historic Stages (SS3)	1830-2100 World Motor Sport (SSX)	1900-2200 World Motor Sport (SS3)
Other satellite	0500-0600 British Rallycross GP (M) 0800-0900 British Rallycross GP (M) 0900-0930 Made in France (M) 0930-1000 Ferrari Maserati Racing (M) 1500-1600 British Rallycross GP (M)	0200-0300 British Rallycross GP (M) 0300-0400 World Series By Nissan review (M) 0400-0500 FIA TGP review (M) 1300-1330 Supercar Rally (M) 1700-1800 European Drag Racing (MM) 1800-2000 Days of Thunder Racing review (M) 2100-2200 British Rallycross GP (M) 2200-2300 European Drag Racing (MM)	1100-1200 European Drag Racing (MM) 1300-1500 Days of Thunder Racing review (M) 1400-1500 European Drag Racing (MM) 2100-0100 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)	0500-0700 NASCAR Busch Series review (M) 1200-1600 NASCAR Busch Series review (M) 2245-2345 World Rally Championship review (E)	0500-0700 NASCAR Busch Series review (M) 0800-1000 NASCAR Busch Series review (M) 1700-1800 European Drag Racing (MM) 2000-2030 US Pro Rally (M) 2200-2300 European Drag Racing (MM)	0230-0300 US Pro Rally (M) 0500-0530 US Pro Rally (M) 0800-1000 NASCAR Busch Series review (M) 1100-1200 European Drag Racing (MM) 1300-1700 NASCAR Busch Series review (M) 1400-1500 European Drag Racing (MM) 2300-0300 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)	0430-0500 US Pro Rally (M) 1830-1900 US Pro Rally (M) 1900-2300 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)	0300-0400 US Pro Rally (M) 0400-0500 US Pro Rally (M) 1300-1400 US Pro Rally (M) 2100-2200 US Pro Rally (M)

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Autosport SHOW UPDATE

THE RACING CAR SHOW

SEAT ADDS CAR DEBUT

SEAT is the latest manufacturer to line up a new-car debut for the Autosport-backed Racing Car Show in Birmingham next month. The Spanish marque will give its new Toledo its first British airing in public.

SEAT has a strong motorsport heritage and that side of the company's activities will also feature strongly. The British Touring Car Championship Toledo will be on display, along with the SEAT Cupra

Championship Leon Cupra R. Its 2005 BTCC drivers, Jason Plato and James Pickford (this year's Autosport Club Driver of the Year) will be on hand to talk to fans and sign autographs on both of the public days.

Saturday January 15 and Sunday January 16.

The new Toledo won't be the only car making its debut. Mitsubishi has already confirmed that its hottest Colt yet will be on display for the first time, and Radical is set to launch its new SR8 model. The SR8 features a V8 engine pumping out over 360bhp and since the car weighs less than 600kg, we can expect dramatic performance.

Fans of pure race cars, meanwhile, will get their first chance to see the new A1 GP category in action in the Live Action Arena. The innovative single-seater series will showcase its 550bhp racer in the NEC's indoor circuit.

TIN-TOP STARS SIGN UP FOR NEC SHOW

FANS will get the chance to meet plenty of touring car heroes at The Racing Car Show on January 15/16. BTCC stars Yvan Muller, Luke Hines and Colin Turkington are all scheduled to attend, while Mercedes DTM drivers Jamie Green and Gary Paffett will also be present. David Coulthard, Allan McNish and Mark Webber are further heavy-hitters on the roster.

TOUR BRITANNIA TO SHOWCASE CLASSICS

TOUR BRITANNIA is to kick-start its build-up with an exhibit in the Historic Hall at the NEC. This new event, which runs from September 5/8 next year, gives owners of pre-1976 road cars the chance to compete in a series of tests at some of Britain's highest-profile venues. Cars on the Tour Britannia stand will include a 1938 Lancia Aprilia and a 1962 Porsche 356B.

JUMP NEC QUEUES WITH GOLD CARD

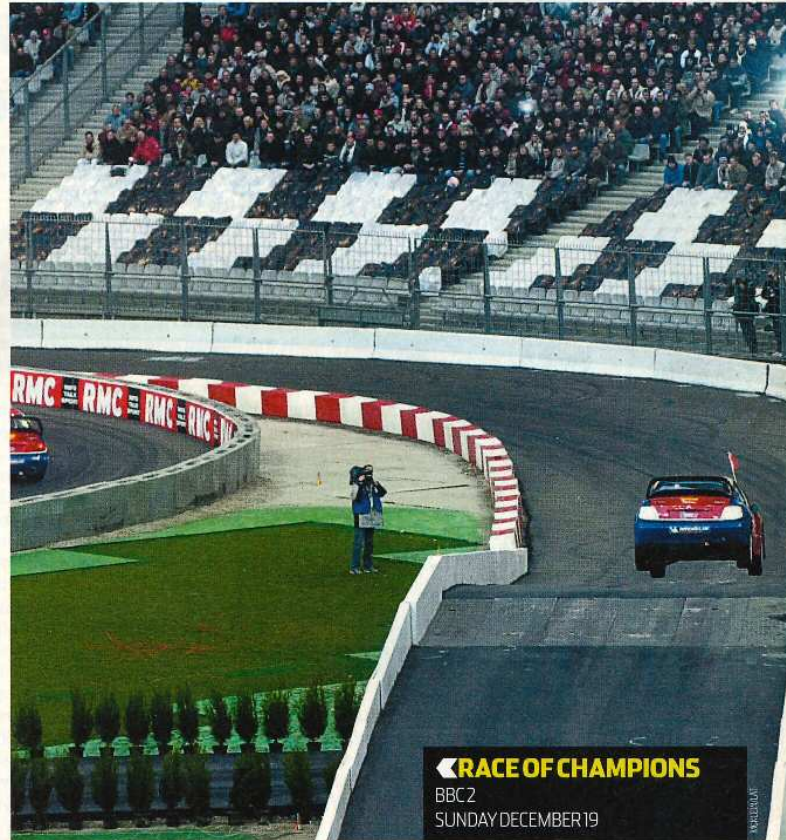
WORRIED about the length of queues at the NEC in January? Then jump them. The Autosport Racing Car Show Gold Card, exclusive to Autosport readers, allows access to the show on Friday January 14, a day normally reserved for trade only. You'll see new car and product launches before the rest of the public, and the £30 ticket also includes a seat in the exclusive reader preview performance of the Live Action Arena. Only the first 3000 applicants can get a Gold Card—call 0870 902 0444 to reserve yours.



RACING CAR SHOW
WANT TO GET CLOSE TO BTCC KIT? THEN BOOK A DATE WITH THE NEC IN JANUARY

TV/WEB/RADIO

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS



RACE OF CHAMPIONS
BBC2
SUNDAY DECEMBER 19

THURSDAY 23

FRIDAY 24

SATURDAY 25

SUNDAY 26

MONDAY 27

TUESDAY 28

WEDNESDAY 29

Motor Sport

1900-2000 Race World (SS3)
2200-2300 Race World (SS3)

0600-0700 Race World (SS1)
1300-1400 Race World (SS3)
1600-1700 Race World (SS3)
1700-1730 Moto + (SS3)
1800-1900 Max Power (SS3)

0000-0100 Max Power (SS3)
0200-0230 Moto + (SS3)
0600-0700 Max Power (SS3)

1830-1900 Moto + (SS2)
0700-0930 World Motor Sport (SS3)
1230-1300 Moto + (SS3)
1430-1700 World Motor Sport (SSX)
1700-1800 Max Power (SS3)

0030-0300 World Motor Sport (SS3)
0930-1200 World Motor Sport (SSX)
1200-1300 Max Power (SS3)

0535-0600 Motorsport Mundial (CS)

1300-1530 World Motor Sport (SSX)

Rally (M)

Rally (M)

(M)

0300-0500 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)
1300-1400 MG Trophy (MM)
1400-1430 US Pro Rally (M)
2100-2200 MG Trophy (MM)

0200-0230 US Pro Rally (M)
0300-0500 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)
1600-1700 MG Trophy (MM)
1700-1800 European Drag Racing (MM)
2130-2200 US Pro Rally (M)
2200-2300 European Drag Racing (MM)

0200-0300 British Rallycross GP (M)
1100-1200 European Drag Racing (MM)
1330-1430 World Rally Championship review (E)
1400-1600 British F3 review (M)
1400-1500 European Drag Racing (MM)
1730-1800 US Pro Rally (M)
2100-0000 JGTC review (M)

0130-0200 US Pro Rally (M)
0300-0500 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)
0500-0700 British F3 review (M)
1400-1700 JGTC review (M)
1900-2000 MG Trophy (MM)

0100-0300 Champ Car World Series review (M)
0300-0500 NASCAR Busch Series review (M)
0700-1000 JGTC review (M)
1300-1400 MG Trophy (MM)
1500-1600 British Rallycross GP (M)
1730-1800 US Pro Rally (M)

0030-0100 US Pro Rally (M)
0100-0300 Champ Car World Series review (M)
1300-1600 JGTC review (M)
1600-1630 US Pro Rally (M)
2300-0200 JGTC review (M)

0300-0500 British F3 review (M)
1830-1900 US Pro Rally (M)
1900-2000 MG Trophy (MM)
1900-2200 JGTC review (M)



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LETTERS AND OPINION

YOU SAY

"Silverstone is one of the final links to the sport's racing soul"

LETTER OF THE WEEK BRITISH GP - BRING IT ON

NOW THAT the British Grand Prix has been saved, I can only hope that the punters that flocked to Northampton this season (fearing it would be their last opportunity to do so) will turn up again in 2005, and also in those lovely bonus five years afterwards.

I went to this year's race and it was apparent that a vast majority of the crowd (myself included, admittedly) were experiencing Formula 1 racing 'in the flesh' for the first time.

So again I can only hope that this loud and 'pleasurably stinky' experience is going to encourage them to return in 2005 - after all, it was looking pretty doubtful at one point. Sure, F1 may be a bit dull these days, and everyone has become bored with watching records broken and history being made, but Silverstone is one of the final links to the sport's racing soul.

Grand prix racing may have lost its roots somewhat, but I for one will arrive at the historic gates at Silverstone in July, and I sincerely hope many other Autosport readers will do the same.

Mark Robinson, by email

AUTOSPORT SAYS: Stirring words Mark. It was not only good news for the British GP, but also for those who work in and around the circuit and for those who work in British motorsport in general. But it's now up to the BRDC to carry out the improvements demanded by Bernie and co to safeguard this event for years to come. The ball, as they say, is in your court.

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BAMBER'S VIEW



A LEGEND SPEAKS

I've noticed with considerable interest the correspondence concerning the 1966 Ferrari 312. When it was first introduced, this car was certainly the worst power-to-weight-ratio Formula 1 car that I ever drove. Yes, the factory claimed it had something like 320bhp, but, in fact, it had 290bhp. I lapped Modena race circuit over two seconds per lap faster in the 2.4-litre V6 engine 158 chassis that was to have been my Tasman car, but didn't get used because of my accident in Canada. I pleaded to use that car in the early races,

"THE 1966 FERRARI 312 HAD 320BHP, AND NOT 290BHP" JOHN SURTEES

particularly Monaco. The car improved a little after Monaco when engineer Rocci introduced some cylinder head modifications and we did get over 300hp. When I left the team, Ferrari had to advance its programme for the new three-valve engine, which was used for Monza and had in the region of 370hp - a massive gain.

The picture you published is of Parkes, who only became involved in F1 after my departure.

John Surtees, Kent

DOH!

Last week in Autosport's 'F1 test special' you stated that Sauber had never had a world champion in one of its cars. Not true, I'm afraid. None other than Michael Schumacher tested a Sauber before the 2004 season started...

As I recall, the test was to compare the Ferrari-powered Sauber chassis with his own Ferrari chassis. Incidentally, he felt the Sauber was superior (as was reported in Autosport).

James Armstead, by e-mail

AUTOSPORT SAYS: Whoops! Sorry about that, James. You're right on the money there - Schuey did test the car. The journo concerned is on Christmas washing-up duty.

BRING IT HOME

The Race of Champions. Wow! With the exception of the scrum at the entrance to get in, and the fiasco of the final race in the Nations Cup, this was fantastic.

The sight of Heikki Kovalainen jubilant on the roof of his Ferrari after beating Michael Schumacher in the semi-finals will go down as

one of my great racing moments. We need to see more of this guy.

But where next for the Race of Champions?

The Stade de France was a good venue for atmosphere, but the track was a bit tight. Answer: what about Rockingham? It's got the facilities, more space and has the perfect atmosphere to put on a truly spectacular event.

Come on Rockingham, bring the Race of Champions home!

Nigel Guy, by email

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING

At the Race of Champions, there was no doubt Heikki Kovalainen could easily lay claim to being the (fastest) driver of the day, as well as being one of the brightest stars you need to keep an eye on.

However, the real highlight of the day was the participation of Jean Alesi. Kovalainen, and all the other young guns could learn a lot from this charismatic veteran of

SOUND BITES

I owe Takuma Sato a big apology. Earlier this year you published a letter from me questioning the wisdom behind replacing Jacques Villeneuve with Taku. He's proved me totally wrong. I hope all the other doubters will follow my lead and offer their sincerest apologies. Good luck for next year Sato san!

Tony Buchan, a now very humbled Taku fan, by email

Re: The Race of Champions. It would have been better if there was an English version of the programme. A check in my dictionary spelt out that I wanted to find directions to the the Race of Mushrooms (champignons)! **Peter Kellond, Sunbury on Thames**

the track. From his banter in the pits with the rival drivers, to his unforgettable dismount from the Ferrari to kiss the asphalt in celebration of his 'perceived' win, before sprinting back to the car to actually win the race, followed by his exuberant helmet launch, it was all a fabulous reminder of what terrific entertainment motorsport can be. If the stars of the future can get rid of the seemingly *de rigueur* clinical images they cultivate, and put a bit of feeling into things, then we'll all be the richer for it.

Russ Bowey, Milton Keynes

AUTOSPORT SAYS: It seems the RoFC really captured everyone's attention. We can't wait to see the event make a welcome return... wherever and however that may be.

DTM DELIGHT

I think DTM has the chance of becoming the most interesting race series next year. Not only because the championship is packed with a host of ex-F1 drivers, including Jean Alesi (who was awesome at RoFC) and former F1 world champ Mika Häkkinen, but also because there seems to be such a wealth of great young talent, including our own 'should be in F1' Gary Paffett, who will be battling it out with three or four other Brits for national glory.

Now here's a thought. Maybe the BBC should pitch in with an offer to cover the races. It could turn out to be the most shrewd motorsport move Auntie has made in quite a long time.

Alex Brayshaw, by email

BACK TO BASICS

Congratulations to the Anglesey Circuit Club and its brilliant inaugural race meeting. Variable track conditions and an eclectic entry of cars combined for an extremely entertaining event.

Judging from the reactions of the competitors, fans and marshals alike, this was a good-natured tribute to the original concepts of club racing. But if the general atmosphere was not enough for you, then the racing was superb. The competition was as close as you could wish for, but any damage to the cars was kept to the barest minimum.

Well done to the entire crew at Anglesey; you've started something that I, for one, would dearly love to see continue for a very long time. Cheers guys!

Andrew Crighton, by email

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WE SAY

"Let's have some more worthwhile pursuits this winter, like this month's Race of Champions"

JIM HOLDER - DEPUTY EDITOR



Christmas lunch: a mangy bird, lukewarm gravy and ball-bearing sprouts, served with lashings of dissatisfaction at the presents received and overtones of the brooding arguments yet to come. Season of goodwill? I've been to happier wakes.

I've no objection to the event itself, but I hate the forced smiles, jumped-up excitement and constant barracking to spend, spend, spend, usually delivered in a high-pitched tone by a half-witted bimbo in a low-cut Santa costume. Don't you just hate high-pitched voices?

Where does the common sense we apply to our lives during the rest of the year go? It's shocking, but true: hanging illuminated snowmen from your porch will not reduce Third World debt, handing out mince pies to homeless people really isn't a long-term solution and buying those handy all-in-one wash bags for the woman in your life is only going to inspire a false smile and a silent vow to leave you for the marketing chap at work.

So instead of wrapping our lives in these delusional fantasies, let's have some more

genuinely worthwhile pursuits, like the Race of Champions earlier this month. Instead of sitting on their bums, spending vast amounts of money on tack and stuffing themselves full of rubbish food, the organisers pulled off a major coup by taking advantage of the winter break and putting on a genuinely awe-inspiring show while raising money for charity.

Now this was the sort of occasion where I didn't mind spending my money. Yes, the price of a couple of sandwiches and drinks set me back more than the petrol to drive from London to Paris, but once the show had kicked off I knew I wasn't going to regret parting with my cash. At a time of year when Saturday nights are usually spent twiddling thumbs and watching crap films, it was the perfect showcase for the sport.

But now, when Britain's motorsport-mad public is biding its time, wondering what to do before the Autosport International Show in January, there's nothing but the occasional club-level national race and rally to keep them occupied. Shouldn't someone with a bit of get up and go be making the most of this downtime, cajoling racing stars with nothing better to do into some entertaining machinery and laying on a bit of a show?

How about Brands Hatch, some high-powered, rear-wheel-drive cars and a host of wintering wheel-turners like Jensen Button, David Coulthard, Anthony Davidson, Dan Wheldon, Dario Franchitti and Justin Wilson? Throw in a few up-and-comers for that Heikki Kovalainen effect and you'd have a brilliant day's entertainment and something altogether more worthwhile to do than dressing an evergreen. Trees belong outdoors — and that's just where we'd all be if only someone would put on some racing for us to go to.



▶ The Race of Champions proved off-season motorsport events can be a major success

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Jody Scheckter, ex-Formula 1 World Champion, has turned his hand to organic farming at Laverstoke Park in Hampshire, with products on sale in his farm shop (01256 890906). To celebrate, we are giving away a signed print from his title-winning season in 1979.



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In what year did Jody Scheckter win the Formula 1 World Championship?

- A 1978**
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JODY'S TRACTOR TESTED! p126





FIFTH COLUMN

NIGEL ROEBUCK

THE DATING GAME



“TO RUN THE GOODWOOD FESTIVAL AND THE BRITISH GP OVER THE SAME WEEKEND WOULD BE FOLLY”

AFTER ABOUT the length of time it took Wagner to compose 'The Ring Cycle', at last, eventually, finally, ultimately, we have a decision about Silverstone, and it's the one we wanted: the British Grand Prix will be run on July

10 2005 and its future is secure – until 2009, anyway. A cynical colleague pointed out that maybe this wasn't the worst moment for Bernie Ecclestone to come out with some good news, not least to remind everyone, should they have thought (and, in some cases, hoped) otherwise, that he was still very much in business.

"I am extremely happy," said Ecclestone, "that, with the help of Ray Bellm of the BRDC, we have reached a five-year agreement with Silverstone." One doubts that the omission from his statement of any mention of Jackie Stewart (who has devoted many months of his life to the saving of the British Grand Prix) is accidental, and rather suggests that personal animosities remain.

Still, we must – as Mr Blair reminds us on a daily basis, when seeking to brush off the latest annoying crisis – move on. What's important is that the British Grand Prix has survived, and I don't doubt that, as well as all the fans, the teams and sponsors are immensely relieved.

There are 19 races on the schedule for 2005, one more than in '04, which in turn had one more than any previous season. "I would never, ever, ever put more than 16 races on the calendar," Bernie said to me a few years ago. "No way." Seems a very long time ago.

The only new race next year is Istanbul, on August 21 (not, I'm led to believe, the cool season in Turkey), but its addition to the world championship, and the fact that the overall season is shortened by a week, means that even more 'back-to-backs' are scheduled for 2005.

There were three this year, five next, and the worst of it is that four of the five are lumped together: thus we have Monaco and the Nürburgring, weekend off, Montréal and Indianapolis, weekend off, Magny-Cours and Silverstone, weekend off, Hockenheim and the Hungaroring. Not too daunting, perhaps, if your deposit account vaults on each occasion and you get to and fro these places in your private jet, but rather less inviting if you're a mechanic flying 'steerage', or perhaps travelling in a truck.

What it amounts to, this midsummer spree, is eight events in 11 weekends – and make that nine if you intend also to go to the Goodwood Festival of Speed, which all right-thinking people should.

It was only a couple of weeks ago that Lord March announced that next year's event would be held over the weekend of July 9/10, one week after the date provisionally allocated to Silverstone. On that same schedule Magny-Cours was to be run in April, but not surprisingly the French didn't go for that too much and requested their traditional slot, at the beginning of July. This has been duly granted, with the consequence that Silverstone moves to July 10 – and Charles March must make other arrangements.

When I called Goodwood about this, I found their enthusiasm well under control, and no surprise there. The only gaps – excuse me, 'windows of opportunity' – I can see for the Festival of Speed are June 25/26 (between Indianapolis and Magny-Cours) and July 16/17 (between Silverstone and Hockenheim). Originally, July 17 had been allocated to the German Grand Prix, but it now shifts to the following week to 'twin' with Budapest.

Quite obviously Goodwood has to move, for to run the Festival of Speed and the British Grand Prix over the same weekend would be folly – and for both parties. While of course a conflict with



HAWKINS/LAT

Which Formula 1 line-up would you be looking at if there was a clash? Some would go for Goodwood over Silverstone

Silverstone would hurt Goodwood, so I have no doubt, given the sell-out popularity of the Festival, the reverse would also be true.

"They can't be on the same weekend, can they?" a friend said to me this morning. I said no, of course not. "Well, if they are," he said, with some vim, "I know bloody well which one I'm going to!" He wasn't talking about Silverstone, and I suspect many would make a similar decision.

Why? Because the Goodwood Festival of Speed is unique in the world, not so much a competitive event as a gathering of great cars and people. Whenever I'm asked which are my favourite weekends of the year, I say, "Imola, Indianapolis, Spa, Monza – and the two Goodwoods." A few years ago I was mortified to miss the Revival Meeting (thanks to a clash with Monza), but in 2005, happily, it is on September 17/18, between Spa and Interlagos.

If the Revival Meeting has unquestioned status as the best historic race event on the planet, still the Festival of Speed has a quality all its own. You come across racing people – everyone from Nino Vaccarella to Bobby Allison – you've never met before, and renew contact with more you thought probably you'd never see again.

As a social occasion in motorsport there is nothing like it – and if the modern F1 content is not the greatest pull for me (having seen the cars race somewhere a few days earlier), I can well understand its appeal to fans who rarely get to see a Ferrari or Williams or whatever. Where else can you watch, at close quarters, Juan Montoya or Jensen Button blasting off the line?

When Ralf Schumacher was deputed to drive the Williams-BMW at Goodwood in 2003, he behaved like a brat all weekend, but invariably contemporary F1 drivers get into the spirit of the thing.

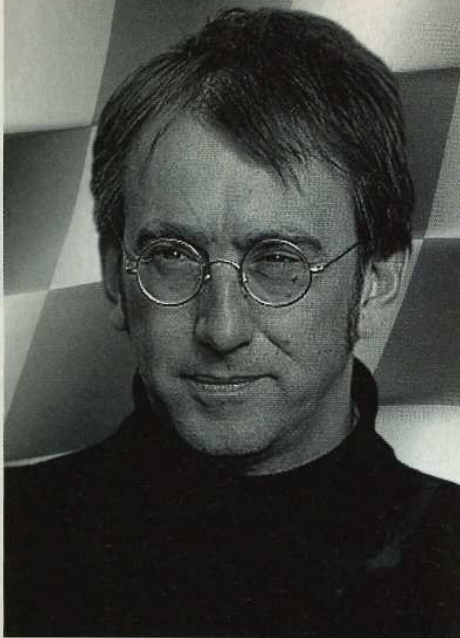
"Goodwood's a fantastic event, I think," said Jensen. "It's obviously great for the fans to see the cars and drivers, and all the rest of it, but for me it's great to do that too, because I just love cars – and not just Formula 1 cars either."

"As well as that, it's nice to have contact with the fans. I actually like that – it's a good feeling when there's a lot of fans around, asking for autographs. And of course at the grands prix you don't get that – you're always arriving or leaving when people want you to sign things; you're always in a rush at the grands prix. I know it must look rude, but it's not that – we're busy."

Nineteen races in 34 weekends, plus testing. They're going to be busy indeed in 2005. ☐

NIGEL ROEBUCK'S TOP 50 FIFTH COLUMNS, dating back to 1980, are all available on the AUTOSPORT PLUS section of...

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"A TRULY TOUGH PRO WOULDN'T HAVE ALLOWED THE SIGNING OF ANOTHER TOP DRIVER TO RATTLE HIM"



Carlos Reutemann, who drove a current Ferrari F1 car at Fiorano, is still revered by team personnel



IT'S THE summer of '78. The airwaves are pumping out songs like *Baker Street* by Gerry Rafferty, *Dreadlock Holiday* by 10cc, *Roxanne* by a new group called The Police, *Pump It Up* by Elvis Costello. The grand prix circuits are routinely

surrendering to the JPS Lotus 79 steamroller.

Ferrari has announced it's signed Jody Scheckter for next year. Enzo Ferrari has told him that it's likely Carlos Reutemann will remain to partner him. Jody's a shrewd operator and wants to stamp his authority on the team before he even gets there, he wants destiny in his own hands. He gives Reutemann a call and arranges a secret meeting with him in a French car park. Jody tells Carlos: "Look, I've signed as number one. I hope we can work together well, I think it could be good."

Today the way Jody tells it, laughing, "He didn't say much, nodded his head, got out the car and I think he must've agreed terms with Lotus about 20 minutes later."

So for the balance of the season Carlos, a sensitive soul who'd been very happy at Ferrari once Niki Lauda had left, would have been taking it all in, the details of his life at Maranello, to imprint on his memory for soon he would be gone. He'd do his last few tests at Fiorano. He loved that place, he loved blatting around there until dusk trying new Michelin compounds, new tweaks from Forghieri, working with the engineers, knowing the Old Man was sat up in his darkened room listening to the flat-12 as he worked.

Reutemann's recruitment by Ferrari late in 1976 had been typically Machiavellian, with Carlos almost the innocent beneficiary. Lauda had crashed at the Nürburgring, coming close to losing his life. It seemed inconceivable that he would drive again in '76, if ever. His big championship lead might just be enough to retain him the title, so long as James Hunt didn't win consistently, but if not then with Lauda tucked up in bed, Ferrari would still be the moral victors.

It's impossible not to feel that Enzo would have preferred Lauda to have stayed out of sight, to keep his scarred face from besmirching the image of his team. Within a couple of weeks Enzo had reached a deal with Bernie Ecclestone for Reutemann to be released from Brabham with immediate effect. The handsome, enigmatic and devastatingly fast Carlos would come to Ferrari, immediately start winning races and thereby keep Hunt from doing so. That presumably was the plan. But didn't Niki not only go and recover unbelievably quickly, but also insist he was coming back to fight for his title? Enzo could hardly publicly

refuse him, could he? Damn his ugly face!

Unsurprisingly in the circumstances, Reutemann's and Lauda's relationship through the following year was distinctly chilly, and equally unsurprisingly the force of Lauda's personality and history with the team left Reutemann in the background. Lauda left the moment the title was clinched, waiting not a minute longer. Only then did Reutemann really begin to come into flower at Ferrari.

This should have been the last great hurdle of his career on the way to the world championship, the first opportunity to really stamp his mark on his F1 career as his own man, the way Lauda had done, the way Scheckter would later do. Reutemann had graduated to F1 at Brabham and so was always going to be subservient to Bernie there. Now, he was number one driver in the world's number one team. The world was at his feet. Only the advent of ground effect prevented him from parlaying his drive into a title in 1978, although he did brilliantly well to score four victories in a season of Lotus dominance. For '79, Ferrari would have a ground effect car of its own. The final step was sure to be taken.

But Carlos was a man who always gave doubts far too much house space. What was this about the team signing Scheckter? That rang a discordant bell in his head. Then there was that meeting in the car park. That was it. He was off. A truly tough pro wouldn't have allowed the signing of another top driver to rattle him and certainly wouldn't have had much truck with one-sided conversations in a car park. He'd have just focused on preparing his ground, doing his stuff and using the advantage of being the incumbent, knowing which buttons to hit, which engineers to have on your car. That just wasn't him. And that was why he never became world champion, maybe even a multiple world champion. There have been others with less talent who became so. Instead, Scheckter arrived, took his drive, took his title and retired from the car a rich man at 30.

Reutemann's 62 now, probably old enough to look back on it with the detachment of someone else. But there were surely some pangs as he arrived at Fiorano last week, walked past the office where the Old Man used to sit, got changed into a set of red Ferrari overalls, then went out and blatted round the track for 17 laps in a state-of-the-art F1 Ferrari: He's still held in reverence by the team. He never seemed to realise he could've used that to get anything he wanted. ☒

BEST OF 2004

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

SEASON ROUND-UP Autosport brings you the most eye-catching images of the 2004 season

MARKKOMARTIN RALLY ARGENTINA

One innocuous bump turned Markko Märtin's WRC season upside down in a split-second. His Focus WRC went end-over-end along the road at more than 100mph, leaving him with blurred vision in one eye. He took weeks to recover fully.



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PETTERSOLBERG RALLY DEUTSCHLAND

We thought Markko's accident would be the biggest of the year—but then Petter slid wide at a left-hander, clipped one of the notorious hinkelsteins and bounced off two more before coming to rest. He and navigator Phil Mills were lucky to get out alive.



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MICHAEL SCHUMACHER SPANISH GP

Another year of records for Schuey, who lifted his seventh world title and took an amazing 13 race wins in one season. This particular celebration came in Spain, as he secured his fifth victory straight out of the blocks at the start of the year. The Monaco tunnel would come next...

COMTES/LAT



THE YEAR

the 2004 season, plus some of our most memorable moments



SNAPSHOT

JOHN McILROY



WWW.MCILROY.COM

CARLOS SAINZ can be a fairly intimidating chap. Journalists are easy fodder for his intense stare and ruthless scrutiny of every word that's written about him. Like most hacks, I've been on the end of the odd grilling from the man they call *El Matador*.

But at the same time, you can't help but admire him. During his 16 years in the sport, Carlos has raised rallying's profile worldwide and taught a generation of young talent how to hone their approach, deal with the media, use testing to their benefit, and keep their concentration on events. He has been the rally driver's rally driver for well over a decade.

This year, though, he decided to call time on his career. He didn't feel he wanted to do all 16 rallies next year and, in typical Carlos fashion, he didn't feel a part-time programme was really him.

I'd suspected it might happen, so I'd lined up a trip to Catalunya much earlier in the year. The Spanish worship Sainz like royalty — his farewell to his adoring fan base would be something special. So I ended up at the inside of the hairpin, under the famous viaduct at Villadrau as adoring and adored said goodbye to each other under the most popular vantage point in world rallying. Frankly, the atmosphere was so electric that it moved me to tears. It had been painful — I'd got up at half-past one in the morning to make sure of my viewing point — but it was worth it. An era of rallying ended in a matter of seconds, with one wave.



NIGEL MANSELL
REGENT STREET, LONDON

The push to hold a Formula 1 race in London gathered momentum when several teams ran a pre-British GP demo up and down Regent Street. Nigel Mansell joined in — good to see that the ex-champ still managed to get the Sunseeker Powerboats cap into the shot as well...

MADPILOT
BAHRAIN GP

Gulf Air was one of the sponsors of Formula 1's first trip into the Middle East in Bahrain, and it was determined that the deal wasn't going to go unnoticed. One of the firm's Airbus jets doing a fly-past at a few hundred feet made sure that it didn't.



GULF AIR



Formula 1's
rain, and it
't going to
ous jets
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GIANMARIABRUNI
ITALIANGP

Fire is still the biggest danger in Formula 1 and it's still very worrying when it interrupts the flow of a Sunday afternoon. Gianmaria Bruni had cause to panic when some spilled fuel sent his Minardi up in flames during a pitstop at Monza.

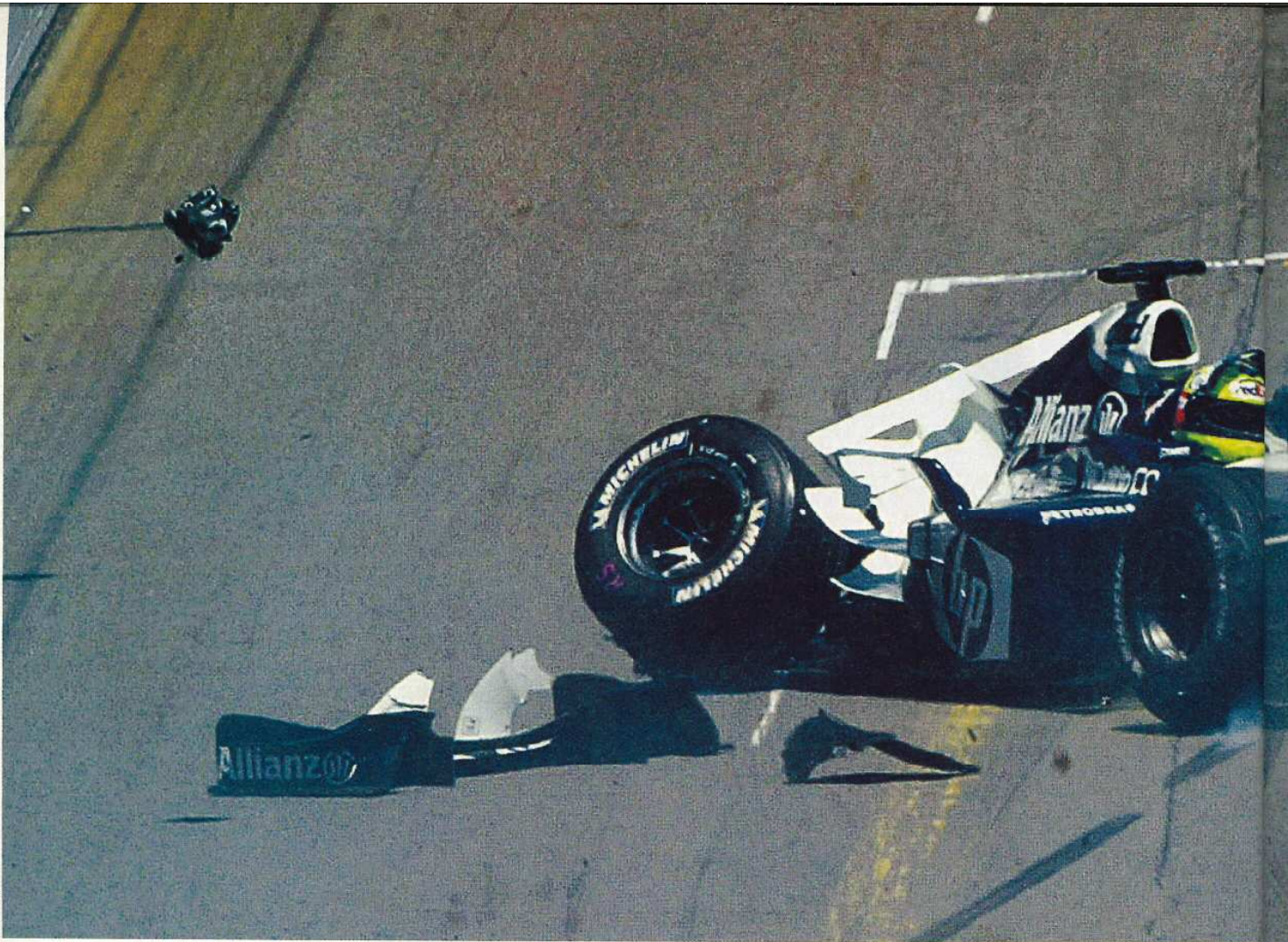
COLINMcRAE
THEMIDDLEOFNOWHERE

From fighting for seconds to fighting for survival. Well, perhaps Colin McRae's first crack at the Dakar Rally wasn't quite as dramatic as that, but it certainly opened the Scot's eyes to a whole new field of motorsport. Not sure he enjoyed digging his Nissan out of the dunes all the time, though.



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SNAPSHOT

CHARLES BRADLEY



JONATHAN NOBLE

HOTEL ROOM ceiling. Headache. The cry of a seagull. Ah, it's either Zandvoort or Estoril DTM then. Sore throat too. Spectator noise outside. Must be Zandvoort then; no-one came to Estoril. Raceday! Better get a move on, but what happened last night?

Slowly it floods back... The Saturday-night Mercedes press dinner with news ed Andy van de Burgt, autosport.com GP ed Jonathan Noble and *F1 Racing's* Steve Cooper... The 0230 departure after myriad renditions of *Yellow Submarine* and *Roll Me Over* (a bawdy soldier's song from the Second World War) with Merc's legendary 'Doc' on the concertina (above). His hangover cure? Another beer and a cigarette. You don't get that on the NHS.

Also seem to have won a watch (since given away on 'Not Seen on eBay') signed by Jean Alesi and Gary Paffett. Oh yes. I was sat next to Jean for dinner. He told some cracking anecdotes. Like how Flavio Briatore shafted him on money at Benetton. How Ferrari team-mate Gerhard Berger's mistimed yank on a handbrake meant the Lancia he was driving (property of) Todd ended up its roof on their way to a Fiorano test. How Benetton's seven-speed gearbox was really to blame for him missing his pitboard when he ran out of fuel in Melbourne. How he loves being part of the DTM.

Fantastic company with great, great stories. Something else: a street race at Avignon! Autosport exclusive, I think. See, I knew I had something to celebrate. You don't think I get drunk like that at every DTM race, do you?





SNAPSHOT

JIM HOLDER



IT TOOK a long, long winter to build and about three seconds to destroy. Deciding to build a rally car for the budget Formula 1000 rally series was one thing, actually getting a car prepared quite another. Let's just say I had a lot of help.

Just four rounds into the 10-round series, there we were, my co-driver Matt Burt and I, one mile from the end of the event and lying a season-best fifth overall. Unfortunately, we were also lying on our sides in the upturned, now three-wheeled Micra, surveying the world through smashed windows. I undid the belts and climbed through a gap where some glass had previously been. Somewhere in the back of my mind I was still convinced that I could shove the car back over and drag it to the finish.

Erm no. The only place this Micra was going was the scrapyard.

In the aftermath of the crash I wasn't that enthusiastic about returning, yet within a week series organiser Tristan Dodd had sourced me a new car and begun welding in a cage. Just three weeks and several nine-hour round trips to Dodd's base in North Wales later — where I took up half his space, used all his tools, ate his family's food, slept in their house and so on — I had a new rally car. Just six months earlier I hadn't known a screwdriver from a spanner — but, left with no choice, I had a rally car again.

And, better yet, I've still got it... until next time.

PETER DUMBRECK ZANDVOORT DTM



Biggest race accident of the year? Peter Dumbreck ran wide at the final corner at Zandvoort and hit a tyre wall at 122.4mph, then rolled three times down the main straight. His Opel is now in a dustbin; the reasons behind the shunt are still a mystery.

RALF SCHUMACHER UNITED STATES GP

We've always wondered what would happen if someone went off at the final corner at Indianapolis. Ralf was the eventual guinea pig, sliding off backwards into the wall. He missed several races with damaged vertebrae.

MARCUS GRONHOLM RALLY AUSTRALIA

A year to forget for the double WRC champion, as he and Peugeot struggled with the 307 WRC. Still, there were times when Marcus himself pushed the boundaries a little too far — like Australia, where he crashed out. Twice.



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BEST OF 2004



CARLLONG **ROCKINGHAM**

Journeyman pedaller Carl Long mortgaged his house to buy a Dodge Intrepid and go Nextel Cup racing. And then Joe Nemecheck tapped him into a spin at Rockingham. We can only hope he'd saved a bit of money for insurance.

MARTINBRUNDLE **REGENT STREET, LONDON**

In five years' time, we'll look back and wonder how on earth they managed to organise Formula 1 cars running in central London. It caused chaos but was total fever. Ex-F1 driver Martin Brundle got in on the act in a Jaguar.

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SNAPSHOT

DAVID EVANS



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RALLY ARGENTINA can be a bit of pain to get to. There's a lengthy trans-Atlantic trip followed by a seat-of-the-pants internal flight. Once you've convinced the hire car firm that you really do have a booking, then it's time to find your way out of Cordoba...

All the grief is worth it. Well worth it. Villa Carlos Paz is not the most picturesque of the 16 stops the WRC makes in a season, but the rally-mad people are super-friendly, the stages — particularly the lunar landscape of El Condor — mind-blowing, the beer good, the wine great and the food fine.

Watching the superspecial at Pro-Racing on Thursday night before the start is an event in itself. It's a humbling experience to see the passion of a local population eternally grateful to the world rally stars who make this annual carnival possible. This year's event was extra-special for the locals. They had a Spanish-speaking winner to cheer: Carlos Sainz.

And then there was Gilles Panizzi. And Zebras nightclub. Panizzi (above) was busy forgetting a forgettable event. By the time I met him he had forgotten most things. He'd certainly forgotten that breakdancing has had its day. At the end of each routine, he saluted himself and walked away. Classic.

Panizzi wasn't the only one to make a bit of an arse of himself in Zebras. I appeared to have made it my mission to convince Sainz he shouldn't retire. "Seriously though, Carlos, you can't retire..." Oh dear. Painful memories of a great place and an even better rally.

BELANDIA/LAT





**CARLOSSAINZ
RALLYMEXICO**

The WRC's first trip to Mexico was a huge success, but Carlos Sainz didn't have the best of visits. This bizarre incident cost him several minutes and any chance of victory. Don't see many spectators nearby ready to help the Citroën Xsara back onto its wheels, do you?

**DTM VISITS CHINA
SHANGHAI**

A huge day for motorsport in China as the DTM takes in a street circuit in Shanghai. Perhaps the local cleaners are so worried about visiting dignitaries that they've decided to brush the dirt underneath that silver car in the corner... The series isn't going back there in 2005!



BRUNER/LAT

BEST OF 2004

AJ FOYT IV & MARK TAYLOR CHICAGO

When one car goes off in the IRL IndyCar Series it can be pretty frightening. But when two or more of them get it on within reach of the wall, it's close-your-eyes time. Here AJ Foyt and Mark Taylor clash at Chicagoland.



LEVITT/LAT

SNAPSHOT

DAVID MALSHER



LEVITT/LAT

IT'S TOO easy to pick my favourite memory: standing in the sand on the inside of the back straight at Las Vegas Motor Speedway during first practice for Champ Car's Bridgestone 400, completely alone save for Vasser, Bourdais and co, flitting in, flitting out of my vicinity at 210mph. In the background were the beautiful mountains of Nevada, up above in a cloudless sky, F-15 Eagles and F-22 Raptors were banking for final approach to Nellis Air Force Base. Paradisiacal. Having experienced the sheer outrageousness of the city's hotels and casinos the night before, this was the perfect reminder that the work can be way more enjoyable than the recreation in this job.

The Champ Cars' downforce levels at that event were so high (they were using roadcourse wings, unfortunately) that the organisers knew that, come the race, the cars would spend long periods in a pack, IRL-style, and with only two ovals on the CCWS schedule these days, there are a lot of young drivers in the series who needed to learn about the Big Left Turn. An acclimatisation session was deemed necessary on Friday evening.

For this session, one saintly figure worked it for me to stand in the starter gantry, overhanging the track. The wall of warm air and grit as a pack of Champ Cars approaches at well over 200mph, and then the howl as they go past, comprise one of those experiences you only truly appreciate afterwards. As an adrenaline-pumper, it was rivalled only by one particularly amazing taxi-ride through Mexico City—but that's another story.

DUNBAR/LAT

DANILO DIRANI CASTLECOMBE

We know Castle Combe is supposed to be one of the more rural venues in British motorsport, but Danilo Dirani ended up making his Dallara look positively agricultural when he went off during the British F3 series' visit to the track in June.

JENSON BUTTON THE 2004 SEASON

The year when Jenson came of age? He certainly played dirty in the contracts game, but on track there's no doubt that the young Briton delivered the best entertainment of the year. He scored 10 podium finishes and was the most regular challenger to the Ferraris.





SNAPSHOT

GILLIAN BELL



EBREW/AT

I'M AFRAID I am going to have to be greedy and pick two best moments of the year: the Manx International Rally and Wales Rally GB. The first formed part of my British Rally Championship reporting duties and at the second I was let loose on those poor lads in the Junior World Rally Championship.

The Manx is the only round in the BRC that spans three days, so it was good practice ahead of Rally GB. It's superbly organised by Richard Bargerly, and he and PR man Chris Boyde were a constant source of help. Actually, Chris could have been of more assistance to *Motorsport News* colleague Jo Holland and me after he navigated us up a country lane only for us to find ourselves blocking the start of a stage, but that's another story. The event's classic stages also provided great entertainment, with Mark Higgins giving eventual winner Jonny Milner a run for his money.

Of course everything moved up a gear when I arrived in Wales in September, but it was nice to see some familiar faces such as Guy Wilks and Kris Meeke, who scored a one-two in the JWRC. The best moment there? Well, sorry Per-Gunnar Andersson, but it was being in the right place at the right time when the JWRC champ crashed out in his Suzuki Ignis. Never before have I had to run through a forest and get covered in mud and twigs for an interview. Still, it beats being stuck in the office.

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 e, but on track
 Briton delivered
 ar. He scored
 most regular



PICME/AT



BEST OF 2004

SNAPSHOT

GARY WATKINS



JUMPING AND shouting isn't to be encouraged in the press room, not in my book. That's not so much British reserve, more a belief that journalists should remain dispassionate about their subject matter. All that went out the window at the new Dubai Autodrome in September.

It wasn't just that the events of the European Touring Car Championship finale took some believing and produced a gripping finale that had an extra twist at every turn. Nor was it solely that a Brit looked set to steal the title.

If I appeared animated as I watched the final laps of the final ETCC race — the series gets world status for next year — it was because I really wanted Andy Priaux to take the crown. That he was British had something to do with it and so did the fact that he's an all-round good bloke.

But the real reason I wanted him to win the title was that he deserved it, both in the context of his 2004 season and his career. Priaux was the most complete driver in the ETCC over the past year, and but for a couple of slices of Alfa Romeo-inspired bad luck, he would have headed for the finale a shoe-in for the title.

He also deserved it because by hard graft and determination, the personable Guernseyman has turned himself into one of the world's top touring car drivers in the space of three seasons. Further successes will follow his ETCC crown, I'm sure, though I'm hoping I'll keep my emotions to myself next time.



GUERLAIN CHICHERIT RALLY FINLAND

The rallying phrase 'jumping' was originally invented because someone mispronounced the word 'jump'. You can see why. In Finland, Junior WRC flyer Guerlain Chicherit takes his billing a little too seriously and overcommits.

DALE EARNHARDT JR SEARS POINT

The biggest draw in NASCAR still likes to drive road courses once in a while. But somehow, it's hard to see his sponsors being enthusiastic about him moonlighting again after he slid off and suffered burns in a Corvette sportscar.



STAFFORD/LAT



JR
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**SNOOZING PARAMEDIC
 MONACO GP**

Who said the back of the field was boring? The sea air gets to one of the Monaco medics and he grabs 40 winks while the Minardi drivers try to keep their cars between the barriers. At least Dr Do-Little will be fresh if and when he's needed.

**BUDDY RICE... SOMEWHERE
 MICHIGAN**

A good year for the IRL Indycar Series' American hero. He racked up the donuts after winning here at Michigan, but the highlight of his season had to be victory in America's blue-riband race, the Indianapolis 500.



LEVIT/LAT



BEST OF 2004

PIERREKAFFER

SPA

Pierre Kaffer struggles back to the pits after clipping Andrew Kirkaldy's Ferrari and whacking the barrier in his Audi R8. The back of the car is well alight, and his and Allan McNish's bid for the Le Mans Endurance Series has gone up in smoke as well.



JAMES BEARNE

SNAPSHOT

RICHARD ASHER



GUY AERTS

BRITISH FORMULA 3 and the World Series by Nissan have filled up nearly every weekend this summer. Watching the cars from stupidly dangerous spots and meeting the (mostly pleasant) paddock-life has been a great perk.

But nothing comes close to driving a racing car, and piloting World Series Dallaras (twice!) is easily my top memory. It began as a tongue-in-cheek request for a go in the Valencia test. But RC Motorsport boss Francesco Ravera took me seriously. Still, I assumed it was all a joke until I was actually strapped into Karun Chandhok's car the next day...

I was told not to spin—Signor Ravera had looked quite firm on that point. So I was careful to the point of not breaking the two-minute barrier—which annoyed me intensely as I tried to sleep that night.

It would still be annoying me today if Cristiano Giardina hadn't immediately offered me a run for GD Racing—Enrique Bernoldi's team—at Jerez. More ambitious after three weeks' psyching-time, I managed not only a spin in the tepid first turn, but also a locked tyre, with my very own smoke.

An amused Bernoldi described some of my lines as "strange". Unlike Valencia, there are some devilishly fast corners here and I learnt that simply watching from trackside all weekend won't make you believe in downforce's magic. You know Turn 4 is easy-flat, but fourth seems quick enough. I have little faith, but both teams had plenty in me and I was pleased to return the car with no more than a flat-spot. It's an evil drug, 450bhp, but I guess I'd better start at the beginning. Club racing it is then.

KIM JAT

PJ CHESSON TEXAS

Infiniti Pro is meant to be a feeder series for the IRL Indycar championship, but that doesn't mean it's slow. As PJ Chesson demonstrated perfectly in Texas, the cars are plenty quick enough to have a major impact.

SOLBERG & LOEB TOUR DE CORSE

Petter Solberg had won three rallies in a row in an attempt to stop Sébastien Loeb winning his first world title. But in the end, Markko Märtin won in Corsica and second was enough for SuperSébastien to become France's first WRC champ since 1994.





SNAPSHOT

ANTHONY ROWLINSON



I COULD hardly wait. I was so excited, in fact, that I got up early, braved sheeting rain and a suicidal taxi driver to get to Suzuka circuit by 7am and sit, wide-eyed and caffeine-fuelled in the press room.

Typhoon 22, we were told, was about to hit and I wanted to see it. My more sensible/world-weary/cowardly colleagues from the Formula 1 press corps chose to stay cosied-up in their hotel bedrooms, beavering away (at their keyboards, one presumes). One of our number, the estimable Joe Seward, had already counselled us to leave town and get out of 22's path. He took his own advice, too, heading north to Osaka, a couple of hundred kms out of 22's path. Sadly, however, Joe's well-intentioned plea fell on (my) deaf ears.

So there I sat—totally alone apart from two over-dedicated media staff—watching, waiting, trusting that the stout concrete backbone of the Suzuka press room was typhoon-rated. I reasoned that it had be pretty tough as it had withstood 30 years of the worst that Pacific storms could throw at it, with no obvious ill effects.

The view from my perch was spectacular: I was angled directly towards the incoming weather front and the occasional bolt of lightning confirmed that I was in for the show of a lifetime. I waited and watched; watched and waited... Of course, 22 missed Suzuka completely, save for the odd comically heavy cloudburst—the cancelled Saturday qualifying session and my early start both completely futile gestures.

Still, at least the media staff took pity on my lonely vigil: just after 8.30am one of them—unbidden—brought me coffee and two crispy-warm croissants. Only in Japan.

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for SuperSéb to
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WWW.MCKENZIE

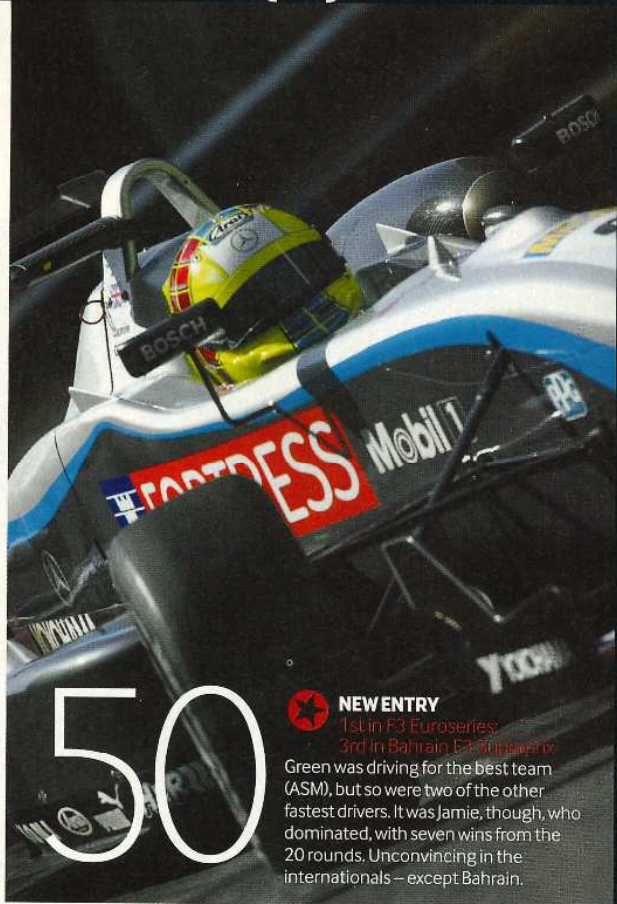


THE LEADING MEN OF THE 2004 MOTORSPORT SEASON

ALL PICS: LAM

THE TOP 50 DRIVERS

JAMIE GREEN (GB)



50

NEW ENTRY
 1st in F3 Euroseries;
 3rd in Bahrain F3 Superprix
 Green was driving for the best team (ASM), but so were two of the other fastest drivers. It was Jamie, though, who dominated, with seven wins from the 20 rounds. Unconvincing in the internationals – except Bahrain.

SAM HORNISH JR (USA)

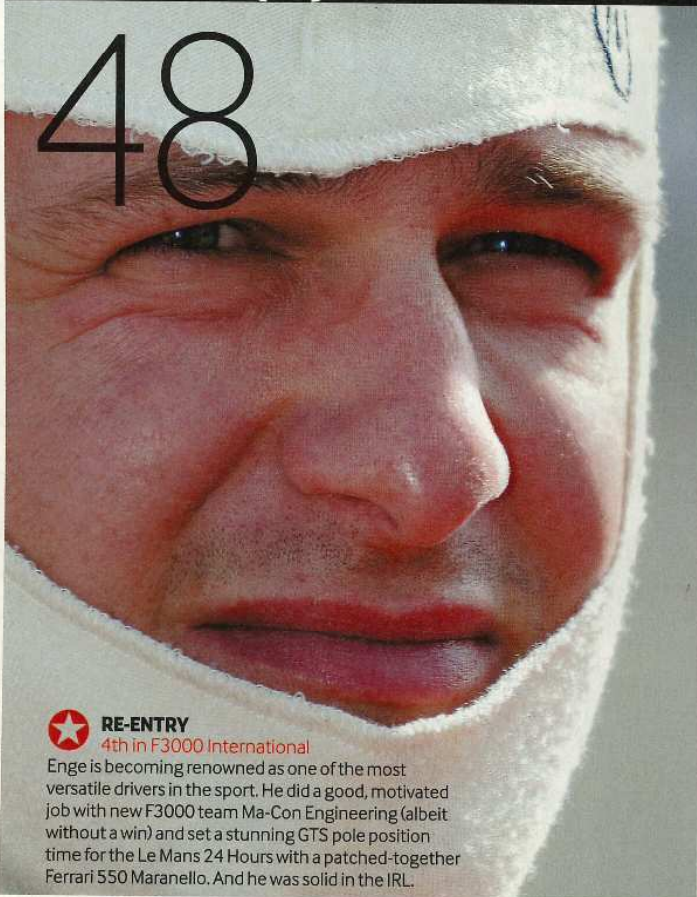
49

DOWN 40
 7th in IRL IndyCar Series

It all looked so perfect when Hornish, first time out with Team Penske, won at Homestead. But his season was a disappointment thereafter. Sure, the Toyota engines Penske ran were not on a par with Honda, but Hornish failed to rise to the challenge in the same way as team-mate Helio Castroneves.



TOMAS ENGE (CZ)



RE-ENTRY
 4th in F3000 International

Engé is becoming renowned as one of the most versatile drivers in the sport. He did a good, motivated job with new F3000 team Ma-Con Engineering (albeit without a win) and set a stunning GTS pole position time for the Le Mans 24 Hours with a patched-together Ferrari 550 Maranello. And he was solid in the IRL.

TOMAS SCHECKTER (ZA)



DOWN 10
 19th in IRL IndyCar Series

What has this guy got to do? It's not falsehood to talk about luck in any sport, generally you make your own – but Scheckter is a clear exception. With Panther Racing (and Chevy power) he's brilliant, passing round the outside until things inevitably went wrong.

ALLAN McNISH (GB)

47

NEW ENTRY

3rd in Le Mans Endurance Series; 1st in Sebring 12 Hours. Of all the Veloqx Audi R8 drivers, McNish was the one who drove fastest and hardest for longest in 2004. Should have won the LMES title – had it not been for co-driver Kaffer's crash in the finale.



BRUNO JUNQUEIRA (BR)

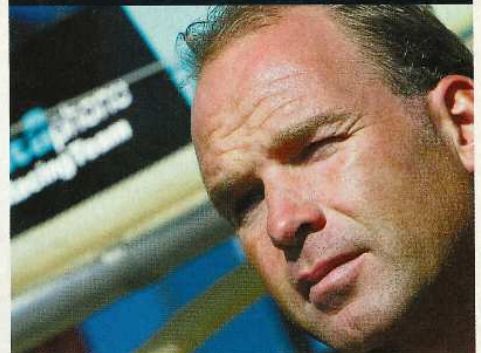
45

DOWN 12

2nd in Champ Car World Series. He was flattered by the points system in finishing so close to team-mate Bourdais. In a long mid-season run of events Junqueira generally qualified half a second slower than the Frenchman, Stealthy, but not exciting.

GT TOP 10

FIA GT, ALMS, LMES, GRAND-AM



1 FABRIZIO GOLLIN (I)

1st in FIA GT Championship; 1st in Spa 24 Hours

2 UWE ALZEN (D) pictured above

10th in FIA GT Championship

3 MIKA SALO (FIN)

13th in FIA GT Championship; 2nd in Spa 24 Hours

4= RON FELLOWS (CDN)
1st in American Le Mans Series (GTS); 2nd in Le Mans 24 Hours (GTS); 1st in Sebring 12 Hours (GTS)

4= JOHNNY O'CONNELL (USA)

1st in American Le Mans Series (GTS); 2nd in Le Mans 24 Hours (GTS); 1st in Sebring 12 Hours (GTS)

6= SASCHA MAASSEN (D)

1st in FIA GT Championship (N-GT); 1st in Le Mans 24 Hours (GT); 3rd in Spa 24 Hours (N-GT); 1st in Sebring 12 Hours (GT)

6= LUCAS LUHR (D)

1st in FIA GT Championship (N-GT); 3rd in Spa 24 Hours (N-GT); 2nd in Sebring 12 Hours (GT)

8 STEPHANE ORTELLI (MC)

3rd in FIA GT Championship (N-GT); 2nd in Le Mans Endurance Series (GT); 1st in Spa 24 Hours (N-GT); 3rd in Le Mans 24 Hours (GT)

9 TOMAS ENGE (CZ)

10th= in Le Mans Endurance Series (GTS)

10 BILL AUBERLEN (USA)

1st in Grand-Am Championship (GT)

This is a new category for this year, assessing those who have shone in the GT classes within the major sportscar classics, the FIA GT Championship, the Le Mans Endurance Series, American Le Mans Series and Grand-Am.

To do that you have to quantify the competitiveness of each individual series. The FIA GT Championship, on the up and on the threshold of an explosion in manufacturer interest, had the numbers and the strength in depth. Fabrizio Gollin was the man, the Italian making the most of his Scuderia Italia Ferrari 550 Maranello and giving his amateur co-driver, Luca Cappellari, a glorious title honour just in the nick of time before the *grande* teams arrive.

Gollin's main rival on speed was Uwe Alzen who, once he'd reinserted his endurance racing brain, was the star of the Saleen S7R hordes. But the American musclecars just don't seem to have the longevity of the Ferraris, and unreliability blunted the Konrad Motorsport-run car's challenge.

Mika Salo gave himself a fine introduction to his new career as a GT driver. First off the Finn turned in a good showing with a Ferrari 575GTC in the Spa 24 Hours, then he proved the best of a high-quality driver line-up when the Maserati MC12s invaded the FIA GT ranks for the last few rounds.

Over in the ALMS, Johnny O'Connell and Ron Fellows continued their highly-successful partnership in the Chevrolet team. Although they lost out on GTS honours in the Le Mans 24 Hours to Corvette team-mates Oliver Gavin and Olivier Beretta (sharing on this occasion with Jan Magnussen), they made far fewer mistakes over the season.

Sascha Maassen/Lucas Luhr topped the Porsche hordes with an FIA N-GT title and a host of successes in the blue-riband races, just edging out Freisinger team-mate Stéphane Ortell in our rankings. Tomáš Enge was superb whenever he got in a Ferrari, while Bill Auberlen led PTG's BMW team in Grand-Am. Unlucky not to make it are ALMS GT champ Timo Bernhard and Porsche Supercup dominator Wolf HENZLER, whose opposition wasn't as strong as in the series' glory years. Johnny Mowlem, too, deserves credit for his class win in the Daytona 24 Hours.

RYAN NEWMAN (USA)

44

DOWN 18
7th in NASCAR Nextel Cup;
2nd in IROC

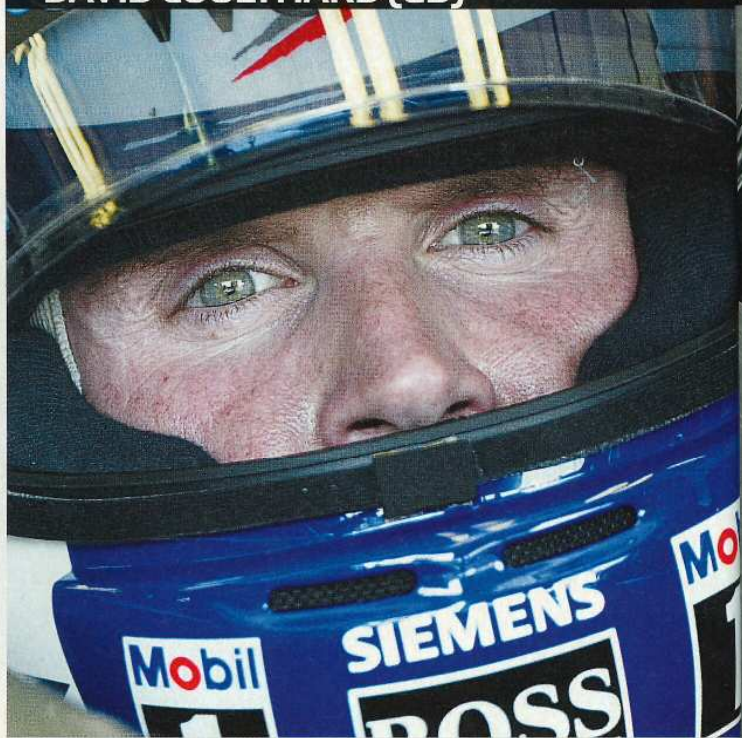
Newman was viewed as the moral champ by many in 2003. The speed was there again in '04, with nine poles, but this time he won only twice. Still, he frequently looked superb and was top Dodge man in the points.



DAVID COULTHARD (GB)

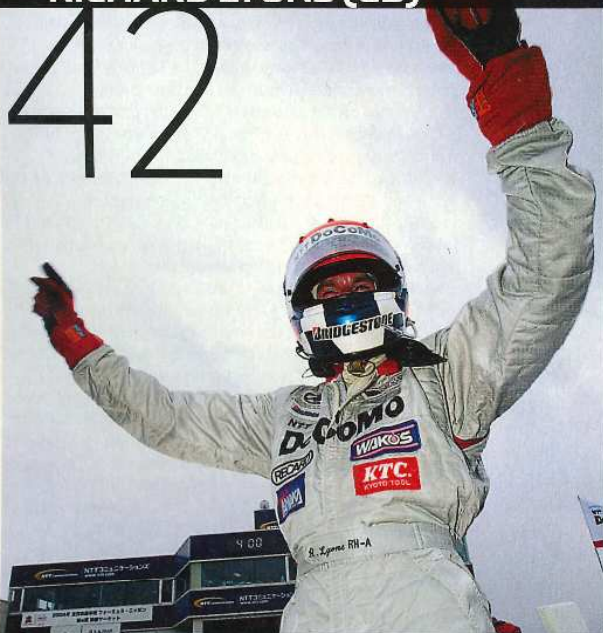
43

DOWN 18
10th in F1 World Championship
The last thing DC needed in '04 was an uncompetitive car with an edgy rear end. But in the first half of the season that's exactly what he got. There were occasional glimmers of what still lies beneath, but for the second season in succession there was too much underperforming.



RICHARD LYONS (GB)

42



NEW ENTRY
1st in Formula Nippon; 1st in Japanese GT
With a previously unsuccessful team (Dandelion), Lyons squeaked to the Nippon title on a tie-break. But his speed was astounding – first or second in qualifying in seven of the last nine races – before things often went wrong in the races. Add to that a GT title win for Nissan – what a year!

41

GABRIELE TARQUINI (I)

NOMOVE
3rd in European Touring Car Championship
He didn't win the title this time, but the Italian's reputation remained undiminished as he eked out his chances of a second successive crown as long as possible. Alfa Romeo lost ground on BMW this year, but Tarquini led the 156s back into the hunt.



ADRIAN FERNANDEZ (MEX)



40

NEW ENTRY
5th in IRL IndyCar Series

When Fernández switched to the IRL, it looked like he'd be winding down his career into retirement. Not a bit of it! In a way the Mexican veteran was the revelation of the season. With three late-season wins he's fashioned himself his very own Riccardo Patrese-style swansong.

FRANCOIS DUVAL (B)

39

NEW ENTRY
6th in World Rally Championship

A year of significant improvement for the 24-year-old, who made the leap from promising talent to clinch five podiums thanks in large part to a new approach to his pacenotes. At his most dangerous on asphalt, Duval still needs a patch more consistency to mix with his speed.



JUNIOR TOP 10

F3, FORMULA RENAULT



- 1 JAMIE GREEN (GB)**
1st in Formula 3 Euroseries; 3rd in Bahrain F3 Superprix
- 2 ALEXANDRE PREMAT (F)** pictured above
2nd in Formula 3 Euroseries; 1st in Marlboro Masters of F3; 1st in Macau F3 Grand Prix
- 3 ADAM CARROLL (GB)**
2nd in British Formula 3 Championship; 3rd in Marlboro Masters of F3
- 4 NELSON ANGELO PIQUET (BR)**
1st in British Formula 3 Championship
- 5 RONNIE QUINTARELLI (I)**
1st in Japanese Formula 3 Championship
- 6 SCOTT SPEED (USA)**
1st in Formula Renault 2000 Eurocup; 1st in German Formula Renault Championship
- 7 ERIC SALIGNON (F)**
6th in Formula 3 Euroseries; 2nd in Marlboro Masters of F3
- 8 LEWIS HAMILTON (GB)**
5th in Formula 3 Euroseries; 1st in Bahrain F3 Superprix
- 9 NEEL JANI (CH)**
4th in Formula Renault V6 Eurocup
- 10 GIORGIO MONDINI (I)**
1st in Formula Renault V6 Eurocup

As Formula 3 Euroseries champion, Ryan Briscoe won this category last year, and we see no reason to upset the status quo this time around in nominating his successor, Jamie Green. This category is intended to highlight who is the best driver of the year two or more steps from the sport's pinnacles (or, in Green's case, the DTM).

Alexandre Prémat was *le haut banane* in the internationals at Zandvoort and Macau, but didn't have the consistency to get anywhere near ASM team-mate Green over the course of the Euroseries season. And the team's third driver, Eric Salignon, got his career back on track, although was unlucky for a road accident to scupper the final few months of his year.

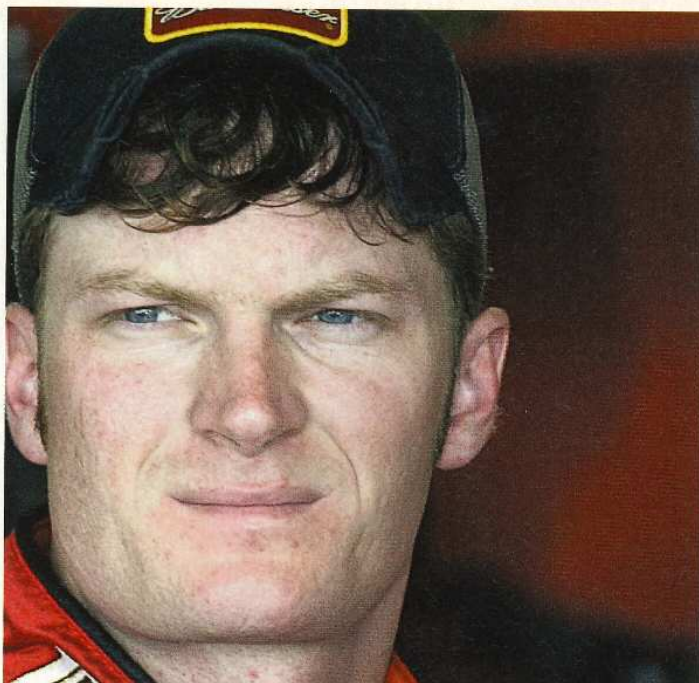
Also from the Euroseries, Lewis Hamilton had a very good season with Manor Motorsport, freshly over from the British championship. This was a tough task for both driver and team, yet the British lad did a cracking job to take a race win at the Norisring and completed the season in style in Bahrain.

We've placed Adam Carroll as the highest driver from British F3, just above champion Nelson Angelo Piquet. The Northern Irishman had his perennial struggle for a budget at P1 Motorsport yet carried the title fight to the Brazilian right down to the final round. Not only that, but he beat Piquet at both Zandvoort (again with P1) and Macau (after a switch back to his 2003 team, Menu Motorsport).

Ronnie Quintarelli's form was unconvincing at Macau, but he did a superb job to comfortably win the Japanese F3 title. With second-string Toyota team Ing Ing, he beat fancied Westerners João Paulo de Oliveira and Richard Antinucci (effectively with works teams) plus Fábio Carbone.

Of the Renault categories, the V6 Eurocup didn't seem to have quite the standard of top drivers from 2003. Pre-season V6 favourite Neel Jani had loads of bad luck keeping his points down, while champion Giorgio Mondini is doing amazingly well considering his lack of experience. Red Bull protégé Scott Speed was easily the class of Europe in the two-litre category and has put his illness-blighted '03 behind him.

Those who just missed out include F3 aces Nicolas Lapierre, James Rossiter and Nico Rosberg, British F Renault champ Mike Conway (it would have been nice to see him take in more than just the Donington Eurocup round) and German Formula BMW dominator Sebastian Vettel.

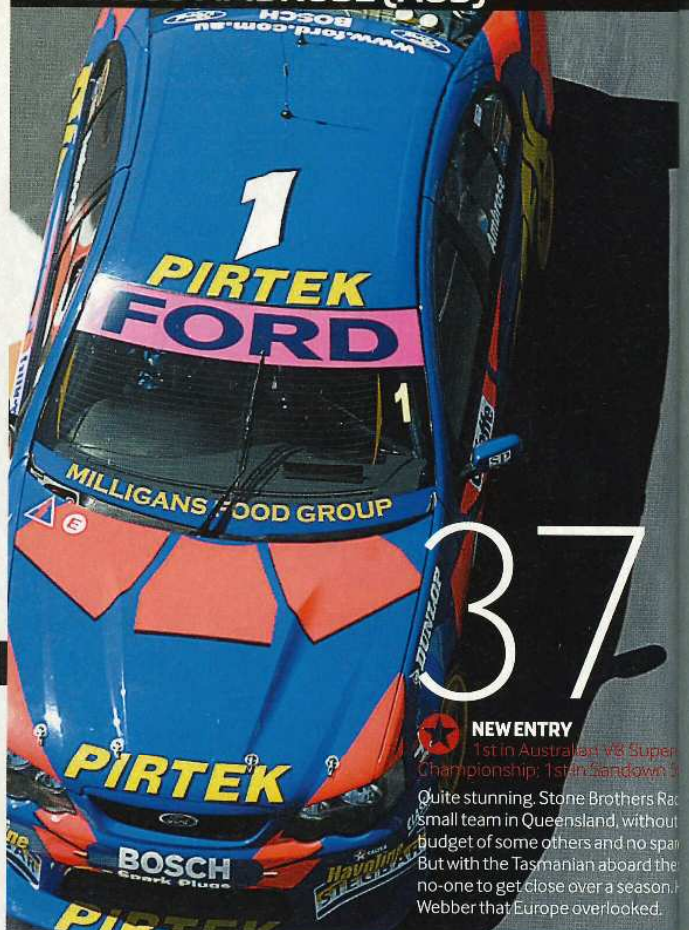


DALE EARNHARDT JR (USA)

38

UP 4
 5th in NASCAR Nextel Cup;
 1st in Daytona 500
 How much did that ALMS fire hold Earnhardt back? Until then he'd looked a certain title contender with the family team's Chevrolet. Even after that Dale Jr stayed in the hunt, but it was an increasingly forlorn hope against Kurt Busch and Jimmie Johnson.

MARCOS AMBROSE (AUS)



37

NEW ENTRY
 1st in Australian V8 Super Championship; 1st in Sandown 500
 Quite stunning. Stone Brothers Racing's small team in Queensland, without budget of some others and no spare parts, but with the Tasmanian aboard the no-one to get close over a season. In Europe overlooked.

FELIPE MASSA (BR)



36

NEW ENTRY
 12th in Formula 1 World Championship
 Towards the season's end there were finally signs that Massa was developing into the driver his obvious talent warrants. Having Fisichella blow his doors off most of the year may have made him look inwards. Certainly the promise shown at Monza was vindicated in a big way at Interlagos.

CARLOS SAINZ (E)



35

DOWN 15
 4th in World Rally Championship
 At the age of 42, the great Spaniard retires from the sport with his head held high. He won in Argentina to set a new all-time win record of 26, helped Citroën to a second consecutive world manufacturers' title and claimed fourth in the drivers' championship.



KURT BUSCH (USA)

34



UP9

1st in NASCAR Nextel Cup

Looking anything but the image of the grizzled NASCAR superstar, scrawny kid Busch played the bizarre points system to perfection to take his first Nextel Cup title. The Roush Ford driver wasn't the fastest man around, but at least he won three times – better than Kenseth last year.

BUBBLING UNDER TOP 10

F3000, WORLD SERIES, IPS



- 1 **VITANTONIO LIUZZI (I)**
1st in Formula 3000 International Championship
- 2 **HEIKKI KOVALAINEN (FIN)**
1st in World Series by Nissan
- 3 **RICHARD LYONS (GB)**
1st in Formula Nippon Championship
- 4 **ANDRE LOTTERER (D)** pictured above
2nd in Formula Nippon Championship
- 5 **TIAGO MONTEIRO (P)**
2nd in World Series by Nissan
- 6 **JONNY REID (NZ)**
4th in Euro 3000 Series
- 7 **ENRICO TOCCACELO (I)**
2nd in Formula 3000 International Championship
- 8 **ALEX LLOYD (GB)**
6th in Euro 3000 Series
- 9 **PJ CHESSON (USA)**
4th in Infiniti Pro Series
- 10 **JON FOGARTY (USA)**
1st in Toyota Atlantic Championship



ANDY PRIAULX (GB)

33



NEW ENTRY

1st in European Touring Car Championship

Like Ambrose in Australia, fellow ex-Alan Docking F3 driver Priaulx did wonders with a smaller team to grab the title from under the noses of favoured BMW team Schnitzer. A great underdog achievement, not just from Priaulx but from the modest Racing Bart Mampaey team in Belgium.

IT'S THE age-old (well, three years old anyway) problem. Which series is more competitive? Formula 3000 International or World Series by Nissan.

On balance, we reckon the World Series *just* shades it for 2004. So why have we rated Liuzzi higher than Kovalainen?

It's close. Liuzzi didn't have very strong opposition (runner-up Enrico Toccacelo has, for example, been around the F3/F3000 level for seven years now), and Toccacelo frequently gave his fellow Italian plenty of pressure before often losing time during his pitstop. But Liuzzi so seldom made mistakes during his seven-wins-out-of-10 season.

Kovalainen, meanwhile, took a few races before getting his first win in the World Series. From then on he was clearly The Man, but often his rivals tripped over themselves and also the championship took place on less challenging circuits (how can it be called a World Series when six of the nine rounds take place on the Iberian peninsula?).

Of their respective challengers, Tiago Monteiro took five wins in the World Series to Toccacelo's one in F3000, so the Portuguese gets the verdict between these two.

Formula Nippon was probably the most competitive series at this level, with Richard Lyons, André Lotterer, Yuji Ide and Benoît Tréluyer covered by just three points. Lyons was easily the fastest in qualifying, but Lotterer would race through from lowly midfield positions to put himself into title contention. Both men are big talents.

Euro 3000 produced some good talent too. Champion Nicky Pastorelli was in his second year in the series; runner-up Fabrizio del Monte in his third; while Norbert Siedler has been at a similar level for a while. More impressive were John Village's duo, Jonny Reid and Alex Lloyd. Kiwi Reid won the NZ Formula Ford title in early 2003 and then raced an old Reynard F3000 car in Australian Formula Holden for the rest of the year. So for him to achieve the results he did in his first season in Europe was outstanding. Look out for him in future. Same goes for Lloyd, a great driver to watch but who needs to make fewer mistakes.

It was a struggle to decide the last two spots. Sprintcar graduate PJ Chesson joined the IPS late, but from that point on his results were better than those of champion Thiago Medeiros. Jon Fogarty, meanwhile, won the Toyota Atlantic title for a second time by pipping Ryan Dalziel, who should shine in Champ Cars next year.

OLIVIER PANIS (F)



32

DOWN 8
14th in F1 World Championship

Even in his final year Panis was still quick enough to see off his team-mate, but in truth it was a scrappy season for him. He didn't respond well to the car's failings and induced quite a few of them himself. And he often ruined his race chances in the opening seconds.



AJ ALLMENDINGER (USA)

NEW ENTRY
6th in Champ Car World Series

The USA's most blazingly brilliant talent for a decade, Allmendinger went Champ Cars with RuSPORT, a rookie year for driver and team. He didn't win, but he outqualified a team-mate who'd been a title contender in '03 in all 14 road/street rounds, sometimes by more than a second. Okay, Michel Jourdain Jr isn't a superstar, but AJ will be.

30

DARIO FRANCHETTI (GB)



31

RE-ENTRY
4th in Champ Car Series

This was effectively Franchetti's maiden year in the IRL, following on from his injury-infested 2003, and he took time to pick up the pace. But two mid-season wins showed that he'll undoubtedly be a title contender for '05 with Andretti Green Racing. Still a star.



ANTONIO PIZZONIA (BR)

NEW ENTRY
15th in F1 World Championship

The opportunities arising from Ralf Schumacher's injury allowed Pizzonia to begin repairing the damage to his reputation caused by his half-season at Jag in '03. After a shaky start he put in some very convincing showings, particularly in Hungary, where he was faster than Montoya despite a heavier car.

29

HEIKKI KOVALAINEN (FIN)

28



RE-ENTRY

1st in World Series by Nissan
1st in Race of Champions

Kovalainen is a superstar waiting to happen, that much is clear from his season of brilliance. Even so, his win strike-rate (six from 18) with Pons Racing was surprisingly low, but he *did* beat Schuey and Loeb in Paris!

PROTOTYPE TOP 10

LMES, ALMS, GRAND-AM



1 ALLAN McNISH (GB)

3rd in Le Mans Endurance Series; 1st in Sebring 12 Hours

2 JJ LEHTO (FIN)

1st in American Le Mans Series; 3rd in Le Mans 24 Hours; 2nd in Sebring 12 Hours

3 MARCO WERNER (D)

1st in American Le Mans Series; 3rd in Le Mans 24 Hours; 2nd in Sebring 12 Hours

4 NICOLAS MINASSIAN (F)

7th in Le Mans Endurance Series

5 JOHNNY HERBERT (GB)

1st in Le Mans Endurance Series; 2nd in Le Mans 24 Hours; 3rd in Sebring 12 Hours

6 MAX ANGELELLI (I)

4th in Grand-Am Championship

7 ANDY WALLACE (GB) pictured above

3rd in American Le Mans Series;

3rd in Grand-Am Championship

8 PIERRE KAFFER (D)

3rd in Le Mans Endurance Series; 1st in Sebring 12 Hours

9 SCOTT PRUETT (USA)

1st in Grand-Am Championship

10 RINALDO CAPELLO (I)

1st in Le Mans 24 Hours; 5th in Le Mans Endurance Series

WHEN YOU have such a roster of talent as occupies the seats of the various Audi R8s, this is always going to be a tough one to call. In particular, Allan McNish, JJ Lehto, Marco Werner and Johnny Herbert all did great things in the all-conquering German prototype. So did Tom Kristensen, but we're excluding him because he only competed twice this year in the prototype ranks, at Le Mans and in the Monza 1000Km.

McNish, on his return to sportscars from Formula 1, gets it for the same reasons as explained in the overall top 50. Paired predominantly this year with surprise package Pierre Kaffer, he was unlucky to lose the LMES title owing to the German's major slip-up in the final round, the Spa 1000Km.

The ever-consistent Johnny Herbert and Jamie Davies were there to take advantage, although the form of Davies was a tad disappointing this season.

Lehto and Werner had opposition only from the Dyson Racing Lolas in the ALMS, but they did a fantastic job in the Champion Racing R8 and there was *very* little to choose between the two. Lehto, though, just had the edge on pulling something special out of the bag when necessary.

In among the Audi boys is Nicolas Minassian. The Frenchman was superquick in Creation's DBA4-Zytek and should be an established top-liner at this level. On the evidence of his outing in the works Zytek at Silverstone, the same goes for underrated Brit Robbie Kerr.

The cars might look like British Clubmans racers on steroids, but there's no doubt that the low-tech Grand-Am series has massive momentum at the moment. Some strong teams and an increasingly impressive driver line-up battled out the 2004 season. Fiery Max Angelelli, in the works Riley-Pontiac, is rated most highly here, although it was countryman Max Papis and American veteran Scott Pruett who took the title in the Chip Ganassi Racing Riley-Lexus.

Andy Wallace also had a strong season in Grand-Am. Co-driver Milka Duno wasn't anywhere near the Brit on pace, but somehow they won twice in their Crawford-Pontiac. To that Wallace added some strong ALMS outings for Dyson. Team-mates James Weaver and Butch Leitzinger finished ahead in the ALMS points and just missed out on our top 10 rankings – this time!

JEFF GORDON (USA)

27



NEW ENTRY

This was the multiple champion's most convincing season for some time and Gordon had a great campaign in his Hendrick Motorsports Chevy to take six poles and five wins. When things are right there are still few to touch him.





26

VITANTONIO LIUZZI (I)

NEW ENTRY
 2nd in F3000 (lower ranked)
 Speedwise there was little to choose between Liuzzi's 2004 achievements and those at the same team (Arden) of Björn Wirdheim in '03. The Italian scarcely erred on his way to seven wins — but that was against probably the lowest-quality field in F3000 history.

DAN WHELDON (GB)



24

NEW ENTRY
 2nd in IRL IndyCar Series,
 3rd in Indy 500
 Wild? Dangerous? Wheldon did a good job in laying those accusations to rest in 2004 with an amazingly consistent season at Andretti Green. Team-mate Tony Kanaan was out of reach, but Wheldon was in the top four in each of the last seven races...



GARY PAFFETT (GB)

25

RE-ENTRY
 2nd in DTM
 In his first season with the crack AMG squad, Paffett stole the thunder of Mercedes talisman Bernd Schneider and would-be champ Christijan Albers in brilliant style. And Alesi didn't get near him. You don't do that without being seriously talented.

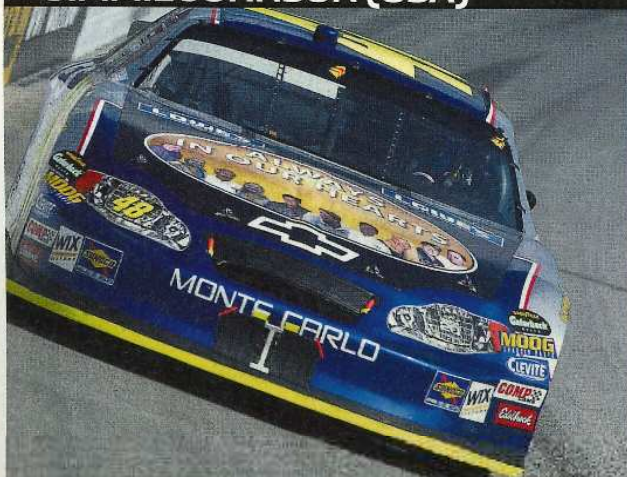
TOM KRISTENSEN (DK)



23

UPS
 1st in Le Mans 24 Hours;
 4th in DTM
 It's now six wins for Kristensen at Le Mans, surely the greatest enduro driver of his generation. And he showed that his sprint racing isn't too shabby either — in his first season of tin-tops since 2000, Tom was a winner for Audi here too.

JIMMIE JOHNSON (USA)



22

UP 7
 2nd in NASCAR Nextel Cup
 Johnson was the Ryan Newman of 2004 — eight wins but no title. Armed with his Hendrick Motorsports Chevy, he bounced back from a disastrous start to the Chase for the Championship to lose out to Busch by the skin of his teeth.

MARKKO MARTIN (EST)

20

✓ **DOWN 6**
3rd in World Rally Championship

He wound up third in the championship with three wins, but there is a nagging suspicion that Märtin could have taken the fight to Loeb but for his massive shunt on Rally Argentina. In the events afterwards he struggled with blurred vision and inconsistent results, but he allayed all doubts with two dominant runs in Corsica and Spain.



BUDDY RICE (USA)

21

★ **NEW ENTRY**
3rd in IRL IndyCar Series;
1st in Indy 500

Shame on those Champ Car teams who overlooked Rice after he won the Toyota Atlantic series. Their loss is the gain of the IRL, and more specifically Rahal Letterman Racing. Rice, with three wins, was fast and hard, but still a little rough round the edges.



HELIO CASTRONEVES (BR)

19

✓ **DOWN 1**
4th in IRL IndyCar Series

In his season of adversity (with Toyota lacking against Honda), Castroneves's reputation was, if anything, heightened. This season he saw off Sam Hornish Jr, his twice-champion team-mate at Penske, and took a run of four successive poles before his final-round win.

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TAKUMA SATO (J)

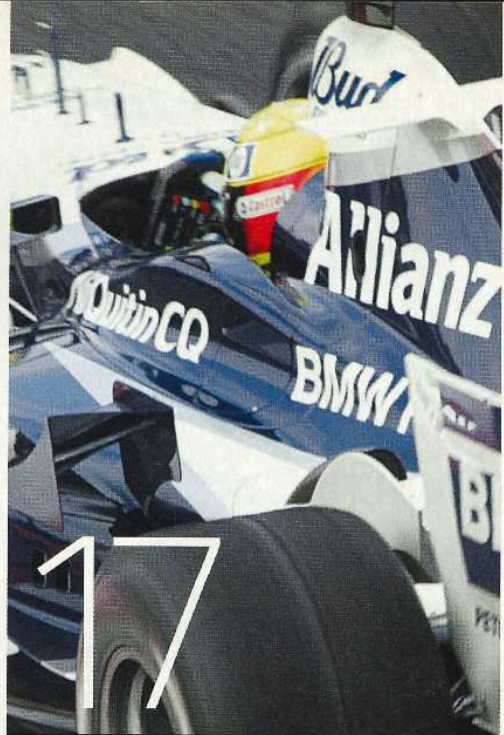
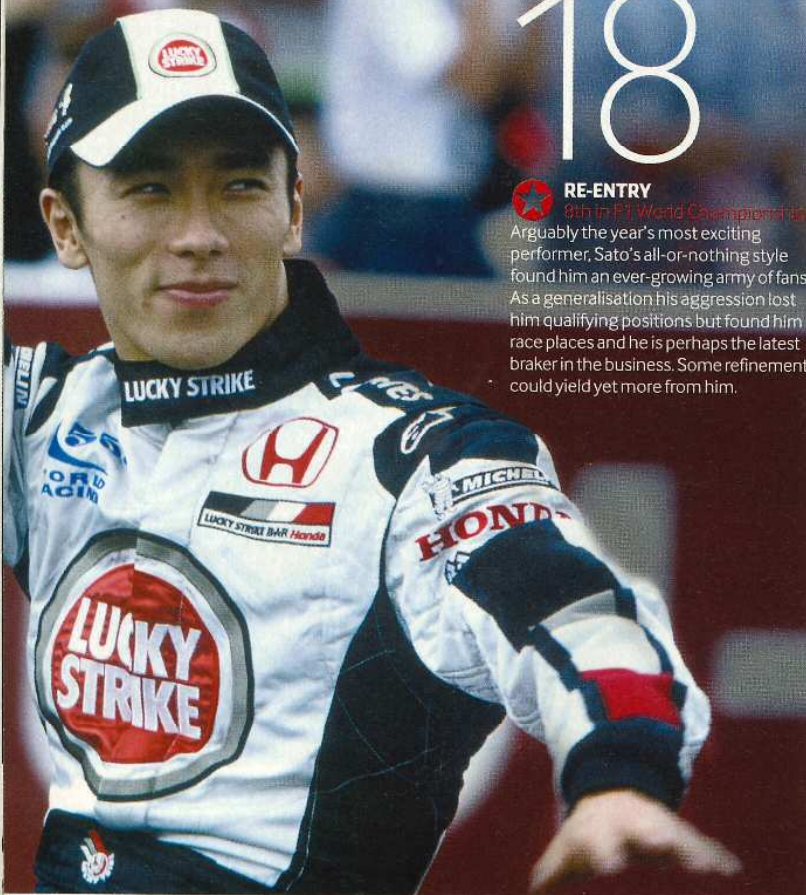
18



RE-ENTRY

9th in F1 World Championship

Arguably the year's most exciting performer, Sato's all-or-nothing style found him an ever-growing army of fans. As a generalisation, his aggression lost him qualifying positions but found him race places and he is perhaps the latest braker in the business. Some refinement could yield yet more from him.



17

RALF SCHUMACHER (D)



DOWN 5

9th in F1 World Championship

There were two Ralfs this year: the uninterested early-season one; and the one who came alive at Montréal and looked once more the formidable driver he can be. A week later he landed himself in hospital. Happily, the driver who returned three months on was definitely the Montréal-spec one.

MATTIAS EKSTROM (S)

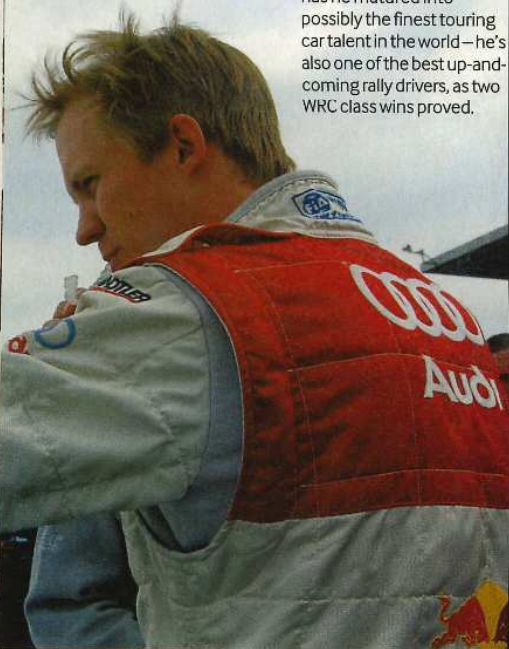
16



NEW ENTRY

1st in DTM

Everyone loves an underdog and Ekström was perceived as that as Audi, in its first year back in the DTM as a works operation, vanquished Merc. Not only has he matured into possibly the finest touring car talent in the world—he's also one of the best up-and-coming rally drivers, as two WRC class wins proved.



NICK HEIDFELD (D)

15



UP 20

18th in F1 World Championship

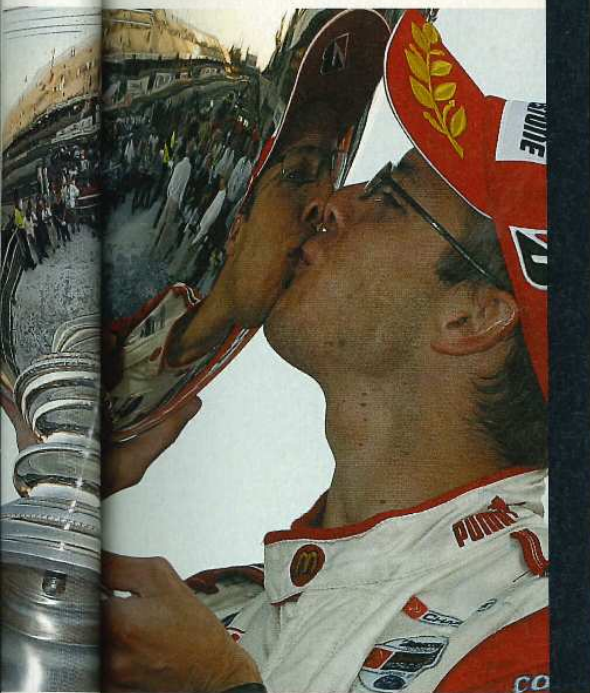
All he could hope to do in an '04 Jordan was take the occasional snipe at an underperforming Toyota or Jag. Whenever this opportunity presented itself, Heidfeld was there taking advantage as a guy who was wringing everything the car had to give. It was so easy to miss him, but so wrong to do so.

SEBASTIEN BOURDAIS (F)

UP14

1st in Champ Car World Series

Bourdis showed himself to be probably the out-and-out fastest racing driver in the world outside Formula 1 this year. Okay, the Champ Car opposition was weaker, but Bourdis was nearly always faster than such as Junqueira and Tracy, who had the same chances. That puts him ahead of Kanaan, who benefited from the Andretti Green IRL steamroller.



TONY KANAAN (BR)

14

UP5

1st in IRL IndyCar Series;
2nd in Indy 500

You've heard all the stats, but they're the boring stuff. Kanaan's IRL title was the story of a gracious, honourable man completing a climb from penniless near obscurity to become the toast of US open-wheel racing. He's a legend – and not just for the size of his nose!



JARNO TRULLI (I)



12

UP4

6th in F1 World Championship

For most of the season's first half, Trulli was a driver reborn. The searing qualifying pace was still there, this time backed up by a previously elusive consistency in races. His Monaco victory was a stunner – he was simply The Man all weekend. Then he began negotiating and it all went wrong.

MARK WEBBER (AUS)

11

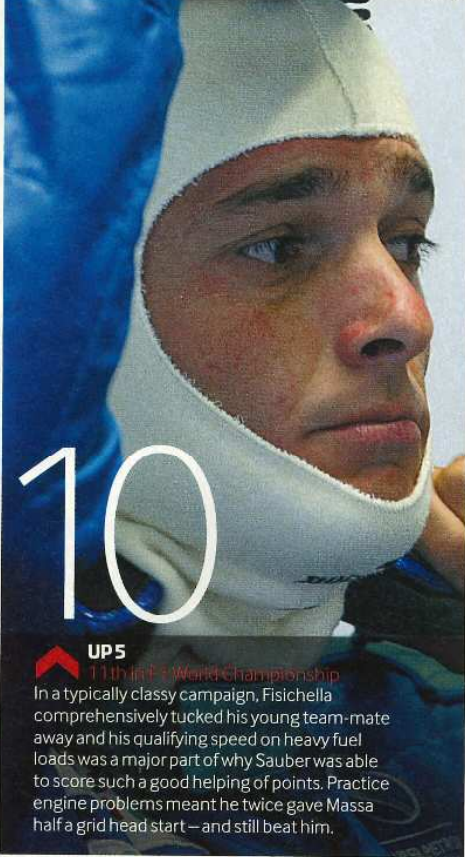
DOWN1

13th in F1
World Championship

Again showed great leadership qualities and brought the team around him. Inside the car Webber routinely squeezed what was there to be squeezed and early in the year – before the power battle left Cosworth well behind – that included putting the R5 onto the front row.



GIANCARLO FISICHELLA (I)



10

UP5

11th in F1 World Championship

In a typically classy campaign, Fisichella comprehensively tucked his young team-mate away and his qualifying speed on heavy fuel loads was a major part of why Sauber was able to score such a good helping of points. Practice engine problems meant he twice gave Massa half a grid head start — and still beat him.

RUBENS BARRICHELLO (BR)



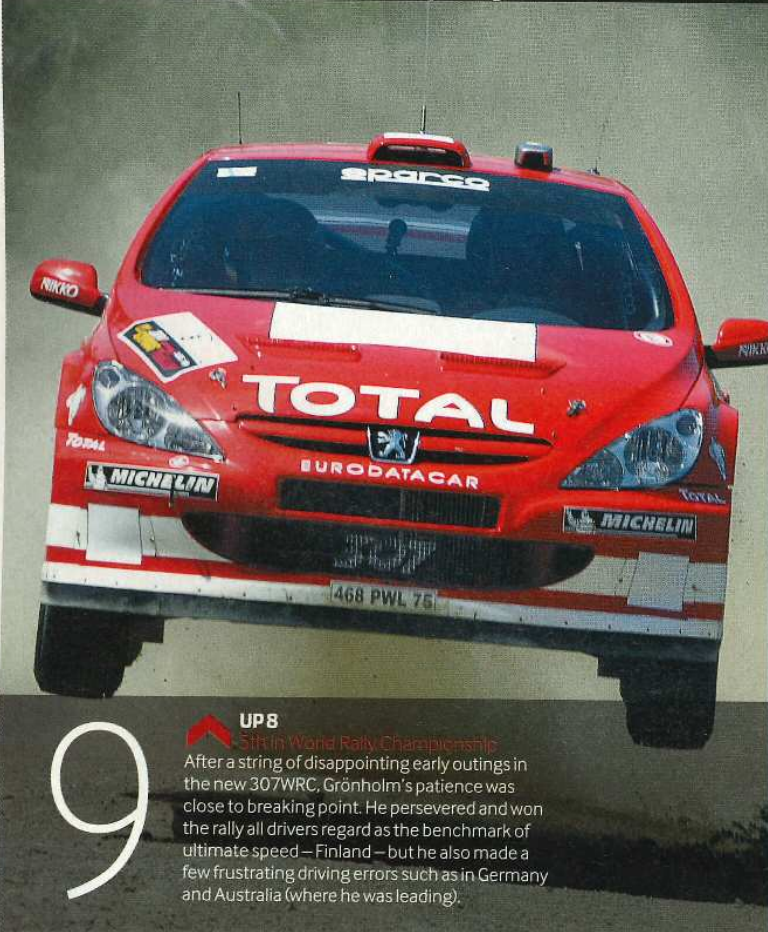
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UP1

2nd in F1 World Championship

Barrichello's year only really came alive at around the halfway point, once he'd got his head around the Ferrari F2004. But thereafter he gave his team leader several frights, notably in Montréal, Indy, Silverstone and Interlagos. At Indy he even outqualified Michael despite a significantly heavier fuel load.

MARCUS GRONHOLM (FIN)

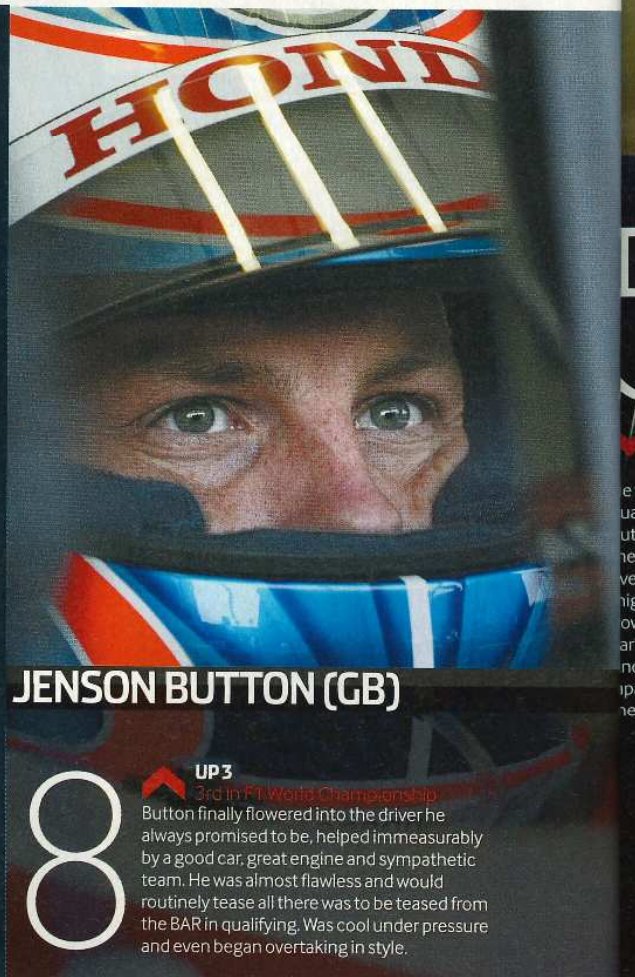


9

UP8

5th in World Rally Championship

After a string of disappointing early outings in the new 307WRC, Grönholm's patience was close to breaking point. He persevered and won the rally all drivers regard as the benchmark of ultimate speed — Finland — but he also made a few frustrating driving errors such as in Germany and Australia (where he was leading).



JENSON BUTTON (GB)

8

UP3

3rd in F1 World Championship

Button finally flowered into the driver he always promised to be, helped immeasurably by a good car, great engine and sympathetic team. He was almost flawless and would routinely tease all there was to be teased from the BAR in qualifying. Was cool under pressure and even began overtaking in style.

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA (CO)

6

NOMOVE

5th in F1 World Championship

Given the generally uncompetitive state of his car, Montoya's season was all about the little moments of genius that remind you he is probably the greatest passer we've ever seen. Schuey didn't even realise there was a passing place he had to defend into the chicane at Spa, but there was JPM alongside and through.



FERNANDO ALONSO (E)

5

DOWN 3

4th in F1 World Championship

He was often shaded in qualifying by Trulli this year, but in the races Alonso was the same relentless force as ever. He is the only driver who might challenge Schuey in how much he wrings from a car's potential on a Sunday. And his flawless drives in Japan and Brazil flattered the Renault massively.



NON-WRC TOP 10

JWRC, PCWRC, NATIONAL



- 1 PER-GUNNAR ANDERSSON (S)** pictured above
1st in Junior World Rally Championship
2 NIALL MCSHEA (GB)
1st in Production Car World Rally Championship
3 STEPHANE SARRAZIN (F)
1st in French Rally Championship
4 GUY WILKS (GB)
3rd in Junior World Rally Championship
5 ALISTER MCRAE (GB)
5th in Production Car World Rally Championship
6 DANIEL CARLSSON (S)
13th in World Rally Championship
7 JANI PAASONEN (FIN)
3rd in Production Car World Rally Championship
8 NICOLAS BERNARDI (F)
2nd in Junior World Rally Championship
9 KRIS MEEKE (GB)
7th in Junior World Rally Championship
10 MARK HIGGINS (GB)
14th in Production Car World Rally Championship

PER-GUNNAR ANDERSSON was a revelation in this year's Junior World Rally Championship and tops this category, for those rally drivers competing outside of the works teams on the WRC or in national championships. The Swede was regularly the fastest of the Suzuki quartet, but his real achievement this season came on the Spanish asphalt. Having only contested a handful of sealed-surface events, he held his nerve and kept his Ignis on the straight and narrow to take the title on the final round.

Nerve was something Niall McShea needed — but often before the Production Car rounds had even begun. That the Subaru Impreza-driving Northern Irish star made each event was a fiscal miracle. The groundwork for his title started with a solid second — ahead of chief rival Alister McRae — in Corsica and finished off down under as he profited from the Scotsman's misfortune.

Another impressive Impreza performance, this time in WRC form, came from rally novice and former F1 driver Stéphane Sarrazin. In his first full season in the sport he clinched the French title and topped his year off with a staggering fourth overall in Catalunya, ahead of Petter Solberg's official Subaru.

Top Brit in the JWRC was Guy Wilks, who until he went off the road on the final morning in Spain looked set to become the fourth winner of the World Super 1600 title. His Catalan crash was the low point but wins in Greece and Britain went some way to making up for his disappointment.

Not an awful lot could make up for McRae's Oz letdown. Like Wilks, a world title beckoned until the final leg of the final event, when the transmission on his Impreza let him down.

Daniel Carlsson had emerged from the thick of the 2003 JWRC battle with a semi-official Peugeot contract for this year. He only got one shot in a 307WRC, when he went off the road in Britain. But he made up for that with strong showings elsewhere in a Peugeot 206.

Jani Paasonen is in a similar situation to Carlsson. He missed out on PC success but sixth in Finland in a works Skoda has won him a part programme with the Czechs for next year.

Frenchman Nicolas Bernardi won where he was expected to — Monte and Spain — but also flattened his gravel learning curve as the season unfolded.

Kris Meeke and Mark Higgins each endured a difficult season with little to show for their efforts.

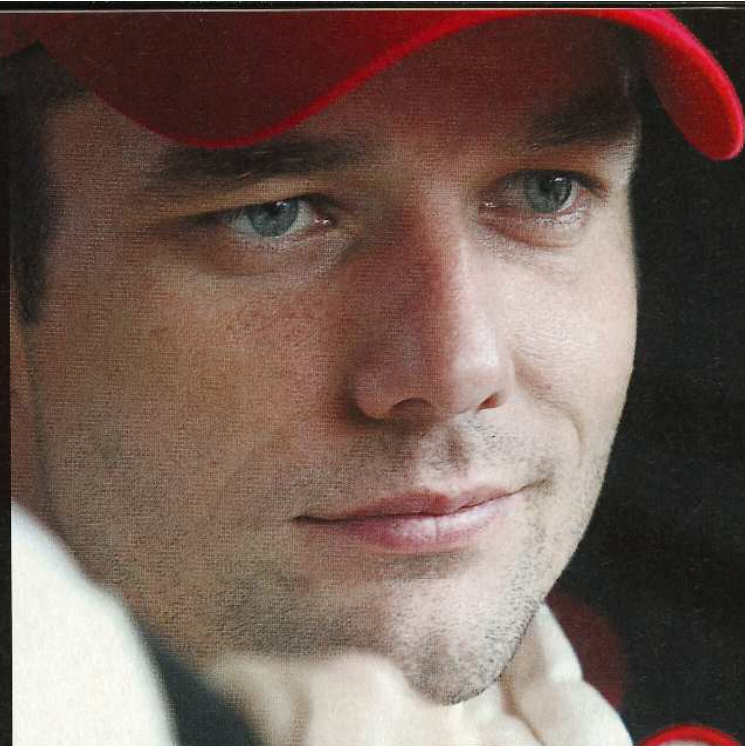
PETTER SOLBERG (N)

4

NO MOVE

2nd in World Rally Championship

Lost his world crown, but Solberg can take solace from five wins and the fact that his reputation as the fastest – as opposed to most consistent – rally driver in the world is intact. Need evidence? Think back to the last half of the penultimate stage on Rally GB, Margam Park, where he settled a rally-long battle with Loeb in his favour.



SEBASTIEN LOEB (F)

3

UP 2

1st in World Rally Championship

Six victories in a 16-event season was impressive. That he achieved it on surfaces ranging from the snow, ice and asphalt of Monte Carlo, through to the snow of Sweden, dirt of Cyprus, Turkey and Australia and asphalt of Germany underlines just how complete a driver Loeb has become.

KIMI RAIKKONEN (FIN)

2

UP 1

7th in F1 World Championship

The searing speed and icy calm were always there, just waiting for McLaren to give him a car to demonstrate as much. That car was the MP4-19B and from then on Räikkönen was the same formidable Schumacher-scarer that we'd seen so often in the previous couple of years.





MICHAEL SCHUMACHER (D)

1

NOMOVE

1st in F1 World Championship

This season was simple confirmation of the colossus we've become so familiar with over the years. There was the same startling ability to nail a lap from cold – see Melbourne and his first lap of the year for a classic illustration of outpsyching the competition for the rest of the season. The same angel's

judgement in marginal situations – see how he kept himself just out of reach while treading a delicate line of speed and brake conservation in Bahrain. The same awesome speed around the pitstops – see Imola and how he turned a 1sec deficit to Button into a 5sec lead within just a few laps. The same staggering speed in the rain – in the wet practice of Suzuka he was whole

seconds per sector faster than even his team-mate. This is arguably the greatest team the sport has ever seen and Michael is the absolute centre point to it, the phenomenon from which it derives its energy. Until the title was clinched, his hunger and commitment never wavered, though thereafter his consistency dropped off. There was his lamentable performance in China and a

very low key one in Brazil. But in between there was his customary magnificence in Japan. Read it as one of his little blips, not a pointer to the future. *Top 50* written by Marcus Simmons, Mark Hughes, Jim Holder and David Evans. Additional help in compiling: John McIlroy, Charles Bradley, Andrew van de Burgt, Gary Watkins, Tim Scott, Laurence Foster and David Malsher.



TOURING CARS TOP 20

DTM, ETCC, AUSSIE V8, BTCC



1 MATTIAS EKSTROM (S)

1st in DTM

2 GARY PAFFETT (GB)

2nd in DTM

3 ANDY PRIAULX (GB)

1st in European Touring Car Championship

4 MARCOS AMBROSE (AUS)

1st in Australian V8 Supercar Championship;
1st in Sandown 500

5 GABRIELE TARQUINI (I)

3rd in European Touring Car Championship

6 CHRISTIJAN ALBERS (NL)

3rd in DTM

7 GREG MURPHY (NZ)

4th in Australian V8 Supercar Championship;
1st in Bathurst 1000

8 JAMES THOMPSON (GB) pictured above

1st in British Touring Car Championship;
9th in European Touring Car Championship

9 JASON PLATO (GB)

3rd in British Touring Car Championship

10 DIRK MULLER (D)

2nd in European Touring Car Championship;
1st in Nürburgring 24 Hours

11 RICKARD RYDELL (S)

10th in European Touring Car Championship

12 JORG MULLER (D)

4th in European Touring Car Championship;
1st in Nürburgring 24 Hours

13 RICK KELLY (AUS)

6th in Australian V8 Supercar Championship;
1st in Bathurst 1000

14 YVAN MULLER (F)

2nd in British Touring Car Championship

15 RICHARD GÖRANSSON (S)

1st in Swedish Touring Car Championship

16 TOM KRISTENSEN (DK)

4th in DTM

17 RUSSELL INGALL (AUS)

2nd in Australian V8 Supercar Championship;
2nd in Sandown 500

18 ANTHONY REID (GB)

4th in British Touring Car Championship

19 BERND SCHNEIDER (D)

6th in DTM

20 JASON BRIGHT (AUS)

3rd in Australian V8 Supercar Championship

THIS IS a top 20 this year, mainly because the three major tin-top series (DTM, ETCC, Australian V8s) showed unprecedented levels of competition and some of the national series (British, Swedish) were extremely strong.

There was plenty of argument here over the respective merits of those aforementioned 'big three' – and therefore which driver would be number one. Ultimately, the DTM has a strong field of international drivers (something Australian V8s still lack) and a decent length of races (one hour, opposed to the puny made-for-TV 20-minute thrashes of the ETCC).

Both Ekström and Paffett moved the DTM goalposts further away from the old guard in favour of youth. Will the likes of Schneider ever win the title again? Priaulx and Ambrose both did outstanding jobs against bigger-buck rivals.

Jason Plato can take pride in being the highest-ranked SEAT driver (above Rickard Rydell). He was superb in the BTCC, but James Thompson's additional ETCC outings helped him prevail. Our surprise inclusion here is Richard Göransson, Swedish champ in his first full year of touring cars – he's an international star of the future if ever there was one.

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THE GREATEST ALL-ROUNDERS



STIRLING MOSS

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

FORMULA 1

Championship runner-up in 1955, '56, '57, '58

Third in '59, '60, '61

16 wins, 16 pole positions, 19 fastest laps in 66 starts

RALLYING

Second in 1952 Monte Carlo Rally

First in class on 1952 Alpine Rally

SPORTSCARS

Won seven Tourist Trophies

between 1951 and '61

Won Mille Miglia, 1955

Won Targa Florio, 1955

Won 13 World Sportscar

Championship races

RECORD-BREAKING

Five records for 1101-1500cc cars in

1957 at 245.64mph for flying kilometre

FORMULA 2

Won 1959 British championship

Stirling Moss's failure to win the world championship merely devalued the title. When his career ended against a Goodwood earth bank, he had been indisputably the top driver in Formula 1 for more than four years

ALL PICS: LAT ARCHIVE

MOTORSPORT'S GREATEST ALL-ROUNDERS

Stirling Moss and Mario Andretti are legends who transferred their talents across a vast array of motorsport disciplines. They tell DAVID MALSHER how — and why — they did it

MARIO ANDRETTI

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

FORMULA 1

World champion, 1978

Third in 1977

12 wins, 18 pole positions, 10 fastest laps in 128 starts

CHAMP CARS

52 wins and 67 poles in 407 starts

'RALLYING'

Won Pikes Peak, 1969

NASCAR

Won Daytona 500, 1967

SPORTSCARS

Won eight World Sportscar

Championship races

DIRTCARS

Won 1974 title

FORMULA 5000

Runner-up in 1973 and '74

championships

IROC

Won 1979 title



Mario Andretti didn't compete in a full GP season until he was 37. A year later he became world champion with Lotus. He retired from full-time racing (in Champ Cars) in 1994 - at the age of 54

As Stirling Moss floored the throttle, the distinctive, sinister but oh-so-beautiful throb of straight-eight raised in pitch, 300bhp transferred to the rear wheels, screwed the scuffed Continentals into the asphalt for the millionth time and catapulted the Mercedes-Benz 300 SLR towards the forbidding crest, beyond which lay the next terrace of stone cottages, the next row of telegraph poles, the next pockmarked turn-in point, the next apex obscured by spectators.

At the wheel of a car capable of reaching 180mph, and on the most demanding course in the history of motorsport, Moss's concentration was too absolute to take in anything other than the road ahead, the feel of the car and the notes being relayed to him by his navigator, Denis Jenkinson. Nothing else mattered. The crowd was just a solid blur on the straights and a jumble of faces Stirling could hear yelling encouragement in the tight corners. No time to register any individual, but just feel the electric atmosphere.


If this was a Hollywood movie, though, there would come a point in the 1955 Mille Miglia, at one of the hairpins, when the engine noise and crowd hubbub would fade to background noise, an atmospheric keyboard would become the dominant sound and the action would switch to slow-mo. Then the camera, as if looking through the eyes of Moss, would scan into the out-of-focus crowd and register pin-sharp on one face, a skinny little Italian teenager, not whooping with crazed enthusiasm along with his compatriots but just watching with total absorption. That face would be staring intently into the cockpit, watching Stirling's hands on the

wheel, the minimalist three-dial dashboard, the stretched-arm driving style... Just a face in the crowd.

Almost 50 years on, that 15-year-old kid is a legend: Mario Andretti, born in Montona, near Trieste, saw that epic race and vowed to be a race driver. The year before, watching Alberto Ascari in the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, he had become a major fan of the man and the sport. Watching Moss win the Mille Miglia fanned the flames into a conflagration of desire. For Andretti there could be no other career. When Gigi, his father, moved the family to Pennsylvania in the USA a few months later to escape the iron grip of communism, Mario and twin brother Aldo were delighted to discover a half-mile dirt oval, Nazareth Speedway, within earshot of their new home. At the age of 18 the pair bought a wrecked 1948 Hudson from a junkyard, stripped it and rebuilt it using knowledge they had bought from Hudson's NASCAR star, Marshall Teague. Then they went racing.

"When we started, Aldo and I had confidence," says Mario, "but nothing to back that confidence up. No background of any kind, just what we'd read and what we'd seen. Already though, we were aware that not only do we have to be up to standard, the equipment we use has to be too."

They were - and so was the car: Mario won his first race.

That was 1958, a significant year too for Moss. Not only did he become a legend by finishing second in the Formula 1 World Championship for the fourth season in succession, but with Fangio's retirement he had indubitably become top man in grand prix racing. Tony Brooks was a frequent threat, Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins occasionally troublesome given a car advantage - but none of these compatriots had Stirling's all-consuming desire to succeed, to push beyond the limits. 

THE GREATEST ALL-ROUNDERS



Moss was possibly the greatest major sportscar driver of all time. Driving the Aston Martin DB3S at the Nürburgring in 1959, he made an even GP pace look average

MOSS'S GREATEST DRIVES

ON TWO HUGE – AND HUGELY DEMANDING – CIRCUITS, STIRLING SHOWED HOW HE COULD NOT ONLY DOMINATE BUT FIGHT BACK

FORMULA 1

The 1957 Pescara Grand Prix is the Moss classic. The 16-mile strip of road – two thirds of it comprised straightline blasts down to the coast and along the coast, the middle third a magical haul through villages in the surrounding hillside – amounted to a 10-minute lap.

Mid-August 1957, still reeling from the mindnumbing drubbing world champion Juan Manuel Fangio had handed out to one and all a fortnight earlier at the Nürburgring, the teams were greeted by furnace-like conditions. And Fangio's Maserati took pole by 10sec from a troubled Moss, who had found his car wandering on the straights as he nudged 170mph...

But on race day all was right. At the start Luigi Musso's Ferrari 801 made the best start from the outside of the front row, but Stirling's Vanwall trailed him and, climbing up the hill away from the pitstraight at the start of the second lap, he was firmly in the superior-handling Ferrari's slipstream and soon past. That he then disappeared from all pursuers, including Fangio, was Moss at his finest. That he eventually beat Fangio by 3min 14sec – ie, on a normal-length track he would have lapped him – is verging on the unreal.

OTHER – SPORTSCARS

Moss's epic performance in the Mercedes on the Mille Miglia in 1955

is one of the greatest stories this sport has ever produced. But you could say he maximised an advantage in that he had the methodical Mercedes preparation – and his own and navigator Denis Jenkinson's efforts – as the foundations of a superlative drive.

But the 1959 Nürburgring 1000Km was a different matter altogether. Moss and Jack Brabham had won the race for Aston Martin the year before and the company was in no hurry to defend its crown, having determined to concentrate on its F1 project and the Le Mans 24 Hours. So in '59 it was a token effort from Aston, the DBR1 to be driven by Moss and Jack Fairman. Against the Ferrari 250 Testa Rossa trio of Dan Gurney/Cliff Allison, Tony Brooks/Jean Behra and Phil Hill/Olivier Gendebien, few gave the British car a chance.

The stakes changed on lap one, when Stirling pulled out 15 seconds on Gurney and, by the time he handed over to Fairman after two hours, he had a five-minute lead. Fairman progressively allowed that advantage to dwindle and eventually he parked the car in a ditch. By the time he had extricated the Aston and given it back to Moss, they were a minute down on the Ferraris of Gendebien and Behra, but Moss made up this disadvantage in three 14-mile laps and that put him in the lead as the Ferrari pair pitted simultaneously. Moss pulled out three minutes before he too pitted and gave the car back to Fairman. By the time he returned to the cockpit the Aston was a minute down, but again Moss caught and passed the Italian cars within three laps and pulled away to win by half a minute.



Pescara: Fangio never saw this sight until he got back to the paddock

of the car and thus improve their skills still further. Moss's constant accumulation of experience at driving on the edge just extended the gap to his rivals.

"I would rather lose a race driving fast enough to win it than win a race driving slow enough to lose it," says Moss to explain his competitive nature. "But it was only after my career ended that I analysed where the speed had come from. At the time I just went out and did it. If I'd thought about it at the time, I'm sure I could have won a hell of a lot more races. And that goes for the technical side too. For example, when I first started using the Climax engines I was changing up at 6500rpm, which I felt was good for saving the engine, and it was a long time before I discovered its peak power was at 7500."

Suggest to Moss that, since the war, only Gilles Villeneuve, Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher have matched his need to be the fastest on every lap and he agrees before adding: "Gilles was a great driver, a fantastic driver, but some of his attempts to do the impossible bordered on the stupid, and as for Michael, I don't think he'd be alive if he raced in our day. He makes lots of mistakes but the equipment he has allows him to do that without hurting himself."

Sadly, Villeneuve, Senna and Schumacher were almost exclusively F1 drivers once they reached the top echelon. Teams and sponsors dictated it that way. In more relaxed contractual times, Moss wanted to be The Man in whatever category he drove. Over August and September 1956, for example, he raced Maserati 250F, 150S, 300S, Aston Martin DB3S, Cooper-Climax, Lotus 11 and Mercedes 300SL – and was a force in all of them. Ask what motivated him to give his all in each of them and he looks so nonplussed that you half-expect to get the reply, "Because it was a race, old boy."

Moss puts it another way: "I didn't like to race, I liked to win. So when, for example, I was racing the Austin-Healey at Sebring in 1955, okay, I was doing it because I thought Donald Healey was a good bloke, but I had the same motivation to win that day as I did at, say, Monaco in '61."

What unites Andreotti and Moss beyond their ability to step into any car and be quick was the need to prove they were the best. "Right from my first stock car race I had goals," says Mario. "I was never just in it for the thrill of speed. The overwhelming factor was a burning desire to win. At the end of every season I wanted to say, 'My career is much further on than last year'. Progress – that was all-important."

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Andretti remained
a major force in
Champ Cars
through the '80s
and early '90s. He
won the 1984
championship, but
there should have
been more and only
the direst luck
kept him from the
title in 1987 (right)



ANDRETTI'S GREATEST DRIVES

MARIO TURNED LOTUS AROUND IN ONE SEASON, BUT WHEN HE HAD A GREAT CAR TO START WITH HE COULD SIMPLY DISAPPEAR

That marked Andretti out from most of his rivals in stock car racing, because for him it was a means to an end: "The only reason I was driving stockers was that it was the only thing that seemed doable on the means we had. My objective was single-seaters, which at our level was midgets. All of the top Champ Car drivers of the time had started in midgets, and the minute I sat in one I felt so right. It was everything I was looking for. A stock car feels loose; you're playing with the wheel the whole time and it feels like you're going in slow motion. But a midget was like a laser in its precision."

This boy was in a hurry, though, to reach the top. Andretti decided the best way to make up for his lack of experience in any category was to learn who was the best and discover why. In his first midget race he followed one of the quick guys in practice heats, found he could keep up and easily made the finals. Moving up to sprint cars he did the same thing, using dirt-oval master Jud Larson as his template. Intriguingly, though, it led to Mario developing a style very much his own, using the whole track and being completely comfortable running the high groove: "What I tried to learn from the masters was how to set the car up to deal with a track whose conditions changed every three or four minutes. So I went and saw how the best guys were having their cars set up and copied that, and when I did that I discovered I could drive the car anywhere on the track."

His aim to race in Europe, to follow compatriot Dan Gurney's lead, also demanded that Mario learn about turning right as well as left. Which is why, when he overcame inferior equipment to beat Mark Donohue and win his first ever road-course race, at Lime Rock in '63, it gave him a bigger thrill than any previous victory: "I thought I was in heaven. Man, I felt like Fangio!"

Confidence further bolstered, Andretti needed little help from anyone when he graduated to Champ Cars. Immediately on the pace of series yardstick AJ Foyt, he beat him and everyone else to the 1965 and '66 titles.

Moss's talent was even more instinctive. As soon as he had his hands on a decent car, his own Maserati 250F, he became a major force, despite using 1000rpm less than the works cars in order to preserve the engine. He pays homage to his Mercedes team leader Fangio, and says that following in his wheeltracks in '55 taught him so much, but Stirling sells himself short. He'd have been no less great without Fangio's masterclass. ➔

FORMULA 1

Whichever way you look at it, Lotus came a hell of a long way in 1976. The previous season had been calamitous: the squad struggled between the five-year-old 72 and its replacement, the 76, which simply didn't work, and drivers Ronnie Peterson and Jacky Ickx had mustered a less-than-grand total of nine points.

At the start of '76, with the Lotus 77, it looked barely better. Andretti, in an apparent one-off drive for the team, collided with team-mate Peterson in the season opener. Three races later at Long Beach, with Peterson gone, Lotus saw one car fail to qualify, the other start 20th and retire. Andretti was in a pickle of his own: his hitherto full-time employer Vel's Parnelli Jones Racing had decided to quit F1 as of that race. Licking their wounds in a café in Long Beach the

next morning, Chapman and Andretti decided to get their act together.

With the team now galvanised into positivity, almost immediately the Lotus 77 made progress. Mario qualified second at Anderstorp and third at Brands. Then encouraging race results came too, with third places at Zandvoort and Mosport.

Then came Fuji. With the world's focus on the Hunt versus Lauda championship battle, Andretti got on with his job and pipped the pair of them to pole by 0.03sec and 0.3sec respectively. More impressive was the gap back to team-mate Nilsson of over 1.5sec — and a full 15 places.

After a poor start in monsoon conditions, Andretti wisely bided his time, let others screw their tyres or just plain screw up, nursed his shredding

rubber as the track dried, and came through to score Lotus's first GP win in more than two years. Perfect job to end a year of stunning progress.

OTHERS - CHAMP CARS

Taken in context, we shouldn't be surprised Andretti missed the milk in the 1987 Indy 500. For one thing his luck at Indy was traditionally appalling; he should have won anywhere between six and nine 500s in his 30 years of trying. Instead he had just one victory there. Secondly, look at his stats for 1987, a year riddled with unreliability from the Newman/Haas-run Lola-Chevrolet. Eight pole positions, more laps led than any of his rivals, but just five finishes from 15 starts (of which two were wins). Sixth place in the championship was dreadfully poor reward.

But the loss of the Indy 500 was the cruellest blow, without question. For the whole qualifying month of May he was paralysing the opposition and continued this domination into the race. A lap ahead and cruising... But that, amazingly, was the problem. With 23 laps to go his engine coughed and died. A valve spring had been broken by freak harmonics in the engine at the 'relaxed' revs Mario had been running in fifth gear. Had he gone faster or stayed in fourth — worked the engine harder, in other words — he'd have won. And by two laps. Now that's bad luck!



Andretti at Fuji in '76: the Lotus is on slicks, so it must be in qualifying...

VERSATILE FIVE

THE OTHER TOP ALL-ROUNDERS

JIMMY CLARK

He could do anything in an F1 car, or indeed any car. Aside from winning 25 grands prix and 19 non-championship F1 races, he could step into a touring car, a sportscar or a Champ Car and make it dance to his tune. That's how he beat the US aces at Indy in '65 and the touring car experts to the '64 Saloon Car title. But perhaps most remarkable was when he set three fastest stage times on the '66 RAC Rally.



Right: Andretti and Bruce McLaren won the Sebring 12 Hours in '67 with the Ford MkIV. Far right: Mario won the Champ Car title in 1965, '66 (pictured) and '69 driving a Hawk



JACKY ICKX

Forever associated with six Le Mans 24 Hour victories. But don't forget that he won 34 other sportscar races, has finished second in the Paris-Dakar Rally and won the 1977 Bathurst 1000 touring car race. In F1 he could match his era's yardsticks, Jackie Stewart and Jochen Rindt. And at the Nürburgring, or on a wet track, he had no peers.



Right: Even in 1952, Moss was versatile. He finished second in the Monte Carlo Rally driving a Sunbeam Talbot 90. Far right: Moss averaged almost 100mph on the '55 Mille Miglia



DAN GURNEY

A true F1 ace who rarely had his backside in the right car at the right time, Gurney possessed not only a huge talent but a malleable one which could extract the most out of any machinery. If the car survived he could beat Clark in an F1 car, Parnell Jones in a TransAm car, Richard Petty in a NASCAR, Foyt in a Champ Car, Reyson in a CanAm car, Jack Sears in a touring car, Chris Amon in a sportscar...



This is how Moss explains his driving style: "All the cars I've driven were different, but all of them had similar basic traits, which is why it doesn't matter if the car has its engine in the front or the back. Making the change from a front-engined Vanwall to a rear-engined Cooper was no bigger a leap than going from the Cooper to a Lotus.

"If a car has a natural tendency to understeer, you can put it into a corner at a certain angle and provoke it to oversteer by applying the throttle earlier, and if it oversteers you ease it in and try to keep it neutral. Straightlining the corner as much as possible, putting as shallow an angle on the turning wheels as possible, is an imperative in any car. If you've ever tried to push a car with its front wheels turned, you'll feel how much easier it is if the wheels are in the straight-ahead position. Then apply that to racing speeds and you can see how much time and speed tyre-scrub can lose you.

"Look at those Jaguar MkVIIIs. I had to have one leg sticking out, propping myself against the door because they rolled so much I was slipping along the bench seat. But it still handled like a racing car. Every car's handling characteristics are basically similar and it just takes different things from you as the driver to get what you want out of them. If you take a girl on a date, you treat her differently than when you date her mother or her grandmother; you just have to know how to handle each of them. Similarly, every car gives out a message, and to get the best out of it you treat it according to the message."

Andretti concurs: "To win in every category you've got to have that desire to succeed - but the other important thing is to keep an open mind. I did the first two races of '65 in the [front-engined] roadster - led the first, finished second in the other, but then switched for Indy to the [rear-engined] Hawk. And yet despite being a rookie, my first attempt at a qualifying run put me up into the top three, mixing it with Jimmy Clark, AJ Foyt and Dan Gurney. Even though everything was different about the handling, once I got the Hawk how I wanted it I was someone to be reckoned with. The rear-engined car had the potential to go quicker through the turns, so if you turned in at roadster pace you could feel the rear-engined car inviting you to go quicker. If it feels right you can push and push to the limit of the car. And once you get there it gives you messages telling you what it needs to make it go even quicker, and that's when you start chasing those last fractions of a second to fine-tune it.

"That's the other important factor if you want to be successful in every type of car: acquiring and using technical knowledge. You've gotta give 100 per cent at the wheel, but

also 100 per cent on the technical side. When Holman & Moody asked me to drive their Ford for the 1967 Daytona 500, I asked them for a basic set-up they knew worked and I'd adapt it to how I wanted it. I changed it from having a little bit of understeer, adjusted the ride-height, softened the anti-roll bar and adjusted the camber and crossweights so I hardly had to turn the wheel to turn into the corner. It was just rotating around the inside front, with just a slight tail-end drift.

"Your job as a driver is to find the set-up you like and makes you feel comfortable and then maximise it. Then you can drive anything! If the car's balanced with a capital 'B', then you've gotta love it, whatever type of car it is. To have confidence in the machinery you're in, to know what it's going to do, is as important as the basic skill of driving fast: that's what allows you to give 101 per cent."

We could never revisit the careers of Stirling Moss and Mario Andretti in five pages. For that, read their biographies. But we can attempt to come to a conclusion about which of them is the greatest all-rounder.

Moss, it must be said, was the master of anything he turned his hand to. For example, his margin over Fangio in sportscars was far greater than Fangio's was over Moss in F1 - if that latter margin existed at all. Andretti, by contrast, had five or six drivers his equal in grand prix racing, at least in terms of outright pace. But then that was only half his game: even by the mid '70s, raw driving talent was not enough to succeed in F1 and Mario's technical nous was second to none. Yet he was quick too: he started his first grand prix (Watkins Glen in 1968) and his penultimate grand prix (Monza, '82) from pole. And remember how long he was competitive in Champ Cars, winning in both his second year, 1965, and his penultimate, 1993. In that span of 28 years, there were at most four Champ Car drivers who could say they were as good as Andretti.

You can hardly criticise Moss for not having a longer career. He was only 32 when he crashed at Goodwood in 1962, and it's reasonable to suppose he'd have fought Clark, then Stewart for another eight years in F1 - and, intriguingly, raced Andretti in sportscars in the early '70s.

One could also assume Moss would have been hot in a Champ Car. But we don't know - just as we'll never know if Don Bradman could have become the greatest baseball player and Babe Ruth the greatest cricketer. And that's why Andretti has to get the nod as the greatest all-rounder of all time. Stirling had the greater raw talent for driving fast, but Mario spread his talent further for longer. ☐

JOHN SURTEES

Statistically in the shadow of Clark, Surtees was faster in some circumstances. At the very least he's vying with Gurney for second-best F1 driver of the '60s and, like both the Scot and the American, Surtees would excel in any category. He won the 1966 Can-Am title in a Lola T70, but was immensely fast in sportscars too, racking up nine pole positions. Oh, and he was quite handy on bikes too...



AJ FOYT

We could have gone for Vic Elford or Parnell Jones, but the scale of Foyt's achievements is too jaw-dropping. With 67 wins and seven championships, he's the most successful Champ Car driver of all time - then add six NASCAR wins, sportscar victories at Le Mans, Daytona and Sebring, plus titles in sprintcars, stock cars and dirt cars.



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2004 GRAND PRIX REVIEW

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REVIEW

TEAM-BY-TEAM ANALYSIS



THE FINAL VERDICT

Our three grand prix writers turn judge and jury on the F1 teams' performances during 2004

Back in February, our grand prix correspondents got their heads together to discuss the prospects for the Formula 1 season ahead. Much of what they came up with was borne out in subsequent months, but there were other comments that in hindsight look terribly optimistic. This is time for them to be answerable, and also to give their verdict on the teams and drivers of 2004.

The experts are Nigel Roebuck, Mark Hughes and Anthony Rowlinson, questioner is David Malsher, host is John McIlroy.

FERRARI

DM: In the preview you cautioned against being too critical of Ferrari just because they appeared to have played it safe with this year's car. Well, you were spot on with that. Should we be surprised that they got 15 out of 18 wins this year? What was the magic ingredient in the 2004 car?

MH: Bridgestone made a huge leap right on the eve of the season, at the Imola test two weeks before Melbourne. And more significantly, after we did our preview forum! They'd been working on a new compound and a new construction in separate development programmes and then for that test they

actually produced a tyre that brought those two programmes together. That was the vital bit of information we were missing when we did the season preview.

AR: It's also about other people's performances as well: Williams had a chassis that didn't work and McLaren had a chassis that didn't last long, so those two weren't really in a position to take them on.

NR: In the first few years that Michael [Schumacher] was with Ferrari, they started nowhere and gradually got better and better. But over the last few years they've been the only ones who have been ready from the word go. Williams were a massive disappointment this year because they were so pleased with themselves in testing, they were so far ahead compared to the same time in 2003.

MH: I think the '03 car started off ropey but basically had a lot of potential, whereas this year's FW26 performed at a level straightaway and just stayed there. It didn't seem to matter what they did to it, whether they put on the ugly nose or the pretty one: [Juan Pablo] Montoya said it felt about the same.

DM: So how has Ferrari sidestepped what used to be a natural cycle, with a team at the top for maybe three years and then going down and another team being at the top for three years? Ferrari has now been constructors' champion since 1999.



**NIGEL
ROEBUCK**



**MARK
HUGHES**



**ANTHONY
ROWLINSON**

SPINNEY/LAT

Is it this continuity thing that everyone bangs on about?

MH: Certainly partly, yes.

NR: It's like that old line in Sherlock Holmes about 'if you eliminate the impossible whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth'. It just seems to me that it's Ferrari's extraordinary attention to detail. They just set about eliminating things that can go wrong. They have a cockpit fire in the pitstop and they deal with it just like that, as if they're ready for it, or they expected it. There's just no drama.

AR: Obviously they have a fantastic budget, the biggest budget of any of the teams. So if they're operating on \$400 million (£208m) a year, then nobody else gets a look-in.

DM: What is a comparative figure then?

AR: The current estimate is between \$400 & \$450 million a year isn't it?

NR: Patrick Head talks about certain components on a car, expensive components which Williams will use for four to six races, Ferrari uses things once then throw them away. The word 'refurbish' doesn't exist in Maranello, everything is always new, new, new the whole time.

MH: It's also sort of third to a circle about it, because to a sponsor being associated with Ferrari is reckoned to be worth about 40 per cent more than anybody else. So it can command three different people.

JM: Isn't the underside sponsored by somebody? So that if one day one of them flipped over, some company would get some extra air-time?

DM: Probably. This year Michael seemed to have a couple more off days than we'd expect, normally he has one really crap race in a season but this year there were China and Brazil, and qualifying at USA and Brazil. On race day in Brazil, he didn't really look like he was trying.

NR: I thought that was really odd. Michael might have a bad

race or he might be making mistakes, but you expect him to always give 100 per cent.

MH: That was why he had his tactics slightly off in Brazil. But then you expected to see the recovery from that mistake and it didn't really happen.

DM: So, do we think he's going down a little bit?

MH: No. Okay, he's had more bad races this year but he's won more races than he has before as well.

NR: I must confess I'm still mystified by the Rubens [Barrichello]-Ferrari saga. Once in a while Rubens pops up and looks like the best driver in the world.

MH: There is a bit of a pattern there though if you look at the type of tracks they happen at, which is anywhere where there's not the really high-speed corners where Michael can do his stuff. Where it's all just precision work, Rubens quite often puts Michael under a lot of pressure around most of the track. I think Rubens' most startling moment last year was Indy qualifying. Turns out he was 0.4 seconds quicker than Michael with 17 more litres of fuel on board.

DM: How much potential has Barrichello got?

MH: If he was leading any other team, I'd consider him as one of the elite. He's definitely up there.

DM: Could he have won the world championship?

MH: If you'd have taken Michael out of the equation, yes. He'd have probably won it in 2002 as well and have been double world champion.

NR: Yes, and his argument always is 'well if I'd have gone to Williams, how much would I have won there? Where would I have finished in the championship?'

MH: I guess Rubens, probably in his heart of hearts when he signed, was thinking 'by the time we get to 2005 Michael's going to be long gone'. So it would've looked a pretty smart move back then.

Before the first F1 race of 2004 our team of experts stuck their necks out to predict the winners and losers. They met for lunch to sort the pundits kings from the Anne Boleyns

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DM: Would Ferrari be that dominant if it were Rubens leading it rather than Michael? Because Michael must inspire so much commitment...

NR: Yes he does, but I still think without any question it would be the team. With Ross [Brawn] and Rory [Byrne] and Maranello...

AR: I hate to disagree, but I think Michael's the glue that holds it together...

NR: I'm not so sure. I think Ross is the glue.

MH: Yes, I'd agree with that. I think Michael is the inspiration. Talking of inspiration, I'm a bit disappointed about his Monaco tunnel accident. I'd have liked to have seen how that panned out, with him versus [Jarno] Trulli. I think we were about to see one of those impossible performances and he knew that and he'd just been denied the chance of showing everybody and I think he still gets a huge kick out of showing everybody he's the man. He'd just done a series of races where he'd really cruised to victory and yet here he was, he had the chance to show everybody and he had that chance taken off him.

DM: Did he brake-test Montoya or was he just testing his brakes?

NR: It was just like with Jenson [Button] at Monza in 2000 when Jenson flew off the road because he wasn't expecting Michael to suddenly back off.

MH: You could argue that Michael should have known that the kink in the tunnel is not the best place to be doing that and Montoya was probably not expecting it.

NR: We were saying he doesn't have any failings, but I still think that for a driver of his greatness he makes too many mistakes. That's never really changed.

MH: But he's operating in an era where you can push in the knowledge that it's not that serious and it's not going to cost you anything. So I think he's using that to his advantage. And apart from Silverstone in 1999 he doesn't usually do it in a place where he might hurt himself; he usually does it in a relatively harmless place.

BAR

DM: Again your predictions were pretty accurate that they would be close enough to take advantage when Ferrari failed. The only problem being, when Ferrari did fail those just didn't seem to be BAR's strongest moments - despite 11 podiums.

AR: Monaco was close. Brazil's another one they were very gutted about it because Michael was stuck behind them and they knew they had the advantage on tyres and Jenson had one of his few retirements of the year. He was ahead of Montoya at the time, and you have to say that was another one that got away for Jenson.

MH: Just as an aside, ever since Monza, Jenson seems to have discovered overtaking in a big way. He just went through them like a knife through butter. Kimi [Raikkonen], Montoya and then he did it again in Japan when he nailed [Fernando] Alonso. He did it on the first lap in Brazil, did Montoya within two corners. I wonder if driving up front the whole time has given him that extra bit of confidence.

NR: The thing that's surprised me most about BAR this year has been Honda. They've suddenly become 'proper' Hondas.

DM: You mentioned that they were popping like bubble-wrap



Left: Roebuck and Rowlinson differed over Schuey's influence at Ferrari
Below: There was no argument over Ferrari's prowess during 2004



FERRARI



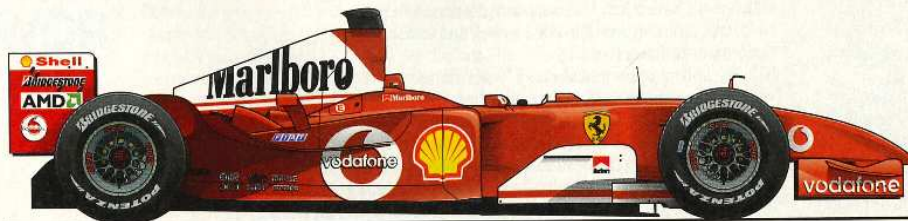
1. Michael SCHUMACHER (D)	
Date of birth	3/1/1969
Grands prix	213
Teams	Jordan ('91), Benetton ('91-95), Ferrari ('96-04)
Wins	83
Points	1231
Poles	63
Fastest laps	66
Best championship	1st ('94-95, '00-04)



2. Rubens BARRICHELLO (BR)	
Date of birth	23/5/1972
Grands prix	198
Teams	Jordan ('93-96), Stewart ('97-99), Ferrari ('00-04)
Wins	9
Points	451
Poles	13
Fastest laps	15
Best championship	2nd ('02, '04)



Debut	1950 Monaco GP
Starts	704
Wins	182
Poles	178
Fastest laps	181
Drivers' titles	12
Constructors' titles	13



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Top: The lunch and reflections over the past season were excellent. Above: Jenson Button wasn't bad in 2004 either. Right: So just how good is Takuma Sato? The experts reckon that only time will tell.



before the season...

MH: But I think in hindsight they were just establishing what the limits were with the engine.

DM: And was Takuma Sato running a different spec?

AR: Apparently not. Historically we'll never know.

MH: If you were a conspiracy theorist you could certainly make a good case to say that they were using Takuma for their development. Because Jenson had racked up the points, he kept the proven stuff. Neither the team nor Takuma would necessarily know anything about it. They would just be given the engine and off you go.

DM: Were you impressed with how Jenson and the team got on with it, despite all the legal wrangles? It must have been strained at times.

MH: The atmosphere in Hungary... you could feel it.

AR: Just while we're talking about Jenson, I think this really was his coming of age year. He seems like an adult rather than a kid that's got lucky by getting into Formula 1. His whole bearing and his way of dealing with everything including the media very much makes him the team leader.

NR: What I can't understand is why he would jeopardise things the way he did.

DM: I mean it wouldn't be for the money because presumably Frank's [Williams] no better a payer than BAR.

NR: It was going to be the same. If you talked to Frank any time from 2000 on, he was always glowing about Jenson, never any criticisms of any kind. It was always on the cards that he was going to go back there eventually, but the whole thing was so tacky wasn't it? It couldn't have been dealt with any worse.

AR: Having said that, with the greatest respect to BAR, if you were Jenson's manager and you had the opportunity to send him to Williams wouldn't you do exactly what John Byfield did?

MH: I think it's a close call actually. If you look at Honda and you think where's Honda going to go with this. It's not like he'd been offered an opportunity to replace Michael at Ferrari.

NR: And Jenson had a pretty nice set-up at BAR. Earlier on we were talking about Rubens, and I think it would have been fascinating to see what Rubens might have done with a BAR-Honda in some places. Or Montoya or Kimi for that matter.

DM: So do you not think Jenson's up on Rubens' level?

NR: Not yet perhaps, but he certainly will be.

MH: I think Jenson's ready to take on anyone now.

DM: What about Sato? Do we think he has got the makings of a race winner?

MH: Yes, but maybe not a consistent one.

AR: It's like he's got a bundle of speed he can just tap into. It's always a bit impressive and wild and ragged and all the rest of it, but he seems to have tamed it a little bit. I think working with Jock Clear has been really good because Jock has given him, from what I understand, a lot of guidance on set-up and not throwing the car into the wall and all that kind of business. I think there's an awful lot of potential talent there. It's a sight to watch and everybody likes watching Takuma. You just knew you had to watch his lap at Suzuka. He's got that magnetic appeal hasn't he?

DM: Is there any reason why Williams didn't go for him when they knew they couldn't get hold of Jenson?

AR: I think Honda might have had something to say about that. Taku's only been a racing driver for seven years. He didn't race anything with four wheels until he was 17. So in terms of his career he is still at a pretty young status even after two seasons of F1. There's got to be more to learn.

MH: There's still more to come from Taku, but for now, none of us knows how much.

RENAULT

DM: This is where the predictions fell down pretty badly in our season preview. Here's a quote from you, Mark: 'I think they'll be able to go head-to-head with anyone'...

MH: Yeah, well we were tricked by Ferrari weren't we? If we'd have had a 2003-type Ferrari... or if you took Ferrari out of the equation, Renault did go head-to-head with everyone, and were in the battle for runners-up place in the championship.

NR: Yes and actually you are just saying Ferrari: it's Ferrari and Bridgestone.

DM: Would you think they're looking back at the season now as a disappointment or do you think they're where they expected to be?

MH: I think they were pleasantly surprised to be that high up in the championship. They had a very different car to everyone else. And they maximised in places where others lacked.

DM: Yeah, we expected the loss of launch control to affect them badly, but what they had learned from using it continued to help them.

MH: Partly that, and partly because they designed the whole car around the start.

NR: The first five seconds of a grand prix is the best chance of making up places you're going to have all day.

MH: If you think you've got a package that you can set pole with you probably wouldn't compromise it by designing a car that compromises the other areas just to get a start-line advantage. But if you think you're going to be row two or three rather than row one, it's probably the smart thing to do.

AR: The engine's power characteristics are biased towards a tall car, a narrow car... it's rear-end heavy. It's got a six-speed gearbox rather than seven...

DM: Does that make it particularly peculiar to drive? Is that why Jacques Villeneuve had a massive problem?

MH: Partly I think, yes. Both drivers, both Trulli and Alonso were saying it's a very difficult car to get any feel for. Trulli said the problem would be he'd do a lap and it wouldn't really tell him he's had a good lap. So he'd push a bit harder next time, have a nasty moment and know that the lap before had been good.

NR: I read something where Trulli was expressing a lot of sympathy for Jacques, a year out and then into such a strange car for three races.

DM: Apart from Monaco, were there any other circuits where Renault genuinely looked like a match for Ferrari?

AR: I think in Indy where Alonso had the tyre failure.

MH: Trulli would have probably won Canada, because Alonso, had he not had an eight-second delay in his pit, was on track to beat Michael. And Trulli started ahead of Alonso, so Renault would have been running one-two, and Fernando could have been a buffer. Michael couldn't have beaten both of them.

DM: At Hungary where Alonso dominated in 2003 why did

BAR



9. Jenson BUTTON (GB)

Date of birth	19/1/1980
Grands prix	84
Teams	Williams ('00), Benetton/Renault '01-02), BAR ('03-04)
Best finish	2nd
Points	130
Poles	1
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	3rd ('04)

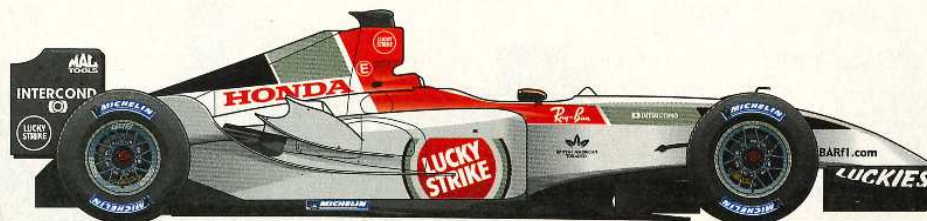


10. Takuma SATO (J)

Date of birth	28/1/1977
Grands prix	36
Teams	Jordan ('02), BAR ('03-04)
Best finish	3rd
Points	39
Best grid	2nd
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	8th ('04)



Debut	1999 Australian GP
Starts	101
Wins	0
Poles	1
Fastest laps	0
Best drivers'	3rd ('04)
Best constructors'	2nd ('04)



He end up only third this year?

MH: He absolutely annihilated everyone, but the Ferraris.

AR: And the Bridgestones were working when they weren't in 2003. Bridgestone actually admit that one of their key targets this year was to make sure that at Hungary, after the embarrassment last year, they had a tyre that was as competitive if not dominant.

MH: Yeah. Had he wanted to, Michael could have lapped Alonso. Which would have been poetic justice after last year.

DM: Alonso in the preview we described as relentless on race days. Was that the same in 2004 too?

MH: He was still terrific on race day, even when Jarno was a couple of tenths quicker in qualifying. You weren't surprised by the reverse of positions in the race.

NR: That's the thing with Alonso, it is his race pace. He's a bit like Michael in that respect.

DM: What about Trulli? We did actually predict that he would get a win, and he also got two poles. Unfortunately, he also got the sack. Did it really hinge on that last lap at Magny-Cours?

MH: I think it went a bit deeper than that, but it was certainly an untimely lapse.

NR: Also, after Monaco he did have aspirations about getting well paid.

WILLIAMS

DM: Williams-BMW: fifth and ninth in the championship and one win. Were we too optimistic about them at the start of the year because we all love them?

NR: Well, around the time of our first lunch testing was going very well.

MH: I know I keep coming back to it, but you have got to take Ferrari and Bridgestone out of the equation because when we had this discussion last time, the Ferrari/Bridgestone info wasn't there. If you take that out, Williams wouldn't have had a bad season. But they clearly went in the wrong direction aerodynamically.

DM: You explained earlier in the year the problems with the walrus nose: that it had to be heavy to pass the crash test, which meant there was less weight available to be used as ballast. Isn't that something Williams could and should have figured out before mid-season?

MH: Clearly their aero figures were telling them that it was worth more than it actually was.

DM: What was the supposed advantage of the walrus nose?

MH: It made a much cleaner path for airflow, bearing in mind they had gone for the twin-keel suspension mountings. Which sort of makes sense, but it clearly wasn't as much of an advantage as they thought. The windtunnel figures initially said they should expect to get more and the more never came.

AR: Plus they changed other things. They had a much shorter wheelbase than the previous year and that made the car much more twitchy, less manageable.

DM: How good was the BMW engine?

MH: Pretty good, just not the best. Because everybody had caught up to where BMW used to be.

DM: Are we just talking about power or torque?

NR: It was pretty good all round, but Montoya was saying by two-thirds of the way through the season, 'if I slipstream



Top: Hughes and others were taken by surprise by Bridgestone tyres
Above: Espresso fuelled the F1 talk

Top right: Alonso and Trulli got the best out of Renault
Middle right: JPM stuck it to Schuey, while Gené (right) replaced the luckless Ralf (far right) after his Indy crash



RENAULT



7/17 (Toyota), Jarno TRULLI (I)	
Date of birth	13/7/1974
Grands prix	130
Teams	Minardi ('97), Prost ('97-99), Jordan ('00-01), Renault ('02-04), Toyota ('04)
Wins	1
Points	117
Poles	2
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	6th ('04)



8. Fernando ALONSO (E)	
Date of birth	29/7/1981
Grands prix	50
Teams	Minardi ('01), Renault ('03-04)
Wins	1
Points	114
Poles	3
Fastest laps	1
Best championship	4th ('04)



7. Jacques VILLENEUVE (CDN)	
Date of birth	9/4/1971
Grands prix	133
Teams	Williams ('96-98), BAR ('99-03), Benetton ('04)
Wins	11
Points	219
Poles	13
Fastest laps	9
Best championship	1st ('94-95, '00-03)



Debut	1977 British GP
Starts	189
Wins	18
Poles	38
Fastest laps	20
Best drivers'	2nd ('83)
Best constructors'	2nd ('83)





BELANGA/LAT



COURTESY/LAT



COURTESY/LAT

behind Michael or Rubens out of a slow corner and the beginning of a long straight they will edge away.'

DM: Speaking of JPM, did he give 100 per cent in every race?

MH: I don't know. You look at where he was after Ralf [Schumacher] crashed and then where he was when Ralf came back and it makes you wonder. On some subconscious level I wonder if he switched off because he didn't have Ralf to push him? Marc Gené and [Antonio] Pizzonia weren't going to.

NR: I think there's an element too of Ralf's input into the car. There isn't any argument that Ralf is better on set-up than Montoya. It's like Lotus in 1978, when you'd have to say that Ronnie [Peterson] was quicker than Mario, but Ronnie always said, 'This car wouldn't be what it is if it weren't for Mario'.

MH: [Emerson] Fittipaldi, Ronnie and Lotus were the same in 1973.

NR: But the difference is, in those days a driver could drive around problems a lot more than you can now.

DM: Montoya did look mega in Brazil. Is that because Ralf had come back and sorted him out in China?

MH: The car suited him as well. The Interlagos circuit required a higher ride height.

NR: The body language in that last race... the way Montoya and Kimi came out of the pitlane and then at that uphill corner, you just knew Montoya was going to try something. Maybe he was going to go off, but there was no way he was going to just sit there and let Kimi get his rhythm back.

MH: But wasn't that just classic Montoya? It doesn't matter how momentous the occasion was, that's the way he is going to do it.

DM: By contrast, Ralf Schumacher looked rubbish in Brazil.

MH: Ralf was on a very heavy fuel load there and the conditions stopped him a bit. We never got to see Ralf's true pace there because the conditions meant everybody pitted for their new tyres. So anybody who was loaded up with fuel you didn't really get to see.

DM: Okay, but even before Ralf's accident at Indy, Montoya looked like he had got the measure of him.

MH: Well, the start of the year was awful and then suddenly Ralf just came alive.

NR: And it was the same the year before. He was appalling at the start too.

MH: Then in Montreal he was fantastic.

DM: Any reason for that other than the usual sleep-a-bit, race-a-bit nature of Ralf?

MH: I suppose it's emotional on one level and he requires a very specific thing from the car. It needs to be very adaptable and if he couldn't get that from the car, then he really struggled badly.

DM: Juan's qualifying lap at Barcelona gets my vote as the most entertaining lap of the year. It looked like he was wrestling an alligator on wheels. So if he could do that then, why did Juan struggle at China compared to Ralf?

AR: My personal opinion is that he'd gone to sleep a little bit. From having a semi-good team-mate to being back to having an ace team-mate. He got a bit of a wake up call.

DM: What was the relationship between drivers and team, bearing in mind by the time the season started, they were pretty sure that they'd both be heading for the exit at the end of

the season? Was everyone just too focused on 2005?

NR: I wouldn't say that. But in this situation there's always an element of 'seeing out the year'. I got the impression a year ago that to some degree, not that they exactly couldn't wait for Ralf to leave, but at this time last year they were well and truly out of patience with him. And I think there's no question that Montoya's the one they are sorry to see going. In August 2003 we knew Montoya was going to McLaren, so once that was done I think changing both was an inevitability.

MH: I think it's interesting Ron [Dennis] saying he's sure he can get more out of Juan than Frank and Patrick [Head] did. It'll be interesting to see if that's true or not.

NR: Well, Ron's convinced he has got this inside track to South America...

DM: A few words about the fill-in drivers. Gené lived up to his lack of promise. Did we expect better things from him?

NR: No. That Monza drive in 2003, he really wasn't bad. The last third of the race he was at least as quick as everybody else.

DM: How hard is it to drive at Monza? I mean he was still a second slower than Montoya in qualifying.

NR: He was, but then he was pitched in quite late in the weekend. I mean, Gené is Gené and this year he was more or less what we expected.

DM: Pizzonia looked good in Spa.

MH: And qualifying in Hungary. He outqualified Juan on a bigger fuel load, but then we get back to wondering how much effort Juan was making during that period of Ralf's convalescence. So it's difficult really to gauge. But certainly Pizzonia had his moments.

DM: Do you think he is worthy of a race seat somewhere next year?

MH: I don't know. We don't really know his level.

DM: All in all then, a pretty messy year from everyone's favourite F1 team, in terms of relationships.

AR: Also, Williams appointed a new technical director in the middle of the season. With the greatest respect to Sam Michael, he had to step up to being technical director and Patrick Head became... whatever his new job title is. However able those two individuals are, that is a huge change for a team to make in the middle of a season. It's bound to affect their performance.

MH: It still doesn't seem to be a settled team. Still making big changes at very senior levels.

DM: The opposite of Ferrari then, so maybe that's why they have struggled to keep up in recent years.

MH: Historically the likes of Williams and McLaren have used technical ingenuity to overcome Ferrari's in-built advantages. Now Ferrari has a team that's every bit as ingenious as the leading British teams, and also the scope for doing that has been all but squeezed out by the regs. If you look at the last five years every time either McLaren or Williams have come up with something that would have been a big step forward, it's been banned. CVT transmission, energy storage. These things would have been huge advances. And it would have enabled them to have absolutely utterly dominant seasons...

DM: Why have those been outlawed?

NR: They didn't fit the plan.

MH: Well you could argue... I'm sure Max [Mosley] could

WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS FI	
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3. Juan Pablo MONTOYA (CO)	
Date of birth	20/9/1975
Grands prix	68
Teams	Williams ('01-04)
Wins	4
Points	221
Poles	11
Fastest laps	11
Best championship	3rd ('02-'03)

4. Ralf SCHUMACHER (D)	
Date of birth	30/6/1975
Grands prix	127
Teams	Jordan ('97-98), Williams ('99-04)
Wins	6
Points	259
Poles	5
Fastest laps	7
Best championship	4th ('01-'02)

4. Marc GENÉ (E)	
Date of birth	29/3/1974
Grands prix	36
Teams	Minardi ('99-00), Williams ('03-04)
Best finish	5th
Points	5
Best grid	5th
Best championship	17th ('99, '03)

4. Antonio PIZZONIA (BR)	
Date of birth	11/9/1980
Grands prix	15
Teams	Jaguar ('03), Williams ('04)
Best finish	7th
Points	6
Best grid	6th
Best ch'pionship	14th ('04)

Debut	1972
Argentine GP	
Starts	446
Wins	113
Poles	124
Fastest laps	128
Drivers' titles	7
Constructors' titles	9



argue it very thoroughly on safety grounds too.

McLAREN

DM: A really weird year. Started really badly, Kimi retired in the first three races and then at Magny-Cours they bring out the new car and it all starts to go right again. But if you take Silverstone out, Williams still scored more points in the second half of the year than McLaren did. Was the reason that the original MP4-19 was bad still a legacy of going too radical with the stillborn MP4-18?

MH: Yes, absolutely. It was basically the same car and the car that Adrian [Newey] wanted to do or start with was in effect a 19B. But he was overruled.

DM: Because it was too ambitious?

MH: Yes. So they started the season knowing that they were using a car that was unsuitable for the latest generation of tyres from Michelin.

NR: And at the same time there were those catastrophic engine problems.

DM: What were those engine problems?

NR: Not enough horsepower, and they kept blowing apart.

AR: They have gone back now to being a very English controlled team...

MH: Rather than co-ordinating the English and German sides. So it's all one unit now. McLaren had a lot of scope to improve, they did improve – and pretty dramatically by the end of the year.

NR: And actually in a way that said everything about BAR and Renault didn't it? At Spa, suddenly, bang! There was McLaren back racing with Ferrari.

MH: And Räikkönen had had the pace at Hockenheim and was able to give Michael a really hard time. The complex gestation of the MP4-19B went right back to the rule changes of the year before and one thing piled on top of another. Plus they were trying to restructure the way they did the engines at the same time that they were moving factory, and so on.

DM: You reckoned they were going to be right there.

MH: Well, in testing they were doing quick times, but it was at places like Valencia. The McLaren we expected to see was at Silverstone wasn't it? That was the McLaren performance we had expected.

DM: And they changed the engine at the same time did they? When they brought out the 19B that's when they brought in the new less porous engine, yes? How much of that original mess was down to Mercedes?

NR: I think quite a lot of it.

AR: One of the reasons they went so light with the 18 was to make sure it had structural stability. So it's all inter-related.

DM: Ignoring the driver line-up for next year, is this the start of an up cycle for McLaren?

NR: I think this will be the start of an up cycle for no other reason than because of the driver line-up. I just think Räikkönen and Montoya together will be dynamite. I think the whole team will be revitalised.

MH: Also McLaren are well aware of what went wrong, they understood how it happened and look what they did to put it right: a new, much quicker car mid-season. And now there are no sudden changes of senior positions or anything like that.



Top: Decent red helped the experts whine about the demise of McLaren in '04 Above: Mercedes and McLaren were playing catch-up from the start Left: Kimi showed what he and the team are capable of at Interlagos Right: DC had a tough final year with the team



McLAREN



5. David COULTHARD (GB)

Date of birth	27/3/1971
Grands prix	751
Teams	Williams ('94-95), McLaren ('96-04)
Wins	13
Points	475
Poles	12
Fastest laps	18
Best championship	2nd ('01)



6. Kimi RAIKKONEN (FIN)

Date of birth	17/10/1979
Grands prix	68
Teams	Sauber ('01), McLaren ('02-04)
Wins	2
Points	169
Poles	3
Fastest laps	6
Best championship	2nd ('03)



Debut	1966 Monaco GP
Starts	577
Wins	138
Poles	115
Fastest laps	113
Drivers' titles	11
Constructors' titles	9





Left: Malsher put the questions to the experts
Below: Fisi wrung what he could out of the Sauber
Bottom left: Will Felipe Massa be more than a match for Villeneuve?
Bottom right: Sauber's used its new windtunnel to develop aero tweaks mid-season

TELE/AT



TELE/AT



BELLEVILLE/AT



BELLEVILLE/AT



TELE/AT

SPINNEVAT

Everything just seems to be following a logical path. I don't think the Kimi/Juan relationship will be destructive. I think neither of them have personalities with a poisoned edge to them. I think they will have a very tense relationship, but not a destructive one.

NR: It's not like Senna and Prost. The point is they were the absolute best without any arguments. It was the guy who was the best and the guy who was going to be the best.

DM: Kimi this year looked to be as fearsome as ever, but with fewer mistakes. Except when he was chasing Montoya in Brazil, and started running too close and then running wide.

MH: Funnily enough, although Juan has the impression of being more flaky than Räikkönen, his drive there at the critical points was absolutely flawless. When he sees the chink of victory he suddenly just goes and does what he did in Brazil. Whereas if he's faffing about in fifth place and the car's not quite there, he lets his head drop.

NR: And Kimi's like that too. For example, in Magny-Cours when [David Coulthard] blew him away. What was that about?

MH: He doesn't go very quickly at Suzuka either. There are funny little contradictions about him.

TELE/AT: Whereas Mika Häkkinen used to take DC apart at Suzuka.

NR: Yes he did, he used to take everyone apart at Suzuka, sometimes even Michael. At the moment we're not thinking of Räikkönen being yet at Häkkinen's standard. I still think Mika is the only driver who Schumacher has ever considered as being in his league.

MH: I think Räikkönen is more on a constant level than Häkkinen was, but that Mika had higher peaks.

DM: But Kimi hasn't yet been given a car that can allow him to take the fight to Michael more than once or twice a year.

MH: True enough, but I still haven't seen a qualifying lap from Kimi where you'd go 'Jesus Christ!'. You used to see laps like that two or three times a year from Mika.

DM: To be fair to Räikkönen, he got his fingers burnt three times in 2003 by over-committing in qualifying and having to start at the back. So he would naturally take a step back, because the consequences of goofing up are so much greater.

NR: Okay yes, qualifying was different in Häkkinen's day, but you never ever saw Mika make a mistake on his qualifying lap. Mika was a better qualifier than Michael, and in fact, under pressure Häkkinen was better than Schumacher.

DM: What about Coulthard? Has he still got it?

AR: Personally, I would love to see David in another team. I'd just love to see what he can do away from McLaren with a whole new mindset. He always was tremendously talented and still is. Whether he's the quickest he has ever been is a different question, but he's still got a lot to offer and I don't think he's past it by any means.

MH: There were flashes of real speed from him this year, but he never strung them together.

NR: I've always seen DC as sort of a lesser [Carlos] Reutemann. He'd have a weekend where you'd think 'wow!', and then two or three races where you wouldn't know he's there.

DM: He's got a real hard edge to him when it comes to wheel-to-wheel stuff. Better than Mika Häkkinen was, actually.

NR: Yes I agree.

DM: Is he worthy of a drive somewhere else?

SAUBER



11. Giancarlo FISICHELLA (I)	
Date of birth	14/1/1973
Grands prix	141
Teams	Minardi ('96), Jordan ('97,'02-03), Benetton ('98-01), Sauber ('04)
Wins	1
Points	116
Poles	1
Fastest laps	1
Best championship	6th ('00)



12. Felipe MASSA (BR)	
Date of birth	25/4/1981
Grands prix	34
Teams	Sauber ('02-04)
Best finish	4th
Points	16
Best grid	4th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	12th ('04)



Debut	1993
	South Africa GP
Starts	197
Best finish	3rd
Best grid	3rd
Fastest laps	0
Best drivers'	7th ('01)
Best constructors'	4th ('01)



MH: I'd say so. I don't think he can complain he's no longer in a top team. He's spent a long time in a top team...

NR: He's only ever had top teams. It's the Ralf thing again. If the car is absolutely on form, he's quick and he's formidable.

DM: When do we think was the last time we saw Coulthard at his absolute best?

NR: He was good at Suzuka, he was good at Magny-Cours. But he hasn't had a single weekend where you think's***t, that was good! Nothing like his win in Monaco in 2002, for instance, when he held everyone up while his tyres were going off.

DM: Although if you had to hold people off while losing four seconds a lap, Monaco's the circuit you'd pick to do it on.

NR: Yes you would, but he was still very intelligent in terms of knowing exactly where he had to be.

MH: It's interesting that Montoya reckons if you gave him a Formula 3000 car and allowed him pole, he could win the Monaco Grand Prix.

SAUBER

DM: Another fairly difficult Sauber year?

MH: Yes, better than last year, though. When they got the new spec car for Silverstone they took a big step, and you definitely saw the benefits of the new windtunnel there. I think they did a bloody good job for an independent and I think sixth in the championship is the highest, reasonably, you could expect to see them in this era.

DM: Were they flattered by the Bridgestones though?

MH: Some days, but not always. There were some days when the Bridgestones were absolutely brilliant on the Ferrari, but on the Saubers were blistering because it's so critical on how much downforce you're getting and how balanced the car is.

DM: So they'll be better off on Michelins in 2005?

MH: Maybe.

DM: Is Giancarlo Fisichella as good as he ever was?

MH: I think so.

DM: We didn't expect [Felipe] Massa to be quite as close. They quite often ran the same strategy, didn't they, fuel-wise? And Massa outqualified him six times.

MH: Only twice on the same fuel load though. Fisi tucked him up nicely, if you look what's behind the statistics.

NR: Massa is quick. Montoya says about Felipe Massa that he's the kind of guy you're not sure if he's in control on a straight, just because of the unexpected things he does.

DM: Hmm... like overtaking Montoya at Interlagos.

MH: Well, he gets stuck in. He's good at that. But... there's this big stigma in motor racing that a driver can't have a coach because it's some sort of slight against your reputation if you have to have a coach. But I think Massa is someone who would benefit massively from one.

DM: Would you say then that Massa is capable of taking on Villeneuve next year?

NR: On speed, yes.

DM: But will Villeneuve psyche him out?

MH: I don't think so. I don't think Jacques is as quick as Fisichella, so I think we'll see two evenly matched drivers.

NR: What I've never really understood is there are so many people who won't rate Jacques at all and I don't get that, I never have. I'm not saying for one second that he's one of the greatest



Left: Rowlinson was all souped up
Bottom: All agreed Webber was a star in the Jaguar, but Klein struggled (bottom right)
Right: Da Matta was unable to show his talent and Panis (below right) was ignored



JAGUAR



14. Mark WEBBER (AUS)

Date of birth	27/8/1976
Grands prix	50
Teams	Minardi ('02), Jaguar ('03-'04)
Best finish	5th
Points	26
Best grid	3rd
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	10th ('03)

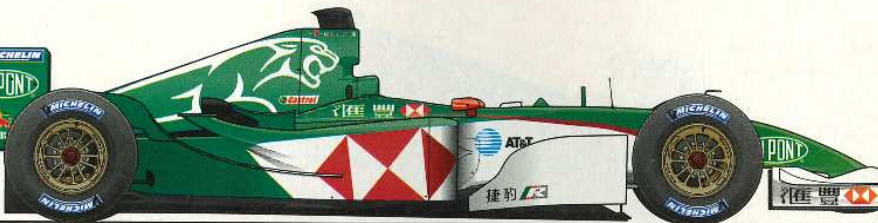


15. Christian KLIEN (A)

Date of birth	7/6/1983
Grands prix	18
Teams	Jaguar ('04)
Best finish	6th
Points	3
Best qualifying	1th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	16th ('04)



Debut	2000 Australian GP
Starts	85
Best finish	3rd
Best grid	3rd
Fastest laps	0
Best drivers'	9th ('02)
Best constructors'	7th ('03)





BELLANCA/LAT

world champions or anything like that, but he certainly is a good racer. You look at that pass he put on Michael at Jerez in 1997 and not many people would have even *thought* about it.

DM: How would Sauber have got on with Michelins this year?

MH: Probably about the same overall. There were days when they had it good like at Silverstone, yet it was a Bridgestone weekend and they were the fourth or fifth quickest car there, quicker than a Williams.

DM: Why can't a Sauber-Ferrari get closer to a Ferrari-Ferrari? Is it aerodynamically in a different league?

MH: We've seen more and more now the windtunnel's up.

JM: Ferrari must have much more data than any other team.

NR: You can call it the blue Ferrari if you want. They did try to copy the back end of the Ferrari, but they are struggling with the packaging. They can't use some of the materials Ferrari use, because some of them are made with products that are actually banned in Switzerland under environmental laws.

DM: So we think sixth in the championship is pretty impressive for Sauber?

NR: Yes. And I also think Peter Sauber is one of the great men of the Formula 1 paddock. I admire him hugely. We all bang on endlessly about how there's not much integrity in F1, but he is an obvious exception.

JAGUAR

DM: In our preview we said the R5 didn't look clever and we were right. What were the problems?

NR: Money.

MH: Engine power and rear tyre usage. They were very hard on their tyres, not as much as the previous R4, but still it was a problem. They were basing their strategy around that rather than what they really needed to do. Cosworth had been starved of investment as well as Jaguar. So by the end of the year they were so far down on power, maybe 100bhp down, and it really showed. Aerodynamically it was reckoned to be a pretty good car.

DM: In 2005 there were spikes of promise, for example, [Mark] Webber qualifying third in Brazil.

MH: There were this year too though, I mean he put it on the front row in Malaysia.

DM: That's true. Do we believe Webber gave everything?

MH: Yes I think so, I think he squeezed everything there was to be squeezed. I still wonder about his mistake in qualifying at Montreal though, because that was at a time when Jaguar were only a couple of points adrift of sixth place in the championship, which was the cut-off point whereby they would have had first dibs on his services in 2005.

AR: And it was one of their better tracks.

MH: Yes, they'd been quick in the practice sessions.

AR: Having said that, Mark is one of the most inherently impressive individuals in the paddock.

NR: He's a hard man. You can't intimidate Mark.

MH: I think it's going to be interesting to see him in a Williams because so far he's had cars that have not raced as well as they have qualified. But I have a suspicion that he's going to be the sort of guy that's going to be a fantastic racer rather than a qualifier, but we haven't seen that yet because of the kind of cars he's been in. Jaguars were pretty good qualifiers, but not

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CORTES/LAT

good race cars. You can imagine him getting excited by the prospect of Williams because you know he's one of those guys that's going to give it a go, a bit like [Nigel] Mansell was.

NR: Theoretically he's in absolutely the right place, because he's got complete contempt for all the PR bullshit that drove him round the bend at Jaguar. And if there's a team that has no interest in PR, it's Williams. You can see him getting on with Patrick Head, you can see him getting on with Sam Michael. On paper, it's a fantastic balance.

DM: Could anyone have done better in the circumstances that he was given at Jaguar?

MH: Michael Schumacher maybe.

AR: Having said that, I think the pressure's still really on Mark next year. It's not a muck-about year for him, he's got to deliver.

MH: That's why I was disappointed that Jenson didn't go and join him. Because everyone accepts Jenson's speed whereas Antonio Pizzonia is an unknown.

DM: Christian Klien, given the circumstances, did okay, didn't he?

MH: He's just not ready. But he has got something. Down at Spa in the damp he was very, very quick. You've got to have talent to do that.

NR: In Bahrain he had a race with Kimi. He just needs more time, you can't throw him in too deep and expect him to swim, straight away.

MH: He'll have had his confidence knocked now, so he could do with a year of testing, learning all the stuff he hasn't had time to learn.

NR: Yes, because if he has next year with [Vitantonio] Liuzzi, that could finish him.

DM: Looking at the bigger picture, how damaging has the five-year charade been to the Jaguar name?

MH: Funnily enough, someone was saying they had a friend who was a Jaguar dealer who said he felt that yes, it was actually damaging them now because he was getting comments of 'Oh, Merc and BMW have got much better F1 teams'. I don't know if that's typical or not.

NR: When they took it over they spent too much money on stupid things. And Ford and F1 is an odd mix: there's this feeling of a day late, a dollar short. Even when they won the championship with Benetton in 1994 they forgot to tell everybody. And by the time they got around to accepting that Flavio Briatore was going with Renault in '95, Sauber was the only thing left.

MH: I think it's the American and European culture clash.

AR: What I hated about Jaguar was that the team existed to promote the brand. It wasn't just a straightforward F1 team.

TOYOTA

DM: Here's a team where the one problem they don't have is lack of funds. Again pre-season testing hinted at the car not being up to much, so what was the problem?

MH: It was an off-the-pace design, not cutting edge at all. It was too heavy, it's centre of gravity was too high, and it ate rear tyres as a result. It was just a fundamentally poor car.

DM: Does it still have good horsepower?

MH: Yes.

DM: [Cristiano] Da Matta says the technical team weren't

TOYOTA



17. Olivier PANIS (F)	
Date of birth	2/10/1966
Grands prix	158
Teams	Ligier/Prost ('94-99), BAR ('01-02), Toyota ('03-04)
Wins	1
Points	76
Best grid	3rd
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	8th ('95, '99)



16. Cristiano DA MATTA (BR)	
Date of birth	19/9/1973
Grands prix	28
Teams	Toyota ('03-04)
Best finish	6th
Points	13
Best grid	3rd
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	13th ('03)



16. Ricardo ZONTA (BR)	
Date of birth	23/3/1976
Grands prix	36
Teams	BAR ('99-01), Jordan ('02), Toyota ('04)
Best finish	6th
Points	3
Best grid	6th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	14th ('00)



Debut 2002 Australian GP
Starts 51
Best finish 5th
Best grid 3rd
Fastest laps 0
Best drivers' 13th ('03)
Best constructors' 8th



2004 GRAND PRIX REVIEW

TEAM-BY-TEAM ANALYSIS

listening to him, which he could semi understand because he didn't have a lot of F1 experience. But what he couldn't understand is that they weren't listening to [Olivier] Panis either, who had been in Formula 1 for 10 years and had been a very respected tester for McLaren. Who was at fault there, the drivers or the technical team?

NR: I think da Matta has to be better than he looks.

DM: But he needed a different team and partner. I believe if he had been in a Ferrari for the last couple of years, he'd have won a race or two. Bear in mind at Suzuka in 2003, he qualified third and he had never been there before. I know they were on light fuel loads, but that was still impressive.

MH: But having said that, Toyota did appear to step up a level when Trulli got in their car this year. In Suzuka it was a weird circumstance that put him sixth on the grid, but he was very quick in Brazil. So you'd have to question how good a job Panis and da Matta were doing.

DM: So were Toyota right to shuffle drivers at season's end?

MH: I think they felt it was worth a go because they were trying to get the next place up in the constructors' championship. They felt they weren't going to get points out of da Matta in the season that was left. And [Ricardo] Zonta had done a good job on the Friday, so it was worth a punt.

DM: I think it's unfair for the drivers to take so much of the rap for another year of Toyota underachievement. The German Grand Prix improvements didn't seem to make a hell of a lot of difference to the car did they?

MH: No, it didn't show any great improvement over the original, in any of the remaining races.

DM: Exactly. I think it was very unseemly swapping drivers before the season's end. And it's not like they dumped da Matta for Michael Schumacher, is it? They swapped him for Zonta!

MH: I'm sure they felt they had to do something. Someone has to report back to Japan at the end of the weekend...

NR: And Toyota has a pretty ruthless reputation in motorsport.

DM: What's the situation at that end?

AR: People say its facilities are awesome and the factory is like a small town. You have to ride a bike to get around. So limitless money – they just don't seem to be able to spend it right.

DM: Is spending vast amounts on pairing Ralf Schumacher with Jarno Trulli a move in the right direction?

AR: They probably got the wrong pairing, but it takes away some of the doubt, doesn't it? Having said that, if you've got Trulli and Ralf Schumacher then there's going to be a lot of doubt, but there will also be weekends when that car is going genuinely as quick as it can.

DM: Are you fairly confident that Toyota will make it at some point then and that they're not going to pull the plug like Ford?

NR: They have always eventually succeeded at everything they've done.

DM: Are we surprised that it's taken this long for them to reach eighth in the constructors' championship?

MH: Yep. We would have expected another step by now: they're about a year behind schedule if you like.

JORDAN

DM: At the start of the year we were pretty non-committal about their chances of creeping into the top eight, which is



JORDAN



18. Nick Heidfeld (D)	
Date of birth	10/5/1977
Grands prix	85
Teams	Prost ('01), Sauber ('02-03)
Best finish	3rd
Points	28
Best grid	4th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	8th ('01)



19. Giorgio PANTANO (I)	
Date of birth	4/2/1979
Grands prix	14
Teams	Jordan ('04)
Best finish	13th
Points	0
Best grid	14th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	Unclassified ('04)



19. Timo GLOCK (D)	
Date of birth	18/3/1982
Grands prix	4
Teams	Jordan ('04)
Best finish	7th
Points	2
Best grid	16th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	19th ('04)



Debut	1991 USA GP
Starts	231
Wins	4
Poles	2
Fastest laps	2
Best drivers	3rd ('99)
Best constructors	3rd ('99)





Top left: Lunch was savoured by all
Left: Jordan was saved by Toyota after a poor '04
Above: Japan was a lowpoint for the minnow Minardi
Right: Hughes explains twin-keel suspension using a spicy salsa dip



probably fairly justified. Could, or should it, have been a better year for them?
MH: It's just a skeleton team really.
DM: Is the chassis rubbish as well?
MH: Yes, but there was no windtunnel time in its conception. That's where you're going to be as a little independent team without a major manufacturer. I mean the game's moved on massively since 1999 when they were in contention for the title.
AR: Also that year they had some of the best guys in the paddock, [Mike] Gascoyne, Sam Michael, top drivers and top commercial staff as well. So not only are they competing against bigger budgets, they've got a weaker team to do it with.
NR: Nothing has gone right for Eddie Jordan since he got rid of Heinz-Harald Frentzen in the middle of 2001.
DM: Nick Heidfeld's talents were wasted yet again - where would that team be without him?
NR: Back where they were. All I mean is his considerable efforts really didn't count for much.
MH: Exactly. Sometimes he was a second quicker than Giorgio Pantano, but only one place ahead of him on the grid!
DM: Could any driver have improved the situation?
MH: Michael would if he brought Ross and Rory with him and Maranello and X millions of dollars and a windtunnel.
DM: Were there any highlights?
MH: It's nice that they still exist, that's about as much as you can hope for. For any team in that position. It's nice they're still around, it's nice that Minardi are still around.
DM: Is there a danger next year that they could actually come up with a better chassis than Toyota and blow them away with Toyota engines?
NR: No. They won't have Ralf and Trulli for a start. I'd be very surprised if they did a better car than the last one.

MINARDI

DM: That chassis looked horrible at times. At Suzuka what happened? They were about four seconds down at the end of lap one? Had they loaded them with gallons of fuel?
AR: I spoke to [Paul] Stoddart after the race and he's normally quite resilient. But this time he said 'the sport's f****d, our car's f****d. I don't want to go racing like this, everything's s**t. All I want to do is go home'. I think it was their lowest point.
NR: I know a lot of people seem not to like him. At least he's not weighed down with the political correctness.
DM: But why does he keep doing it? What's the motivation when you're that hopeless?
AR: Being in Formula 1. I remember when he got into it he said he'd sponsor the team as long as he could hold the pitboard out. He just wanted to be in the team shirt doing that.
DM: Okay, to the driver line-up. Mark, in our British Grand Prix preview supplement you said that one of them is quick, the other motivated, but neither is both. Still a fair comment?
NR: It has to be said, if there was anything special about Gianmaria Bruni he would have annihilated [Zsolt] Baumgartner in every session.
MH: He was actually embarrassingly slow sometimes: not just embarrassingly close to... he was actually slower than Zsolt Baumgartner.
DM: Which is why it's justice that Zsolt scored their point. ☑

MINARDI



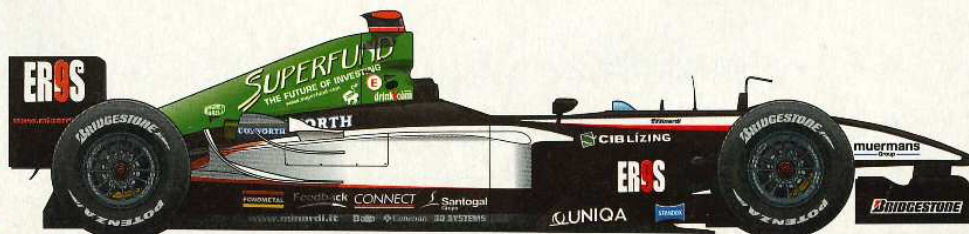
20. Zsolt BAUMGARTNER (H)	
Date of birth	1/1/1981
Grands prix	20
Teams	Jordan ('03), Minardi ('04)
Best finish	8th
Points	1
Best grid	17th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	20th ('04)



21. Gianmaria BRUNI (I)	
Date of birth	30/5/1981
Grands prix	18
Teams	Minardi ('04)
Best finish	14th
Points	0
Best grid	16th
Fastest laps	0
Best championship	Unclassified ('04)



Debut	1985 Brazilian GP
Starts	321
Best finish	4th
Best grid	2nd
Fastest laps	0
Best drivers'	11th ('91)
Best constructors'	7th ('91)



HIGHS AND LOWS

SPECIAL FEATURE For every high point in a Formula 1 season, there is often a low point



**MARK
HUGHES**



FORME, as ever, Brazil features heavily in the highs. Some tell you it sucks, and by that they mean walking the streets can be dangerous or the roof in the press office lets in a torrent of rain during a thunderstorm, or the practice is delayed while they chase a couple of stray dogs off the track. What Brazil doesn't let you do is stay in the bubble of F1 unreality. Sao Paulo is the world in microcosm, everything crowding in together because there isn't room to do otherwise: good and bad, beautiful and ugly, rich and poor. This is F1's reality check, and it's truly wonderful.

Breathe in! Let your shoulders down! Look at how beautiful the track's contours are, see it following whatever the swampland beneath it decides. It makes no difference if they grind and roll the bumps out; they just appear somewhere else. Raise the ride heights and let's get going. The atmosphere as the cars drove to the dummy grid from the garages this year was spellbinding. To the usual samba drums and the rhythmic 'Rubin-ho' chants add to the uncertainty over tyre choice as the drizzle began to fall, juggling the way the race was going to play out. It was electric and a great note on which to finish the season.

Uncertainty played a central role in the low point too: those few seconds after Ralf Schumacher struck the wall at Indianapolis and wasn't getting out the car were awful. That the camera images showed a damaged Williams with an unmoving yellow helmet inside flashed up all the wrong messages. That Michael Schumacher made an immediate pit-stop, gaining competitive advantage from a situation in which—unknown to him—his brother lay in a wreck in the middle of the track, just brought home the latent cruelty which lies just beneath the surface of this sport. ☒



**ANTHONY
ROWLINSON**

Below left: A stray dog wanders across the track in Brazil, halting events, but that's the charm, says Mark Hughes. Below right: The Indy fiasco was a low point, with cars being directed around a stricken Ralf Schumacher. A stark reminder of the dangers in F1

**“BRAZIL IS F1'S
REALITY CHECK,
AND IT'S TRULY
WONDERFUL”
MARK HUGHES**

Below: The Jaguar Racing team is given wings of a Red Bull variety. Just perfect to show the human side of what can be a cold, clinical sport. Below right: Political wrangling underpinned 2004 and left a bitter taste in the mouth for many fans



LOWES OF 2004

point, MARK HUGHES, ANTHONY ROWLINSON and NIGEL ROEBUCK offer their selections



NO QUESTION as to the best moment of the year. Standing on the fringe of the factory floor at the team formerly known as Jaguar Racing and watching 300 staff being told their jobs had been saved by Red Bull was always going to take some beating.

Autosport was the only publication privileged enough to share that moment and it served as a reminder that when all the sniping's said and done, F1 remains a human sport. A heavily commercial, technical, image-obsessed sport, sure—but still one that relies on human heartbeats to make it tick.

Ninety-five per cent of those sitting on the close-set plastic chairs to hear the good news from, in turn, Richard Parry-Jones, Tony Purnell and Dave Pitchforth were unsung grafters, whose livelihood had been placed in jeopardy by the unfortunate decision from the Ford main board that it no longer wanted to fund an F1 programme. That its lieutenants subsequently helped ensure the team was sold on, is to miss the point: it was the Tony Purnells, Dave Pitchforths and Mark Gallaghers who led the fight to save the team. And it's thanks to their unwavering resolve (and a hundred-or-so million dollars of Red Bull cash) that F1 has a full complement of teams for 2005. Gentlemen, take a bow.

Equally pleasing—though less astonishing—was the news that Eddie Jordan (backed by the powers of Mr Ecclestone) had clinched a deal to run Toyota engines in the back of his cars next season. At the time of writing, the precise make-up of the team for 2005 was unclear, but at least the Toyota deal allowed Jordan to register an entry for the 2005 world championship, keeping it alive to fight another day. The apparent salvation of these embattled organisations (and the continued existence of Minardi—a minor, Stoddart-blessed miracle) saved F1 from the dread prospect of a seven-entry 2005 grid, and all the associated wrangling over three-car teams that would have ensued. After a year of warfare, the last thing F1 needed was a winter of bitter in-fighting.

Which brings us to the lows. The nadir, the unscratchable itch, the dirty stuff in F1's navel. Was there ever a year like this for interminable political posturing? We had Bernie v the banks; the FIA v the teams; the GPWC v Bernie; Ferrari v the world; Silverstone v Ecclestone; Jenson v BAR; BAR v Williams... there came a point, on the Friday of the Brazilian GP weekend, as the now-famous 'Stoddart declaration' was being prepared, when a journalist couldn't turn without being briefed this way or that. It was enough to make heads explode (and after a 12-hour flight, jet lag and a beer too many, mine almost did). F1 was never meant to be like this. Praise be that Räikkönen and Montoya staged one of the best races of the year, to leave us smiling at the prospect of 2005. Bring it on. ☒



NIGEL ROEBUCK

Below: When man and machine became one for Nigel Roebuck—nice guys do finish first thanks to Trulli's perfect pole lap and peerless race display. Below right: Shunts galore at Indy, which weren't cleared up properly, robbed fans of a decent race



HIGHS AND lows in 2004... there were plenty of each. For me, the highest point was Jarno Trulli's masterpiece of a pole lap at Monaco, half a second faster than anyone else, and probably as close to perfection as a man and a racing car have ever been. When he then won the race, faultlessly, I was delighted to see a nice guy finish first.

Other highs? Kimi Räikkönen's sheer combativeness against Michael Schumacher at Silverstone, knowing he couldn't hold the Ferrari once its Bridgestone tyres kicked in, but fighting all the same, in the manner of Gilles Villeneuve.

I relished the performances of BAR-Honda, consummately the revelation of 2004. Jenson Button took pole position at Imola, and led the early laps until the inevitable Schumacher went by. Beaten only by the Ferrari drivers in the championship, Button had a remarkable season, but don't overlook Takuma Sato: that start at Monaco may have been messy, but, boy, was it committed...

The best race? Until the scrap between Juan Montoya and Räikkönen in Interlagos (which beautifully set up 2005), it was Kimi's defeat of the Ferraris at Spa. Like Williams, like Renault, McLaren won only once this year, but in each case the victory was memorable. Ferrari's high came, appropriately, at Monza, where Rubens Barrichello and Schumacher were ninth and 11th after six laps, yet finished 1-2, truly demonstrating the superiority of the F2004. Best of Michael's 13 wins? Suzuka, perfection.

Now the lows. The revised qualifying system was not a success, its shortcomings revealed to the full in the preliminary session at Silverstone, where the drivers tried not to go fast...

At Indy, a first-corner accident was cleared up too quickly, and debris subsequently caused accidents to Fernando Alonso and, almost certainly, Ralf Schumacher—the latter missing half a dozen races while he recovered from injury.

In the same race Montoya switched late—a little too late—to the T-car, and was disqualified by the stewards only after running 58 laps. Unforgivable.

Other lows: Ford pulling the plug on Jaguar Racing, the whole Byfield/Button/BAR/Williams mess—followed by the unjustified removal of David Richards from BAR—and the announcement of 2.4-litre V8 engines for 2006. Last, if the return of Spa to F1 was a blessing, the return of the Belgian police was not... ☒

The Jaguar team is...
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2004
GRAND PRIX
REVIEW

FIVE IN A ROW

BUNCH OF FIVE

Schumacher's winning streak is an epic feat, but which year is the pick of the bunch? By MARK HUGHES

It says everything about the enormity of Michael Schumacher's achievements that we can even consider this feature: which of his *five* consecutive Ferrari titles has been his best? And we're not even looking at his back-to-back championships with Benetton. Some very, very great drivers never even won one title. It's all the more extraordinary given his career call at the end of that second title success with Benetton. It would have been so easy and entirely logical to have simply plugged himself into Williams or McLaren at that stage and racked up relatively comfortable titles immediately. Instead, he took on the challenge of helping transform the glittering façade that was Ferrari into something more real. The difficult early Ferrari years, where he was fighting against superior machinery, teased some of his greatest driving performances. As the quality of the machines created by the close-knit family around him increased, so there was less call on his reserves.

This is a critical point, because the vastness of the man's talent also allows us an important distinction when analysing his seasons. Because there are routine wins – victories that probably could have been replicated by any world class driver in similar circumstances – and there are the extraordinary wins, ones where he has plainly dug very deep into the vast vaults of his ability. By definition there will be less of the latter as his cars have got better, but every so often he has given us a reminder that all is still intact.

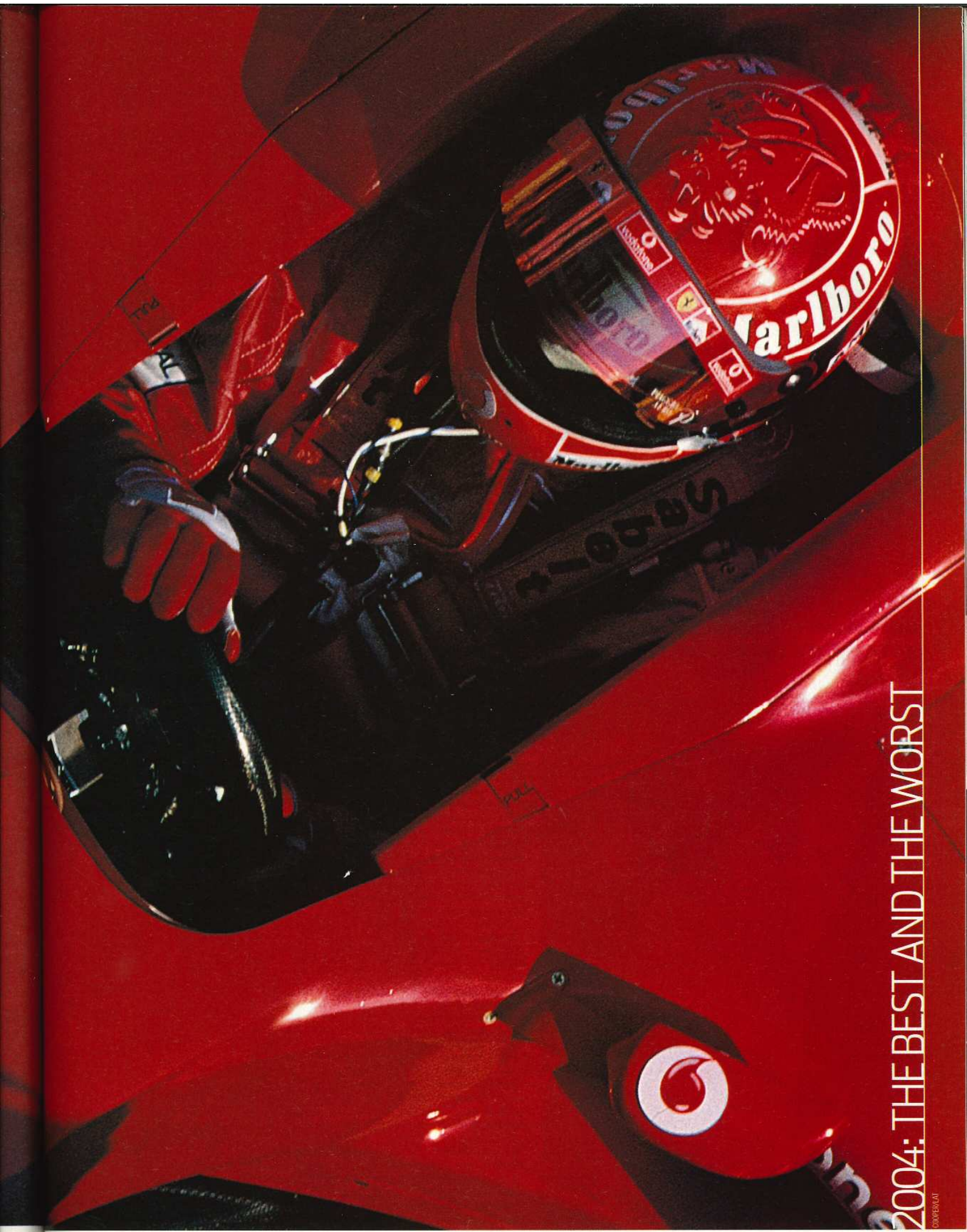
Looking at the merits of each of his seasonal campaigns with Ferrari, as opposed to the heights of brilliance reached in individual races within them, we're striving to get a feel for an overall level of performance within the very specific circumstances of each year.

2000: THE BIG ONE

World Champion driver in a Ferrari, the first for 21 years. This stands as the crowning glory of his career, the most significant achievement of all. But was it his best? Arguable.

The 2000 Ferrari was perhaps a whisper slower than the →

More wins but
more errors for
Schuey in 2004



2004: THE BEST AND THE WORST

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2004 GRAND PRIX REVIEW

FIVE IN A ROW

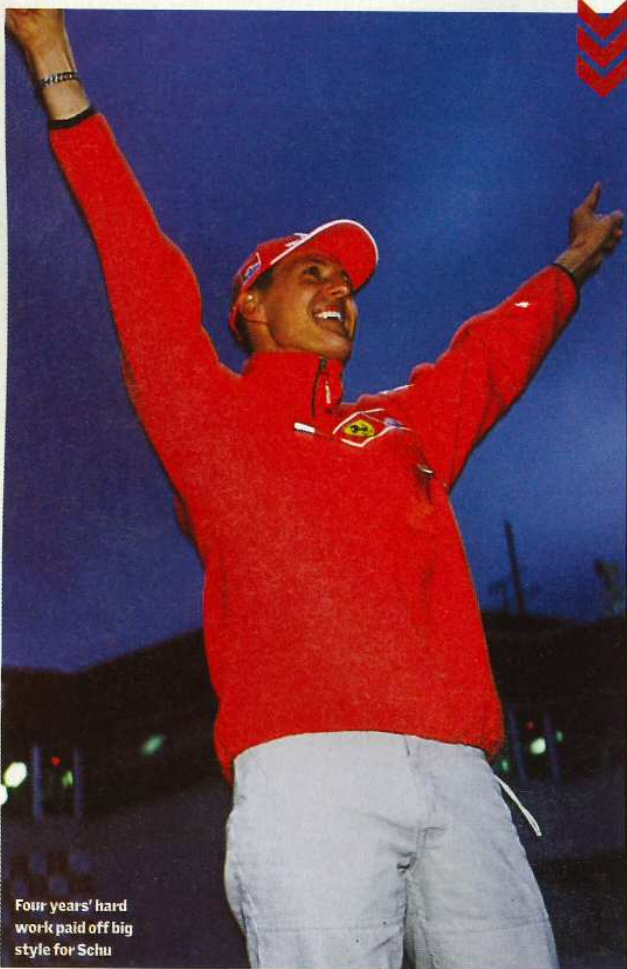
McLaren MP4-15 of his chief rival Mika Häkkinen, but it was more reliable, and this certainly was critical in his title success. But even in those races where the McLaren was apparently quicker – notably the opening two encounters in Australia and Brazil – Schumacher showed a control and focus, pushing to the maximum but not transcending the car and those races came to him thanks to McLaren unreliability. It was as if he was looking at this year as a true campaign rather than as a series of races in which to express his brilliance.

Make no mistake, Michael wanted this title badly, probably more than Häkkinen did, and that might just have been the critical difference between them that year. To this day, Michael considers Mika as the biggest rival he's ever faced. He's probably the only guy who's ever caused Michael to question whether he really is the fastest. But Häkkinen came into the season fatigued by the pressures of two consecutive championships and the promotional work that they brought. Here he was in 2000, again in probably the fastest car, and he could only repeat what he'd already done, or lose. That's how he later said he felt, and he had a few quiet off races mid-season. Michael, by contrast, was the underdog.

Coming into the season after the scare of 1999 – when someone else had very nearly benefited from the gamble he took at the end of '95 and all the hard work subsequently – almost certainly helped lend Michael extra focus. It would have been a disaster for him if the history books had recorded Eddie Irvine, a driver not in the same league, as the man who brought title success back to Ferrari, when it was Michael who'd made it possible.

That focus and desire was clear at Imola and the title-decider at Suzuka, where there was absolutely nothing to choose between the two men in speed. Michael turned Imola from 'advantage Mika' to 'game Michael' with miraculous in-and-out-laps at the final stop. At Suzuka he did the same at the first stops, aided in this case by a bit of rain, which always plays to his uncanny skill.

It was rare that Schuey and Häkkinen actually faced off each other wheel-to-wheel. But it did happen at Spa, thanks to



Four years' hard work paid off big style for Schu

2000: THE BIG ONE



Ferrari gained its first car advantage in '01

Michael's unsuitable wing settings and, once enraged by Michael's out-of-order defence, there was no doubting Häkkinen's desire there. Ironically, it came just as Ferrari was about to find a significant performance step which would neutralise McLaren's brief ascendancy. Thereafter, it was a straight fight and Michael won. Into the bargain, he nailed the collywobbles of title-clinching we'd seen in 1994, '97 and '98, although it would later re-appear.

2001: ADVANTAGE FERRARI

This was a much easier title than 2000. That doesn't necessarily mean Schuey wasn't as good, or better. But this time he had a car advantage and Häkkinen, preoccupied by thoughts of retirement and let down by poor reliability, only rarely sparked into the performer he could be. There were races where the Williams-BMW and Michelin combination was a difficult one to race against – dragster straightline, a very different tyre performance profile and an unpredictable, combative rival he'd never faced before – but Michael was still able to seal the title relatively early.

He has since said that achieving title success with Ferrari in 2000 took the pressure off him and that everything since has been a bonus, in stark contrast to how title success affected Häkkinen. With the pressure off, we probably saw more individual brilliance from Schuey in '01 than '00. We can point to Malaysia, Magny-Cours, Spa and Suzuka as truly exceptional performances, and maybe it's significant that two of these four came after the title had been clinched.

In terms of his rivals, it was a different sort of season for him than the previous three years. Juan Pablo Montoya took a different kind of rivalry to him than Häkkinen had, Spa 2000 aside. It was more personal and combative, more wheel-to-wheel. Schuey didn't shirk from it, but didn't fight it on JPM's terms. He was less swashbuckling, smarter. When pitched against brother Ralf, he didn't hesitate to be as ruthless as necessary with him, more so than he ever was with Montoya.

2002: AN ADVANTAGE EXTENDED

The F2002 gave Schumacher a huge machinery advantage over everyone bar his team-mate Rubens Barrichello, and so the records tumbled.

His raw speed should theoretically have been less visible, given that the car was supplying so much of it. Yet we saw five

2001: ADVANTAGE FERRARI

purple patch performances – Melbourne, Interlagos, Silverstone, Spa and Suzuka. At Spa, he just let rip with everything he had. It was pure indulgence, a drive of such staggering perfection and superiority it took the breath away.

The car was so good in 2002 that Barrichello became a more consistent threat, something that really came to the public eye with the team orders of Austria-gate. But on tracks where the driver needed to squeeze more than what the car could give him – Spa, Suzuka – Schuey was in a different league.

2003: THE STRUGGLE

He had three things against him: 1) A car inappropriate in concept to late-notice new rules. 2) A re-jigged points system which reduced the advantage of winning races. 3) Ferrari supplier Bridgestone lost ground to rival Michelin. As a result of all this, he clinched the title only at the last race, and in a very scrappy manner.

There were still some stunners along the way – Imola, Austria, Montreal and Monza – but the title collywobbles reappeared in Japan. He also made errors early on, going off three times in Australia to finish fourth in a race that was winnable. He drove into Jarno Trulli in Malaysia and went off in the rain under double-waved yellows in Brazil. He was done like a kipper by JPM at the Nürburgring, too. It was almost as if the domination of 2002 had made him rusty at getting his hands dirty. Furthermore, with a car that didn't respond as well as some of the other Ferraris to Michael's left-foot braking skills, Barrichello was closer than ever.

But Schuey still won six races in a year when no-one else won more than two. This was in a car which was on balance the fastest, but not by much and certainly not by the margin of six wins to two.

2004: THE BEST AND THE WORST

With a car advantage probably even bigger than in '02, Michael won more races than ever before, but also made more errors than before too, more even than in '03 when he was up against it. But there were still miracle performances – Bahrain,



Montoya was a thorn in Schuey's side during 2003

where his qualifying lap defied belief and where his race was a masterclass in control, using just enough pace to stay out of reach while balancing on an extremely delicate pivot of brake and tyre wear. There was the annihilation of the Nürburgring, where Schuey effectively secured the race after eight laps. There was the sequence of qualifying-style laps which allowed Ferrari's bold four-stop strategy to work at Magny-Cours, the highly symbolic dominance at Hungary, where he was lapped the year before. Then the perfection of Suzuka, one year on from his shambolic performance in '03.

On the other hand, Michael wasn't as quick as Barrichello at Montreal, Indianapolis or Interlagos and it was only nip and tuck between them at Silverstone and Monza. Then there was his nightmare China weekend where he made more mistakes than in the whole of the 2002 season. Plus there was his strangely subdued race in Brazil.

His highs were as high as ever, but there were more lows. It used to be that once the title pressure was off you would really see Schuey do his stuff. But this year it was like he lost focus once it was all sealed up.

CONCLUSIONS

It has got to be 2002. The whole negativity created by Austria towards both Ferrari and Schumacher tends to obscure the fact that we saw a fantastic personal performance from the champ in this year. Not only were there the unreal performances which weren't even necessary in clinching the title, but there was not a single subdued performance or significant error – Indy finish-line aside. Besides, he may have been handed Austria (and even that's not a given, as from early in the race neither Ferrari was racing the other), but he paid that back in spades, gifting Rubens Hungary, Monza and, inadvertently, Indy.

Interspersing the usual brilliance, there were a lot of errors in both 2003 and '04. So perhaps his next best Ferrari title after '02 was 2000. Although he had more special races in '01, 2000 demanded more qualities of him, put him up against it at the end, because of not having the car advantage and on this occasion he delivered, emerging on top of that magnificent struggle with Häkkinen.

But if we look outside of his Ferrari years, in terms of driving performance, can anything be compared to 1995 when he didn't just win with an inferior car, but dominated? ☑



Was 2002 the pick of the bunch for Michael?

2002: AN ADVANTAGE EXTENDED

2003: THE STRUGGLE



TOP 10 F1 DRIVERS OF 2004

ALAN
JONES

TOP 10 DRIVERS

Yet another year of dominance by Michael Schumacher, but it has been an intriguing one nonetheless. Despite this being the fifth year on the trot that

Michael's taken the championship, and despite not really liking what I know of him, I can't stop watching him in action.

All the grands prix were interesting – at least up until the point where Michael took the lead, either at the first corner or whenever the leader had to pit. The guy

– and the team – always had something in reserve, had it all covered. That's depressing for everyone else, of course, but it was bloody impressive to see in action. I have a lot of admiration for the Ferrari team, even if they have drilled a hole through the record books.

I think there are drivers who could give him trouble, but there are no opportunities for them. None of the teams do as good a job as Ferrari so that rules out rivalry from outside the team. And the No2 Ferrari seat is a poisoned chalice. So that's that.

Like I said, Michael's got it all covered.

RALF SCHUMACHER

He's a strange guy. I can barely remember a single race this year where Ralf looked fired up and ready for a fight. Okay, maybe it's slightly unfair to say that, considering he missed a third of the races, but of those six races he missed he'd maybe have used his talent in one of them. He has good talent and he did look bloody good in China – he sorted out Montoya properly. But most of the time he looked a bit of a fairy. Whereas he used to thrive on the rivalry with Montoya, this year that wasn't enough for him – I think that's because the FW26 wasn't anywhere near the

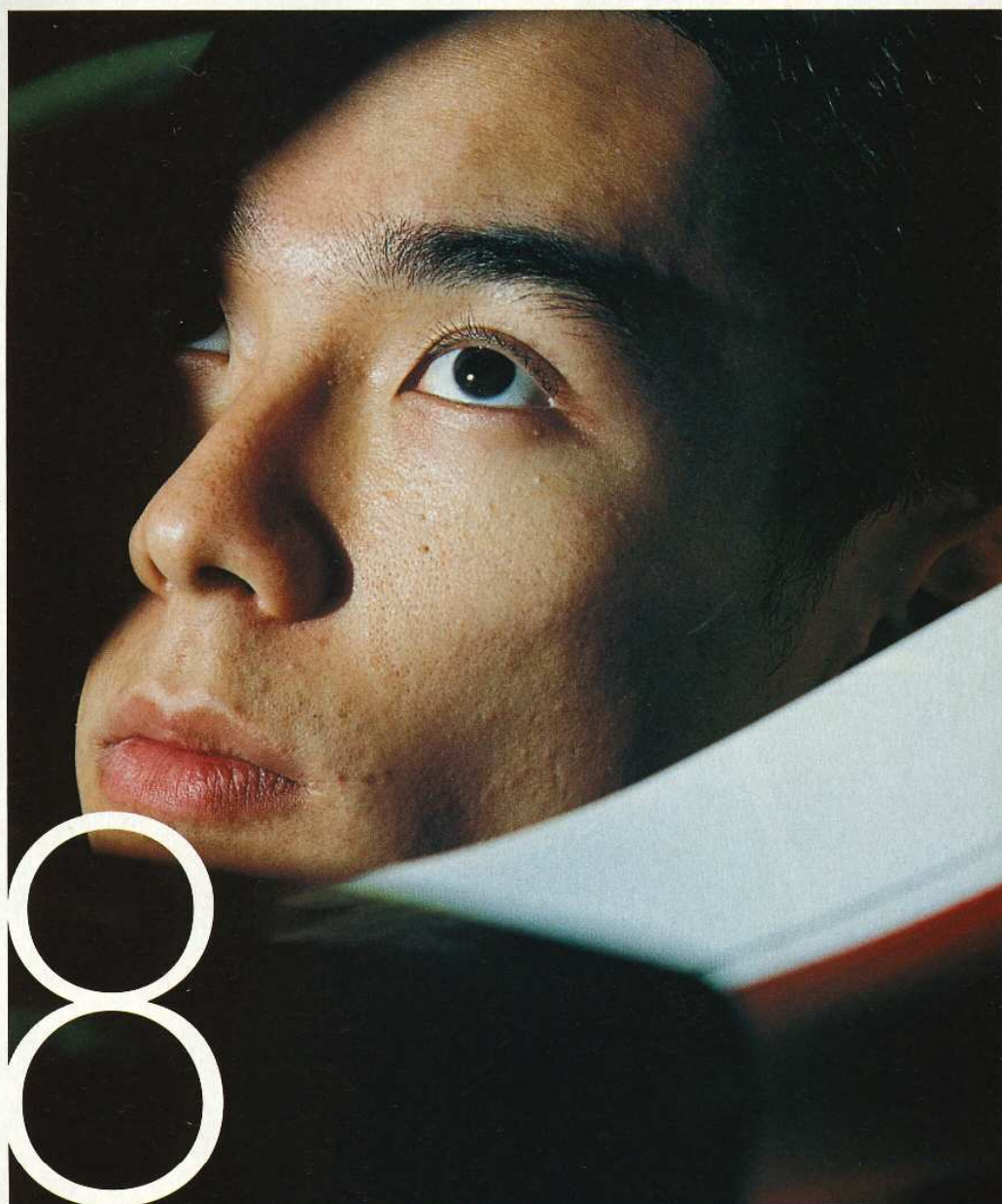
Ferrari. That's a crap attitude to have because you must give your best at all times.





JARNO TRULLI

9 Almost as strange as Ralf. He was amazing in Monaco, in qualifying and during the race, and in the first half of the season he was often outqualifying his team-mate, Fernando Alonso. But in France Alonso sorted him out, he fell asleep and let Barrichello past on the last corner, and that was it – he never got his head straight again. I know there were rumours that from then on the team weren't working as hard on his car as they were on Alonso's, but that's pure bullshit. No-one would deliberately compromise one half of the team. No, I think it was mental frailty on Trulli's part. Having said that, I don't think Flavio Briatore treated him in the best way in the second half of the year. A fragile driver is never going to give his best if he's certain he's going to be sacked, is he? And to replace him in the middle of the season was even crazier.



TAKUMA SATO

00 To describe Sato as the best ever Japanese F1 driver isn't saying much, is it? But it's still true. And to say that one of his best qualities is his Honda backing sounds flippant, but that's true too. But I have to say I've become a real fan of his. Taku had already earned his stripes before he reached F1 – look at his Formula 3 performances. But this year we started to see his potential, and I think he's a cracking driver who just needs

to find more consistency. I don't mean he should cruise around and collect points: he's a great fighter and a fantastic overtaker and we all need that in Formula 1. Next year I just want to see him analysing why he's quick when he's quick, sorting out where he isn't quick enough, and then he should have the sort of year that his team-mate had this year. One more year's experience should make him superb.



JENSON BUTTON

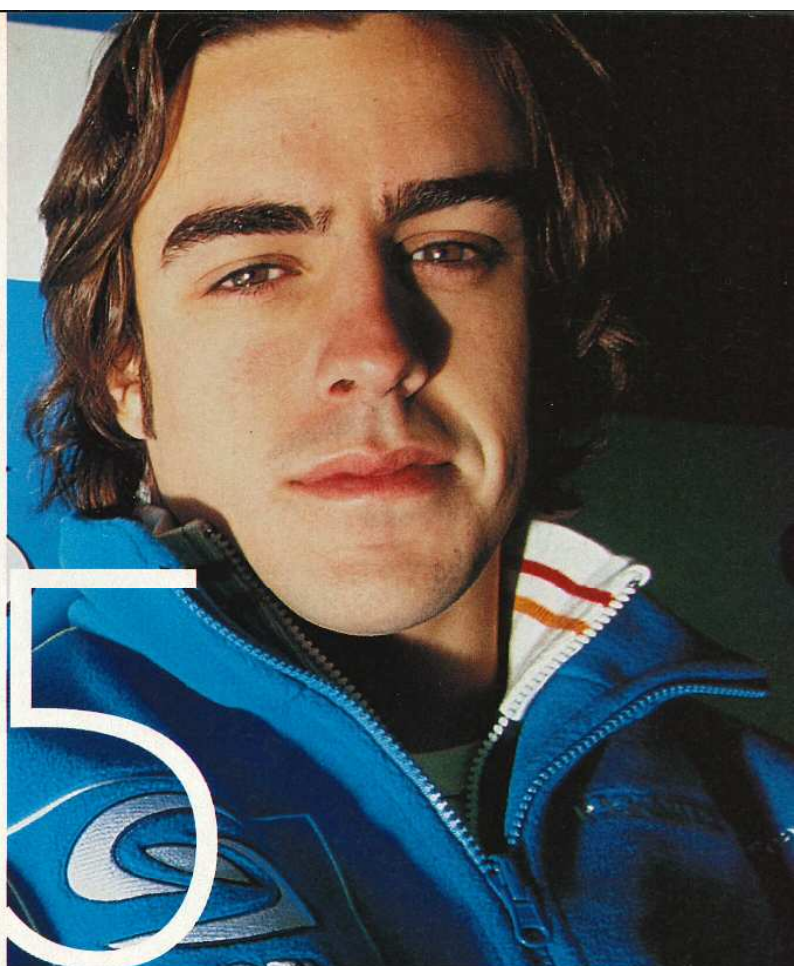
Yeah, yeah, I know some people will be upset at me putting Button down here after he finished third in the championship, but they'll all be overly-patriotic English fans. The thing is, the BAR 006 was a superb car, and over the course of the season, taking all the circuits into account, probably the second best. So, Jenson fulfilled the car's potential, but I think only in Imola qualifying was he outstanding. Having said that he has a lot of ability, and I'm impressed with the way that he doesn't need to be wrapped in cotton wool to turn out his best performance. The way he got on with the job while his management tried to screw up his future was impressive. However, he's just one of a lot of drivers who I think could do as good a job as Barrichello, but no better, if they were given the second Ferrari.



JUAN PABLO MONTOYA

Well, he's still a bloody good racer and a bloody good overtaker. He did a really good job in Brazil and his move on Ralf Schumacher at Melbourne was spot on too. He's a real fighter. But he's much too temperamental, a bit like Nelson Piquet was: he needs to be fired up to give his best. But whereas Nelson won three world championships, I don't know if Juan can do that: he certainly isn't as good at setting a car up as

Nelson was. Also, why did Montoya look so caught out by Ralf's pace when Ralf came back in China? Clearly he needed a wake-up. Also, Juan needs to be cuddled and know the team is behind him, otherwise he starts losing his perspective and either goes slow or goes out of control. I don't know this for sure, but I'm reckoning Frank Williams will be pleased to see the arse-end of both his drivers.



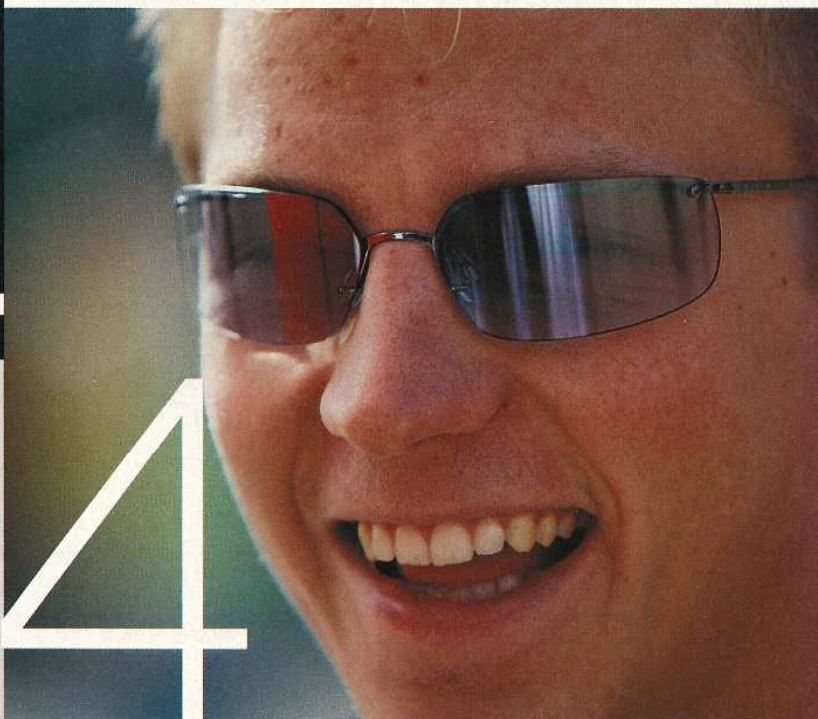
FERNANDO ALONSO

Here's a guy that has driven his backside off all year, given it everything at every race, and yet it was his teammate that got Renault's win and both their poles. Life can be shit like that. I'm a real fan of Alonso, because I never see him driving like he's on a Sunday drive. He's always flat out and he'll always go for an overtaking manoeuvre if half a chance comes up. Mentally he's

stronger than Trulli. Sure, he got outqualified by Trulli a fair bit at the start of the year, but Alonso's aggression on race day made up for that. Some of his driving down to the first corner, maximising the R24's advantage off the startline, was fantastic. And in any race if you saw a Renault pulling off an overtaking manoeuvre – successful – you knew which one it was.

KIMI RAIKKONEN

You've got to admire his persistence this year. I mean, at the start of the season that McLaren looked a real mongrel: slow on the straights, twitchy on the corners, and it couldn't bloody well stay together for a whole race. It had nothing going for it, but Räikkönen never stopped getting the most from it and, compared to previous years, had an increased advantage over David Coulthard. And he proved why it's important to keep trying through the bad times: it means you're sharp enough to grab opportunities when the situation improves, like it did for McLaren mid-season. Räikkönen drove a great race at Silverstone, could have won in Germany, and got that win in Spa after another mega drive. Okay, he shouldn't have allowed Montoya past in Brazil, but I guess the guy's allowed one mistake. He's one driver who could push Schumacher, given a fighting chance.





3 MARK WEBBER

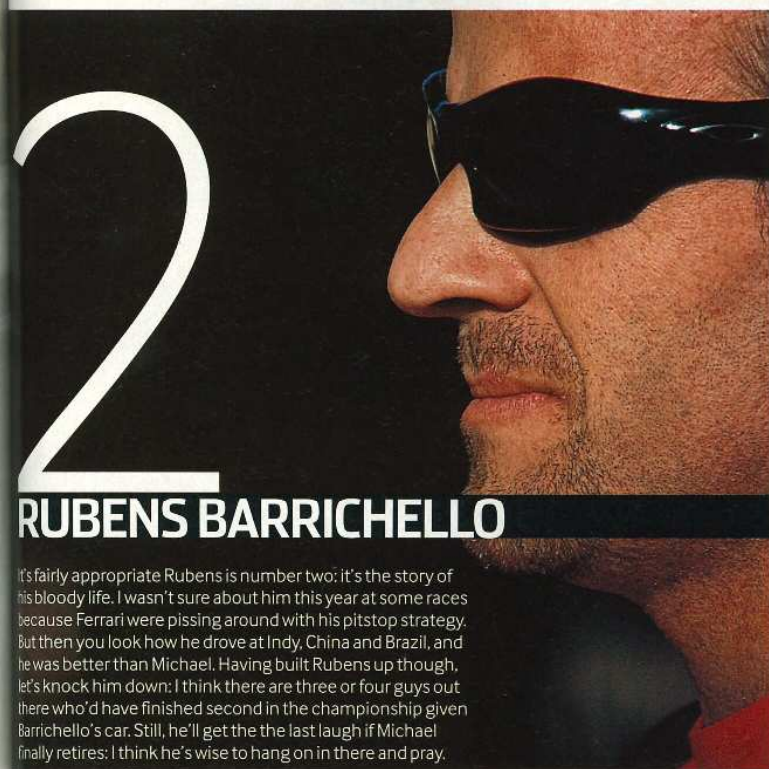
Okay, I need to justify this one for someone that didn't finish in the top 10 in the championship. But I can say this hand on heart: I can't see a single thing wrong with this guy as a racing driver. For one thing, he's Australian! He's fit, he's dedicated, he's talented and he works his backside off to improve himself, his car and the way his team works. Who else, other than Michael Schumacher, can you say that about? And who else, other than Michael, could have carried Jaguar – the team and the car – so well through another shitty year? Mark's so strong in the head he never let himself get down.



1 MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

How could it be anyone else? Michael's been the best driver in Formula 1 since Ayrton Senna died, and anyone who denies that is living in his own little world. I hate the fact that it's been so easy for him; having the best car, and the other guy's not allowed to beat him on the rare occasions when he's anywhere near. But jeez, Michael's put himself in that situation: he's a fundamental part of the whole team dynamic, he inspires people to get the best out of themselves, and for the last five years he's been rewarded. Fair play

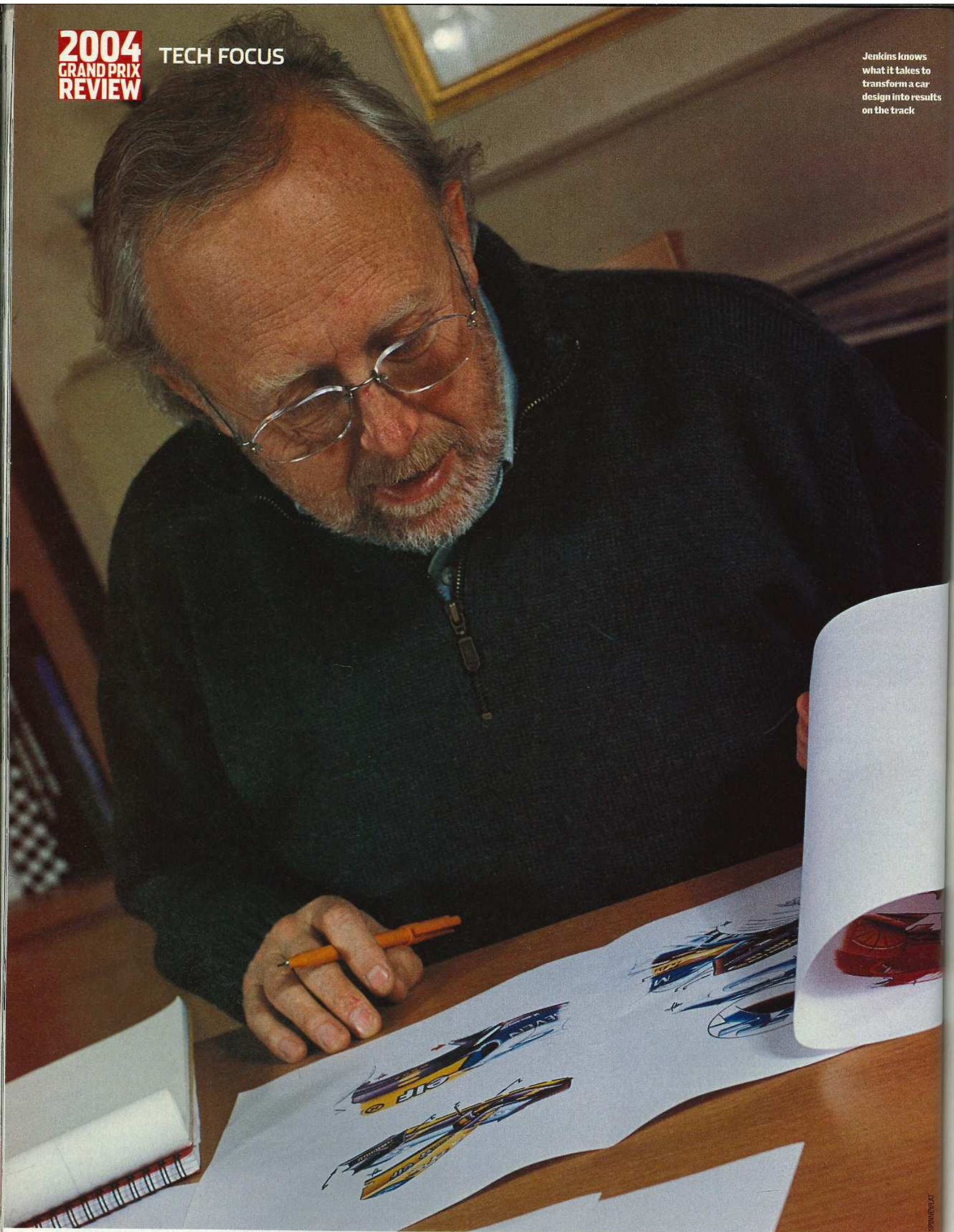
to him. People have been trying to get some kind of satisfaction from his mistakes towards the end of the year, but let's get a grip here: he'd won 12 bloody races by the time he screwed up in China! If his focus wasn't on the job 100 per cent, well... that's kind of understandable given that he'd clinched the title with four races still to go. If he relaxes this winter, as well as testing obviously, he'll come back as focused and amazing as ever next year. I don't see him losing his grip until he's retired. Worst luck...



2 RUBENS BARRICHELLO

It's fairly appropriate Rubens is number two: it's the story of his bloody life. I wasn't sure about him this year at some races because Ferrari were pissing around with his pitstop strategy. But then you look how he drove at Indy, China and Brazil, and he was better than Michael. Having built Rubens up though, let's knock him down: I think there are three or four guys out there who'd have finished second in the championship given Barrichello's car. Still, he'll get the the last laugh if Michael finally retires: I think he's wise to hang on in there and pray.

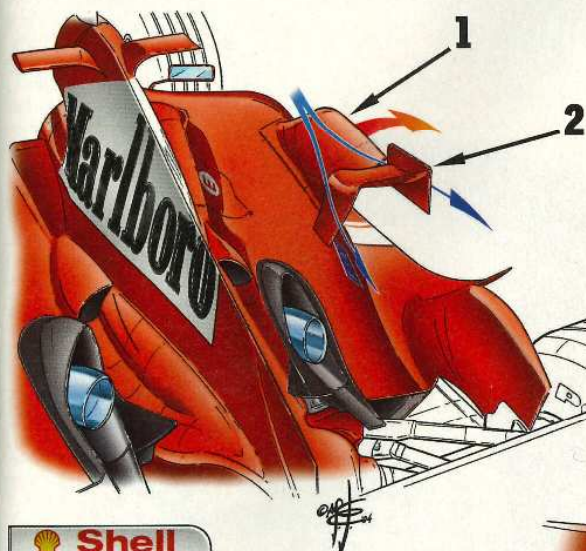
Jenkins knows what it takes to transform a car design into results on the track



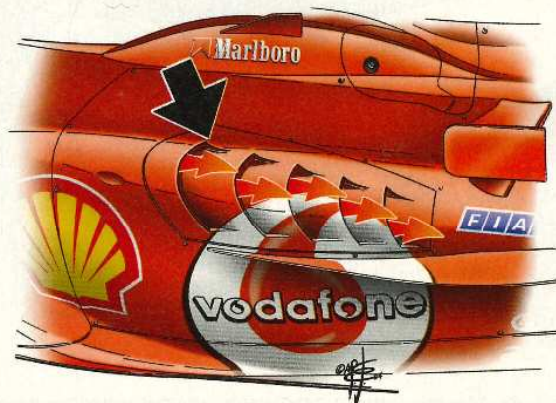
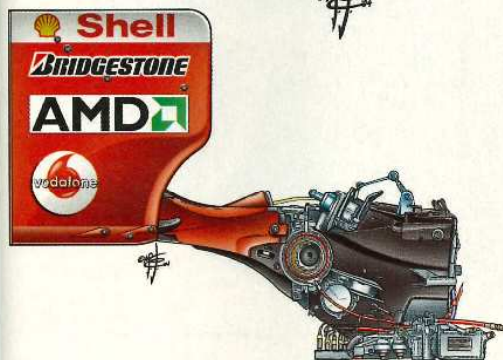
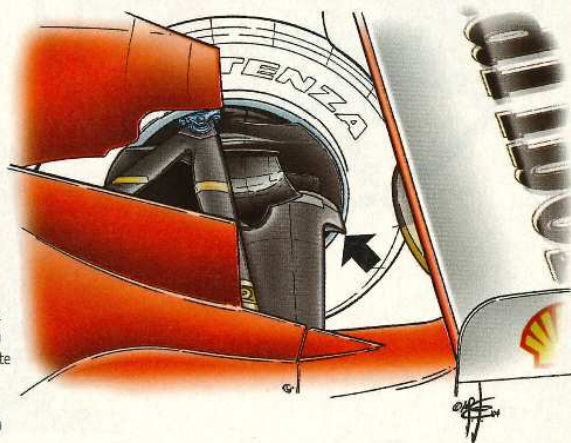
SPRING/04

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

How did Ferrari manage to drub its four leading rivals so comprehensively in 2004? ANTHONY ROWLINSON found out from ex-Stewart and Prost tech boss Alan Jenkins



3 THE F2004'S chimney (1) had a big effect on downforce, channelling the airflow to the winglets and directing hot air away from the car. The endplate of the winglet (2) was modified, with a bigger wall to separate airflow. The endplate opened up in thickness (3), like the R24's main wing endplate.



FERRARI USED a super-small gearbox in the F2004 (far left).

THE F2004 RAN with shark vents in Malaysia, unlike in the previous race in Australia, where they were closed. All five 'shark-gill' windows were used.

FOR IMOLA further refinements were made to the F2004's aero package. A carbonfibre wing-shaped cover creating positive lift over the driveshafts and toe-links improved airflow to the upper wing.

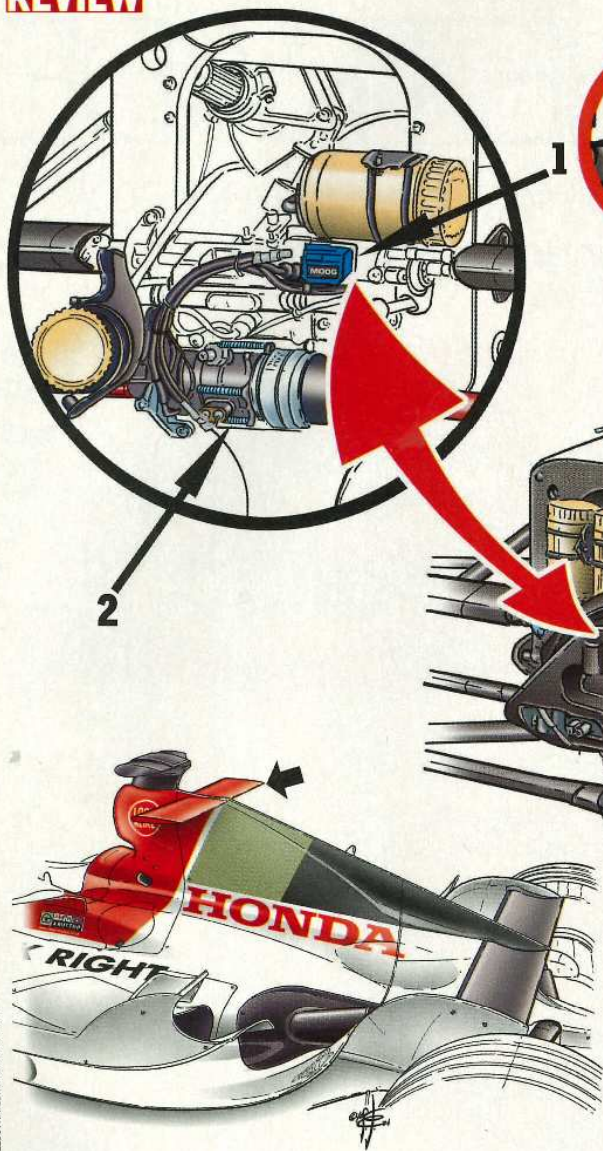
ILLUSTRATIONS: GIORGIO PIOLA

It's all in the stats: 15 wins; 262 points; 785 laps led; 12 pole positions and 14 fastest laps tell their own story of Ferrari's dominance in 2004. But more accurately it's all in the figures: the minuscule increments of gain eked out in windtunnels and on test tracks during the season are what give Ferrari its advantage every time the red lights go out. But more than that, it's the way the figures are interpreted and put to good, effective use, with maximum cohesion between Ferrari's departments and minimum wasted effort. That's what makes Ferrari so effective. Of course, it has the budget to ensure that its computer modelling and design tools are the very best, and that the chaps who use them, such as head of vehicle design Aldo Costa (tipped to succeed Rory Byrne as chief designer at the end of next year) are among the very best in the business. But the team has also generated an apparently self-sustaining culture of excellence, which makes knocking it off its lofty perch all-but impossible.

"When you look at how they work together," says Alan Jenkins, "you realise how unflawed the relationship is between, say, Rory Byrne, Ross Brawn and Paolo Martinelli. And it's all expertly managed by Jean Todt. You compare that with what the other teams have and you see the strains between BMW and Williams, or the problems that McLaren and Mercedes are still having since the unfortunate loss of Paul Morgan knocked Ilmor [which builds Mercedes' engines] sideways, and you start to wonder how the others can even begin to compete. It's not as simple as designing the best car - it's designing every last bit of it to be the best and

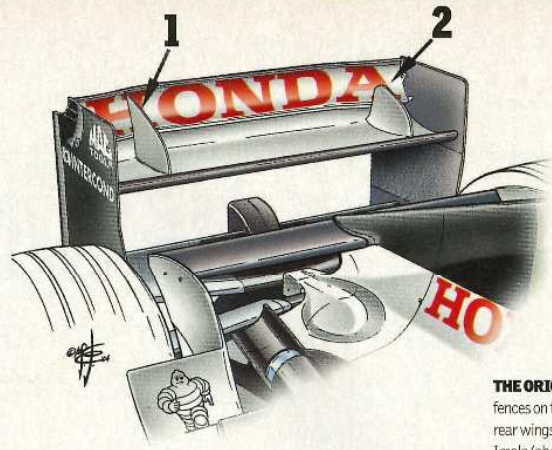
The F2004 was the result of a team operating at its peak



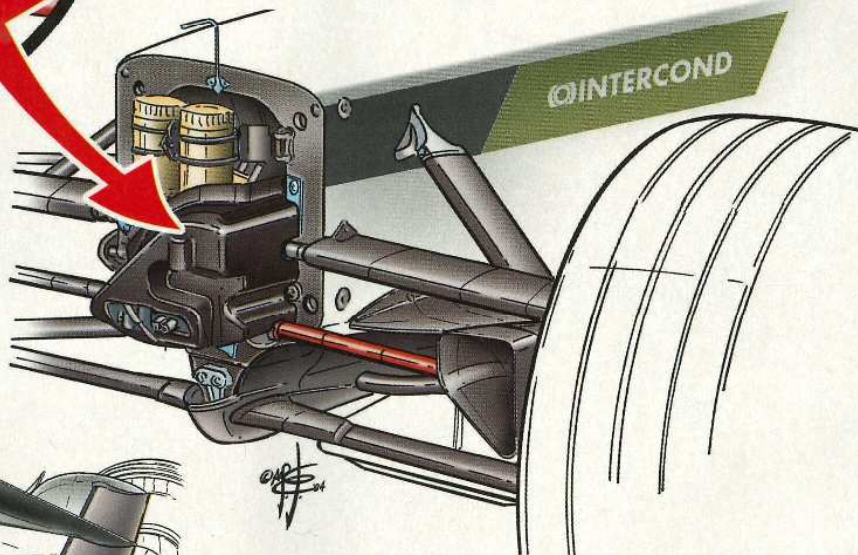


ILLUSTRATIONS: GIORGIO FIOLA

THE TEAM USED
a 60cm wide airbox-mounted winglet for extra downforce at Imola (left), something it had done for the previous two years.



THE ORIGINAL
fences on the 006's rear wings were cut for Imola (above) after an FIA clarification. The originals are shaped as (1), the new ones as (2). It was ruled that the fences had to be aerofoil-shaped in profile, necessitating that their size be reduced. BAR found that although this reduced downforce, it improved drag and overall efficiency.



BAR'S controversial and subsequently banned front torque transfer device introduced in Germany took its inspiration from Benetton's similar component in 1999. Torque shafts transferred the torque from a faster wheel to a slower one to even out braking distribution, theoretically enabling the driver to brake deeper in the turn and unlock more front-end grip. There was a software-controlled MOOG electro-hydraulic valve (1) and a clutch (2).

ILLUSTRATIONS: GIORGIO FIOLA



BAR was undoubtedly the surprise package of the 2004 season

having the culture and tools that allow you to do that. That, to my mind, is what makes Ferrari so effective."

TOTAL PACKAGE

Ferrari, Jenkins believes, is still way ahead of the rest in its ability to think of its car as a total package. "What makes a good car a great car is getting nine-and-a-half of every 10 things as good as they can be. That's so much harder than it sounds, but Ferrari get closer to it than anyone else."

He points to the failed Williams experiment with the original, dramatic, tusk nose on the FW26 as an example of a team compromising a car's overall effectiveness because a single area of development showed good results. The stub-nosed tusk arrangement supporting the front wing was intended to maximise airflow through its twin-keel front suspension arrangement to the underbody. While this was claimed to generate more downforce, it cost the chassis in other areas.

Says Jenkins: "You have to reflect on how much time was spent making that short nose pass a crash test. That's time and mental resource being directed away from the overall performance of the car into one specific area. It's something any technical department has to be very careful to avoid and in this instance Williams didn't do that. We know, because they admit it, that the nose was heavier than ideal to make it robust enough to pass a crash test, and that's badly-placed weight, too, up high in the nose at the front of the car. Then you look at the twin keels - they're like tree trunks!"

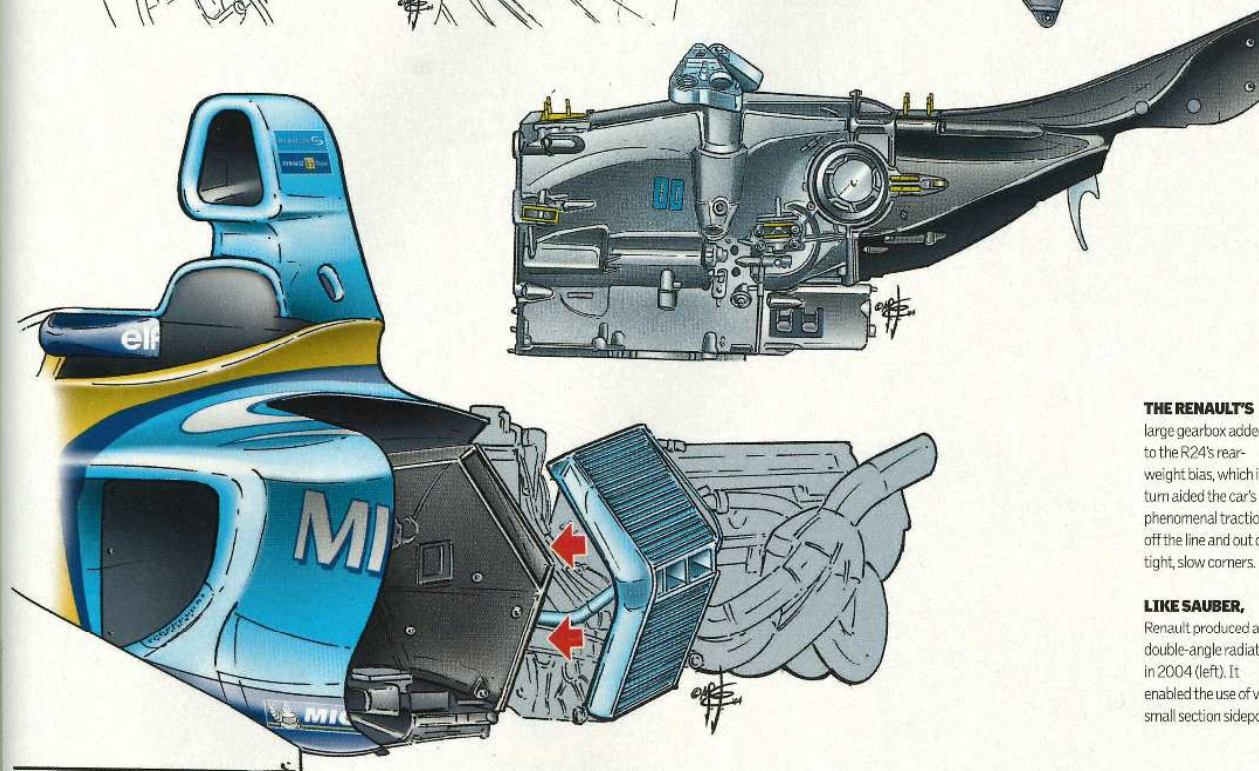
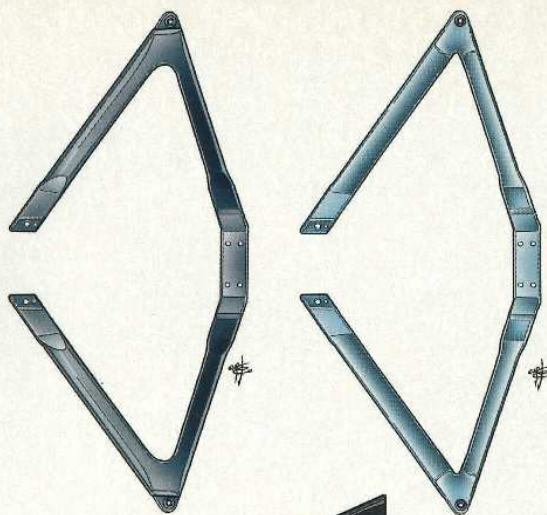
This, he believes, is another example of narrowly-focused aerodynamic considerations taking too much precedence

RELANCA/AT



INSET DRAWINGS

(1) and (2) show Monaco-type wings used in Suzuka (left). Main drawing shows the China wing with bigger section (3). Endplate detailing and shapes are distinctly different and intricate in all cases.



THE RENAULT'S

large gearbox added to the R24's rear-weight bias, which in turn aided the car's phenomenal traction off the line and out of tight, slow corners.

LIKE SAUBER,

Renault produced a double-angle radiator in 2004 (left). It enabled the use of very small section sidepods.

AFTER JARNO

Trulli's Silverstone accident, Renault revised the specification of its unique one-piece rear wishbone system (above). It retained the one-piece concept, but the material was changed from carbonfibre to titanium after Hockenheim. This gave a small weight increase and rigidity decrease, but neither was judged to be a significant safety issue.



Renault won at Monte but could not provide a constant challenge

over fundamentals such as suspension layout and geometry. The 'tree trunks' had to be so chunky to withstand the loadings being placed through them without the need for any bracing between the spars – which would have compromised the all-important airflow to the underbody.

"That's when you end up going round in circles," says Jenkins. "You're doing something because your aerodynamic department tells you it'll make the car faster, so a design path gets approved which compromises certain areas and then when it reaches production you find out that you've got to compromise the original aerodynamic idea to make the chassis stiff enough, or whatever."

Another compromise forced onto the FW26 by its frontal aerodynamics was distorted, non-classical suspension geometry. The top wishbone had a notably downward slope which, coupled with the restricted movement forced on the lower wishbones by the twin 'stumps', forced Williams always to run the chassis with extremely stiff settings.

"If you watched the Williams over the kerbs," says Jenkins, "it was horrible. It looked most of the time like it wanted to pitch the drivers into a spin, which is why they often complained about how tricky and twitchy it was to drive. Cars like the BAR and Ferrari were much more fluid: they could ride the kerbs like they weren't there."

The Williams' twitchiness was also a function of a short wheelbase – again something of a recent departure for Williams, whose cars until 2003 had been notably long-wheelbase. While a short wheelbase has advantages such as making the car better able to turn in and more manoeuvrable through low-speed corners, it's harder to make the

Williams FW26's walrus nose caused more problems than it solved



DESIGN ERROR

The team had nearly run out of brakes in Canada (white dotted line, left, shows extra aperture compared to conventional duct).

The team had nearly run out of brakes in the race last year – Ralf Schumacher only finished because he was stuck behind his brake-conserving brother Michael.

WILLIAMS USED

a more conventional nose on the FW26 at Hungary, but it differed significantly from 2003's. The bottom section was more curved, with McLaren-like contours on its underside. The wing profile had a full spoon shape (1) with long support pillars (2). An unusual endplate inner section (3) featured a non-horizontal downward-facing plate. There was an extra horizontal plate inside the endplate (4) and a Gurney flap on the main profile (5).

aerodynamics work over the more compressed bodywork.

By the Hungarian Grand Prix Williams had resorted to a more conventional (less ugly!) nose arrangement – one of a number of aerodynamic developments worked into the car throughout the season that eventually made it quick enough to win, at Interlagos – albeit in a particularly favourable set of circumstances. The legacy of Williams' bold, but flawed, ambition with the FW26 is the departure of chief aerodynamicist Antonia Terzi, who has been replaced by Loic Bigois. Next year's FW27 is expected to revert to a single-keel front suspension layout.

SINGLE-KEEL

That layout, of course, is one from which Ferrari has never deviated, and that, according to Jenkins, is proof of the team's pragmatic approach to 'total design' which springs from its resident tech guru, Byrne.

"Rory," says Jenkins, "unlike some others in his position, is a chief designer who has an extremely strong background in aerodynamics. That allows him to resolve the tensions between a purely aero-lead approach and the sometimes more practically-driven solutions you have to adopt to ensure a car can function. That used to be the case at Williams when Patrick Head was very much in charge. Last season Williams was too aero-driven, as was McLaren. I don't think you'd ever have found a Walrus-nose Ferrari coming out of Maranello."

Ferrari's cause was helped massively by the improved performance of Bridgestone's tyres (see feature, p104), which were at least the equal of Michelin's all season. The combination of a totally integrated chassis-engine-tyre package coupled with the strongest driver pairing on the grid was always going to be near-unbeatable.

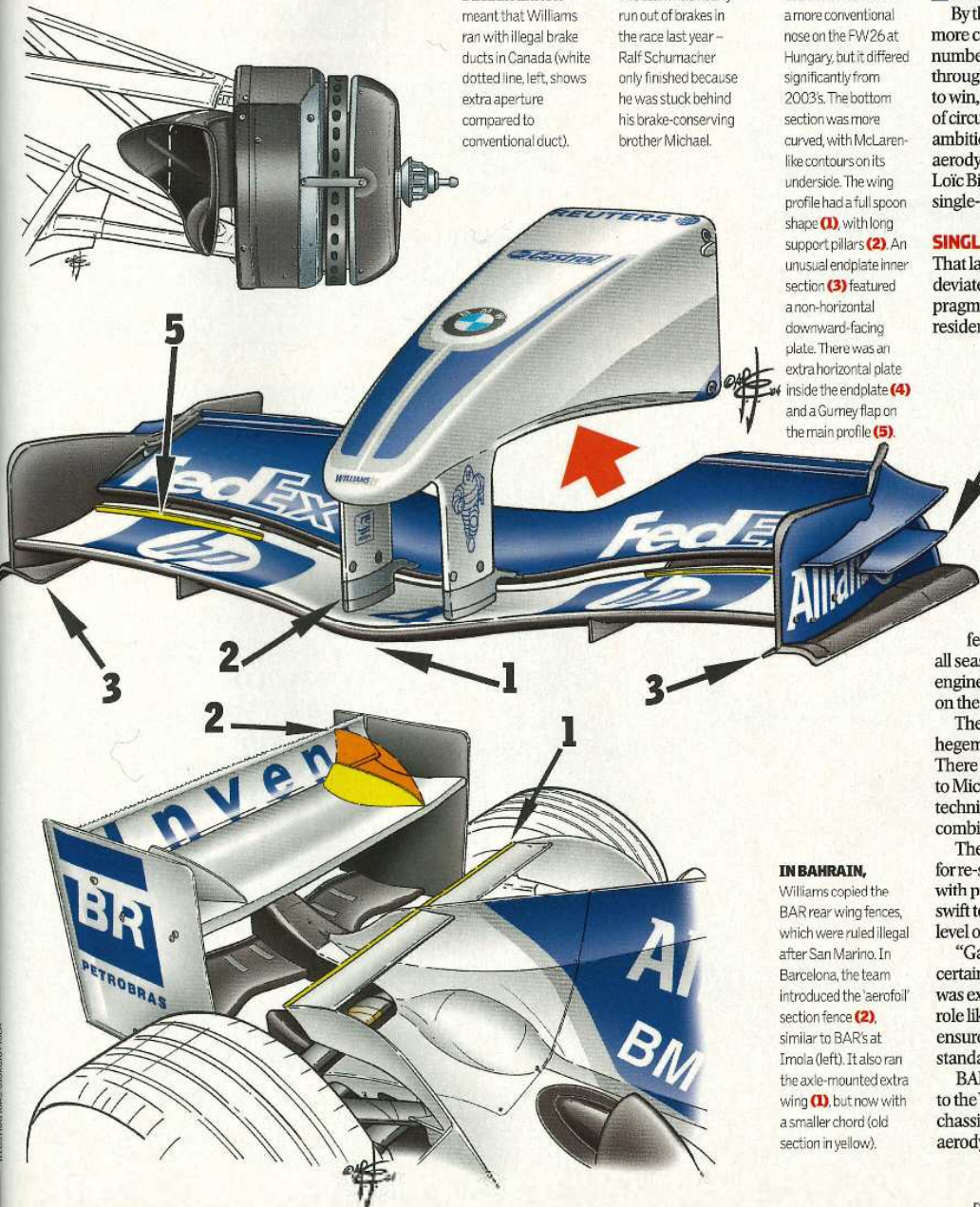
The team which came closest to breaking Ferrari hegemony was BAR, without doubt 2004's surprise package. There had been much promise in '03, but an off-season switch to Michelin, a huge drive from Honda and a detail-driven technical department proved to be a mighty effective combination – even if the team didn't win a race.

The obvious plaudits go to technical director Geoff Willis, for re-structuring the technical department to make it function with previously unimaginable efficiency. But Jenkins is also swift to sing the praises of Willis's deputy, Gary Savage, for the level of engineering rigour he brought to the team.

"Gary's brilliant with composites," says Jenkins, "almost certainly the best in the business. The detail finish of that car was excellent. It's also very clever to have a guy like Gary in a role like that, with a slightly rolling brief. It means he's able to ensure that the basic engineering levels are of a very high standard, across the board."

BAR's 006 was, Jenkins reckons, "the opposite extreme to the Williams". Its wheelbase was the longest of any F1 chassis (eight inches longer than the FW26) and its aerodynamics were relatively clean and simple. "At the

IN BAHRAIN, Williams copied the BAR rear wing fences, which were ruled illegal after San Marino. In Barcelona, the team introduced the 'aerofoil' section fence (2), similar to BAR's at Imola (left). It also ran the axle-mounted extra wing (1), but now with a smaller chord (old section in yellow).



start of the year in particular it was notable how few little bits and pieces there were on the bodywork, trying to make the airflow work harder. That probably means it was an inherently efficient car. A longer wheelbase helps with that, because it allows the air more space to work across the body."

Willis, says Jenkins, is probably the natural successor to Byrne and Adrian Newey, as the leading designer/technical director of his generation. "He's an aero guy who's now running a technical department, but one who's also got a great feel for the overall packaging of the car." The BAR 006 was an essentially benign car, which scored highly on stability and therefore allowed its drivers – particularly Jenson Button – to access most of its speed, most of the time. "I really didn't think they'd have the resources to maintain their level of performance throughout the season, but they did and that was really quite impressive," says Jenkins. "I thought the way they managed to do that even through the distraction of the whole Button saga said a lot for how the team was structured and managed."

FLEX APPEAL

Elegant, effective and blessed with a mighty engine the BAR may have been; it was also a car on which the team was not afraid to employ a few neat touches. BAR, along with Ferrari and Renault, was a leading exponent of flexible rear-wing design. This trick works by closing the wing elements together, through a built-in-degree of flex, which has the effect of reducing drag and increasing top speed. It requires extremely precise, controlled manufacturing techniques and BAR was one of the few teams able to meet such exacting requirements.

VIVE LA DIFFERENCE

The least orthodox chassis of 2004 was Renault's R24. Its entire philosophy was based around rear-biased weight distribution. This, coupled with a strong six-speed gearbox, heavy-duty transmission, and a high-torque engine, enabled Renault to maintain its remarkable start-line advantage. The flipside was that the car was nervous, difficult to drive and not consistently competitive.

Along with Ferrari, Renault also pushed hard to minimise the amount of bodywork around the rear of the car, enabling more airflow to get to the rear wing. Its deeply-sculpted rear sidepods and intricate flick-ups were evidence of sophisticated aerodynamic development.

"The more you get other bits out of the way," says Jenkins, "the more you can get the aero bits working. Minimalist rear ends are a trend that's not going to go away."

Overall though, he reckons, Renault underperformed in 2004. That single Monaco win was well taken but rarely did Renault look like a team capable of taking on Michael Schumacher. "They lack Ferrari's cohesion. They've got some great old hands there like Pat Symonds, but you don't see the same degree of stability and continuity. I can't see Renault being close to winning the championship next year, and you have to ask, 'what then?'"

By the end of the season Renault had been comprehensively beaten in the race for second in the constructors' championship by BAR, and as it parachuted in Jacques Villeneuve to replace the ousted Jarno Trulli, it seemed like a team that had lost some of its early-season focus.

Not so McLaren, which after a disastrous first half-season suddenly came on strong with the introduction of the MP4-19B at the French Grand Prix. The MP4-19 which started the year was plagued still with the legacy of chassis flex that so blighted its unraced predecessor, the MP4-18. Its engine also suffered with block porosity problems, causing repeated failures and losing irreplaceable development time in the search for more power.

Nevertheless, reckons Jenkins, McLaren showed "a lot of class" in keeping its motivation when things were falling apart. That, he says, is the legacy of a team in which the culture of success runs too deep to be overcome by a poor half-season.

"They did brilliantly to rescue the situation. They showed a lot of discipline in making that car work as well as they did towards the end of the season. The chassis was never optimised for the lower fuel levels teams could run with under the regulations, but they focused on getting the best fixes they could and finished the year more strongly than they could have hoped. Mercedes and Ilmor got their act together, as well. They're definitely a team on an upward trajectory – at last!"



McLAREN HAD A huge horizontal fin (1) attached to the central section for Brazil (right). It included a leading edge with a distinct wing profile (2) and an extra channel (3) to direct air in the right direction.

THIS GRAPHIC (above) shows the MP4-19B's underbody and its ballast, which came out in one piece. The holes were for fixing.



McLAREN RAN A completely new nose and front wing at Monza (below). A high downforce version had been scheduled to be tested before China. At previous tracks this nose couldn't be combined with the normal flaps because it adversely affected the cooling, but in low downforce trim this was deemed not to be an issue.



McLaren came on strong after the introduction of the MP4-19B

ILLUSTRATIONS: GIORGIO PIOLA

TEF/LAT



2004
GRAND PRIX
REVIEW

TYRE PERFORMANCE

TREAD CAREFULLY

In their constant quest for speed, F1's designers have found ever more innovative ways to shift cornering load away from the rear tyres and onto the fronts. By MARK HUGHES



Beneath the usual frantic scuffle for ever more downforce and yet more horsepower, there has been a fascinating sub-plot to Formula 1 technical development in the past few years. It's all been about getting as much of the overall cornering load onto the front tyres and away from the undersized rears as possible. Finding increasingly intricate ways of doing this, all the while attempting to overrule the laws of diminishing returns, has been the technicians' driving force, certainly since the imposition of 1998's grooved tyre rules, and probably since '93's rear tyre width restriction.

Big gains have been made in this search in the past couple of years, much of it centred on paring the weight of rear-end components down to an incredible extent, and the development of axis-changing electronic differentials. Lowering the centre of gravity, giving the car's mass less leverage on the tyres, has been another key endeavour.

Because of rear-mounted engines and gearboxes and rear-wheel drive, the rear tyres are being asked to contribute around 65 percent of the overall workload from only 52 percent of the total tyre width (a maximum rear wheel width of 380mm compared to a maximum front of 355mm). Also, you are not allowed any variation in compound front to rear.

Therefore, every bit of load you can transfer off the overworked rears and onto the fronts can be translated into a softer, grippier compound and real lap time gain.

But there has been another, less obvious development area that has brought gains as least as big, possibly bigger. This concerns the front tyre's behaviour in the transient part of a corner, distorting its behaviour in this phase to give better turn in. Carcass and tread design in particular has been driven by this aim in the past two years, and in 2004 Bridgestone made some spectacular gains here in what has usually been an area of Michelin expertise.

If you can temporarily distort the tyre's performance in this phase, you can load up its grip quicker and get better, less time-consuming turn in. Traditionally, Bridgestone has used negative camber to do this, while Michelin has incorporated a sort of hinge between carcass and tread that distorts the footprint. This latter approach reaps dividends under braking, too, while the former detracts from that aspect. In '04, Bridgestone moved quite a way towards the Michelin approach.

There's a virtuous circle to the whole process, of course. Once you achieve quick turn in, the more important it is that the rear is as light as possible, so that the fast turn in doesn't unstuck the rear. The benefits of moving the weight forward therefore snowball. Hence the extraordinary lengths being taken to ensure light rear ends.

A shorter wheelbase is one key way of moving the weight distribution forward, and the shorter stint durations that developed from the parc ferme regulations have made this more feasible by cutting down on fuel tank sizes. However, shorter wheelbase brings its own stability issues; not just the normal mechanical ones, but aero. It means there's less aero area to produce downforce from, and around the bargeboard it becomes very hard to get enough direction change into the airflow to channel enough of it through the diffuser.

The above background should be seen as the template against which to understand the technical conception and development of each car and each tyre.

FERRARI

The F2004 chassis was the first Ferrari built to the parc ferme regs, and its small tank/shorter wheelbase configuration was far more appropriate. It had a fantastically efficient underbody performance and could therefore still produce decent downforce from relatively little wing. Honda estimated the Ferrari's lift/drag co-efficient was six percent better than anyone else's, which would translate to a 12km/h advantage at the end of a 230km/h straight for the same downforce.

On the eve of the season, Bridgestone combined its new compound and construction programmes into one tyre for the first time, and it was a huge improvement. Featuring a slightly squarer-shouldered, more Michelin-like shape, its operating temperature was lower than before, although still probably higher than the Michelin. This contributed towards a first-lap performance deficit because one warm-up lap wasn't enough to bring it to peak temperature. As a result, it was a poor qualifying tyre, but fantastically consistent in races.

For Hungary a new, more flexible construction rear tyre was introduced, again converging towards Michelin's approach. This consigned the qualifying deficit to history, but it was less durable than the old spec and more difficult to set the car up for. It was deemed inappropriate for the high speeds of Spa and Monza, but was brought back from China onwards.

BAR

The BAR006 persisted with a fairly long wheelbase by '04 standards, but designer Geoff Willis had an alternative way of generating turn-in response, using some negative camber and improving front-end stability through the FCP front axle package that mitigated against wheel lock through a clutch mechanism. This was only used in the season's latter half, deprived of the original's electronics.

It was a good, viceless chassis in a season when Renault, Williams and McLaren all came up with cars featuring major flaws. But perhaps its strongest card was its Honda engine – light and very powerful. It used more front camber than other single keel Michelin cars (a result of the team being weaned on Bridgestones?), and this was perhaps contributory to it not finding as much pace as expected on fresh rubber. On new tyres, its strong turn in seemed to upset the rear, making it nervy, a trait that lost Jenson Button second place in Japan and lost the team grid places elsewhere. Button's smooth style – it took him longer to get through the graining phase than most – may also have contributed to this phenomenon.

RENAULT

The R24 was a car that totally bucked the move towards more forward-biased weight distributions. It was a totally different concept from every other car, based around startline performance. The design team accepted the penalty of an engine that was heavy, beefed up to cope with the standing start loads of its pre-loaded transmission and with the unique way its traction control worked, cutting off fuel flow, thereby generating heat in the valve and exhaust areas. This latter feature combined with the torque heavy/powerlight concept helped it to by far the best fuel efficiency.

The pre-loading system meant the gearbox, too, had to be strong and sturdy, and its structural requirements meant only six speeds, compared to the seven of every other frontrunner.

The gentle power curve and excellent traction meant that despite the rearward-biased weight distribution, it was still very kind to its rear tyres. The concept gave less scope for varying weight distribution track to track, maybe explaining its inconsistent performance. The drivers also complained that it gave them poor feedback.

WILLIAMS

The twin keel/short nose chassis was supposed to improve underbody airflow, but the aero advantages never snowballed the way the team expected. The flow didn't increase in proportion to lower ride heights, but at high ride-height tracks – Montreal, Brazil – it was really good.

The weight necessary to get the short nose past the crash test limited the use of ballast to vary distribution track to track, and placed that weight quite high in the car. The transient aero performance was very poor, as a consequence of the short airflow over the nose to the bargeboard area. The geometry limitations of the extreme use of twin keels meant the car ran a lot of static camber and wasn't good over bumps under braking. This in turn worsened the transient aero. It also made its set-up window narrow, and tyre pressures were used to soften this, making it very sensitive to pressures.

MCLAREN

The MP4-19 chassis was unsuited to the latest generation of Michelins, the increased grip of the front overcoming the rears because of the car's weight distribution not being forward-biased enough. As the track temperature comes up, this becomes even more of an issue, hence it looked reasonable in winter testing, but hopeless in early races in equatorial heat. Lack of development of the Michelin rear in comparison to the front therefore hurt this car more than any other. The rear suspension, because of the gearbox attachment, didn't have the geometry to make the best of the Michelin rears, so exacerbating the problem. The 19B addressed the rear geometry issue and used aero revisions as a Band-Aid for the inappropriate weight distribution. It



Right: The twin keel failed to pay off as Williams initially hoped



Left: The R5 enjoyed good fast-corner performance

Right: The Toyota crucified its tyres

Far right: A lack of development hurt McLaren's early season assaults



It was a huge improvement. The early-season engine performance was very poor – initially less than 900bhp and very unreliable with it – but much improved later on.

SAUBER

The C23 didn't have anything like the downforce of the Ferrari, and was therefore unable to work the Bridgestones in the same way, generally requiring a harder tyre. It was essentially a short wheelbase 03-GA, but without Ferrari supplying the development data in a team very limited on development testing. The benefits of the team's new windtunnel were very apparent on the updated car, from Silverstone on.

JAGUAR

The R5 featured the same skeleton as the R4 and therefore suffered the same issues, just softened down on the aero/tyre usage front, but amplified by progress of others on the engine front. It suffered poor electrical reliability, as well. It was still too hard on its rears, but better than the R4. Its aero performance was good, with notably high fast-corner performance.

TOYOTA

TF104 and 104B were both light on downforce, the chassis weight and centre of gravity too high. Put these together and it crucified its rear tyres. It had a super engine and looked okay on low-downforce tracks, but poor everywhere else.

JORDAN

With the EJ14, the team went back to a single keel. It got a 90-degree Cosworth in place of the EJ13's 72 degrees. It had nowhere near the downforce needed to get the best from Ferrari tyres.

MINARDI

The same car as before really, going back to '02. Powered by the old 72-degree Cosworth. No downforce, no testing. A very impoverished season, even by Minardi standards. As an illustration of tyre progress, though, its time in Brazil would have been good for pole in '03! ☑

BRIDGESTONE v MICHELIN

HOW FATE – AND BRIDGESTONE PROGRESS – PREVENTED MICHELIN FROM TAKING THE TITLE FIGHT TO ITS JAPANESE RIVAL

ASA GENERALITY, the Michelin was a better qualifying tyre than the Bridgestone – at least until Bridgestone's Hungary tyre, also used for the last three races, and frequently Ferrari had to compromise the ideal race strategy to make up for this trait.

But as a race tyre the Bridgestone was fantastically consistent, usually more so than the Michelin by virtue of being less prone to graining. By contrast, the Bridgestone was still more prone to blistering on tracks that induce it, again as a consequence of its higher running temperature.

The Bridgestone's flaws were addressed by the new rear construction used at Hungary, China, Japan and Brazil. With a more flexible sidewall, it came up to temperature quicker and a complementary new compound (introduced on the old construction at Hockenheim) appeared to cure the blistering bugbear.

Michelin still appeared to eke out an advantage over Bridgestone when track temperatures became very hot, and were unlucky in the first three races when raceday

temperatures were 10C lower than forecast.

As if that were not enough, nature lent Bridgestone a further hand at Imola for the fourth round when a huge Saturday night thunderstorm washed the track clean of rubber build-up for the race. Because the Bridgestone relies less than the Michelin on 'chemical grip' for its performance – the interaction at a molecular level between tyre and track – it usually has an advantage on a 'green' track.

Spain was the first race where conditions were as expected – but Michelin made a poor compound selection. Furthermore, the Barcelona track places particularly heavy demands of the rear tyre – and there was a suggestion that Michelin's rear construction wasn't strong enough.

Monaco played to the stop/go superiority of the Michelins, giving the French rubber probably its first decisive advantage of the season. There seemed no particular race day advantage either way at Nürburgring. Michelin's qualifying superiority was very evident in Canada, though on race day there seemed little in it. The

Bridgestones seemed to be less hard wearing than the Michelins at Indianapolis, but in the event this wasn't critical. On Sunday at Magny-Cours the Michelin was better early in the stint, the Bridgestone better later.

Bridgestone appeared to have a decisive advantage at Silverstone, it was fairly even at Hockenheim, while the new Michelin-influenced Bridgestone at Hungary appeared to give a significant advantage. The circumstances of the race at Spa played against the old-spec Bridgestone's early lap performance, but made the faster Michelin quite fragile. At Monza there seemed little in it.

The competitive advantage swung from one make to the other throughout the China weekend, while in Japan it was fairly even. Damp conditions played very much to Michelin in the season finale at Brazil.

Having said that, it's actually next to impossible to untangle how much of a lap time is contributed by the car's aerodynamics and how much the tyre. For example, a tyre that was frequently superb on the Ferrari could look mediocre on the Sauber, with grip shortfall and graining.

VITAL STATISTICS

All the important facts and figures from the 2004 Formula 1 season, compiled by EDD STRAW

THE YEAR'S RESULTS

Pole positions

Michael SCHUMACHER	8
Rubens BARRICHELLO	4
Jarno TRULLI	2
Jenson BUTTON	1
Fernando ALONSO	1
Kimi RAIKKONEN	1
Ralf SCHUMACHER	1

Fastest laps

Michael SCHUMACHER	10
Rubens BARRICHELLO	4
Juan Pablo MONTOYA	2
Kimi RAIKKONEN	2

Finishes by team

Ferrari	34
Sauber	30
BAR, Williams & Renault	28
Toyota	26
Jaguar & McLaren	24
Jordan	21
Minardi	20

The tyre war (in races)

Bridgestone	15
Michelin	3

The tyre war (in qualifying)

Bridgestone	12
Michelin	6

Net places gained/lost from grid position in full race

Giancarlo FISICHELLA	+67
Zsolt BAUMGARTNER	+54
Fernando ALONSO	+51
Felipe MASSA	+50
Nick HEIDFELD	+44
Kimi RAIKKONEN	+34
Michael SCHUMACHER	+31
Christian KLIEN	+25
Gianmaria BRUNI	+25
Jenson BUTTON	+24
Mark WEBBER	+19
Rubens BARRICHELLO	+16
David COULTHARD	+15
Timo GLOCK	+14
Giorgio PANTANO	+11
Cristiano DA MATTA	+4
Juan Pablo MONTOYA	+4
Jacques VILLENEUVE	+3
Takuma SATO	+3
Antônio PIZZONIA	+3
Olivier PANIS	+2
Ralf SCHUMACHER	+1
Ricardo ZONTA	+1
Marc GENE	-3
Jarno TRULLI	-3



It took seven years for Jarno Trulli to score his first GP victory, but he finally tasted the winner's champagne in Monaco in May

Baumgartner became the first Hungarian to score a point when he

F1 SUPERGRID

(Based on mean average qualifying position)

1	Michael SCHUMACHER	3.94
2	Rubens BARRICHELLO	4.55
3	Jenson BUTTON	4.94
4	Juan Pablo MONTOYA	5.61
5	Ralf SCHUMACHER	6.00
6	Jarno TRULLI	6.35
7	Fernando ALONSO	7.50
8	Kimi RAIKKONEN	8.22
9	Takuma SATO	8.22
10	David COULTHARD	9.38
11	Antônio PIZZONIA	9.50
12	Marc GENE	9.50
13	Mark WEBBER	9.72
14	Olivier PANIS	10.89
15	Jacques VILLENEUVE	11.33
16	Cristiano DA MATTA	11.66
17	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	12.27
18	Felipe MASSA	13.39
19	Christian KLIEN	13.66
20	Ricardo ZONTA	14.60
21	Nick HEIDFELD	16.11
22	Timo GLOCK	16.50
23	Giorgio PANTANO	16.79
24	Gianmaria BRUNI	18.28
25	Zsolt BAUMGARTNER	18.83

DRIVER AND TEAM FINES

GIANMARTA BRUNI (Minardi)	\$12,000
Ferrari	\$10,000
Kimi RAIKKONEN (McLaren)	\$10,000
Nick HEIDFELD (Jordan)	\$10,000
Giorgio PANTANO (Jordan)	\$8250
Christian KLIEN (Jaguar)	\$6250
Michael SCHUMACHER (Ferrari)	\$3750
Anthony DAVIDSON (BAR)	\$2250
Olivier PANIS (Toyota)	\$2250
Fernando ALONSO (Renault)	\$2000
Timo GLOCK (Jordan)	\$750
Mark WEBBER (Jaguar)	\$500

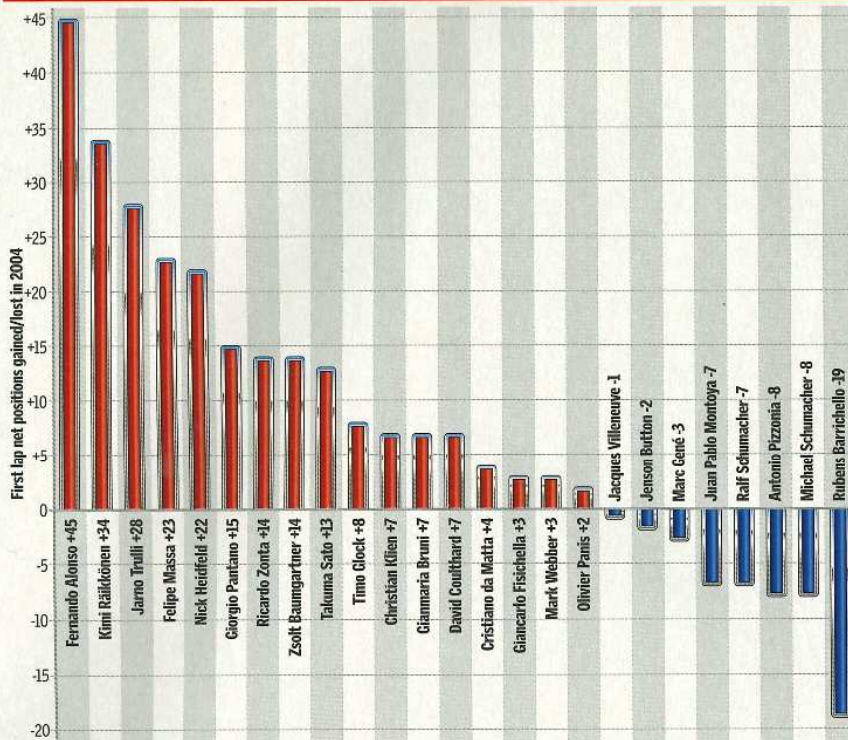
Net fines in US dollars



Come the end of the season, bad boy of the pitlane Gianmaria Bruni had the lightest of wallets - to the tune of \$12,000 (£6263)

**ONLY FIVE DRIVERS
WON GRANDS PRIX IN
THE 2004 SEASON,
COMPARED TO EIGHT
DIFFERENT RACE
WINNERS IN 2003**

First lap net positions gained/lost



Alonso used his Renault's impressive pace off the grid to full effect; Barrichello lost more places than anyone by far

TEST DRIVER CHAMPIONSHIP

These are the blokes who didn't have much to do after Fridays. So let's give them a bit of credit...

DRIVERS	pts	wins
1 Anthony DAVIDSON	168	14
2 Björn WIRDHEIM	103	0
3 Ricardo ZONTA	100	1
4 Bas LEINDERS	98	0
5 Timo GLOCK	83	1
6 Ryan BRISCOE	42	1
7 Robert DOORBOS	21	1

QUALIFYING MATCH-UP

M SCHUMACHER	13-5	R BARRICHELLO
J P MONTOYA	14-4	SCHU/GENE/PIZ
D COULTHARD	6-12	K RAIKKONEN
TRULLI/VNEUVE	7-11	F ALONSO
J BUTTON	11-7	T SATO
G FISICHELLA	12-6	F MASSA
O PANIS/ZONTA	10-8	DMAT/ZONT/TRU
M WEBBER	15-3	C KLIEN
N HEIDFELD	15-3	P'NTANO/GLOCK
G BRUNI	12-6	Z B'GARTNER

when finished eighth at Indy ● Button's third is the best finish for a Brit since 2000

2004 SEASON POINTS AND POSITIONS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS	AUS 7/3	MAL 21/3	BRN 4/4	RSM 25/4	E 9/5	MC 23/5	EU 30/5	CON 13/6	USA 20/6	F 4/7	GB 11/7	D 25/7	H 15/8	B 29/8	I 12/9	PRC 26/9	J 10/10	BR 24/10
1	Michael SCHUMACHER	148	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	Ret	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	2nd	2nd	12th	1st	7th
2	Rubens BARRICHELLO	114	2nd	4th	2nd	6th	2nd	3rd	2nd	2nd	2nd	3rd	3rd	12th	2nd	3rd	1st	1st	Ret	3rd
3	Jenson BUTTON	85	6th	3rd	3rd	2nd	8th	2nd	3rd	3rd	Ret	5th	4th	2nd	5th	Ret	3rd	2nd	3rd	Ret
4	Fernando ALONSO	59	3rd	7th	6th	4th	4th	Ret	5th	Ret	Ret	2nd	10th	3rd	3rd	Ret	Ret	4th	5th	4th
5	Juan Pablo MONTOYA	58	5th	2nd	13th	3rd	Ret	4th	8th	Exc	Ret	8th	5th	5th	4th	Ret	5th	5th	7th	1st
6	Jarno TRULLI	46	7th	5th	4th	5th	3rd	1st	4th	Ret	4th	4th	Ret	11th	Ret	9th	10th	-	11th	12th
7	Kimi RAIKKONEN	45	Ret	Ret	Ret	8th	11th	Ret	Ret	5th	6th	7th	2nd	Ret	Ret	1st	Ret	3rd	6th	2nd
8	Takuma SATO	34	9th	15th	5th	16th	5th	Ret	Ret	Ret	3rd	Ret	11th	8th	6th	Ret	4th	6th	4th	6th
9	Ralf SCHUMACHER	24	4th	Ret	7th	7th	6th	10th	Ret	Exc	Ret	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ret	2nd	5th
10	David COULTHARD	24	8th	6th	Ret	12th	10th	Ret	Ret	6th	7th	6th	7th	4th	9th	7th	6th	9th	Ret	11th
11	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	22	10th	11th	11th	9th	7th	Ret	6th	4th	Ret	12th	6th	9th	8th	5th	8th	7th	8th	9th
12	Felipe MASSA	12	Ret	8th	12th	10th	9th	5th	9th	Ret	Ret	13th	9th	13th	Ret	4th	12th	8th	9th	8th
13	Mark WEBBER	7	Ret	Ret	8th	13th	12th	Ret	7th	Ret	Ret	9th	8th	6th	10th	Ret	9th	10th	Ret	Ret
14	Olivier PANIS	6	13th	12th	9th	11th	Ret	8th	11th	Exc	5th	15th	Ret	14th	11th	8th	Ret	14th	Ret	-
15	Antonio PIZZONIA	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7th	7th	Ret	7th	-	-	-
16	Christian KLIEN	3	11th	10th	14th	14th	Ret	Ret	12th	9th	Ret	11th	14th	10th	13th	6th	13th	Ret	12th	14th
17	Cristiano DA MATTA	3	12th	9th	10th	Ret	13th	6th	Ret	Exc	Ret	14th	13th	Ret	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	Nick HEIDFELD	3	Ret	Ret	15th	Ret	Ret	7th	10th	8th	Ret	16th	15th	Ret	12th	11th	14th	13th	13th	Ret
19	Timo GLOCK	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15th	15th	15th
20	Zsolt BAUMGARTNER	1	Ret	16th	Ret	15th	Ret	9th	15th	10th	8th	Ret	Ret	16th	15th	Ret	15th	16th	Ret	16th
21	Jacques VILLENEUVE	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11th	10th	10th
22	Ricardo ZONTA	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Ret	10th	11th	Ret	-	13th
23	Marc GENE	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10th	12th	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24	Giorgio PANTANO	0	14th	13th	16th	Ret	Ret	Ret	13th	-	Ret	17th	Ret	15th	Ret	Ret	Ret	-	-	-
25	Gianmaria BRUNI	0	NC	14th	17th	Ret	Ret	Ret	14th	Ret	Ret	18th	16th	17th	14th	Ret	Ret	Ret	16th	17th
1	FERRARI	262	18	15	18	13	18	6	18	18	18	16	16	10	18	14	18	10	10	8
2	BAR-HONDA	119	3	6	10	8	5	8	6	6	6	4	5	9	7	0	11	11	11	3
3	RENAULT	105	8	6	8	9	11	10	9	0	5	13	0	6	6	0	0	5	4	5
4	WILLIAMS-BMW	88	9	8	2	8	3	5	1	0	0	1	4	6	7	0	6	4	10	14
5	McLAREN-MERCEDES	69	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	7	5	5	10	5	0	12	3	6	3	8
6	SAUBER-PETRONAS	34	0	1	0	0	2	4	3	5	0	0	3	0	1	9	1	3	1	1
7	JAGUAR-COSWORTH	10	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
8	TOYOTA	9	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
9	JORDAN-COSWORTH	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	MINARDI-COSWORTH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Points 1st=10pts; 2nd=8pts; 3rd=6pts; 4th=5pts; 5th=4pts; 6th=3pt; 7th=2pts; 8th=1pt

2004
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F1 IN-FIGHTING



THE ART OF BOXING CLEVER

In the scrabble for F1's cash, politics takes precedence over sport, says TONY DODGINS

Frank Williams has always said that Formula 1 is a sport between two and four on a Sunday afternoon, and a business at any other time. Politics is also an integral evil, but not since the days of the FISA/FOCA war almost a quarter of a century ago has the whole future of F1 been so unpredictable. While Michael Schumacher and Ferrari turned 2004 into largely a one-man show again on the track, the paddock was awash with intrigue.

The season began with quiet optimism that a sensible deal would be thrashed out between F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone and the car manufacturers, who threaten to start their own GPWC (Grand Prix World Championship) series when the current Concorde Agreement governing the sport expires at the end of 2007. The very ownership and control of the sport, and its almost billion-dollar annual revenues, are at

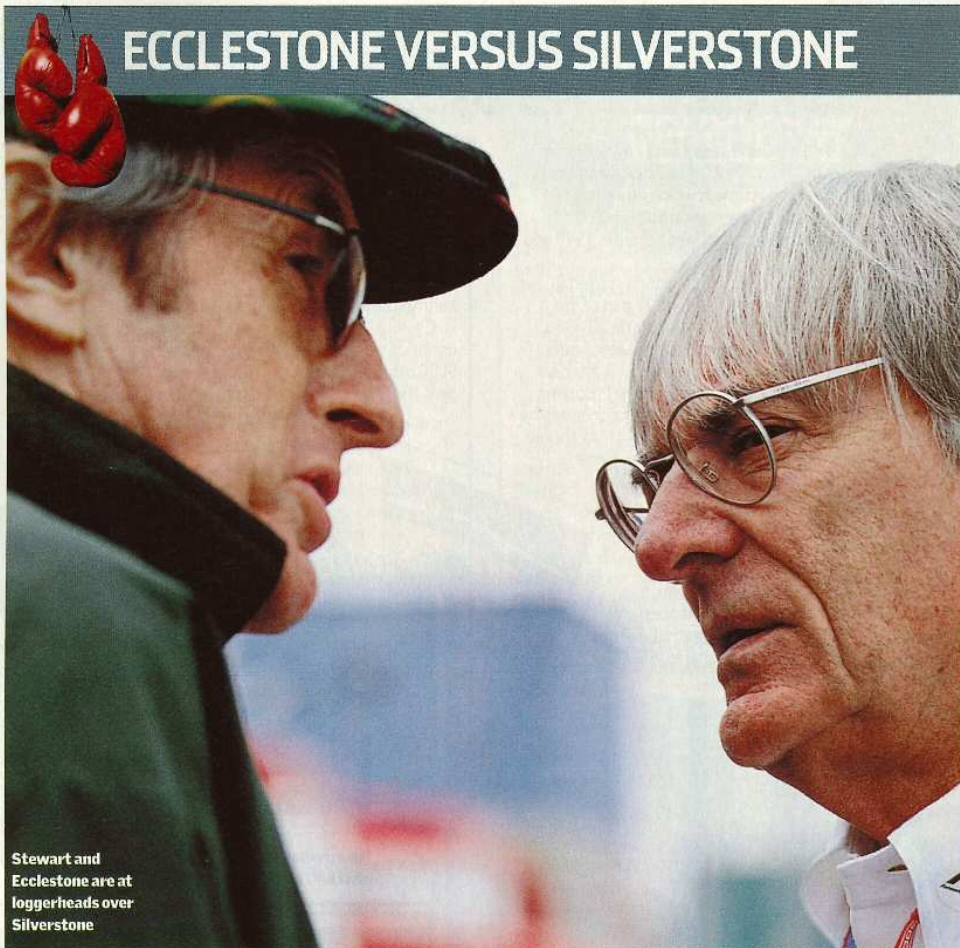
stake here. This is at the core of every last bit of wrangling and political manoeuvring going on in the paddock.

The car manufacturers, the three German banks that ended up owning a 75 per cent investment in F1 when Kirch went bust and Ecclestone made an agreement in December 2003 which resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would form the blueprint for the sport's future. The manufacturers wanted it implemented by mid-2004 and when, in their view, Ecclestone stalled, they terminated the MOU and got on with their own plans for a breakaway series.

In recent times, the 1994 season was about as political as anyone can remember. Since, there has been sniping over car legality issues, principally between Ferrari and McLaren in the late '90s, but by the time '04 ended at Interlagos the race was almost an inconvenient interruption in the wall-to-wall politicking – a manifestation of what is wrong with F1 today. ❧

R
NS

ECCLESTONE VERSUS SILVERSTONE



Stewart and Ecclestone are at loggerheads over Silverstone

COMPTON

OR SHOULD that be Bernie versus Jackie Stewart? The two have never enjoyed a cosy relationship. Sir Jackie has always been close to the royals, not just the British ones, and when his team arrived in F1, Ecclestone seemed to take great delight in the fact that, with insufficient room in the Monaco paddock, SGP found itself miles away in the cliff face car park nearer the old town. "It's very close to the Rainiers' palace," grinned Bernie. "I thought he'd like that..."

At the time, Stewart turned up at a team principals meeting to find that the start time he'd been given meant that it had been in progress for an hour when he arrived. He didn't think it was an accident and he spoke openly about the unnecessary hostility he found intrinsic to the F1 paddock. In truth, JYS's involvement in the on/off British GP Silverstone saga, as president of the land-owning BRDC, is probably just an amusing coincidence for Ecclestone as he contemplates a much bigger picture.

Ostensibly, the argument is about money – as always. Ecclestone, Interpublic (which then owned the rights to the Grand Prix before paying Ecclestone over \$90 million (£46.7 million) to get out of the long-term commitment) and the BRDC agreed a joint investment that would see a new pits/paddock/press complex built as well as other updating measures to the Northamptonshire track.

"Nice car parks..." Ecclestone commented sarcastically a year on, as he claimed that the BRDC was dragging its heels over the

improvements and that Silverstone was now a joke when compared with other venues on the F1 calendar. Certainly, the modern super-venues like Bahrain and Shanghai prove how things have moved on, but you cannot compare projects funded by government

multiple hundreds of millions with the resource available to what is basically a gentleman's club. Which is part of Ecclestone's gripe. But neither can you go to Interlagos and claim that Silverstone is bad.

Up until recently there was no hint of an alternative. Then came the Regent St demonstration. Is a London Grand Prix a serious possibility? Who knows? But it could become a Plan B if the capital's Olympic bid fails and, in the meantime, it's a handy stick with which to beat Silverstone.

There were essentially two sticking points. The \$13.5 million (£7 m) that Ecclestone wanted for the race was not the problem, it was the 10 per cent annual escalator he wanted on the fee. Five years down the road, that takes the price to almost \$22 million (£11.4m). But the real issue was the length of contract and the terms of the option for its extension.

Ecclestone wants Silverstone in his pocket beyond 2007, in the face of the GPWC threat, and rumour has it that the teams have told the circuit not to play ball.

Nevertheless, a five-year agreement was reached by December 9, potentially locking Silverstone into taking Bernie's circus, in whatever form it takes, until at least 2009.



2000's muddy debacle gave Ecclestone extra ammunition for his attacks

DOWNHILL

"BERNIE AND SIR JACKIE HAVE NEVER HAD A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP"

REX FEATURES

ECCLESTONE VERSUS THE GPWC



THIS IS all about cash and how the sport is run. The current Concorde Agreement, a 10-year document which governs how F1 is run, how its revenues are distributed and commits the teams to taking part, was signed in 1998 and runs to the end of '07.

As long ago as the '70s Bernie Ecclestone started to negotiate on behalf of the teams, which, as part of the settlement terms of the FISA/FOCA war some 25 years ago, were leased the F1 commercial rights. Later, under Max Mosley's FIA presidency, the commercial rights deal was done directly with Ecclestone's company. Problems arose when the extent of the revenues being generated by Bernie became apparent. The teams thought they should have a bigger slice of the pie. Ron Dennis and Frank Williams, joined by the late Ken Tyrrell, originally refused to sign the 1998 agreement. It is believed that as an inducement to sign, McLaren and Williams were promised a slice of Ecclestone's Formula One Holdings company if it was publicly floated or privately sold. The planned flotation did not happen and, according to *The Economist*, the teams have not seen any money because it was shares in SLEC, not FOH, that were sold privately...

Since 1998, the major car

manufacturers have established a greater profile in F1 and costs/budgets have gone through the roof. The teams (in some cases the manufacturer's partners) take what is said to be just 23 per cent of the total revenue (from TV rights, circuits promoters fees and circuit advertising/hospitality), while SLEC (now owned 25 per cent by Ecclestone and 75 per cent by three German banks – Bayerische Landesbank, Lehman Brothers and JP Morgan Chase) takes the rest.

Obviously, that situation was not going to be allowed to continue beyond 2008. An amazing deal with the FIA gave SLEC the F1 rights until 2110, but unless they got a better deal, the manufacturers/teams were always going to do their own series in '08, whether it was with the FIA or not.

Will that happen? Again, who knows? Dennis always said a deal would be worked out, because it is in everyone's interests. The MOU was supposed to be it. Under its terms the teams would have taken 50 per cent of all revenues, the manufacturers would have avoided the hassle of organising a rival series and would have had board representation in a new organisation under a 10-year deal which would have seen less influence for the FIA.

But in April the MOU fell apart. According to Bernie it was because the manufacturers would not make the long-term commitment (until 2014), and according to the GPWC it was because Bernie did not want agreements with the teams but with the manufacturers themselves which, they said, were not in a position to sign.

A GPWC spokesman told Autosport: "In the past, Bernie's negotiating tactics have worked in his favour because he always had something that people wanted.

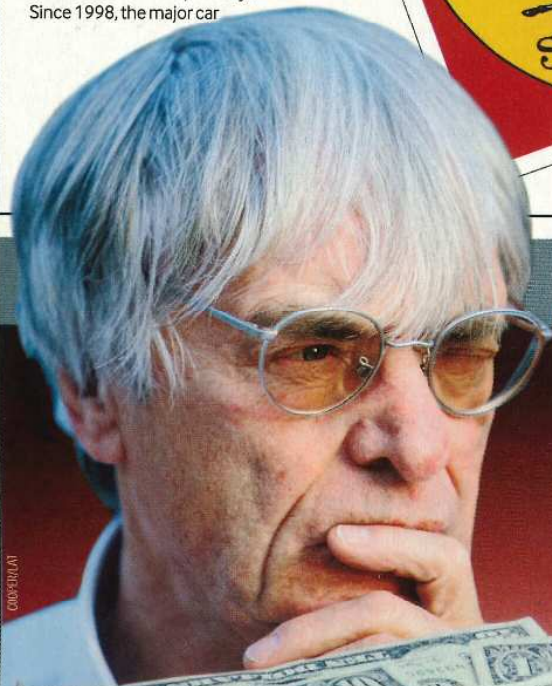
But he has failed to realise that his product is slipping through his fingers and he can only beg all the team principals. If they have half a brain, they will let him come back to them with a deal that exceeds the MOU. If not, no loss, sit back, relax, or commit now to the GPWC and put the pressure on him. It really is that simple."

And, true enough, the day after the banks' victory in the High Court (see below) Ecclestone offered the teams an additional \$500 million (£259m) over three years, more than doubling their income from the sport. This one has some way to run yet...



The manufacturers have a strong hand in F1's latest game of bluff

ECCLESTONE VERSUS THE BANKS



Money makes F1's world go around, but who owns it?



PICS: TEE & COATES/LAT

COOPER/LAT

REX FEATURES

THE TEAMS VERSUS FERRARI



Todt is often the odd man out in negotiations

FERRARI ONCE again dominated F1 in 2004. Cynics and supporters of the Scuderia will see the moves made in Brazil as a deliberate attempt to undermine Ferrari's advantage by drastically cutting back on testing, when the team has its own Fiorano test track as well as Mugello on the doorstep.

But Williams's Patrick Head is not a man to get hot under the collar for no reason. In a heated meeting on the Friday in Brazil, he told Ferrari's Jean Todt that it was only Toyota and the Italian team that do not have budgetary concerns, and that if something was not done to curb spending, then it was not just Minardi and Jordan who faced going out of business.

McLaren's Ron Dennis explained that the unprecedented nine-team cost-cutting initiatives stemmed from a desire to highlight exactly where the obstruction to progress lies...

"The team principals are often portrayed as a bunch of people who can't decide things and come to a common position," he said. "This is the only time when we are so upset with coming up against a stone wall, that we decided we should just walk around it and see what can be done."

Despite being portrayed as the bad guys, it was no surprise that Todt and Ferrari would not be railroaded into any rash decisions even if he accepted that cutting the cost of F1 was necessary. Ferrari pointed out that it has chosen to invest in test facilities because it considered them to be important, and that it has not told Dennis to pull down the new McLaren Technology Centre because it is too expensive...

Again, no concrete decisions have been agreed, although it is anticipated that some concessions to reduced spending will have to be made and Ferrari's opponents intend to stick to a 24-day test agreement during 2005. Most also favour a single tyre supplier in '06. They charge that Ferrari, with its key players on contracts with two years left to run, simply want to steamroller everyone until the end of this era and doesn't give a fig for the well-being of F1.

RELLING/CAJUT

TEAMS/ MANUFACTURERS VERSUS MOSLEY



ALTHOUGH DIRECTIVES from the European Union surrounding anti-competitiveness rulings required the sport's governing body, the FIA, to separate its commercial and regulatory roles, there are few who doubt Bernie Ecclestone and FIA president Max Mosley are joined at the hip and work to a common agenda.

Against the background of the fight for control beyond 2007, there is deep suspicion about any move that is made, whether it makes common sense or not.

Talking about Ecclestone and Mosley, a GPWC spokesman said: "They've lived very well based on divide and rule. The V8 engine is the most beautiful example. In the power games of the past, we had side skirts and turbo issues. Now we've got V8s and V10s. It's the same game. Which is why we are offering an alternative. We are saying if you want to stay in the sport for a long time, we are going to give you the capability to have more influence. Please sign on the dotted line and it will also allow you a key to the wealth of the sport."

In June/July, Mosley shocked the motorsport world by announcing he would stand down from the presidency in October, then, shortly after, he did

a U-turn and said he would stay to October 2005 and did not rule out standing again. Some say the resignation was an angry reaction to dissent from within the FIA,

others suggest it was a deliberate attempt to flush out his enemies. So accomplished is Mosley, you never know.

There is little doubt the '06 engine regulations, which are severely restrictive, are a deliberate slap in the face to the manufacturers, who Mosley sees as becoming too powerful. He argues budgets have risen to unsustainable levels and that F1 was in danger of self-destructing if no action was taken. The immediate changes, he says, are on safety grounds and in response to the recommendations of F1's own Technical Working Group.

Mosley points out that manufacturers use the sport for their own purposes, coming and going as they please, and to have F1 so dependent on them is folly. When you look at the big picture, which is sport and entertainment, and the business of putting two cars on a track 18 times a year, you have to concede that he has a point.

Some suggest the manufacturers will inevitably take the FIA to arbitration over illegal changes to the Concorde Agreement and that they will win, but the safety card is always a compelling ace for Mosley to have up his sleeve.

"FEW DOUBT ECCLESTONE AND MOSLEY ARE JOINED AT THE HIP"

THIS ONE makes heavy going if you've had too much pudding wine, but it could be crucial to Bernie Ecclestone's continued presence at the helm of the F1 ship.

What you need to know is that through a series of complex financial deals dating back to the mid-'90s, Ecclestone appeared to have been able to sell 75 per cent of his F1 empire, while still remaining in control.

He sold 50 per cent of SLEC (an F1 holding company named after his wife Slavica) to two private equity firms. The recent court dispute surrounds a shareholders agreement drawn up in 2000 when German media company EM-TV bought Speed Investments, which owned the 50 per cent share of SLEC, with an option to buy a further 25 per cent. When EM-TV hit trouble, the Kirch Group bought the 75 per cent stake after borrowing \$1.6 billion (£828m) from three German banks.

Ecclestone appeared to have lost control, but Kirch then collapsed, leaving the banks with a 75 per cent shareholding in SLEC and its complex web of associated companies, (Formula One Holdings, Formula One Administration, Formula One Management and Petara — named after Ecclestone's daughters, Tamara and Petra).

Although SLEC is a highly profitable company, the banks' gripe was that, amazingly, they didn't have board control of the companies running F1. The banks argued that through a series of illegitimate board appointments in 2002 after the Kirch problems, Bambino Trust (whose beneficiaries are Ecclestone's family), which owns the Ecclestons' remaining 25 per cent of SLEC through Bambino Holdings, had hijacked board control of Formula One Holdings.

A detailed study by *The Economist* this year revealed the part of the Kirch Group that controlled Speed investments collapsed and filed for bankruptcy in mid-'02, whereupon the banks moved to enforce their security over Kirch's 75

per cent. Before they could, they had to await ratification from the European Commission, which did not come until late September. In the intervening period, according to the banks, Bambino wrested control of FOH, FOA and FOM.

Central to this was the appointment of two Swiss lawyers, Luc Argand and his wife, Emmanuelle Argand-Rey, to the FOH board. Both are Bambino directors and their appointment gave Bambino control of FOH. Further moves had also been made in FOA, where lawyer Stephen Mullens (an Ecclestone/Bambino man) was appointed a director by Bambino, exceeding the maximum three directors in the company statutes, which was solved by removing Speed's director.

Without board control, the banks could not realise a proper price for their shares. GPWC could be in the market to buy.

The banks' lawyer called for a summary judgement, claiming that Bambino did not have an arguable case. This was

upheld by Mr Justice Park in the High Court on December 6. Many have suggested that Ecclestone is finished, but the banks will have to launch similar actions to gain control of FOA and FOM. But Ecclestone has conducted his affairs with such secrecy that he is the only one who knows how F1 really works. The banks may feel exposed trying to realise a return on their 'investment' without him.

Ecclestone says he unperturbed by the verdict. "They don't want to be in F1," he said, "they want out. All they are doing is talking up the share price. I have no problem with the banks, we will go on working together."

But what if they sell to GPWC? The FIA has a 'Don King' clause in the leasing of the commercial rights allowing it to veto anyone it considers unsuitable from controlling the rights. Which would mean GPWC having to go it alone. The next two years could be highly interesting. Or exceedingly tedious. Depending upon your point of view...

"THE BANKS' GRIPE IS THAT THEY DON'T HAVE CONTROL"



Mosley (left) is renowned for his political acumen

BUTTON WHOLE

INTERVIEW 2004 was Jenson's 'coming of age' year in F1.
By NIGEL ROEBUCK

Like a lot of people, Jenson Button got to bed late – around 4.30am – on the night of the Autosport Awards, but he looked fine when he arrived at the BAT headquarters the following afternoon. “Slept ‘til 12, no problem – I can sleep anywhere, any time...” The evening before Jenson had won the award for the International Racing Driver of the Year, and the trophy now sat on a table in the board room. In truth, he was faintly embarrassed about it: “Let’s face it, Michael [Schumacher] won a dozen races, and completely destroyed the rest of us in the championship...” That said, though, while highly respectful of the world champion, he does not hold him in awe, as we shall see later.

Five years into his Formula 1 career, with 84 grands prix behind him, Button has still to win a race, but whereas, a couple of years ago, I for one would not have bet a great sum on his ever doing so, now it is clearly only a matter of ‘when’. In 2004 he finished third in the world championship – beaten only by Ferrari drivers – and scored 85 points, 68 of them from podium finishes. His four previous seasons had yielded a total of 45.

While there had never been any doubts about Jenson’s pure ability – at 20, he qualified his Williams-BMW third at Spa, for crying out loud – there was less certainty about his commitment. When BAR parted company with Jacques Villeneuve a year ago, Button became a team leader for the first time. We wondered how he was going to step up to the plate, and now we have our answer. The 2004 season has been the making of him. I wondered which had been the best moment. First pole position, at Imola? Leading Schumacher in the early laps there, or what?

“Getting pole at Imola was a special moment – especially in Italy, with Michael second! But really, I can’t pick out a particular race: it was the consistency of the results that was the best thing for me. At Monza the Ferrari was very much quicker, but we were still close to winning, as at Monaco and Shanghai.”

“At Monza the Ferrari was very much quicker...” When Button walked into the Hotel de la Ville that evening, he seemed almost in shock. Michael, he said, had sat right behind him through Parabolica, then simply driven past on the straight. Due to circumstance the Ferraris had been nowhere in the early laps, yet by the flag had laid on another one-two, prompting thoughts that maybe this was the first occasion on which the potential of the F2004 had been fully revealed.

“It’s true, I’m afraid,” says Jenson. “When they get into a decent lead, they slow down – run fewer revs, and take it easy. In a lot of races, I think they could have lapped the whole field.”

“If a car is quicker than you through a high-speed corner, you can sort of understand it, but to be quicker through Parabolica – and *behind* me, in the dirty air! – and then simply power past me, it was simply staggering. It felt like I was in one of the slowest cars, and he was coming up to lap me!”

And you’d led half the race...

“Exactly!”

Was Button saying, then, that no other car could have tailed him through Parabolica?

“Yes, absolutely. I mean, different cars have different strong points – the Renault has very good traction, the McLaren is better on braking than anything else, and so on – but the Ferrari just seems strong in every area.”

“The scary thing is, look at the Sauber – which is pretty much an old Ferrari – now that the team’s switched to Michelin. Okay,

at the Barcelona test I’m sure they were running with low fuel, but they were *very* fast. I think if you put a Ferrari on Michelins, there wouldn’t be any point in anyone else turning up next year.”

“That car is just phenomenal – in every area. They’ve got reliability, unbelievable downforce, and they’ve got horsepower. As well as that, the torque of the Ferrari engine is fantastic, very different from any other in F1. The Honda engine is tremendous now, but we’ve still got to improve to beat the Ferrari.”

“It seems that if you’ve got a Ferrari behind you, he’s going to pass you, and if he’s in front of you, you’re *never* going to overtake him – even if you’re doing the same lap times. They’ve obviously looked at every area with that car – making it difficult to follow through high-speed corners, and also able to follow other cars through quick corners, which we just can’t do.”

This was an area of aerodynamics to which I had never given much thought, having always assumed that ‘dirty air’ was just that. Apparently some is way dirtier than others.

“Believe me, there’s a big difference,” says Jenson. “When you’re following other cars, there’s a lot more buffeting with some than others – and especially the Ferrari. You just cannot follow it through a high-speed corner.”

No stone unturned at Maranello, as he suggests.

When Marc Gené tested a Ferrari recently, he was blown away: the F2004, he said, wasn’t merely better than anything he had driven before, but on another level entirely.

Button agrees, but doesn’t necessarily think the same of the man who has won five straight championships in a red car.

“There’s no way Michael’s on a different level, as far as I’m concerned. When Kimi [Räikkönen] and Juan Pablo [Montoya] say he’s the man to beat, obviously they’re correct. They’re not talking him up – I mean, he is a seven-time world champion. But if you put Juan or Kimi in the same situation Michael’s in, they’d be winning straight away. Put it this way: I do not believe he is unbeatable. The position he’s in gives him confidence, and he’s able to relax – he’s never on edge – but of course he’s done a lot of that himself, building the team around him.”

“It surprises me, the number of mistakes he makes. When he has the car, and he’s very quick, he doesn’t do that – I mean, he’s *there*. But as soon as it’s a bit more difficult, he seems to make a small mistake, and then follow it up with another. If you look at Shanghai, and also Brazil... he crashed in practice, wasn’t strong in qualifying, and then spun off in the race, so it’s... very strange. And in between we had Suzuka, where he destroyed everyone!”

“Maybe it was because the championship was over, I don’t know, but hopefully we’ll find out next year, if he’s under a bit more pressure. When I did the quick lap in Imola qualifying, he had to respond, and he’d probably have beaten me – but he made a mistake. And it’s good to know, it really is. Michael’s been in front for so long that if he gets someone up behind him, pushing him, I suppose he feels it’s a bit strange – ‘Have I lost it?’ or ‘What’s happened?’ Must be a very difficult situation for him.”

Huge respect for the world champion, then, but not unqualified. Of the other frontrunners in F1, the two he rates most highly are Räikkönen and Montoya. I thought he might have included Fernando Alonso.

“Mmmm... Alonso’s tough, but fair – and he’s a great *racing* driver. He’ll fight to the death, he really will. And the same is true of Rubens [Barrichello]. He might not have Michael’s pace in qualifying sometimes but he is great in a race. When Michael’s not in a position to win, Rubens is there, ready and waiting.”

After time to reflect on last season, Button reckons that beating Schuey to pole position at Imola was his best moment



ALL PICS: SPINNEVLT



Although BAR-Honda came second in the constructors' championship – a result predicted by no one – and soundly defeated the more fancied Renault, Williams and McLaren, the fact remains that each of those three won a race, while BAR did not. Soon after mid-season, it seemed that the team had stalled.

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Jenson shrugs. "We lost a bit of pace to the Ferrari, but it was really more that McLaren had their new car going well, and Williams came with a new aero package, whereas ours wasn't ready yet – we did try one, but it didn't work. We had another new one ready and waiting, but it wasn't the right time to introduce it. A couple of races later, we stuck the new aero package on the car, plus we had a new engine, and we stepped up a gear, and were back to normal. There was just a strange crossover period at mid-season."

Was it completely coincidental, I murmur, that it was also around that time that the whole 'Button to Williams' thing blew up? Jenson grimaces, as I had known he would.

"I don't want to talk about it again," he begins. "I really don't. I think it's been talked about enough, and we've got to get on with things now."

Understood. But surely he must look back on it with a measure of regret, not least because many in the F1 fraternity were not impressed by the episode (and the same was true of a good few of his fans), not least because it must have been a distraction for folk in the team, himself included?

"I don't regret *everything* about it," he says. "I don't regret my reasons for doing it. It was more the way it was handled – we all make mistakes..."

And had it been a distraction?

"Well, you don't think it's distracting you when you're driving, but I'm sure – at the back of my mind – it was. There was a lot going on, and it was very hectic away from the circuit, with a lot of meetings and so on, and it was a bit uncomfortable. So I'm sure it didn't help either the team, or myself. Without it, we might not have had any better performances, but... yes, I'm sure it did hamper us in some ways."

The episode erupted between Hockenheim, where Button finished second, and the Hungaroring, where the atmosphere at BAR was predictably frosty. It would have been no surprise to see untypical driving errors from Jenson, but again he was in the points, fifth.

"The team did a great job there, I must say. Everyone wanted us to get it sorted out, but they were very professional when it came to the racing side of things. In circumstances like that – hard times – you really get to know a team. It wasn't an easy situation for anyone."

When the Contracts Recognition Board made its decision, both Button and Williams immediately accepted it, but in the statements made by both afterwards there seemed the suggestion that it remained 'unfinished business'.

"Well," Jenson grins, "I'm not saying nothing will happen in the future, but nothing is 100 per cent settled or anything like that. We'll have to wait and see."

It may be that Frank Williams lost an opportunity to sign Button that will never come up again. Certainly, one imagines, a couple of recent developments at BAR will make Jenson more, rather than less, inclined to stay beyond the end of 2005.

First, Honda underlined its commitment, both to BAR and to F1, by buying into the team, to the tune of 45 per cent.

"That's a huge thing for BAR," says Button. "No question about it. When everyone heard the news, they went, 'Wow! They really are serious...' I think it'll make a big difference – maybe not immediately, but in the future. And it's also going to make a difference to all the Honda people – knowing how serious about F1 the top management is."

In the press room, certainly, there has been the perception that Honda, after a period of being – forgive me – 'marketing led', rather than 'engineering led', had reverted in the last 12 months to being *Honda* again.

"Yep, I know what you mean," says Jenson. "For one thing, they were supplying two teams for a while, and when you've got to stick so many engines out there, it's difficult. So really the starting point was when they dropped Jordan, and concentrated on BAR. I'm not saying everything's perfect, but they've done a hell of a job. There are areas we need to work on, and they know it, but the power's good, and it's a user-friendly engine, too."

As the announcement of Honda's buy-in came, so also the news broke that David Richards would be leaving, that Nick Fry – hired from Aston Martin by DR to run Prodrive – would in future be the BAR team principal.

When Richards signed Button, for 2003, it's fair to say Jenson was hardly the hottest property in F1, after two disappointing seasons with Benetton/ Renault, and there were many – including Bernie Ecclestone – who thought David was making a

mistake. During DR's time with the team, its fortunes have been transformed, and not a few feel he has been treated shabbily.

Why has he been shown the door? Some say that the Button/Williams affair was the root of the problem, that even though BAR eventually won the day, neither BAT nor Honda was impressed by the time and expense involved in fighting a situation they felt should not have arisen in the first place.

It's a fact that Richards and Button's manager, John Byfield, had a famously awful relationship, and some say that DR has been removed in the hope of making Jenson more inclined to commit to the team long-term.

Whatever the true facts of the matter, and despite powerful rumours that Button is about to announce a change in his management, he is cool on the subject of Richards, a man to whom, on the face of it, he owes a great deal. When we spoke of BAR's ascendancy, I asked how much had been down to David.

"Er, well, it wasn't down to one person. He was helpful, but so were a lot of other people in the team – especially the engineers. This year I've had a great engineer on my car – Craig Wilson, whom I knew from my season at Williams, when he was working with Ralf [Schumacher].

"Obviously, Geoff [Willis] has done a great job, and so also has Nick Fry – you don't see him at the races, because he stays back at base, but he's going to be running things from now on."

And that was that.

"Let me ask you something completely different..." I say. "Good?"

I wanted to know how differently he felt about the job these days. Had he consciously changed anything? Flavio Briatore, for example, reckoned that when Jenson was driving for him, his talent was obvious – but he was lazy...

"Ha," Jenson laughs, "that – coming from Flavio! I don't know if 'lazy' is the right word for it. I think it was more that I didn't know how much was involved, how much I needed to do with the team, to push them – even on the smallest things, a bit of pressure makes all the difference.

"That was something I realised when I arrived at BAR. They sat me down, talked everything through, said they wanted me to be very open, about anything to do with the team. That helped a lot, and it was also very exciting – I hadn't found Renault such an open team. If I had a comment, some people there would just say, 'That's not correct' – they wouldn't look into it, and that doesn't give you confidence.

"At BAR, if I want even the smallest thing changed, they look into it, find something, and within a week have a new component on the car. It's the same with Honda, and that makes you feel great – makes you want to push even harder.

"How have I changed? Well, outside the car, I've worked a lot better with the team. I'm thinking all the time about things that could help us – little things that can make a difference. The bigger things are taken care of, so I just concentrate on the driver aids and the driver's needs, really. As far as driving is concerned, I think I'm even smoother than I was, because I've had so much confidence in the car. It's something I've really worked on."

A standard way of operating over a grand prix weekend has evolved, too. "Throughout the year, I didn't change. I turned up the same at every race – well, except Hungary! – very excited, and ran through exactly the same programme. We've concentrated on making sure that every weekend is very similar to every other, so I get my free time before qualifying and the race – I sleep for 15 minutes, and then my physio gives me a massage. After that, we do some visualisation work..."

Which would be what?

"It involves sitting on a blow-up ball, with a steering wheel in my hands, and my eyes closed, just 'driving round the circuit'. He times me, and I make all the noises! I'm normally within three seconds of my lap time – it's amazing how close you can get."

Many changes are coming in the 2005 season, and Button has mixed feelings about one or two of them.

The cutback in testing: "I'm a racing driver – I'd rather go racing than testing! Ferrari test virtually every day – the amount of money they throw at it is crazy. There has to be a limit on the number of test days, but I'd say we need at least 35 to 40."

Two sets of tyres per race weekend: "I haven't got a problem with that for dry tyres, but to limit us to two sets of wets would be very dangerous, particularly if it was wet all weekend – as soon as you lose tread on wets, you aquaplane, so if we can't change tyres in the race, we're going to be stopping halfway through..."

All in all, though, Jenson can't wait for the new season to begin. "I feel so confident, going into next year – some people might say I'm too confident, but if I'm in the right car, I believe we'll be challenging for the championship. I'm not saying we will be, but we have the expertise in the team. It's just a matter of whether we've moved forward enough from this year, isn't it?"



Jenson is tight-lipped on the subject of 'Button-gate' but is confident that he can again move forward with BAR in 2005

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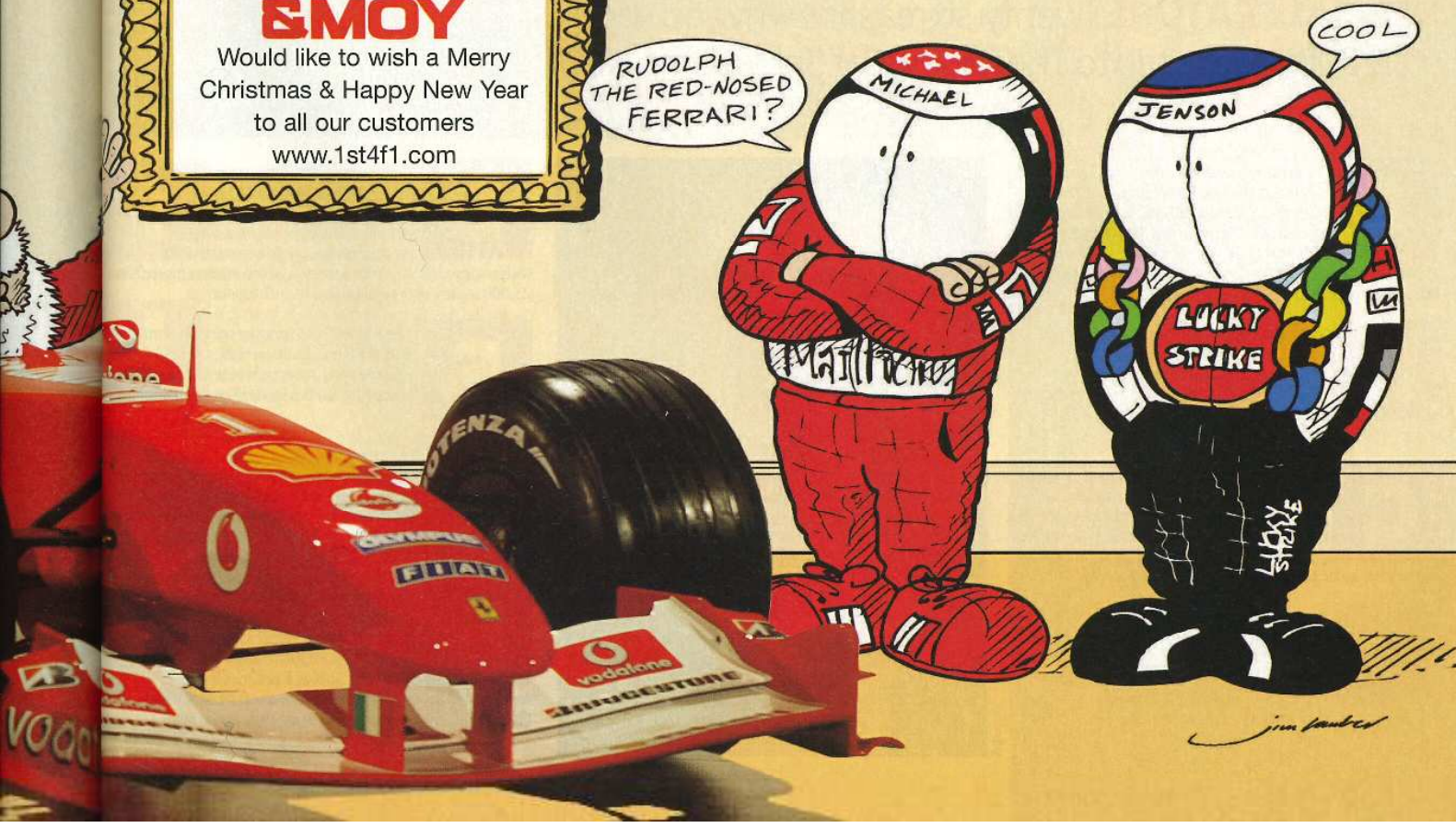
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A-Z OF THE RACING CAR SHOW

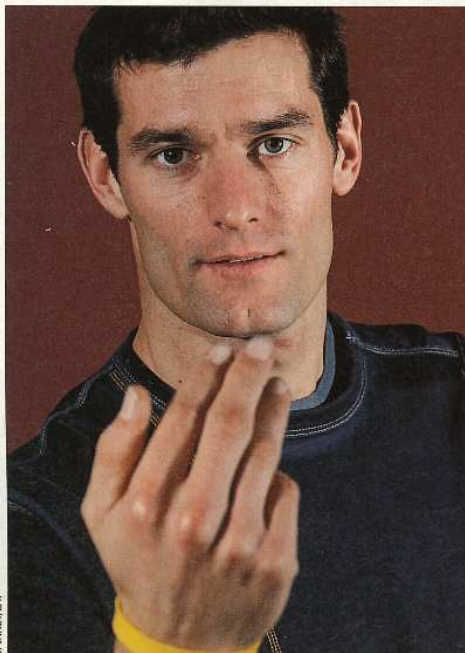
SPECIAL FEATURE Twenty-six reasons why you should start 2005 with a trip to The Racing Car Show at the NEC

A Ascari's long-awaited KZ1 200mph supercar will make its first UK appearance at The Racing Car Show. With claimed performance figures of 0-60mph in just 3.7 seconds, the 500bhp machine will be the star of the *Evo* Track and Road Car gallery. Given its £235,000 price tag, this might be the closest many of us will ever get to it.

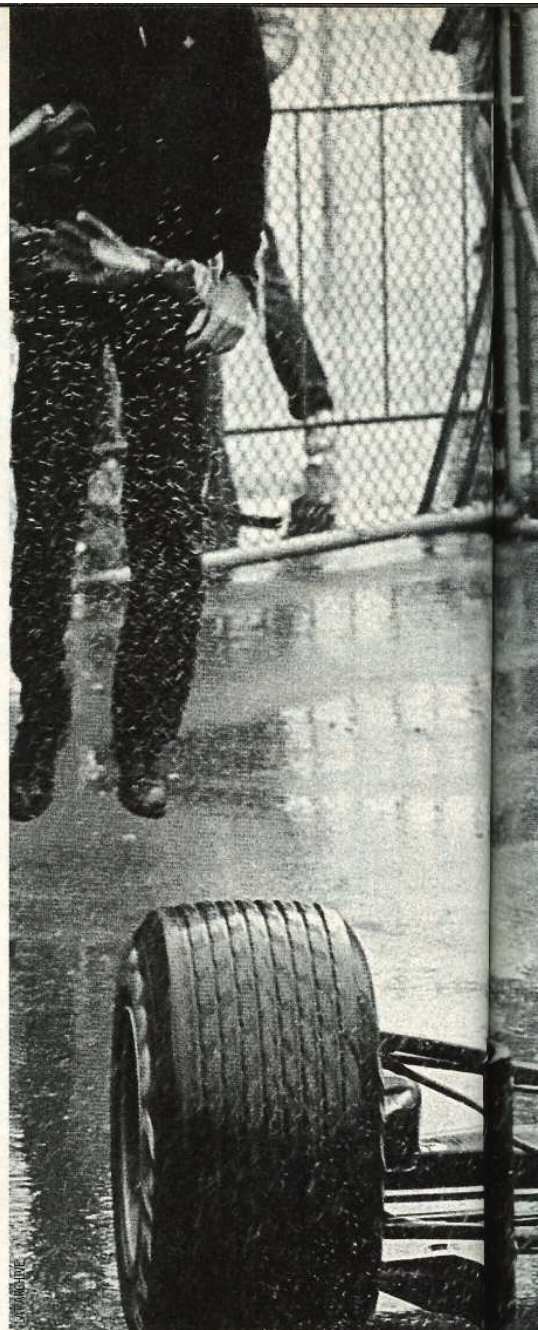
B is for British Touring Cars. A display which offers you the chance to compare the spectacular machines that have defined every era of the series, right through to the record-breaking, all-conquering Vauxhall Astra Coupe. You'll love this collection.

C Careers in motorsport. If you dream of being the next Ross Brawn, or want a lifetime of adrenaline as a race or rally technician, the Careers in Motorsport area is the place to be. Sixteen top-class universities and colleges will be on hand to discuss educational opportunities.

D Drool, which is what you'll do when you see the machinery in *Autocar's* supercar paddock. After feasting your eyes on Ford's new GT, the Dodge Viper SRT-10, Ferrari 550 LM and new Chevrolet Corvette, the journey home might not be the same...



SPINNEY/LAT



E Engineering Show. The companies exhibiting on the first two days of Autosport International are the heartbeat of the motorsport industry. An extended aftermarket show and manufacturing technology area feature in a section which attracts more than 25,000 trade visitors and buyers from 50 countries.

F is for Focus. Or, to be more specific, Ford's 2005 WRC contender, which is an evolution of this year's three-time winner. Both cars will be shown together for the first time in Britain.

G Grand prix heroes. Some of the stars from the 2004 grid, including Mark Webber and David Coulthard, will be joined by favourites from the past. Keep an eye out for the champions of the future too.


H Historic Motorsport Show. For the first time the historic race and rally sectors will have a dedicated hall, backed by *Classic and Sports Car* and *MotorSport*. Features include a Group C display, Cheffins classic car auction, and the centenary celebrations of Shelsley Walsh hillclimb and BEN, the industry's benevolent charity.



D is for Indy Racing League star. British ace Daniel Wheldon has been busy conquering ovals in 2004 to transform himself into a genuine IndyCar Series title contender. He will be joining us on the Autosport Central Stage to reveal just how he did it.

J is for Jodie, Jodie Kidd that is. Blonde hair, blue eyes and racing in the blood. The catwalk queen will take the microphone in the Live Action Arena, where she will be joined by host Paul Musselle and some spectacular cars.

K Karting. If you are considering a career in karting for your son (or daughter, for that matter), or you fall into the 'could've been a contender' category and just want to race around for 20 minutes and show the world what it's been missing, head straight for the karting track. More than 50 stands at the show are dedicated to this aspect of motor racing alone.

L Live Action Arena. Star drivers, star cars (don't forget to keep an eye on Stig Blomqvist's Audi Quattro) and some truly spectacular action. As for the autotest routines - involving reverse spins, handbrake parking and car 'dances' - don't try it at home, as they say. 

TICKETS

HOW TO GET INTO THE RACING CAR SHOW

TICKETS FOR The Racing Car Show and Live Action Arena are available by picking up the phone and calling 0870 902 0444, or you can book online by logging on to www.autosport-international.com. Admission is £18 for adults and £10 for children. A combined ticket for entrance and the Live Action Arena costs £25 for adults and £17.50 for children.

The Racing Car Show at Birmingham's NEC is open to the public on January 15-16 and open to the trade on January 13-14.

Above: Past will be present: the image of Lotus team manager Peter Warr hailing Ayrton Senna's first win will be on show on the LAT stand

Left: Webber: "Come and join me at the Racing Car Show, mate"

Right: 'It' girl, catwalk queen and unashamed petrolhead Jodie Kidd will be popping in to the Live Action Arena





BOWEN/LAT

Memorabilia. Don't miss this once a year opportunity to leave the grown-up and responsible you at the turnstile and indulge in some fever motorsport books, models, pictures, videos and DVDs of all your heroes.

National Motorsport Area, supported by *Motorsport News*. Head in this direction to find out more about getting involved in affordable motorsport, be it club racing, rallying, hillclimbing, sprints or autotests. The latter might just tempt you after a visit to Live Action.

O is for the Oval Racing Experience. Oval racers will have their own stage in an area featuring everything from BriSCA F1 cars and hotrods to rallycross and autograss racers. Plenty to see, including the Historic Oval Racing Association's amazing cars from the '50s and '60s.

Photo opportunity. The *F1 Racing* gallery will feature an authentic Formula 1 podium, complete with traditional chequered background. Now it's no longer just Schuey who gets to stand on the top step having his picture taken while spraying the champs!

Questions please, as respected Autosport F1 columnist Nigel Roebuck takes to the stage on Saturday and Sunday to talk about the great and the good (and even the not very good) of Formula 1 from past to present.

Radical. The phenomenal success story of the Peterborough-based sportscar manufacturer moves up another gear when Radical officially launches its new 72-degree 2.6-litre V8 engine. The firm will also be displaying its brand new SR8 chassis.

Sainz. Carlos - El Matador! One of the most successful drivers in the history of the World Rally Championship will be present to say farewell to his faithful British fans. Now in retirement, the Spaniard will spend a lot more of his time with Real Madrid's footballers - he's a bit special on the pitch as well as the special stage - but on this occasion he'll be opting for Birmingham rather than the Bernabeu.

Above: The retro looks of Ford's new GT is guaranteed to have you drooling (if you have a pulse)

Right: If action is your *raison d'être*, then don't miss the chance to thumb a lift in some rapid machinery

Below right: Nigel Roebuck will be answering your questions - as long as they don't ban smoking in the NEC



SPINNEY/LAT



SPINNEY/LAT

AAA PASSES

BENEFITS GALORE, AND ALL FOR £30

FOR THE first time Autosport is offering a limited number of AAA passes, which will entitle the holder to some exclusive benefits. These include fast-track entry to the Live Action grandstand, a VIP seat (highly recommended) and special access to the autograph signing area, where you can meet many top-line drivers and Page 3 girls.

You can pre-book by calling the ticket hotline on 0870 902 0444 or by registering online at www.autosport-international.com.

The AAA passes cost £30. Group discounts are available.



MCKEIN/LAT

T Technical guru. Ross Brawn, one of the key figures in Ferrari's most successful era, will deliver the eighth annual Watkins Lecture to the trade on behalf of the Motorsport Safety Fund. Trade visitors should pre-register for the talk, which is on Friday January 14.

U Unprecedented access to the archives of LAT Photographic, motor racing's most famous picture agency. It has selected some truly evocative images for display on a 31-metre wall. From Tazio Nuvolari and a 1936 aerial shot of Brooklands, right through to Ayrton Senna and that infamous Benetton fire, these shots will make the hairs on the back of your neck stand straight up.

V Vertical Formula 1 cars! The *F1 Racing* gallery will enable you to see grand prix cars as you've never seen them before – at 90 degrees. Every team on the 2004 grid will be represented in this area, where cars will be displayed in steel cradles.

W WRCZone. World rallying's top manufacturers will be represented in this special section. New for 2005 is a service area in which each team's mechanics will be stripping and re-assembling the cars, enabling you to see the work at close quarters.

X X-Power. MG's adrenaline-charged motorsport programme is represented by the spectacular MG ZS British Touring Car Championship challenger, which can be found on the Autosport stand.

Y Young guns. As well as celebrating the current crop of motorsporting stars, the show is a great chance to get to know the next generation of talent. We'll be introducing you to future champions such as McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Paul di Resta.

Z Alex Zanardi. As inspirational now as he was at his peerless best in Champ Cars, the former F1 driver will be appearing at the NEC to meet his many fans. Don't miss our second exclusive extract from his autobiography, which will be run in our full guide to The Racing Car Show. ☑

Above: stage star Carlos Sainz will be making a rare appearance in the UK

Right: An artist's impression of the F1 Racing gallery. See F1 cars as you've never seen them before

Below right: Alex Zanardi. The Italian is a hero and has been racing in 2004 in an ETCC BMW



PHOTO/LAT

READER OFFER

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS GOLD

IF YOU'VE ever wanted to gatecrash one of The Racing Car Show's trade days, then now's your chance. Here's an exclusive offer to Autosport readers which will allow the first 3000 applicants to gain entrance to the show on Friday January 14 – usually a trade-only day.

To see the new car and product launches before the doors are opened to the public, secure your Gold Card access by calling 0870 902 0444 and quoting Gold Card. For £30, this special ticket includes entry into the show and a seat in an exclusive preview performance of the Live Action Arena, in association with Eurosport GB and Fulda.

Autosport

TRACK TEST

STEIGER 9370Q

DRIVEN BY JODY SCHECKTER
JIM 'NODDY' HOLDER
CIRCUIT LAVERSTOKE PARK
ORGANIC FARM,
HAMPSHIRE



JODY'S TRACK M

Lifting the clutch, I ram the throttle open and charge into the unknown. The 14-litre, 400bhp engine roars into action and 50-inch wheels dig for grip. Instinctively, I clinch the steering wheel tight with both hands, but that comfort zone passes in a flash. This monster has an insatiable appetite for gears – and I need to start feeding it... fast.

Right hand off the wheel, I flap around for the gear lever. The semi-automatic 'box saves me from having to search for the clutch, a blessing in the unfamiliar cab, and as the revs soar up I finally find the joystick shift. A gentle flick up and

the momentum builds – again and again and, erm, again. Eleven times in total, up to top gear – or 12th, as it's known.

Are we shifting? Eat my dirt, onlookers, this baby – which sniffs in the face of suspension, preferring instead to rock'n'roll with the best of them – is locked on course and reaching terminal velocity. Hands back on the wheel, I pluck up the courage for the moment of truth. Trees whizzing by the window, I hold my breath and look at the dashboard. 2540.

Answers on a postcard, anyone? What's that? Oh, the rev counter. Try again, shall I?

14.5. And, yes, that is a decimal point.


Eyes back on the track, I've veered off course in my jubilation. I've maxed out, touched the outer limits of acceleration, paying a nodding homage to the God of Speed en route to my place in the pantheon of driving greats. Don't believe me? You try shifting a 21-tonne tractor, laden with almost 1000 litres of diesel, any faster.

Not just any tractor, mind. This is a Steiger 9370Q, that book-ending Q signifying the unusual caterpillar arrangement of the wheels. Or, to translate that for non-tractor buffs, it's the daddy of its class, around five times more powerful than the average cow-herder that holds you up as you scoot round country lanes, and three times the size.



KMAKER

But these are mere appetisers to the greatest fact of all about this particular machine. You want a clue? Look at the colour, think racing, think big engines, wayward handling, think... hold on a minute, who's that charging across the field? Why, it's none other than 1979 Formula 1 World Champion Jody Scheckter. What could he be doing here?

"I hope you haven't been tearing my field up in that thing!" he says, a broad grin spreading across his face, almost certainly on account of seeing a man stood in a large field wearing racing overalls and a crash helmet (thanks, Mr McIlroy, I owe you one). "Reckon you're some hotshot over from London, do you? Oh gawd, I'm too old for this." 

Main: The 14-litre, 400hp monster is poised for the ultimate test. Would-be rally legend and aspirational farming machinery ace Jim Holder gets ready (right)



ALL PICTURES: FERRAROLI/AT



The Steiger lacks a little in technology when compared to Jody's 1979 title-winning Ferrari, but makes up for that with brute force



Scheckter has invested heavily in organic farming - and his tractor. Left: Looking forward to Christmas, folks?

And with that, he's shaking his green wellies and thrusting his hands into his Barbour jacket pockets, head down and heading for the Steiger. As he climbs behind the wheel he looks and smiles. There in front of him is his 2500-acre dream, an organic farm by the name of Laverstoke Park that's setting new standards in producing fresh, natural foods.

"I was never a farmer, nothing like it," he says. "After Formula 1, when I lived in America, I had some land, but it was nothing much. This all started when I was given a book on organic farming, and it really caught my imagination. I started the farm to produce the healthiest, best-tasting food without compromise for my family. But I realised pretty quickly that I would have to expand and diversify if I didn't want to eat beef every day for five weeks."

The results are incredible, and underline the zeal with which he is pursuing his latest project. He owns 14 of the 40 pure native Angus cattle in the world and 80 of the world's 500 traditional pure Herefords. This isn't a collector's drive for obscurity, either - both breeds were selected because they were the source of his favourite steaks during the years he spent in F1 - and to this day his favourite restaurant in Argentina hangs his picture on the wall.

The list goes on, and is just as eye-catching as it is vast. For instance, there are more than 250 water buffalo (lean and juicy meat), Hebridean sheep (voted the best meat after exhaustive taste tests) and wild boar (the original pig). There are dairy cattle and sheep, more than 60 varieties of fruit and vegetables and plans to expand the current farm shop with a bakery, dairy and restaurant, where every product will be produced on the farm. Even the compost and grass types are carefully monitored to be sure they are the best. Little wonder the farm's catchphrase is 'The biggest small-holding in the world'.

Scheckter also explains his plans to build his own

abattoir, aimed at avoiding having to pack his animals into lorries before they die, thereby making their final hours less stressful. Good job we're in a fallow field out of eye and earshot of any of them, I reason, as Jody takes a two-minute refresher course in the tractor's controls, plonks her into reverse and then makes short work of making me look like the driving monkey that I know I am.

"Where do you want me to go?" he asks.

"Just create a track," I smile, musing on the fact that at the wheel of this beast he can go pretty much wherever he wants, without anyone or anything stopping him until all that diesel is swallowed (something which, rather alarmingly, only takes about a day).

And he's off. Old man or not, it's pretty clear he can still drive anything. So I got it into 12th on a long straight. Big deal. For a bit of fun we've had Drivedata come along to fit a data-logger, and the fearless Scheckter is pulling 10mph in 8.82 seconds, but hitting 20mph takes 39.37sec. It's pretty clear where the torque is, so Jody refuses to give up any momentum by pausing to knock her down gears for the corners. Instead, foot-planted he maximises the tight turning circle afforded by the rear-wheel steering and shows just what this beauty can do. A mound of earth dares to stand in his way as he winds on the lock. It's bulldozed in the blink of an eye, that quick-fire, take-no-prisoners approach to his driving clearly still coursing through his veins.

"It's hard to know if it's understeering or if you've still got a turn of lock on, that wheel goes round so many times," he grins as he slides back to earth, punching the air just to make it clear that my ponderous cornering efforts have impressed nobody. "I'm not into the farming to make money, it's just a passion. It's half fun and half killing me, but in life, I've always been driven to do things the best I can."

Tractor driving included. ☒

ALL HAIL THE A CAB

As the Quadtrac has no suspension, the driver's seat features fully-adjustable air cushioning for comfort. The driver is surrounded by 51 square feet of glass to ensure outstanding visibility at all times - and that includes uphill runs.



FUEL FOR THOUGHT

The tractor's fuel capacity is a staggering 946 litres, although the 21-tonne vehicle burns through that in a day if the tractor is unladen. Fully loaded it can tow up to 25 tonnes of additional weight, but fuel consumption rockets.





POWER TO THE PEOPLE

The unit is powered by a 14-litre, six-cylinder engine that produces 400bhp. The engine idles at 850rpm and pulls around 2100rpm loaded, 2300rpm unloaded. The 12 forward gears are selected by a powershift change system.

KEEPING TRACK

All told, there are nine metres of track being driven by the wheels. The tread on the track is designed by Goodyear to maximise grip in particularly muddy and slippery conditions.

Far left: Sorry lads, your number's nearly up. Above left: Jody Scheckter has gone from F1 world champ to organic farmer

JOB DONE

THE EX-F1 CHAMP OFFERS AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT PROMPTED HIM TO HANG UP HIS HELMET AND GLOVES

IT'S A flippant question that takes Jody Scheckter about a tenth of a second to answer. What car from his career would he most describe as a tractor? The Ferrari 312T5, of course, the machine that he ended his career in, or possibly ended his career.

"It's true, the T5 was a dog," he shrugs. "But I think my decision to retire was based more on winning the world championship the year before. The way I saw it, in my first full year in F1, 1974, I was one

point off the championship lead leaving Monza, with two rounds to go. I suppose at that stage I knew I was capable of winning the title. Yes, it took me until '79, but from '74 I knew that's what I was capable of.

"Once I'd done that, it didn't mean anything to me to win it twice. That was a personal thing, but it was just so dangerous; I knew pretty close to the start of the next season that I wasn't so keen. It was quite strange, because at the



circuit I felt I was trying as hard as ever, but away from it I wasn't waking up in the night and thinking about the car. That was the difference. But the T5 was still a dog..."

● For information on Laverstoke Park farm and how to obtain its products call 01256 8909000; fax: 01256 890909; e-mail: info@laverstokepark.co.uk; website: www.laverstokepark.co.uk/

For information on Drivedata log on to: www.drivedata.com or visit the Autosport International Show and go to stand 10215 in Hall 10.



ANIMAL MAG

SPECIAL FEATURE A man's best friend comes in all shapes and sizes, as a pet-loving CHARLES BRADLEY discovers

Myth: racing drivers are the coolest of the cool. They own jets, helicopters and yachts. Some would put their own granny in the pitwall if it meant keeping the lead of a race. Wouldn't they? Fact: racing drivers are just like you and me. They own dogs, cats and even budgies. Some have adopted stray dogs, founded wildlife sanctuaries and taken courses in advanced horse whispering.

According to people who know such things (although God only knows why) people subconsciously pick animals for pets that not only reflect their personality, but also their status. Formula 1's own 'top dog' Michael Schumacher owns a Westie terrier called Jenny, a mongrel called Floh (he rescued it from Interlagos in Brazil) and, wait for it, three massive Malinois Belgian Shepherds – renowned as the daddies of the doggy world. Now that's more like it!

Preventing boredom is another important reason that people keep pets, and it's fair to say that away from the track drivers spend much of their time pursuing interests that keep their fitness levels at a premium. DTM champion Mattias Ekström is a case in point. He takes his terrier, Moss, for rides on his jetski and snowmobile.

"He really enjoys it," says Ekström. "I was on my jetski and he was at the water's edge, barking. So I said to him, 'Do you want get on?' and he barked again. I put him on the handlebars and cruised around. He didn't want to get off for at least an hour. I got bored of it before he did!"

Another in the DTM paddock to have a cool pet is Jeroen Bleekemolen, whose father Michael not only has one grand prix start to his name, but also three wallabies called Lychee, Kiwi and Skippy. Jeroen says: "He just saw one for sale in the newspaper and said, 'I want one!' We hand-reared it from a Joey, because its mother had died. It's very tame, and will hop over to you. The other two are a bit more timid, although they're not afraid of fighting our dogs and goats if provoked!"

Michael's next 'pet' project is to own a bear, but the Bleekemolens are not alone in owning unusual pets. NASCAR racer Michael Waltrip has a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig, accepted as a gift from rival Brett Bodine. Mario Andretti has kept exotic birds, but his most famous pet was a pig named Martini. Mika Häkkinen owned a turtle called Clarence.

It's not just drivers. British Touring Car svengali Alan Gow once kept llamas. His favourite was called Dalai (for obvious reasons) and he used to take it to his local pub.

Main: It's a dog's life for DTM ace Mattias Ekström as he chauffeurs his four-legged friend, Moss, around on the handlebars of his jetski

"He went inside once," reveals Gow. "The locals used to give him a big ashtray full of mineral water – still, not sparkling, because he didn't like the bubbles. They thought I was an eccentric Australian! I sold them to the people next door when I sold the house. You see, you can't have llamas in Chobham!" Obviously.

But pets can have a more practical benefit, apart from convincing the regulars in your local that you're barmy. After sustaining severe head injuries in a crash at Darlington in 2001, NASCAR racer Steve Park was given a Labrador called Harley by his neurosurgeon to aid his rehabilitation.

His mother Dotti recalls: "He was just so determined that he would race again, he worked too hard. It was like a night and day change when he had something he had to be responsible for besides himself. That's what Harley did for him."

Fellow NASCAR star Ward Burton has even set up his own wildlife foundation, preserving 1100 acres in southern Virginia for wildlife conservation. So too Australian V8 Supercar ace Craig Lowndes, who is involved in a drought-relief programme which entailed relocating 10 horses to his own farm where he and wife Natalie look after them.

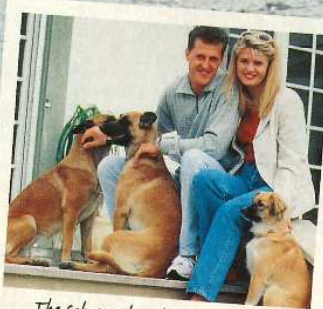
Lowndes is also undertaking horse whisperer training, and says: "Motorsport is a very hectic and demanding industry, so spending time at home with my animals is the best way to unwind and recharge. Horses are such amazing, noble creatures; I really wanted to understand them better and doing the horse whispering course has been an incredible experience."

Is there anything drivers won't do to find extra horsepower? But perhaps the greatest animal-owning racing driver is NASCAR's resident firebrand Tony Stewart. He might possess a fuse shorter than Oasis frontman Liam Gallagher on a bad day ('The Smoke' has slapped a photographer and once had to be restrained from chasing an official after being shown a black flag) but he owns some mega pets.

He owns a tiger (how cool is that?) called Tangie, which lives in Metrolina Zoo in Rockwell. Now fully grown, he no longer has hands-on contact with it. "It might take my arm off," he says, "so it's probably better I stay away for now."

He also has a monkey called Mojo, a Chihuahua and 41 racing greyhounds, which he insists fly to their races rather than be transported by road. But why a monkey? "Why not? I'm in a position where I can have one. Some people have dogs. Actually, I have dogs too. But the monkey is the Chihuahua's best friend."

You can't argue with that. You'd better not, anyway. ❧



The Schumacher clan in full. Hello! magazine poses outside their home



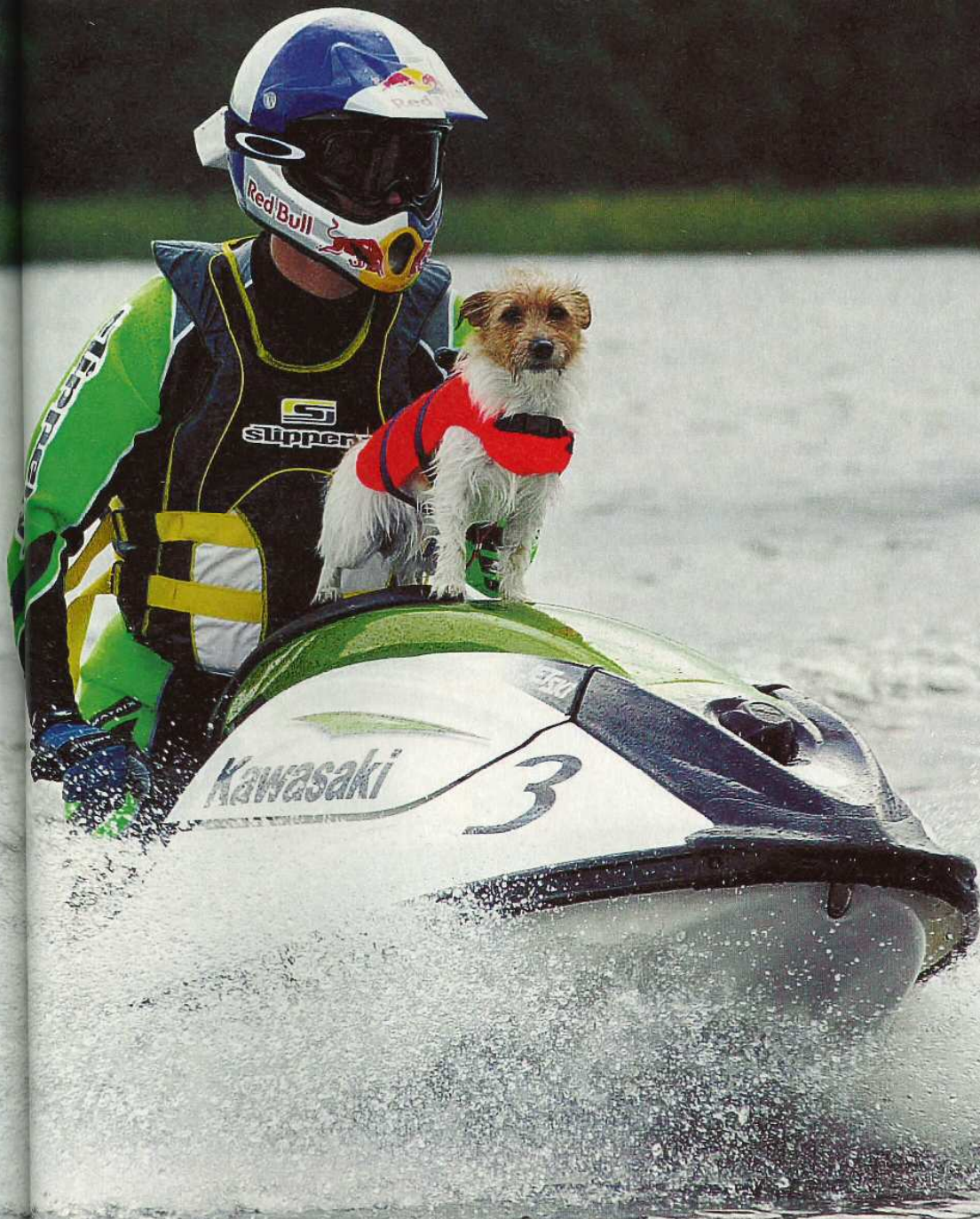
NASCAR's Ken Schrader gets confused over the 'be saying, get them running off your back'



Mercedes DTM star Jean Alesi smiles for the cameras along with his pet pooch



Ryan Newman celebrates yet another NASCAR pole with his wife and canine



ANIMAL TRAGIC

WHEN MAN, BEAST AND MACHINERY COLLIDE



LAT. ANCHUTTE

ANIMALS AND racing cars just don't mix. Interface the two, and it usually ends in an ugly mess.

For example, Lotus grand prix driver Alan Stacey was hit in the face by a pigeon, near the infamous Masta kink at Spa in 1960. He was knocked unconscious and crashed to his death.

Stefan Johansson (pictured above) was incredibly lucky to escape with only a cracked rib when he hit a deer in qualifying at the Osterreichring. The impact split the unfortunate beast in two and sent Johansson's wrecked McLaren hurtling into the barriers.

"I was so lucky it hit the suspension," he said after the subsequent crash. "If it had been head-on—just a few centimetres to the right—I reckon that would have been it for me."

Deer on track are rare, but stray dogs on the track in Mexico (as hit by Jackie Stewart's Tyrrell in 1970) are as common as hares at Silverstone (as splattered by Jean Behra, among many others), or groundhogs in Montreal (ditto Alessandro Nannini).

More exotic animals have also played their part. Seven-times Bathurst 1000 winner Jim Richards was taken out of the 2004 running of the great race when a kangaroo unwisely jumped into his path!

But for a 'when animals attack' story, you can't beat '50s NASCAR racer Tim Flock. The son of a tightrope walker, he knew a thing or two about showbiz. He owned a rhesus monkey called Jocko Flocko, and decided it was a great idea to have it sit alongside him in the cockpit of his stock car wearing a race suit and goggles. It used to pull faces at rival drivers as he overtook them!

That was until Raleigh Speedway where, mid-race, the animal managed to escape from his harness and went walkabout in the car.

It pulled a string that opened a trap door over the wheel, used by Flock to check for tyre wear. A pebble flipped up and hit the monkey in the face, sending the little fella berserk. He grabbed Flock around the neck, pulled his head back and almost choked him.

Somehow, Flock managed to swerve into the pitlane and hurled the simian out of the window to his pit crew.

The monkey never rode again.



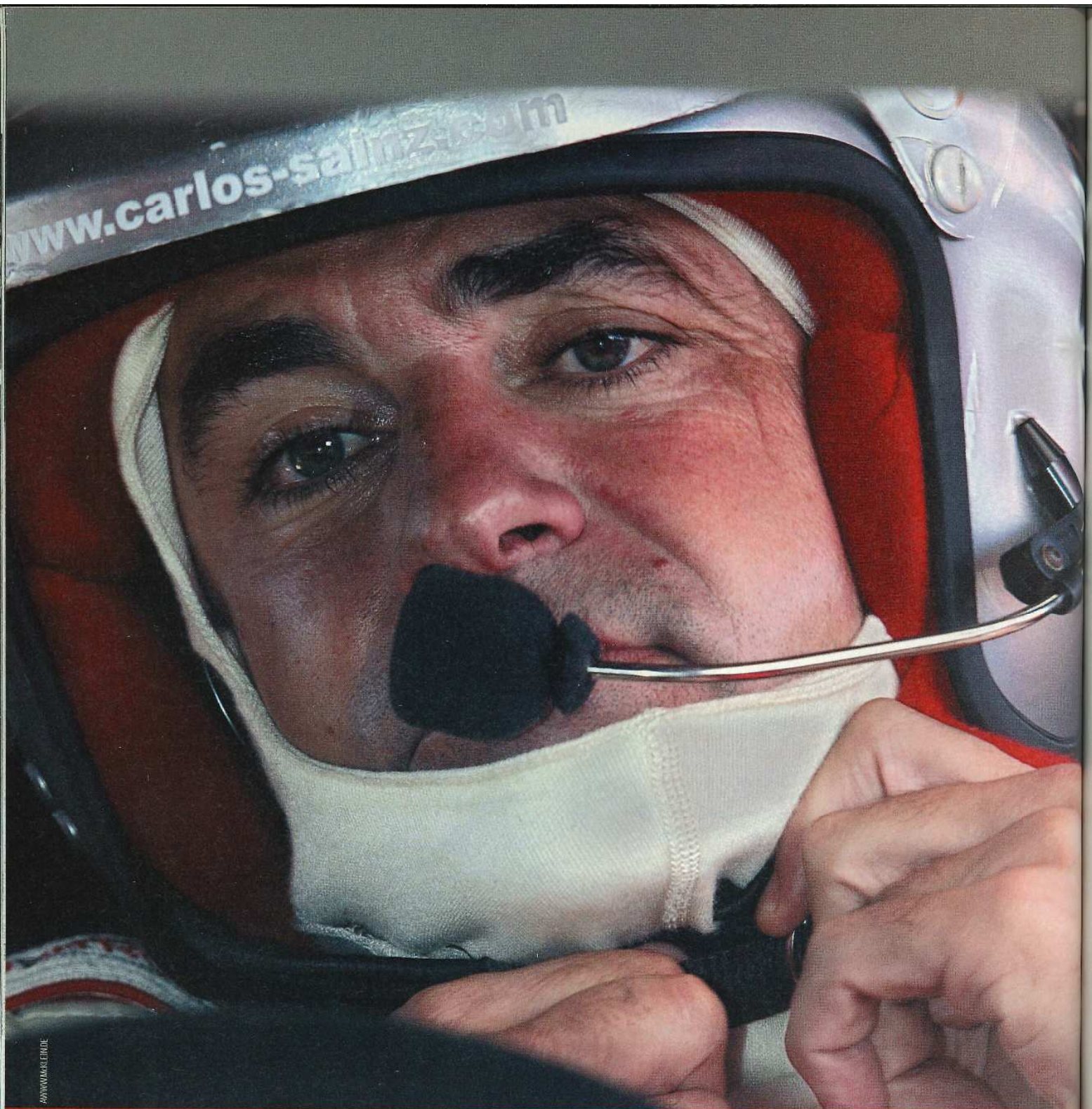
The family Bleckemans, from left-to-right: Jeremy, Sebastian, Skippy and Michael



Alex Zanardi's kart protégé, Martin Punnamäe, and his parrot



Formula 3 racer Bruno Spengler (aged 8) bottle feeds an elk!



WHEN KING CARLOS RULED THE WORLD

The WRC's most successful driver and a few of his former colleagues relive the good and bad

RAC RALLY 1989

That year's RAC Rally was one of the proudest moments of my life, but at the same time one of the most disappointing. I had been leading for the whole event and was about a minute ahead when we had one or two stages to go, then the propshaft broke. It was in Dalby forest – I'll never forget it. We eventually finished second, which is still a result that makes me proud. The reason this was such an important event for me was that it was the last 'secret' RAC Rally, the last time the event ran before using pacenotes. To be a Latin driver coming to a secret RAC – a rally which is so specialised – and to be so close to winning was very special. That event was never the same once pacenotes were introduced. When it was secret, it was always one of my favourites.

1990

My first win. We had had lots of problems with the Celica before Greece that season, leading lots of rallies but not managing to get the victory. When we won, though, it was like a switch. We turned the switch on and suddenly the wins started to come. One of the really special ones came quickly: Finland. The 1,000 Lakes is a very specialised rally, and being the first non-Scandinavian to win was fantastic. At the same time, I did the event with an injured left foot. Two nights before the start of the rally I had been out on the recee. We came over a crest into a corner and found a car – maybe a spectator's car or something – in the road. To avoid it I had to go off the road but when we crashed the pedals hit my left foot quite badly. I had to do the rally with my foot strapped up, which was not so good given that you use your left foot for braking! Once the rally started though I didn't think about the foot once, I was just focused on the event and winning it.

FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP

Winning my first championship in 1990 is something I will never forget. We did it with third place in Italy. We went on to finish the year on another high by winning the RAC Rally for the first time. It's just a shame it wasn't when the event was run without pacenotes.

1991

Remember this as a season we missed out on. We came so close to the championship – we had it in our pocket. On the last three rallies we had mechanical problems, starting in Catalunya. In Sanremo we couldn't get the car started and then on the RAC the headgasket went. It wasn't such a good year as the one we'd had before.

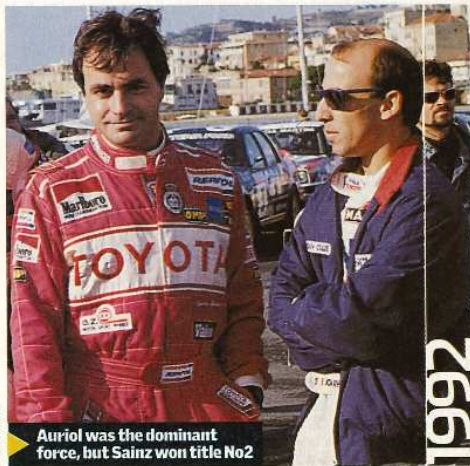
1992

This was the opposite to the season before. This was the year where Didier Auriol was going so well in the Lancia, but this time it was me who came up at the end of the season to win the championship. I remember two rallies well that year: the RAC and the Safari. We had big battles on both of them, but the Safari was *really* tough. It went on for six days and there were some night sections in there as well. We had a turbo problem with the car early on, which meant we had to go flat out for the win as the event progressed. A great rally and a great memory.



The RAC pre-pacenotes was always a Sainz favourite

RAC RALLY 1989



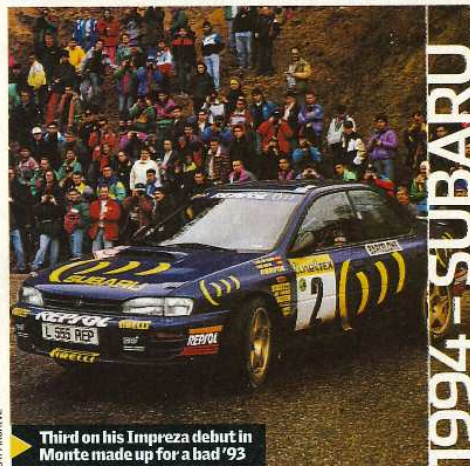
Auriol was the dominant force, but Sainz won title No2

1992



That first win on the Acropolis opened up the floodgates

1990 – FIRST WIN



Third on his Impreza debut in Monte made up for a bad '93

1994 – SUBARU



Sanremo was the setting for Sainz's first title win in 1990

1990 – CHAMP

BEST MEMORY

OVE ANDERSSON



THE MOST memorable rally I had with Carlos was the 1990 Acropolis – his first win with Toyota. He was tantalisingly close to winning on many previous occasions, but something always conspired against him.

Once that win came, it was like a dam breaking. He was champion in 1990, but that first success had been a long time coming. Carlos did suffer from bad luck, and the best or worst example of this came on the 1998 RAC Rally. He was on his way to a third title when the car stopped 300 metres from the end. That rendered me unable to do anything for a week. It was unbelievable.

When Carlos came to the team, the mechanics swore they would never work with him because he was so tough. I told them to give it time and a few tests later they realised that Carlos is a driver who demands perfection and was able to bring results. They would do anything for him thereafter.

Above all, Carlos is an ambassador for his sport. I have worked with very few F1 drivers in my career, but I think the only one who is worthy of comparison is Michael Schumacher. His dedication and passion for his job is clear to see. I would say the same about Carlos and I'd compare him with no other.

Toyota Team Europe and Carlos grew up together. He became a champion with us and we became champions with him. I have a lot to thank him for, notably for making our team the success that it was.



Andersson says Sainz's dedication helped make Toyota a success

LAT ARCHIVE

MILOS ORLD

and times with DAVID EVANS



A year of misses, including a broken headgasket on the RAC

1991

BEST MEMORY

MALCOLM WILSON



Sainz and Kankkunen scored a one-two for Ford in Greece

CARLOS SAINZ'S win on the Acropolis Rally in 1997 is the one I'll always remember. It was the first world championship win for Ford since I had taken over the contract at the end of the previous season.

Carlos gave me so much satisfaction with that win. It had been really difficult trying to get the car and everything up and running in such a short space of time, but we'd managed it and we'd won. The best part was that it was a Ford one-two.

I was in the dream situation of having to tell Juha Kankkunen (our second-placed driver) to back off a little bit. Carlos had a bit of a problem later in the event and I didn't want Juha to pressure him—but what a fantastic scenario.

I'd never worked with Carlos before the start of that season, but having driven against him I had an idea of what he was like. It's fair to say Carlos and I had our moments early in the season. Looking back on it now, it was probably my fault. Carlos was always on the telephone wanting to know what was happening with the car and what we were doing. I was spending all my time trying to get the reliability right—I just didn't have the time or the infrastructure around me to explain to him what I was doing. I was just getting on with it.

It all came right in Greece that year, though. When Carlos left the team [at the end of that season] we both had a lot of respect for each other.

BEST MEMORY

COLIN McRAE



McRae remembers Sainz blowing the rest away in Cyprus 2000

THE RALLY I remember Carlos most for is Cyprus in 2000, when he blew everybody away and won quite comfortably. Carlos wasn't really the kind of driver who would string together a lot of wins at once. He would go along gathering points consistently, with the odd win thrown in here and there.

In Cyprus that year there was something special. He was exactly the same guy out of the car, but I don't know what it was while he was on the stages... People asked if it was because Cyprus was a new event and he was right on it with his notes, but I don't think it was that—I guess he just found his confidence quickly. He got the right car set-up very quickly and then felt comfortable driving at that speed in those conditions.

These kind of things happen every now and again, and when it happens to you as a driver, it can be quite eerie. It almost feels as though everybody else is driving slowly. It's hard to explain how you're doing it—you just are. When it comes like that it feels like some of the easiest driving you will ever do. You're not putting any extra effort in at all.

That's what it was like for Carlos in Cyprus that year.



Sainz always demanded the most from his teams - and he usually got it

MCKEIN/ARCHIVE

MCKEIN/AT



"I'LL NEVER FORGET THE 1998 RAC, BUT NOT FOR GOOD REASONS!"

SUBARU
After a difficult season – a wasted season – in 1993 when we were driving a Lancia, it was good to get in the Subaru and win the Acropolis in '94. It's always good to get your first win in a new car and the Impreza was

no different. The following year went well for us – starting with Monte Carlo, a great rally which we won for Prodrive. After that there were more wins and a great battle with Juha Kankkunen in Portugal.

FORD/TOYOTA

Moving to Ford to drive the Escort Cosworth provided me with some satisfaction. The year before the Escort hadn't seemed like it was going to win. But 1996 started well, especially in Sweden where we fought hard with Tommi Mäkinen. We lost about 20 seconds on one of the early stages, but then fought back and had a big battle with Tommi. We lost out after we had a problem with the rear axle. We were really close in most events after that, but the win came in Indonesia, which was an event where most people had problems. The following season was the first of the World Rally Car era. We were still at Ford, but now with the Escort WRC, which wasn't very different to the Group A car from the previous year. We won Indonesia again, but it was the one-two we did there and in Greece that I remember. They were great results for me and the team. I went back to Toyota for 1998, with a great start to the season but a disastrous finish. Winning Monte Carlo was perfect as it was the first time the Corolla WRC had ever been used. As you can imagine, what happened on the RAC that year is something I'm never going to forget – but not for good reasons!

CITROEN

After a couple of seasons with Ford, it was clear that the financial situation the team found itself in meant there was no drive for me. At this time some people were trying to retire

BEST MEMORY

LUIS MOYA



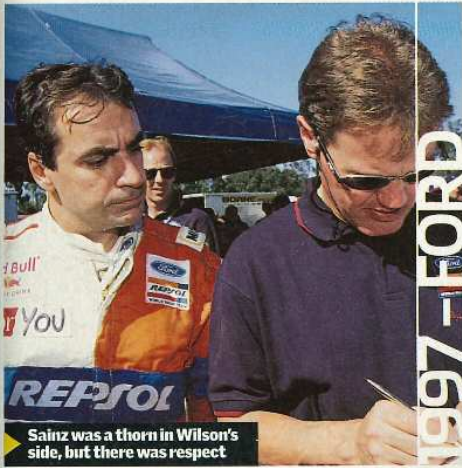
Sainz conquered the six-day marathon that was the '92 Safari

AFTER SO many events co-driving for Carlos – all of which were special in their own way – picking just one is difficult. I would go for the Safari in 1992. That was the first time we won this very special rally, and this has to be my number one memory.

It was quite a dry year, so running first on the road was very important, and you had to get out of the dust. The first leg took us down from Nairobi to Mombasa, running into the night. We were following Miki Biasion and the dust was terrible, but at night it got even worse. To this day, I don't know how the hell Carlos did it, but he was magnificent. He drove so well and so fast to get us into the lead. Miki couldn't believe it, either.

That event was a special one for us. It was six days long and a really tough route made all the more difficult by the problems we had when our Celica kept on blowing turbos. We were fighting with Jorge Recalde and his co-driver Martin Christie in their Lancia.

For every one of those six days we were enemies on the stages, but then at night, when we had finished driving, Martin and I would go to the bar and have a drink. We were great friends. To win that event was a fantastic memory for Carlos and I – the Safari is a special event and one of the real stars of the World Rally Championship, so you never forget your first win there.



Sainz was a thorn in Wilson's side, but there was respect

1997-FORD
L.A. ARCHIVE

me, but I wasn't ready. I didn't feel the moment had come for me to stop driving, which is why I was so glad the deal with Citroën came about. Both years were great. It meant a lot to me to still be in with a chance of winning the championship at the end of my first season in the Xsara in 2003. As well as that I was able to help the team win the manufacturers' title in our first full season in the sport. This year was also good for us, when we won the manufacturers' title again and Sébastien [Loeb] won the drivers' crown. I am proud of what we achieved as a team.

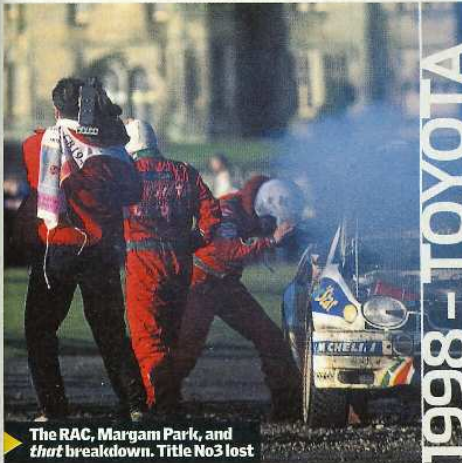
26 WINS

Winning in Argentina this year made me the most successful WRC driver ever. I am happy about the number of wins, but at the same time I'm equally happy about the different rallies I have won. I have always said that to be a good rally driver, a complete rally driver, you have to be able to win on all surfaces. I have won many different events, from the RAC and Finland, to Safari and the Acropolis, and then pure asphalt rallies such as Corsica. It's nice to look back on the number, but as I said – from my side – it's nice to win on such different types of rally.

MADRID 2004

What an amazing way to end my career! I will never ever forget that day. When I heard I was going to drive in the centre of Madrid I was looking forward to it, but I didn't have any idea how many people to expect. When 170,000 people turned out to watch, it was amazing. I have to say a big thank you to Madrid, the government and Citroën for making this fantastic day possible. If there was ever a way to end your career in the world championship, this was it. It was a very emotional day and a special prize for me. ☑

"I AM PROUD OF WHAT WE ACHIEVED AT CITROËN THIS YEAR"



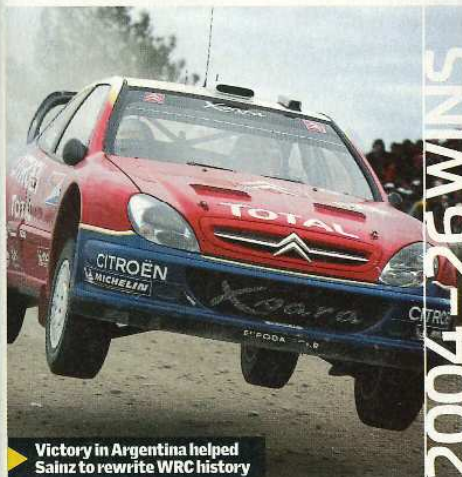
The RAC, Margam Park, and that breakdown. Title No3 lost

1998-TOYOTA
WWW.KLEINDE



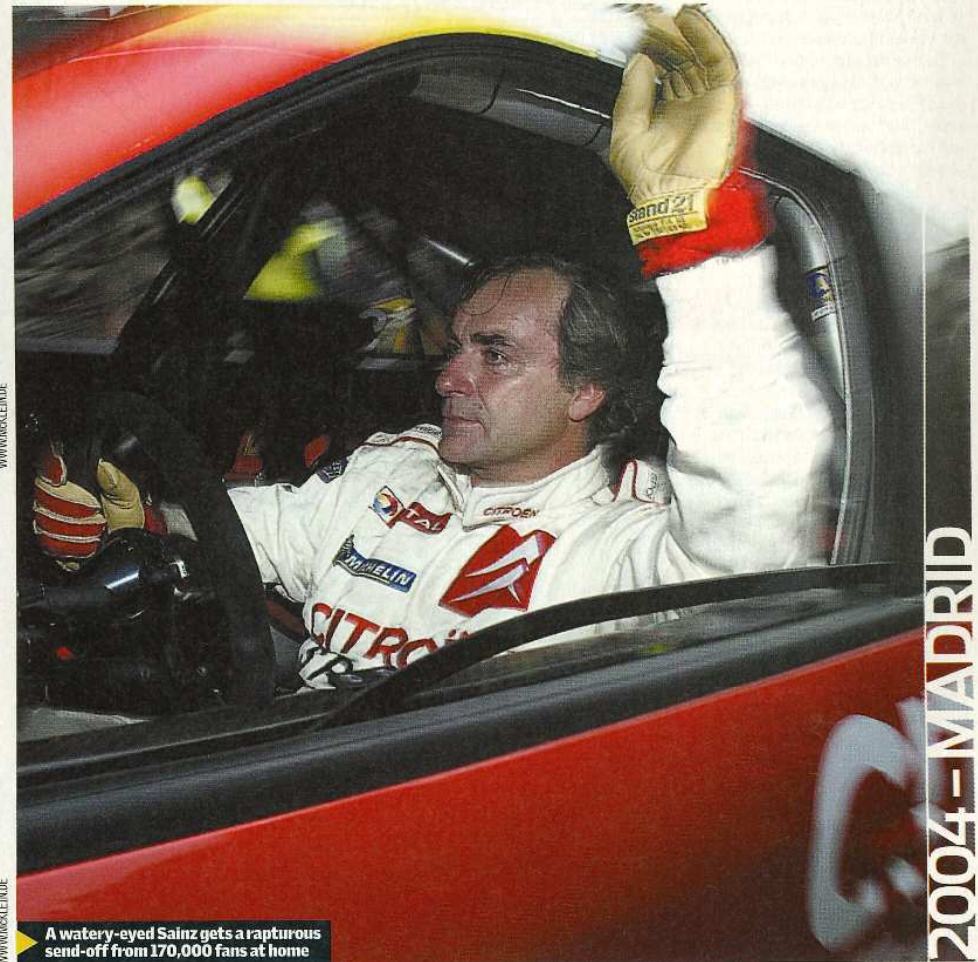
Loeb's first title win: a proud moment for his team-mate

2004-CITROËN
WWW.KLEINDE



Victory in Argentina helped Sainz to rewrite WRC history

2004-26 WINS
WWW.KLEINDE



A watery-eyed Sainz gets a rapturous send-off from 170,000 fans at home

2004-MADRID

BEST MEMORY

DAVID RICHARDS



It was Sainz v the Brits in Catalunya '95, but the Spaniard won

WWW.KLEINDE

WHAT DO I remember most about Carlos? The High Street in Lloret de Mar on the Catalunya Rally in 1995! That was the year when Carlos and his Subaru team-mate Colin McRae were both going for the world championship. On the night before the final leg of the event, Carlos, Colin and myself had agreed that the drivers would hold station – which meant Carlos would win. Colin then passed Carlos in the stages and was in first place before the last control.

That final service was an interesting one. This was a very difficult situation for everybody involved. Colin is a racer, he wanted to win. Carlos on the other hand was quite subdued at the service. I think he was feeling that he couldn't trust these Brits – myself and Colin – who had ganged up against him and then I think he was rather pleasantly surprised with the way things worked out.

I had spent a lot of time with Carlos up until then and since then and I've always found him to be the complete professional – he was then and is now. He has left us with lots and lots of great memories from his time in the championship, but that afternoon in Lloret was a particularly interesting one!

**BAHRAIN
SUPER
PRIX**
SAKHIR,
BAHRAIN

10.12.04



BREAKFAST WOULD

have been a relaxed affair for Lewis Hamilton last Friday.

While Franck Perera, Jamie Green and others were concocting plans for staying at the front on a track that positively encourages overtaking moves, Manor Motorsport's lad probably didn't have too many butterflies. He was starting the race from the back of beyond and any chance of success looked hopeless.

"Starting low down took a lot of pressure off my shoulders," he admitted after he snatched an explosive late victory. "Nobody expected me to win. Just getting to fourth place would have been a fantastic result from 21st on the grid. I'm overwhelmed."

Even though there was a qualification race to help Hamilton move forward, pushing through to win the Superprix was a gargantuan effort. He started the main event 11th and, until the lights turned green, he hadn't shown up in the top 10 throughout the weekend's competition.

But Hamilton buried himself well in there by sprinting straight up to fourth — just ahead of highly-impressive team-mate Paul di Resta — as they exited the first corner. It needed a double-take, but there he was, chasing down front-row starter Fábio Carbone, while poleman Green and Nico Rosberg raced away in first and second places.

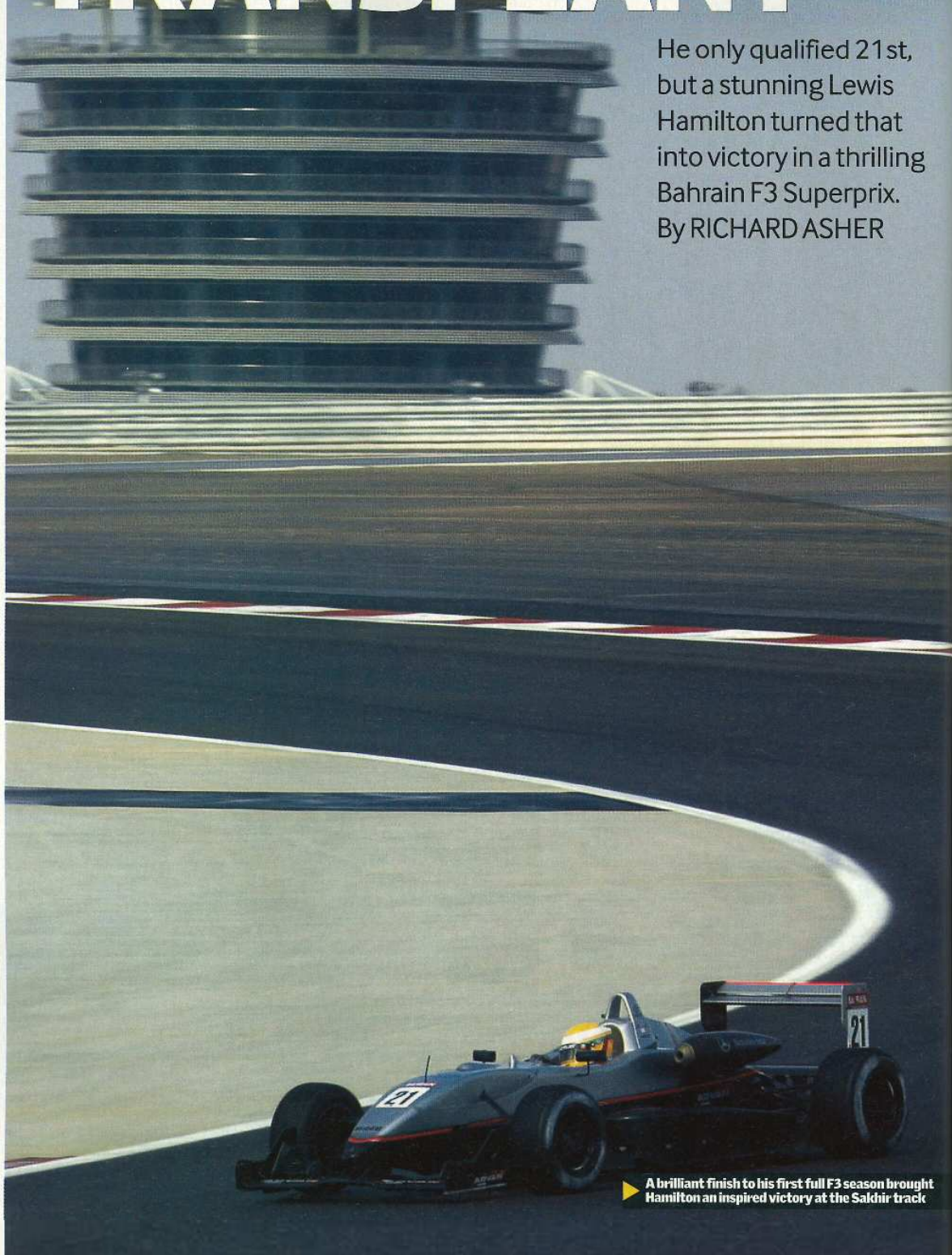
The safety car made its first appearance almost immediately as Charles Zwolsman and Danilo Dirani tangled entering the back straight. At the restart Hamilton spied his opportunity and by the end of the lap he was up to second, although he couldn't exactly explain how he did it! He nearly paid the price later on, though, because he had worked his Dallara-Mercedes' tyres rather too hard in those early laps.

But even he couldn't make much impression on Green, whose ASM Dallara-Merc looked pretty comfortable at the front. Meanwhile, Rosberg (Team Rosberg Dallara-Opel) was turning up the heat on his mate Hamilton as the Brit's tyres faded. The Finn was past again on lap eight, sweeping through at the quick left-hander at the end of the back straight.

There followed a quiet period, at least for the front few. Rosberg edged a little closer to Green as the Euroseries champion made a couple of mistakes, but things seemed pretty stable. Carbone was struggling with his Three Bond Dallara-Nissan and certainly wasn't

HAMILTON'S BAHRAIN TRANSPLANT

He only qualified 21st, but a stunning Lewis Hamilton turned that into victory in a thrilling Bahrain F3 Superprix.
By RICHARD ASHER



▶ A brilliant finish to his first full F3 season brought Hamilton an inspired victory at the Sakhir track

ALL PICTURES: EBREVILAT



Nico Rosberg played his part in a thrilling race. Another lap and he could have won...

catching Hamilton.

The Brazilian had more concerns behind him, because there were a few quick drivers slicing up the field at the rate of at least one position per lap. Richard Antinucci was one, and Ronnie Quintarelli another. Both had passed rapid starters (but slow thereafter) Giedo van der Garde and di Resta and were on Carbone's exhaust by lap 13. On lap 14 both got past as Antinucci set the move in motion at the inside of Turn 1.

Just as Carbone began to drop away the safety car appeared again when Rob Austin's car needed removing. There should have been three laps left when it came in, but Ho-Pin Tung and Daisuke Ikeda contrived to collide under caution and kept it out for a crucial extra lap.

It nearly made all the difference in the world. The restart and the last two laps bore almost no resemblance to the race that went before. First, there was the mass confusion as the safety car only switched its lights off a moment before heading for pitlane. To cut a long story short, some drivers were ready and others weren't. Green fell into the latter camp.

"The safety car driver was impressively bad," Green said. "He was very slow. And it was a surprise that we went green when we did, but that's no excuse for losing the lead. I made an error and I have got to take it on the chin."

The faux pas cost him the win, because Rosberg was able to get alongside him into the first corner. Green wouldn't say die until the next hairpin, though, and neither would back out of the throttle until they were too far up the hill.

As each went in far too deep, it was Hamilton's moment. Not only did he inherit first, but his rivals' lost momentum meant he was gifted a vital cushion. He only needed to hold on for a lap and two-thirds.

"I knew Nico had a bit more on me," said Hamilton. "My tyres were gone. If there had been another lap, he'd have been on my arse. I had a bit of luck, but I'm not complaining."

Manor boss John Booth wasn't, either: "Lewis deserved a break after going from 21st to third. It's not as though he hadn't passed 18 cars already. The safety car robbed us in Macau and it paid us back here."

Behind Hamilton and Rosberg, chaos reigned for two laps. Green was so far off course that he'd also lost third to Lucas di Grassi, who was later penalised 25 seconds for passing cars before the line in the restart mayhem. But Green was back up to third on the last lap, di Grassi claiming that the Briton had

pushed him out of the way.

Either way, the Hitech Racing driver ran wide and dropped more places shortly afterwards. Meanwhile, Japanese series rivals Antinucci and Quintarelli ruined their hard work by colliding, the Italian driver accepting the blame. Neither they nor Carbone had done well out of the restart, although James Rossiter had, with certain mumbblings that he too should've been penalised.

Rossiter brought his Signature Dallara-Opel home fourth ahead of



Green (right) lost out to Hamilton for podium top step



Hamilton? Pah! Rossiter (above) made up 27 places to take fourth

Carbone and Marko Asmer, who had enjoyed an unexpectedly good weekend with Carlin Motorsport, this despite the Estonian insisting he had been pushed wide by "somebody braking far too late" at the first turn.

Just to add to the fun, the flagman missed the first few runners at the line, so the three leaders all raced a lap more than they needed. But an ecstatic Hamilton had held on to win by less than a second from Rosberg.

Di Resta deserves a mention for an outstanding performance just days after winning the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award. His qualifying performance showed the judges had made a shrewd decision, although an error in the first race let him down and a set-up problem had him going backwards in the main race before a clash with Eric Salignon put him out.

"It was a good weekend and I'm happy because the pace is there," said the Scot. "I wasn't expecting anything or ruling anything out, so I'm not surprised at my results."

British Formula 3 Champion Nelson Angelo Piquet endured another off weekend, unable to nail the qualifying laps he might have done. His overtaking was something to behold, though, despite his race ending when he touched di Grassi. Piquet said di Grassi braked early and the move was more avoidance than anything; di Grassi said that Piquet was already alongside under braking.

Zandvoort and Macau winner Alexandre Prémat fought with diabolical oversteer throughout practice, but made it a lot better in the race-morning warm-up. He qualified way down, but thoughts of a miraculous comeback for an international F3 hat-trick disappeared after a clash with Piquet put him off and had him starting the final from the back. ☒

»» QUALIFYING RACE

PERERA SECURES SHOCK POLE, BUT GREEN HAS LAST LAUGH



Frenchman Franck Perera celebrates his maiden F3 pole

RAINCOATS were absent from most Formula 3 kitbags as the teams headed for the Persian Gulf. Fair enough, rain was unlikely in the desert, but Wednesday and Thursday proved that it's not impossible.

Wednesday's free practice was entirely wet, as was Thursday morning qualifying, which meant that grid slots came down to the second session. Drivers would have to learn the dry circuit and go for pole in just half an hour.

In a way it was a brilliant judge of character. Most drivers had a mini-test of a few minutes before changing tyres, while a red flag at either end reduced qualifying to a 10-minute shootout. It meant rising to the occasion, because quickest times lasted about as long as a Pakistan cricket captain.

Tyres were only good on the second and third laps, but nobody told Franck Perera, who stole pole position in his Prema Dallara-Opel just when everything seemed settled. Jamie Green was second, Fábio Carbone third and Formula Renault graduate Paul di Resta impressed the whole paddock with fourth on his first competitive F3 outing.

Top of the disaster list was Lewis Hamilton, who went off, damaged the floor and languished in 21st. James Rossiter joined him after a failed driveshaft stopped him from doing a flier, thereby demoting him to last.

The qualification race on Friday morning went well for Rossiter and Hamilton as both made up ground, but it was awful for Perera. His weekend was pretty much over in a matter of seconds after stalling under pressure at the start. The disappointed Frenchman owned up to the error, but could do little as he finally got away last.

Green cruised to victory, securing pole for the Superprix. Carbone and Nico Rosberg followed, albeit some way off. Di Resta would have been fourth but put a wheel off, losing places to Marko Asmer and Richard Antinucci.

Di Resta took Antinucci back, and then Nelsinho Piquet made a great move on the American. After that Antinucci got hit by Lucas di Grassi in the same corner, the accident causing an early stoppage and a countback of the results.

RESULTS December 10, Bahrain F3 Superprix, Sakhir (BRN)

FEATURE RACE, 20 LAPS (66.78 MILES)				QUALIFICATION RACE, 8 LAPS (26.71 MILES)					
Pos	Drivers	Team	Car	Time	Pos	Drivers	Time	Qual	Grid
1	Lewis Hamilton (GB)	Manor Motorsport	Dallara-Mercedes F302	47m11.528s	1	Green	15m17.488s	1m53.972s	2
2	Nico Rosberg (FIN)	Team Rosberg	Dallara-Opel F303	47m12.323s	2	Carbone	15m20.845s	1m54.078s	3
3	Jamie Green (GB)	ASM	Dallara-Mercedes F303	47m16.230s	3	Rosberg	15m23.040s	1m54.129s	6
4	James Rossiter (GB)	Signature	Dallara-Opel F302	47m18.276s	4	Asmer	15m27.073s	1m54.116s	5
5	Fábio Carbone (BR)	Three Bond Racing	Dallara-Nissan F303	47m19.331s	5	Antinucci	15m27.421s	1m54.433s	9
6	Marko Asmer (EE)	Carlin Motorsport	Dallara-Mugen F302	47m19.392s	6	di Resta	15m28.130s	1m54.085s	4
7	Kazuki Nakajima (J)	TOM'S	Dallara-Toyota F304	47m20.022s	7	Piquet	15m29.035s	1m54.586s	12
8	Loïc Duval (F)	Signature	Dallara-Opel F302	47m20.962s	8	di Grassi	15m29.892s	1m54.135s	7
9	Alexandre Prémat (F)	ASM	Dallara-Mercedes F303	47m21.486s	9	Nakajima	15m30.367s	1m54.347s	8
10	Ernesto Viso (YV)	Menu Motorsport	Dallara-Opel F302	47m21.673s	10	Quintarelli	15m30.667s	1m54.522s	11
11	Naoki Yokomizo (J)	Ing Ing	Dallara-Toyota F303	47m22.889s	11	Hamilton	15m33.063s	1m55.227s	21
12	Kohei Hirate (J)	Prema Powerteam	Dallara-Opel F304	47m22.945s	12	Salignon	15m34.126s	1m54.447s	10
13	John O'Hara (IRL)	TME Racing	Dallara-Toyota F303	47m23.227s	13	van der Garde	15m37.367s	1m55.566s	25
14	Eric Salignon (F)	ASM	Dallara-Mercedes F304	47m23.453s	14	Yokomizo	15m37.699s	1m54.830s	16
15	Giedo van der Garde (NL)	Signature	Dallara-Opel F302	47m24.122s	15	Zwolsman	15m38.809s	1m55.456s	24
<p>16 Matteo Cressoni (I), Ombra Dallara-Mugen F302, 47m24.399s; 17 Davide Mazzeoli (I), Ombra Dallara-Mugen F302, 47m25.184s; 18 Karl Reindler (AUS), Swiss Racing Team Dallara-Opel F302, 47m25.254s; 19 Lucas di Grassi (BR), Hitech Racing Dallara-Renault F302, 47m45.512s; 20 Franck Perera (F), Prema Powerteam Dallara-Opel F304, 19 laps - accident; 21 Richard Antinucci (USA), TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F304, 18 laps - accident; 22 Ronnie Quintarelli (I), Ing Ing Dallara-Toyota F302, 18 laps - accident; R Ho-Pin Tung (PRC), Hitech Racing Dallara-Renault F302, 16 laps - accident; R Daisuke Ikeda (J), Swiss Racing Team Dallara-Opel F302, 16 laps - accident; R Rob Austin (GB), Menu Motorsport Dallara-Opel F302, 14 laps - accident; R Barton Mawer (AUS), Hitech Racing Dallara-Renault F302, 12 laps - accident; R Paul di Resta (GB), Manor Motorsport Dallara-Mercedes F302, 10 laps - accident; R Nelson Angelo Piquet (BR), Piquet Sports Dallara-Mugen F303, 4 laps - accident damage; R Danilo Dirani (BR), Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Mugen F302, 1 lap - accident damage; R Ross Zwolsman (NL), TME Racing Dallara-Toyota F303, 0 laps - accident; NS Rodolfo Avila (PRC), Carlin Motorsport Dallara-Mugen F302, driver injury. Winner's average speed 84.904mph. Fastest lap Green, 1m54.049s (105.424mph).</p>									
<p>16 Austin, 15m41.485s (Q23-1m55.300s); 17 Viso, 15m42.605s (Q18-1m55.012s); 18 Duval, 15m43.346s (Q17-1m54.902s); 19 Rossiter, 15m45.503s (Q31-2m04.782s); 20 Ikeda, 15m46.280s (Q26-1m55.971s); 21 Perera, 15m46.349s (Q1-1m53.938s); 22 Hirate, 15m47.401s (Q19-1m55.149s); 23 Mazzeoli, 15m48.876s (Q15-1m54.704s); 24 Dirani, 15m50.105s (Q22-1m54.765s); 25 Tung, 15m52.140s (Q20-1m55.226s); 26 Reindler, 15m54.192s (Q29-1m56.480s); 27 Mawer, 15m57.774s (Q28-1m56.352s); 28 Avila, 16m01.414s (Q30-1m57.234s); R Prémat, 2 laps - accident damage (Q14-1m54.702s); R O'Hara, 1 lap - accident (Q27-1m56.225s); R Cressoni, 1 lap - accident (Q13-1m54.671s). Winner's average speed 104.811mph. Fastest lap Green, 1m54.112s (105.366mph). * = Dirani penalised 10 places on the grid for an engine change.</p>									

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

WIN!

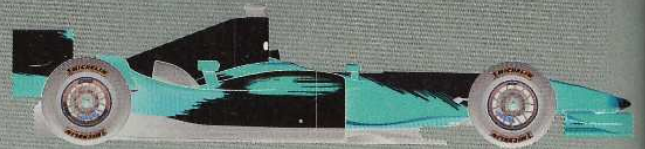
A SILVERSTONE DRIVING DAY



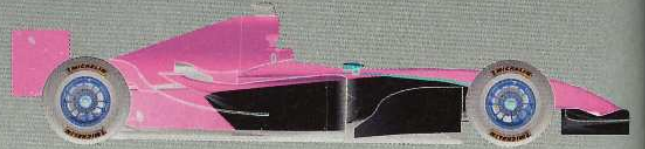
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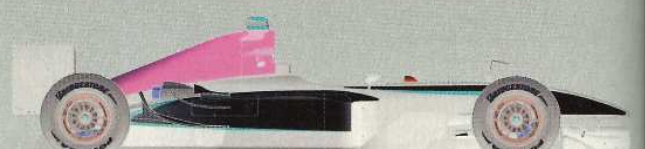
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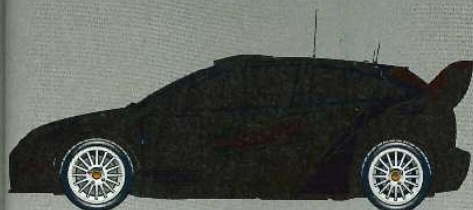




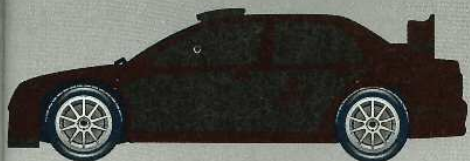
SILVERSTONE TRACK DAY



IT'S QUIZ TIME! If you'd like to take part in a Silverstone Track Day next year, but the Christmas shopping has emptied your wallet yet again, why not enter our simple quiz? Just one lucky winner gets the chance to try a host of cars in a fun-packed day



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TO ENTER

THE QUIZ THAT PUTS YOU IN THE HOT SEAT

TO ENTER our Christmas Quiz, all you have to do is correctly identify the 2004 Formula 1 and World Rally Championship cars from their silhouettes shown.

Send your entries to the address below, and don't forget to include your name, address and a daytime telephone number.

Our address is:
**Autosport Christmas Competition,
Autosport, Somerset House, Somerset
Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 8RU.**

The closing date is Monday January 3. Usual Autosport competition rules apply (see page 21).
Good luck!

NATIONAL

ALL THE NATIONAL & CLUB RACE, RALLY AND HISTORIC NEWS. PLUS FULL RESULTS ROUND-UP

"ED ADORED WILL. IT'S FANTASTIC TO KEEP THE LEE/HOY FAMILY LINK GOING IN BMW"
CAROLYN HOY



NICK WALKER

HOY NAME RETURNS TO VLR FOLD

VIC LEE will once again link up with a member of the Hoy family after signing up Ed Hoy, nephew of the late former British Touring Car Champion Will Hoy, for his Soper Sport Formula BMW outfit for 2005.

Lee ran Will Hoy to BTCC title glory in a BMW M3 in 1991, and Ed Hoy has opted to put his £35,000 Formula BMW scholarship towards a ride with the team that came close to sealing the inaugural BMW GB title with Philip Glew this year.

Hoy will line up alongside fellow circuit racing novice Aaron Steele, and BMW rookie champion and old karting sparring partner Ross Curnow next season.

Lee said: "Ed is an ultra-smooth driver, and he has obviously proved himself by winning one of the scholarships. He's probably the most inexperienced of our drivers at the moment because he hasn't had anywhere near as much track time as the others. When we start our testing programme in January, we hope we will be able to get them all up to the same level."

Hoy has spent the past two years out of kart racing after growing too tall for the

compact machines, and has been targeting a graduation to the circuits for some time.

Carolyn Hoy, wife of Will, said: "Ed adored Will, and Will was a great supporter of his. It's fantastic to keep the Vic Lee/Hoy family link going in Formula BMW."

Hoy has had only one day of testing a Formula BMW, at Donington Park two weeks ago, and will be at a disadvantage against his team-mates. Curnow has already had a season in the category, while Steele has enjoyed regular runs with the team over the past month.

Soper Sport has one more seat available for next season, and Lee hopes to run two squads within the team, each comprising of one experienced driver and one junior racer. Curnow, who took a Formula BMW victory at Knockhill last year, will lead one unit, and is an early favourite for the championship.

Lee said: "What we're hoping for with the third car is to get a seasoned campaigner, so we can run a rookie and a senior in each, and have two teams of two cars. With these three drivers, we have got a very strong crop, and

we're in discussion with a number of strong contenders for the final seat."

Steele, 16, competed at Super One karting level this year, and has already impressed Soper Sport in testing.

Lee said: "Having worked with Aaron on

numerous occasions, I'm already very pleased with his progress. For a very young driver he has got the determination to get to where he wants to be, which is really good to see in a man of his age. He'll be one to watch out for in the future."



Vic Lee



Ed Hoy got behind the wheel of Will Hoy's BTCC-winning BMW this year

BLOOMFIELD

BRIEFS

SORLIE RUN

Formula BMW race winner Stian Sorlie had his first taste of Formula Renault machinery with Fortec Motorsport at Donington Park last week. He joined fellow BMW driver Jordan Wise at the test.

KINCH RENAULT RUN

Team aka boss Andrew Kirkaldy gave his British GT Championship team-mate Nathan Kinch a Formula Renault run-out at Donington Park last week.



MICK WALKER

Kinch's Formula Renault run

JACKSON TO JOIN AKA

Paul Jackson will partner Andrew Kirkaldy to run Team Aka in Formula Renault next season. Jackson has left his job at Fortec's Renault squad to join Kirkaldy. He engineered the Scot in Formula Opel in 1997. Team aka tested at Albacete this week.

STROUD RUN

BRDC Formula Ford race winner Aaran Stroud tested for Italian Formula Renault outfit Euronova at Adria last week. Stroud is seeking a move into either Formula Renault or Formula BMW for next season.

SHAWYER ALBACETE

BRDC single-seater champion Matt Shawyer tested for Formula Renault outfit Hill Speed Racing at Albacete last week, ahead of a planned move into the category. Formula BMW champion Tim Bridgman also had a run-out with the former ARP F3 champions.

IPTARGETS BMW

Former Canadian Touring Car driver Paul Ip is planning a switch to Formula BMW for next season. The London-based driver tested for Carlin Motorsport at Donington Park last week.

MILLER SCHOLAR

Emerson Slade Miller will contest the New Zealand Formula Ford Championship after winning this year's Team USA scholarship. Former winners include Jimmy Vasser and Buddy Rice.

GOODWOOD ONHOLD

Next year's Goodwood Festival of Speed is likely to move in order to avoid a clash with the British Grand Prix, which has been given its original July 8-10 date. A June fixture is favourite, and could be finalised by today (Thursday). Log on to www.goodwood.co.uk

The night stages were one of the attractions of the Rockingham rally



CAROL HAWKINS

MORE RALLY FOR ROCK

ROCKINGHAM IS poised to run more rallies following the success of last Sunday's inaugural Rockingham Stages Rally single-venue event.

The rally, which attracted a capacity entry of 75 cars, has already secured a provisional date to run on December 11 next year.

Despite the cancellation of one of the planned eight stages because of time being lost during the day thanks to the unusually high number of retirements, the event still attracted praise from the competitors.

John Stone, who won the rally at the wheel of

his Metro 6R4 with co-driver Lee Carter said: "They were quite clever in the way they organised the stages to keep you on your toes. Normally, on single-venue rallies, they run it in one direction in the morning, and then alter it around in the afternoon. Here, they ran two stages in one direction before switching it around. The stages in the dark were excellent, and were quite an added bonus."

"The facilities are fantastic in rallying terms. Usually you're putting up with all sorts things like bad service areas, but Rockingham was just fantastic."

The rally also attracted a huge number of spectators, tempted by the unique view from the Rockingham building. After originally planning to run the event behind closed doors, spectator numbers outstripped predictions.

Circuit spokesman Jeff Carter said: "Every bit of the venue was used, including the track, pitlane, access tunnels and car parks in both directions. We are absolutely delighted to have doubled our crowd estimate with everyone very happy. There was positive feedback from visitors and competitors alike. We would love to do it again."

HOGAN FIRSTAIR RUN

IRISH YOUNG racing driver of the year finalist Patrick Hogan tested for Team Firststair last week, as he evaluates teams for his attack on next year's UK Formula Renault Championship.

The 20-year-old completed a full day with the outfit last Thursday (December 9), but is also in discussion with a number of leading teams, including his 2004 team Manor Motorsport and championship-winning team Fortec Motorsport.

Hogan said: "I absolutely have to win the championship next

season, and Firststair is certainly a possibility. The budget is going well, although there are always issues, but I've got a lot of thinking to do. I've had quite a few sleepless nights, I can tell you."

Firststair boss Ian Barnwell is keen to sign Hogan, because 2004's lead driver Sean McIntosh is unlikely to return to the outfit for his second season in the championship.

Barnwell said: "I met with Patrick last week and offered him a test. We are seeking a team leader, and he would be ideal."



Hogan ran with Team Firststair at Donington Park last week

MICK WALKER

CLIO CUP EXTENDED

THE CURRENT-specification Renault Clio Cup car has had its competitive life span extended by a year to the end of the 2006 season.

The Clio 182 was originally expected to be superseded by the next-generation example of the French hatchback for the start of 2006. However, teams are now expected to take delivery of the new Clios in May 2006, giving them sufficient time for testing and development before racing them in the relaunched Clio Cup the following season.

Renault UK Motorsport Manager Tim Jackson said: "Being able to confirm the situation before the New Year means our teams can plan well in advance of 2007, when the new model will be with us in the UK."

BMW CO-OP FORMED

A NEW co-operative aimed at helping youngsters make the transition from karts to Formula BMW is being fronted by former single-seater racer Roger Orgee.

"The Racing Partnership has evolved through the help of a group of parents of promising drivers, who need to get the most from their budgets," said Orgee, whose Omegaland equipe team contested F3000 and this year's inaugural BMW GB championship.

"By owning their car and paying for insurance, entries, engine

rebuids and spares, drivers have more control over their equipment and have a tangible tax-efficient asset to realise at the end of the season."

TRP will offer management, preparation, transport and logistical support, with things like tyres. "We've calculated that typical budgets quoted by traditionally-operated teams can be trimmed by a third," said Orgee.

Bristol-based TRP will unveil its first two drivers at Autosport International next month.

KENT RACES ADDED

THE BRSCC has added two stand-alone King of Kents races on next year's calendar, increasing the number of stand-alones to five.

The club hopes to increase the national appeal of the series by reducing the number of regional races that can count towards the total score. Competitors can now count a maximum of six regional

races, two less than this season.

The races will be staged at Silverstone Grand Prix, Mallory Park, Oulton Park Fosters and then two meetings at Brands Hatch, culminating in the Formula Ford Festival on October 23.

Lydden is off the BRSCC's calendar and the club was unable to secure a date at Thruxton.

FRENAULT BARC SHAPES UP

PRO TEAMS IN BARC SERIES

THE FORMULA Renault BARC Championship, which will admit the latest-specification one-make racers for the first time next year, has already attracted a number of professional teams.

Five organisations with experience of the UK Formula Renault Championship in 2004 have signed up, including frontrunning outfit Eurotek Motorsport. They are set to be joined by Falcon Motorsport, Welch Motorsport and Scorpio Motorsport.

Hill Speed boss Richard Ollerenshaw said: "It makes sense to run cars in both championships because Renault has made sure

that the dates don't clash. It's a good way for a team like ours to get some drivers out there who want to prepare to move into the TOCA championship in future.

Team Griffin Racing is also poised to run two cars on its first foray into single-seater racing (see separate story below), while driver/owner Martin Bloss will be combining his duties on the organisational side of the championship with running in the Club class for pre-one-make cars.

● Next season's Formula Renault UK Championship dates have been modified. The Brands Hatch Indy meeting will now take place on June 4/5, with Croft switched to July 16/17.

GRIFFIN IN SINGLE-SEATER EXPANSION

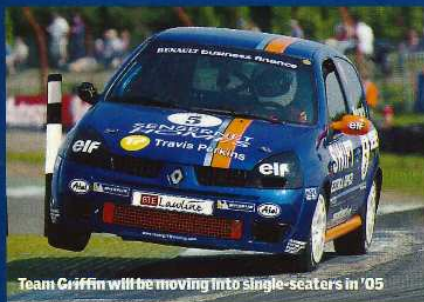
RENAULT CLIO outfit Team Griffin Racing will move into single-seaters next season in the revamped Formula Renault BARC Championship ahead of a possible move into the main championship in 2006.

Griffin has secured one of Team JVA's cars, and is seeking drivers for the BARC series.

Team boss Julian Griffin said: "We want to do a year in BARC

and then step up to TOCA. It will be a good way to break in. The rounds don't clash so we can use established TOCA engineers to help us."

Griffin has also taken delivery of an ex-FIA GT Porsche 911 GT3-RS to run alongside its Chrysler Viper in the British GT Championship. In addition, the team will also run in Britcar and the Volkswagen Racing Cup.



Team Griffin will be moving into single-seaters in '05

MICK WALKER



ONE TO WATCH
DANIEL SERRA



THIRD PLACE at last weekend's Brazilian Formula Renault finale was enough to secure the title for Daniel Serra—and Chico Serra's son will soon be heading for European shores.

The 20-year-old gets a free season in Italian Formula Renault for winning the title, but he hopes he'll be able to find the cash to come to England instead. "My dream," he says, "is to race in the English series next year. I'd love to go the way my father did 25 years ago. He thinks the British races are the ones that matter."

Serra is a veteran of 31 Renault races, having graduated from karts in mid-2002. He started off with newcomers Medina before switching to Bassani Racing last year. He's had cash problems, and it took until this year to get his first win. Success at Londrina was the first of three victories—he also took double glory at Rio.



HUMBLE PYE

MARCUS PYE

"GREGORS OVER, IT'S 'NOT THE AUTOSPORT AWARDS' TIME AGAIN"

THE AUTOSPORT AWARDS marks the end of the domestic season in my book, and so with 'the Gregors' (in deference to the magazine's founding father Mr Gregor Grant) over, it's 'Not the Autosport Awards' time again. My seventh annual list of winners is drawn from the sport's nursery slopes and fringes in 2004.

Top result: Tim Bridgman. Beat big-budget 'name' teams with 'step-dad and lad' outfit (engineered by ex-Formula 4 racer Allan Rennie) to land the inaugural Formula BMW GB. Cash-strapped Luke Stevens's Caterham R400 victory was a great effort, too. Shame a needless MSA tribunal case swallowed more funds. His ability merits a top GT ride.

Best racing: The AVO Ginetta championship. Full grids and sensational battling, with ex-Touring Car racer Tom Ferrier and Formula 3 racer Rob Austin as benchmarks. Super-consistent Stewart Linn mixed it and deserved the crown. The 750 Motor Club's Locosts ran them close at the grass roots, with Brian Mitcham (64) emerging as champ.

Finds: Making his Ginetta debut, Eddy Morris (16) and Historic sportscar standout Oliver Bryant (19) both aspire to Le Mans 24 Hours drives via GTs. Meanwhile, Formula Jedi 600 star Jodie Hemming (19), unbeaten in 15 starts, jumps into a EuroBOSS Jordan for 2005!

Best value: It's those Ginettas again. Where else can you race at British F3/GT meetings, and get on TV, so cheaply? I did three rounds in the Dunlop car, and am hooked. A top team has offered me a £25k deal for 2005, and I'm working on it. We'll have to see what Chrimbo brings...

Best atmosphere: Peter Auto's second Le Mans Classic—a mammoth historic showpiece with 500 entries and three races per car era over 24 hours—was a logistical *cauchemard*, but the whole feel of the event was sensational.

Club spirit: The 750MC invariably brings out the best in competitors. Paddock ambience at Historic Sports Car Club meetings has blossomed, giving members a real sense of camaraderie.

One to watch: The Britcar initiative is growing fast, with Britsports enduros in support. Their 'Willhire' 24-hours at Silverstone will be a landmark.

Unmissable in 2005:

Any Castle Combe meeting for top family entertainment. Jewel in the crown of Shelsley Walsh hillclimb's 100th anniversary is the centenary celebration on August 21. The Brighton Speed Trials (September 10) is 100 years old too, a week before Goodwood's magnificent race meeting. And get to Santa Pod for the ultra-professional FIA European Drag Racing championships.

Award of Merit: BRDC assistant secretary James Beckett, for masterminding Silverstone's Historic meeting in July, and the fifth Walter Hayes Trophy race, which pulled 86 cars—the season's biggest FF1600 entry. A club racing aficionado, I've lost count of the events I saw James and brother Colin at during the year. Now that's dedication.



CLUB ROUND-UP

MURRAY PLANS NEWLY-CROWNED Motorsport Ireland Young Racing Driver of the Year Eoin Murray has set his sights on the European Alfa Romeo 147 Challenge title.

The former Renault Clio race winner switched to European competition in the one-make championship, finishing fourth in the points, and already has several offers on the table for 2004.

Murray said: "I had a very good first season and I'm looking to do better than this in 2005. This award means so much to me and is a boost to my confidence."

FOSTER FRANCE FORMER FORMULA Ford Festival champion Joey Foster is set for a run-out with leading French Formula Renault outfit Tech 1 later this month.

Although Foster is likely to race in British Formula 3 next season, Tech 1, which finished eighth in the championship last year with Julien Falcani Joulain, is an option for 2005. Foster said: "I really don't want to go down this route because it'll put me a bit off the map; Formula 3 is my aim. But anything's possible."

HTML SEAT PLAN SCSA RACING (formerly Days of Thunder) frontrunning outfit Team HTML is considering a return to saloon cars by racing in the SEAT Cupra next season. The SEAT Cupras would be run alongside a planned return to SCSA.

Team boss Jonathan Haynes said: "We're looking at running a couple of SEATs, but we've not bought the cars yet. The drivers will buy them and we'll run them alongside SCSA. We did look at doing something in touring cars, but we've walked away from that now."

Tim Bridgman caps a successful year by scooping a 'Not the Autosport Award'



BLOOMSBURY

BRIEFS

OSRC RULE CHANGE
The Open Sports Racing Cup (formerly National Supersports) has modified its class rules to allow 1300cc Radicals, Global Lights and other bike-engined cars for next season. The capacity ceiling for Class D has been reduced from 1500cc to 1300cc.

MSV TEST SCHEME
MotorSport Vision, which owns and operates Brands Hatch, Oulton Park, Snetterton and Cadwell Park, has become the first circuit group to offer online test booking through its website, www.motorsportvision.co.uk

ROBERTS RUN
Mike Roberts gave his ex-Tracsport Lola B2K/40 its first serious run-out at Brands Hatch last Friday. He is aiming to run the car in Britsports events.



It's a bit slower than what he's used to, but it's a step up in prestige for Shanly, who tested the Porsche at Donington

JOHN COLLEY

SHANLY'S PORSCHE PLAN

DOUBLE NATIONAL Supersports champion Stephen Shanly is aiming to make a switch into the Porsche Carrera Cup GB next season. The 28-year-old tested for reigning champion team Red Line Racing at Donington Park last week. Although any deal will be dependent on funding, Shanly believes that the time is right to make his move to a higher level after making his return to racing in Supersports two years ago. Shanly said: "People keep telling me that I've done everything I can in Supersports and need to move up to something more professional."

"Long-term the plan is to get to the Le Mans 24 Hours and this is a step towards doing that. I want to enjoy whatever I am racing and the Porsche was certainly interesting to drive. The team was really professional and Red Line are certainly a good option if I do go for the Carrera Cup next year. Should his plans to make the switch into Porsches fail, Shanly is likely to defend his Supersports crown with Chiron. Shanly said: "Supersports is my fall-back option and it's a very good one because I've built up a good relationship with the guys there. The ideal

thing would be to go to Le Mans with Chiron at some point in the future. ● Frontrunning Porsche Carrera Cup GB team RPM will expand into the Australian championship next season. The team ran New Zealander James Cressey, who competed in the Australian series this season, in the ex-Tim Harvey car at Donington last week. The car is about to be shipped Down Under. RPM boss Robin Mortimer said: "James's father asked us to give him a run here before shipping the car out. We're going to expand as a team and run in Australia as well as the UK."



Mike Roberts

JAMAICA WIN
Richie Berrie and Neil Baugh won the Rally of Jamaica at the wheel of their recently-acquired Subaru Impreza WRX. The pair beat Gary Gregg and Hugh Hutchinson's Ford Focus WRC by 51 seconds.

REES'S CAR SWITCH
Production class British Rally champ Dorian Rees has opted to use an Impreza WRC, rather than his Group N version, for next February's Wydean Forest Rally.



Dorian Rees

GLORY FOR PETCH
Steve Petch and co-driver John Richardson took their Hyundai Accent WRC to victory on last Sunday's Malton Forest Stages Rally. John Banister's Subaru Impreza finished in second.

CMW CELEBRATED
Autosport rally photographer Chris Miles-Williams was presented with the Dennis Hopwood Award, which recognises contribution to media activity, at last Saturday's Kumho National Rally Championship awards.

MARCUS PYE'S CLUB LEGENDS

35: MARTINI TT SPECIAL

FRENCH firm Martini is rooted in the swing-axled hillclimb special which Renato 'Tico' Martini constructed on Jersey. Weighing 365lb and with a 54-inch wheelbase, it was powered by a 650cc twin-cylinder Triumph Tiger motorcycle engine driving via a Norton gearbox. It scored a debut win at a 1962 Bouley Bay clubbie, but by July's RAC National round the

Armstrong/Lambretta hybrid coilover damping had replaced its rubber block springing. Martini thrashed allcomers as well as David Boshier-Jones's course record. Although Tico's win was contested (due to his Italian nationality), it still stood. To prove a point he entered the next round at Great Auclum. He won, beating champion-elect Arthur Owen with a record. Neither Martini nor the car reappeared, but still came ninth in the table. Martini built his first cars while working for the Winfield school at Magny-Cours in 1968. Helped by stars like Jacques Laffite, René Arnoux and Alain Prost, his marque dominated France's Renault formulas and F3 in the '70s. European F2 titles went to Martini thanks to Laffite and Arnoux, but the F1 MK23 of 1978 was outmoded. Martini, who builds F3 Ligiers today, still owns it.



USF ARCHIVE

HORSLEY GIVEN TITLE

ADRIAN Horsley has been confirmed as the BRDA Stock Hatch Rallycross champ after the ECU on his Citroën Saxo was declared legal. Horsley won eight of the 10 rounds this year before the eligibility of his ECU was referred to the MSA and his championship crown declared provisional. "I knew the car was right and I'm glad to have that confirmed now," said Horsley. "The protest and rumours about it have taken the edge off the season for me."

The MSA's National Court rejected the protest, saying: "We are not satisfied on the balance of probabilities that the ECU fitted to the Saxo VTR was incorrect." ● The BRDA has appointed John Horton to take over as chairman from Mike Dresser, who has decided to stand down after spending five years in the job. "I've taken things as far as I am able to at the moment," said Dresser. "We've achieved a lot in the last five years."



Horsley on his way to the BRDA Stock Hatch Rallycross crown

IAN WATTS/DRAGON

BEST OF 2004

NATIONAL YEAR

SEASON ROUND-UP There were plenty of madcap moments in this year's national ra



JEFF FOXHAWK/LAT

CAR IN PICTURES

ional racing scene – and we're not just talking about our own Edd Straw's race debut...



BRANDS HATCH BRITCAR NIGHT FEVER

European Endurance Racing Club driving force James Tucker is never short of ideas, and his revival of night racing in this country produced one of the events of the year. Despite being run in November, the Brands Hatch Britcar night race had a touch of the magic of Le Mans in the air.

LEGENDS ROCK LEGENDS

Legends cars may have their roots in short ovals, but they make one hell of a sight at Rockingham as a gaggle of the curious machines blaze around Turn 1 on the first lap of their races. Once again in 2004, Legends provided some of the most dramatic racing in the UK.

OLIVER READ



RICK WALKER

MAX SAMUEL-CAMPS PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM

Different car, but Grand Prix Masters racer Max Samuel-Camps takes a leaf out of contemporary driver Jody Scheckter's Silverstone exploits in the WolfWR1, campaigned by the South African in Formula 1 in 1977.

ANTHONY WILLS FFORD SUPPORT ROLL

Classic Formula Ford racer Wills performed a dramatic exit from the lead of the Formula Ford Festival support race following contact with David Penlington. Wills emerged unscathed from a multiple roll, which is more than could be said for his wrecked Royale RP2.



BARRY ANDERSON

SNAPSHOT

EDD STRAW



STEVE JONES

THERE ARE some spectacles in any sport that transcend the boundary between the interested and the apathetic. I would defy even the least interested watcher of motorsport not to get at least a little caught up in the moment come the race start. Like a great goal or a dramatic reflex catch on the cricket field, no-one can fail to be excited by a race start.

At Mallory Park on March 14th I was anticipating more startline fireworks than usual. Rather than my familiar perch trackside, I occupied a puddle in 17th place on the grid and was about to make my long-awaited racing debut (at least by me!) in my new and proudest possession — a Stock Hatch Ford Fiesta XR2.

The race itself went pretty well, as the startline shunt avoided me and I was able to recover from dropping to 26th at the start to finish 17th. The result wasn't brilliant, but like so many before me, even to see my name on an official timing sheet was something special. Competing on the circuits had long been a dream of mine, but at a professional level it offers a fantastic insight not just into the skills of racing, but also the dedication required to run a racing car in your spare time.

So, my fellow competitors, not to mention those indefatigable souls who work tirelessly out of the limelight at the circuits, stages and speed venues in these islands, I salute you for making British national motorsport the most endlessly engrossing and diverse racing scene at any level anywhere in the world.



OLIVER READ

**BARRY WEBB
THROUGH INFINITY!**

Barry Webb (2) may have won the Powertrain Clubmans' Cup, but Barry Mumm found an interesting way to scupper both drivers' chances with this interesting attempt to bore through his rival at Pembrey in September.

**ANDY DEMETRIOU
NOT VERY HANDY ANDY**

Caterham racing is always close, but sometimes things get that bit too close... R400 racer Andy Demetriou (right) had his licence endorsed after colliding with Will Mitcham at Silverstone.



JACOB EBREY



**ALEX DZIURZYNSKI
AROUND OF GOLF**

Alex Dziurzynski enjoyed better moments in his Mark II VW Golf during this year's Volkswagen Racing Cup than this roll in the Brands Hatch season finale.



JACOB ERIC WYLLAT



WITOLDA MARISZKOWSKA

**NEIL DORAN
CLARKE ENCOUNTER**

Formula Ford racer Neil Doran became another of Daniel Clarke's victims in the championship's Donington Park season-opener.

**MICHAEL VERGERS
ROLLING ROCK**

Dutchman Michael Vergers may not have won the Days of Thunder title, but he became the undisputed holder of the 'biggest-ever crash' award at Rockingham when he executed six rolls on the run down from Turn 3.



JAMES TERRY/JAKOB EBBERVILAT

SNAPSHOT

MARCUS PYE



JIM HODGKIN

NIGHT RACING stands out in my memory—another blend of events for cars old and new—at July's Le Mans Classic, September's Spa Six Hours and November's Britcar finale on Brands Hatch's Grand Prix circuit.

La Sarthe has always been magical under cover of darkness, with the hum of engines through the forest omnipresent on the warm breeze. But my impressions of Peter Auto's second tour de force—biopics spanning the races of the '30s to the '70s in rotation over 24 hours—were heightened by the delightful company of my five-year-old daughter Fionnuala on a 'great French adventure'.

Spa meant a different type of endurance, for I commented for 14 hours in one stint, through to the big race's climax in the early hours of Sunday. Then I returned for a full day from 8.30am! Brands was a shorter buzz, but the quality of the racing—and calibre of driving in damp, freezing conditions—augurs well for the 'Willhire' 24 Hours' return at Silverstone next September.

My own racing was a fascinating variety pack, full of great flavours: Chevron, Cooper, Elva, Ginetta, Jade, Ralt and Talbot. The surprise of the decade, let alone the year, was the Dunlop Ginetta G20 in which racing was epic. But while Jade's Trackstar carried me round Silverstone's National circuit in a personal best of 56.5 seconds, John Ruston's huge 1934 Talbot 105—with bags of power, sensational pre-selector gearbox, fine handling and no brakes—was a more mentally demanding blast in July's BRDC 500 retro.

OLIVER REID

**ROB AUSTIN
FLYING MACHINE**

Rob Austin takes the aerial route at Thruxton's Club Chicane to pass Tom Ferrier on the last lap and win the Ginetta race. "I kept my foot in and hoped for the best," said Austin of one of the most audacious moves of the season.

**DENNIS AUTIER
DENNIS AND THE MENACE**

BARC Formula Renault racer Dennis Autier gets up close and personal with the Druids gravel trap at Brands Hatch after catapulting himself off at the hairpin.



JIM HODGKIN



GARY HAWKINS



JAKOB EBREY

**GARY HAWKINS
IN THE RIGHT PLACE...**

Here's some proof that Autosport's photographers always get close to the action! When Joey Foster and Mike Edgar got together in the Kent Formula Ford Festival (above) intrepid Brands Hatch snapper Gary Hawkins was there to capture the moment (right).



JAKOB EBREY

**JUAN BARAZI
A CLOSE-RUN THING**



Juan Barazi's immaculately-prepared Porsche 917K dominated the Classic Endurance Racing Championship, but he only beat Chris McAllister's Gulf Mirage M6 by 0.170 seconds at Spa-Francorchamps in September.



**ROB JENKINSON
'I WAS ROBBED!'**

Formula Palmer Audi title challenger Rob Jenkinson was left looking puzzled after losing the crown to Jonathan Kennard following a mix-up over the race length. Thinking he had won the eight-lap event, Jenkinson lifted over the line and dropped to third only to find he was on the real last lap.

**JAUSSAUD v BARTH
RELIVING THE GLORY DAYS**

Jean-Pierre Jaussaud's Renault leads Jürgen Barth's Porsche as the 1978 and '77 Le Mans 24 Hours winners recreate their glory days at July's Le Mans Classic. Nigh on 400 cars headed to La Sarthe for one of the historic events of the year.

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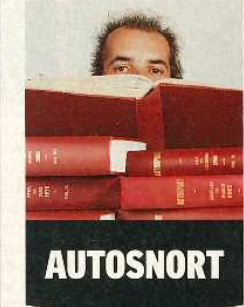
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 Sainz at McLaren (Apr 22)
 Teamer at 200 (May 13)
 Sainz's Nordschleife record (May 13 - JN)
 Sainz in F1 to the WRC (Jun 24 - DE)
 Sainz Kristensen (Jun 24 - GW)
 In focus - Williams FW26

Tyres (Jun 24 - DE)
 Argentina (Jul 15 - DE)
 Finland (Aug 5 - DE)
 Germany (Aug 19 - JH)
 Japan (Sep 2 - JH)
 Italy (Sep 30 - DE)
 Corsica (Oct 14 - DE)
 Catalunya (Oct 28 - DE)
 Australia (Nov 11 - DE)
World Rally reports
 Monte Carlo (Jan 29 - DE)
 Sweden (Feb 12 - DE)
 Mexico (Jul 8 - DM)
 New Zealand (Apr 22 - DE)
 Cyprus (May 20 - DE)
 Acropolis (Jun 10 - DE)
 Turkey (Jul 1 - DE)
 Argentina (Oct 28 - DE)
 Finland (Aug 12 - DE)
 Germany (Aug 26 - JH)
 Japan (Sep 9 - JH)
 Italy (Oct 7 - DE)
 Corsica (Oct 21 - DE)
 Catalunya (Nov 4 - DE)
 Australia (Nov 18 - DE)

Key
 RA - Richard Asher
 JA - James Atwood
 GB - Gillian Bell
 MB - Mary Biggioni
 BB - Ben Blake
 AB - Andy Bothwell
 PB - Phil Branagan
 HB - Helen Brown
 CB - Charles Bradley
 PB - Phil Branagan
 MC - Mike Campbell
 AC - Adam Cooper
 TD - Tony Dodgins
 DE - David Evans
 GF - Glenn Freeman
 CG - Colin Goodwin
 AH - Andy Hallberg
 JHA - Jeremy Hart
 JH - Jim Holder
 HHF - Henry Hope-Frost
 KH - Keith Howard
 MH - Mark Hughes
 JI - Jonathan Ingram
 GK - Gordon Kirby
 GKU - Gerhard Kuntzschik
 DM - David Malsher
 JM - John McIlroy
 MM - Matthew Marsh
 RM - Robin Miller
 JN - Jonathan Noble
 JO - John Oreovicz
 JOL - Jeff Olson
 BP - Brian Patterson
 AP - Anthony Peacock
 DP - David Phillips
 NP - Nick Phillips
 GP - Giorgio Piola
 MP - Marcus Pye
 PR - Paul Rayner
 RR - Robert Reid
 NR - Nigel Roebuck
 AR - Anthony Rowlinson
 MS - Marcus Simmons
 DS - Damien Smith
 SS - Simon Strang
 ES - Edd Straw
 AVDB - Andrew van de Burgt
 LV - Luis Vasconcelos
 GW - Gary Watkins
 JW - John Windfield
 TW - Tim Whittington

BRITISH RALLYCROSS GP 1988

It was glory for Gollop and his flame-belching MG Metro 6R4, much to the delight of the appreciative Brands Hatch crowd



PEE ONE: A GUIDE TO URINATING IN RACING CARS

WE'VE ALL heard the stories about Nelson Piquet weeing in his car during his F1 days. And there's apparently a Palmer Audi driver at the moment with an unusually small bladder. But for our money the best 'caught short' story concerns Jason Plato from the 2000 Bathurst 1000, when he shared a Holden Commodore with Yvan Muller.

We'll let the man himself take up the story: "It's a long race at Bathurst and the team are always radioing you to have a drink. I had 40 minutes left in a double-stint and was drinking and drinking, but then we had a safety car.

"When you slow down you lose concentration and it was on my mind that I needed a wee. I thought 'I can hold on' but just couldn't. In the end I thought it would be okay—it's just water—and that it would dry out. But it was the longest wee I ever had in my life, and they hadn't put a hole in the bottom of the seat! And then they decided to call me in that lap for a tactical stop. Oh my God no! I'd started weeing on the Mountain, and I was still going on Conrod Straight...

"As I jumped out there was a massive puddle in the seat. I did Yvan's belts for him and the last thing was to plug the aerial in. By then it was beginning to seep through and I had tears in my eyes from giggling. I saw a look in his eyes and slammed the door! Then I plugged myself into the radio in the garage to hear him shout, 'You dirty English bastard—you've pissed in ze car!'

"It wasn't done in malice, but after the breakdown in our working relationship, it's a memory I'll savour. It couldn't happen to a nicer bloke!"



Plato: a funny wee tale

WILL GOLLOP became the seventh different winner of the prestigious Brands Hatch British Rallycross Grand Prix in as many years. The Englishman powered his flame-belching MG Metro 6R4 to victory in the A Final ahead of the Ford RS200Es of fellow Brit Mark Rennison and 'Mr Rallycross', Norwegian Martin Schanche.

The build-up to the main event had not been plagued by the foul weather of recent years. This time, the races ran largely without incident, giving the typically large number of rallycross spectators a full programme of excellent action.

The C Final was won by British rallycross veteran Trevor Hopkins in the Ford RS200, the brutal machine finding gameful employment in this discipline after its World Rally demise. 'Hoppy' was chased hard by the

turbocharged Escort of Vidar Sauthon.

The B final gave the fearsome Audi Sport Quattro of Olle Amesson a three-second victory over the Ford Escorts of Orjan Wahlund and Kjetil Bolneset.

It was almost dark when the A Finalists came to the grid, led by polesitter Schanche. Gollop sat alongside, with the improved BMW M3 of Arild Martinsen joining them.

It was Martinsen who exploded off the line first, only to be outragged by Schanche and Gollop. A jump-start from Rob Gibson meant a re-start. Schanche got in front again, with Gollop moving ahead of a hugely sideways Martinsen halfway round the first lap.

Schanche held on to the lead until turbo problems blighted his challenge. The roar from the crowd as Gollop cruised to his first victory summed it up perfectly. *Autosport, December 15 1988*



RARE VIEW

1972 BRANDS HATCH

On the racing line – Emerson Fittipaldi leads Carlos Reutemann in a Rothmans 50,000 support race



BEFORE THEY WERE FAMOUS ANTHONY REID

IT'S Matt Neal's best mate at the 1985 launch of the Madgwick Motorsport Saab F3 team. "The lack of engine performance highlighted the excellence of my Reynard chassis," etc.

ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER 16

AJ Allmendinger (b 1981)
Jamie Campbell-Walter (b 1972)
Colin Chapman (d 1982)

DECEMBER 17

Ryan Hunter-Reay (b 1980)
Paul Tracy (b 1968)

DECEMBER 18

John Booth (b 1954)
Christophe Tinseau (b 1969)

DECEMBER 19

Jeff Allam (b 1954)

Onofré Marimón (b 1923,

d Jul 31 1954)

DECEMBER 20

Ben Edwards (b 1965)
Alister McRae (b 1970)
Matthew Neal (b 1966)
Karl Wendlinger (b 1968)

DECEMBER 21

Lorenzo Bandini (b 1935)

DECEMBER 22

'Pierre Levegh' (b 1905,
d Jun 11 1955)

DECEMBER 23

Michele Alboreto (b 1956
d Apr 25 2001)
'B Bira' (d 1985)
Bertrand Gachot (b 1962)

DECEMBER 24

Howden Ganley (b 1941)

DECEMBER 25

Giancarlo Baghetti (b 1934,
d Nov 27 1995)
Wilson Fittipaldi (b 1943)

DECEMBER 26

Walter Hayes (d 2000)

Adrian Newey (b 1958)

DECEMBER 27

'Jules' Boullion (b 1969)
Hans Stuck Sr (b 1900,
d Feb 8 1978)

DECEMBER 28

Matt Davies (b 1976)

DECEMBER 29

Andrea Aghini (b 1963)
Helmut Kelleners (b 1938)
Allan McNish (b 1969)

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