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CONTENTS

FEBRUARY 2021

SECTOR 1

4 **IGNITION**
Accentuating the positives in 2021

6 **PARADES**
This month's best F1 images

14 **F1 INSIDER**
Sergio Pérez to Red Bull; 2021 calendar changes

20 **F1 ANALYST**
Ben Edwards on new faces behind the microphones

22 **UNDER THE HOOD**
Pat Symonds on why crash inquiries matter

SECTOR 3

84 **SUBSCRIPTIONS**
Three issues of *GP Racing* for £3

102 **REPORT**
From Abu Dhabi, the final race of the 2020 season

104 **PRODUCTS AND DOCUMENTARIES**
Reviews of the best F1 gear and a new F1 documentary

106 **FLAT CHAT**
Stuart Codling on Cyril Abiteboul's exit from Renault





30
SURVIVING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, BUT AT WHAT COST?





40
ONLY THE BEST: WHO ARE F1'S SUPERSTARS?





50
OCON'S BUMPY RIDE BACK INTO THE BIG TIME





54
FERRARI: A LONG ROAD BACK OR A QUICK FIX?

SECTOR 2

30 **COST OF COVID**
What effect has the coronavirus pandemic had on F1, its people and its financial health?

40 **BEST OF THE BEST**
We analyse what exactly it is that makes certain Formula 1 drivers stand out from the crowd

50 **ESTEBAN OCON**
How he coped on his F1 return, plus the challenge to come

54 **MENDING MARANELLO**
The challenges facing Ferrari as it plans a route back to the top

62 **JOHN HOGAN**
A tribute to the hugely respected Formula 1 sponsorship guru

65 ***GP RACING* AWARDS**
Your votes are in and here we reveal the nine winners

76 **NIGEL ROEBUCK'S HEROES**
The inspirational, enigmatic and hugely talented Pedro Rodríguez

78 **NOW *THAT* WAS A CAR**
Built in secret, the 001 was the precursor to Tyrrell title success

86 **PICTURES OF THE YEAR**
A selection of 2020's best F1 images from our photographers

F1 PRO

27 **STRAIGHT TALK**
Mark Gallagher on F1 contract negotiation headaches

28 **McLAREN'S NEW INVESTORS**
Who are they and what is the effect on McLaren's finances?

IGNITION

FEBRUARY 2021



Ben Anderson

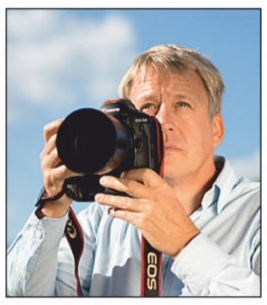
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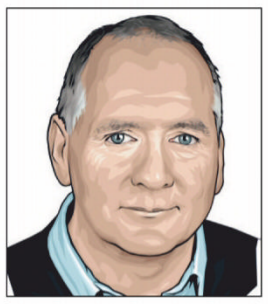
ANDREW BENSON

The tricky question of what exactly makes the best F1 drivers stand out gets the attention of BBC Sport's chief F1 writer this month (p40)



STEVEN TEE

Steve is the man in charge of LAT's intrepid snappers and his and his team's best images from 2020 can be found on pages 86 to 99



MARK GALLAGHER

Mark tries to explain the financial implications of the COVID-19-ravaged 2020 season and how F1 and the teams have coped with them (p30)



ROBERTO CHINCHERO

Roberto analyses what Ferrari got wrong in 2020 and the measures the Scuderia is taking fix those issues for the upcoming season (p54)

Keeping the show on the road

The 2021 Australian and Chinese Grands Prix had recently been postponed as this issue of *GP Racing* closed for press. With everything else going on amid this latest wave of the global coronavirus pandemic, it's easy to feel like history is simply repeating itself and we're running nowhere fast – like hamsters on a wheel.

But I want to forgo the negativity and focus on reasons for F1 fans to feel cheerful heading into 2021. Firstly, we know F1 has a credible protocol for keeping its show on the road. As our business expert Mark Gallagher explains (page 30), F1 has gone to extraordinary lengths to mitigate the threat COVID-19 poses to its operations.

Coronavirus has taken a severe toll, and whether F1 can withstand mutations and variants remains to be seen, but it does have a credible basis. When so many other businesses are existentially threatened, we should all be thankful F1 has found some way through the mire. As mass vaccination occurs and the virus (hopefully) recedes, more race promoters can begin to welcome back fans, which in turn should help return F1 to normality.

As we begin to look towards the new season, which will now start slightly later than planned and in Bahrain rather than Melbourne, there are several exciting aspects to anticipate. Will tweaks to the aerodynamics and tyres designed to slow the cars, plus a new budget cap, have a disproportionately negative effect on Mercedes and bring Sir Lewis Hamilton (presuming he signs a new contract) back towards the chasing pack? Will the token system, plus a new Honda engine, carry Red Bull over the line? And what of Sergio Pérez taking the seat vacated by DTM-bound Alex Albon (see page 14)?

We hope too that Ferrari comes back into the mix in 2021. There has been much recent reorganisation behind the scenes at Maranello (what's new?), but it seems there is a clear plan (page 54) to recalibrate the Scuderia after its worst season since 1980.

Then there's Sebastian Vettel and Aston Martin, and Fernando Alonso and the rebranded Alpine/ Renault team. Unlike Alonso, Vettel is no longer thought of as truly elite by F1's leading teams (see page 40), but his vast experience could prove invaluable to the ambitions of 'Project Stroll'. Vettel is coming off a rocky season personally, but it's been tough for the teams too. Several gratefully grasped fresh investment amid bleak economic conditions in order to keep the wheels turning.

These are difficult times for everyone, even the best of us. This issue marks the end of our first year as *GP Racing*; 300 issues in total for the magazine founded as *F1 Racing*. Next month we turn 25. It's not been an easy road for us either, but we're still here and still fighting. Thank you for sticking with us. Let's look forward to a brighter future.

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F1 PARADE
motorsport IMAGES

Before Checo checks out

We're always on the hunt for new angles on established venues and sometimes ideas just come up through casual conversations. In this case, Sergio Pérez's manager was telling me what a great view he had from his hotel room.

While still obeying the biosphere protocols I was able to shoot from his balcony, with a variable-density drop-in ND (neutral density) filter in the adaptor I use to fit my older EF lens onto Canon's new R5 mirrorless camera body. With this you reduce the amount of light hitting the sensor, enabling you to run a slower shutter speed and achieve motion blur, even on a wide-angle lens.



Photographer
Glenn Dunbar

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 3.39pm, Saturday 12 December 2020

Details Canon EOS R5 12-24mm lens, 1/4 @ F7.1


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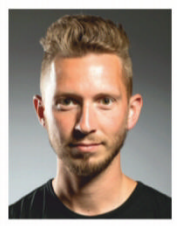


F1 PARADE
motorsport IMAGES

When Schu takes a view

Naturally there was huge excitement surrounding the announcement of Mick Schumacher's graduation to Formula 1 with Haas. As the team's photographer I was responsible for all the official images – including those used for the on-screen graphics during his FP1 appearance in Abu Dhabi – but I also wanted to try something more creative.

I set up this shot in the team's catering area and the chef acted as Mick's stand-in so I could get the exposure right in advance. When Mick arrived we got it done within a minute – drivers don't like to faff about with pictures when they're busy, so it pays to leave them with a good impression.



Photographer
Andy Hone

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 10.33am, Wednesday 9 December 2020

Details Leica Q2
28mm lens, 1/3200 @ F1.7

F1 PARADE

motorsport IMAGES

The beginning of the ending

This is one of those photo opportunities you just happen across – as McLaren's photographer I was hurrying along the pitlane to the garage, planning what needed to be done if the team finished third in the constructors' standings, when I passed this scene at Ferrari. The mechanics had formed a guard of honour to applaud Sebastian Vettel as he left the garage for the last time.

I'm not sure Ferrari did this for Kimi Räikkönen, Fernando Alonso or Felipe Massa, and I don't recall the team doing it for Michael Schumacher when he did his last grand prix in red – mind you, that race was a championship decider...



Photographer
Steven Tee

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 4.30pm, Sunday
13 December 2020

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII
24-105mm lens, 1/1000 @ F5

18+

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F1 PARADE
motorsport IMAGES

Smoking after the sunset

Motorsport Images always aims to have at least one photographer in this position at the end of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix because the drivers tend to light up their rear tyres and bring the season to a close on a smoky note.

It's a nice little spectacle, especially after a race that was a dead rubber so far as the top of the championship was concerned. The drivers know they won't have to run these cars again so they give it some welly (Valtteri Botas seemed to be particularly aggressive on the throttle, it must be said).

Timing is the important element to a shot like this – go too early and there's not enough smoke, wait too long and there's so much of it that you can't see the car.



Photographer
Glenn Dunbar

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
When 6.54pm, Sunday
13 December 2020

Details Canon EOS R5
100-500mm lens, 1/1000 @ F5.6

01 | **PÉREZ REPLACES ALBON**
Can Red Bull now challenge Mercedes for titles?

WILL PÉREZ BE RED BULL'S MISSING LINK?

01 **Red Bull now has the last two grand** prix winners of 2020 on its books, having hired Sergio Pérez to replace Alex Albon, who will instead race a Red Bull-backed Ferrari in the DTM. It will be the first time Red Bull Racing has looked outside its young driver programme for a new recruit since Mark Webber joined from Williams in 2007.

The likelihood is that Pérez represents a stopgap solution to Red Bull's problem of having a temporary shortage of home-grown talent it considers up to the job of partnering Max Verstappen. Even before the end of the 2020 season, Red Bull team principal Christian Horner wrote off the possibility of bringing Pierre Gasly back into the fold from AlphaTauri; Albon was given until the end of the year but then placed elsewhere; and the next in line on the Junior Team, Estonian Jüri Vips, only competed in a handful of races because COVID scuppered plans for him to contest the Japanese Super Formula championship. Vips has been placed with Hitech in F2 for 2021 and already has a super licence.

Gasly may yet rebuild bridges with the senior team but he is currently regarded as being too psychologically fragile for the role, having essentially 'lost the dressing room' during his Red Bull tenure. Word circulated that he became fixated upon seat and pedal configuration changes, believing these to be the source of his troubles. Albon showed flashes of promise but was eventually shown the door for the same reason Gasly was demoted to AlphaTauri in mid-2019: in order to challenge Mercedes properly, Red Bull needs two drivers at or near the front consistently. Gasly and Albon more often than not qualified well adrift of Verstappen, or slipped away from him on race pace, leaving a large gap which enabled Mercedes to checkmate Red Bull strategically, even on the days Verstappen was in contention on pure pace.

Some of the issues stem from recent Red Bull cars being difficult to drive – except for an individual of Verstappen's rare gifts. Red Bull pioneered the 'high rake' aerodynamic concept in Formula 1 over 10 years ago and has since pushed it to extremes. In theory it provides greater peak downforce because the greater volume available under the rear of the car enables the air there to accelerate faster if managed properly.

But rule changes brought in for 2019 made that management process more difficult by limiting the number of turning vanes permitted on the front wing. The problem was particularly marked in slow-speed corners. Red Bull sought to cure that in 2020 by adopting a much narrower



Albon (above) has been benched for 2021 and replaced by Sakhir GP race winner Pérez (right)



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; FIA POOL



PÉREZ IS NOW AMONG THE MOST PROFICIENT IN THE VITAL SKILL OF MANAGING PIRELLI'S DELICATE RUBBER, A PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTIC WHICH IS NOT LIKELY TO CHANGE THIS YEAR

nose on the RB16, thereby working the bargeboards harder, but this brought additional correlation problems because the turbulent wake of the front wheels is difficult to simulate. The result was a car which delivered higher peak downforce but was even trickier than before in lower-speed corners.

Red Bull threw resources at understanding and curing this problem before development curbs were introduced ahead of this season. It brought a whole new nose and wing concept to the RB16 at the Turkish GP, where it was raced by Verstappen, although the circumstances of that race (and an adjustment error by the mechanics) meant the revised package didn't show its full potential until the final triple-header.

The team is therefore far more bullish about its prospects of challenging Mercedes than it was in the early races of 2020. And, or course, it now has two grand prix winners in the garage rather than one.

It may be the best part of 10 years since Pérez was regarded as a coming man in F1 but, after the low point of his single season with McLaren in 2013, he has rebuilt his career and his reputation, ironing out the weak spots in his craft. He is now among the most proficient in the vital skill of managing Pirelli's delicate rubber, a performance characteristic which is not likely to change this year.

While it's unlikely that Pérez will offer a real challenge to Verstappen on or off the track, he is at least a known quantity and he brings a budget – useful since Red Bull has now lost Aston Martin's title sponsorship. As the team focuses its energies on the unknowns ahead – it especially needs to nail down its engine plans in order to proceed with a car design for the new 2022 technical rules – a safe pair of hands is what Red Bull needs right now. ▶

F1 STANDS FIRM ON REMAINING RACE DATES



02 **The commercial rights holder** has moved to quash reports that further races are at risk after it was forced to postpone the Australian and Chinese Grands Prix and rejig this year's calendar. Formula 1 issued an unequivocal denial in response to claims – believed initially to have been published by a Dutch website – that city-based races in Monaco, Azerbaijan and Canada faced imminent cancellation.

"We have set out the details of the revised 2021 calendar and there are no other changes," said an F1 spokesman. "The suggestion street races will not take place are completely wrong."

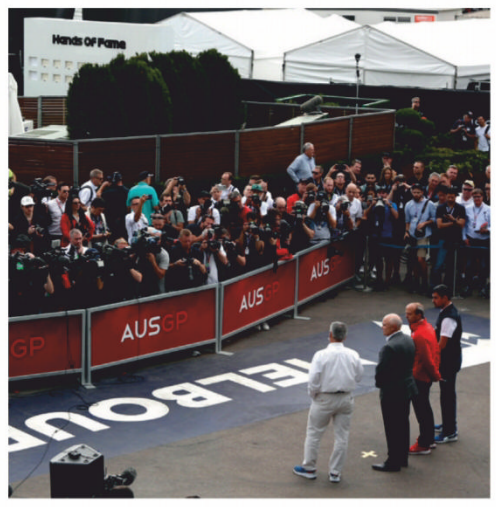
F1's revised calendar begins and ends a week later than originally planned, kicking off in Bahrain on 28 March and ending in Abu Dhabi on 12 December. There will be a single pre-season test in Bahrain on 12-14 March.

The Australian GP promoter sought and obtained a date change, from 21 March to 21 November, owing to travel restrictions relating to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The prudence of this was borne out within days of the announcement by the chaos surrounding the arrival of players hoping to participate in the Australian Open tennis tournament, also located in Melbourne. A number of positive tests on the charter flights to Australia arranged by the organisers led to 72 players being held in strict quarantine for 14 days.

China has yet to be granted a new slot after its promoter also sought a postponement. Its place in the revised 23-race calendar has been taken by Imola, which will host a second Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix on 18 April. The 'TBC' slot vacated by the Vietnamese GP has moved to 2 May and is likely to be taken by Portimão. While the back end of the calendar is heavily congested and offers no obvious place into which a Shanghai date could slot, except after the Singapore-Russia-Japan leg, doubts have emerged over the renamed São Paulo GP at Interlagos.

F1 has denied claims that Monaco (above), Azerbaijan, and Canada, all races that were last run in 2019, are in line to be shelved

When plans to host a Brazilian event at a new circuit in Rio fell through, F1 signed a deal with a new promoter – Brasil Motorsport, which has financial backing from Abu Dhabi's sovereign wealth fund Mubadala – to continue at Interlagos under a different name. Under the previous arrangement the promoter did not pay a sanctioning fee, but the new deal involved the city paying £2.7 million per year.



To prevent a repeat of scenes such as this, when the 2020 race was postponed, an early decision was taken to move the Australian GP

This has become the subject of a legal challenge regarding the use of public money and transparency, and the contract has been suspended by a judge, Emílio Migliano Neto.

The revised 23-race calendar, without the Chinese GP, is: 28 March Bahrain; 18 April Emilia-Romagna; 2 May TBC; 9 May Spain; 23 May Monaco; 6 June Azerbaijan; 13 June Canada; 27 June France; 4 July Austria; 18 July Britain; 1 August Hungary; 29 August Belgium; 5 September Netherlands; 12 September Italy; 26 September Russia; 3 October Singapore; 10 October Japan; 24 October United States; 31 October Mexico; 7 November São Paulo; 21 November Australia; 5 December Saudi Arabia; 12 December Abu Dhabi.

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The challenges facing F1's top two teams in 2021

ON SALE MAR 19

> Plus: Renault rebrand; Mercedes power for McLaren
> How good is Mick Schumacher?
> Trading places: Alonso, Perez, Ricciardo, Sainz, Vettel
> The lowdown on all the drivers and all the races

PICTURES: ZAK MAUGER; SAM BLOXHAM.
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F1 INSIDER

INEOS BUYS IN TO MERC – BUT LEWIS HASN'T

03 **While two teams are rebranding** completely this year – Racing Point takes on yet another new skin as Aston Martin while Renault becomes Alpine, along with a host of management changes – possibly the most significant shift during the off-season will barely be visible at all.

Mercedes title sponsor Ineos has become a one-third shareholder in the team, enabling Daimler to reduce its exposure. This is one of several investment deals completed since the signing of the new Concorde Agreement last summer, and it points the way to a future in which teams both enjoy a franchise value and – theoretically – become profit generators rather than money pits.

But this may also have an impact on driver salaries – at least in the short term as F1's business model goes through a period of adjustment. Manufacturer largesse has wrought many inequalities on F1, not least the ability of the most deep-pocketed entrants to comply with the salary demands of the biggest stars. Now, though, the market is changing, as evinced by the fact that Lewis Hamilton has yet (as *GP Racing* went to press) to sign a contract for the 2021 season and beyond.

GP Racing understands that Hamilton's proposal places the value of his services in the region of $150million over two years, while Daimler chairman Ola Källenius is unprepared to venture north of $100million. Although driver salaries are not included within the $145million budget cap which comes into force this season, a future salary cap of $30million per year for both drivers could be written into the rules from 2023 onwards. The long-term commercial vision for F1 is that all the teams should attain profitability. Mercedes already makes a profit despite being among the highest spenders: its most recent published accounts indicated a post-tax profit of $19.3million in 2019 despite an expenditure of $442million.

Given the more equitable share of revenues enshrined in the new Concorde Agreement, it's likely Mercedes will be less well-rewarded even if it continues to dominate, which may have an impact on profitability. It will also have to downsize in order to meet the salary cap. For these reasons, agreeing to pay its star driver such an extraordinary amount would not be a good look even if it made business sense.

"Turning the team into something that can produce cashflows rather than consuming cashflows is very tangible," said Källenius when the Ineos investment was announced.

As F1 pivots towards the US sports franchise model, where territorial exclusivity makes teams more stable and investable, there may yet be a point in the journey where the stars can command megabucks again, as they do in NBA basketball. But for now a new frugality holds sway...

HAMILTON'S PROPOSAL PLACES THE VALUE OF HIS SERVICES IN THE REGION OF $150MILLION OVER TWO YEARS, WHILE DAIMLER CHAIRMAN OLA KÄLLENIUS IS UNPREPARED TO VENTURE NORTH OF $100MILLION



Ineos joined Mercedes as a partner in 2020 but now owns a third of the F1 team



F1 MASTERMIND

Your chosen specialised subject: the world's greatest motorsport

Q1 Valtteri Bottas has started from pole 16 times in his F1 career, but which is the only circuit at which he has done so on three occasions?

Q2 What was the type number of the last McLaren to win an F1 race and who was driving it?

Q3 True or false: the last driver before Sergio Pérez to claim his maiden F1 win when over the age of 30 was Nigel Mansell in 1985?

Q4 Who is the only driver to win two F1 GPs at Zolder?

Q5 Who won more races for Ferrari: Sebastian Vettel or Fernando Alonso?

Q6 How many times has an F1 season finished later than it did in 2020: one, twice, or three times?

Q7 Of the drivers that led at least one lap in 2020 five won at least one race. Lance Stroll, George Russell and which two others didn't...?

Q8 With which team did Gerhard Berger make his F1 debut at the 1984 Italian GP?

Q9 At Mick Schumacher's first GP in Bahrain will he be younger or older than his father was when he made his F1 debut?

Q10 How many F1 world championship Spanish GPs have there been: 46, 48 or 50?



1 Red Bull Ring **2** MP4-27, Jenson Button **3** False, it was Mark Webber in 2009 **4** Niki Lauda **5** Vettel (14 to Alonso's 11) **6** Twice, in 1962 and 1963 **7** Alex Albon and Carlos Sainz **8** ATS **9** Younger **10** 50

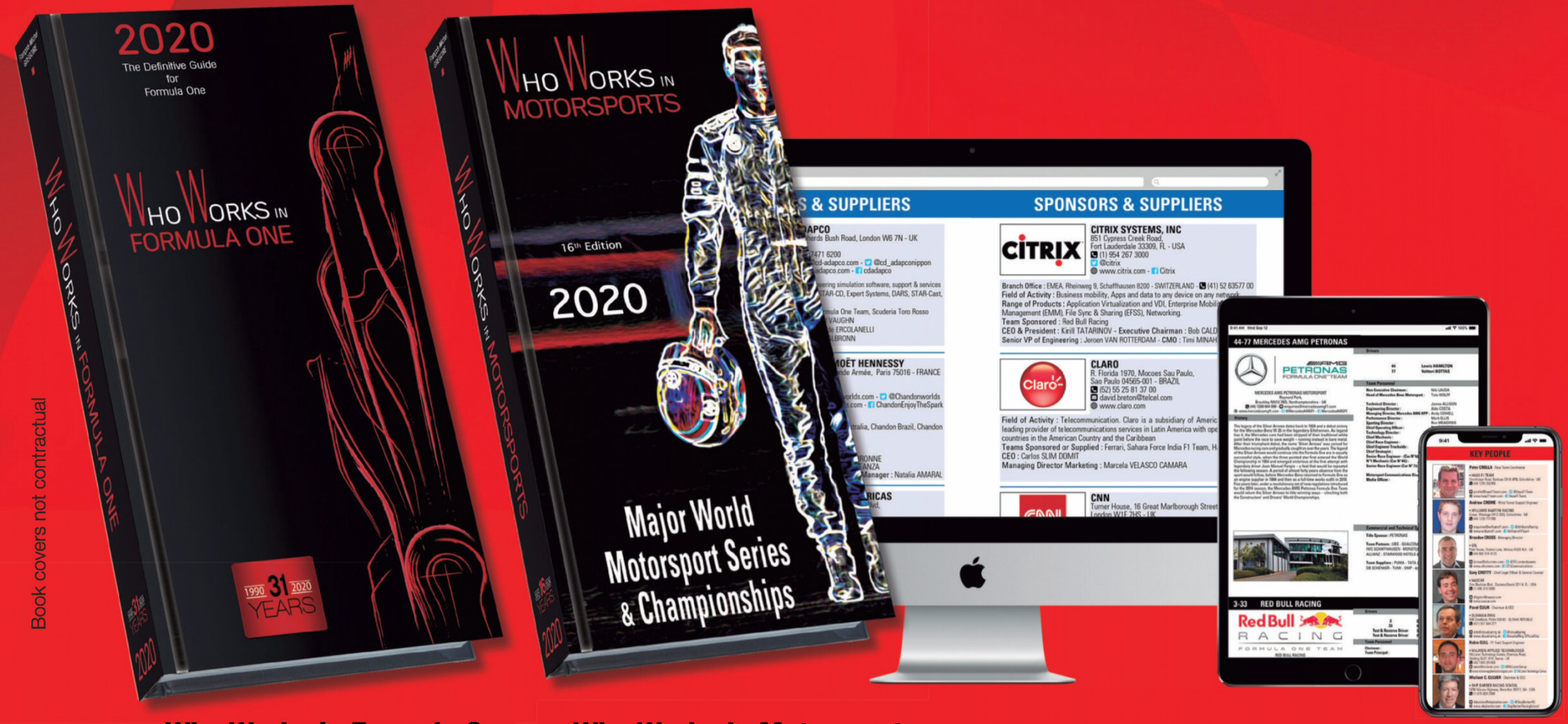
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THE F1 ANALYST

BEN EDWARDS

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THE HEADY MIX OF ENTERTAIMENT AND SPORT

The worlds of entertainment and sport are distinctly separate and yet the element of entertainment within sport is often what puts a smile on faces. In recent years, there's been a rise to that element within Formula 1, created by a superb mix of people.

In 2016 Jay Hunt, then boss of Channel 4, took control of terrestrial F1 coverage in the UK and wanted to make a distinct change to the way it was delivered on screen. While I kept my role as commentator, a new frontman was announced.

Steve Jones had been a successful TV presenter in the world of entertainment for some years when he received a call from Hunt: "She asked me if I liked F1 and I said, 'Yes, I love it, I watch it all the time'. For anyone who wants a tip when it comes to the entertainment world, always say yes…"

In fact, Steve had very little knowledge of Formula 1. It was on in the background of the family household as he grew up, but his interests lay elsewhere. He loved music and entertainment, developing a reputation as a jovial and friendly presenter on *T4*, a youth-based Saturday morning show, and he went on to host *X Factor USA*.

"Initially I thought, 'They've got the wrong guy here. I'm an entertainment presenter, this is a specialised subject', but I do like a challenge so I focused. The thought of presenting something with jeopardy, and real passion from the audience, was very appealing. Entertainment is extremely important in making people laugh and think, but sport taps into something primal."

At the time however, Formula 1 was a pretty serious business, and Steve's light-hearted approach to some aspects of a race weekend did not go down well with everyone.

"There was a bit of backlash at the start with regards to my style, things like, 'What is he doing? This isn't F1!' In fact, looking back, they were probably right."

Steve feels that in 2016 Formula 1 was more introspective and therefore his stance clashed with the underlying atmosphere. Over the course of the last five years, that has changed.

"There's definitely been a shift in the sport since I arrived in Formula 1, and it's just a happy coincidence, not my influence at all, it's the young guys coming in.

"The likes of Lando Norris, Carlos Sainz, George Russell, all want to be funny online, posting their memes and jokes. It's had a huge influence, drawing people in, and teams like Mercedes and Haas are engaging in a similar way."

Steve's lack of in-depth knowledge of Formula 1 in 2016 did not prevent him winning a bet with the programme's commander-in-chief. Mark Wilkin had worked alongside Murray Walker and James Hunt, and knew Formula 1 inside out; he put his money on Lewis Hamilton to win the title. Steve, on the other hand, went for Nico Rosberg, and the rest of us just shook our heads and smiled.

At the end of the season, it was Steve who had the biggest grin as Rosberg claimed the crown. Would he have made the same call if he had the experience he has now?

"No; that Steve in 2016 was an idiot; only an idiot would think that Nico would win in 2016. That call came from such an uninformed place, but in a way that's how I got it right and how I won quite a bit of coin.

"The difference between Steve in 2016 and Steve in 2020 is night and day. I remember in that first year asking David Coulthard 'Who is Fangio again?' He just stared at me and said, 'Never say that aloud again; sit down at the computer and Google him right now'.

"I've worked hard at it, and I remember it all suddenly started to click into place. I'd get picked up by a taxi from the airport on returning home from a race and be asked questions by the driver and be unsure what to say, then suddenly I found myself informing the driver and giving him opinions."

Steve has interviewed stars of screen, stage and Formula 1 over the years and finds a link in the aura exuded by the likes of Hollywood megastar Will Smith and seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton. So how has his relationship with Lewis developed over time?

"I was sitting at a bar with my wife in Abu Dhabi after the race in 2016 and Lewis walked by and completely blanked me. Since then, we've had numerous occasions in the paddock where we've acknowledged each other and had the odd fist bump. I think we've got there.

"After winning the title in Turkey last year, he came over to our spot in the paddock and started joking that, as it was me and DC, perhaps he'd give the interview a miss, but at the same time he was asking us how we were doing and having a laugh. We have developed the relationship and I enjoy his company."

Working with Steve over the past five years has been a real pleasure, and although I have now stepped away from my commentating role, I intend to keep a close involvement with Formula 1.

I'll be keeping an eye on Steve's ability to draw out the funny side of this serious business, and with the younger generation of drivers doing the same, the entertainment side of F1 should continue to flourish.



Using Steve Jones as the frontman for Channel 4's F1 coverage was a bold move back in 2016

The influx of younger drivers such as Russell, Albon and Norris has made F1 more fun, feels Jones



Jones, seen here with co-host Coulthard, has slowly built a relationship with Hamilton





There still remains an element of fun to Jones, as this 2019 piece to camera at Raidillon demonstrates

PICTURES: ANDY HONE; MARK SUTTON; SIMON GALLOWAY. ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE.



UNDER THE HOOD

PAT SYMONDS

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HOW GROSJEAN SURVIVED MAY STAY A MYSTERY

The 2020 Formula 1 season will be remembered for many things. The relentless schedule of 17 race events completed in 165 days will certainly not be forgotten by those who participated, and the intense midfield battles occupied the minds of the majority of teams.

For fans, the return to some classic tracks, plus the introduction of new ones, will be remembered. But if one were to choose a single event that will be talked about for some time to come, it would undoubtably be the fiery accident suffered by Romain Grosjean in Bahrain.

Accidents are part of motorsport. Any workplace can be dangerous, but motorsport must rank alongside military combat as one of the most dangerous occupations. In spite of this, and as illustrated in Bahrain, thankfully the injury rate is low. This is due to a constant focus on safety from both the teams and the FIA.

Accident investigation is a scientific task and must be approached with a forensic eye. In most cases, particularly when considering aviation or road traffic accidents, the primary focus is on establishing the cause of the accident. Understanding the cause is the primary mitigation against repetition. In Grosjean's case, the cause was obvious. Video clearly showed the driver's error, which caused the loss of control.

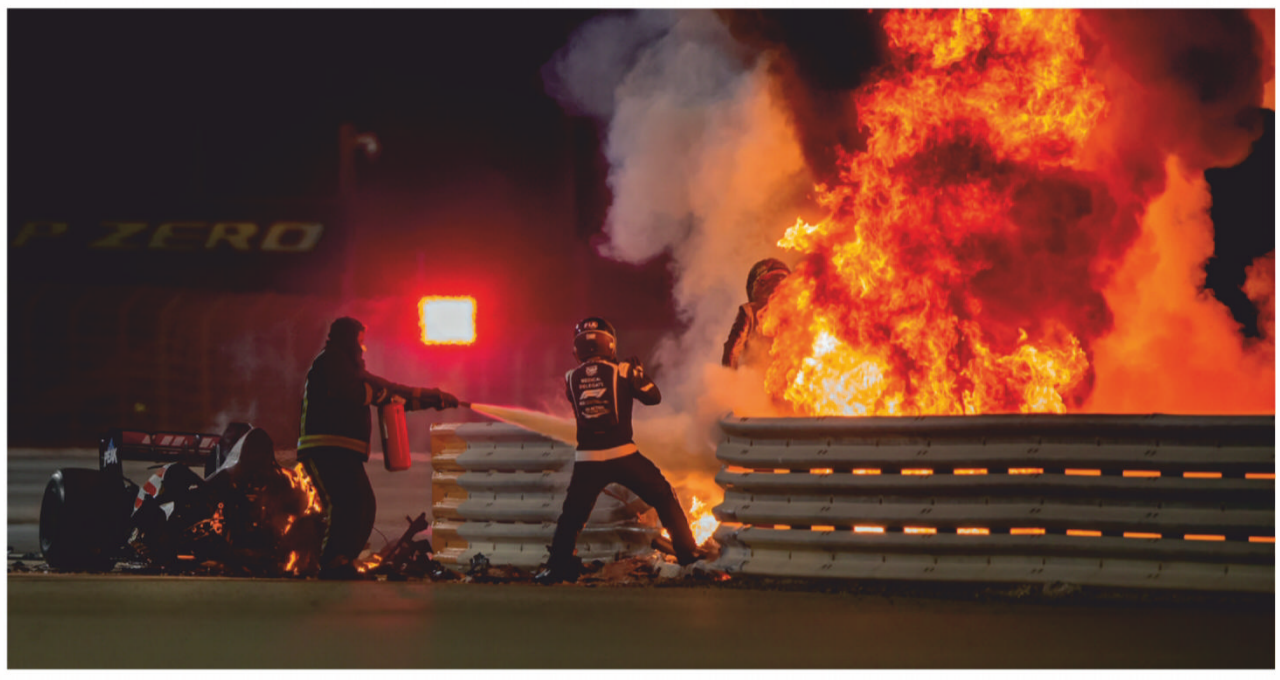
Sometimes it is not so obvious, and even today the cause of the accident that led to the death of Ayrton Senna at Imola in 1994 is not known with certainty. The balance of probability in that case determined the chassis bottoming out due to low tyre pressures after a Safety Car was the precursor to the impact.

Grosjean thankfully survived his fiery Bahrain accident, which is now being forensically investigated

The lengths that investigators must go to are immense. When Jules Bianchi died after an accident in Japan in 2014, a 396-page report was written – even though in this case the cause of the accident was known with some certainty. The report focused on circumstances surrounding the accident and what mitigation might be put in place to provide better future outcomes. Without doubt this accelerated work that had been ongoing for some time regarding frontal protection for the driver's head and led to the introduction of the Halo, which may well have saved Grosjean's life several years later.

It is a bold statement to say that all the circumstances leading up to the outcome of an accident are known. It is very rare that a single event is sufficient to predict the aftermath of an accident, or even a car component failure. Usually, other theories are employed, such as the 'chain of events theory' or the 'branched chain of events theory'. The science behind these is not new, but the thinking was rapidly advanced and disseminated after the space shuttle Challenger suffered catastrophic failure on launch in 1986.

In the case of Grosjean's accident, while the cause may be known, the outcome was partially determined by a linear chain of events, including impact with another car, impact with the barrier, and structural failure of certain parts. But other factors were equally important. The branched chain of events may inquire as to the placement and construction of barriers, design specifics of the car, or even the role of the ▶



PICTURES: ANDY HONE; RAINER SCHLEGELMILCH. ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE

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The cause of Ayrton Senna's 1994 accident is still not certain

first responders to the accident.

Whatever approach is taken it needs to have forensic exactitude. In Formula 1 we are lucky to have extensive video coverage from both inside and outside the car, so while witness statements – particularly from the driver – are valuable, the cognitive bias witnesses often display is mitigated. Additionally, there is a plethora of data, including the accelerometers built into each driver's earpieces, dedicated to accident investigation.

> "IN FORMULA 1 WE ARE LUCKY TO HAVE EXTENSIVE VIDEO COVERAGE FROM BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CAR"

Such evidence is only useful if it's collected and analysed in a rigorous manner. Some years ago, I wrote a detailed procedure for my team of how events – be they a component failure leading to a potential race retirement, or a serious accident – were investigated. It relies on collecting and inspecting data and components and ensuring the evidence is not disturbed before all details are recorded. Of course, in the Bahrain case this was difficult as a race had to be restarted, but numerous photographs were taken to establish the state of objects before they were moved.

Even with such exhaustive investigation it can still be difficult to establish the exact sequence of events. Various channels of data are recorded at different frequencies, and electronic filtering can introduce delays such that at the most granular level the sequence of events can be misrepresented unless the full characteristics of the data acquisition system are understood.

In order to reach a sound conclusion, all facets of the incident must be studied, and as propounded in the Sherlock Holmes stories, it is sometimes the case that elimination of potential causes is as important in determining the origin of an outcome as establishing the ultimate reason directly.

That said, the FIA has world-leading expertise in these matters and, combined with an immense desire to push safety forward rather than to apportion blame, enormous strides have been made in the safety of the cars and the infrastructure involved in race meetings since that fateful day in May 1994 when Senna died.

Motorsport will never be completely safe, but neither will our everyday lives. That memorable moment in Bahrain should be recognised as a tribute to what has been achieved so far, but more importantly act as a spur to continue the quest for zero deaths or serious injuries in motorsport.



The FIA published a 396-page report after Jules Bianchi's 2014 accident

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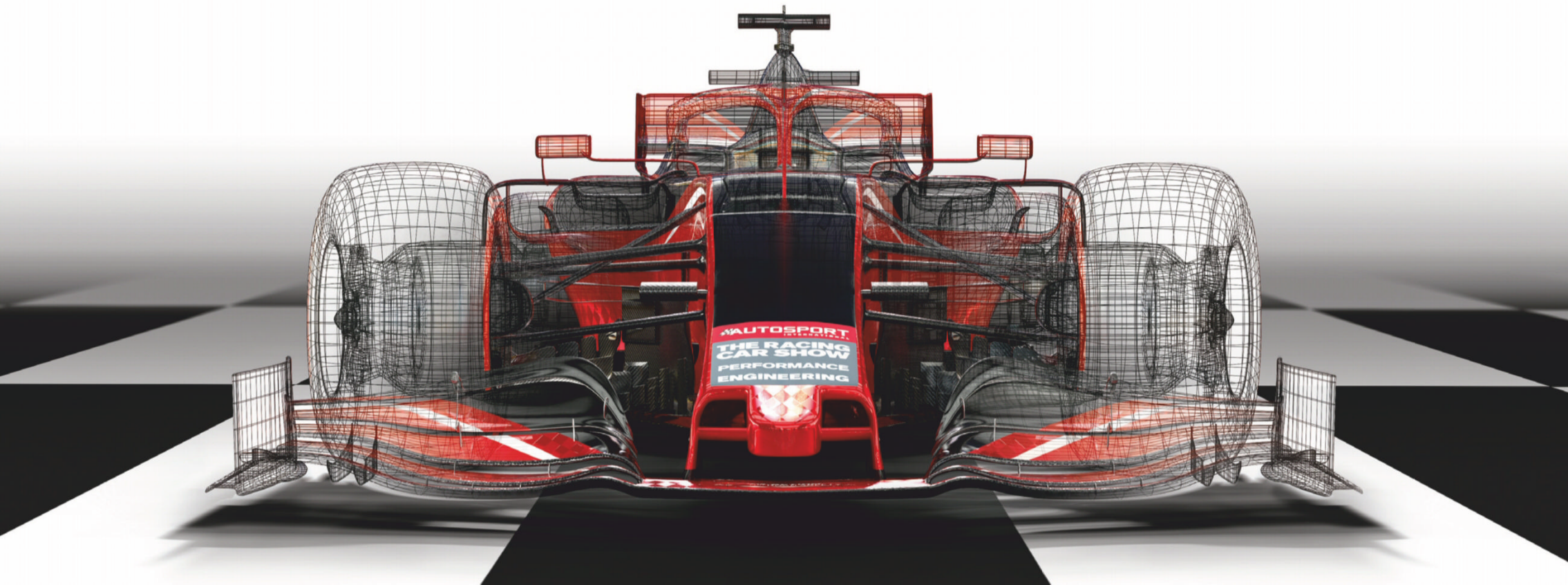
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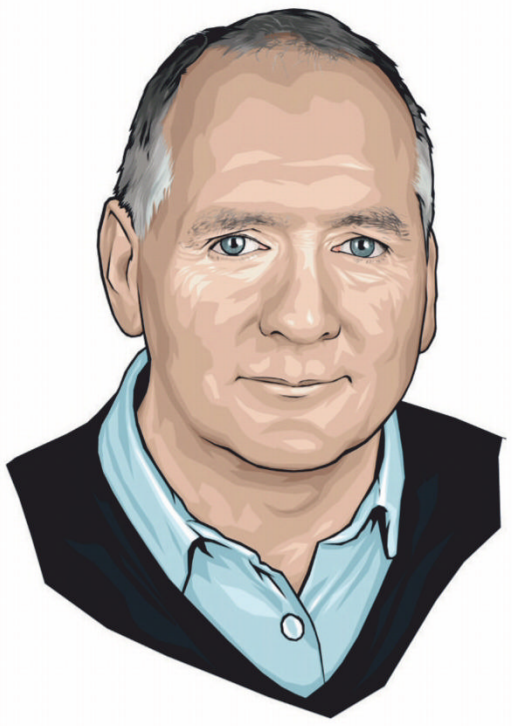
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F1 PRO

Essential guide to the business of F1



STRAIGHT TALK

MARK GALLAGHER

@_markgallagher

WHEN CONTRACTS BECOME A LITTLE COMPLICATED...

With Lewis Hamilton brake-tested by COVID-19 and George Russell testing positive for talent, the Sakhir Grand Prix prompted much debate about driver contracts in that calm, knowledgeable arena known as 'social media'.

Opinions centred around suggestions that Mercedes should sack Valtteri Bottas in favour of the man whom he outqualified by 26 milliseconds or – shock horror – the notion that Toto Wolff could slash his driver budget by opting for Russell over seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton.

If it passed Toto's mind that he should sign all three of them in tribute to one of Monisha Kaltenborn's less desired legacies, I'm sure his brain will have moved that thought straight to trash. Sauber's Kaltenborn, it should be remembered, turned up in Melbourne in 2015 with Marcus Ericsson, Felipe Nasr and Giedo van der Garde each holding valid race contracts, and Adrian Sutil still embroiled in a legal dispute with the team over *his* existing contract for the season.

There followed an excruciating court case, played out in front of the media, resulting in the State of Victoria's Supreme Court confirming that Van der Garde was legally entitled to a seat.

Kaltenborn's motivation for signing Mssrs Ericsson and Nasr was founded upon their talent for bringing more moolah to the table that the lesser-sponsored Dutchman. While her efforts to shore up Sauber's finances were laudable, they weren't legal. Van der Garde could have taken things further, but didn't, accepting a financial settlement and opting to leave F1's world of sharp practices behind.

That wasn't even the first time in recent memory a team turned up to a race with three drivers aiming to squeeze into two cockpits. At the 2010 British Grand Prix, Hispania Racing Team boss Colin Kolles accepted a bank transfer to run Sakon Yamamoto, notwithstanding the fact Bruno Senna and Karun Chandhok were already looking forward to their own Silverstone outings.

Boarding the flight to London, Kolles was quite naturally fretting about how to solve this three-into-two conundrum, but he need not have worried. Fate was smiling kindly upon him.

Upon landing, the HRT boss found an email, inadvertently sent to his phone by one of Senna's advisors, describing him in less than flattering terms. Sensing an opportunity, Kolles played the wounded party, ignored the apologies of Senna's associates and used a contractual detail to drop him for the race.

While being one of three contracted drivers vying for two seats is not ideal, however, much worse is to be fully out of contract. The world is full of drivers waiting to grab your seat.

It was decidedly strange, therefore, for Mercedes and Red Bull to leave Abu Dhabi in mid-December with one driver opening apiece. Alex Albon was given no option by Red Bull but, for Lewis Hamilton, opting to delay the negotiation of a new agreement appeared to tempt Fate.

Hamilton may have intended to finalise his Mercedes deal by Christmas, but more than one driver manager expressed surprise, particularly since Russell's Sakhir outing handed Wolff an additional card to play.

The late Mark McCormick, founder of the IMG sports management company, once said, "the windows of opportunity open and close with dazzling rapidity. I constantly... remind people to seize the moment."

It felt like Lewis's best moment was post-Turkey, with the drivers' title secured and a fine performance fresh in everyone's mind.

One more reason why, next to their helmet and the Halo, a quick driver's best security comes in the form of a good lawyer with impeccable timing.



Did George Russell's Sakhir performance perhaps hand Mercedes an extra bargaining chip in its negotiations with Lewis Hamilton?

PICTURE: STEVE ETHERINGTON. ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE

WHO ARE McLAREN'S NEW INVESTORS?

The deal, which will help the cash-strapped F1 team pay for much-needed infrastructure upgrades, also points toward the future for F1 itself

WORDS STUART CODLING
PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

Shortly before tying up third place in the constructors' championship at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, McLaren announced the partial sale of McLaren Racing to a US-based investment consortium for £185million. Under the terms of the deal, which values the company at £560m, the consortium will take an initial stake of 15%, growing to 33% by the end of 2022.

MSP Sports Capital is the lead investor, along with The Najafi Companies and UBS O'Connor, a subsidiary of the Swiss bank which offers wealth management services, including hedge funds. There is some overlap between the investors – Jahm Najafi is a partner in MSP as well as being the founder and owner of his eponymous private equity company. And all three entities enjoy prior connections with McLaren Racing CEO Zak Brown via Just Marketing Inc, the agency Brown founded in the 1990s and sold to CSM in 2013. JMI had a number of clients in NASCAR, where Brown met MSP founding partner Jeff Moorad, owner of the Hall Of Fame Racing team; Brown also tied up sponsorship accounts for JMI in Formula 1 with UBS and Rexona, an antiperspirant brand ultimately owned by Najafi.

Moorad made his name – and the beginnings of his fortune – as an agent representing players in Major League Baseball in the 1980s; he and his then business partner Leigh Steinberg also acted as 'technical consultants' on the movie *Jerry Maguire*, and were reputedly the inspiration for the main character. Moorad has owned stakes in the Arizona Diamondbacks and San Diego Padres, buying (relatively) low and selling high on each occasion. More recently he has owned shares in companies specialising in sports events, travel and betting. MSP Sports Capital has also invested in second-tier football teams in Spain and Portugal.

While Najafi's career encompasses a stint on Wall Street, his Iranian-American family's wealth stems from prudent real estate investment during the boom years of the 1980s and 1990s. The Najafi Companies was initially set up as a subsidiary of the family business, the Phoenix-based Pivotal Group; its modus operandi was to scoop up undervalued companies, restructure them and establish profitability, then sell them on to other investors. One of its most significant trophies was the web services company Network Solutions, acquired by Verisign for £21billion in March 2000, just weeks before the dotcom bubble burst. In October 2003 Najafi, then known as Pivotal Private Equity, relieved Verisign of the majority of the business for a reported $100m, selling it on to General Atlantic (a venture capital company) for a reported $800m four years later.

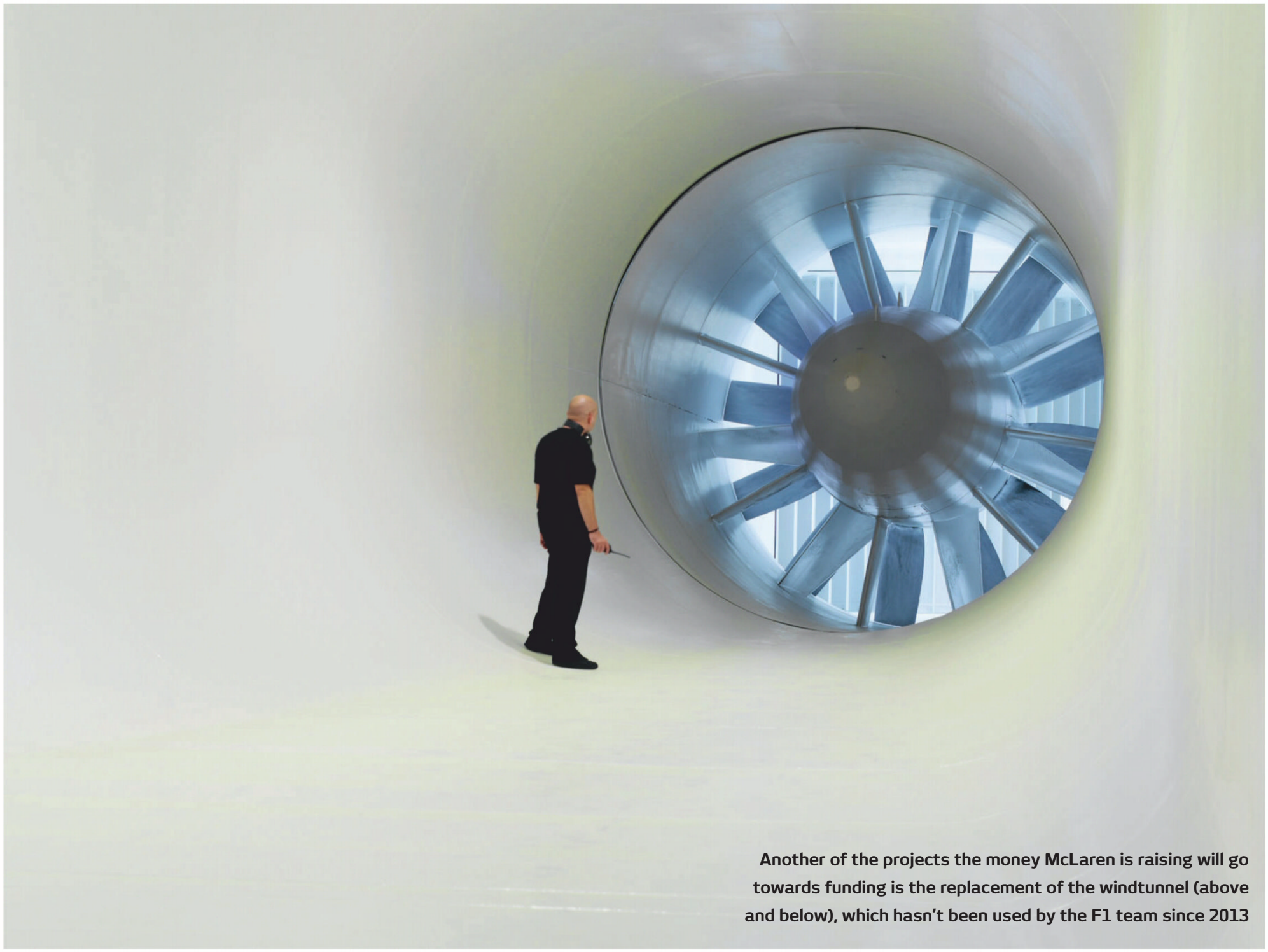
The parties of the first part therefore have form in spotting companies which are, in some form, down on their luck. McLaren Racing has been the lame duck of the McLaren Group for several years on account of its poor on-track performance, reflected in diminishing returns from the F1 prize pot. Rather than generating revenues it was propped up by other companies in the group, notably McLaren Automotive. But the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic shut production down and hobbled sales, precipitating redundancies across the group and a wholesale refinancing of the business.

It has been known for some time that Mumtalakat, the Bahrain sovereign wealth fund which has a majority stake in the McLaren Group, is looking to reduce its shareholding. One of the contributing factors to McLaren's financing problems last year stemmed from the expulsion of Ron Dennis in 2016; to buy out his shareholding, McLaren took out loans leveraged against assets including its historic car collection, forcing it to look elsewhere when it needed cash urgently in mid-2020.

It was as a guest of Mumtalakat that Moorad attended the 2019 Bahrain Grand Prix, where



This injection of money should fund replacement of an obsolete driver-in-loop simulator



Another of the projects the money McLaren is raising will go towards funding is the replacement of the windtunnel (above and below), which hasn't been used by the F1 team since 2013

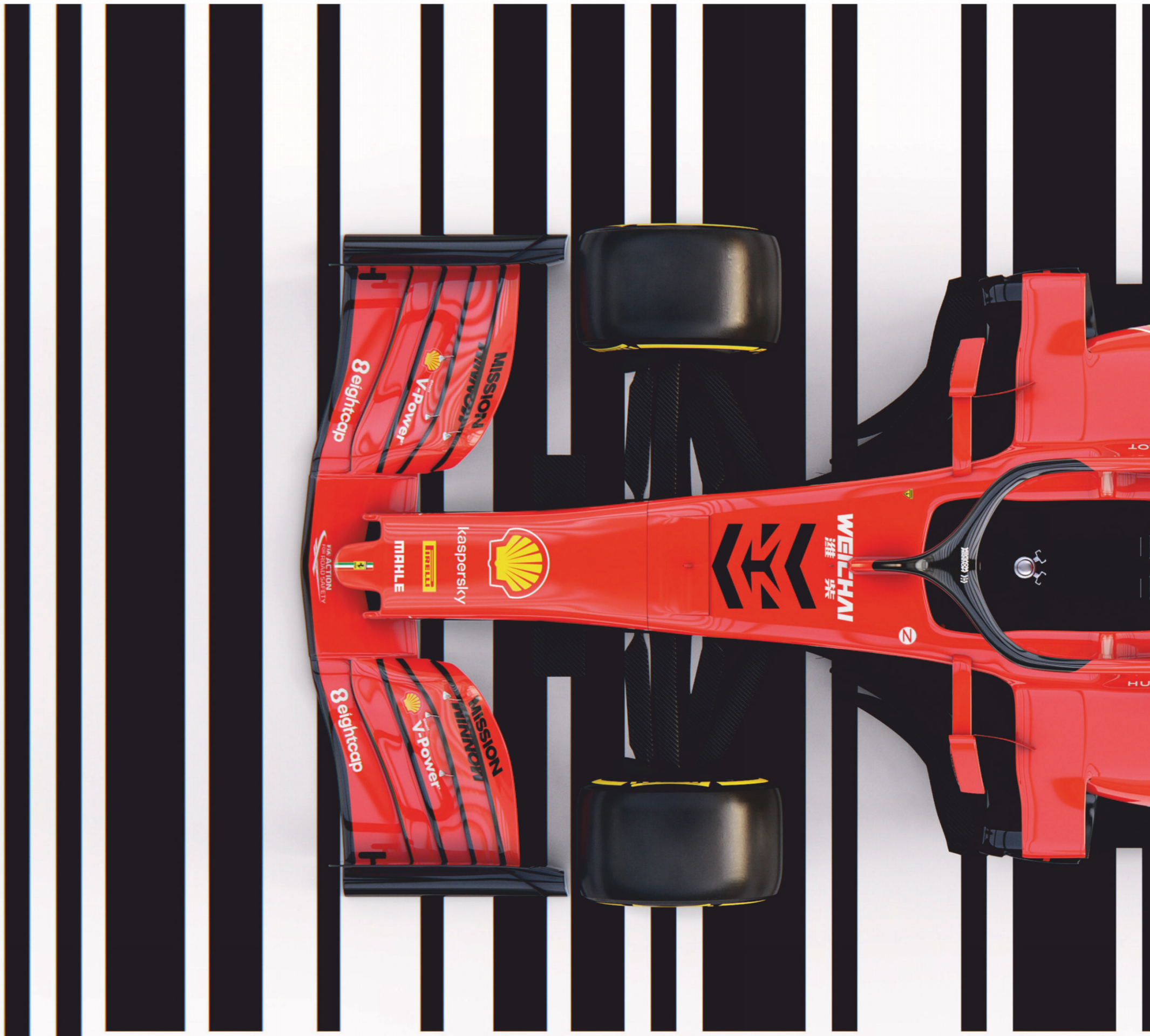
McLaren vice-chairman and Mumtalakat board member Shaikh Mohamed bin Isa Al Khalifa re-introduced him to Brown. At that point Moorad had already been involved in trying to buy Force India out of administration, and more recently he was connected with the sale of Williams.

"It [Force India] was a good education for us, frankly in retrospect, in getting to know the sport a bit," Moorad said in a Zoom call with media after the McLaren deal was announced. "We had a much less serious interest in Williams, but certainly took a look."

What's interesting about the deal is that the new money will go not to servicing debts but to fund the many capital projects underway at the MTC, including the replacement of the obsolete windtunnel (which has not been used for the F1 programme since 2013), as well as the similarly obsolete driver-in-loop simulator. The announcement was also at pains to point out that McLaren Automotive is not part of the deal; last September, Automotive boss Mike Flewitt alluded to a stock exchange float forming part of the exit strategy for investors in that business.

Moorad will sit on McLaren Racing's board of directors and Najafi will become vice chairman, indicating a deeper strategic involvement in the future. They have experience, through previous investments in sports franchises, of the financial model enshrined in the new Concorde Agreement. As F1 moves closer to the American model of teams-as-franchises, this investment could usher McLaren towards the front of the grid in more ways than one.





20 THE COST

As the onset of the coronavirus pandemic wrought havoc around the world, Formula 1 had to get creative to survive. The financial and human cost has been heavy, but quick thinking and urgent action has allowed F1 and its stakeholders to bring the championship back from the brink of catastrophe...

WORDS MARK GALLAGHER
PICTURES PETER CROWTHER AND motorsport IMAGES



OF COVID

FORMULA 1'S RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

provided a beacon of hope to sports fans around the world in 2020, as FOM, the FIA, teams and race promoters somehow pulled together a 17-race world championship in spite of the chaos wrought by COVID-19. This came at a cost, however, as at least £2.5billion in financial engineering took place to save the sport and its constituent teams from disaster.

It is worth reflecting upon the fact that F1 staged its 2020 series against a catastrophic backdrop in terms of the harm to human life and global economic disruption. By the end of the 2020 well over 88 million people had been infected by the virus, and 1.9 million died as a result. With global travel halted and lockdowns enforced, it has had a profound impact on the business world – international sport included, along with those who work in it.

Silverstone's managing director Stuart Pringle is forthright in his explanation of the effects of COVID-19 on the home of the British motor racing. "It's been disastrous, no other way of putting it," he says, bluntly. "The country got locked down on 23 March. If that had happened on 23 October, just as we were going into a fallow winter period, life would have been very different. In fact, it took out our entire summer season, our (main) revenue earning, and we were effectively staring down the barrel of 18 months of consecutive winters."

For Silverstone, months of uncertainty were followed by an agreement to host two grands prix, without spectators, requiring a very different kind of deal with F1.

"There were two elements to that challenge," explains Pringle. "Number one was dealing with our customers, the fans. We had sold about 63,000 tickets up until early March when sales fell off a cliff. We had to manage the fans, not mess them around and yet take them on a journey which would give them confidence in us as a circuit asking them to take their booking for 2020 and transfer that to 2021."

"The second part was sitting between the FIA and F1 on the one hand, and the UK government and health bodies on the other, trying to pick a path which would allow us to run races behind closed doors in a secure manner."

F1 had the task of putting together a COVID-19 testing regime which would meet the standards required by governments and health authorities, a system which one insider described as "extensive and expensive". Such was the price of ensuring that racing could take place – albeit with far fewer race personnel, officials and media travelling to events.

As F1 raced to put in place a revised schedule, elsewhere the effects of COVID-19 were hitting home. May's announcement of a budget cap showed the degree to which stability and survivability had become a focus for all F1's stakeholders. This was underlined by the speed with which the new, five-year Concorde Agreement was secured by August.

The automotive industry saw vehicle sales collapse, recover and collapse again as lockdowns came and went. A 25% reduction in global vehicles sales in 2020 compared with the peak of 2017 is anticipated. Some have ridden the storm remarkably well; others have been less fortunate.

Daimler had a good year considering how bad things appeared during the first quarter, even to the point where CEO Ola Källenius was able to report a record rise in sales in China – its largest single market – during the summer.

Renault, on the other hand, lost £6.7billion in the first half of the year, leaving incoming boss Luca de Meo with rather larger problems to resolve while still signing off on a recommitment to Formula 1 under the Alpine brand.

Honda announced its withdrawal from F1, just as it did amid the 2008 global financial crisis. This time Honda cited a need to refocus on environmental technologies, turning its back on racing at precisely the moment F1 and the FIA have set a course towards carbon neutrality by 2030. It came as no surprise to hear F1's outgoing CEO Chase Carey tell investors he believed economic conditions within the car industry lay behind Honda's decision.

While Red Bull and AlphaTauri digested Honda's bitter news, F1 witnessed three teams opting to sell shareholdings and a fourth transformed by the near collapse of Aston Martin.

The announcement that Daimler has reduced its stake in the dominant Mercedes team might seem like retrenchment in the face of the global downturn. In reality, the move to bring Sir Jim Ratcliffe's INEOS chemicals business in as a one-third partner alongside chief executive Toto Wolff is a strategic move rather than one born out of necessity.

For the world champions, at least, 2020 produced a number of operational challenges but not the existential threats which created headlines elsewhere.

> "IT'S BEEN DISASTROUS, NO OTHER WAY OF PUTTING IT, IT TOOK OUT OUR ENTIRE SUMMER SEASON, OUR (MAIN) REVENUE EARNING, AND WE WERE EFFECTIVELY STARING DOWN THE BARREL OF 18 MONTHS OF CONSECUTIVE WINTERS"
>
> STUART PRINGLE MANAGING DIRECTOR, SILVERSTONE

Silverstone managed to host two GPs last year, but both were without the financial benefit of crowds



"WHEN THE PANDEMIC HIT, THESE WERE THE FINAL NAILS IN OUR COFFIN"

CLAIRE WILLIAMS
FORMER DEPUTY TEAM PRINCIPAL,
WILLIAMS F1

The most notable was the decision by the Williams family to sell up, 43 years after Frank Williams and Patrick Head met at the Carlton Towers hotel in London's Sloane Street, creating one of F1's most successful teams.

May's announcement of a 'Strategic Review' made it clear that a potential sale of the team was on the cards, a £13million loss in 2019 having focused minds on survival. The termination of Williams' sponsorship agreement with ROKiT didn't help and, when the pandemic hit, Claire Williams told the *New York Times* these "were the final nails in our coffin."

The subsequent sale to Dorilton Capital, for £140million, can only be regarded as a success. The alternative does not bear thinking about. One suspects the Williams family was glad to have both a budget cap and more equitable Concorde Agreement to help woo new owners into buying a loss-making team, albeit one with a fabulous heritage.

As Williams changed hands, long-time rival McLaren was rocked by a series of unprecedented financial challenges caused by COVID-19. Chief among these was the collapse in sales at McLaren Automotive during the first quarter of 2020. This resulted in a £133million loss, which forced the company into making over a quarter of its 4000 staff redundant.

Automotive had been the Group's solid performer in 2019, producing profits of £265million against a combined loss of £89million between the F1 team and Applied Technologies business units. When car sales tanked, the Group was immediately in need of additional funding, £300million of which was provided by its shareholders in March, just as executive chairman Paul Walsh took the helm.

With car production halted from March until June, McLaren's woes deepened alongside an acknowledgement that new funding was needed to avoid a cash crisis in mid-July. McLaren's efforts to secure loans against company assets were then subject to a squabble with bondholders who maintained that the prestigious heritage car collection was already secured against an existing debt.

Ultimately a £150million loan from the National Bank of Bahrain came to the rescue. With the racing season recommencing in July and McLaren Automotive witnessing a recovery in car sales during the third quarter, disaster was averted. Nevertheless, the company's November 2020 results showed that, in the year to date, McLaren's Group revenues were 61% down on the same period in 2019…

The sale of up to one third of the Formula 1 team to MSP Sports Capital, announced in December, will have given the Group a further much-needed injection of capital. This transaction valued McLaren's racing business at £560million – four times the sale value of Williams – MSP putting in an initial £85million with a further £100million due by the end of 2022.

The effects of coronavirus on McLaren Automotive's sales mirrored the experience of F1's other supercar brands, Ferrari and Aston Martin. Ferrari weathered the storm remarkably well, Maranello delivering 6440 cars to new owners in the first nine months of 2020, compared with 7755 during the same period in 2019.

While the prancing horse galloped on, Aston Martin stumbled, its share price plummeting as already weak sales began to stall in the wake of the pandemic. Lawrence Stroll's buy-out of the company, announced in January, was a brave move as COVID-19 took hold, but he factored that into the deal. The consortium put together by the Canadian billionaire shored up Aston Martin's finances, while a later deal has given engine and technology partner Daimler a 20% stake in the business. This will help ensure Aston Martin's hybrid and fully electric future.

Stroll's takeover sounded the death knell for Red Bull Racing's Aston Martin deal, while his rebranding of Racing Point has been given added spice through the signing of Sebastian Vettel. Sergio Pérez's victory in the penultimate race of the season helped Stroll end his year on a high: fourth in the constructors' championship brought welcome prize money.

This, of course, flows from the profits F1 makes as the result of selling TV rights, sponsorship and events to race promoters. While the teams faced varying degrees of disruption, the leadership of Formula 1 found itself being tested to the full as Chase Carey, Ross Brawn and their lieutenants set about ensuring the very survival of the world championship.

Following the last-minute cancellation of the Australian GP, the original calendar was scrapped as F1 paused for four months, its teams advancing and extending their summer shutdown. There was much scepticism when Chase Carey announced in April that a reworked championship would start in Austria on 5 July with "15-18 races". As things turned out, he was spot on.

Early ambitions to revisit Asia and include the American continent soon gave way to the impossibility of long-haul travel amid COVID-19. The subsequent decision to create a Eurocentric campaign, with Bahrain and Abu Dhabi providing a more familiar ending, was both pragmatic and cost effective.

Having back-to-back events in Austria, Britain and Bahrain was a straightforward call. To have races



McLaren's finances were hard hit when, unsurprisingly, the bottom fell out of the luxury car market in 2020

at three different venues in Italy, revisit the Nürburgring and bring Formula 1 to Portugal's Portimao circuit was innovative, effective and pleasing to fans.

In staging 17 events Formula 1 ensured that its media rights deals were fulfilled and that the championship's sponsors could be billed, albeit for fewer events and in a smaller number of territories than originally planned. Corporate hospitality revenue was wiped out but, with freight costs localised to Europe and the Gulf, F1's London-based management team worked a minor miracle in delivering a series which exceeded expectations.

To cope with the disruption Liberty undertook some financial engineering in April, reattributing the Live Nation events business from the Formula One Group to its SiriusXM digital media company, strengthening F1's balance sheet to the tune of US$1.5billion.

Focus then shifted towards agreeing a budget cap, initially fixed at US$145million, reducing that to US$135million for 2023-24. That was followed by the successful conclusion of negotiations with teams over a new five-year Concorde Agreement.

Liberty also completed significant management changes during this most unpredictable of years. Commercial boss Sean Bratches returned to the US, incoming director of commercial partnerships Ben Pincus arrived from series sponsor Heineken, and Stefano Domenicali was named as Carey's replacement starting this month.

With real racing halted in the spring, virtual racing came to the fore and represents a success for F1 in 2020. Esports boss Dr Julian Tan was initially asked to create a virtual replacement for the Chinese Grand Prix, but within weeks that task became rather more ambitious.

"We pulled together the concept of the Virtual Grands Prix in a matter of five days," he says. "We wanted to put on the Virtual GPs because we felt a responsibility to our fans. There was a wider appreciation that our fans wanted to see our drivers race, and if they cannot see them race in the real world then they would still want to watch in a different way."

As with many online businesses, F1's Esports ambitions have fared well out of COVID-19, accelerating the shift towards virtual racing, including the participation of drivers such as Charles Leclerc, Lando Norris and George Russell. With over 30 million fans watching and 287,000 gamers attempting

In the early days of the pandemic Esports, helped by a number of F1 drivers, stepped in to keep fans interested until on-track racing resumed

Portimão hosted the first Portuguese GP since 1996 and was a popular addition to the revised calendar





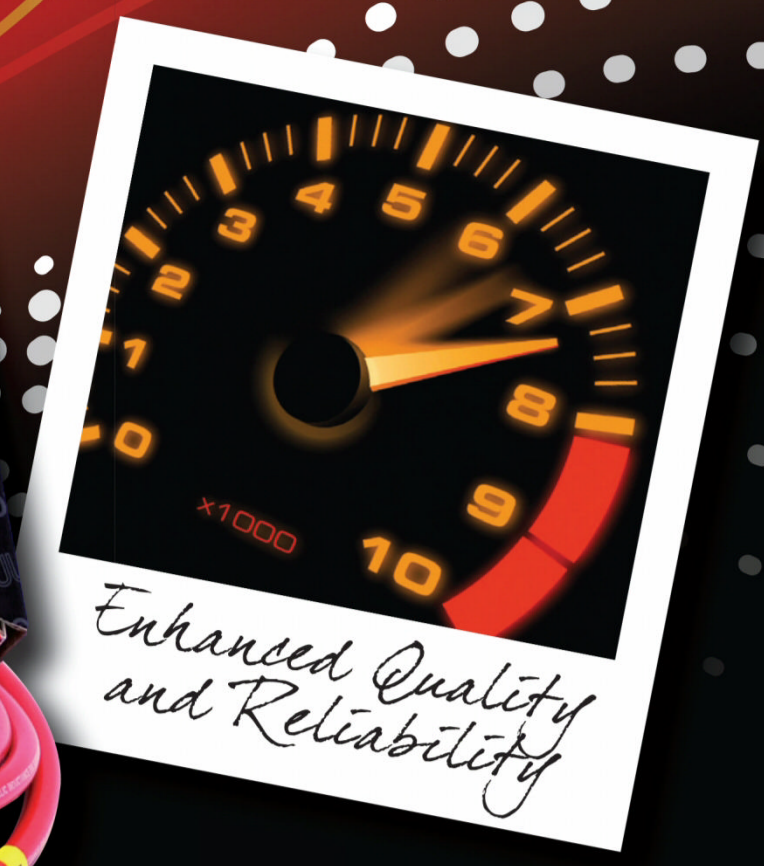
IN STAGING 17 EVENTS F1 ENSURED THAT ITS MEDIA RIGHTS DEALS WERE FULFILLED AND THAT THE CHAMPIONSHIP'S SPONSORS COULD BE BILLED, ALBEIT FOR FEWER EVENTS AND IN A SMALLER NUMBER OF TERRITORIES THAN ORIGINALLY PLANNED

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>
> NICK WARREN DIRECTOR, TRAVEL PLACES

to qualify for F1’s Esports series, Liberty’s ambitions for more fan engagement have been accelerated in the midst of disruption.

There is no question, however, that the biggest challenge of all was to keep the real racing show on the road, generating the core revenues upon which F1 depends. As the effects of the pandemic began to choke travel and hospitality, the sport urgently looked for solutions. For those tasked with making it happen, the challenge was profound.

“It’s been a brutal experience,” says Nick Warren, director of Travel Places, a specialist sports travel agency with a client base across Formula 1. “It all started in Australia where the logistical process had to be reworked to get people home. We were fortunate to have a team on the ground in Melbourne and on call 24/7 to deal with it.”

Once the revised championship got under way the challenge shifted to helping move 2,500 F1, FIA and team personnel to 17 events across 12 countries in 24 weeks.

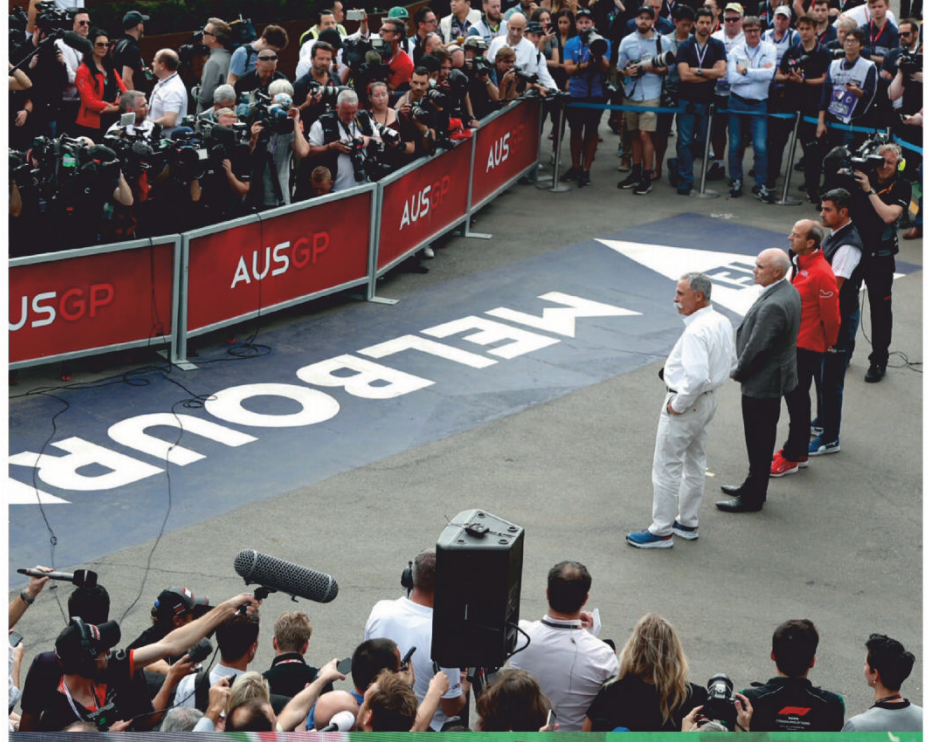
“Every day saw the picture change as we dealt with government restrictions and the ambiguity and uncertainty which came with them,” adds Warren. “Airlines were cancelling flights a week in advance, so while we were getting most people out to Austria and Hungary in chartered planes, you would then find the 20 to 30 people booked on scheduled flights were having them cancelled. We were constantly having to rework how we moved people from one place to the next, including whether there were options to drive across borders in order to access a particular airport.”

The Russian GP, tricky to get to at the best of times, proved to be particularly challenging, but on the upside the fleet of charter aircraft was expanded as mainstream airlines began to offer planes for hire. Finding hotels was made easier at races which boasted government support while at others, such as Austria, guest houses were coaxed to remain open.

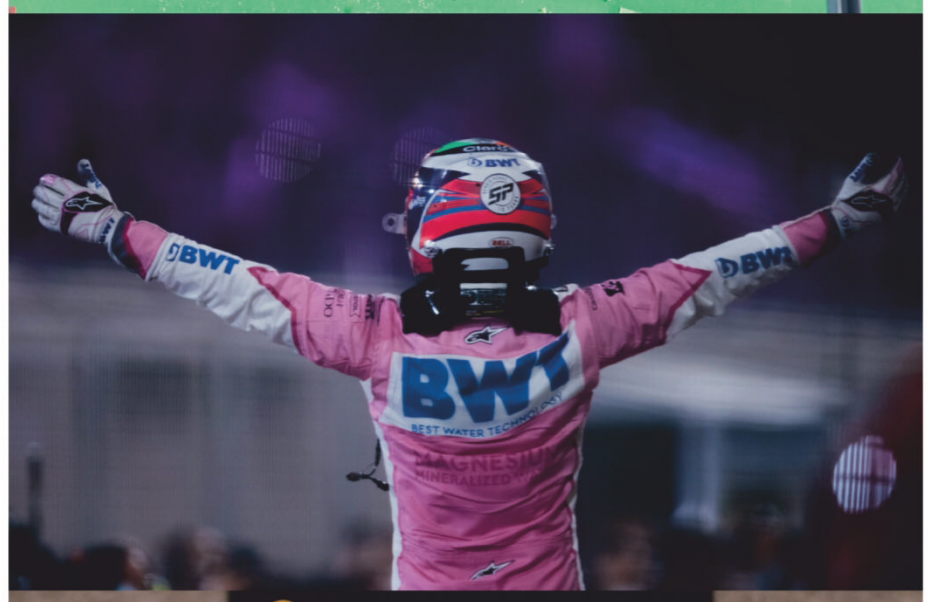
That F1 managed to pull it together, adding fascinating venues and providing some exceptional racing despite Mercedes’ overall dominance, is a testimony to the work of suppliers like Travel Places together with F1’s in-house staff and the work of managers and logistics teams from Hinwil to Woking, Faenza to Milton Keynes.

Despite all the hurdles and obstacles, F1 put on a 17-race season which included some unexpected highlights

While most of the world dealt with remote working, F1 navigated its way to providing six months of sporting entertainment. Most importantly of all, it found a way to survive in the midst of chaos.









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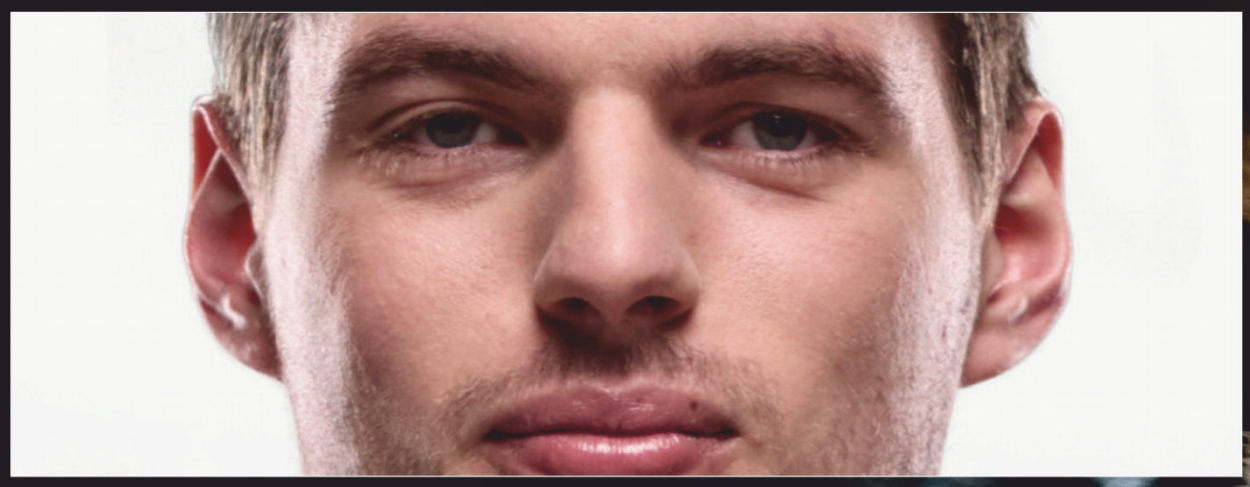
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What makes the very best drivers in Formula 1 stand out among what is already a highly elite bunch? Let's take a closer look at those with the special blend of skill, judgment, feel and attitude that sets only a select few apart from the rest

WORDS ANDREW BENSON

PICTURES motorsport IMAGES AND SHUTTERSTOCK



WHO ARE THE VERY BEST RACING DRIVERS IN THE WORLD? THE ONES WHO, OVER A SEASON, WILL GET EVERYTHING OUT OF A CAR THAT IT SHOULD GIVE – AND SOMETIMES EVEN A BIT MORE.



One of the things that sets Hamilton apart is his ability to wring the best from his car whatever the circumstances

It's a question that generates endless debates among Formula 1 fans, but also one that the teams have to grapple with in a very real way. And in a sense, they settle it.

For the teams are the ones with skin in the game, who have to put their money where their mouths are, and the ones with the most money speak loudest.

The three biggest teams in F1 have identified the drivers they believe to be the best available, the ones in which they have invested not only their hopes for the future, but also their budgets. Those three drivers are Lewis Hamilton, Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc.

And then there is Fernando Alonso, whose reputation and record after a remarkable career not only earns him a place on this list, but also a seat with the Renault-Alpine team this season, despite the fact he has been off the grid for two years and will turn 40 in July.

How did these four drivers each gain such status, and what makes them so special?

A driver has to earn their place in this exalted group by the sheer, consistent excellence of their performances – and the effect they have on others with the exact same machinery at their disposal.

As Mercedes technical director James Allison says of Lewis Hamilton: "You have to look at what a driver's track record is relative to his team-mate, and Lewis I don't think leaves many questions in that regard. He beats his team-mates."

In a nutshell, that is why two drivers who have previously been in this category are not quite anymore: Sebastian Vettel and Daniel Ricciardo.

Vettel's case is the most intriguing. This is a man who is third on the all-time winners' list, behind only Hamilton and Michael Schumacher, and whose four titles put him fourth equal with Alain Prost in the ranking of championships won.

Having swept all before him with Red Bull through 2010-13, Vettel apparently had the world at his feet, even though some saw how closely Alonso ran him in inferior Ferraris and wondered about Vettel's actual level. Alonso, for one, does not rate Vettel in the same class as himself, or Hamilton.

Vettel's subsequent career has harmed his reputation. First, he was beaten by Ricciardo when the Australian joined Red Bull in 2014. Then, at Ferrari, Vettel was less superior to Kimi Räikkönen when they were Ferrari team-mates compared with Alonso's 2014 campaign alongside the 2007 world champion.

And then there were the series of pressure mistakes Vettel made in the heat of title battles against Hamilton in 2017 and 2018. Those unconvincing seasons led to Ferrari bringing in Leclerc to benchmark Vettel in 2019, whereupon the younger man, just as with Ricciardo before, came out on top.

Ferrari had seen enough. Management was now convinced Leclerc was the man in whom to invest the Scuderia's future and Vettel, surplus to requirements, was informed before the delayed 2020 season started that his contract would not be renewed. Ferrari believes Vettel's performances relative to Leclerc in 2020 served to further justify that decision.

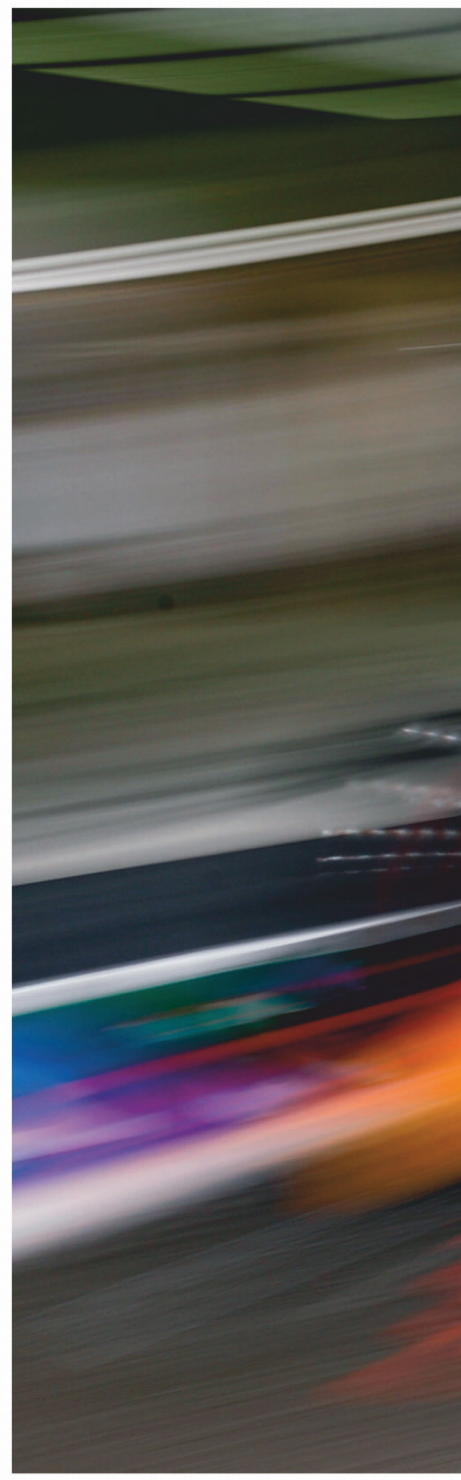
As a result, while at his best he remains formidable, Vettel's career as a member of the crème de la crème, in the eyes of the F1 teams, is effectively over, regardless either of his move to Aston Martin for this year, or his overall career statistics.

Ricciardo's case is different. Having dispensed with Vettel, Daniel enjoyed a few seasons in which his daring overtaking moves, flashy victories and obvious qualifying speed made teams consider him part of the elite. But Ricciardo voluntarily stepped away from Red Bull at the end of 2018, and in doing so removed himself from a seat at one of the leading outfits in Formula 1. He made that choice during a season in which Verstappen finally and decisively gained the upper hand.

In 2016, their first season together, Ricciardo beat Verstappen both in their qualifying head-to-head and in the championship. Verstappen joined after spending the first four races of that season with Toro Rosso, but so strong was the Australian that year that Alonso, no less, was moved to call him the best driver in the championship.

The following year, Ricciardo won the points fight, but Verstappen took the qualifying head-to-head 11-9. By 2018, Verstappen was the superior driver, over one lap and in races.

Once Verstappen established superiority, it consummated a love affair that had been developing between the Dutchman and Red Bull for some time, and Ricciardo, now feeling the gooseberry in the relationship, decided to leave. ▶





> You have to look at what a driver's track record is relative to his team-mate, and Lewis I don't think leaves many questions in that regard. He beats his team-mates
>
> **JAMES ALLISON**



It took him a while, but once Verstappen established superiority at Red Bull he hasn't looked back



Ricciardo is still one of the better drivers on the grid but the teams that count aren't likely to come calling anymore

But how he ended up at Renault in 2019, and subsequently at McLaren for 2021, rather than another of the big three teams, tells another aspect of the story.

In 2018, there was a Mercedes seat open – but the team did not pursue him, preferring to keep Valtteri Bottas as the foil for Hamilton. Likewise, in 2020, when Ferrari decided to dispense with Vettel, it looked to Carlos Sainz rather than Ricciardo as a partner for Leclerc.

In both cases, perhaps Ricciardo suffered for being a bit too good for the team in question to want to put him alongside its chosen ace – but not so good, in the eyes of the bosses, that they felt he was a potentially better choice.

Like Vettel, then, Ricciardo's time among the uber-elite seems to have passed, at least for now. Both remain world-class drivers but not – at least in the eyes of the teams that count – ones that operate at the absolute rarefied level.

Not everyone will agree with those decisions, but decisions they are. So, the question is, what is it about those four drivers – Alonso, Hamilton, Leclerc and Verstappen – that means the teams regard them as the best of the best?

Ask anyone who has worked with Hamilton or Alonso what makes them so special and the first thing they will mention is speed and talent, and then expand on their other strengths: consistency, adaptability, work ethic, and so on.

"Ultimately," says former McLaren and Mercedes technical director Paddy Lowe, "it's just all about your car control. If I drive a racing car, the thing that freaks me out is losing the back end and I can't catch it quick enough. That's the basic control task – catching the moment.

"Responding to that in the fastest way allows you to go faster in the moment but also allows you to set the car up to be nearer the limit, so it is inherently quicker. Quicker drivers can run with a car that is far worse balanced, but they still keep it on the black bit and keep going quick. Fernando is a great example of that. Lewis is a terrific example of that."

The corollary of this is that the elite can cope with differing car characteristics and still be fast, rather than performing at their absolute peak only when the car behaves in the way they want. And that is a fundamental part of what differentiates the absolute best from the rest of the grid. This is a scenario that could be seen playing out at both Red Bull and Ferrari in 2020.

Because Vettel likes to get the car rotating earlier than most other drivers, he needs a balance with a consistent, predictable rear end. Give him that, and he is devastatingly fast – hence his strength in the Red Bulls of the early 2010s, with their exhaust-



> "Quicker drivers can run with a car that is far worse balanced, but still keep it on the black bit and keep going quick"
>
> **PADDY LOWE**



blown diffusers and high levels of downforce.

But he is far less comfortable when the rear is not stable. As a source close to him says: "When the car is not balanced, especially the rear, and he can't feel it, his processing is lost. It's like a computer programme that misses a zero or a one."

The 2020 Ferrari was not only uncompetitive; it was unpredictable, and its rear was very far from planted. In such circumstances, what Ferrari believed was already a significant gap to Leclerc only grew. The average qualifying gap between the two more than tripled in 2020, from around a tenth of a second in 2019 to more than three tenths this season, and Leclerc's advantage in the head-to-head rose from 12-9 to 13-4.

Vettel, being less comfortable with the loose rear of the car, tended to lose out by fractions at each corner. Over a lap, that more often than not added up to a significant margin.

Team boss Mattia Binotto explained it like this: "At first we should say that Charles is very fast and when you are comparing yourself to such a fast driver it is never easy, even if you are a four-time world champion. Seb is struggling with braking stability. He's not too confident with the car. I think it's a matter of feeling the grip, of extracting the potential."

That sounds similar to Vettel's difficulties during his final season at Red Bull, where in 2020 Alex Albon's struggles were similar. Red Bull started the year with a rear instability problem caused by an aerodynamic flaw. Both drivers struggled with this, and spins were relatively frequent.

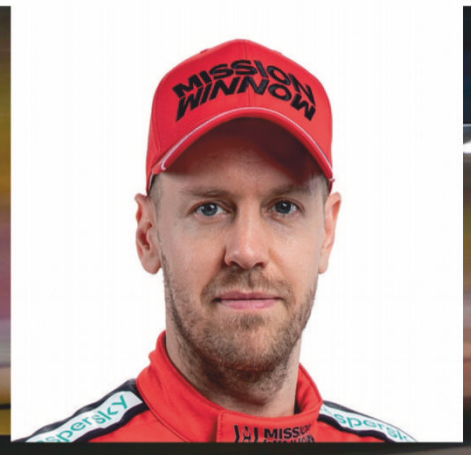
As the year went on, Red Bull managed to tame this characteristic, even if the fundamental issue remained. But once it was under control to a degree Verstappen was comfortable with, the Dutchman, who prefers cars with positive turn-in, was telling the team that to go quicker he needed more front grip.

Albon found himself in a position where he still preferred to focus on stabilising the rear, to give him confidence on turn-in. But, as the junior and slower member of the team, his views were in conflict with Verstappen's. And in that scenario, the team is only going to go one way...

At Mercedes, this plays out in less obvious ways.

In 2020, Bottas was closer to Hamilton on pure pace than Vettel was to Leclerc, but the gap was still substantial: a tad over two and a quarter tenths of a second. But at Mercedes the car was quick enough for Bottas to still qualify regularly on the front row, while Ferrari was in the midfield pack, hence Leclerc's average grid position of 8.2 compared to Vettel's 12.2.

It's the races where the differences created by Hamilton's talent are truly magnified, and not only because he finished ahead of Bottas far more often than not. ▶



Four-time world champion Vettel was discarded by Ferrari before the delayed 2020 season even got under way



Leclerc's first season at Ferrari was enough to cement his place at the team and as the man for the future

Take the second Silverstone race, for example, where Mercedes ran into tyre trouble, but Hamilton was able to keep his in better shape than Bottas and do one pitstop fewer. Or at the Nürburgring, where despite Hamilton being behind Bottas in the first stint, it was the Finn who ran into graining problems, came under pressure from Hamilton, locked a front tyre and lost the lead.

Or Portimão, where for once heat management of the Pirellis was not the problem on the smooth track surface – getting the tyres up to the right temperature in the right way was the key. And Hamilton, having lost two positions on the first lap, caught and passed Bottas, and won by more than 25 seconds.

Or Monza, where Bottas remained stuck at the back end of the top six after a poor first lap, but Hamilton, after serving a penalty for stopping while the pitlane was closed, carved through from the back to seventh.

"That's Lewis, man," says former F1 driver Pedro de la Rosa. "It doesn't matter what you throw at him, he will drive fast. Like in Monza. He's penalised. He drives from the back. He starts 32 seconds behind the leader and he finishes 17 seconds [behind], overtaking people. Ten more laps, and he overtakes Bottas. How is that possible? Because he is adaptable."

Having worked closely with both Hamilton and Alonso, de la Rosa is able to analyse what differentiates them from the rest.

"Lewis and Fernando are on a different level from the others," he says. "Trust me when I say they are really special drivers. You don't encounter talent of this magnitude every day; it happens every five or 10 years. When you encounter a Fernando, a Lewis – a Max as well – this is high voltage.

"What makes them special is how much speed they can run into the apex and still have decent exit speed. They can balance out the car with speed and brakes. If the car is understeering, or oversteering, they will sort this out with their feeling. They don't know why they are doing it. They just know it's faster."

This is also why Hamilton, Alonso and Verstappen are so much more effective than Bottas when trying to overtake, and look much more aggressive and threatening when they are chasing another car. Their enhanced feel means they can get closer to the car in front, compensating for the lost downforce with their control under braking.

Verstappen showed similar qualities in being the only driver able to put the Mercedes under pressure in 2020. And while Leclerc has been in F1 for only three seasons, he is already demonstrating a similar skillset.

Take the ability on show in his remarkable dogfight with Verstappen at Silverstone in 2019; or making a one-stop strategy work with a low-downforce set-up in high temperatures that chewed the tyres on the Mercedes at the 70th ▶

> "What makes them special is how much speed they can run into the apex and still have decent exit speed"
>
> **PEDRO DE LA ROSA**

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> Being humble, of acknowledging the gap to perfection, this is a strong characteristic of Fernando's
>
> **ANDREA STELLA**

Anniversary GP at the same track this year; or the breathtaking qualifying lap that put the Ferrari fourth on the grid at Portimão, when Vettel was 15th and gripless. And then there was Leclerc's remarkable under-the-radar drive in Turkey.

Leclerc was 35.7 seconds behind Vettel on lap 15 after Vettel made an electrifying start to vault to fourth on the first lap while Leclerc was stuck in 14th. Ten laps later, Leclerc had closed that to 20 seconds. Leclerc gained more time in the pits, to reduce the gap to just over seven seconds by the end of lap 34. Six laps later, Leclerc was in front, stretching a five-second lead over the next seven laps.

Vettel fought back in the closing laps, and overtook when Leclerc outbraked himself into the final chicane trying to wrestle second place away from Sergio Pérez, so Leclerc fell to fourth. Congratulated by the team on a great recovery drive, Leclerc rejected the compliments and focused only on the late error, saying he'd done a "shit" job.

In doing so, he demonstrated another quality of truly great drivers – to never be satisfied. Whether it's Hamilton learning from what he perceives as his weaknesses to come back stronger again. Or Verstappen working out that his crashes in the early races of 2018 were because he was trying too hard, then moving into another gear once he'd analysed what had gone wrong. Or Alonso's desire to constantly improve.

Perhaps contrary to popular perception of Alonso, McLaren performance director Andrea Stella says "being humble, of acknowledging the gap to perfection, this is a strong characteristic of Fernando's. So, through the years, he has worked on these weaker characteristics. To gain this final step, it is a combination of first of all you need to be humble and you need to think: 'That's not enough. I need to improve.' And the second thing is, 'How do I do that?'"

Alonso is returning to a Renault team rebranded Alpine and bullish about its prospects for this year and, particularly, 2022. "When he sees Daniel doing that in the car [finishing on the podium], I'm very sure he knows in himself he can do better than that," says sporting director Alan Permane. "That's his benchmark. That's the minimum he's going to do in it, what Daniel's doing in it."

That's the high standards these special drivers set. Even a season that would be regarded as outstanding for any other driver is the very least expected of them – and by themselves.

Andrew Benson is BBC Sport's chief F1 writer

Alonso's high standards mean he has to improve on what Ricciardo has done at Renault, despite two years out of F1



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AN UPHILL BATTLE

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It's been an uneasy ride for **Esteban Ocon** since his Formula 1 comeback – and fresh challenges lie in wait as he's joined by double world champion (and renowned agitator) Fernando Alonso in the newly rebranded Alpine team...



"I have a great relationship with Fernando and a lot of respect for him as well. I get on well with him, so there's no issues there at all"

"STARTING STRONG IS GOOD. FINISHING STRONG IS EPIC"

An aphorism which sounds as if it might have tripped from the tongue of an author of self-help manuals (it has: Robin Sharma, no less), but is no less astutely observed for being so. For Esteban Ocon it's a mantra to live by as he seeks to preserve the momentum of the season just passed, one in which he built from shaky foundations to a feisty maiden podium finish in the penultimate round.

Twelve months ago, the prevailing expectation was that the line-up of Ocon and Daniel Ricciardo at Renault was potentially the spiciest on the grid, given each had a history of on-track rancour with team-mates. Ricciardo went to Renault after feeling the Red Bull love tilt inexorably in the direction of Max Verstappen, even after the clash between the two in Baku in 2018. At Racing Point, Ocon and Sergio Pérez had formed possibly the least cuddly partnership since Ralf Schumacher and Juan Pablo Montoya at Williams in the mid-2000s – to the extent of being threatened with sanctions by the team if they carried on colliding. Ocon's nationality also offered the tantalising possibility of favouritism within the proudly French-flagged Renault organisation.

These expectations fizzled out over the course of a 2020 season in which Ricciardo generally showed Ocon his rear wing in qualifying and during races – and on the occasions when they *were* fighting for the same stretch of asphalt it was generally as a consequence of split strategies which resulted in team orders for Ocon to move over. It wasn't quite the rollocking comeback Ocon might have been hoping for and it illuminates the difficulty in squeezing the final few tenths from an F1 car. These are margins you find not through bravura and natural talent but by sifting through data and teasing out fragments of useful information.

"I think the biggest challenge has been to get back up to speed – and quickly," Ocon says. "You can kind of get back up to speed, but the last details take longer. What's been difficult in this past season is that we were going through three races, then just one week of a break, and then three races again. So, we had a limited amount of time to analyse and come back stronger for the next one compared with a normal season.

"But our progression has been good, I would say, and we're pretty pleased with that. Where I'm coming from is that we ended the year a lot stronger than at the beginning, and this is what we have to take on board for next season and start from there, from the much higher level. Obviously, Daniel [Ricciardo] stepped up from his first year at Renault to his second year and I'm looking to do the same."

In an interview with *GP Racing* last year Lando Norris spoke of how he'd used the enforced downtime of the first COVID-19 lockdown in the UK, analysing nuances of the data from the preceding season. This was a luxury Ocon didn't have, since he'd spent 2019 as Mercedes' reserve and therefore had no grands prix to review forensically in that way. There was also the matter of having to establish relationships in a different team, with a second-year driver alongside, and with the additional impediment of new social-distancing and mask-wearing protocols.



After a slow start to 2020 following his enforced year out, Ocon's performance picked up in the second half of the shortened season

"It has been a very tough season in that we couldn't go as much as we wanted to the factory to analyse, to do simulator correlation and preparation for races," Ocon says. "Because of travel restrictions, quarantine rules and so on, I probably spent 50% less time at the factory, on the sim, than I otherwise would.

"So that's not been a great help but it's not an excuse, because everyone has the same situation. In the end I found my way around and I've been a lot more comfortable recently than I was at the beginning of last season.

"Being out for a year, and then coming back into a new team is not an easy thing... What I've learned from this last year is crucial – working in a different way from what I did with my previous teams and finding the right words."

Key relationships such as those between the driver and their engineer, as well as between the driver and the rest of the trackside personnel, naturally take time to bed in. In the early races of last season, it became apparent the machinery wasn't running as smoothly as it might, as Ocon qualified an average of two tenths behind Ricciardo and failed more often to make it to Q3, limiting his strategic choices.

In first half of the Styrian GP – where Ocon outqualified Ricciardo for the first of just two occasions all season – there was a curious phase in which Ocon fought to defend sixth from Ricciardo, even though he was on degrading soft-compound tyres while his team-mate was pushing hard on mediums with plenty of life left. In the absence of team orders Ricciardo had to push his way through on lap 19 – arguably about four laps too late since fifth-placed Carlos Sainz was pulling away. Ocon retired six laps later when a radiator weld failed. Ricciardo said he believed team orders "were coming", but the delay was suggestive: was it a pitwall dither over potential strategic outcomes? Or were they unsure of Ocon's response to orders, given previous form?

While the gap between the Renault drivers in qualifying over the first half of 2020 was relatively small, it tended to have a disproportionate effect on outcomes because Ricciardo made it into Q3 regularly and Ocon didn't. This generally consigned Ocon to offset strategies requiring him to start on harder tyres in the hope of gaining track position as those immediately ahead on softer rubber pitted. As a consequence, there came several moments in which Ricciardo had to pass his team-mate while Ocon was beginning to struggle for grip on ageing rubber, adding to the impression that the Australian had the upper hand.

In what became a season of two halves, Ocon reduced his average pace deficit in qualifying to a tenth of a second. If there was a turning point, we might pin it down to the Italian GP weekend, where frustrations boiled to the surface. During the red-flag period which defined the outcome of the race, Ocon ultimately chose used softs rather than new hards in order to be stronger at the restart, though the radio conversation between him and veteran engineer Mark Slade (who engineered Mika Häkkinen to two world championships at McLaren and latterly worked with Kimi Räikkonen at both McLaren and 'Team Enstone') revealed some initial uncertainty over how many laps the used tyres had done. Ocon then distracted himself by enquiring about what Ricciardo was doing and quibbling about how many positions he had lost as a result of Renault double-stacking its drivers in the pits under the Safety Car before the red flag.

Informed that Ricciardo would take the restart on mediums, Ocon described that as "the right choice" – but the only mediums available to him were a used set which hadn't been in tyre blankets and were too cold to use. Ocon duly flew at the restart, only to fade over the final laps, though his eighth place was a net gain from 12th on the grid. A rebarbative exchange then followed over the radio on the slowing-down lap as Ocon railed against the tyre choice, only to be instructed by Slade and team principal Cyril Abiteboul to keep his thoughts off an open channel.

Whatever happened behind closed doors afterwards, from this point onwards Ocon began to find more speed during qualifying, which gave him a platform to perform better over the second half of the season. At Mugello he raced strongly before being eliminated by brake failure and then, in Portugal, an outlier race where starting on a harder tyre compound paid dividends to those who could make them last, he completed 53 laps on mediums to finish eighth – ahead of Ricciardo, who had started one place in front.

Ironically, perhaps, it was Ocon's final failure of the season to reach Q3 which set him on the path to his best result, second place in the Sakhir Grand Prix. Once again he executed a long first stint on harder rubber with aplomb, which delivered him track position before the Safety Car prompted by Jack Aitken's late-race shunt. Running fourth at the onset of that, Ocon gained two places from Mercedes' disarray and, though never a serious threat to new race leader Sergio Pérez, Ocon had the other Racing Point of Lance Stroll well under control.

"I think the understanding with my side of the garage was a lot stronger by the end of the year," reflects Ocon. "And we found a much better way of building the weekend, getting the car to where I wanted it to be. Early in the year I was probably giving directions which were not the optimum for the car I had, and the understanding was not fantastic between me and the garage. We're doing this a lot better now, everything is properly understood and we are a lot stronger all together."

Now Ocon faces the looming presence in the garage next door of Fernando Alonso, undoubtedly one of F1's big beasts even if he is returning after two seasons competing elsewhere, and is now nearing his 40th birthday. Alonso brings baggage not only historical – in the form of his two world championships and well-established reputation as a tantrum-prone disruptor – but also current, in that he has been hired as the figurehead of a team with ambitions and a recently installed signer of cheques (Luca de Meo, CEO of Renault since July 2020).

Ocon has raced against Alonso in F1, during McLaren's midfield toils in 2017 and 2018, and describes him as "tough but fair". Ocon has yet to experience the intensity Alonso brings to off-track operations. Asked what his expectations are of working with Alonso, Ocon is diplomatic: "I have a great relationship with Fernando and a lot of respect for him as well. I get on well with him, so there's no issues there at all."

But with expectations from above to be met, and a hyper-competitive animal for a new team-mate, Ocon is going to have to start and finish strong if he wishes his 2021 season to be truly epic for the right reasons...


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HOW TO FIX FERRARI

From challenging Mercedes for world titles, Ferrari abruptly reverted to the kind of shambles not seen since the early 1990s over the course of a disastrous 2020 campaign. Putting the Scuderia back on track won't be the work of a moment...

WORDS ROBERTO CHINCHERO
PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

TO understand why Ferrari flunked the 2020 Formula 1 season so comprehensively, and why the road back is so challenging, we need to go back a year. To 28 February 2020, in fact, and a bombshell the sport's governing body lodged in the stakeholders' inboxes roughly five minutes before the chequered flag on the final day of pre-season testing in Barcelona.

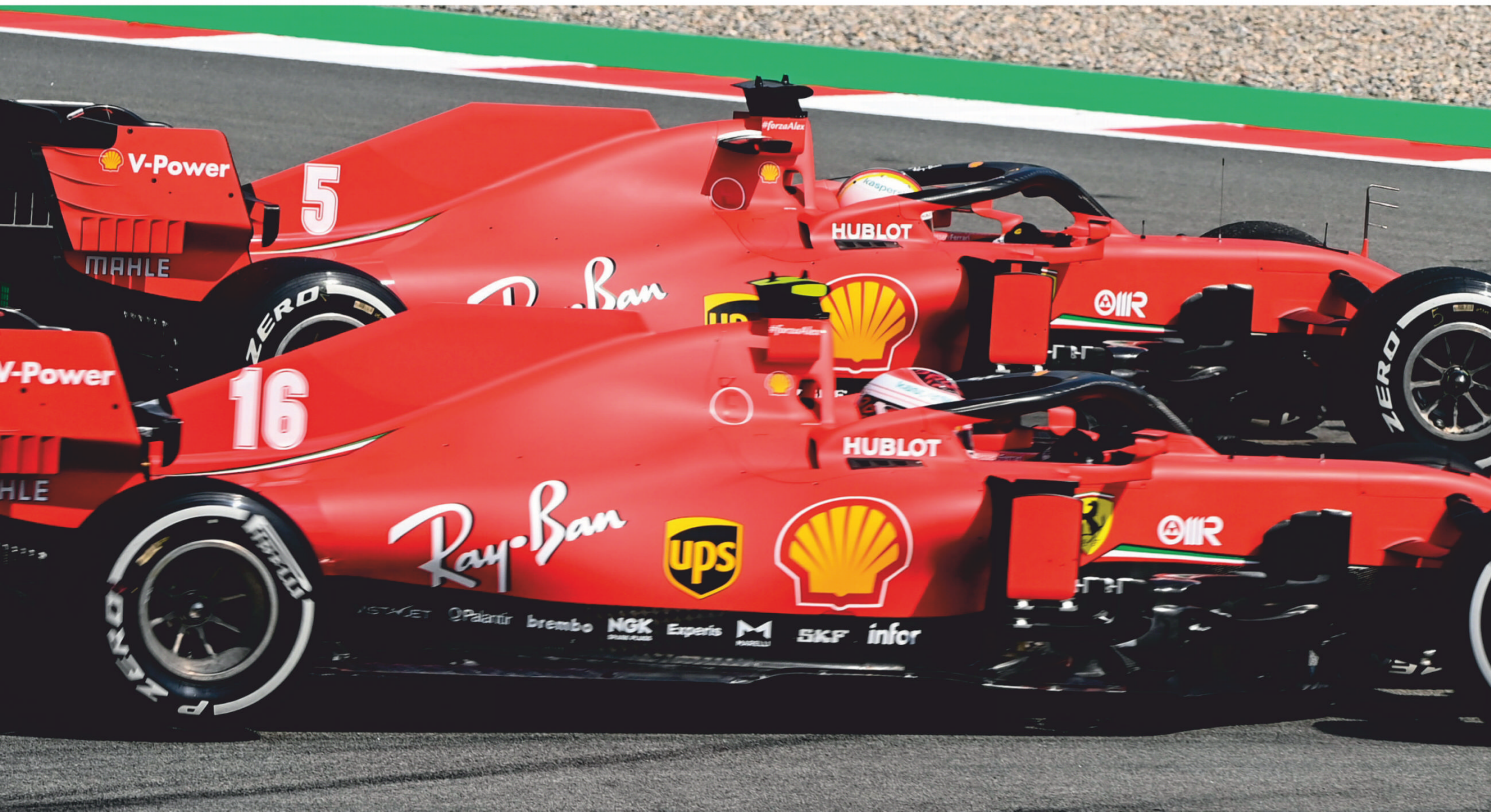
The statement read: "The FIA announces that, after thorough technical investigations, it has concluded its analysis of the operation of the Scuderia Ferrari Formula 1 power unit and reached a settlement with the team. The specifics of the agreement will remain between the parties. The FIA and Scuderia Ferrari have agreed to a number of technical commitments that will improve the monitoring of all Formula 1 power units for forthcoming championship seasons."

These 'investigations' had been in progress for several months, during which the FIA's engineering experts pored over every detail of the Ferrari engine, which had been the subject of ongoing speculation during the final races of the previous season. Other teams had been expecting the FIA to uncover some sort of 'smoking gun' and that it would hit Ferrari with a penalty – perhaps even cancelling some of the results achieved in the 2019 season. Instead this statement, which left a veil of mystery over the specifics of the case, felt like a cop-out and Ferrari's rivals were outraged.

In hindsight, perhaps, they did not need to be so anxious. The FIA had already issued several technical directives relating to the fuel and lubrication systems of the F1 power units and how they would be monitored – and in the hiatus between testing and the season actually starting, it issued several more. In effect, the 'grey areas' in the 2019 regulations had been removed and the policing sharpened, and all the power unit manufacturers had to adapt to it. It was obvious as early as the Barcelona tests that those new regulations had hit the Ferrari power unit quite hard, an impression confirmed by the relative performance of Ferrari's engine customers.

THE SF1000 HAD BEEN DESIGNED AROUND THE ASSUMPTION OF HIGH POWER, AND THE TECHNICAL GROUP PERMITTED A FAIR VALUE OF DRAG, TRUSTING THAT ON THE TRACKS WITH IMPORTANT STRAIGHTS THE ENGINE WOULD BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COMPENSATE

This was a determining factor in Ferrari's 2020 performances. Team principal Mattia Binotto has never quantified the horsepower lost through complying with the new regime, but estimates made by other teams put the figure around 50-60bhp. That's a significant number and it compromised the entire 2020 technical package. The SF1000 had been designed around the assumption of high power, and the technical group comprising Simone Resta, David Sanchez and Enrico Cardile (Resta returned from secondment at Alfa Romeo when the project was almost completed) permitted a fair value of drag, trusting that on the tracks with important



straights the engine would be powerful enough to compensate.

It was the shortcomings of the 2019 project which dictated the aerodynamic philosophy of the SF1000. The SF90 was fast on the straight, as demonstrated by its performance at tracks such as Bahrain, Spa and Monza, but its slow-corner performance was lacking, as was overall pace at circuits requiring high downforce levels. The goal of the SF1000 was to increase the downforce and Ferrari succeeded, albeit not in the ideal way, since it came at the cost of efficiency. The Ferrari engineers still hoped the power of the engine would compensate for the greater drag, but the agreement with the FIA meant this was not the case.

In 2020 Ferrari had major problems on the tracks where it had achieved its best results in 2019, confirming the impression that the direction of the project failed after the agreement with the FIA. It did not take long for the Ferrari engineers to realise this was going to be a very difficult season: a notable lack of speed became apparent at the Barcelona tests, and this could not be resolved quickly because it related to the basic design of the car.

The obvious question is why Ferrari specifically has lost so much power in complying with the new FIA technical directives. It's likely to relate to details of the power unit's architecture which Ferrari naturally wishes to remain confidential, hence the nature of its agreement with the FIA. The governing body has admitted it could not find conclusive evidence of wrongdoing, which would have enabled Ferrari to lodge appeals against any punitive sanctions. That would have taken months, which is why the FIA reached a compromise.

"The agreement is secret because it is obvious that an agreement of this type is," says Binotto. "If it hadn't been secret we would have had to show everyone the drawings



PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; CHARLES COATES



Vettel's departure was announced pre-season but he plugged away despite the SF1000's troubles

Leclerc and Vettel had to deal with a substantially inferior package in 2020 following the ruling on Ferrari's 2019 engine

of our engine, and I don't think anyone has ever done it in Formula 1, and no one will ever do that in the future. About the 'grey areas', it was so throughout the 2019 season until new guidelines arrived, [which were] also defined thanks to our help. These directives have had an impact on all engines, but we paid a higher price."

There have been no official communications regarding what has been changed on the Ferrari 2020 power unit. The team's opponents believe that in 2019 Ferrari found and exploited one of these 'grey areas' regarding fuel flow, in such a way that it was able to inject more fuel. But it was never *found* to have exceeded the permitted maximum of 100 kg/h.

"Nobody in 2019 filed a protest against us," insists Binotto. "And what was done subsequently [at the end of the 2019 season] starts from the FIA's desire to continue its investigations, which would have led to a considerable waste of energies, both on their part and ours, at a time when we were busy developing the car for the 2020 season. We thus came to a simple agreement: let's focus on the future, let's help us understand what are the grey areas where clarification is needed, clarifications which have been made with our help."

Another decision which had a huge impact on Ferrari's 2020 season was the one not to renew Sebastian Vettel's contract at the end of the year – and to tell him he was on his way out before a wheel had turned in anger.



PICTURE: MARK SUTTON

AT TIMES LECLERC'S DESPERATION TO MAKE AN IMPACT LED TO POOR DECISION-MAKING, AS AT THE START OF THE SAKHIR GRAND PRIX WHEN HE TOOK OUT MAX VERSTAPPEN

On 12 May Ferrari announced the divorce with Vettel, and it's important to underline this was a unilateral choice, a decision taken by the top management of the Scuderia. It's been many years since Vettel has been the dictated rather than the dictator when it comes to his career.

"I was at home," says Binotto, "and before calling Sebastian to tell him our decision, I mentally repeated three times what I should tell him and the best way to do it. The decision to end the collaboration was not easy, because we love him as a driver, as a person, and for what he has given to the team over the years. But there comes a time when you need to make choices looking to the future, we are close to the start of a new technical cycle in 2022, there is a team that is building up in all its roles, we have the duty and the ambition to have to look at the medium and long term, and it is precisely on these rational arguments that one finds the strength to make certain choices.

Leclerc will be able to take fewer risks this season if the car is improved

"Did Seb put the phone down? No, he didn't close the call, he's a very intelligent person, a beautiful person, as demonstrated by the professional approach he maintained during the season in which there was no lack of difficulties. Never negative, always proactive, a very respectable person."

Vettel's behaviour in public was exemplary but, human nature being what it is, the motivations weren't the same as they were in 2017 and 2018, when he was battling for the title. Being declared surplus to Ferrari's requirements cannot fail to have had a bearing on morale, especially for a four-time world champion who was previously the team leader.

The SF1000's performance didn't help the situation, even though the Scuderia had recalibrated its expectations as the realities of the car's problems became apparent. Charles Leclerc had prevailed in the internal battle with Vettel in 2019 and now a difficult car put Vettel deeper into crisis. He traditionally prefers a car with a lot of rear end predictability, a characteristic the SF1000 never possessed. Beyond scoring a podium in the Turkish GP, for Vettel 2020 was a long countdown towards the start of his new adventure at Aston Martin, and Vettel made no secret of that. The desire to change is understandable, and paradoxically in the final races of 2020 the driver who appeared under pressure was Leclerc.

For Ferrari's new superstar 2020 was a shocking comedown after the great exploits of the previous season. Drivers enjoying long careers will find the occasional year of suffering can happen, and they eventually reconcile themselves to that and gain perspective. This is what Leclerc needs to digest over the winter break, because at times his desperation to make an impact led to poor decision-making, as at the start of the Sakhir Grand Prix when he took out Max Verstappen. For his second year as undisputed team leader, Leclerc must aspire to greater serenity in high-pressure moments such as this.

Mattia Binotto's task is not a small one, and although the team principal has now officially declared that he will play no further part in the technical decisions, his presence in the *Gestione Sportiva* in Maranello will always tempt him to take a look at the technical area. Also, at certain stages of the 2020 season, there was the impression that Binotto was left alone at the helm of Scuderia Ferrari.

President John Elkann and CEO Louis Camilleri periodically issued statements guaranteeing maximum confidence in Binotto, but there is an obvious difference in approach between the current top management and that of Sergio Marchionne, who had taken to heart the 'mission' of Ferrari. Marchionne not only attended many grands prix, he carved out the time to be present at meetings of the Formula 1 Commission.

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THE NEW POWER UNIT HAS ALREADY BEEN RUNNING ON TEST BENCHES FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, AND BINOTTO SAYS HE IS CONFIDENT ABOUT ITS PROSPECTS

Today Binotto relies on himself and on the emerging figure of Laurent Mekies for such duties; what's missing, perhaps, is a charismatic heavy-hitter, a role fulfilled in the past by Luca di Montezemolo and Marchionne. Neither of these individuals were afraid of thumping desks in offices in defence of Ferrari's interests.

Often when Ferrari struggles on track, heads roll within the factory. During 2020 there were some changes in terms of organisation of responsibilities inside the technical department, but any who expected big-name recruitments to reinforce operations were to be disappointed. It's very likely Simone Resta, who left to start a new adventure at Haas, will be replaced with an experienced figure, but any such hire will only be able to have meaningful influence on the 2022 project.

In the nearer future there's the rapidly approaching question of the 2021 season and how Ferrari can claw back lost ground. Will it be possible to do so with the restrictions imposed on development for this season? The possibility exists. The most critical aspect for Ferrari in 2020 was undoubtedly the power unit, and on this front there are no restrictions. The new power unit, with a lighter turbine and new cylinder head design, has already been running on test benches for several months and Binotto says he is confident about its prospects.

Obviously the definitive answer will only come when the new car runs on track, but astute observers have divined a potentially significant change in the political winds. In November, Ferrari changed its position regarding Red Bull's proposal to freeze the power unit specifications from 2022, a concept it had previously been against. This suggests Maranello is confident about its new unit, because otherwise an early freeze might prove ruinous.

Aside from the power unit, there's still room for manoeuvre to solve the major problems of the SF1000 project by working on its aerodynamics and rear suspension. Ferrari can spend the two tokens granted by the regulations in these areas and hope the horsepower gains from the new engine brings the complete package up to standard.

Ferrari's ambitions are more modest than they were 12 months ago. It can aspire to more podiums, perhaps to poach the occasional win, and aim to finish third in the constructors' championship, but these goals won't be simple to achieve.

Provided Leclerc can rediscover his equilibrium and Ferrari can put together a more competitive package – elements which are intertwined – success will also depend on the occupant of the second car. While the announcement of Carlos Sainz was greeted with disdain by those expecting Daniel Ricciardo, the Spaniard boosted his credentials over the course of a strong 2020 with McLaren. There are fewer doubts concerning his maturity and talent and fewer voices whispering that an incorrect decision had been made.

Ultimately any rebirth of Ferrari will rely upon the collaboration between the two drivers. As is usual in F1, if there is any friction between them, it will manifest itself when the car is in a position for them to win races.

It's perhaps ironic that this is one problem Ferrari must hope to face and manage as soon as possible.



The 2021 goals may be modest by Ferrari standards but Binotto must ensure they are met

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JOHN HOGAN

1944-2021

This quietly spoken and unassuming Australian was one of the most influential men in the F1 paddock for nearly 40 years

WORDS DAMIEN SMITH
PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

John Hogan, who died in January of a Covid-related illness at the age of 76, was a pioneering commercial figure in Formula 1 who commanded significant influence in the paddock. But he was also so much more. 'Hogie', as he was universally known, was a genuine motorsport enthusiast whose intuitive understanding of F1 made him a popular character and close friend to many drivers, including James Hunt, Niki Lauda, Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna.

In F1 circles, Hogie will be remembered as the real 'Marlboro Man' (even if he didn't wear the hat), having joined parent company Philip Morris in 1973 as the cigarette brand was embarking on its long commercial relationship with F1. Until 2002, when he finally left the company, Hogan was Marlboro's man in the paddock who negotiated the big-money deals that made its flourescent-red-and-white colours synonymous with the world of grand prix racing.

"People used to call us cowboys and at first you get offended," he said in 2014. "But then I realised, no, actually that is what we are and it's great. I loved being a cowboy!"

The son of a soldier, Australian-born Hogan spent childhood years in the Far East following his father's army postings, but moved to England to attend school, where he befriended future *A Clockwork Orange* actor Malcolm McDowell, whose father ran a pub in Aintree. Visits to F1 races at the Liverpool venue would whet Hogan's appetite.

HIS MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO F1'S STORY WAS SURELY HIS ADVOCACY OF DENNIS TO TAKE OVER McLAREN IN 1980

Hogan plunged into the advertising business straight out of school, working up to big accounts such as Nestlé and Coca-Cola. He also found himself naturally drawn to motor racing people, befriending future Brabham F1 driver Tim Schenken, Scottish rising star Gerry Birrell, and Hunt. Hogan would recall sourcing them sponsorship, at £500 per race, then found a kindred spirit in Ron Dennis, a former mechanic who co-founded the Rondel Formula 2 team. Hogan came up with the team's backing from Motul and 208 Radio Luxembourg.

When he landed at Philip Morris, Hogan wasted little time making his mark, soon switching the Marlboro brand from BRM to the sharper McLaren team, with whom Emerson Fittipaldi won his second world title in 1974. When the Brazilian shocked the team by quitting for his brother Wilson's new Copersucar-backed outfit, Hogan played a central role in McLaren signing Hunt to replace him. Hogan was perfectly placed to witness the Englishman's epic season-long duel with Lauda through 1976, maintaining strong friendships with both.

His most significant contribution to F1's story was surely his advocacy of Dennis to take over McLaren in 1980, in the wake of the team's dwindling form under Teddy Mayer. Without Hogan, Dennis might never have landed the defining role of his professional life, as Marlboro McLaren raised the bar through the 1980s and Lauda, Prost and Senna returned the brand's investment with a string of world titles. Hogan also ran a programme supporting young talent: Mika Häkkinen, Eddie Irvine and Allan McNish were among the beneficiaries.

Like team co-ordinator Jo Ramírez, Hogan was one of few people to remain on good terms with both Prost and Senna during their explosive rivalry between 1988 and 1990. "I had a problem in that I liked them both," he said, even if he did admit Senna was "not a very amicable individual". Along with Gerhard Berger and Hunt, it was Hogan who contributed to Senna's mellowing in his final years – although he couldn't blunt the Brazilian's cutthroat approach to negotiations when he agreed the infamous $1million



Hogan at his desk in 1995. Never one to grab the limelight, he remained a key figure in Formula 1 for many years

per race deal in Senna's final season with McLaren in 1993.

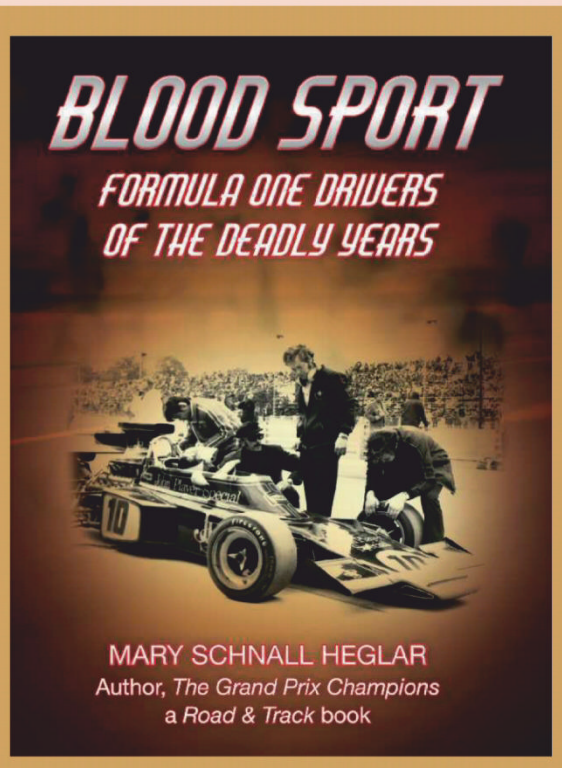
It was also Hogan who terminated McLaren's long relationship with Marlboro at the end of 1996, confirming the news to an expectant Dennis at the Spanish GP. Despite years of friendship, he'd say the conversation would prove no hardship after the many tough budget negotiations the pair had engaged in each season.

The deal to increase Marlboro's investment in Ferrari was perfectly timed, coinciding as it did with Michael Schumacher's incredible run of success in Scuderia red. Hogan held the German in high regard, but by Schumacher's third of five Ferrari titles Hogan cried enough, leaving his post as he approached 60. A brief, unhappy experience at calamitous Jaguar Racing would have been an off-key coda to his career, but Hogan's connection to F1 – including a strong bond with Bernie Ecclestone – was never truly broken. He'd subsequently work closely with Zak Brown as a consultant to his JMI marketing agency, advising the future McLaren team boss using all the experience he'd gained from a life of paddock negotiations.

He modestly claimed to be "the man with one eye in the land of the blind" during those 'cowboy pioneering' days of the 1970s. But beside the likes of Ecclestone and Colin Chapman – another friend – Hogan was a low-profile but key mover and shaker in the generation that hustled F1 into the modern commercial era, and he played his part with energy, charm and a vital dose of good humour. It was with good reason that *GP Racing* recently enshrined him as one of the most influential figures in F1 history.

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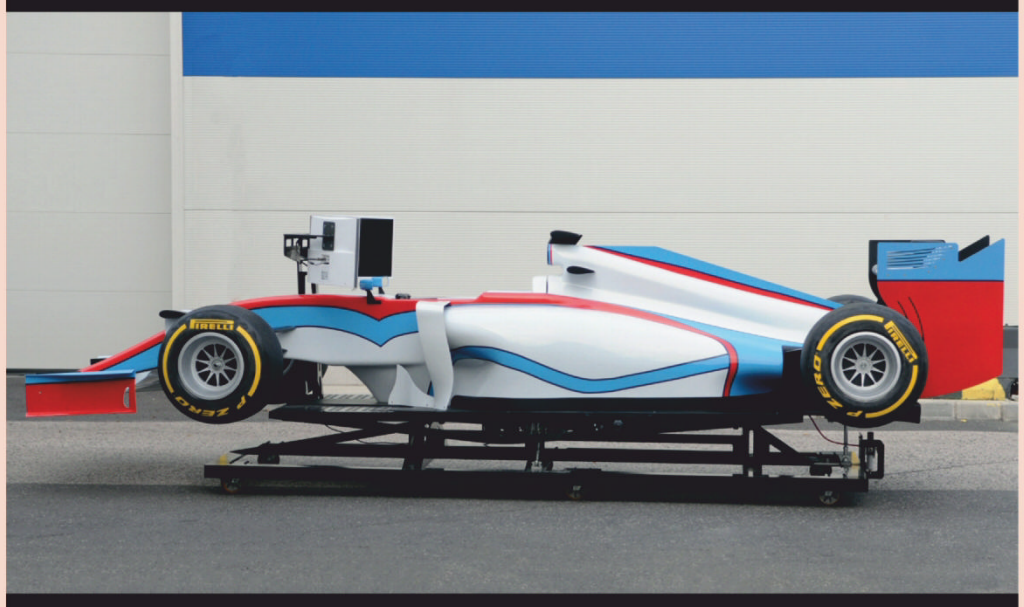
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AWARDS 2020

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We all had high hopes for 2020 before COVID-19 did its nasty work. We looked forward to a new race in Vietnam, the return of Zandvoort, and hoped Ferrari and Red Bull would challenge Mercedes. But those races bit the dust, Ferrari lost its power advantage, and Red Bull got lost developing the RB16. Thus, Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes dominated. But they weren't the only stars of this unusual season. Here we celebrate *your* F1 heroes of 2020.

START OF THE YEAR 66
IMPROVED TEAM OF THE YEAR 67
CAR OF THE YEAR 68
PITCREW OF THE YEAR 69
OVERTAKE OF THE YEAR 70
TEAM BOSS OF THE YEAR 71
QUALIFIER OF THE YEAR 72
DRIVE OF THE YEAR 73
DRIVER OF THE YEAR 74

WORDS BEN ANDERSON PORTRAITS THE F1 TEAMS
PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

START OF THE YEAR

Kimi Räikkönen Alfa Romeo





PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR; ALFA ROMEO

"I thank all the GP Racing *readers for this award. Going from P16 to P6 within a lap was obviously quite good, but when you're in the car you don't really focus on the overall gain, you are just looking at the next move. It's only when you watch it all back that it really dawns on you – that was a good lap! Hopefully next year we will be a bit further up the grid and we won't need to overtake that many cars…"*

Kimi Räikkönen

The Portuguese Grand Prix

Kimi Räikkönen fans didn't have much to cheer in 2020, as Alfa Romeo suffered a competitive slump of a similar magnitude to Haas. Ferrari customer status was not the thing to have in the year of coronavirus… But the Portuguese Grand Prix provided brief cause for celebration.

Technically, this award should probably be called 'first lap of the year', because Räikkönen's initial launch from 16th wasn't great. In fact, by the first corner he'd actually lost a place to team-mate Antonio Giovinazzi. But what followed was utterly spectacular, and worthy of this prize.

Räikkönen passed George Russell's Williams around the outside exiting Turn 1; Daniil Kvyat's AlphaTauri round the outside under braking for the Turn 3 hairpin; got back past Giovinazzi on the exit of that same corner; overtook Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari exiting the fast Turn 4 left-hander (where Sergio Pérez's Racing Point was also stranded); dived inside Lance Stroll at the Turn 5 hairpin; rounded Esteban Ocon's Renault on the outside of Turn 6; out-dragged Pierre Gasly's AlphaTauri on the run to Turn 9; drove around the outside of Daniel Ricciardo at Turn 10; went inside Alex Albon's Red Bull at Turn 12; then passed Charles Leclerc's Ferrari just after the first lap was finished to reach the top six.

Räikkönen finding confidence and grip where others couldn't is amazing to watch – search the onboard video F1 posted to YouTube if you haven't seen it. It's like Kimi is playing an F1 computer game rather than doing the real thing.

"It was great to be able to pass people, but unfortunately the end result [Räikkönen finished 11th] didn't really give us anything, so that was pretty disappointing," he said. "I didn't get excited after one lap – I was looking more for hopefully staying there the whole race."

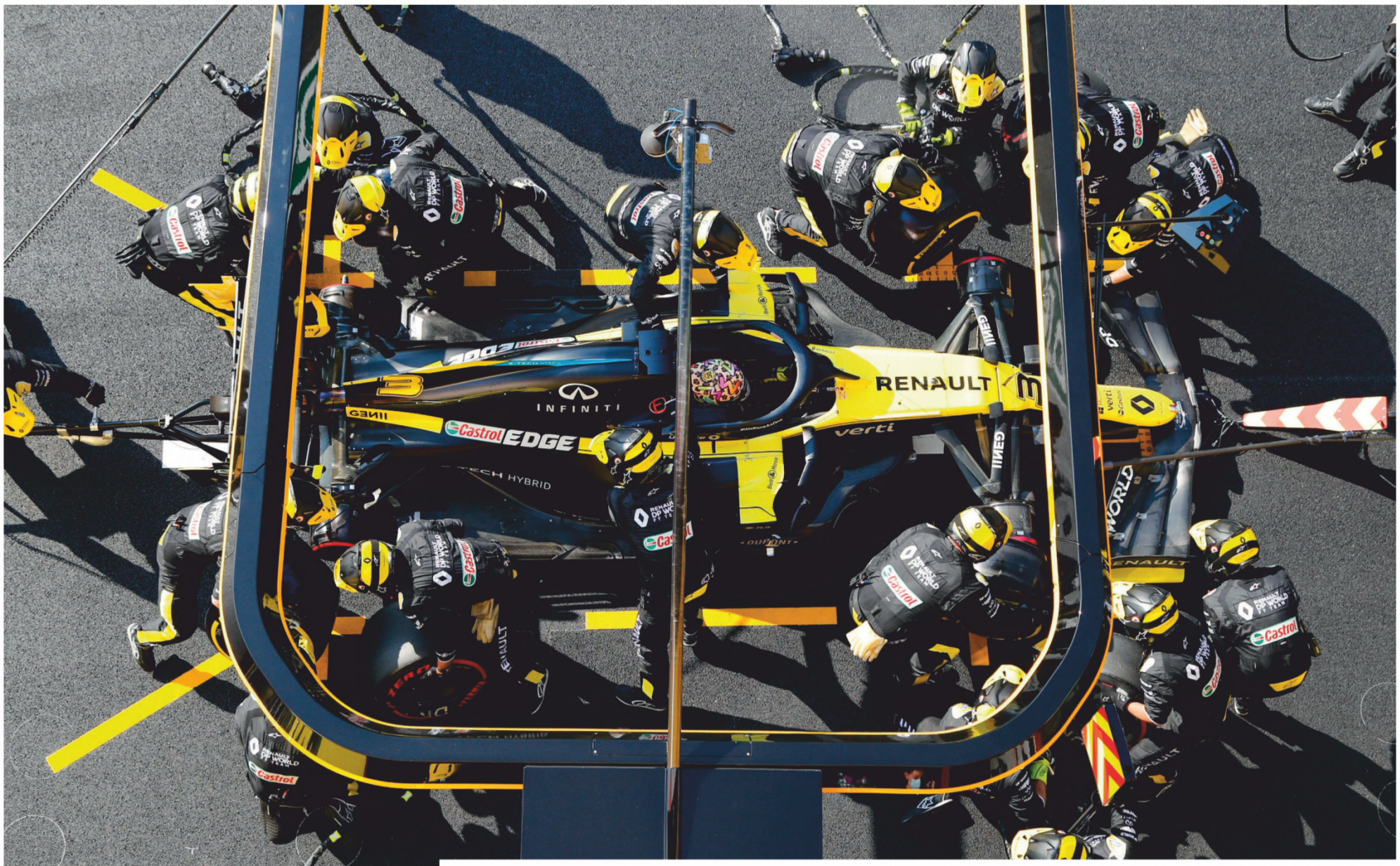
HOW YOU VOTED

Kimi Räikkönen Portugal	67.2%
George Russell Tuscany	11.8%
Max Verstappen Hungary	9.6%
Charles Leclerc Belgium	5.8%
Kevin Magnussen Russia	5.6%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

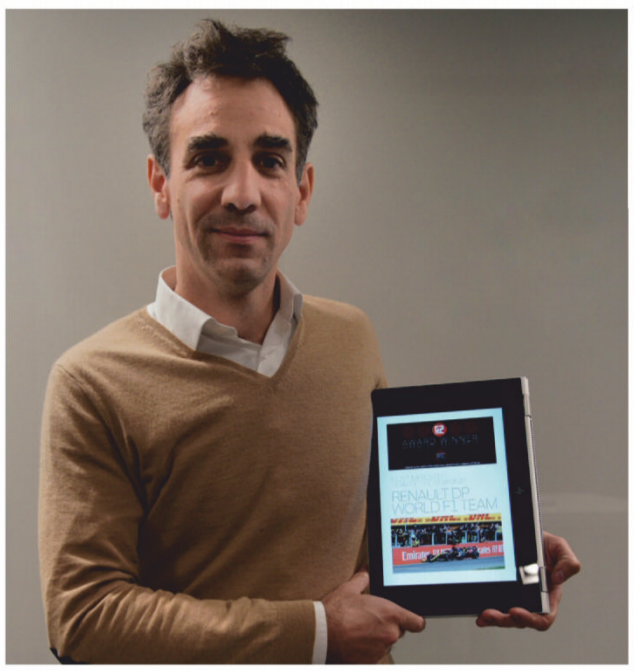
IMPROVED TEAM OF THE YEAR

Renault



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; RENAULT

"After the very unusual year we have just had, to receive this award recognising our progression is very satisfying. After last year's disappointment, the changes we made to the team and the intense work over the winter, we could feel that we had made progress. The time gap to pole position was reduced by about 30% compared with 2019. While it means we need to reach another 70%, it gives us a target and we will now concentrate our attention on this." ***Cyril Abiteboul,*** *Renault team principal and managing director*



This is a well-deserved award for a team which showed tangible progress in 2020, despite its final constructors' championship position (fifth) being identical to its 2019 achievement.

The reality of 2020 is that Renault made huge strides forward, scoring almost 100 points more than the previous season, fighting for third place in the standings until the final race, and beating Ferrari comfortably. And there were those breakthrough podiums, thanks to Daniel Ricciardo's third placed finishes at the Nürburgring and Imola, and Esteban Ocon finishing second in the Sakhir GP.

But perhaps more important than these results was the improved pace of the car. Enstone used the pandemic-enforced delay to the season to improve the RS20 between pre-season testing and the first race, and Ricciardo said he could immediately feel the improvement in rear grip. Tweaks to the set-up at Silverstone put the car in what Ricciardo called the "sweet spot" and he became a consistent top-six threat in qualifying as the season progressed.

According to team boss Cyril Abiteboul, this progress was the result of changes made during 2019, when aerodynamic development of the RS19 stalled. Since then, the technical team (now under Pat Fry's leadership) has been performing strongly.

"There's been lots of change – but maybe more so in 2019," Abiteboul explained. "It's just that now we're seeing the effects. Another thing that's had an impact is that during the hiatus we were able to mature a technical package that had been scheduled for June or July, so from race one the car was benefitting from the upgrade. We've got new people and a new dynamic within the aero department, and a new way of developing the car."

HOW YOU VOTED

Renault	28.3%
Racing Point	26.6%
McLaren	20.80%
AlphaTauri	18%
Williams	6.3%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

CAR OF THE YEAR

Mercedes W11



PICTURES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; MERCEDES; RED BULL



"It's been a great pleasure to see the W11 being pushed to its limits in Valtteri's and Lewis's hands. This car looked strong at almost every track and in almost all conditions. It's been a big improvement over the previous car, which was already very strong. The W11 is the result of a tremendous amount of work in Brixworth and Brackley and I'm very happy that all this hard work was crowned with another championship for the team."

Andrew Shovlin, *trackside engineering director*

It's hardly surprising the Mercedes W11 was the resounding winner of this award, as the mighty winning machine of Brackley/Brixworth/Stuttgart rolled on to a record seventh consecutive championship double.

The stats are one thing: 15 pole positions, 13 wins from 17 races, 83% of laps led – but the way Mercedes worked harder than ever to respond to Ferrari's mid-2019 form is what truly stands out about this work of art. Innovative suspension front and rear, re-engineering of the power unit to make it the best in F1 again, and no stone left unturned in pursuit of refinement to the overall package, which added up to a substantial performance gain.

When the Ferrari engine's wings were clipped by the FIA, and Red Bull got itself into a spin trying to develop the RB16 after winter testing in Barcelona, a yawning chasm opened between W11 and the rest. Mercedes also made full use of the pandemic-enforced factory shutdown, working out ways to improve engine reliability and give star driver Lewis Hamilton the handling characteristics he wanted.

"Last year our car was good through medium and high-speed corners but was quite poor in low-speed corners," he explained. "The car would not rotate as well as we'd like. I've always preferred a more positive front end in the car. But there's a limitation with these tyres. Last year our car was definitely very, very strong at the rear and the front was a lot more understeery.

"We started this year in winter testing and the car had similar characteristics, and I had some challenges I put to the team in terms of how we set the car up which changed that. We moved the aero balance. That difficulty we had in 2019 with the car rotating – we don't have that problem anymore."

HOW YOU VOTED

Mercedes W11	84.2%
McLaren MCL35	7.1%
Racing Point RP20	4.7%
Red Bull RB16	3.4%
Renault RS20	0.6%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

PITCREW OF THE YEAR

Red Bull



There is probably no team in Formula 1 better at good old-fashioned mechanic-ing than Red Bull. Whether it's servicing the cars in world record time during races, swapping engines with incredible efficiency, or repairing damaged cars at breakneck pace, the Red Bull pitcrew remains the benchmark in F1 – and is thus a deserved recipient of this award.

The team won F1's fastest pitstop prize an incredible 15 times from 17 races in 2020, including nine sub-two-seconds efforts across the season. Three times Red Bull turned its cars around in less than 1.9s, with 1.86s efforts in Russia and Portugal the fastest stops of the season. No other team made a stop quicker than two seconds, though Williams came closest with a 2.00s stop for George Russell in Russia.

Calmness under pressure is key, and perhaps nowhere was that more evident than in Hungary, after star driver Max Verstappen crashed his car in wet conditions on the way to the grid. Mechanics had to replace the front wing and parts of the suspension with the clock ticking down to the start of the race.

"The funny thing is, I wasn't stressed about it," said team boss Christian Horner after Verstappen finished second in his repaired car. "I felt that if anyone could do the repairs then our mechanics could. You'd need to be a sensational piano player to be able to work your fingers within the space they had, such is the tight design of these cars.

"They were properly buzzed in the garage and then had to calm themselves down because it is the same mechanics doing the pitstops. They smashed in a sub-two-second pitstop as well – the quickest during the race – for the third race in a row. It was a phenomenal performance."

"Perfection's a goal we strive for but rarely reach – but the guys have shown such professionalism, and the team spirit is extraordinary. The guys have worked harder and harder on consistency. The fact they are achieving sub-two-second pitstops is extraordinary; the number they've racked up this year, under pressure, in race situations – we're at the point now where we're doing faster pitstops in the races than we are in practice."

Jonathan Wheatley, *sporting director*

HOW YOU VOTED

Red Bull	60.6%
Williams	18.5%
Mercedes	14.8%
McLaren	2.6%
Ferrari	2.2%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

OVERTAKE OF THE YEAR

Daniel Ricciardo
Renault

On Charles Leclerc at the Eifel GP





PICTURES: ANDY HONE; RENAULT; MERCEDES

We've offered no Rookie of the Year award for 2020, given Nicholas Latifi had no competition in this category until Lewis Hamilton missing the penultimate race of the season created its domino effect, so we replaced this with 'Overtake of the Year'.

Perhaps it's no surprise to see Daniel Ricciardo scoop this prize from your vote, considering the formidable reputation he's built for himself as a master of the art during F1's hybrid era. Competition in this category was fierce too. *GP Racing* thought Sergio Pérez might nab the prize for his ballsy outside pass of Carlos Sainz at Turn 5 in the Styrian Grand Prix, or Charles Leclerc for his gutsy lunge down the inside of Pérez's Racing Point at Turn 3 during the previous weekend's Austrian GP, or even Carlos Sainz – for going round the outside of Kimi Räikkönen at Monza's first chicane.

But our ever-discerning readers picked Ricciardo's Fernando Alonso-like move on Charles Leclerc's Ferrari in the Eifel GP.

This was an important weekend for Ricciardo and Renault, because it finished with him claiming the team's first podium since returning as a works outfit – its first podium in F1 since the 2011 Malaysian GP – and the pass on Leclerc, which came on lap nine of 60 and was for fourth place at that time, was crucial for gaining the track position needed to put Ricciardo into third when Valtteri Bottas's Mercedes broke unexpectedly.

"There were a couple of laps where I had a run at Charles into Turn 1, but he was covering the inside really well," Ricciardo explained. "I thought if I forced him deep into the corner then I might have a chance into Turn 2. The corner is very low grip and off-camber, but I had confidence there all weekend and I managed to make the car stick on the outside."

"I've had a couple of these awards over the last few years, so it's nice to know I've still got it! This was an important overtake for me, as once I got past Charles I was able to pull away from the pack and set-up that first podium finish with the team."

Daniel Ricciardo

HOW YOU VOTED

Daniel Ricciardo (on Charles Leclerc, Eifel GP)	42.6%
Charles Leclerc (on Sergio Pérez, Austrian GP)	22.9%
Carlos Sainz (on Kimi Räikkönen, Italian GP)	13.9%
Sergio Perez (on Carlos Sainz, Styrian GP)	12.9%
Valtteri Bottas (on Daniel Ricciardo, Tuscan GP)	7.8%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

TEAM BOSS OF THE YEAR

Toto Wolff
Mercedes



"Thank you for this recognition. It's very humbling to be named best team principal, because ultimately my job is very easy: I'm very fortunate to work with a large group of incredibly talented and passionate people who are at the heart of this great team. Together, we've written motorsport history and I see this award as a recognition of all their hard work."

Toto Wolff, *team principal and CEO*

A resounding victory in this category for the leader of F1's pre-eminent team. The group has seemingly grown in confidence and stature with each championship double, and although the effort has clearly taken a toll, it's also clear to see Toto is determined to keep his team on top. He has become addicted to winning.

It would be easy to glance at the Mercedes setup and think Wolff is simply riding the crest of the wave created by predecessor Ross Brawn's early investment in V6 engine technology, coupled with yearly bundles of cash from Mercedes' parent company Daimler. But that belittles the enormous effort of the team to keep successfully reinventing the wheel year after year, and the efforts of Toto to instil a culture in the team which strives to be the best without ever believing it is.

Wolff is not only the race team's figurehead, but also its chief political and commercial negotiator. He must keep finding new partners to reduce the financial pressure on Daimler – see the recent buy-in from 2020 newcomer INEOS – while simultaneously managing day-to-day racing operations, being front and centre at grands prix, managing the drivers, and this year successfully negotiating new commercial terms with F1 itself.

Toto has had to cope without Niki Lauda, and with rule changes designed to dethrone Mercedes, but it's a testament to Wolff's own will to win, and the winning culture he has inspired and reinforced within the team, that Mercedes continues to find new ways to raise the bar.

Lewis Hamilton talks about how vital Wolff is to his own feelings of contentment within Mercedes, while technical chief James Allison calls Wolff the best boss he's ever had in F1.

That's a proper vote of confidence.

HOW YOU VOTED

Toto Wolff Mercedes	58.2%
Andreas Seidl McLaren	24%
Christian Horner Red Bull	9.4%
Cyril Abiteboul Renault	4.3%
Otmar Szafnauer Haas	4.1%

AWARDS 2020

QUALIFIER OF THE YEAR

Lewis Hamilton
Mercedes







"Qualifying is all about delivering that one special lap at the right time and that wasn't easy in 2020. We went to a lot of completely new circuits and tracks we hadn't been to in a long time, so I really had to be on top of my game. Valtteri was very strong and you could see how close it was on most Saturdays, but I'm happy I managed to stay ahead." ***Lewis Hamilton***

George Russell ran Lewis Hamilton extremely close in this category, and Russell's consistently excellent efforts in dragging the Williams FW43 into Q2 were absolutely worthy of taking this prize, but those at the front naturally grab the limelight and Hamilton's record of 10 poles from 16 attempts – including eight of the first 10 – was difficult to ignore.

And within that sample set were some truly outstanding performances. After a slightly sub-par showing at the season opener in Austria, Hamilton responded with a brilliant qualifying lap for the Styrian GP at the same circuit. The Red Bull Ring is a short circuit, but Hamilton was over 1.2 seconds faster than anyone else in the wet.

"I love days like that," he reflected. "Because it's literally all about feel and less about set-up or tyre temperatures, those sort of things – more basic, more standard."

But Hamilton doesn't only rely on improvisation to obliterate his opposition. Perhaps there's no better example of his ability to fine tune his way to a dominant position than at Spa, where the work he did in the background this season to finesse his driving technique on the Pirelli tyres culminated in a sublime pole position lap, half a second faster than Valtteri Bottas in the same car.

"On one side, you could say it's because we've got the same tyres again, so my understanding just continues to evolve in terms of how you utilise those," Hamilton says of his improved qualifying form. "As the years go on, I have been able to invest more in understanding the car, understanding the technical side, understanding the set-up.

"On the weekend there are so many things to change and you can easily miss things. You're trying to make really quick decisions. This year, I have been a lot more efficient with that."

HOW YOU VOTED

Lewis Hamilton	36.4%
George Russell	34.5%
Charles Leclerc	15.8%
Max Verstappen	10.8%
Daniel Ricciardo	3.2%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

DRIVE OF THE YEAR

Pierre Gasly
AlphaTauri







PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; GLENN DUNBAR; MARK SUTTON; MERCEDES; ALPHATAURI

The Italian Grand Prix

Pierre Gasly's unlikely first victory in F1 was the perfect example of taking your opportunities when they arise. Yes, Gasly was fortunate to make a pitstop at the perfect time – just before the Safety Car was scrambled to get Kevin Magnussen's broken Haas away from the pit entry – and yes, Gasly was lucky to get the benefit of a penalty for Lewis Hamilton stopping while the pitlane was closed, and then to get a free choice of tyres for the restart after Charles Leclerc crashed at Parabolica and brought out red flags.

But Gasly still had his work cut out at Monza. The Racing Point of Lance Stroll was better placed to take advantage of Hamilton's penalty, but Stroll messed up his own restart from second on the reformed grid. The Alfa Romeos of Antonio Giovinazzi and Kimi Räikkönen restarted on soft-compound tyres, while Gasly's AlphaTauri was on mediums, so they were a real threat from behind as the race got back under way.

Gasly dealt with all that by making a superb getaway from third on the grid, almost challenging Hamilton for the lead as they rounded the first chicane, then defending his position from Räikkönen at the second chicane. When Hamilton took his stop/go penalty, Gasly took the lead.

But there were still 25 laps to run and Carlos Sainz, whose McLaren was fast all weekend and genuinely qualified third, carved his way past Stroll and the two Alfas then began to hunt Gasly's slower car down. Come the start of the final lap, Sainz had use of DRS and a run on Gasly approaching the first chicane, but the AlphaTauri driver held firm to win by less than half a second.

"Thanks to all the F1 fans who voted for me. I'm really happy about it. It was the highlight of the season. It was an extremely intense race, there were a lot of things going on between the Safety Car, the red flag, the restart, and the laps that I had to lead with Carlos really fast behind me. It was an exciting time, and a lot of emotions crossing the line and getting this first win in Formula 1, which was a dream since I was a kid."

Pierre Gasly

HOW YOU VOTED

Pierre Gasly Italian GP	51%
Max Verstappen 70th Anniversary GP	17.8%
Lewis Hamilton Spanish GP	15%
Carlos Sainz Italian GP	8.4%
Charles Leclerc British GP	7.8%

GP RACING AWARDS 2020

DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Lewis Hamilton
Mercedes



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; MERCEDES

Formula 1's reigning world champion was the resounding winner of this prize, thanks to a phenomenal season in which he used the performance of the Mercedes W11 to devastating effect, crushing the opposition, eclipsing Michael Schumacher's previous record of 92 career race wins, and finally equalling Schumacher's tally of seven world championships.

Ten pole positions, 11 race wins, championship wrapped up with three of the 17 races to spare – this was one of Hamilton's most dominant seasons. But when you consider team-mate Valtteri Bottas only narrowly beat Max Verstappen to second in the standings, it's clear Hamilton's level of performance matched the excellence of the car beneath him.

"It definitely feels like the most all-rounded, highest level I've been at," he says. "It's a natural progression. This year, being as we've also had COVID, we've had more time to focus on areas of weakness and I would say last year the racing was strong, qualifying wasn't so great, and I came into this season trying to make sure I kept the strengths but worked on the weaknesses. But in improving in qualifying, I managed to improve the racing, which was a bit of a surprise. I was not expecting that."

Hamilton has become increasingly detail oriented as his F1 career has matured, and this applies to his areas of focus outside the car as well as to the car itself. Hamilton spent most of 2020 isolated from friends and family, diligently trying to prevent coronavirus – which ultimately did afflict him and forced him to miss a race – from derailing his title bid.

Hamilton turned to meditation and self-help books as a way to ease the mental strain and



help better manage his time and energy levels during the pandemic, while simultaneously shouldering responsibility for driving a campaign for racial equality and greater diversity in F1.

Mercedes supported Hamilton in his efforts, swapping from traditional silver to a black livery in a show of solidarity, while also undertaking an internal review to encourage greater diversity within the company. On track, Hamilton continued to play a leading role in driving performance of the car in the right direction, work he says has given him true appreciation for what Schumacher did during his dominant years at Ferrari, work that Hamilton himself is "very, very proud of".

"It's difficult for someone starting in F1, for young drivers, to fully understand what it is that Michael did, what I am doing in this team," Hamilton says. "They'll just see that we have a good car, that Michael had a good car, but now I'm here I understand what Michael did with the team – I'm sure it's similar to what I've had to do. Unfortunately, people don't get to see all that in the background.

"I applied a lot of pressure on the team in terms of where I want the aero balance, for example. I have had them shift that since 2014. But I've also had to do a lot of learning. I've challenged the guys a lot, and there have been times when I have been wrong. But I'm totally fine with being wrong. That's part of learning.

"But getting them to think out of the box and try different things, they've really moved in that direction. That's one of the elements that's helped us to continue to raise the bar, because we have a better approach than perhaps they did before I was here and perhaps we did when I started here."

"Thank you very much for this award, what a great honour. It's not been an easy year for anyone, but I'm grateful that we got to race and that I got to go on this incredible journey together with my team. I remember Michael winning those seven championships, but just to get one or two is so hard. So, to get seven seemed just unimaginable.

But when you work with such a great group of people, and you communicate and trust one another and listen to one another, there is just no end to what you can do together. I'm so proud of what we've achieved together this year, both on and off the track.

And I feel like we're only just getting started, I feel like we've still got a lot of work to do in F1. I know 2020 has been difficult for everyone, but I'm hoping that you're staying positive and that 2021 will be a great year for you all."

Lewis Hamilton



HOW YOU VOTED

Lewis Hamilton	50%
Pierre Gasly	23.2%
Max Verstappen	10.9%
Charles Leclerc	10.5%
Carlos Sainz	5.4%

NIGEL ROEBUCK'S FORMULA ONE HEROES

PEDRO RODRÍGUEZ

PICTURES motorsport IMAGES



Although he had some eccentric tendancies, Rodríguez inspired those he drove for and always gave his best

IN JANUARY 1993 THERE WAS A TOUCHING EVENT...

at Daytona Beach. At this cathedral of stock car racing, they were naming a road course turn for Pedro Rodríguez, and present for the ceremony was his mother. No, she said, she bore no grudge against the sport which had taken both her sons. They had savoured their brief lives.

Daytona was always good to Pedro. Twice he won the 24 Hours, but an earlier victory, in 1963, was perhaps the most crucial of his career. The annual sportscar race was then run over three hours, and Pedro came to it grieving the loss of his brother and not sure he wanted to continue. Winning swept away most of his doubts.

Both Rodríguez brothers had immense natural ability, and their father's wealth allowed them to display it. In 1959 they shared an OSCA at Le Mans, and thereafter frequently drove together in the Ferraris of Luigi Chinetti's North American Racing Team.

Chinetti missed no opportunity to sing their praises to Enzo Ferrari, and the Old Man offered Don Pedro the opportunity to buy them into the factory team. In 1961 Ricardo, 19 years old, made his F1 debut at Monza, and stunned everyone by qualifying second.

The following year he was a full-time Ferrari driver, but 1962 was a poor season for the team, and when Enzo declined to enter the inaugural Mexican GP, Ricardo arranged to drive Rob Walker's Lotus. At the end of qualifying, going for pole, he crashed to his death.

Not surprisingly Pedro was traumatised by this, but the Daytona win, two months later, resolved him to carry on. When John Cooper offered a drive at Kyalami, the first GP of 1967, Pedro took it up – and won! Cooper offered a contract for the season, and the die was cast.

For 1968 there came an offer from BRM, and two memories stay with me. First, the Race of Champions, where Rodríguez stalled on the line, getting away when the rest were long gone. Brands Hatch was oily that day, but Rodríguez always excelled on a treacherous surface, and came through to second.

Then there was Monaco, for which he never cared: "You can have fun sliding the car around, but I prefer somewhere like Spa – there you cannot make a mistake and be safe..."

Pedro's second, and final, world championship F1 victory came in the BRM P153 at Spa in 1970



Into Mirabeau the BRM's brake pedal went to the floor. Somehow Rodríguez made it through most of the corner, but at the exit hit the wall hard. Spectating at Station Hairpin, I watched him sauntering towards us, helmet swinging on his arm.

Pedro was a devout fatalist: "God is the only one that can tell you this is the end of the line, and it is no matter where you are. You can be racing, in the street, in church, you can be anywhere."

Rodríguez's ambition was to win Le Mans, and in 1968 he achieved it, sharing a Ford GT40 with Lucien Bianchi. Although there were no victories in F1, Pedro did a fine job for BRM, but unfathomably Louis Stanley dropped him for 1969. By the end of it, he was only too happy to re-hire him and so began Rodríguez's great period as a racing driver: back with BRM, he also signed a Porsche contract. Ah, Pedro and the 917...

Even though Jo Siffert was the lead driver of the other Gulf Porsche, Rodríguez was the star of the team. "You had the impression," said team manager David Yorke, "that Seppi did the job with arm flexed, while Pedro sat there resting his thumbs on the wheel."

Particularly unforgettable was the BOAC Brands Hatch 1000Kms, run virtually throughout in torrential rain. There was a magic about Rodríguez that cheerless April day in 1970: it was a drive to match any I have seen.

In F1, too, his star was rising. In the BRM P153 he won at his favourite circuit, Spa, chased throughout by Chris Amon's March.

"Pedro passed me on the climb after Eau Rouge," Chris remembered. "That BRM had loads of power – he didn't even bother to slipstream me – but his precision was fabulous. I knew I'd get him only if he made a mistake – and he never did..."

Rodríguez, by now well at peace with himself, had become curiously Anglicised, living in Bray, driving around in a classic Bentley. It would glide into the paddock, and out would step this small figure, black hair swept back, omnipresent sunglasses, Goodyear jacket – and the finishing touch, a deerstalker!

"Pedro was eccentric in many ways," said Yorke. "If you didn't know him you might have thought he was a bit of a dilettante, but, Ye Gods, he was anything but that in a car.

"At Daytona in 1971 he was sharing with Jackie Oliver – who was sick during his stint. The cockpit of the 917 was cramped and hot – when we opened the door the whole scene in there was pretty frightful, but Pedro, in fresh overalls, didn't hesitate for a second – just hurled himself into the cockpit, and away he went!"

Rodríguez won that race, and other victories followed. In the BRM he looked set for his best season, winning at Oulton Park on Good Friday, then fighting with Jacky Ickx at a wet Zandvoort. "The BRM was no match for the Ferrari," remembered Raymond Mays, "but in those conditions Pedro could have beaten anybody in anything. It was only when the track dried that the superiority of the Ferrari told."

> **IN THE LATTER PART OF HIS CAREER HE WAS, WITHOUT DOUBT, ONE OF THE THREE BEST IN THE WORLD**
>
> **RAYMOND MAYS**

John Wyer believed Rodríguez's finest drive came at the Österreichring a week later. After leading the early laps of the 1000km sportscar race, he lost six minutes in the pits, yet came back to win. "Pedro could drive absolutely flat out indefinitely, it seemed, and that day he had to – he was in the car for all but 10 laps, and I never saw a greater drive."

The following weekend Rodríguez ran second to Jackie Stewart in the French GP before retiring, and had high hopes for Silverstone. In testing, 10 days before the race, he set the fastest time.

Wyer, there to watch, was astonished to learn that Pedro had agreed to drive in an Interserie race at the Norisring. BRM, too, was less than enthusiastic about the idea. "We didn't want him to do that race," said Mays, "and under the terms of the contract could have stopped him. How I wish to God we had..."

After leading the early laps, Rodríguez came upon a slower car, which moved across as he went to lap it. After hitting a barrier, the Ferrari somersaulted and exploded: when finally released from the wreckage, Pedro was beyond saving. "We thought the world of him," Mays said. "The mechanics worshipped him – always a sure sign of a man's worth. In the latter part of his career he was, without doubt, one of the three best in the world."

Wyer, too, was shattered. "Everyone loved Pedro – as a driver he was an inspiration. He always gave his absolute best, never complained. Money was never important to him. He loved to race."

Afterwards there was much talk that so great a driver's life had been lost in so trivial an event, but Pedro himself would not have seen it that way. God, he would have said, decided 11 July 1971 was the end of the line for him: "And it is no matter where you are."



Rodríguez in the BRM at Zandvoort in 1971, when only a drying track prevented him from beating the Ferrari of Jacky Ickx

TYRRELL



001

The first in a line of world beaters was designed in a back bedroom and then constructed in a shed

NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No. 95

WORDS STUART CODLING
PICTURES JAMES MANN





There is no blue plaque outside 23 Parklands Avenue, a modest suburban house in Lillington, near Leamington Spa. Perhaps there should be. For it was here, in a back bedroom and later the garage, that work began in utter secrecy on the first of a series of cars which would deliver a constructors' championship and two drivers' titles in the hands of Jackie Stewart.

Why the secrecy? For all its modest trappings – HQ was a collection of sheds in a former woodyard in Ockham, Surrey – the Tyrrell Racing Organisation was a formidably competitive and well-drilled outfit, and in Stewart it had one of the finest drivers in the business. What Tyrrell had never done was build its own car so, when circumstances conspired to leave it without one, the team's rivals were keen that it should remain competitively becalmed.

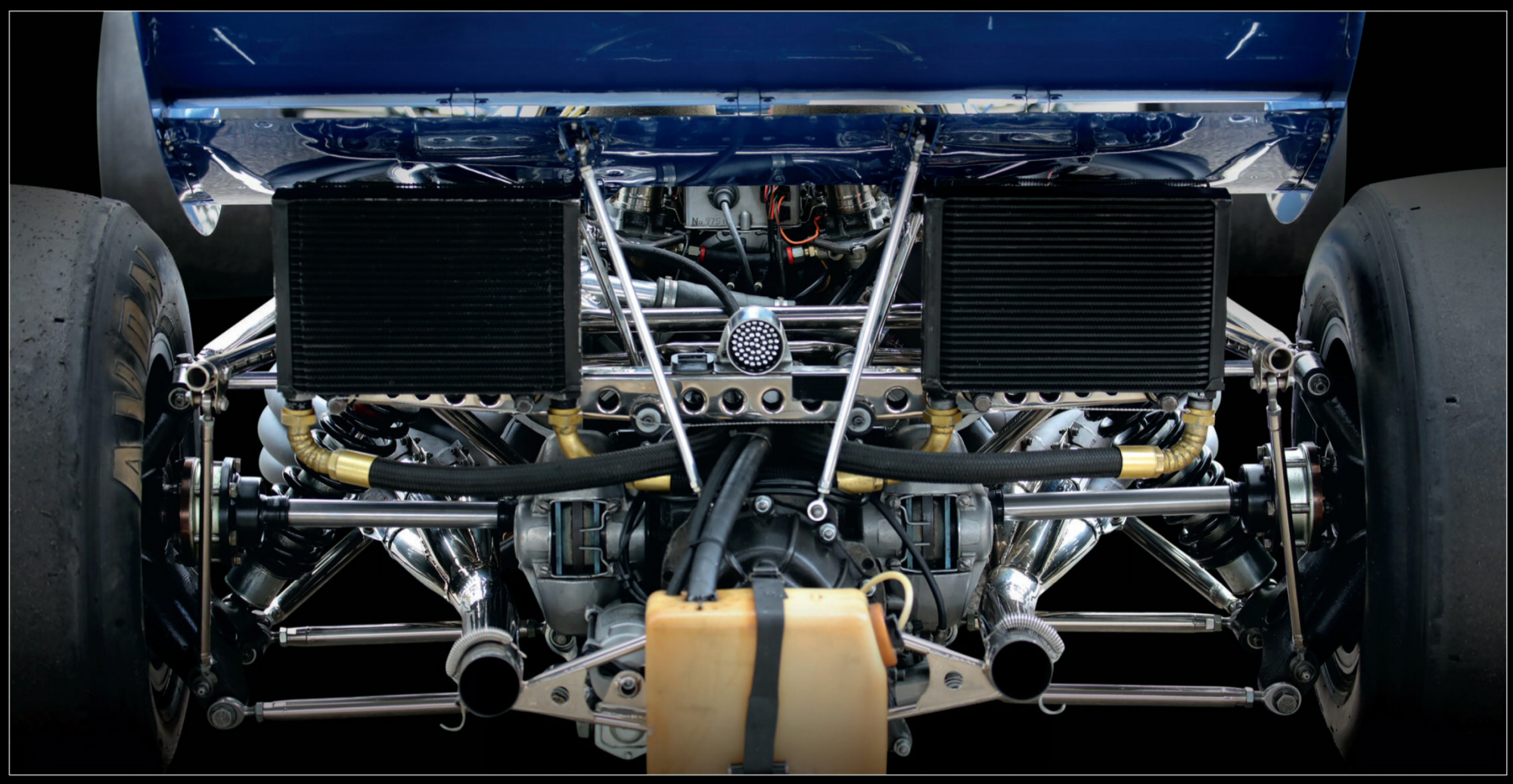




Ken Tyrrell and brother Bert were timber merchants, though for Ken the business of operating his eponymous race team took precedence once he realised he lacked the necessary skills to cut it as a racing driver himself. Through the 1960s the Tyrrell team acquired its reputation for hard-headed excellence in the junior formulae, running Stewart to the 1964 British F3 championship and then taking over BRM's F2 operation before forging a partnership with Matra which would take it into F1.

Matra's aerospace background informed a succession of slippery, strong but competitively light monocoque chassis, but its in-house engine – a V12 – was less convincing.

"WORKING FROM PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXISTING CARS, GARDNER INITIALLY LEANED TOWARDS THE WEDGE PROFILE WHICH WOULD SOON BECOME FASHIONABLE"



TYRRELL 001

NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No.95

In 1968 its works team came away with a single podium for the V12-powered MS11, while Tyrrell and Jackie Stewart chalked up three wins and second in the drivers' standings with a Ford-Cosworth V8-engined MS10. The following year, Matra focused its works efforts on sportscar racing and Stewart romped to the F1 drivers' title with the innovative side-tanked MS80. This would be the first and only time a private entry won both the drivers' and constructors' championships.

Stewart's famous victory in the 1969 Italian GP made him champion with three rounds remaining. But even before he contested those final rounds, Stewart was aware the walls were closing in on Tyrrell. Matra was being acquired by Simca, part of the Chrysler empire, which would make continuing with the Ford engine in a Matra chassis politically impossible. Stewart had tested the V12 engine and found it sweet enough, but didn't consider it a winner, for it lacked the brutal and instant shove furnished by Ford's pugilistic DFV. A schism with Matra was inevitable, but Brabham, McLaren and Lotus would not sell chassis to Tyrrell – why provide a car to one of your fiercest competitors? When Stewart arrived at Watkins Glen for the penultimate round, he also learned that Dunlop was about to withdraw from motor racing. The only glimmer of hope was that Elf remained committed as title sponsor.

Grudgingly and with due brinksmanship, Tyrrell concluded a deal with Max Mosley, salesman for March, the new chassis constructor, on the eve of the 1970 season. Ken also persuaded Dunlop to hold off on quitting the racing scene. In February, three weeks before the season-opening South African GP, Stewart tested the March 701 for the first time.

He hated it.

Though Stewart would qualify on pole at Kyalami and finish third in the March, this did nothing to diminish his impression that the car was not just inadequate, but that its shortcomings were fundamental to the design and could not be ironed out by fiddling with spring rates and corner weights. Fortunately, a solution was already coming together in Leamington Spa.

Initially only four people knew of the 'Special Project': Stewart, Ken Tyrrell and his wife Norah, and Derek Gardner, the little-known engineer building a prototype F1 car in his garage. Gardner had never designed a car before, his speciality being transmissions – which was how, via his involvement with Ferguson's four-wheel-drive F1 project, he met Tyrrell when Matra evaluated 4WD. For Tyrrell, anxious to keep his plan below the radar, hiring a big-name designer was out of the question; someone quietly competent was his best bet.

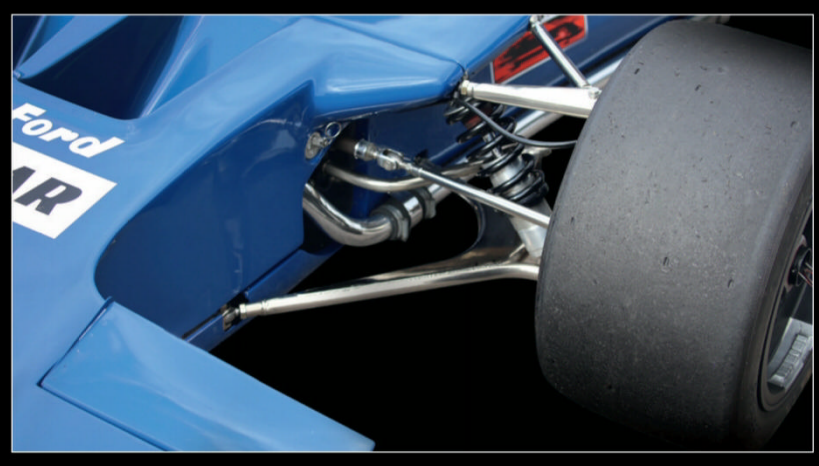
Early in 1970 Tyrrell arranged a meeting with Gardner in a pub in Henley, figuring that was roughly halfway between Leamington Spa and Ockham, and suitably off the beaten track to avoid random encounters with any other racing folk. Tyrrell didn't beat about the bush: could Gardner design a Formula 1 car, and do it in utmost secrecy?

After some initial misgivings Gardner agreed, shook hands on a deal, quit his job and set up as an independent engineering consultant, even going so far as to order stationery in the name of his new business to maintain the illusion. Confidence, though, remained in short supply. He would later recall watching a TV show in which Stewart was filmed testing the new March, and thinking, "There seemed to be no way I could compete with this sort of thing when I was a one-man band working from home".

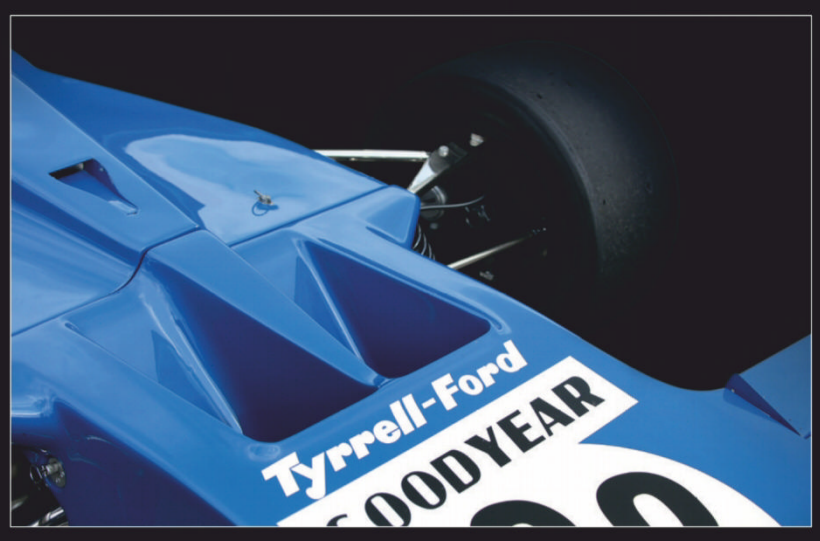
Working from photographs of existing cars, Gardner initially leaned towards the wedge profile which would soon become fashionable when the Lotus 72 became a success. Lacking space to accommodate the fuel tanks now the rules mandated rubber bags, he drifted back to a plan view which more closely resembled that of the MS80.











NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No.95

TYRRELL 001

The first mock-up of the Special Project was a confection of wood, aluminium, chicken wire and cardboard. As the car took shape, so the circle of trust had to be widened as Ken's longest-serving staff were called upon to shuttle an engine and gearbox up to Warwickshire to be fitted to the mock-up under cover of darkness. Stewart, preparing for a couple of F2 outings in a John Coombs-run Brabham with a test at Goodwood, briefly excused himself and took a private plane to Coventry airport, where Gardner collected him to perform what would nowadays be called a seat fitting. The dimensions of the Special Project's cockpit were adjusted to suit Stewart perfectly.

By June, rocked by the deaths of Piers Courage and Bruce McLaren, Stewart was anxious to be rid of a car which could only produce a respectable laptime when pushed to the absolute limit. The Special Project, soon to be christened the 001, was by then proceeding to the sheet metal stage. Lacking the facilities to produce panels at Ockham, Tyrrell turned to Maurice Gomm, whose eponymous fabrication company was the go-to outfit of the day, working on projects as diverse as Brabham and McLaren single-seaters, Lola sportscars, and even the titular vehicle from *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*…

From Gomm's works in Old Woking, the cut metal panels were delivered to Ockham for final assembly in a large shed by a handful of skilled mechanics led by Roy Topp. Stewart periodically stopped by so cockpit arrangements could be finessed. The world championship passed the half-way point; Stewart had won just one GP in the March, at Jarama, and that fortuitously. But the detailing of the new car, with its Matra-style, aeronautically inspired rows of pop rivets suggesting strength and durability, gave him cause for optimism.

By August the car was nearly ready, such that Tyrrell felt able to commit to a first race in the non-championship Oulton Park Gold Cup, a week before the Italian Grand Prix. Word about the 001 was beginning to leak out. Ron Dennis – then a mechanic at Brabham – accosted Tyrrell's Nick Davis in the paddock during the weekend of the Austrian Grand Prix on 16 August, saying he was sure they were up to something. A stub in the sports pages of the Guardian the previous week had indeed reported Tyrrell was working on an F1 car of its own design.

Ken Tyrrell himself continued to deny the rumours – right up until Monday 17 August 1970, when the car was unveiled in Ford's flagship dealership on Regent Street in London, resplendent in its blue livery. Max Mosley was said to be incandescent that Tyrrell had pulled off such subterfuge… and that the 001 was around 45kg lighter than the 701.

An unseasonal cold snap played havoc with the 001's fuel metering at Oulton Park, leading Stewart to do the majority of practice and qualifying in the 701, which he put fifth on the grid. Playing the long game, he elected to start the 001 from the back and treat the first heat as an extended test. On the second lap the throttle cable jammed between the fuel hatch and the monocoque, sending him through the grass, but Stewart made it back to the pits where strategically placed tape enabled him to go out again. He broke the lap record en route to seventh, then a piston failure eliminated him from the second heat.

Further teething troubles at Monza moved Stewart to race the 701. On the weekend that claimed the life of Jochen Rindt, Stewart was relieved he had probably competed in the unloved March for the last time.

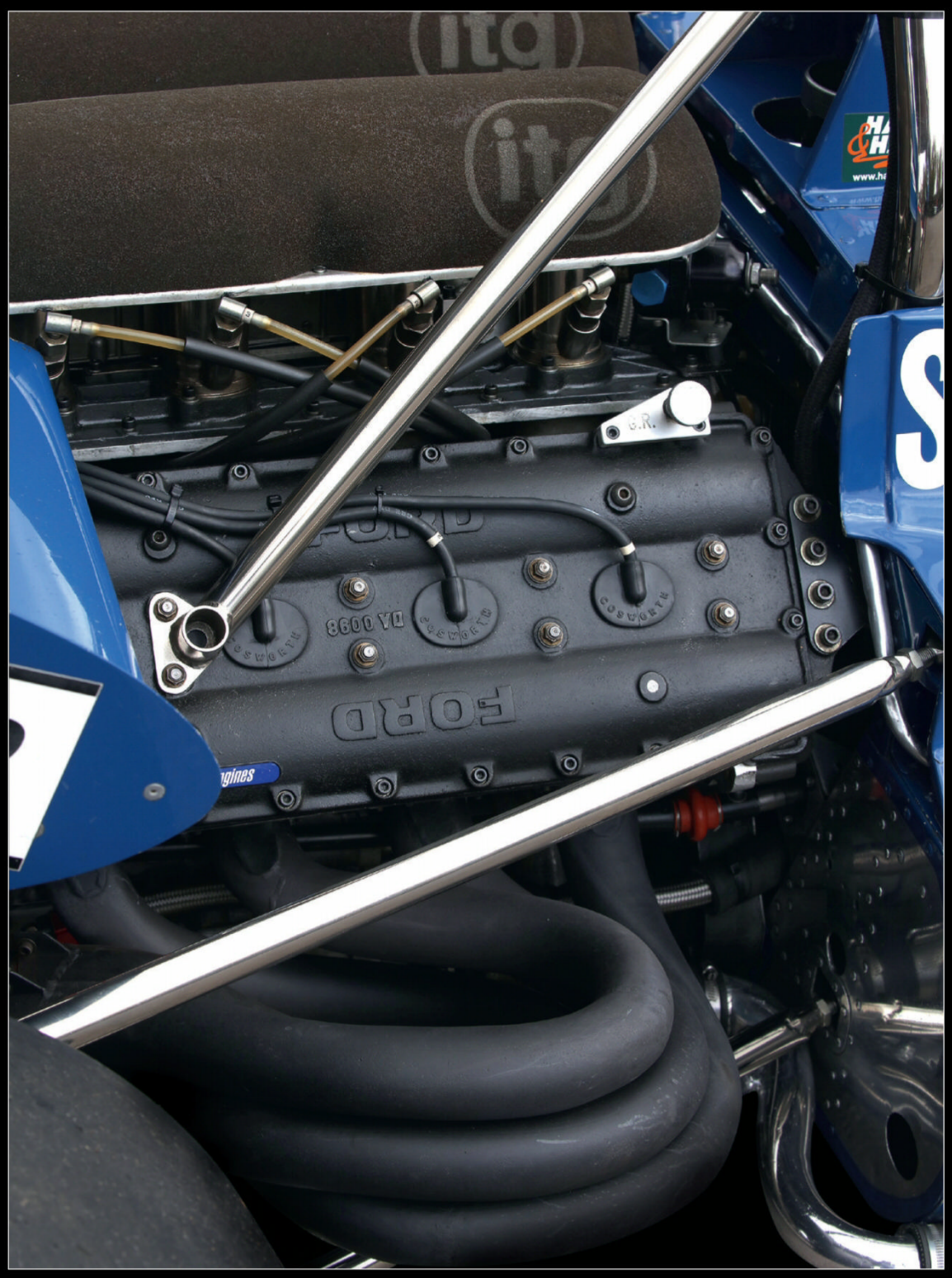
The final three rounds in North America added jet lag to the woes of mechanics who had been working round the clock for months to get the 001 ready. It continued to suffer frustrating teething troubles, such as when a wheel worked loose as qualifying approached in Canada. Stewart reverted to the 701 to set a time, but when the 001 was declared ready with minutes to spare, he eagerly swapped over and set pole position in the new car. In the race he was pulling away at a second a lap, certain of victory, when a stub axle broke.

In the two weeks between the races at Mont-Tremblant and Watkins Glen, Gardner went back to the UK to redesign the front suspension uprights, returning with the new ones in his luggage. Given very little dry running in qualifying, Stewart ran Jacky Ickx's Ferrari close to annex second on the grid, then led the race for 82 of the 108 laps. Stewart had a margin of one minute and had lapped everyone up to second-placed Pedro Rodríguez when smoke began to pour from the 001's rear, the result of a tie wrap melting and allowing an oil pipe to rub against the exhaust. Tyrrell directed Stewart to stay out, but when the oil ran dry the engine seized.

Then, in Mexico, Stewart was running third, when a stray dog ran on to the track. At 140mph there was no time to react and the poor creature met its maker instantly. Stewart brought the 001 to a halt, its chassis and suspension stoved in. The car would see action in just one more world championship race, when Stewart took it to second in the 1971 opener at Kyalami.

Over the winter, Gardner transferred his office to Ockham and fed the experience of 001 into 002, which new recruit François Cevert would drive in 1971, and 003, with which Stewart would win eight races over the following two seasons and claim another world championship. 005 and 006 would deliver him to his final title in 1973. Stewart could see it coming.

"I felt I was going to be at my peak," he would recall years later, "and I knew there was no need to fear failure with the Tyrrell project. We were ready to go."



"THE FIRST MOCK-UP OF THE SPECIAL PROJECT WAS A CONFECTION OF WOOD, ALUMINIUM, CHICKEN WIRE AND CARDBOARD"



RACE RECORD

Starts 5
Wins 0
Poles 2
Fastest laps 0
Podiums 1
Constructors' championship points 6

SPECIFICATION

Chassis Aluminium monocoque
Suspension Double wishbones with coil springs over dampers
Engine Ford-Cosworth DFV V8
Engine capacity 2993cc
Power 430bhp@10000rpm
Gearbox Hewland five-speed manual
Tyres Dunlop (1970) Goodyear (1971)
Weight 540kg
Notable drivers Jackie Stewart

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PICTURES OF THE YEAR

Come rain or shine – or, indeed, a blizzard of nasopharyngeal swabs – Motorsport Images had the past season covered

motorsport IMAGES







1



2

1 PUTTING EVERYONE IN THE SHADE

In the sweltering midsummer Barcelona heat, Lewis Hamilton walks to his garage with one thing in mind: utter domination. In the coming Spanish Grand Prix he will lap all but two of his rivals

2 A POINT TO PROVE

Racing Point hoped 'cloning' the 2019 Mercedes would be a shortcut to success, but the road to victory was tough. Here in Mugello Lance Stroll would crash out and Sergio Pérez fight to fifth

3 A FRUSTRATING 'LOS

Carlos Sainz's pain is palpable as he extracts himself from his McLaren after the Italian Grand Prix. At the end of a topsy-turvy race he was less than half a second away from a maiden F1 race win

3

1 DEFLATED AMBITION

The British Grand Prix was defined by a number of spectacular late-race tyre failures. Lewis Hamilton clung on to win (on three wheels) but Carlos Sainz lost a potential fourth place for McLaren

2 SWEATING IN SAKHIR

Race two of the final triple-header and Valtteri Bottas has a lot on his plate – the unknown territory of racing Bahrain's 'outer loop' and containing the threat from stand-in team-mate George Russell

3 COOL AS EVER

Kimi Räikkönen demonstrates his remarkable unflappability as he brings his burning Alfa Romeo to a halt during practice in Abu Dhabi, calmly dismounts, then takes charge of the fire-fighting

4 AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

Our principal photographer, Steven Tee, captured this evocative image at precisely the time the grid should have been forming on Australian GP race day. It set the tone for a year without big crowds



3


ORLEN
ADLER
RICHARD MILLE
HUSKI CHOCOLATE
ORLEN

4


ROLEX
Australia
MELBOURNE
Australia
MELBOURNE
WALKER STRAIGHT
MELBOURNE

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

1 PRINTS CHARMING

"I'm used to sitting in this chair. It might have my prints," said Max Verstappen after qualifying third (for the ninth time in 2020) for the Sakhir GP. The next weekend he jokingly walked off with it...



1


2

2 AN EYEFUL IN THE EIFEL

When thick fog at the Nürburgring led to Friday's first practice for the Eifel GP being cancelled, the image artists occupied their time creatively. Andy Hone captured this shot of a steaming rain light

3 DON'T BLAME SEB

It might look like Sebastian Vettel is the aggressor here, but it's actually Kimi Räikkönen (out of shot) who has just understeered into George Russell during the Eifel GP and clattered him off



3

4

4 SHOWER IN THE DESERT

The Bahrain circuit's alternative configuration used in the Sakhir GP features a small dip which causes F1 cars to bottom out, generating a spectacular shower of sparks

5



5 SEVEN UP

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff congratulates Turkish Grand Prix winner Lewis Hamilton on his remarkable feat of equalling Michael Schumacher's seven world titles

PICTURES OF THE YEAR

1 THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH

Nico Hülkenberg's call-up to stand in for an unwell Sergio Pérez in the British GP came so late that he had to borrow a set of Lance Stroll's overalls, which made for a tight fit



2 A WHEEL IN THE DIRT

Formula 1's trip to the Algarve brought big skies and a chance for drivers to get to grips with a 'new' circuit – with virgin asphalt. That made for many a slip, particularly at this crest…



3 ORIGIN OF SYMMETRY

The traditional end-of-season driver portrait had to take an appropriate socially distanced form in 2020. For some drivers it also represented a sign-off as they made way for new faces in 2021

4 HOME IS WHERE THE ART IS

Teams and drivers have had to be creative in reaching out to fans this past season – full marks to whoever thought to repurpose Lando Norris as a Portuguese footballer for Portimão…



PICTURES OF THE YEAR

1 RUNNING ON EMPTY

Formula 1 ground to a halt on the Friday of the Australian GP in the wake of McLaren's withdrawal. The screens in the empty media centre show F1's al fresco press conference announcing the event's postponement

2 SEAT TIME FOR SATO

An unusual face in the AlphaTauri cockpit: F2 racer Marino Sato (no relation to Indy 500 winner Takuma Sato) got some miles under his belt in the Abu Dhabi young driver test, though he'll remain in F2 in 2021

3 CONFETTI CONFERENCE

Victory in the Turkish Grand Prix means a record-equalling seventh world title for an elated Lewis Hamilton; there's joy, too, for second-placed Sergio Pérez as he celebrates his best result of the season so far

4 BURN IT, PARK IT

The post-race burn-outs had a special significance for both Mercedes drivers in Abu Dhabi: the end of a trying weekend for an unwell Lewis Hamilton and the beginning of another winter reboot for Valtteri Bottas



1



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PICTURES OF THE YEAR

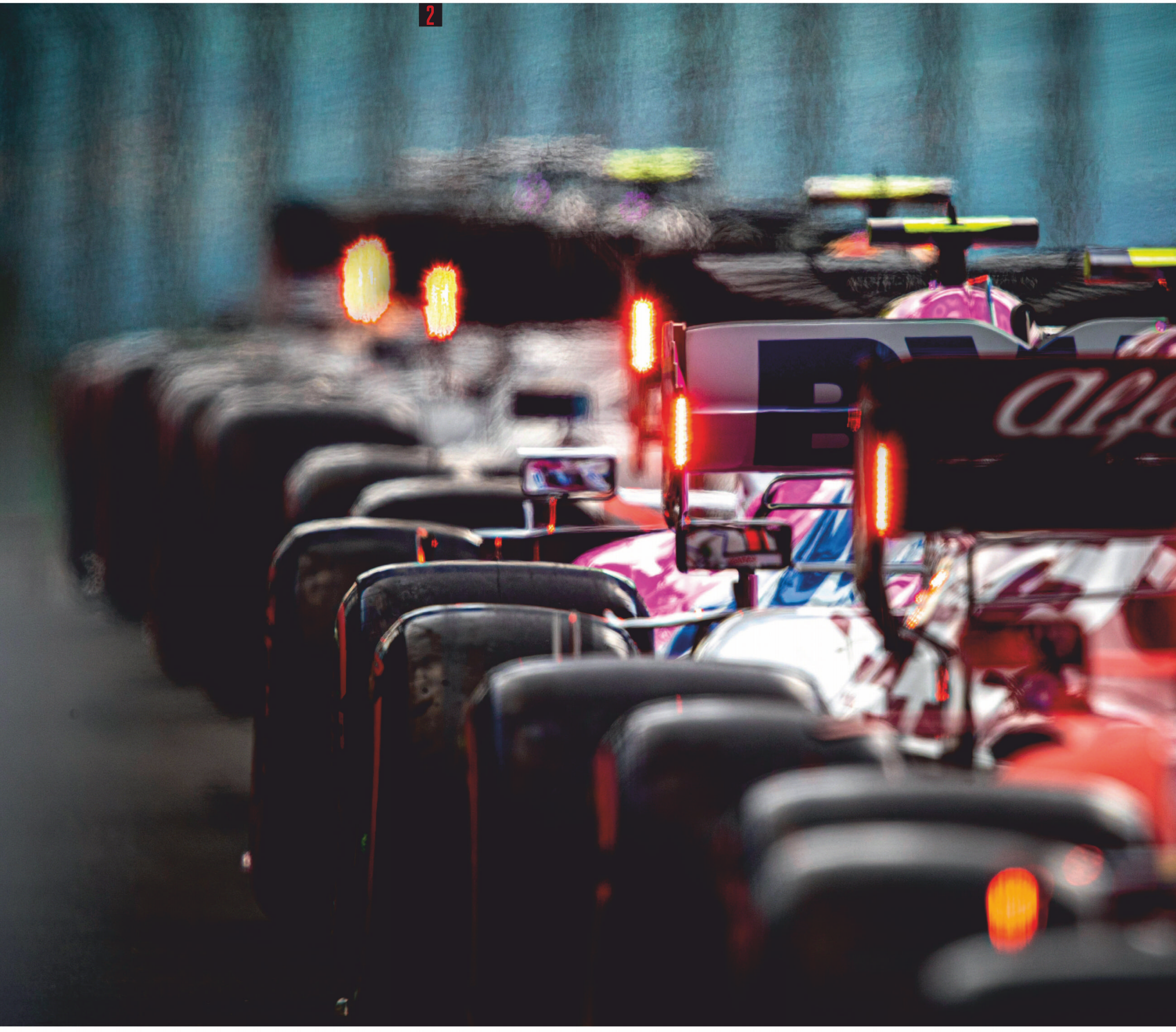
1 SENNA SIEMPRE

A poignant mural dedicated to the late, great Ayrton Senna adorns the building by Imola's pit entry. It was at this circuit where the legendary Brazilian ace lost his life in the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix

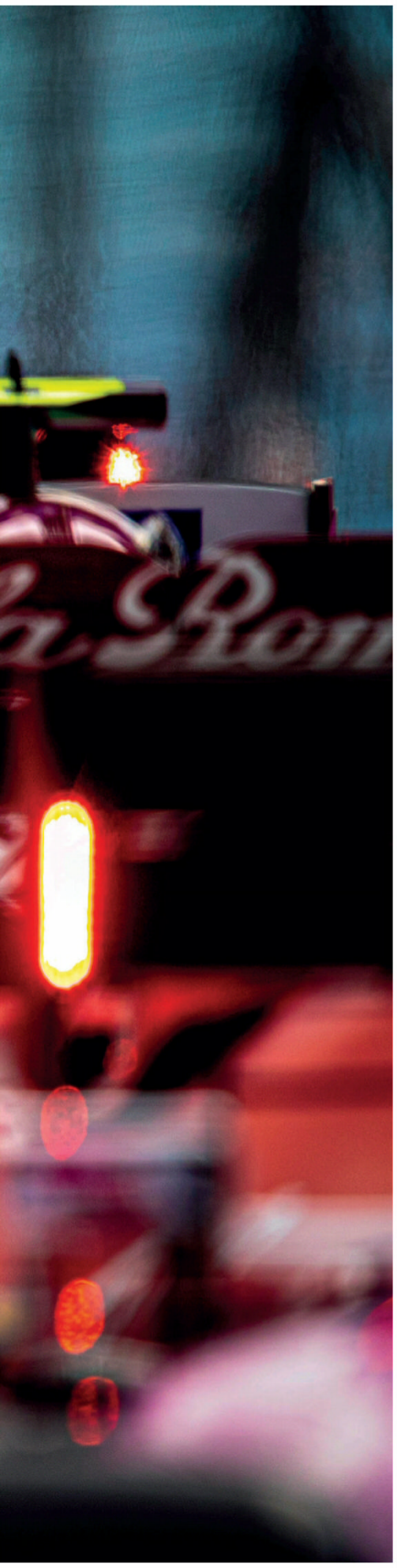
2 GET OUT NOW

Qualifying usually gets off to a relaxed start but in Hungary the queue began well before the session started. The imminent threat of rain meant it was imperative to get laps in the bag quickly









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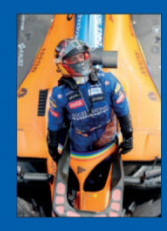


STEVEN TEE

Born into the world of racing imagery – his father Michael photographed F1 in the days of straw bales – Steven remains as enthusiastic about F1 as he was when he attended his very first grand prix.



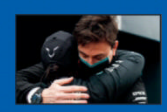
Page 88



Page 89



Page 91



Page 93



GLENN DUNBAR

As with several other photographers, Glenn shoots on behalf of a team – and that, in 2020, meant staying in that team's 'bubble' throughout the season. He delivered a new perspective on Racing Point's breakout year.



Page 86



Page 88



Page 94



Page 98



SAM BLOXHAM

Edinburgh-domiciled Sam was better travelled than most during 2020, covering Formula E and the Le Mans 24 Hours as well as selected grands prix as part of the Motorsport Images trackside photographic posse.



Page 95



Page 96



Page 95



ANDY HONE

He may appear to be merely a teenager, but Andy celebrated his 16th season photographing F1 in 2020. An award-winning snapper, he shot on behalf of Haas throughout the year but also captured lots of other action.



Page 90



Page 92



Page 92



ZAK MAUGER

The greatest thing to come out of Guernsey since the literary and potato peel pie society, Zak got more game time in F1 last year after several seasons of focusing primarily on F2. That's one good outcome from the pandemic...



Page 93



Page 96



Page 97



MARK SUTTON

With an eye for the quirky and an uncanny knack of being in the right place at the right time to capture on-track incidents, Mark must strike fear into the hearts of drivers – or at least provoke apperehension – as they flash by his lens.



Page 91



Page 92



Page 95



CHARLES COATES

Nicknamed 'Toots', aka 'TooTall', on account of his vertiginous stature, Charles had a productive year behind the lens and was particularly delighted to visit Imola again, 14 years after its last GP.



Page 90



Page 97



Page 98

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Promotional Feature

Fast Cars Love Spa



SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

The Belgian Grand Prix

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The best spots to catch all the action at the Formula 1 Belgium Grand Prix.

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EAU ROUGE GOLD 3

From £470pp

There are fewer corners in motorsport more treacherous than Eau Rouge and Raidillon. The uphill left-right-left is a challenge for any driver coming to Spa.

Four grandstands surround the complex, but Gold 3 – which sits at the summit of the hill – is one of the best. You get a complete view of the cars approaching turn 2, and any impatient drivers who might be brave enough to send one around the outside before hitting the Kemmel Straight.





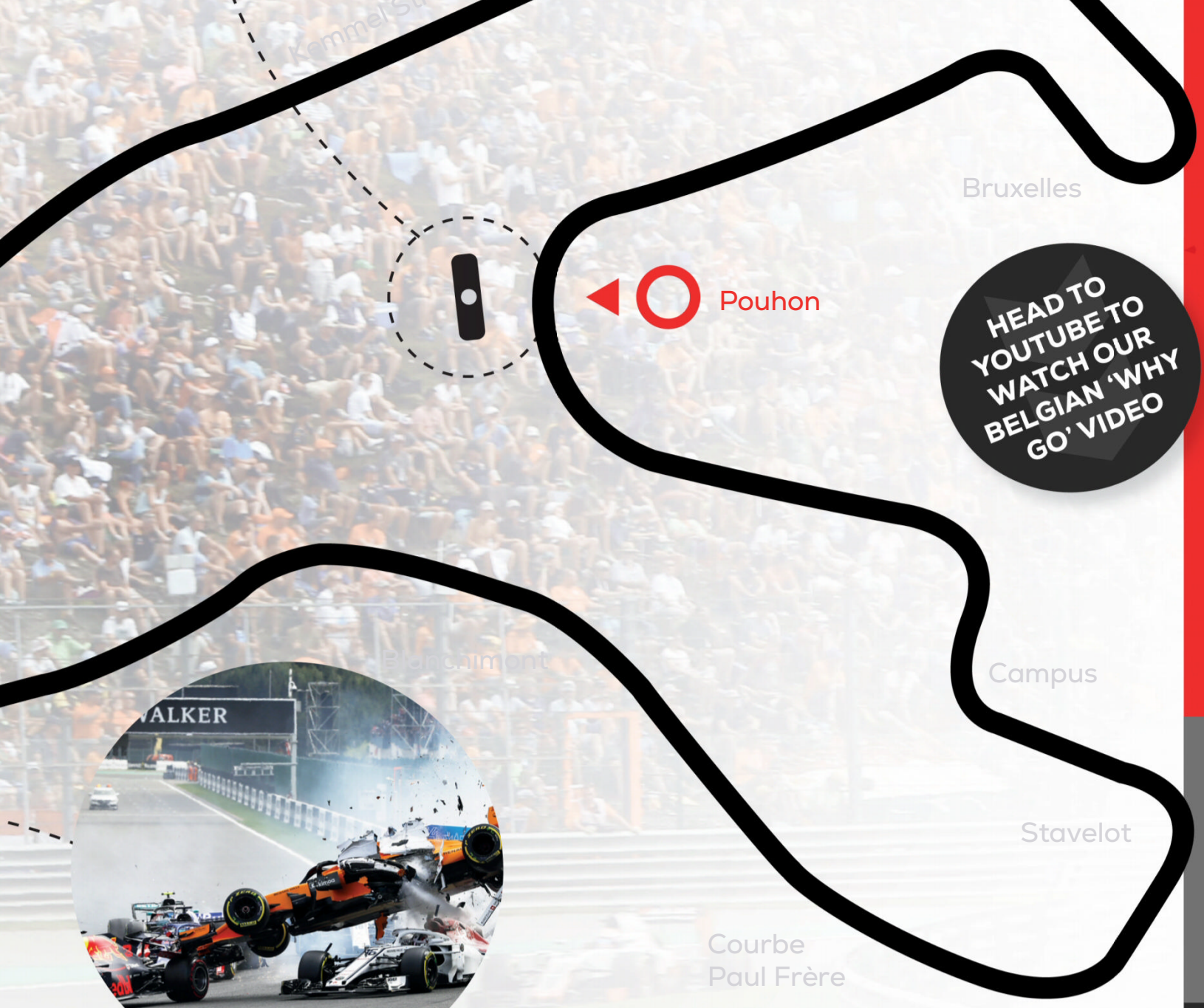




POUHON SILVER 3
From £335pp

The stands around Pouhon are real fan favourites. Silver 3 is bang in the middle of turns 10 and 11 at Pouhon. The cars approach Pouhon at 290km/h, before sweeping around this long left-hander and approaching the final sector of the lap. Antonio Giovinazzi is a driver who has been caught out here: he's crashed out at turn 11 in the previous two races.

Atmosphere at this section of the circuit is electric, not least because Max Verstappen's party-loving Orange Army often congregate around this section of the track. A big TV screen opposite the grandstand also keeps you across all the racing action.





LA SOURCE GOLD 7
From £470pp

Starts at Spa-Francorchamps are always lively. The short burst down to turn 1 quickly bunches up into this tight hairpin. In recent years, Fernando Alonso was sent over the top of Charles Leclerc in 2018. And who could forget the dramatic pile-up at the start of the 1998 race.

The Gold 7 grandstand is head-on with this heavy braking zone, and you will see the cars push towards Eau Rouge and Raidillon, and will see them reach the top of the hill in the distance.

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FINISHING STRAIGHT

RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 17

THE ABU DHABI GP IN 3 KEY MOMENTS





Verstappen is mobbed by his team after a dominant victory, his second of the season

1 Red Bull teamwork ties up out-of-sorts Mercedes

It's fair to say the only fireworks in the 2020 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix were launched by the organisers as Red Bull's Max Verstappen took the chequered flag 15.976s in credit over the Mercedes of Valtteri Bottas. Lewis Hamilton, still suffering with the effects of COVID-19, finished a further 2.439s in arrears, signing off a race Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff would describe as "a slap on the wrist".

Verstappen qualified on pole position and was never seriously challenged by either Mercedes as he took off into the lead on lap one. Bottas once again looked ragged through the first sequence of corners before settling into a rhythm, but for once Mercedes didn't have the pace to fight back.

All Mercedes-engined cars were running with their power units in a milder state of tune owing to concerns about the hybrid system. Sergio Pérez retired his Racing Point from the Bahrain GP with an MGU-K failure and when George Russell's Williams suffered a similar problem during practice in Abu Dhabi, Mercedes elected to turn the engines down. Pérez took a new PU for the race, entailing a back-of-the-grid start, but was destined to be halted by another broken MGU-K in the opening laps.

But what really cost Mercedes was persistent understeer on both W11s which it was unable to dial out, either through adding more downforce at the front end or weakening the rear. The engine deficit, according to trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin, was costing Mercedes in the region of a tenth of a second per lap. Far more deleterious, both to laptime and front tyre life, was the tendency of the W11s to scrub wide at Turns 5 and 6 and throughout the final sector. Adjustments when Bottas and Hamilton made their sole pitstops improved the balance, but the data indicated the cars remained reluctant to turn.

The leading trio took the start on Pirelli's medium tyres but got off them early when Perez's MGU-K expired towards the end of lap eight, triggering a Virtual Safety Car which was then upgraded to a full Safety Car deployment. Verstappen was nearly four seconds to the good by this point, and under green-flag conditions he began to pull away again. The majority of the pack had taken on hard tyres during the caution period, and the difficulty of overtaking on this circuit therefore dictated a long slog to the chequered flag with no further stops – apart from a few drivers on outlier strategies, including both Ferraris, whose pitwall appeared to be following an entirely different race.

Most significantly for Verstappen, team-mate Alex Albon had got himself into the picture and his presence neutralised Mercedes' capacity to try

alternate strategies. Albon qualified fifth, behind Lando Norris, and had to start on the softs, but he dispatched the McLaren quickly and the Safety Car enabled him to dispose of the more fragile rubber and get on the same strategy as his team-mate.

Though Albon slipped back initially, he came on strongly in the latter stages and might have challenged Hamilton for third given another couple of laps. He would later rue a conservatism that left him with "too much juice" at the end.

2 McLaren usurps Racing Point in constructors' race for third

Racing Point seemed to have the battle for third in the constructors' championship under control, courtesy of Sergio Pérez's unexpected victory in the Sakhir GP, but the Mexican's smoking departure on lap eight in Abu Dhabi threw it all open again.

Team-mate Lance Stroll slipped and slid, making heavy weather of the long phase on hard tyres, and was demoted to 10th by Renault's Esteban Ocon on the final lap.

Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz raced to fifth and sixth from fourth and sixth on the grid, enabling McLaren to leapfrog Racing Point and claim third in the final standings, with 202 points to 195. But the resurgent Woking squad faced a post-race investigation before the champagne could be officially uncorked.

Both McLarens stopped on the same lap during the caution period and Racing Point complained that Sainz drove too slowly as he approached his pit box, baulking Stroll, who'd been running just behind Sainz having started eighth. Racing Point turned Stroll around marginally quicker and he almost, but not quite, left the pits ahead of the second McLaren.

But the stewards found no case to answer, observing that Sainz had received no instructions from the pitwall to drive slowly or otherwise, and that he had braked only briefly before returning to the pitlane speed limit.

A strong race for both McLarens wrapped up third in the constructors' championship



3 Ricciardo makes counter-strategy work

Daniel Ricciardo brought his two-year Renault stint to a close with a fine drive to seventh on a tricky alternate tyre strategy. After qualifying 12th and starting 11th, he began the race on hard-compound tyres and was one of just six drivers not to pit during the early caution period.

That gave him track position and he clung on gamely to fifth until stopping for mediums on lap 39 of 55, by which time he was sufficiently ahead of the chasing pack to slot back in to seventh behind the two McLarens.

In contrast, Ferrari also left Sebastian Vettel (hard) and Charles Leclerc (medium) out, enabling them to run seventh and eighth having started 13th and 12th, but Leclerc lost ground at the restart and slipped to 13th before Ferrari brought him in under green-flag conditions on lap 22.

This put Leclerc at the tail of the field and consigned him to a hard slog back to 13th. Vettel also lost ground as the hard tyres gave up prematurely so had to complete the race on mediums, finishing behind his team-mate.

Ricciardo concluded his time at Renault with a fine seventh after qualifying down in 12th



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; GLENN DUNBAR; ANDY HONE

RESULTS ROUND 17

YAS MARINA / 13.12.20 / 55 LAPS



1st	**Max Verstappen** Red Bull	1h36m28.645s
2nd	**Valtteri Bottas** Mercedes	+15.976s
3rd	**Lewis Hamilton** Mercedes	+18.415s
4th	**Alexander Albon** Red Bull	+19.987s
5th	**Lando Norris** McLaren	+60.729s
6th	**Carlos Sainz** McLaren	+65.662s
7th	**Daniel Ricciardo** Renault	+73.748s
8th	**Pierre Gasly** AlphaTauri	+89.718s
9th	**Esteban Ocon** Renault	+101.069s
10th	**Lance Stroll** Racing Point	+102.738s
11th	**Daniil Kvyat** AlphaTauri	+1 lap
12th	**Kimi Räikkönen** Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
13th	**Charles Leclerc** Ferrari	+1 lap
14th	**Sebastian Vettel** Ferrari	+1 lap
15th	**George Russell** Williams	+1 lap
16th	**Antonio Giovinazzi** Alfa Romeo	+1 lap
17th	**Nicholas Latifi** Williams	+1 lap
18th	**Kevin Magnussen** Haas	+1 lap
19th	**Pietro Fittipaldi** Haas	+2 laps

Retirements

Sergio Pérez Racing Point	8 laps - engine

Fastest lap

Daniel Ricciardo: 1m40.926s on lap 55

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



Hard (C3) **Medium** (C4) **Soft** (C5) **Inter** **Wet**

CLIMATE	AIR TEMP	TRACK TEMP
Dry into night	22°C	29°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Hamilton	347pts	13 Vettel	33pts
2 Bottas	223pts	14 Kvyat	32pts
3 Verstappen	214pts	15 Hülkenberg	10pts
4 Pérez	125pts	16 Räikkönen	4pts
5 Ricciardo	119pts	17 Giovinazzi	4pts
6 Sainz	105pts	18 Russell	3pts
7 Albon	105pts	19 Grosjean	2pts
8 Leclerc	98pts	20 Magnussen	1pt
9 Norris	97pts	21 Latifi	0pts
10 Gasly	75pts	22 Aitken	0pts
11 Stroll	75pts	23 Fittipaldi	0pts
12 Ocon	62pts		

motorsport STATS

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STEVE McQUEEN: THE LOST FILM

Sky Documentaries

***Le Mans* was a** famous box office dud but it wasn't Steve McQueen's first attempt at bringing racing to the big screen in partnership with *The Great Escape* director John Sturges. *Day of the Champion*, McQueen's attempt to craft an epic based on F1, was abandoned before principal photography began in 1966.

Funded by Warner Brothers, *Day of the Champion* became embroiled in a race to the screen with Metro Goldwyn Mayer's rival James Garner vehicle *Grand Prix*, and who was aligned with which production became a political issue between teams and drivers. Delays completing McQueen's previous film put the shoot months behind schedule and *Grand Prix* got what would prove to be an unbeatable start, prompting Warner Brothers to pull the plug on *Day of the Champion*. All that remained were the rushes from footage Sturges had shot while waiting for McQueen to arrive.

This feature-length doc is a lavish affair, narrated by David Letterman, and offers a fascinating insight into the technical and political challenges of the production. The extant footage – including Stirling Moss stunt-driving at the Nürburgring – is remarkable too, though its relative scarcity means material from *Grand Prix* is called upon to do some of the narrative's heavy lifting. Since the focus is on McQueen, his life and his abiding passions, there's a lot of biographical material, and a look at *Le Mans* which gives that film a fresh context.



FERRARI 1000GP

Price £137.99

dukevideo.com





Published in two volumes and kicked off with a foreword by former Ferrari CEO Louis Camilleri and Scuderia Ferrari team principal Mattia Binotto, this is the lavishly illustrated official history of the marque's participation in Formula 1. Ferrari celebrated its 1000th world championship grand prix at Mugello last year – although the methodology for arriving at this was opaque and, judging by the correspondence *GP Racing* has received, a number of our readers were similarly baffled.

Ferrari 1000GP therefore provides the definitive guide to Ferrari's thinking since it offers a visual history, with an image from every one of the 1000 races factored into its rubric.

Many of the pictures are drawn from the archive of Motorsport Images, whose work will be familiar to *GP Racing* readers. A results archive makes it an invaluable repository of information regarding Ferrari's performances down the years.

At over 700 pages and weighing 5.8kg, this collection – limited to 2000 copies – will also require a sturdy bookshelf.

TW1018

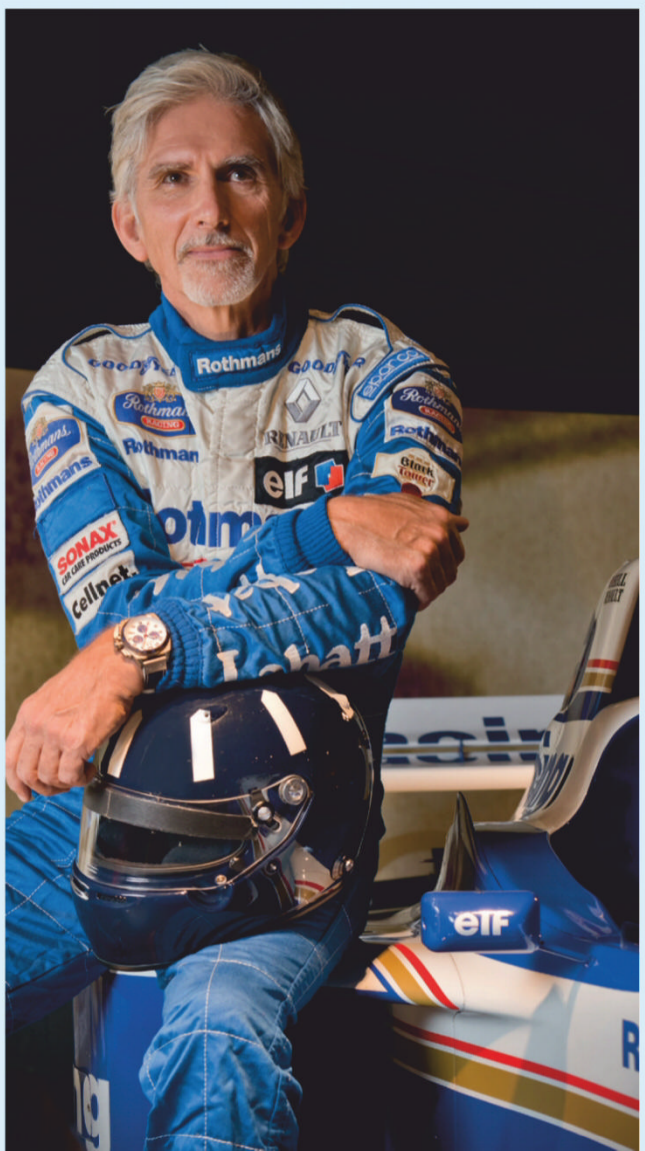
Price £299 (current pre-order price)

uk.twsteel.com

TW Steel has a long association with F1 and its latest timepiece takes its inspiration from 1996 world champion Damon Hill and his Williams FW18 car.

The TW1018 is powered by a Swiss-made Ronda Z60 chronograph movement and claims a battery life of 50 months. It features a double-layered white satin dial enclosed in anti-reflective sapphire crystal within a light titanium case, bordered by a rose gold tachymeter bezel with dark blue detailing redolent of Hill's crash helmet. The rest of the materials are formed in high-grade 316L steel and the engraved caseback features Damon's signature and a chequered flag motif. A dark blue strap with white stitching emphasises the connection with Hill's family racing colours.









FLAT CHAT

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PICTURES motorsport IMAGES

ABITEBOUL HANDED ALPINE PASS OUT

It's said that all political careers end in failure. Thrusting young people with ambition align themselves with the most powerful and influential stars in their firmament, only to suffer the consequences when those stars eventually diminish or blink out.

So farewell, then, Cyril Abiteboul – or Cyril Irritable, as one rival team principal nicknamed him – whose departure from Renault was marked by the classically understated medium of a tersely worded press release in early January, a week before the company provided a first peek at how its newly rebranded Alpine F1 team might look.

Luca de Meo's appointment last July as chief executive of the Renault Group – a long-term replacement for the disgraced Carlos Ghosn – naturally suggested that change might be coming, regardless of his apparent enthusiasm for the F1 project. But Cyril's exit came as something of a surprise because he's always been a survivor. He caught his first break in the mid-2000s after a digital rights proposal he'd written for the Grand Prix Manufacturers' Association (an abortive breakaway series born of friction between the car makers and Bernie Ecclestone) made its way to the desk of Renault F1 team principal Flavio Briatore. That led to a business development role and a position alongside the boss as paperwork wrangler – leading in later years for him to be dubbed by one of the other bigwigs as "Flav's tea boy".

When in 2009 Briatore was ejected in disgrace post-'Crashgate', Cyril had enough traction with Renault's high-ups at the time to avoid the fate of his mentor. This was a febrile period indeed as Renault sold 'Team Enstone' to GenII Capital but remained in F1 as an engine supplier since Ghosn was persuaded that this would remain a strong revenue stream.

A survivor through many of Renault's recent shake-ups, Abiteboul will not get to lead the rebranded Alpine team



Developments in the hybrid era would bring change on that front but in the interim, Abiteboul spent 18 months as team principal of Caterham in F1: at that point, Renault's plan was to resurrect Alpine via a joint venture with Caterham, and Cyril's presence was a means of having a Renault man in a hands-on role. When Caterham folded Cyril was thrown a lifeline by Renault Sport boss Jérôme Stoll, who needed new faces on board to pour balm on an increasingly toxic relationship with Red Bull.

CYRIL'S DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRISTIAN HORNER BECAME AN ENDURING THREAD IN THE STORY OF THE HYBRID ERA

This Cyril was unable to carry off, and his dysfunctional relationship with Red Bull team principal Christian Horner became an enduring thread in the narrative of the hybrid era. Nevertheless we must credit Abiteboul for his part in selling Ghosn the idea of coming back in as a manufacturer, even though his proposed timeline of restoring the team to winning ways in five years proved embarrassingly optimistic.

There have been mistakes along the way – arguably the most notable being the hiring of Daniel Ricciardo when Renault didn't have a car befitting an A-lister. The expense of recruiting Ricciardo also required cutbacks to be made elsewhere.

While overpromising and under-delivering has proved to be another storyline during Abiteboul's tenure, he succeeded very well in protecting the team during the boardroom turbulence which followed Ghosn's arrest. Despite the F1 team's recent upswing in performance it was always likely, after Stoll was pushed into retirement last December, that further purges would occur and would focus on Stoll appointees.

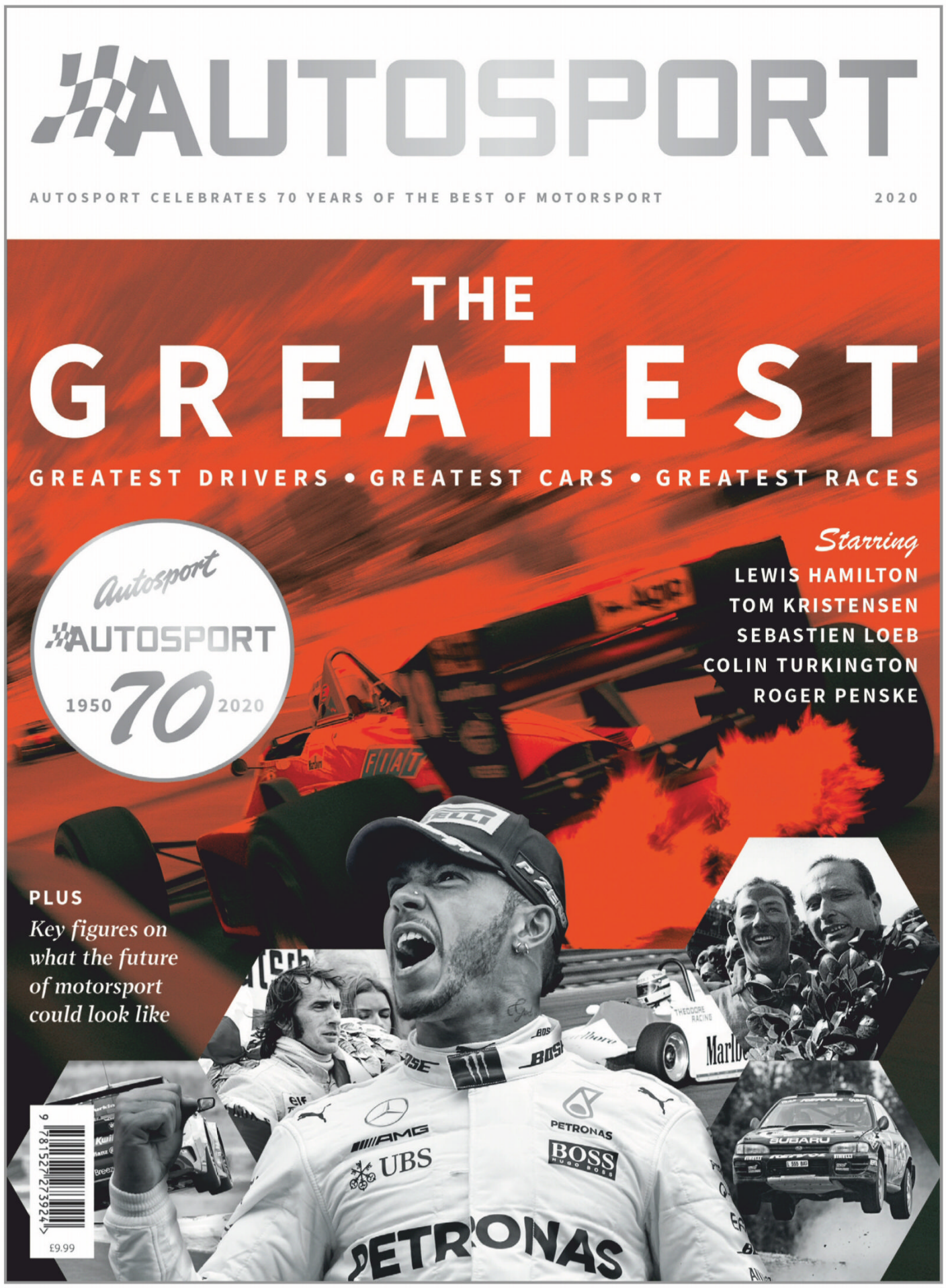
De Meo has already unveiled plans for Renault's road car division which take it in a radically different direction from that espoused by Ghosn. It's hardly surprising, then, that he should want a new face heading up the fresh agenda for Alpine.

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PICTURE: SIMON GALLOWAY; ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE

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