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AN ALMOST INDEPENDENT F1 NEWSPAPER



CANADA
SATURDAY 07·06·08

Rain played a crucial role in yesterday's practice, as changeable weather made the track as slippery as a hockey-rink. It wasn't the only water hazard around, as Kimi Räikkönen discovered on the way here, while elsewhere find out who shares Anthony Hamilton's crash habit and also the strangest demands made by F1 drivers during GP week...

Tyre-blistering form
Lewis Hamilton didn't waste any time reasserting his authority over the track where he claimed his first F1 win last year, setting the fastest time in Friday afternoon's session.
Photography: Sutton Images

On the rocks

After a tough race in Monaco, Kimi just wanted to get away from it all. While Lewis Hamilton and Adrian Sutil were in LA partying with the Pussycat Dolls, Kimi opted for the simple life and headed to Hamina, on the east coast of Finland, to stay at a friend's cottage. That said, you can be at one with nature and still bring your mega-toys along too. So Kimi rang the skipper of his brand new €3.5 million yacht, and gave him the coordinates for his mate's house. That's when a bad week got a whole lot worse. Kimi stared in horror from the beach as the skipper misjudged mooring along the quayside, ramming the 72ft Sunseeker onto the rocks. It's often difficult to judge Kimi's mood, but we gather that his expression hinted at some displeasure.

John the joyrider

Montreal's famous Queue de Cheval restaurant played host to Toyota's annual dinner for the British media on Thursday, where the press corps was treated to a 20 ounce French-cut rib-eye steak. But, tasty though it was, a number of diners nearly spat out their food when John Howett revealed his penchant for B-road hooliganism. When asked what his favourite car is, we expected the company man to wax lyrical about the Lexus LS460. "No, it's got to be a Ferrari," said the candid Howett. "I've got a very early 355. But I just don't drive it enough, and that's a bit dangerous because you forget how it can bite you. I've had it pulled out of ditches twice now." He'll have some stories to share with Anthony Hamilton then.

Frying Finn

You may recall that recently a fire engulfed Mika Hakkinen's home in Provence, southern France. He has now confirmed that all the precious trophies were burnt to a cinder. "They were destroyed," Mika told German newspaper, Express. Investigators have now established that the fire was accidental, caused by faulty wiring in the double world champion's trophy cabinet. A fine example of being a victim of one's own success. But as Hakkinen drove for McLaren he gave his prizes to the team, and so the trophies were replicas anyway. We're pretty sure the silversmiths of Woking will be able to knock up another complete set for him.



▲ **SPIN CITY**
Practice began on a wet track yesterday, and Fernando Alonso was one of five drivers to spin off course. As conditions improved drivers took advantage, switching to supersoft tyres.

Gardening leave

Look up the English expression "gardening leave" in the F1 dictionary and you'll find it defined as the period of time an engineer spends at home after leaving one team before he can join another. But despite the horticultural reference there's usually no gardening involved – until now that is. Williams have come to the aid of sacked technical directors with its own lawnmower. Manufactured by Countax Ltd, the mower's cutting device probably owes a bit to the Brabham fan car, and the 16hp engine is more Jordan's '92 Yamaha than cutting-edge Toyota, but the blue and white paint job is all Williams. It was unveiled yesterday at the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show in London, priced at £5245. Now all we need is a Honda equivalent, and we've got a race.

Diva drivers

While it's a well known fact that touring musicians invade hotels with long lists of crazy demands – Mariah Carey once reputedly asked for a red carpet to be rolled out to greet her when she arrived at a London hotel – F1 drivers are not renowned for being precious. Some mineral water, pasta and a Playstation will normally do it. According to Montreal's concierges however, even F1 drivers do occasionally ask for the impossible. Speaking to the Montreal Gazette this week, Hugo Legrand, concierge at the Sofitel Hotel on Sherbrooke Street, admitted that the strangest request came from a driver who wanted to be taken to a western rodeo. "We found him a private plane, flew him to Calgary, put him up in a hotel, he saw a rodeo and flew back," Legrand said. He wouldn't divulge the name of the said driver but one can only speculate as to which massive fan of western clothing it might have been.

American dream?

INSTANT OPINIONS #7: CONTINENTAL SHIFT

Does North America have a Formula One future?

NEGATIVE: No, it's a dead duck. Canada will probably keep its race because an enthusiastic crowd and a world-class city outweigh concerns over the ageing circuit – but the US wants American teams and heroes, and F1 has neither of those. It isn't going to supersede NASCAR or IndyCar, so F1 should concentrate its efforts on arenas which make financial sense, such as the Middle East.

POSITIVE: North America is the natural home of F1. The crowds are bigger than anywhere and all the big sponsors and manufacturer teams love it. F1 just needs to find the right venues – the USA GP should be somewhere with a little more fizz and glamour than Indianapolis. Las Vegas makes a good case, being a tourist hotspot, with great infrastructure and the necessary glitz for Formula One.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON COVER ILLUSTRATION: EBOY

The Secret Diary of Hermann Schnell, Aged 19½

TUESDAY, MAY 20TH, MONACO

Alessandra is going to be so happy. She's been dropping not-so-subtle hints that I should buy a property in a glamorous tax haven, so I've secretly spent the last week looking at property on the Isle of Man. It's fabulous – great racing heritage, very quiet, no media intrusion... I think this could be the making of us as a couple.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21ST, MONACO

I've been asked to write a few words about the race. Obviously, this place is incredibly boring for someone of my talent, being so slow and offering no overtaking. Derek, the head of communications, suggested it might be a good idea if he softened the language slightly. The issued press release said, "Wow, I love driving at Monaco!" He's also editing my autobiography. I'm a bit worried.

THURSDAY, MAY 22ND, MONACO

My one consolation in this miserable season is that Oscar is having an even worse start to his career. Rumour says he's personally responsible for the global shortage of carbon-fibre, and judging by today, I can believe it. The kindest thing anyone's said about him is that he couldn't drive a soapy stick up a dead dog's bottom – and that was his grandmother. It also means whenever I pop back in to see the old team, they're actually pleased to see me. I had dinner with Elise. She's really great, and now that I'm not rendered entirely speechless by the thought of her knees, we get along really well and I can talk to her for hours.

FRIDAY, MAY 23RD, MONACO

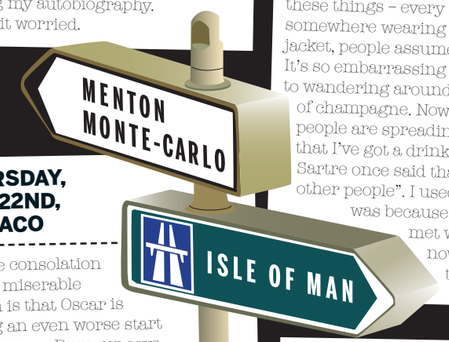
Alessandra is bombarding me with questions about the new home. "Does it overlook the track?" she asked. "Of course," I replied, being very cool, though actually I was impressed – I didn't know she'd even heard of the TT. She explained how her schedule conflicts with the boring races but luckily she will be able to show up at the truly great venues – so I wasn't expecting to see her until Silverstone, but she appeared by my side as I walked past the cameras outside the Fashion TV party. She vanished as soon as we got inside. Is it fair that I have a girlfriend who always disappears before bedtime? I'm beginning to think she might turn into a pumpkin at midnight...

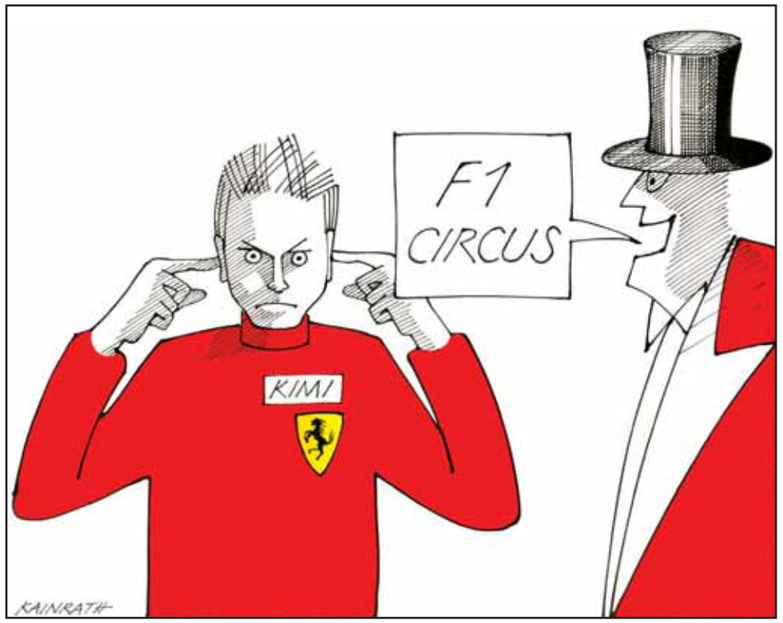
SATURDAY, MAY 24TH, MONACO

There was a gala dinner this evening, hosted by a man called Grimaldi Forum. I don't like these things – every time I go somewhere wearing a dinner jacket, people assume I'm a waiter. It's so embarrassing that I've taken to wandering around with a tray of champagne. Now, I've heard people are spreading rumours that I've got a drink problem. Sartre once said that "Hell is other people". I used to think that was because everybody he met was French – now I'm starting to understand.

SUNDAY, MAY 25TH, MONACO

Interesting race today – because of the rain, everyone was slow and twitchy. I was able to take advantage of that – my car has been slow and twitchy all season, so it didn't particularly make any difference. With six laps to go I thought I might score some points – until I was used for target practice again. The mechanics were all in tears when I limped back to the pits. Kevin kept saying, "The bonus, the bonus... think about what could have been." He's right – I'll be remembered as a hero, and that truly is a bonus. I must thank him for helping me to gain some perspective.





VIEW FROM THE TRUCK: BRAVE NEW WORLD

If F1 can conquer Asia, why not America, too?

BY JUSTIN HYNES

Considering that we inhabit that most irreligious of sports, it's not often that I would choose to draw a reference from a religious text. Yet when trawling through recent Formula One news, Ecclesiastes' statement that "there is nothing new under the sun" springs readily to mind. Of course, it would be more apt if the weather wasn't once again playing tricks (leading to the feeling that Montreal in June has magically morphed into the Nürburgring in mid-April) but the premise that what goes around comes around still holds.

We're embroiled in political in-fighting, enmeshed in the usual summer driver-swapping speculation and, finally, we're retreading the old ground of whether a US GP is viable.

The short answer is: yes. If He Who Must Be Obeyed is willing, then staging the race on a polar ice cap is viable; it's just a case of whether there's a deal to be done. So far Bernie has been coy on the subject, saying he's looking east rather than west and that the US is not fundamental, but that smacks of a classic 'you need us more than we need you' bargaining chip. That's a bit of a stretch, as the event was never a cash cow for Indianapolis, but it did help cement the circuit's claim to be the world's premier motorsport venue (the Indy 500, NASCAR, F1) and bring the city an influx of cash-rich Europeans each summer.

That should be incentive enough, but if any more were needed, how about this for a sweetener. There's the very real prospect of a couple of European races disappearing off the calendar: France and Germany. Silverstone, too, could go. Abu Dhabi and India will fill a couple of slots but that still leaves just 17 or 18 races on the schedule – far from the 20 F1 envisages.

In that case if the US GP is to be re-explored then why not factor in a Mexican race, and stage an end-of-season, prime-time European TV triple-header from Indy through to Mexico, ending in Brazil in early November?

If there's a will to stage a US race then clearly there is also a will in Mexico. In February, the FIA's Vice President for Sport, Mexican José Abed, hinted about a possible GP in Mexico in 2010 to mark the bicentenary of the Mexican War of Independence and the centenary of the Mexican Revolution. Abed said it would be staged in Mexico City, Puebla or the beach resort of Cancún.

Cancún offers the ideal F1 playground. It has a good airport, hundreds of hotels and the chance to draft in the hordes of Mexican drivers that populate US racing

Cancún offers the ideal F1 playground. It has a good airport, hundreds of hotels and would afford F1 the chance to draft in the hordes of Mexican drivers that populate US open-wheel racing. It is also backed by Carlos Slim, the world's third richest man and owner of telecomms companies throughout South America, just the kind of sponsor F1 adores.

Yes, there was an attempt a few years ago to get a race off the ground there, but if the local government can be persuaded of the value of the endeavour, then a late-October Cancún race (after the hurricane season) makes sense as part of a season-ending TV spectacular.

ON THIS DAY... 7/6/08



1977: ROYAL SILVER
An estimated 500m people worldwide watch celebrations for the silver jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the British throne on TV.
The alternative punk celebration.
YouTube.com search: Sex Pistols + monarchy

1975: NEW VIDEO
Sony launch the first video player for their ill-fated Betamax format.
See the odd promotional video for the new format.
YouTube.com search: Betamax + 1975

1982: THE KING'S CASTLE
Graceland is opened to the public, but the bathroom where Elvis died is still off-limits.
Take your own tour of the King's Memphis home.
YouTube.com search: Elvis + Graceland + tour

BIRTHS

1958: PRINCE
The artist formerly known as 'young' turns 50 today.
YouTube.com search: Prince + hit + Purple Rain

ON THIS DAY, VISIT...

MONTREAL ON WHEELS
Why not do your sightseeing differently? Rent bikes, tandems, scooters or in-line skates and take advantage of the city's scenic cycle paths.
27 de la Commune Street East, H2Y 1H9. Prices range from Can$8 to Can$30 depending on rental type.

ON THIS DAY IN F1...



1998: CANADA
Michael Schumacher wins a chaotic race at Montreal.
See the collision that brought out a red flag to end the GP.
YouTube.com search: start + roll + Wurz + 1998

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PHOTOGRAPHY: LAT, GETTY IMAGES ILLUSTRATION: DIETMAR KAINRATH



Steve was losing the will to live as Nelson went on about his new hobby. "This red thing is called the lure and the glove is a gauntlet. I swing the lure and the falcon dives at it. When he comes back I give him a piece of meat and put a little hood over his head..." "Oh, I wish I could put a hood over your head," thought Steve.



Rubens was already regretting agreeing to do his track walk on a quad bike as the always nervous Jock said: "Now, go slowly, look out for that big car, brake, BRAKE!"



"No darling, you'll love it, really you will. It's a detached home with large windows, it's very cheap and the only downside is it's situated near what seems to be a noisy main road, but it does overlook the water and it's got plenty of potential."

TAKING TIME OUT

Paddock life is tough, so it's good to take a little break from work.



Once a car salesman, always a car salesman and Martin had spotted an opportunity: "Now Lewis, what your Dad needs, after that crash in the Porsche, is something less intimidating. I was keeping this buggy for my wife, but I like your face and I'll give you the deal of a lifetime."



Auditions for Pirates of the Carribean III were in full swing and while Laurent was a natural for the Johnny Depp role, Sébastien was impressing no one with his feeble one-legged pirate act.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, CRISPIN THRUSTON

START YOUR SEARCH ENGINE

We've all done it – 'Googling' ourselves to check how many hits the search engine produces. But what happens when you're Nico Rosberg and Google comes back with 1,180,000 matches? The Red Bulletin asked him to look over a few of his favourite sites, starting with… www.nicorosberg.com
By Anthony Rowlinson



Nico Rosberg's impressive new home page promises to take us on a 'personal voyage' with the Williams man and, as you'll see at first click, it's a lifestyle-rich creation, filled with lush, moody, half-lit images and the honeyed tones of our hero. It promises to make Nico's teenage fans swoon, but it says little about racing. Why is this, Nico?
"I wanted to do this to show anyone who's interested in me a different direction and a different side of my personality. We thought a lot about how to do this before starting the website, and I'm really happy with the result so far. It's not the finished product – as you'll see over the coming months, there is a lot more to come. If people want to see my results, they can go to crash.net or williamsf1.com, so why repeat that? We wanted to show a little bit more."

You're pictured with a big friendly dog on your site. Is it yours?
"[Pauses] Er… sort of. Well, let's say yes. It's a family dog. My parents have a country home in Provence and this is one of theirs. He's called Coco… I think!"

We noticed there's a very heavy, vintage-looking leather punchbag on your site, too. But you're not beating it up or anything. What's that all about?
"There's a leather football on there too, if you have a look. You can see me holding it. It takes the site more in a lifestyle direction, I think, because that's a part of me too, and I really enjoy it. It's been fun trying to find something a little bit new. It shows some of my interest in clothes and style, for example, which you probably don't get to see anywhere else."

'Respect' is a word you've chosen to feature heavily…
"The purpose is to give a bit of myself to spectators who, so far, know nothing more about me than what I do in a car. I wanted to try to show some of the things that I believe in and things that I've been brought up with. When you start talking about things you believe in, they are always big words, but I try to keep them in mind. For example, I try to be modest in Formula One. I always try to keep that in mind and I think I have managed quite well."

'Honesty' is another one…
I think that's partly from my Finnish heritage. It's a big word again, and no one is ever going to be 100 per cent honest, but it's one I really hope to keep to in general, particularly with things I care about." ➜

ILLUSTRATION: EBOY; PHOTOGRAPHY: LAT



You talk about playing chess and football as things you do to relax. What's your favourite opening chess strategy?
"Ah, yes, well, I think online poker has taken over a bit from both of these! It's a new thing for me and I'm finding it unbelievably addictive. I could go to the casino instead, but there you have a €500 buy-in or whatever, and that's a lot of money when you're still learning how to play. I like playing online, because you can still play for money, which makes it feel more important and gives the game an edge. It doesn't have to be a lot, but playing for cash makes a difference. I've been into it for a few weeks now and I reckon I'm about even. I lost quite a bit to start with, maybe two or three hundred euros, but now I'm probably about €80 up or something like that.

"It's taught me a lot of patience, actually. Initially, I would put in, say, an extra €40 just to see what the other guy's got, even when I had a weak hand. But playing more has taught me when to wait, and also when to give in. That's a hard thing to learn! It's also taught me not to abuse your winning streak. Quit while you're ahead – that sort of thing. It's nice to learn a new thing, and I'm competitive, so when I do something I want to do it really well."

So who got you addicted to this potentially ruinous game of financial risk?
"A lot of drivers are doing it, you know – for example, Fernando [Alonso], Robert [Kubica]… It's definitely addictive and challenging, and as long as you don't spend your life's earnings on it, it's OK. But I'm not sure if it's a good thing for me to do on a race weekend, actually, because it's very intense. It takes quite a lot of nervous energy, because I get really keyed up by it. It's actually pretty physical… But back to your original question, who got me into it… it's actually one of my old friends who got hooked during his gap year. He started making $1,000 a month and is now basically a full-time professional poker player!"

'On YouTube, there's a whole mini-movie someone's made from my F1 races…'
Nico Rosberg

We've found a couple of other websites dedicated to you, apart from your own. Have you come across www.nicorosbergfanclub.com when you've been on the Internet?
"Ah yes – I even know the girl who does this. She's Dutch, and she has been following me since my F3 days."

She's made up a quiz about you…
"Yes, I know. I should do it. I could win, couldn't I!?"

So, what about the question where she asks about the nickname you had at ART in GP2?
"Yeah – 'The Grandmother'! I don't really know what that was about, to be honest. I think it was when I was going well and getting a few poles, they said I should drive more like a granny or something [ie slow down a bit]. I didn't really understand it then and I don't now!"

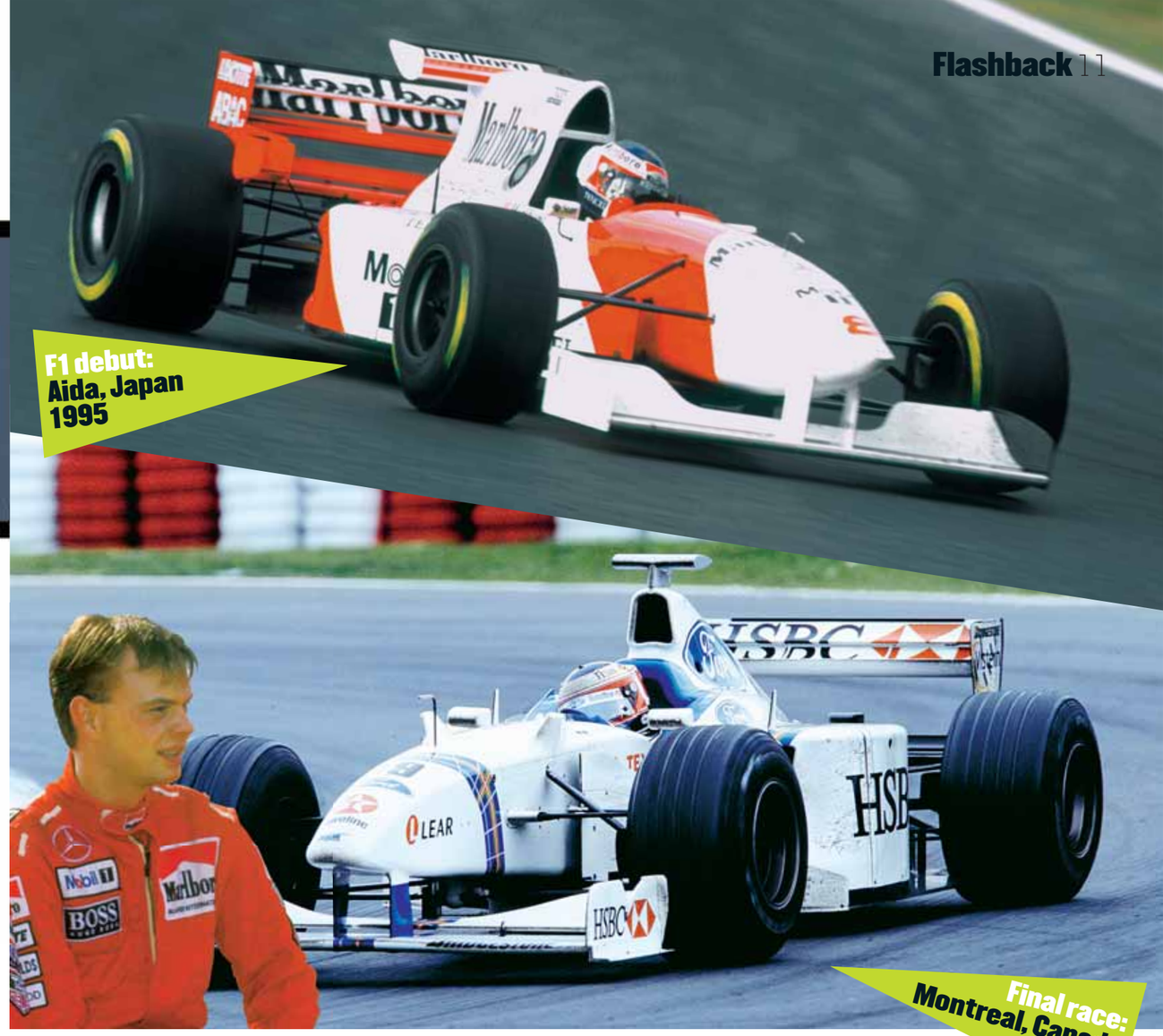
She asks, too, about your favourite TV show…
"Yep, she's right. It's TV Total, which goes out on [German TV channel] Pro 7. The presenter's a German guy called Stefan Raab, and he's very sharp, very funny and has some really good guests. They show some great, crazy clips from other TV shows. It's quite satirical."

OK, another site… There's a girl on www.bebo.com who describes herself as 'Mrs Rosberg'.
"That's very weird. I don't really know what to say. I'll tell you what I have seen, though – there's some really nice stuff on YouTube. There's a whole mini-movie someone's made from my F1 races, edited to Shut up and Drive, and it's really nice and professional. I'm amazed and quite flattered that someone I'll probably never know puts so much time and effort into something like this." [Search YouTube under 'Rosberg + Shut Up and Drive' if you want a look.] There's another one, too, dedicated to my girlfriend, Vivian. [Search Vivian + Rosberg to find 'La novia de Nico Rosberg'.] It's amazing – full of personal pictures of me and her that I've never even seen! They're not my photos, so I don't know how they ended up on YouTube."

So how does this kind of attention make you feel? In your third F1 season, have you just become completely used to all the interest in you and the fans?
"Not really, no. It still feels a bit strange, and I don't know if it will ever become normal."

Do you have a favourite website?
"Yes – www.fulltiltpoker.com!"

And in general, do you like the web?
"You know, not really. I always have ideas about how much I could surf and things I should do with it, but then when I sit down at my laptop, I often find that I don't know what to do. There's just too much of it. I'm not a 'surfer'. I guess I'm just not creative in that way."



First Day/Last Day

JAN MAGNUSSEN

Congratulations, you're fired! There aren't many Formula One drivers who have experienced success and rejection as close together as the Dane.

My first grand prix was the Pacific Grand Prix of 1995, at Aida, in Japan, in which I drove for the McLaren-Mercedes team. I was kind of thrown into it without having time to get properly prepared. Mika Häkkinen had appendicitis and I was a test driver for McLaren at the time. I was only told on the Sunday before the race that I was being entered. I did some pitstop practice and some starts on the Monday, and then left for Japan. Did I qualify 10th? I really don't remember, but it was something like that [actually it was 12th].

The race was pretty good. It was at a time when McLaren were struggling a little bit on speed, but it was still one of the greatest experiences of my life, being right in the middle of everything. The longest I'd run in a Formula One car up until then had been four consecutive laps around Silverstone. I had done that many times, but never more than four laps, so it was a big experience, suddenly having to do 81 laps of Aida. OK, so I was nervous, but I was fit enough to do it, my neck and everything were fine and it turned out to be no problem at all.

The McLaren team were trying very hard not to make me feel nervous about anything and to help me with what I would normally do. When I was standing on the grid, the team physio came up to me with a Big Mac – right on the grid! I had a bit of a reputation for not eating quite right. So that was kind of funny – it took the edge off everything, I have to say.

Despite everything, I had a decent race. I had a good battle with Rubens Barrichello, fighting for, I don't know what position, maybe 10th place. My recollection is that everyone in front of me finished the race. Under normal circumstances, I should have been further up, but I was very happy with 10th.

Oddly enough, my last grand prix, in Montreal in 1998, was my best. I was driving for Stewart on what was not a problem-free weekend. We were supposed to have a new evolution of the car with a longer wheelbase, but I ended up in the old version. Nevertheless, I scored my first and only point in F1 by coming sixth. It was great, getting a point; it really meant something. I was happy for about a day… until I got fired. And that was pretty much it. [Postscript: Jan moved on to race in CART in the USA and the American Le Mans sportscar series and has been a member of the Corvette team since 2004. He has also driven a class-winning car at Le Mans in 2004, 2005 and 2006.]

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PHOTOGRAPHY: GRAND PRIX PHOTO, SUTTON IMAGES







SPEED RACERS

The La Formula Una girls proved they weren't afraid to get dirty as they whizzed around a local bike track.











WINNER

Natalie Chiasson took this amusing picture of thirsty fellow La Formula Una Katrina Lesko, earning herself a prime spot in the Red Bull Racing garage from which to catch all of tomorrow's action.



DC'S DAYS OF THUNDER

Big and brutish, NASCAR may be poles apart from the sophistication of F1, but like its counterpart, it's the sport's raw power that draws the fans. To get a feel for the action, Red Bull Racing's David Coulthard travelled to North America to take in a race. Anthony Rowlinson went with him. Photography Thomas Butler

David Coulthard is wearing a small, soft black leather Gucci 'manbag' across his lower back (definitely not the lower stomach in US 'fanny-pack' style). Fair enough. He probably needs it to stop the usual clutter of phone, wallet, keys and cash ruining the line of his Dolce & Gabbana jeans, which are similarly expensive and Euro chic. The thing is that, discreet though it is, the bag couldn't be more out of place in the Dover Speedway NASCAR paddock that DC is visiting. Think Karl Lagerfeld at a Sex Pistols gig.

It's all the evidence you need that Formula One and NASCAR – huge, motorised, techno circuses though they both are – will forever remain worlds apart. DC, always among the brightest of his clan, is instantly accurate with his first quiet observation, as he strides through the trucks ('haulers' in NASCAR-speak), tyres (skinny Goodyear slicks, not fat Bridgestone grooves) and open-walled garages (no team secrecy here) that make up the deliberately downhome NASCAR pit and paddock arena: "I was going to put my 'wife-beater' T-shirt on, but I'm not sure if it's still a sport out here," he says. Sharp. ➜





Car crazy
Red Bull Racing's Brian Vickers shows DC the ins and outs of his stockcar; a slighty different beast to an F1 car.



➜ His throwaway aside is more revealing than he may realise in an environment where, for example, three teams are unashamedly sponsored by the US military – army, air force and National Guard – and where the pre-race fly-past, common in F1, is performed not by the state airline, or by stunt planes, but by a variety of fighter-bombers or troop transporters. Bass Pro Shops, popular with the huntin', shootin' and fishin' community, is another prominent sponsor (although so, too, are familiar US comfort brands, such as Budweiser, Kellogg's, and Home Depot). And before every race, including those that support the NASCAR Sprint Cup epics, the national anthem is sung, as the entire crowd – sometimes numbering 150,000 – and all NASCAR personnel stand to attention, bow heads, place hands on hearts and get 'real emotional' for 30 seconds or so, until on cue, the jet-powered fly-past breaks the tension, just as the strains of The Star-Spangled Banner fade.

Cliché and stereotype walk unavoidably through the NASCAR experience, bumping into you – sometimes literally, when they are the disturbingly common 20-stone US giants who can't get out of their own way. This 'size thing' is the most immediate cultural difference for any F1 regular visiting NASCAR – getting used to Stateside dimensions takes a degree of sensory recalibration. F1's obsession with ascetic minimalism, and purity of form and function, is blasted aside here in a bellow of V8 thunder and with a day-glo colour palette that make no pretence about their simple, visceral attraction. In every way, NASCAR has animal appeal – it's a great big slobbery hound, aiming to please, compared with the sophisticated F1 feline that will love you only on its own terms.

This is by no means a bad thing. The warmth of a NASCAR 'hello' is wondrous for those hardened to the culture of hostility and suspicion endemic in F1 until, after several seasons, grudging (though lasting) acceptance to the club is granted. All are welcome here, as Coulthard notes during a mutually respectful Q&A with the US media on race morning. Answering a question about whether or not F1 has a tendency to look down on its transatlantic cousin, he says: "I don't think that has ever been the case, no. If we have ever poked fun, it's that the physical side of NASCAR offers a bigger range of ages and shapes the chance to compete." Kissinger-like diplomacy, sure to earn admirers.

One such is racegoer Steve Hass, who is convinced that the presence of a top F1 driver like Coulthard, were he ever to switch codes, could only add to NASCAR's lustre: "It would be awesome if he came here," says Hass, who, like many fans, is revelling in the raceday pitlane access afforded him with the purchase of the appropriate ticket. "I've been a fan of NASCAR and F1 since I was a kid, and I'm certainly not one of those who don't want foreign or F1 drivers here. Guys like Juan Pablo Montoya and Coulthard only add to the talent and expand the fanbase. When Montoya came in, suddenly there was this army of Latino and Hispanic fans who had never really looked at NASCAR before."

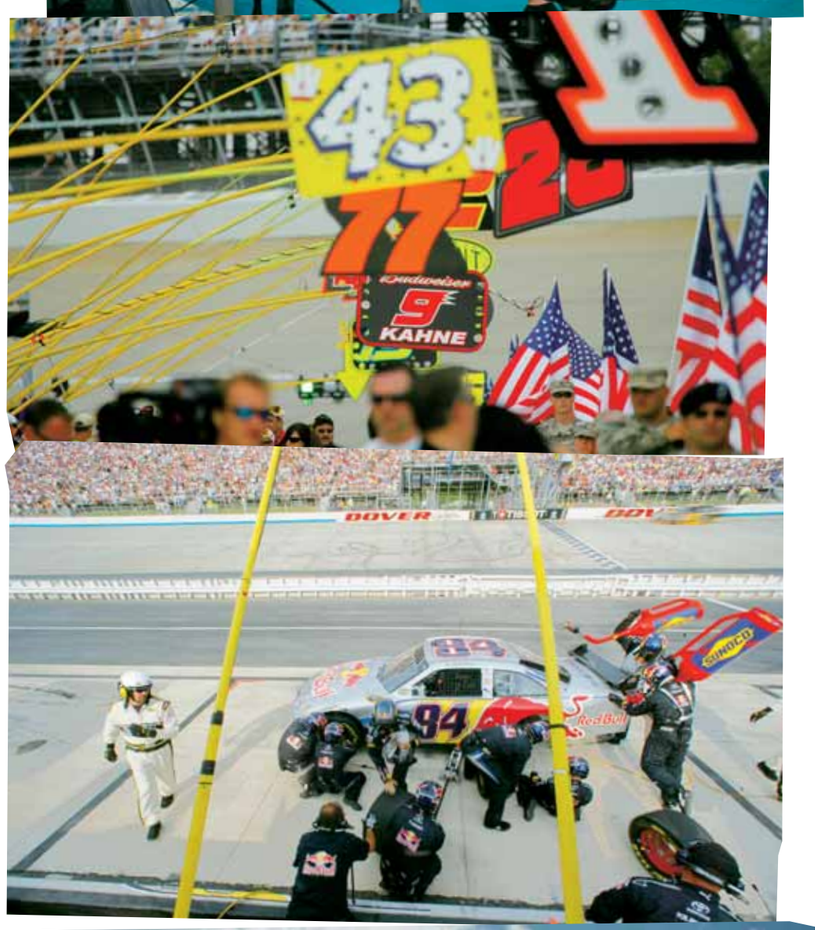
Brian Vickers, Red Bull Racing USA's star driver, echoes the sentiment: "I would love to have DC here," he says. "He's someone who'd bring a lot of international colour. If he did ever consider it, I'd tell him to come on over and have some fun out on the racetrack."

Such refreshing warmth and guileless enthusiasm help make the series' bond with its fans touchingly close. Pay $600 and you're inside your team's garage on race morning. Blatant commercial exploitation of fan-lust, sure, but still the experience of a lifetime for diehard rev-heads. Not, however, an idea that would likely sell well to, say, Ron Dennis or Giorgio Ascanelli.

Coulthard's assessment is acute: "The NASCAR model succeeds because there's so much fan access, and the raceday experience is crucial. The fans feel that they can relate to the cars, drivers and branding – it's part of their everyday life. F1 is a bit more specialised. People cannot really relate to the technical side – there's very little that would be on their road car, but that exclusivity is something that has also worked well for F1. It's such an exclusive club that people become desperate to be a part of it. It's a different approach – not necessarily better or worse, but certainly different."

If getting close to the action is the 'NASCAR way', so, too, is the 'Hollywoodisation' of the race scene, where drivers become lead actors, with race circuits their movie sets. No moments escape the camera – it's even occasionally suggested that NASCAR's powers-that-be run the show to a pretty tight script. And with Coulthard's visit, life comes even closer to imitating art. Today, NASCAR is Hollywood movie Talladega Nights made real. Fans of that film will recall how effete French race ace Jean Girard (played by Sacha Baron Cohen) attempts to challenge established homegrown US star Ricky Bobby (Will Ferrell) for NASCAR supremacy. Central to the film's premise is the gentle mocking of the culture clash between Girard's deeply suspect Euro-sophistication and Bobby's all-American value set. Girard would unquestionably have been comfortable wearing a manbag outside his race overalls, just as Bobby would have made sure he turned up for the Sunday paddock chapel meeting that precedes every race, and during which prayers are said for the sponsors, fans, safety and prolonged good (commercial) health of NASCAR. Yes, really. ➜







➜ It's a moment not without resonance, therefore, when Coulthard, in order to sit for the first time in Vickers' number 83 car, has to unbuckle the manbag to be comfortable as he slings his right leg through the left door window to slip through and in, just like Bo and Luke Duke once did in The Dukes Of Hazzard. You can almost sense the menacing one-tonne slab of 900bhp, 210mph-plus racing machine thinking: "No way are you getting in here wearing that thing, boy."

It's odd to see Coulthard, synonymous for so long with the lithe, corset-tight cockpits of F1 exotica, hemmed into the hefty, hard-edged brick that is a North American Stock Car. His shape and poise are at odds with the beefy dimensions of the machinery that surrounds him (the same could be said of regular driver Vickers, who's as lean as any F1 driver). The more padded proportions of a Juan Pablo Montoya, now a veteran of 50 NASCAR races (and witheringly, though affectionately, dismissed as 'Fat Boy' by DC), are more in tune with the muscular form of NASCAR heavy metal.

Once inside, Coulthard prods and pokes, pushes and pulls, grips the wheel, flexes fingers and rolls his neck, but there's no suggestion of 'start your engine': DC's man enough to admit the prospect of wrestling one of these brutish machines around an oval, having raced throughout his life in single-seaters, on road courses, is not one that greatly appeals: "I'd like to know what it feels like," he says, "but I'd be nervous about it because it would be so alien. It was really strange having the steering wheel so

'I'd like to know what it feels like, but I'd be nervous about it because it would be so alien'
David Coulthard

close, and the pedals just hang above a big, solid floorpan. I suggested to Brian he should get heel-cups to help keep his feet in place. It was hot even when it wasn't running and there's so little visibility. I can't imagine how these guys manage for spatial awareness. They must really have to rely on their spotters."

Reservations aside, Coulthard's inner fan is clearly getting as much out of sitting in this race beast as would anyone with a petrol-pump heart. But do this for a living? "I've never considered racing NASCAR," DC says, "but not for any negative reasons. I've admired it for many years and followed it closely. But I believe that where I fit into the racing picture is as a single-seater racing driver. That's what I grew up with and where my skills are. Doing NASCAR would be as much of a change as doing rallying. I'm absolutely sure that I'm not looking to move to America and do 38 races a year – even if there were an opportunity. I'm an F1 guy."

An F1 guy, still, as DC has been since 1992 (his first test for Benetton-Ford) and one who retains enough passion for his sport to turn up on a weekend off, just to get his fix of noise, fuel vapour and back-of-the-motorhome banter.

Coulthard is also a man who, endearingly, has retained his sense of humour. "You know," he laughs, in a quiet aside, "Brian showed me these guys have a little pocket in the cockpit where they can keep a hat and their sunglasses."

At a push, it would probably accommodate a Gucci manbag, too… ◪

BACK ON TRACK

He may have left Formula One, but that move was by no means the end of the road for Red Bull's Scott Speed.

Scott Speed is relaxing: "No way man, what the hell are you doing here? Sick!" Evidently he never expected to see a Bulletin journalist again, after exiting Scuderia Toro Rosso, and Formula One, at the end of last season. Back in the land of his birth, racing in the Craftsman Truck series that supports the NASCAR Sprint Cup, he's a man apparently without a care in the world.

"Look at my toenails, man. Sick!" Reclining in the comfort of a race-truck executive chair, he flips off a flip-flop and raises his left foot. Scott has, just because he wanted to, outlined the tips of his toenails with blue nail varnish.

What does one say on these occasions? "Yeah, Scott, that's pretty, er, sick." He's laughing – a big, slightly manic, body-encompassing laugh that borders on the hysterical. "Maybe I should do my fingernails next, what do you think, man?"

In fact, Scott never was one to worry about what others thought. From a young age, Speed went against the US racing grain and took to karts, winning titles all over America before being noticed, then picked up, by Red Bull's American Driver Search programme. He was helped over to Europe and found a ride in British F3, from where he progressed to GP2 and F1.

Many who met him found him a bit loud, a bit brash, a bit too, well, American. Perhaps this is why F1 never really 'got' Scott. His fast-talking, open style never sat comfortably with F1's deeply conservative sensibilities. But those who judged too fast hadn't looked too hard. They had never cared to see that this confident kid had achieved something that no other American driver had managed since Michael Andretti – successfully crossed the Atlantic to race in the top flight.

His nationality helped, as both Red Bull and Bernie Ecclestone were keen that an all-American boy should be in the sport. But there was real talent, too: in his 2005 GP2 year, against a field blessed with hot-shots such as Nico Rosberg and Heikki Kovalainen, he finished third in the championship, after five podiums, a pole position and five fastest laps – results that require more than a neat line in toe lacquer.

Against all appearances, he carved out a solid reputation as a thinking driver, one who would play the long game in races and go for points, not a glory pass. If things had been different – had he, for example, stayed for a second season in GP2 and consolidated – his launch platform into F1 might have been more stable. As it is, two seasons with no points will remain his F1 record.

Does he have any regrets? "No way, man. F1 was an amazing experience. I proved to myself that I could compete at the very highest level, and once you've done that no one can seriously say that you're not an amazing racecar driver, wherever you go next. So that's a weight off my shoulders. And I really fell in love with Europe after six years there. There were opportunities to stay in F1, too, but not with Red Bull. And I didn't want to do it unless it was with Red Bull, so that's why I came back."

It's not openly acknowledged, but Speed's apprenticeship in Craftsman Trucks (which are, incidentally, very nearly as quick as the top-echelon NASCAR machines) is a prelude to a full-scale assault on the Sprint Cup next year. He has already shown form in adapting to the brutal yet delicate art of racing 800bhp monsters around a banked oval, winning the Kansas round of NASCAR's junior category, ARCA, at the end of April. It'll be no surprise to see him alongside the big guns – Kyle Busch, Tony Stewart, Juan Pablo Montoya – at the start of '09, possibly sooner.

How considerate of him to go out and win a race – his first truck victory – just four hours after sitting down to talk with The Bulletin. As one NASCAR press veteran said: "The boy's got a little spunk, hasn't he?" ◪



PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER

ALAN JONES' LUCKY DAY

GP Canada, Sept 28, 1980

The 1980 world championship had become a duel between Brabham's Nelson Piquet, with 54 points, and Williams' Alan Jones, with 53. The pair lined up on the front row of the Montreal grid after a titanic battle in qualifying, but who would come out on top?

Nelson Piquet had qualified over 0.8s ahead of Alan Jones in Canada, but the Williams driver still worried the Brabham team. "We tried everything," joked Piquet's team boss Bernie Ecclestone. "We even filled Nelson's car to the brim with oil and sent him out to spray the track – but Jones still got that fast lap in…"

Bernie was talking to a disconsolate Jody Scheckter, one race away from retirement. After 111 Grands Prix, the outgoing champion had failed to qualify for the first time ever. In late September, Ferrari's and Renault's Michelins just weren't getting up to temperature, leaving Jean-Pierre Jabouille as their best qualifier on row seven. Team-mate René Arnoux was on the back row, Gilles Villeneuve just one row ahead.

Behind Villeneuve was New Zealander Mike Thackwell, making his grand prix debut as the youngest driver ever, at 19 years and 182 days. Ken Tyrrell was giving him a chance alongside Jean-Pierre Jarier and Derek Daly. He was 3.208s behind Piquet's fastest lap and ahead of Scheckter to start on the back row, and he nearly set another record: for the shortest grand prix debut.

Jones, oddly superstitious, wore his 'lucky' green Stand 21 overalls for the race. His FW07B had been 'blessed' by his CanAm entrant Carl Haas, who made a point of touching all the parts that might fail, as he had during Jones's winning 1978 CanAm campaign.

The startline was just after the hairpin, before the slight right-hander. Piquet started on the dirty right-hand side of the grid, Jones on the cleaner left, and it was the Australian who made the better start, easing over on Piquet. They touched, Piquet spun, and the Williams' engine cover flew high into the air. Behind, Keke Rosberg spun on cold tyres, snapped right into the wall and began to roll back onto the track.

Unsighted, those behind tried to squeeze through a narrowing gap but chaos ensued. Jarier, Jochen Mass, Villeneuve, Emerson Fittipaldi and Daly were all involved; Mario Andretti flew over Daly's car but Thackwell managed to miss everyone. It was ironic, therefore, that he would be asked to give up his car for Jarier to use. The race was stopped and everyone else took the re-start except Daly and Thackwell. Jones's car suffered only a damaged skirt box, but Piquet had to take the spare car.

An hour and 23 minutes later, the start was given again, the starter holding them on red for an age. Didier Pironi's Ligier crept forward from third on the grid and took off after the fast starting Jones with Piquet in third followed by Bruno Giacomelli's Alfa Romeo.

Piquet was soon past Pironi and then Jones. By lap 10, he was six seconds ahead of Jones who had a similar gap to Pironi. But on lap 24, the Brabham failed to appear. The engine, just 60 miles old, had expired. "We couldn't believe it," says team manager Herbie Blash. "One moment it was going as well it could, the next moment, disaster."

'We even filled Nelson's car with oil and sent him out to spray the track, but Jones still got that fast lap in…'
Bernie Ecclestone

Jabouille crashed his Renault at the about the same time, and was then trapped in his car for a while before being removed with a broken right leg.

Jones led, but he was being challenged by Pironi. However, there was a rumour that the Frenchman was being penalised a minute for a jumped start. Jones, tailed by the Ligier, was informed of the penalty, but he couldn't believe it. Three times they hung out the message, the last time Frank Williams himself had to do it. Finally satisfied, Jones let Pironi through. "I mean, you don't get that sort of luck when you're going for the championship," said the Australian.

Jones took the flag as winner from team-mate Carlos Reutemann with Pironi classified third, but then Ligier protested their penalty. After two hours, the results were confirmed. Jones had won the race and world championship with one race in hand.

FOR MORE, VISIT: WWW.REDBULLETINF1.COM











Left: Mike Thackwell makes his GP debut with the Tyrrell-Ford team. Above: McLaren's Teddy Mayer surveys the circuit. Driver John Watson finished fourth. Below left: Frank Dernie, Patrick Head and Frank Williams wait to see if Alan Jones has won the title. Below: Jones prepares for the start (top); Didier Pironi (bottom) was penalised for jumping the start, but was still classified third.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, LAT, PAUL-HENRI CAHIER

LUCKY NUMBERS

KAZUHITO KAWAI

Fuji TV's Kaz is the man all other commentators look to for race strategy insight. But what's the strategy in owning two cameras, and where did he get his collection of precious steering wheels?

1:36.996

THIS IS THE POLE TIME SET BY AYRTON SENNA... at Suzuka in 1990. After the session, I was given one of the tyres he was using on that lap by a friend at Goodyear.

5,000

I MADE A 5,000-YEN BET... with Aguri Suzuki over who would win the 1997 Monaco Grand Prix. It was raining. I bet on Schumacher and he bet on Frentzen, who was on pole. Then Williams took their tyre-warmers off to reveal slicks! Aguri said, "I've only got 3,000 yen, so you can have that." As you can imagine, I made a bit of a fuss about this. Aguri won our next bet, so I gave him 3,000 in return. "No, we agreed on 5,000," he said. "Pay me 5,000!" That's Aguri for you.



PHOTOGRAPHY: CRISPIN THRUSTON

570

570 MOVIES... is how many I have at home on Laserdisc, DVD and Blu-Ray. I particularly like science fiction, such as Blade Runner and 2001: A Space Odyssey, and movies that take place on submarines. They're always so intense, because you have no eyes on board a sub, only ears. The best is probably The Hunt for Red October.

10

10 ELECTRIC GUITARS... I've got two Les Pauls, one custom and one standard, and a 1980 Flying V in my collection. I used to be in a band called Autumn, but I was crap, so I left.

348

A FERRARI 348... a Porsche 911 and a Honda NSX are all in my garage. Actually, 348 is my lucky number – I always use it on lottery cards and stuff. My home phone number ends in 348 as well.

3

THREE F1 STEERING WHEELS... I once gave a Fuji TV jacket to a mechanic in exchange for Satoru Nakajima's steering wheel. That was quite a good deal! I also have one of Alessandro Nannini's Benetton ones – I hope Pat Symonds doesn't read this! The third one is from a 1998 Benetton, with all the paddles and everything, which I bought for US$2,500. Another good deal. It would have cost $20,000 to make.

2

I'VE GOT TWO SLR CAMERAS... The first was a prize in an F1 quiz hosted by Camel. That was the only time I've ever beaten Michael Schumacher at anything. What clinched it was a question about the 1977 Japanese Grand Prix. They asked us what was unusual about the podium. It was because there was only one driver on it – Patrick Depailler – because James Hunt and Carlos Reutemann had driven to the airport straight after the parc fermé. The other one was a prize for winning a BAR photography competition.

Quebec Quiz

How well can you remember the Canadian Grand Prix over the years?



1. Who are these three drivers at the 1970 race at Mont Tremblant?



2. Driver and car, please, from the race in 1986 at Montreal.



3. Johnny Servoz-Gavin in 1969. Where did he finish and what was notable about the result?



4. Jean Alesi took his only win in Canada in 1995. Who's giving him a lift back to the pits, and which drivers joined Alesi on the podium that year?

1. HENRI PESCAROLO (MATRA-SIMCA MS120) LEADS PETER GETHIN (MCLAREN M14A) AND JEAN-PIERRE BELTOISE (MATRA-SIMCA MS120). 2. ALAN JONES. LOLA THL2. 3. HE FINISHED SIXTH IN HIS MATRA MS84, WHICH WON HIM THE FIRST WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS FOR A FOUR-WHEEL-DRIVE CAR. 4. IT'S MICHAEL SCHUMACHER, AND ALSO ON THE PODIUM WERE RUBENS BARRICHELLO (SECOND) AND EDDIE IRVINE (THIRD).

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES

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Either/Or

YOURS TRULLI

Jarno's winemaking makes the answer to one of our questions a foregone conclusion, but what are his other lifestyle choices away from his Abruzzo vineyard?

WET RACE OR DRY RACE?
I prefer a dry race because you can see better.

SALAD OR STEAK?
Absolutely steak. I don't like salad very much...

IPOD OR VINYL?
iPod. It's easier to take around the world.

NIGHT ON THE TOWN OR QUIET NIGHT AT HOME?
Definitely a night at home – when I'm at home I can do whatever I want.

WINE OR WATER?
You're asking me that question? Wine!

GOLF OR FOOTBALL?
Football. Nothing against golf, but football is more dynamic.

MINIVAN OR MOTORCYCLE?
Ha ha! Definitely motorcycle. I still have plenty of bikes.

MOZART OR MOTÖRHEAD?
I prefer rock music, so I'll say Motörhead – but I'd rather be listening to Elton John.

YACHT OR PLANE?
Neither, really. I don't like flying and I think you have to have a passion for yachts – and I don't.

SUPERMODEL OR GIRL NEXT DOOR?
I prefer the model living next door.

RACE OR QUALIFYING?
I like them both – but racing is better.

BEACH OR MOUNTAIN?
I enjoy both, so no real preference.

NEWSPAPER OR COMIC BOOK?
Neither. I hate reading!

SHOPPING MALL OR INTERNET SHOPPING?
I love the Internet, but the shopping mall is better – purely because you see so much stuff.

MONACO APARTMENT OR SWISS CHALET?
Well, I live in a Swiss chalet...

BEARD OR SHAVE?
Beard. Shaving is a waste of time.

TRAINING IN THE GYM OR TRAINING ON THE ROAD?
On the road is so much better.

BOOK OR TV?
TV – see above.

MONEY OR GLORY?
Glory. Money doesn't give you much.



PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES