THE RED BULLETIN
GP BAHRAIN
SATURDAY, APRIL 14, 2007. ISSUE 134
WWW.REDBULLETIN.COM
AN ALMOST INDEPENDENT F1 NEWSPAPER

NICO
IS THE F1 TITLE A FAMILY AFFAIR?



BUTTON BOTTOM

Poor Jenson Button. Not only does he have to drive a slow, poor- handling car, but it's not even reliable. An engine failure in yesterday's second practice session forced his RA108 to grind to a halt and left Jenson, winner of last year's Hungarian GP, stranded at the side of the track reflecting on what he must have done to deserve such terrible luck. He finished the session 22nd. That's last.

The stormy weather hasn't only upset the GP2 party hosts. It's meant all kinds of strange things have been going on. Our circuit-designer-in-chief found himself in trouble with the law, one journalist has had his scissors taken away from him, some of the drivers have been auditioning for the circus and the man in charge of the Bahrain GP has been stopping planes from taking off. It does get weird...

14.4.07 BAHRAIN SATURDAY

PHOTOGRAPHY.XPB

The Red Bulletin • April 14, 2007

BULLHORN: IN MY VIEW

Destination Comeback

BY GERHARD KUNTSCHIK

Christian Klien's split with long-term supporter Red Bull last year came, for most people in the paddock, as a surprise. And, when the Austrian turned down an offer to drive in Champ Cars with a decent salary, people wondered where the then 23-year-old would show up this season. "My prime target is to stay in F1," Klien said, not in an arrogant way, but with some self-confidence and much commitment.

For Klien there were two options: pursue a race seat with Spyker or go for the Honda reserve drive. Klien managed to get the second which turned out for him the best choice. As he said: "Forget the current problems, if you are with a team like Honda, you're an employee of a big car manufacturer and part of a racing family that is longing for success and therefore doing everything to succeed."

Now 24, Klien, who has already three full F1 seasons with Jaguar Racing and Red Bull respectively as experience, has set only one target for this year as a reserve player: "To get back into the playing squad as soon as possible." And he knows there is only one way to achieve his goal: "By proving in testing what I can do, what I am capable of in technical and in driving matters of course."

Klien does not have to look far to see an example of an astonishing comeback. His countryman Alex Wurz is back in the driving seat with Williams after five seasons with McLaren and one with Williams as a test and reserve driver. "The perseverance, working attitude, and the commitment of Alex for sure make him kind of idol for me," Klien says, but he also adds: "I cannot imagine to be the third guy for six years. I want to back at the next possibility, and I'm hoping this will arise after this season."

'KLIEN ONLY HAS TO LOOK AT HIS COUNTRYMAN WURZ TO SEE AN ASTONINSHING COMEBACK'

What cards has Klien in his hands? Limited ones, because competition will get tougher the nearer he comes towards his goal. Besides drivers currently with other Formula One teams looking into a Honda drive, the team has another young and talented test driver in James Rossiter, though he has no F1 race experience. The biggest challenge might arise from the US in the shape of one M Andretti. Marco has a name, talent, and the best possible nationality for making an impression with Formula One people.

Klien is surely aware of that. And if Honda get to the point where a decision has to be taken, it means that one of their current race drivers either leaves the team or retires. Nothing is really foreseeable right now. "Therefore I can only do my best to convince the team of what I would have to offer," Klien explains. Of course physical fitness is one part of what has to be in shape. Christian knows, when testing times for him are limited this year because of new rules, that he can do a lot in that area.

On the way from Malaysia to Bahrain he made a stopover. At Dubai. At the Mall of the Emirates. But not for shopping, for skiing. "After these weeks in Australia, Indonesia for a holiday and Malaysia, I needed some climate change," he smiles, "and I wanted to try this ski dome. I could not miss the opportunity," he says. "And when I am back home after Bahrain, I will ski again at the Arlberg where the season comes to a close soon. Also for me. But I have to do this. It's natural for us Austrians." Maybe as natural as being tough and eager for racing comebacks.



PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES, THOMAS BUTLER, WERNER STADLOBER, SUTTON IMAGES, REX IMAGES

SPEEDING AIN'T SO FINE

Of all the people to get arrested for speeding on the streets of Bahrain, it had to be circuit designer Hermann Tilke. The unfortunate Mr T got pulled over on Thursday night, returning from the track to his hotel, and was even thrown into the cells for a short period.

The irony of this fate for a man whose Bahrain track design has been criticized by drivers for being too slow and twisty has not been lost on the F1 community, and Tilke himself has emerged somewhat embarrassed by the experience.

The precise details of Hermann's 'crime' have been guarded by Bahraini police and even Tilke himself is unaware what speed he is alleged to have been doing, when he caught the attention of the Bahraini Law Enforcement boys parked at the side of the road.

"I don't know because they did not tell me," he said. He was taken to the local station where he was briefly kepy in the cells before being released. "I don't know what prison food is like, because I was only there for an hour," he said.

The real victim of this story was Tilke's girlfriend, Laura, who had to get out of the couple's car and try and find a taxi while standing on the side of a three-lane highway somewhere between Sakhir and Manama.

FACT!
Catering staff at the Bahrain International Circuit have gone through 40 tonnes of ice this weekend. Also 2,400 lobsters, two tonnes of beef, a tonne of prawns and 6500 bread rolls. Must have been one hell of a barbecue.

THERE'S A STORM COMING

The weather has been doing some strange things in Bahrain. When F1 personnel left the circuit on Thursday night they felt something very rare in this part of the world – rain. And then when they returned yesterday they found things weren't exactly where they left them. Such as the TV compound security guard who couldn't find his Portakabin anywhere. Or The Bulletin crew, who found their power sockets were full of water and the main server broken.

All were victims of the wind and rain that battered the circuit from 7pm on Thursday. Most of the temporary buildings in the TV compound had their roofs ripped off, satellite dishes were damaged, and air conditioning units wrenched from their power cables. The water caused electrical equipment to fry and flooded the commentary booths. In the whole of 2006 it rained only once in Bahrain, but this year the island has experienced its worst weather in 75 years.

"It wasn't the Middle East the other night, it was another world," said Russel Moxham who supplies the BIC with temporary power and air-conditioning systems. "This area isn't designed for rain. We had 125mm over 48 hours in January and it brought the region to a halt."

The highest-profile casualty was the GP2 launch party, brought to an end when the rain threatened to bring down the roof of the hospitality suite.

Guests had leave immediately, but GP2's press officer Will Buxton was at least able to send every guest home with a bottle of champagne each.

HOLD THE LINE, CALLER

Autosport's Tony Dodgins has been experiencing phone difficulties. Having recently discovered how much of his money he could save by using a Skype internet phone, he bought one in Malaysia. Trouble was, the packaging was a bit tight so the journalist attacked the plastic wrapper with a pair of scissors... and cut straight through the chord. Dodgy, out of sympathy, The Bulletin will buy you a new one but please let us open it for you.

JUST PLANE CRAZY

The Bahrain GP has always been a hospitable event, but this year, circuit chief Martin Whitaker went to exceptional lengths to keep the F1 troops happy.

Around 45 Formula One personnel and media, including faces from Bridgestone, Renault, FOM and broadcasters ITV, RAI, RTL and TV Globo, found themselves stranded on their way to Bahrain earlier his week, and were forced to wait in Kuala Lumpur for an extra two hours after a technical hitch with their Malaysian Airlines jet. They needed to make an 18.30 Gulf Air connection in Bangkok, but the delay was making that timescale too tight,

The passengers tried to find another way to get to Bahrain, but there was nothing... until one clever person called Whitaker. He, in turn, put in a call to senior managers at Gulf Air, title sponsor of the GP, and convinced them to hold the flight so that the all-important F1 people could make it on time. The pilot of GF151 received a call instructed not to move his Airbus A340 from the gate.

FACT!
When not being arrested for trying to break the land-speed record, Hermann Tilke spends his time planning new and more interesting ways of using concrete. At Sakhir alone his design uses 70,000 cubic metres of the stuff. For those of you more comfortable with imperial measurements, that's 15 million gallons (18.5 US) – or enough to fill 440,000 oil barrels.

When the travellers arrived in Bangkok and reached the boarding gate it was 8pm. "The plane was still there waiting for us," says F1 Racing's Matt Bishop. "I've never made such a speedy connection. We just sprinted from one plane to the other, and were issued with manual tickets. When I looked at the stub I couldn't believe it – in all the confusion I'd been upgraded to First Class." Soon the anxious latecomers were relaxing in their seats and being plied with wine. "The most astonishing thing was that all our luggage made it," Bishop added.

"We pride ourselves here on making sure nothing's too much trouble – it's just this request was a bit different!" says Whitaker.

INVESTING IN ART

Middle Eastern investment is going further than F1. Now GP2 is getting its coffers filled with Dinari too.

ART has sold a 30 per cent share of the team to the Crown Prince of Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa.

Nicolas Todt who, with Frederic Vasseur, controls 70 per cent told us: "We want to develop our company, and this investment will help us to achieve our goals." So does this mean that ART will play a role in schooling drivers from the Gulf? It's no secret that Bernie Ecclestone is pushing for an Arabic-speaking F1 pilot.

The Prince has said: "It is my aspiration to see regional drivers at home in the GP2 Series in a few years' time so that the ➜

Do teams re-use wheelnuts?

HOW DOES THAT WORK?

"Yes, we cycle them through. A new set will be used in the race, then they'll be used in qualifying, practice sessions and through to testing before they are put in the bin. They are checked for stress fractures after each usage. The lifetime sometimes depends on the materials. We use steel, but some teams use aluminium."

Mick Ainsley-Cowlishaw, team manager, Super Aguri

ON THIS DAY...

APRIL 14

2002 Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello complete a Ferrari one-two at Imola.



Go around Imola in the wet with Giancarlo Fisichella
http://youtube.com/watch?v=A5B84DKJmuA

1865 US President Abraham Lincoln is shot in Ford's Theatre by John Wilkes Booth



A quick portrait of Lincoln
http://youtube.com/watch?v=f2AkzOlnx9w

1912 The British ocean liner RMS Titanic strikes an iceberg and sinks on its maiden voyage, killing more than 1,500



The wreck of the Titanic is found in 1985
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-W_RVWPFmZI

BIRTHS

1904 Sir John Gielgud, British actor (d. 2000)
Sir John reads Ba Ba Blacksheep
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zo98RpBVdU

1929 Gerry Anderson - British TV producer.
If you thought Thunderbirds was just fireworks, cardboard and bits of string, you'd be right
http://youtube.com/watch?v=_dPD_CO8rvQ

DEATHS

1759 George Frideric Handel, German composer (b.1685) Sarabande by Handel:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iNlZ8xyhQE

ON THIS RACE DAY...



2006 Nico Rosberg makes his fantastic debut for Williams in Bahrain last year

2006: Watch the race highlights
http://youtube.com/watch?v=fP3i7rZOwf4



➜ passion for engineering and the drive to win is encouraged in our youth".

Todt agrees that it is likely they may test some Bahraini young guns, but we'll only see a local lad take a race seat if he has the talent to lead ART to another championship victory. "I think we will test some Bahraini drivers, if we believe they have the speed. But there is no commitment on our part," he said.

Meanwhile co-founder Vasseur has been forced to miss this race and the next after a recent skiing accident in the French Alps left him with a slipped disc in his back.

FACT!
The 2007 Bahrain GP marks Bridgestone's 175th F1 entry. Since the company's first GP, Australia 1997, Bridgestone-tyred cars have won 106 grands prix; set 99 pole positions, 101 fastest laps and taken seven drivers' and constructors' championships.

150 STRONG

Today (Saturday) marks the 150th Porsche Supercup race. This year's field is reckoned to be the strongest yet for the ever-popular F1 support series. And so pleased are the championship organisers. they even arranged to have the picture below taken.

It consist of 30 race-ready Prosche 997 GT3s, worth €130,000 each. That makes the cost of the models alone in this photo shoot a mere €4m alone.

FLY AND DRIVE

Rolling Stones drummer Charlie Watts once commented on 30 years with the band, saying it was 25 years of hanging around and five years of playing behind the drums.

But that's nothing compared to the life of a support race driver at a grand prix where the waiting for your 25 minutes of fame over the race weekend it must seem as though it is never ending.

So much so that some of them have to find other things to amuse them, like the free trapeze school out in the SIC's vending area.

Yesterday The Bulletin was wandering around there trying to get some free ice cream when we saw Saudi Arabia's A Aziz Al Ya'eesh, lining up, in full race suit to have a go at flying through the air on two lengths of wire and a pole.

The man currently lying second in the Lumina CSV championship gave it his best shot, achieving some spectacular swings but unfortunately never managed to match the instructors' request to hang by his legs and then execute a somersault on dismount. They don't ask much these circus folk do they?

Still, at least he was brave enough to have a go. No chance of catching any GP2 or F1 drivers chancing it, is there?

The next Lumina CSV qualifying will begin at 9.30am this morning and their first race starts at 5.35pm with another tomorrow (Sunday) morning.



The Secret Diary of Hermann Schnell, Aged 18 8/13

Thursday 5th of April
Hamish the physio gave me a lecture today about how dehydration is my enemy, which seemed a bit pointless as I've been on an all-electrolyte diet since I was 13. He also mentioned that I should avoid excessive alcohol in this climate. Honestly! Doesn't he realise that future champions drink water, eat a balanced diet and go to bed early? I don't even have the after dinner chocolate if I think it might have an alcoholic centre.

Still haven't heard from Prost. Do the French still have a postal system?

Saturday 7th April
Nothing to do at the weekend, but I can't go anywhere as if one of the race drivers is sick (hungover and/or poisoned) or indisposed (in jail) then I'll get My Big Chance. They both like to get my hopes up with a cavalier attitude to seafood buffets and drinking champagne by the magnum (but not out of trophies, I note). Sadly they seem to have the recovery powers of an atomic cockroach and are always able to stagger to the grid on a Sunday afternoon – just my luck to have obnoxiously healthy team-mates. Maybe it's just make-up and vitamin shots to paper over the cracks?

Something strange happened today though. Johan requested I give Télé Luxemburg the benefit of my wisdom during qualifying. I graciously agreed and he introduced me to Heidi Titz, who is a pitlane reporter. She asked me a question about grip when I began to feel hot, short of breath and sort of tingly all over. I became very... excited, like I normally only do when looking at pictures of the Mercedes MP4/17. Maybe it's the onset of heatstroke.

Heidi is very attractive. For an older woman.

Sunday 8th April
Very disturbing dreams last night. Usually the only things I dream about are winning races – occasionally I'm driving naked and the other cars are all being driven by my schoolfriends but basically that's the only variation. Last night was different; a train kept going in and out of tunnels. I was on it and Heidi was there too.

Just in case it is heatstroke I went to the doctor at the track. I described my symptoms. The doctor suggested that I might be allergic to engine oil. Isn't everyone allergic to engine oil? Are there people out their drinking gallons of the stuff? Following protocol I also informed Hamish of my symptoms. He didn't seem to think it was too serious, judging by the laughter and the snorting, but did suggest that the hotel concierge could probably sort me out with a lady who could help me. I explained that I didn't think a massage would help with heatstroke but that just made him laugh harder. Sometimes I don't think my physio takes my wellbeing seriously.

Saw Heidi again today. She was wearing very nice fireproof overalls.

10 THINGS THAT MAKE... SUPER AGURI ADORABLE



If F1 teams were dogs, then Super Aguri would be an excitable little puppy of uncertain pedigree with a wagging tail, bright eyes, a wet nose and lots of enthusiasm. Basically Super Aguri are adorable. Why?

TAKU
For several years the mercurial Takuma Sato had been the antidote to predictable grands prix. Driving like a man with his underpants on fire, with Taku, nothing was certain, no gap was too small, no braking point too late. His unique ability to turn an expensive F1 car (not necessarily his) into a shower of carbon-fibre added interest to what might otherwise have been very dull races – and without Super Aguri, F1's own Captain Chaos would have vanished.

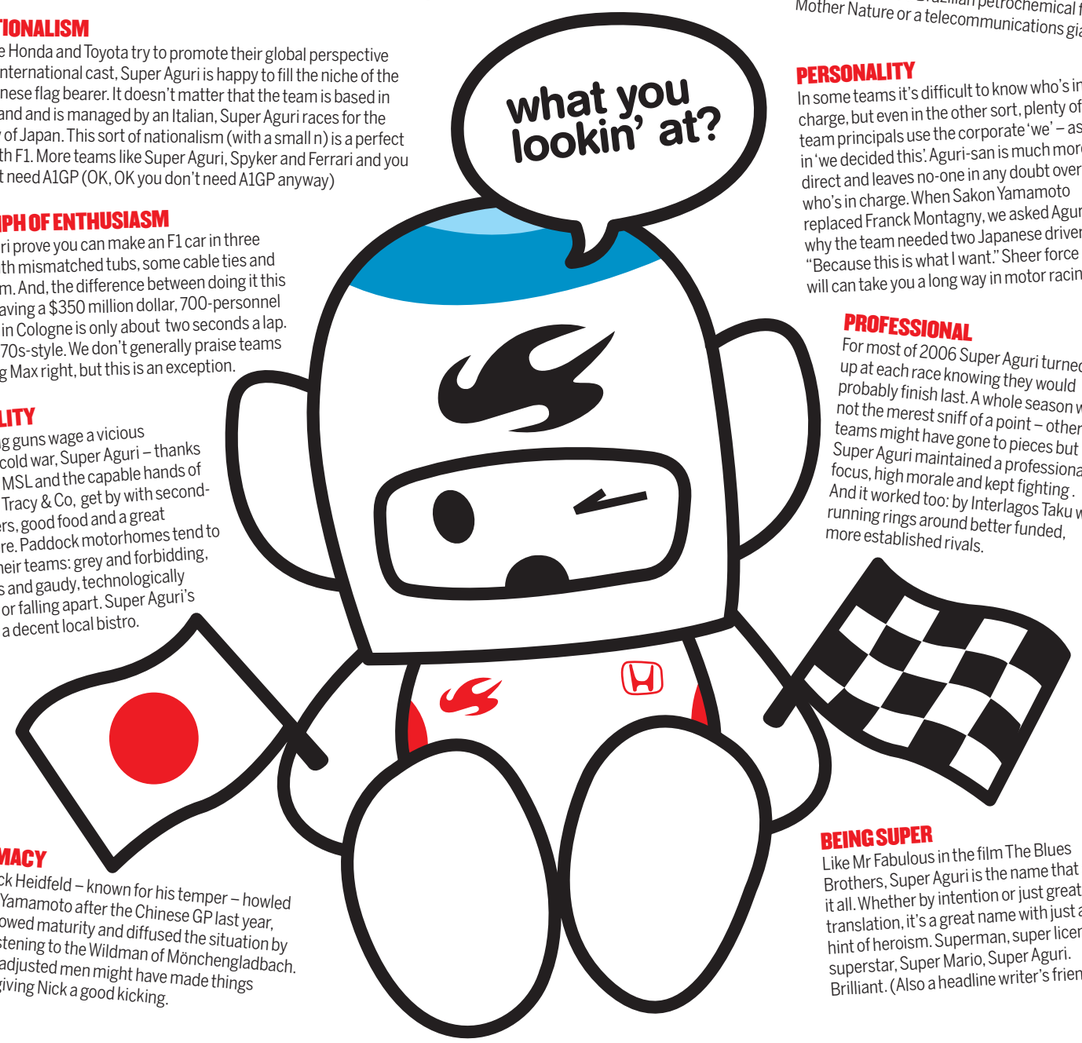
NATIONALISM
While Honda and Toyota try to promote their global perspective and international cast, Super Aguri is happy to fill the niche of the Japanese flag bearer. It doesn't matter that the team is based in England and is managed by an Italian, Super Aguri races for the glory of Japan. This sort of nationalism (with a small n) is a perfect fit with F1. More teams like Super Aguri, Spyker and Ferrari and you won't need A1GP (OK, OK you don't need A1GP anyway)

A TRIUMPH OF ENTHUSIASM
Super Aguri prove you can make an F1 car in three months with mismatched tubs, some cable ties and enthusiasm. And, the difference between doing it this way and having a $350 million dollar, 700-personnel operation in Cologne is only about two seconds a lap. This is F1 '70s-style. We don't generally praise teams for proving Max right, but this is an exception.

HOSPITALITY
While the big guns wage a vicious hospitality cold war, Super Aguri – thanks to caterers MSL and the capable hands of Sam, Nick, Tracy & Co. get by with second-hand trailers, good food and a great atmosphere. Paddock motorhomes tend to look like their teams: grey and forbidding, obnoxious and gaudy, technologically terrifying or falling apart. Super Aguri's looks like a decent local bistro.

DIPLOMACY
When Nick Heidfeld – known for his temper – howled at Sakon Yamamoto after the Chinese GP last year, Sakon showed maturity and diffused the situation by politely listening to the Wildman of Mönchengladbach. Less well-adjusted men might have made things worse by giving Nick a good kicking.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS
...is a good thing – but some teams are nauseating in the lengths they go to. Not Super Aguri though. Whether it's Aguri Suzuki smoking like a chimney in press briefings or Yuji Ide cheerfully showing off a stack of porn thick enough to choke a donkey, it's fair to say Super Aguri don't pretend to be something they're not.



SAMANTHA KINGZ
The most enigmatic title sponsor in F1. For six months we thought they were an exotic brand of Japanese tobacco – the sort with pink filters targeted at executive women and gay men. Turns out they make handbags – which is much better. You know where you are with a handbag... unlike a financial services provider, a sino-american IT company, a Malaysian petrochemical firm that sounds a lot like a Brazilian petrochemical firm, Mother Nature or a telecommunications giant.

PERSONALITY
In some teams it's difficult to know who's in charge, but even in the other sort, plenty of team principals use the corporate 'we' – as in 'we decided this'. Aguri-san is much more direct and leaves no-one in any doubt over who's in charge. When Sakon Yamamoto replaced Franck Montagny, we asked Aguri why the team needed two Japanese drivers: "Because this is what I want." Sheer force of will can take you a long way in motor racing.

PROFESSIONAL
For most of 2006 Super Aguri turned up at each race knowing they would probably finish last. A whole season with not the merest sniff of a point – other teams might have gone to pieces but Super Aguri maintained a professional focus, high morale and kept fighting . And it worked too: by Interlagos Taku was running rings around better funded, more established rivals.

BEING SUPER
Like Mr Fabulous in the film The Blues Brothers, Super Aguri is the name that says it all. Whether by intention or just great in translation, it's a great name with just a hint of heroism. Superman, super licence, superstar, Super Mario, Super Aguri. Brilliant. (Also a headline writer's friend).

ON LOCATION: SAKHIR

It's been a strange couple of days what with the storms in the desert and the abandoned parties. Thank goodness the Bull's Eye is here to keep everyone amused. Well, we say amused...



It looked like Toyota's Montagny was not going to pass the FIA Leg Wax Test.



As Fernando chatted to his boss in the background, the photographers tried out the new FIA ruling that they must kneel at all times when in the presence of a world champion.



The Australian GP, the Malaysian test, then the GP and now Bahrain, all without going home. Time to phone a loved one and tell a few lies: "Darling, it's terrible here. I'm rushed off my feet, the heat is unbearable and my accommodation is really basic..."



It's only Thursday; sofa, so good... (Oh come on. Sofa/so far?)



PR Ladies ... optimise the car, blah, blah, blah... get on with my team-mate, blah, blah, blah... should improve this weekend... you will have to ask the team, ZZZZzzzzzzz



YOUR CAPTION HERE...

Yes. We're having to run it again. We asked for clean answers only, thank you. Just put your best caption on an e-mail to us at secret.service@theredbulletin.com. We'll even let you know what the prize is... a very rare stuffed camel from the airport gift shop. So come on, have a go and give a beast a home.



But then you could have guessed that from the vomit.



John was confused and began to feel a bit sick: "What? You mean they weren't chicken drumsticks?"



"Yes dear, but please ask your aunt to stop buying me clothes. First there was the cap and now you should see the sweater she's bought me."

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, CRISPIN THRUSTON, LUKAS GORY, DPPI

IS NICO THE COMPLETE DRIVER?

He made a huge impact after his impressive F1 debut at this track last season, but then took the rest of the season to return to form. So can Nico emulate his father's success, and would you go for a beer with him?

ON-ROAD

How good is Nico in the car?

QUALIFYING SPEED: 7.5
Barometer: Ayrton Senna
Last year came second best to Mark Webber, but only by an average of 0.17s. "He's been building his data bank," says Williams' technical director Sam Michael, "and that will allow him to access his speed more consistently." In terms of style (late braker, aggressive turn-in) "I need a stable rear to allow me to attack the corner," Nico says and isn't so bothered about front end. May be a little over-sensitive to lack of rear grip. But, "he is very relaxed with oversteer," says Michael. "He has very good car control."

RACE-PACE CONSISTENCY: 7.5
Barometer: Fernando Alonso
When the car works the way he likes it, like here in '06, he's consistent. Not yet as impressive in adapting to a car with a changing handling balance. Had some driver error accidents in '06: Hockenheim and Brazil. "A rookie is allowed that," says Jackie Stewart. "He'll need to begin another curve if the car is more competitive. It's a different pressure running 4th/5th than 12th/13th. He has the ability, but how it's manifest is down to him."

IN/OUT LAPS: 6.5
Barometer: Michael Schumacher
Used to lose time to Webber, but has worked on it over the winter. "He applies himself well in areas that need attention," says Michael, "and he has very good levels of concentration."

OVERTAKING/RACECRAFT: 9.0
Barometer: Nigel Mansell
When the car is working well, he can pass like few others – as in his GP2 title year. "It's one of his strengths," says Patrick Head, "and a valuable quality." Michael agrees: "He has good spatial awareness and can predict what the other guy is going to do." This has also impressed JYS: "Very few drivers have the ability to regularly overtake and not get involved in incidents, but Nico clearly has that."

PRESSURE: 7.0
Barometer: Mika Hakkinen
"He's rock-solid in his defences when under pressure, all part of the same awareness that makes him so good at passing," says Michael. Having to perform over a season, often without the necessary experience to pull it off, was at times apparent last year. "His performances took a dip after a great start," agrees Michael, "but by the end of the year they were coming back up. It's all about that raw database."

TECHNICAL DIALOGUE: 7.5
Barometer: Alain Prost
"This has improved and will keep on improving with experience," says Michael. "He communicates well and it is good having a strong technical guy like Alex Wurz in the other car. Nico has a high engineering understanding, but there are so many things: learning from mistakes, seeing different profiles on the tyres, looking at tyre temperatures with different set-ups, understanding tyre pressures and how everything responds. He's getting there."

WORK ETHIC: 8.0
Barometer: Michael Schumacher
"We've been very impressed at how hard he works," says Michael. "At tests he has a caravan at the track so he's around the engineers until late. He's committed to looking at data and getting the best out of the engineers and he works hard on his fitness." Stewart senses he needs to widen his areas of study. "Any driver, no matter how experienced, needs guidance and sometimes he needs to ask for more help."

MOTIVATIONAL EFFECT: 7.0
Barometer: Ayrton Senna
With the achievements come stature and the inspirational effect. So Nico doesn't have that yet. But, says Michael, "he has a good relationship with the guys in the garage. He socialises with them and has got to know them." So he's getting the team on his side.

PSYCHOLOGY: 8.0
Barometer: Ayrton Senna
"He wants to succeed," says Michael. "He knuckles down to it when under pressure. He's not a driver who flakes off when he has a problem. He worked well with Alex during the winter to bring the team forward but is now focused on the competition with his team-mate." Upset some of his elders at Montreal with his attitude to track space – a good sign.

MIND MANAGEMENT: 7.0
Barometer: Fernando Alonso
At times last year there was too much information to process, and the errors came – such as during crucial stages in qualifying. Rosberg now looks more assured. "It comes with experience," says Stewart. "But it's more than that. It's about keeping the emotion out of the car, especially when it's not going well. Sometimes he could improve on that."

SCORE: 75/100

OFF-ROAD

What's Nico like out of the car?

MARKETABILITY: 9.5
Barometer: Michael Schumacher
On paper, Nico has it all: great pedigree, a famous surname, movie star looks, and fluent in four languages. But, his cleverest marketing ploy is his 'chosen' nationality. "He drives under the German flag for a reason," said a source in the Finnish media. "Everyone, particularly big German sponsors and car manufacturers, is searching for the new Schumi."

"If he's successful, he'll become Germany's F1 pin-up. But thanks to Keke, he draws interest in Finland as well," says GP2 press officer Will Buxton. "He's one of the most marketable properties out there," says broadcaster and PR Tony Jardine. "He has inherited his father's pedigree, and has real attitude." With lifelong residency in Monaco, Nico has true pan-European appeal. His flowing hair is certain to score a L'Oreal campaign soon. But, he's no dumb blonde – he's an intellectual, having been offered a place at London's Imperial College to study aerodynamics. "I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't go back and study after his driving career is over," says our source.

MEDIA SKILLS: 9.0
Barometer: Jackie Stewart
"He speaks six languages, which means that you can sit him down with 75 percent of the press and he'll speak engagingly with them in their own language," says Buxton. The 21-year-old Nico is comfortable with media attention, and while he's careful, he does speak his mind. "He doesn't manipulate the media, he says it as it is," says our contact. "He's like Keke – clever, down to earth, and fearless – only taller, more handsome, and smart enough to tone down the language." He's knowledgeable about his sport: "Because of his maturity, the media seek his opinion, confident it will be an interesting one. He is also punctual and polite," says Williams' press officer, Silvia Hoffer. "The problem I have is finding out the legitimacy of one-to-one requests from female journalists. They seem to enjoy the interviews a bit too much."

GOING FOR A DRINK: 6
Barometer: James Hunt
Champagne and strippers may be the perfect night out for a few drivers, but not Nico. "He's fun to be out with, but definitely no James Hunt," says our Finnish media source. "He's been in a serious relationship for the past three years." His friends say he's unpretentious. "He's got a great sense of humour when you get to know him," says Buxton. "A genuinely nice bloke, I'd gladly go for a beer with him". Quite often he'll bring his dad along and that guarantees a great night. He can also take his drink better than most – while other drivers were a little over refreshed on Sunday night in Melbourne's Boutique club, Nico was still going strong at 4am, entertaining the people from RBS.

HOBBIES: 7.5
Barometer: Niki Lauda
Nico cites the kind of hobbies we'd all have if we lived between the shores of the Mediterranean and the foothills of the Alps: jet-skiing, rock climbing and snowboarding. He's also an able golfer and likes to play soccer. In fact he trains with local Monegasque side La Tourbie. Perhaps not so conventional is his love of backgammon and chess. But his love of board games shows intellect, cunning, spatial awareness and perfect timing: characteristics that benefit a driver on and off the track.

TOYS: 5.5
Barometer: Eddie Irvine
As a relative newcomer to the premier league, Nico Rosberg has yet to acquire most of the toys that a career in F1 rewards: the yachts/the jets/the organic farm/GP2 team/trans-continental airline. Still, being the only son of a former world champion, it's fare to assume that Nico has not gone without. "Senior's the one who loves the toys. Junior grew up surrounded by them," says our source. One of his biggest spends is his vast motorhome, which accompanies him at European races and tests. Inside, it's decked out with plasma screens, but the best bit is the colour-coded trailer it tows, home to Michelin star chef, Vincent Crovisier. In other words, Nico gets to eat cordon bleu every night. "The motorhome shouldn't be counted as an extravagance," concludes the source in Finalnd. "It's simply a practical solution to the necessary evil of life on the road – why stay in shitty, over-priced hotels 250 days a year when you can have your own place in every location?"

SCORE: 37/50

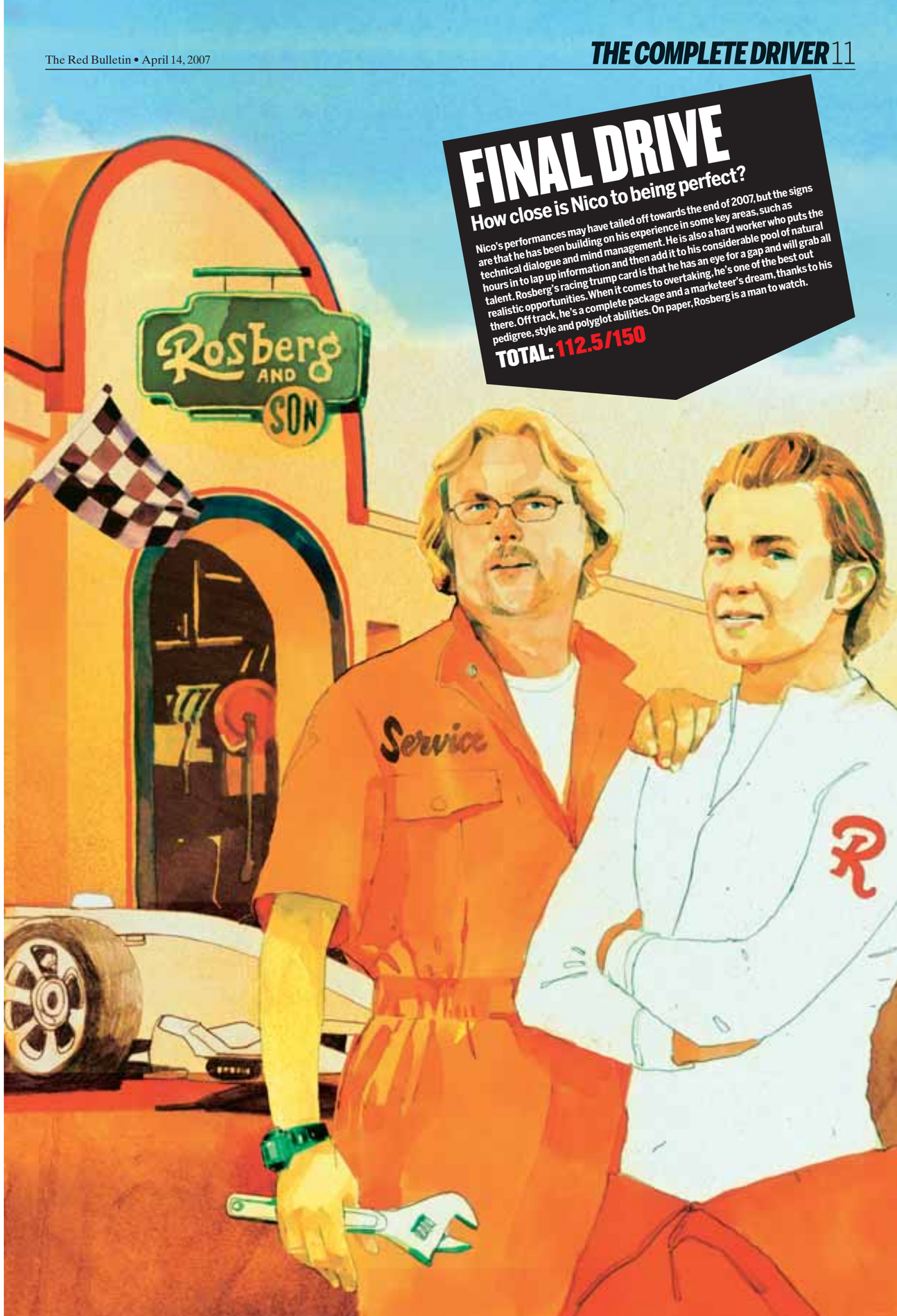


ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL GILLETTE

FINAL DRIVE

How close is Nico to being perfect?

Nico's performances may have tailed off towards the end of 2007, but the signs are that he has been building on his experience in some key areas, such as technical dialogue and mind management. He is also a hard worker who puts the hours in to lap up information and then add it to his considerable pool of natural talent. Rosberg's racing trump card is that he has an eye for a gap and will grab all realistic opportunities. When it comes to overtaking, he's one of the best out there. Off track, he's a complete package and a marketeer's dream, thanks to his pedigree, style and polyglot abilities. On paper, Rosberg is a man to watch.

TOTAL: 112.5/150

The Red Bulletin • April 14, 2007

ISLAND LIFE

We were so close to the water it seemed criminal not to let the Bahraini Unas cool off with a boat trip and as a bonus they got to try their hand at falconry. But it appeared jet-skiing and sunbathing were much more to their taste...











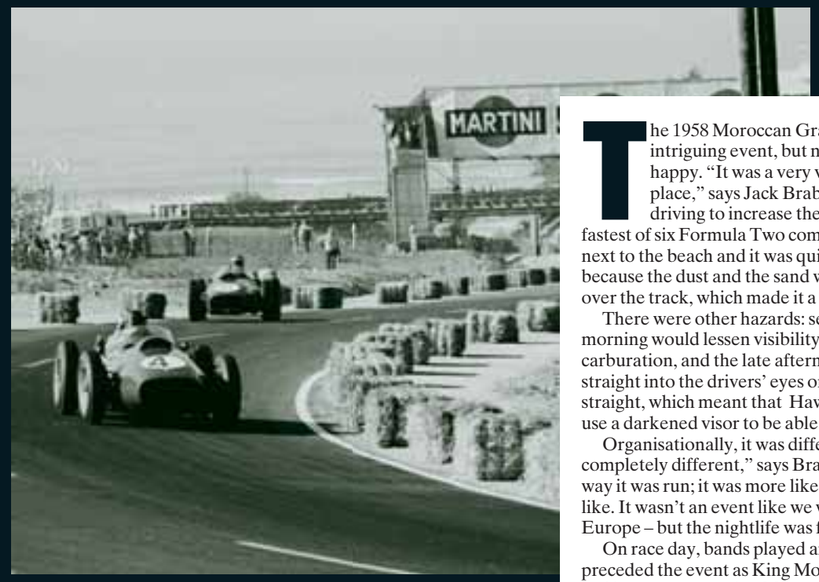






PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER









FLASHBACK:

MOROCCO '58

Until the first Bahrain Grand Prix in 2004, the only other world championship round to be held in an Arab country was in the Ain Diab suburb of Casablanca. It featured a showdown for the title between Vanwall's Stirling Moss and Ferrari's Mike Hawthorn.

The 1958 Moroccan Grand Prix was an intriguing event, but not everyone was happy. "It was a very very strange place," says Jack Brabham, who was driving to increase the numbers as the fastest of six Formula Two competitors. "It was next to the beach and it was quite dangerous because the dust and the sand would blow up over the track, which made it a bit difficult."

There were other hazards: sea mist in the morning would lessen visibility but improve carburation, and the late afternoon sun shone straight into the drivers' eyes on the back straight, which meant that Hawthorn had to use a darkened visor to be able to see.

Organisationally, it was different. "Oh yeah, completely different," says Brabham. "Just the way it was run; it was more like a picnic, if you like. It wasn't an event like we were used to in Europe – but the nightlife was fantastic!"

On race day, bands played and a march-past preceded the event as King Mohammed V and his party arrived in Mercedes road cars, escorted by bodyguards on white BMW motorcycles. Everyone was presented to the King before they eventually took up their grid positions and the race was started, 15 minutes late, by the legendary Toto Roche of Rheims.

"After the pageantry, it was all a bit of an anti-climax," said Hawthorn. The race would be down to tactics anyway, to decide the World Championship. For Moss to win the title, he had to win and take fastest lap and Hawthorn had to finish lower than second.

Moss took the lead from Hawthorn's team-mate Phil Hill, Stuart Lewis-Evans, Jo Bonnier in a BRM and Hawthorn in fifth. Hawthorn moved up to third which became second when Hill outbraked himself as his drum brakes proved no match for Moss's discs, but he came back to overtake Hawthorn, while Tony Brooks also caught the English Ferrari driver and had a tremendous battle with him.

But then Brooks's engine broke. Moss had a comfortable lead over Hill in second with Hawthorn third. "I did win and I did have fastest lap," says Moss. "Mike wasn't second, but quite correctly in my mind, Phil slowed down and let Mike go through, which I think was absolutely right, although it affected me. It was obviously disappointing… no, not disappointing, frustrating, because there was nothing I could do."

Hawthorn was champion, Vanwall won the first-ever constructors' title, but it was little reward. Lewis-Evans, unofficially managed by his good friend Bernie Ecclestone, was badly burned in the late stages of the race when his engine exploded and the car caught fire. Lewis-Evans clambered out with his overalls on fire. Dazed and shocked, he ran away from rescuers. He later died from his injuries

Climbing from his car, a delighted Hawthorn told team manager Romolo Tavoni of his decision to retire from racing. He was killed in a road accident the following January.



Main picture: Stirling Moss, the eventual winner, leads Phil Hill at the start of the race.

Top left: King Mohammed V of Morocco (foreground on the right) on the grid before the start .

Top centre: Phil Hill lead his Ferrari team-mate Mike Hawthorn. Hill eventually allowed Hawthorn to pass him to take second place and the championship.

Top right: Masten Gregory (Temple Buell Maserati 250F) finished sixth.

Above: Tommy Bridger (Cooper-Climax) follows Gerino Gerini (Maserati) through Azzemour corner.

PHOTOGRAPHY: LAT, BERNARD CAHIER/F1.PHOTO.COM

SEASON OPENER

GP TOO

GP2 returns this weekend with a third season which promises more tight racing, close competition and brave overtaking. The series has already provided F1 with a new generation of talent and there are potential world champions lining up on the grid again in '07. The Bulletin will be covering the GP2 races – and paddock – all season. We start by talking to some of this season's contenders.



MICHAEL AMMERMÜLLER
ART GRAND PRIX/RBR TEST DRIVER



"I am pretty confident for this year because I have the experience from last season. I'm also now with the team that has won the championship for the last two years. We've had good testing, we're going to be OK.

"Driving for ART does create more pressure because of their success with Nico and Lewis. The team is expected to be good – but I'm happy, because it means I'll have a car capable of winning.

"The car this season does feel different, and not only because of the new aero package. In testing I had to change my driving style quite a bit.

"It is a very different experience driving a GP2 car for ART and driving an F1 car for Red Bull Racing. The levels of downforce are different and F1 has traction control. For me it hasn't been a big problem because I haven't driven the RB3 yet. I am the reserve driver though and it's an advantage, I think, to be racing and practicing so much. It would be a difficult transition, but it's better than driving nothing!"

AMMERMULLER: WON SECOND RACE OF LAST SEASON

ZAUGG: RACED FOR TEAM SOUTH AFRICA IN A1GP

ADRIAN ZAUGG
ARDEN INTERNATIONAL



"It's definitely a lot quicker than anything else I've raced! Technically GP2 is a big challenge for me. I've had experience of the World Series by Renault and A1GP and this feels like progress. As you go up through the formulae, you learn different techniques, a lot of which comes together in a GP2 car.

"It's a tough championship with experienced drivers. I'm one of the youngest but I think we can make progress. It's a steep learning curve and I hope by the middle of the season I'll be fighting for podiums. I think right now regular points would be a good start.



'THE CHAMPIONSHIP IS GOING TO BE REALLY CHALLENGING. MY HOPE IS TO BE ON THE PACE IN EVERY RACE AND IF IT'S THE CASE THAT AT THE END OF THE YEAR I'M THE CHAMPION, I'LL BE VERY HAPPY! I THINK THE TEAM IS VERY GOOD – BUT MY TEAM-MATE MICHAEL IS VERY GOOD AS WELL! THAT'S WHY HE'S AN F1 TEST DRIVER'

DI GRASSI: TIPPED BY HEIKKI AS 2007 CHAMP



LUCAS DI GRASSI
ART GRAND PRIX



"The championship is going to be really challenging. My hope is to be on the pace in every race and if it's the case that at the end of the year I'm the champion, I'll be very happy! I think the team is very good – but my team-mate Michael is very good as well! that's why he's an F1 test driver.

"In GP2 the cars are only the same mechanically, the teams have setup options and can give you an advantage in the race – but the differences are small. It isn't like F1 where you have the top cars a long way ahead of those at the back. In GP2 it is very close, so even if you do a good job, you have to fight it out on the track.

"It is more up to the driver to be consistent and be quick every race – that's what Nico, and Lewis and Heikki and Scott Speed and Neel Jani were able to do. It's a good championship for good drivers."

DI GRASSI: ALMOST TOO MUSCULAR TO FIT IN THE CAR

SAKON: WRECKED NEW SA06 ON ITS FIRST OUTING, GERMANY 2006

SAKON YAMAMOTO
BCN COMPETICION / SUPER AGURI F1



"My general feeling is that GP2 has plenty of grip! There is lots of downforce, not only in the high-speed turns, in the slow corners as well. The slick tyres make it much easier to control a GP2 car.

"The top speed isn't particularly quick, but in the exits of the corners you can get the power down really nicely. Obviously, when you compete in a series where following another car closely makes you lose front downforce, it makes overtaking really tough. GP2 doesn't suffer in that way, you can follow closely with a much better chance to overtake. Racing without powered steering is a bit hard on the arms, but overall the car isn't more difficult to drive. The steering is heavier, but the cornering speeds are lower, so there are lower g-forces to deal with. I've changed my training accordingly.

"I haven't driven for Super Aguri yet this season, but I think I will get some testing time in the car before too long. It's going to be interesting making the comparisons in style."

YAMAMOTO: HE'S AFRAID OF WASPS. NO, REALLY. WASPS



PHOTOGRAPHY: MURIEL BROUSSEAU, SUTTON IMAGES, LAT, ACTION IMAGES

NAKAJIMA: ONLY MAN TO HAVE DRIVEN GP2 AND F1 CARS THIS SEASON



KASUKI NAKAJIMA
DAMS/WILLIAMS F1



"Driving in GP2 and testing in F1 is not without its difficulties. The cars are different, but it's nice to be doing it.

"Looking the other way, for me the big change from F3 to GP2 is the competitiveness of opponents. I think it will be a close series – but I've never experienced it before so I really don't know what to expect. The championship will be tight though – I'm sure of that."

'I LEARNED A LOT, I IMPROVED'

The series has been a good career move for many of today's F1 grid. We spoke to a couple of the old(ish) boys about their time in GP2.

NELSON PIQUET JNR
RENAULTF1 TEST DRIVER

"GP2 was two years that were very important for me. It was a place where I learned a lot, where I improved as a driver. It helped my career. It's great to have a series with close competition. Real racing drivers love the big fight and with the cars so closely matched, GP2 is one of the toughest.

"I didn't find the difference between driving a GP2 car and driving an F1 car to be that great. Obviously, when I got into the Renault F1 car, I had traction control systems, but next year that will be gone and the one big difference will be removed. More and more GP2 has become the natural step before F1. All the drivers are going to go to GP2 before they go to F1. That's the way it's going to be."

HEIKKI KOVALAINEN
RENAULTF1

"Last year I followed the GP2 Series closely. They have fantastic races. This year will be no different – it will be good to watch. My tip for the year is di Grassi. I know him from Renault. He can do it, and he should have the experience and the right team behind him.

"F1 is different, but GP2 is good preparation. It's a close championship, and you need to be finding the last one hundredth of a second to be at the front. In that it's the same as F1, you have to be on the limit all the time. The competition is high, the level of driver talent is high too – obviously not as high as F1, but close. The cars are very even and that creates good racing. I think it's the best possible preparation.

"And being quick isn't all about natural ability. A GP2 driver needs to be giving really good feedback to the engineers to get the setup right. In that, GP2 is perfect preparation for F1. "

ON WITH THE SHOW

By Didier Perrin, technical director, GP2

Out of principle we change the GP2 car every year, to make sure the engineers all have to start from a new base – we don't want them carrying over a set-up from a previous year. Between 2005 and 2006 we introduced the slicks to replace the grooved tyres. This year we have produced a new aerodynamic package with a new rear wing, chimneys, and a T-wing.

The purpose is twofold. The car will have slightly improved performance with more downforce and better cooling efficiency. We expect the car to be two to three-tenths quicker than last year, not a big difference. We could have made it much quicker, simply by allowing the teams to set-up their rear wings at a higher angle – but we don't want quicker. With too much downforce the car becomes less... tricky. We want to have a tricky car, we are not looking for the best performing, fastest car. We want a good show. We want to give the engineers the opportunity to show their skills and the drivers also. We wanted a car difficult to drive.

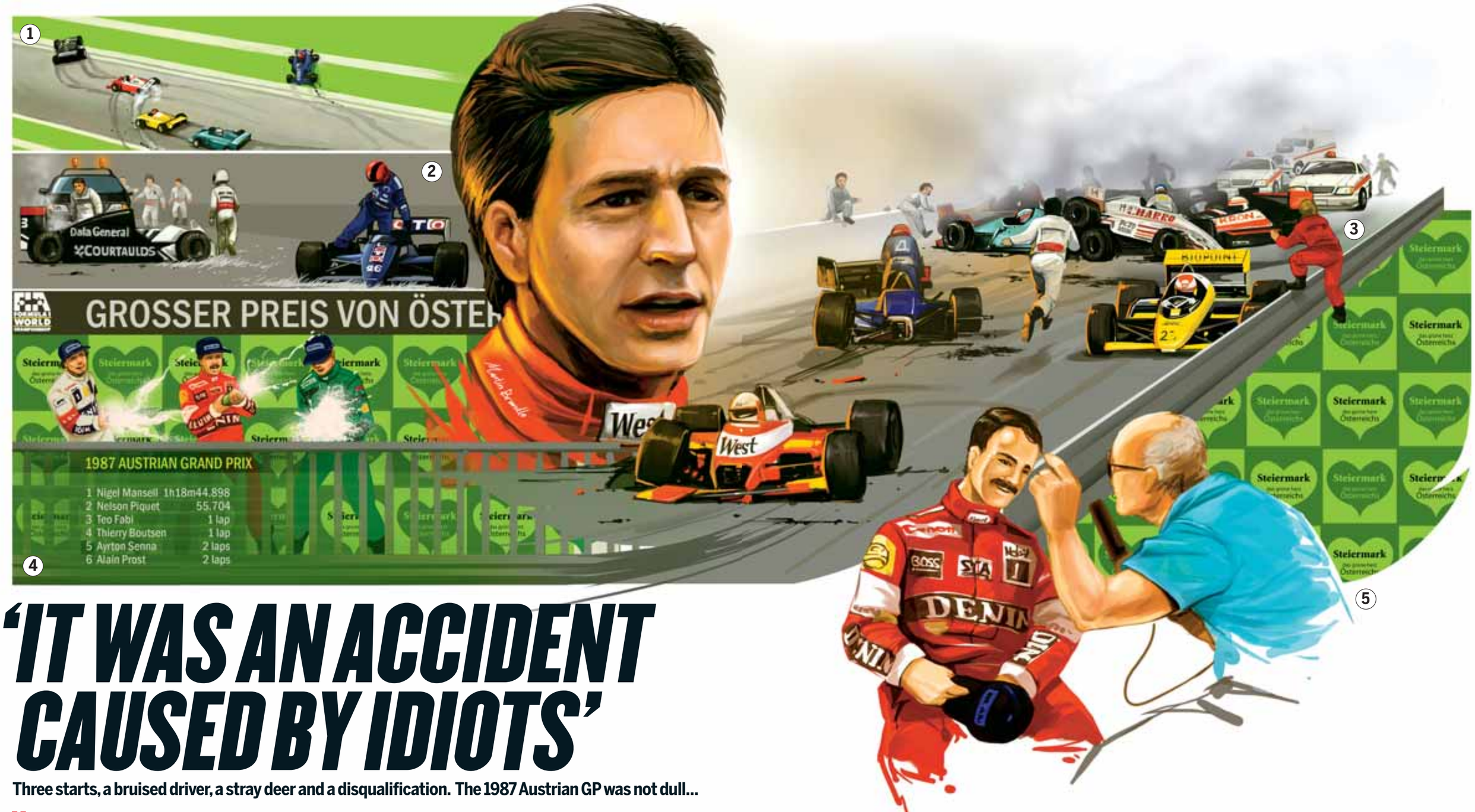
Our philosophy is completely different to the F1 paddock as our priorities are not the same. We have set up the car with a level of performance not far behind F1. Our target was six seconds a lap behind a mid-grid F1 team. After that, we focus on the show. The aims of running a good series for ourselves, and providing a stepping stone to F1 are compatible: with a tricky car, close to F1 performance, we will have a good show and the best drivers will be able to move into F1 without much trouble.

Yes everyone has the same mechanical package, but the teams only seem to be limited in what they can do. But they are not: we give them a lot of freedom to demonstrate their abilities with the aero-settings. As the GP2 is a wing-car, the set-up of the suspension has a great influence on the aerodynamics. Even if you think they are all set up with the same wing position, you still don't know what aero settings they have because it is deeply dependent on the suspension settings.



When I wrote the specification for the third season's car, it defined aerodynamics that allow one car to follow another without losing too much downforce, keeping the gaps down and creating the environment for overtaking. Spectacle has always been important to us.

We want a good show: GP2's technical director Didier Perrin and the 2007-spec car (below)



'IT WAS AN ACCIDENT CAUSED BY IDIOTS'

Three starts, a bruised driver, a stray deer and a disqualification. The 1987 Austrian GP was not dull...

ÖSTERREICHRING, AUGUST 16 1987: LAP 1 (TWICE)

As circuits go, the Österreichring was a gem. Set in Austria's Styrian foothills, it was demanding and picturesque in equal measure. The long straights were linked by fast sweeps which were big on commitment and short on run-off. Nelson Piquet averaged 256.621kph (159.457mph) in his Williams FW11B-Honda to secure pole position for the 1987 Austrian Grand Prix, but the race didn't go quite as smoothly as his qualifying lap. The Österreichring was spectacular... but a bit narrow.

1 Piquet had a clean start and led up to the Hella-Licht Chicane, but a pile-up had developed behind him. "It was all Brundle's fault," recalls Christian Danner, Brundle's Zakspeed team-mate. "He lost it on the straight, which caused chaos." So, Martin Brundle, how do you plead? "Guilty," he says. "I was on the right side of the track and hit a big bump. With a heavy fuel load, my car simply ran out of suspension travel and turned left. I hit the barrier and bounced back into the pack." This sparked collisions which snared Ligier's René Arnoux and Piercarlo Ghinzani, Adrian Campos (Minardi) and the Tyrrells of Jonathan Palmer and Philippe Streiff.

2 It took 43 minutes to clean up the mess before the restart – enough time for teams to gather enough spare parts (or cars) for a full grid. Piquet moved away smartly again, but team-mate Nigel Mansell was slower on the other side and the circuit's cramped nature created a traffic jam in his wake. Riccardo Patrese (Brabham) brushed wheels with Eddie Cheever (Arrows) and McLaren's Stefan Johansson (who had a cracked rib after an incident during practice, when he crashed after hitting a stray deer) found himself with nowhere to go. Cue more chaos. Both Zakspeeds were sucked in, as was almost everyone at the back of the field. Alex Caffi (Osella), Ivan Capelli (March), Philippe Alliot (Larrousse Lola), Pascal Fabre (AGS), Ghinzani and, again, both Tyrrell drivers were involved. "The track was so tight that there was no chance of escape," Capelli says. "I managed to bring my car to a slithering halt, but then I saw Pascal Fabre go flying and he landed on top of my roll-hoop, which fortunately protected me."

'JOHANSSON CRACKED A RIB DURING PRACTICE, WHEN HE CRASHED AFTER HITTING A STRAY DEER'



3 Looking on, retired triple world champion Niki Lauda said: "It's always the same. The farther back on the grid they are, the less brain they have. The guys at the back accelerate full throttle without looking. It was an accident caused by idiots." Gerhard Berger, driving for Ferrari, took a less harsh view. "I do not share Niki's criticism," he said. "The farther back on the grid you are, the less time you have to react if a car at the front stops." It took almost an hour to clear the stage for chapter three.

4 Finally, at 16.12, 1h 42m after the original scheduled start, the Austrian GP began in earnest (minus only Streiff, remarkably). Mansell won for Williams... and then banged his head on a bridge stanchion as the victory car took him on a lap of honour.

5 To make things worse, British TV commentator Murray Walker asked how Mansell felt... then poked Mansell's bruise as he pointed it out to viewers. This was the last Austrian GP for 10 years. When F1 returned in 1997, the track was wider, halved and renamed the A1-Ring after its sponsor. The race remained until 2003, when politics ended its reign. "The original track was magnificent," says Brundle, "but I didn't think that in 1987. By the third start my car was bent and I needed 30° steering just to keep it straight. It was the last place you wanted to be in that situation. The Zakspeed almost always broke down, but I was sitting there thinking 'Break, damn you, break' and for once it kept going." It was one of only four races he finished that year – but it didn't count. The Zakspeed broke bodywork regulations and the stewards later stripped him of 14th place.

ILLUSTRATION: HERI IRAWAN



PHOTOGRAPHY: MASSIMO MASTRORILLO

TONIO LIUZZI

'Welcome to my trophy room. This is my parents' home – the place I grew up. It's a big 1960s villa about 5km from the coast near Pescara, in Italy...

1 This picture was painted by the 14-year-old nephew of one of my sponsors. He and I are great mates, and he gave me this painting after I picked up my first points with Toro Rosso at Indianapolis last year. The background scene reminds me of Baywatch.

2 Here is my first karting licence. I won my first race in 1992, but back then I was just doing regional races and they didn't give us proper trophies. Instead we got certificates.

3 This was one of my greatest moments – the karting world championship final of 2001. Not only did I take the title that day, I also beat Michael Schumacher. We had a chat on the podium and I was surprised by how friendly he was. I hadn't been a particularly big Schumacher fan, but when I met him I realised just how cool and professional he is. I was well impressed and asked him many questions about F1.

4 The Casco d'Oro is Italy's version of Britain's Autosport awards. I've won two of these little figures, and this one was due to my victory in the 2004 F3000 championship. I managed to take seven wins in ten races that year.

5 I like to stand out from the crowd so I really enjoy wearing funky race boots. I wore quite a few special editions last year, which pay respect to the country we're racing in, or the Italian World Cup squad, things like that.

6 When I was a kid I played this piano for five years. My parents pushed me to do as many hobbies as I could – music, football, even ballet. My favourite tune to play was the theme to The Godfather. I would play it all day long. But after a while I got bored and gave it up.

7 As a kid I used to sleep with my helmet because I loved it so much. I came up with the design myself. The original inspiration for my first helmet was Jean Alesi's, but since then I've modified it a lot and now it doesn't look anything like Jean's. By the time I was 15 I had 30 different designs.

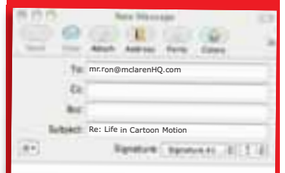
8 This is one of my favourite trophies. I won it at a karting world championship race at Suzuka in 1999. I suppose being glass it's quite fragile, but I have never dropped a trophy. I am extremely careful with them, because they are precious to me. The smartest trophies are usually awarded for international races, so most of these cups were won overseas.

This is just a small selection of my trophies and racing paraphernalia. I never throw anything away, I keep it all stored in boxes and one day I'd like to have it all on display in one room. When my racing career is over, these items will help me never to forget my memories. My parents even keep every newspaper and magazine that has my name or picture in. Soon they may need to move to a bigger house."

24-HOUR PADDOCK PEOPLE

MAILBOX

It seems that there's more than one Mika out there making the headlines...



Dear Ron,
This new Johnny Walker job is fantastic, but it isn't without difficulties. They asked me my views on drinking responsibly and I explained that for a Finn, drinking responsibly means going to another country where sliding under the table is much cheaper than at home. That didn't go down too well – but then what were they expecting? The only people on the planet who drink less responsibly than Finns are racing drivers – so having a Finnish racing driver as your responsible drinking ambassador seems strange – still the money's good and maybe they're being ironic.

Anyway, thanks for the opportunity to test the new car. It was, as always, lots of fun, and I had no idea how popular it would make me back home in Monaco.

Interesting story there actually. In London last week for Johnny W, got on the plane at Heathrow (somebody said there was a famous pop star onboard – but I didn't see anyone I recognised), got off in Nice and there's hundreds of girls waving banners with 'MIKA WE LOVE YOU' written on them. We don't get that sort of thing in DTM so it was a bit of a shock. (Some of them added that 'Grace Kelly Is The Greatest' – must remember to pass that on to Albert).

I must say F1 fandom has changed a bit since my day. Back in the 1990s I'd have got mobbed but this lot seemed happy to jump up and down with their banners – they didn't even make any indication of knowing I was there – are they mad or something?

Anyway, thanks for the test,

Drink Responsibly

Mika (Ambassador)



Dear Mika
Having interfaced with some of the younger members of staff I perceive your understanding of the situation may not be sufficiently developed for optimum accuracy levels.

Regards

Ron

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, REX FEATURES

BAD TRIPS...

SHANGHAI SURPRISE

The first Chinese GP proved memorable for the wrong reasons when the Williams minibus collided with a hit-and-run car driver.



It was so nearly one of the most tragic and sensational events ever to occur in Formula One. A story which would instantly have made headlines around the world and plunged the British royal family into mourning.

The headlines, which, mercifully, never had to be written, would have read something like this: "Royal tragedy: Queen's nephew killed at Chinese Grand Prix."

As it was, Peter Phillips (son of Princess Anne, the Queen's daughter), who two years ago was working for Williams' marketing department, escaped unhurt from a serious road accident just a mile from Shanghai's brand new F1 circuit. Two of his colleagues weren't so lucky.

Phillips, along with three other members of the Williams marketing team, Jim Wright, Chris Styring and David Owen, were travelling in the back of a chauffeured minibus when the accident happened.

Wright, now commercial director of Scuderia Toro Rosso and one of the two injured, recalls how all on board were more than slightly concerned: "That first year in China was an eye-opener for us all. The driving standards were just so appalling. It was a wonder more of us didn't have accidents."

As the Williams minibus approached a crossroads near the track, doing around 40mph, Wright and his colleagues saw a car approaching from the left at about 60mph. "We could see he had no idea about slowing down and he was on a direct collision course for us," he remembers. "The impact was inevitable and he hit us very hard." The car T-boned the minibus, and the heavy impact threw Wright through the glass on the right-hand side. His head, face, hands and arms were all cut before he landed on the road. Styring, sitting to Wright's left, took the heaviest blow and was left unable to move, although fortunately without long-term injuries. Phillips and Owen were shaken but unhurt, while the minibus driver escaped with minor injuries. The car driver also survived.

Remarkably, the first car at the accident scene was carrying F1's medical chief, Professor Sid Watkins. "I remember him saying something like 'what are you doing causing us all this trouble before the weekend has even started', or something like that, before he took control of the situation," says Wright.

"Looking back, we were incredibly lucky that it wasn't worse. I was a bit of a mess because of all the cuts, but I was brilliantly looked after by the FIA's Dr Gary Hartstein and then by the medics at Shanghai hospital." Bloodied but unbowed, he returned to the circuit later that day, head swathed in bandages, having discharged himself from hospital.

Styring, however, was less fortunate, as the shock of the impact of the two vehicles had sent his body into a trauma and he was forced to stay in hospital for several weeks after the accident.

"Obviously it was a nasty incident," Wright reflects, "but I felt very strongly that I wanted to get to the track and be with the team as soon as possible, despite what had happened. Moments like that make you appreciate the very strong bond that exists between all of us who work in the sport."

fashionista!

WITH MICHAEL SCHUMACHER



Hellooo dahlings,

What week, eh? The completely adorable Tom Ford opens his fabulous new store in Neu York, with so many fabulous people like Kate Hudson and Gwyneth Paltrow and Naomi Watts and Liv Tyler there. Wonderful! No me, of course, but I have a new house to furnish. So many fabrics to choose, and so little time to choose them! What's that?

No, Tom Ford does not sell cars you fools!! Oh, it's so depressing dealing with people who think that Ermenegildo Zegna is the current Italian F3000 champion.

So I suppose I have to talk about motorsport. Tres dull, dahlings, So, so boring. But I suppose there is one light shining in the dark – Lewis Hamilton. Quel discovery, n'est ce que pas? He is like a golden god, except in grey. And that is why I am here, children. No more of this awful grey, no more of this dreadful army hair. It's super hot here in Bahrein, so lovely Lewis will need something to keep him super cool in the desert. How about this confection? Fabulous! So, for the heat in the desert it's perfect.

Until next time fashion victims – stay frosty!

Michael

24-HOUR PADDOCK PEOPLE



A little more hair, but unmistakeably Bishop

HOW DID I GET HERE? MATT BISHOP

It's been a long and winding career path for the UK's F1 Racing editor. And he's met some characters along the way...

"I WAS BEHIND MY desk when a man approached me and said, "Mate, can you do something about the toilets?" "What's the matter with them," I asked. "Someone's dead in there. Sort it out cos I wanna use the toilet." And, sure enough, a man had killed himself. But this bloke's only concern was that the corpse should be removed so he could go.

I WAS WORKING AS a betting shop manager in a particularly rough part of London's West Kilburn area. I'd originally been a punter and had a pretty expensive habit. I remember one winter's day a friend and I turned up at Hackney dog track with £1400 between us. After two and a half hours he had two pence in his pocket and I had one. My car was out of petrol, and we had to push it home. Fortunately, I realised pretty soon that you can't beat the bookie. And as the saying goes, if you can't beat 'em join 'em. So I did. I went to work for Mecca Bookmakers and at Wembley dog track.

BUT I KNEW I could write. So I started to contribute greyhound racing reports for the Racing Post. I suppose I can therefore claim to have been a racing journalist since the late 1980s, but that would be glossing over the details. Likewise, I often think back to my Uni days. Not university, you understand... Unigate. That was my first job after leaving school, pumping out double cream from antiquated road tankers. Then I started doing van deliveries and selling jewellery down the market. Most of it was gold-plated fake jewellery... all of it in fact!



BECOMING A PROFESSIONAL JOURNALIST didn't happen overnight. In the meantime I was having to deal with some fairly undesirable betting shop clients, including one gentleman who, after an argument over his winnings, actually had a crap in the corner of my shop by way of protest.

AFTER THAT I STARTED DRIVING a minicab, still in north-west London. Mini-cabbing during a recession is just about the most demoralising thing you can do. Nobody had any money. I remember picking up a woman in her 60s. A huge, smelly, fat woman, and her journey came to £3.50. I remember pulling up to her estate – Chalk Hill, near Wembley, very dodgy – when the woman said: "Look, love, I ain't got three-fifty, but I can give you a blow-job instead, if you want." I politely declined and let her on her way.

I BEGAN TO TAKE up sub-editing shifts on a number of small publications, because subbing was easier to get into than writing. But I needed to carry on cabbing as at that time I was still spending a fortune at dog tracks.

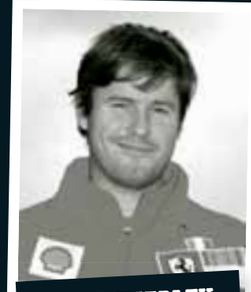
THEN I STARTED SUBBING for Car magazine, and in 1991 they offered me a staff position. I found the job suited me perfectly. I'd been a bit of a maverick in my 20s and had some doubts as to whether I'd ever get on a proper career path. But I worked my way up the Car ladder to features editor, and was then head-hunted for the editor's post at F1 Racing soon after the magazine launched in 1996. Via an extremely eccentric route I'd found myself in the best job in the world.

I THINK MY BACKGROUND has prepared me remarkably well for the F1 paddock. There's such a variety of people here that I think it probably helps to have had a bit of a mixed or even chequered past.

MIND YOU, NOBODY'S EVER been so disappointed with something I've written that they've dropped their trousers and crapped on the floor. Yet."

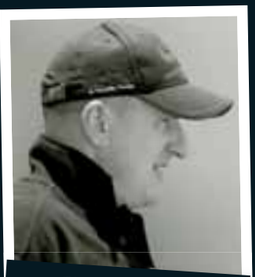
THE LINE-UP

Who does what around the paddock?



ROB SMEDLEY

Rob's first job was as suspension designer for Peugeot's touring car team. He worked his way up the ladder and entered F1 with Jordan in 1998 as a data engineer. He's Felipe Massa's race engineer, and says Brazil '06 was the proudest moment of his career. He's a big Manchester City FC fan.



MIKE SMITH

Super Aguri chef Mike has 13 years' experience in the kitchen. But creating culinary sensations isn't his only craft. He's also a driving instructor and once caused a girl to arrive at her A-Level exam in tears. Before Aguri, he was at Jaguar Racing. His favourite meals are linguini carbonara and Thai green curry. He lives in Cornwall and is mad about surfing.



ANDY STOBART

Bridgestone's new PR manager worked with the Stobart (no relation) VK M-Sport Ford team in WRC and the British Rally Championship. Before that he was a journalist for Crash.net. He has a degree in law and politics and used to organise the British University Karting Championship. In his spare time, Andy buys old cars and does them up.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CRISPIN THRUSTON, SUTTON IMAGES. CARTOON: MODERN TOSS

GRIDDLE

Go on then. How many of these do you know? The answers will be in tomorrow's magazine.

1 Where is this and who is winning the race?



2 Who is this young man seeking world domination?



3 Who, what car and when?



4 Who is this and in what two races did he compete in 1975? And in what car?

F1 CROSSWORD

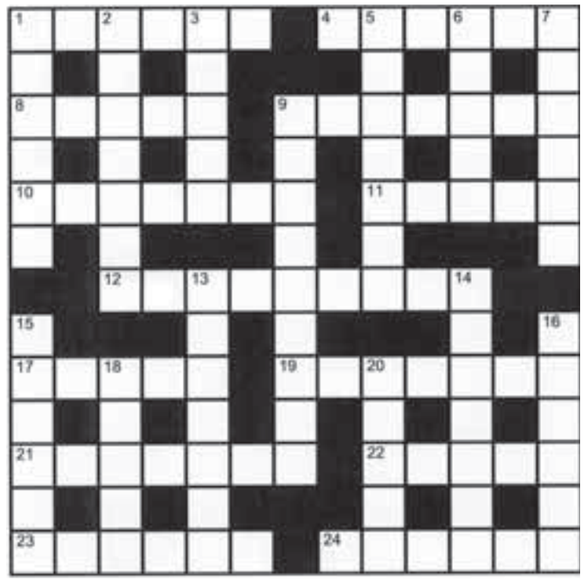
ACROSS

1 Shrewd (6)
4 Perfect place (6)
8 Team, with 2007 drivers Jenson Button and Rubens Barrichello (5)
9 Ancient city associated with Joshua (7)
10 Colombian driver who won the 2005 Brazilian Grand Prix (7)
11 Financial resources (5)
12 The first Grand Prix held here, in 1981, was won by Nelson Piquet (3,6)
17 Colorado ski resort (5)
19 Display in public (7)
21 Lorenzo –, Italian driver whose only F1 victory was the 1964 Austrian Grand Prix (7)
22 Big (5)
23 Rural (6)
24 François –, French driver who had 13 Formula One podium finishes, including one win, in 1971 (6)

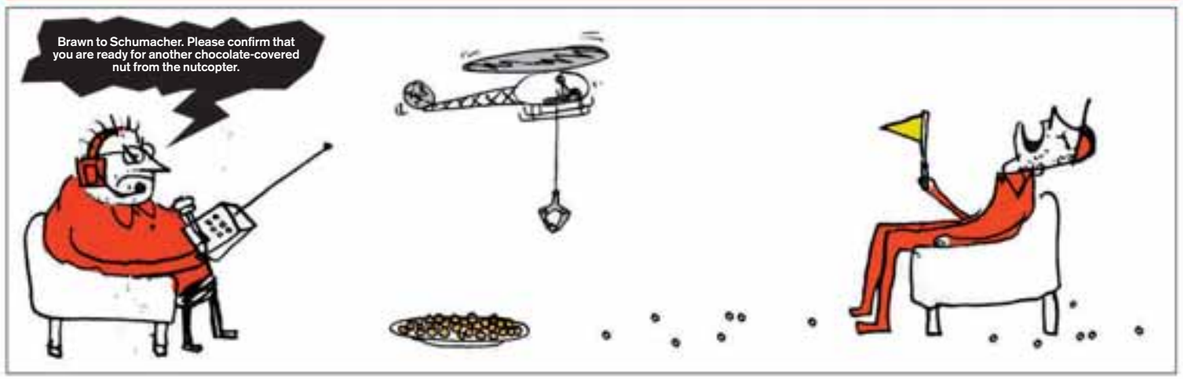
DOWN

1 Relaxed and comfortable (2,4)
2 Occupants (7)
3 – Monteiro, Portuguese driver (5)
5 Piero –, Italian won the '52 Swiss GP (7)
6 Type of nut (5)
7 Spanish driver whose first Grand Prix was for Minardi in March, 2001 (6)
9 French driver who won the 1995 Canadian Grand Prix (4,5)
13 Alessandro –, Italian driver who won the 1989 Japanese Grand Prix (7)
14 Dramatist who wrote Look Back in Anger (7)
15 Constructor that entered F1 for the first time in 1993 (6)
16 Public road (6)
18 French driver whose first Grand Prix was for Ligier in 1994 (5)
20 World Champion in 1967 (5)

ANSWERS IN TOMORROW'S BULLETIN



Brawn&Schumacher in"extended leave"



THE RED BULLETIN

Publisher Norman Howell **Editor** Justin Hynes **Executive Editor** Anthony Rowlinson **Art Director** Miles English **Production Editor** David Granger **Chief Sub-editor** Nancy James **Senior Sub-editor** Paul Keith **Senior Writer** Matt Youson **Staff Writer** Adam Hay-Nicholls **Production Manager** Adam Carbajal **Prepress Technician** Lee Laughton **Designers** Phil Slade, James Greenhow **Photo Editor** Susie Forman **Team Photographer** Thomas Butler **Logistics Manager** Bettina Leidiger **Project Manager** Justine Hoffmann **Logistics** Kate Robson **Operations Manager** Leigh Pothecary **Truckies** Martin Woodfine, Marc Sirett, Martin Young **IT** Werner Stadlober **Printer** Oswald Halwax **Managing Director** Bernd Fisa **Concept** Christian Kaemmerling, Boro Petric, Christian Seiler **Contributors** Eric Silbermann, Bob Constanduros, Andreas Gröbl, Giorgio Piola, Sarah Edworthy **Published by** Red Bulletin GmbH **e-mail:** secret.service@theredbulletin.com F1/Formula 1/Formula One and devices and translations thereof are trademarks of Formula One Licensing BV, a Formula One company. F1/Formula 1 device used with permission. **Cover:** Michael Gillette

HELLO, BERNIE...

While rumours circulate suggesting the French Grand Prix may well move to a new venue at Disneyland Resort Paris, The Red Bulletin spoke to the man who knows, or rather to his answer phone – and due to an unfortunate problem with the system, we heard what everyone else had to say...

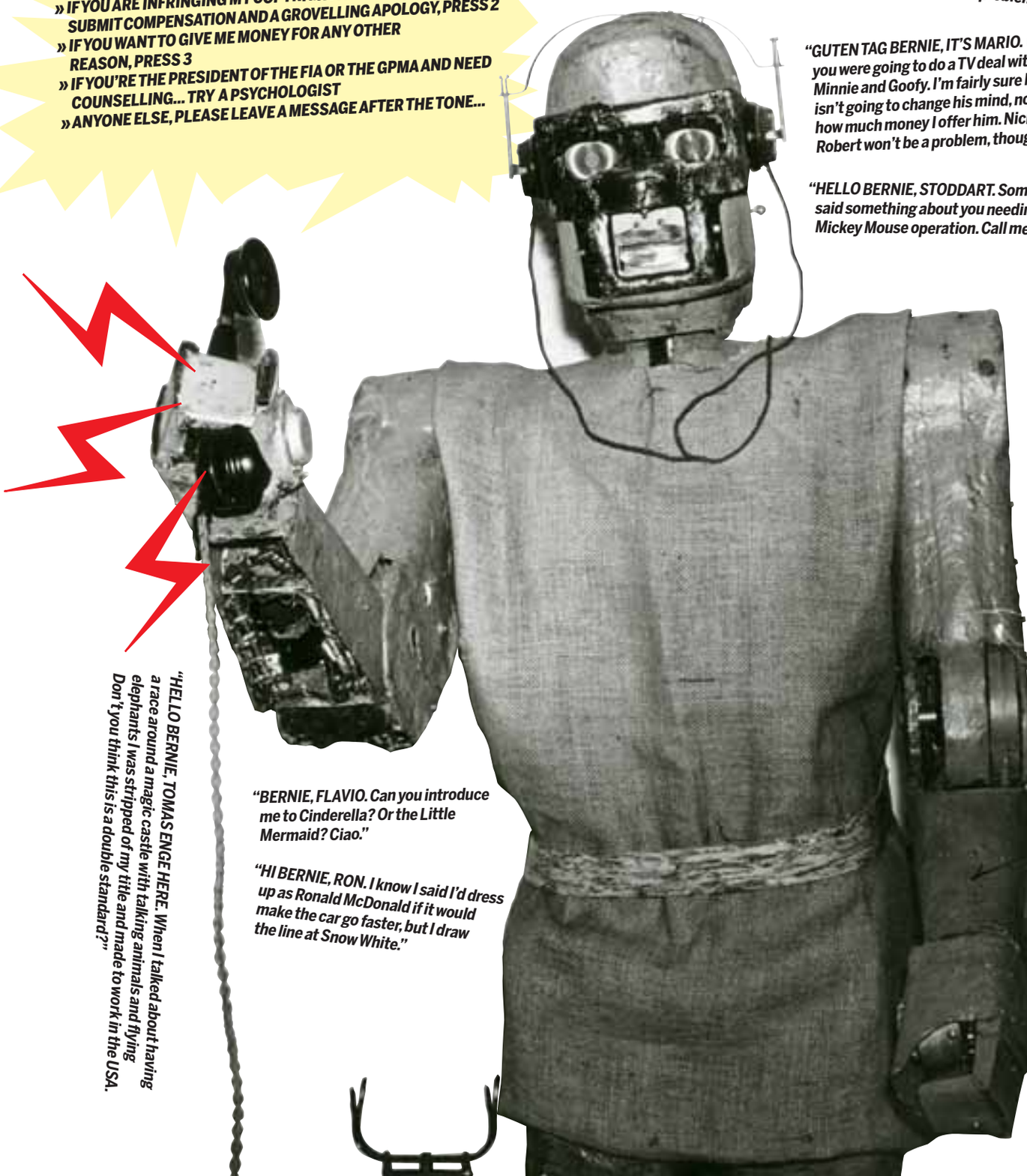
...IS THIS WORKING? ... BLOODY THING... CAN'T STAND NEW TECHNOLOGY... YES I'VE PRESSED RECORD... OH RIGHT. HELLO. THIS IS THE VOICEMAIL OF BERNIE. I'M BUSY. JUST FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND YOU WILL BE DEALT WITH. SO...

» IF YOU'RE AN ASIAN TIGER ECONOMY KEEN TO HOST A GRAND PRIX, PRESS 1
» IF YOU ARE INFRINGING MY COPYRIGHT AND WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT COMPENSATION AND A GROVELLING APOLOGY, PRESS 2
» IF YOU WANT TO GIVE ME MONEY FOR ANY OTHER REASON, PRESS 3
» IF YOU'RE THE PRESIDENT OF THE FIA OR THE GPMA AND NEED COUNSELLING... TRY A PSYCHOLOGIST
» ANYONE ELSE, PLEASE LEAVE A MESSAGE AFTER THE TONE...

"HI BERNIE, DISNEYLAND RESORT PARIS HERE. We like the idea, but for health and safety reasons the person inside the roller-skating Donald Duck outfit has to be a trained dancer. The lawyers say we can't use a GP2 driver. We do have openings for the seven dwarves, though. Also, if the cast members don't smile and wave during the parade, we simply replace them with ones who will – what's the problem?"

"GUTEN TAG BERNIE, IT'S MARIO. I heard you were going to do a TV deal with Mickey, Minnie and Goofy. I'm fairly sure Michael isn't going to change his mind, no matter how much money I offer him. Nick and Robert won't be a problem, though."

"HELLO BERNIE, STODDART. Someone said something about you needing a Mickey Mouse operation. Call me."



"BERNIE, FLAVIO. Can you introduce me to Cinderella? Or the Little Mermaid? Ciao."

"HI BERNIE, RON. I know I said I'd dress up as Ronald McDonald if it would make the car go faster, but I draw the line at Snow White."

"HELLO BERNIE, TOMAS ENGE HERE. When I talked about having a race around a magic castle with talking animals and flying elephants I was stripped of my title and made to work in the USA. Don't you think this is a double standard?"

PHOTOGRAPHY: KEYSTONE FEATURES/GETTY IMAGES *On October 19, 1964, a robot designed by Claus Scholz of Vienna answered the phone, unfortunately he couldn't speak.*