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"I DID IT
MY WAY"

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Why HAM was the man in 2017



Anthony Rowlinson

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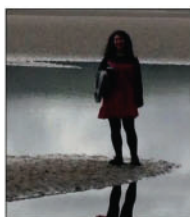
PAUL RIPKE
Mercedes are selling 2,017 copies of Ripke's photo-led book to celebrate their and Lewis's titles. See his work on p54 & p66



MAURICE HAMILTON
The veteran F1 reporter first interviewed Jenson Button in his rookie season back in 2000. Now, 17 years on, they catch up again (p82)



DAMIEN SMITH
Our former editor in chief now dedicates his Sundays to writing about F1. His latest chapter on Ferrari's history is on page 92



VANESSA LONGWORTH
It is with sadness that we bid farewell to our chief sub-editor, Vanessa. She's been at the mag since 2009 and will be sorely missed

So. Did Lewis 'let him have it'? Or, less emotively, did Hamilton subtly gift Valtteri Bottas a victory in Abu Dhabi?

That was the nagging question left by a season finale which, rather unfortunately, proved to be by some margin the duller grand prix of the year, as Bottas cruised to an apparently untroubled win, ahead of his world champion team-mate.

The lack of excitement on Yas Island stood in acute contrast to the excruciating laps ground out last year, as Nico Rosberg clung on to the second place that would secure *his* world title. This time around the only controversy of note was the failure of an intercom system that left the media corps in silence as the post-race interviews began. Not that we missed too much...

Regardless, the point here is that the lack of drama associated with another Mercedes 1-2 has been a fundament of another stellar Silver year – but it's been a facet notable only by its absence.

Peace, love and harmony at Mercedes? Oh yes – and in marked contrast to the tension of intra-team relations throughout the Hamilton-Rosberg years.

With Bottas as his wing-man, Hamilton has 'presented' at grands prix in an almost beatific state of grace this year: unflappable and, as a consequence, largely unbeatable when he and the Wo8 tuned sweetly into each other's groove.

And as you can read from page 54 he admits as much: "I try not to contain any negativity in my life, no matter what is written, no matter what people say," he tells us. "I've managed to build this kind of barrier to bounce off negativity because I think love conquers all and positivity conquers all."

Hamilton has been mocked in the past for being so open with his feelings. But you know what? Given the way he has driven this season, he's earned his platform.

But, as any sportsman will confess, candidly, maintaining motivational peaks is tough. Perhaps subconsciously, Lewis is unlikely to have brought his 'triple A' game to Brazil and Abu Dhabi. He admitted as much in contradictory comments about being "not quite at 100 per cent" but also that he "gave it everything" to beat Bottas.

Valtteri will bank the victory, nonetheless, for as Jenson Button acknowledges in our exclusive interview on p80, "when you beat Lewis you know you've done a good job."

Hamilton was The Man this year – he knows it and his chief rival Sebastian Vettel was gracious enough to concede that point.

Will he be so next year? Impatiently, we wait.

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A bird's-eye view of Yas Marina Circuit

Each year the organisers of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix are able to give photographers access to the Viceroy Hotel that overlooks the Yas Marina track.


Before Saturday morning's practice session, I went to reception and was guided by a member of the hotel staff to a room above the walkway that spans across the circuit.

As you shoot into the light, you get a back-lit effect on the cars and the shadows really stand out. However, it's the intricate mesh of the hotel's roof that is really impressive.

It's unusual to have a hotel within an F1 circuit, so it provides a great opportunity for guests - and photographers - to enjoy the views.



Photographer

 **LAT IMAGES:** Lorenzo Bellanca

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

When 2.42pm, Saturday
25 November 2017

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
14mm lens, 1/2000sec @ F5

Emerging from the desert shadows

For the beginning of qualifying I positioned myself on the outside of the track at Turn 3. Sunset in the Middle East at this time of year (late November) is just after 5.30pm and as the session started at 5pm local time, the first period was perfect to capture this shot.

The deep yellow of sunlight mixes perfectly with the colour of Carlos Sainz's Renault and also the sparks that strike up from underneath the floor of the chassis.

What's particularly cool is that for this race and Singapore, drivers use clear visors for the shift into floodlit driving, so you can always make out their facial features - and sometimes even their eyes.



Photographer

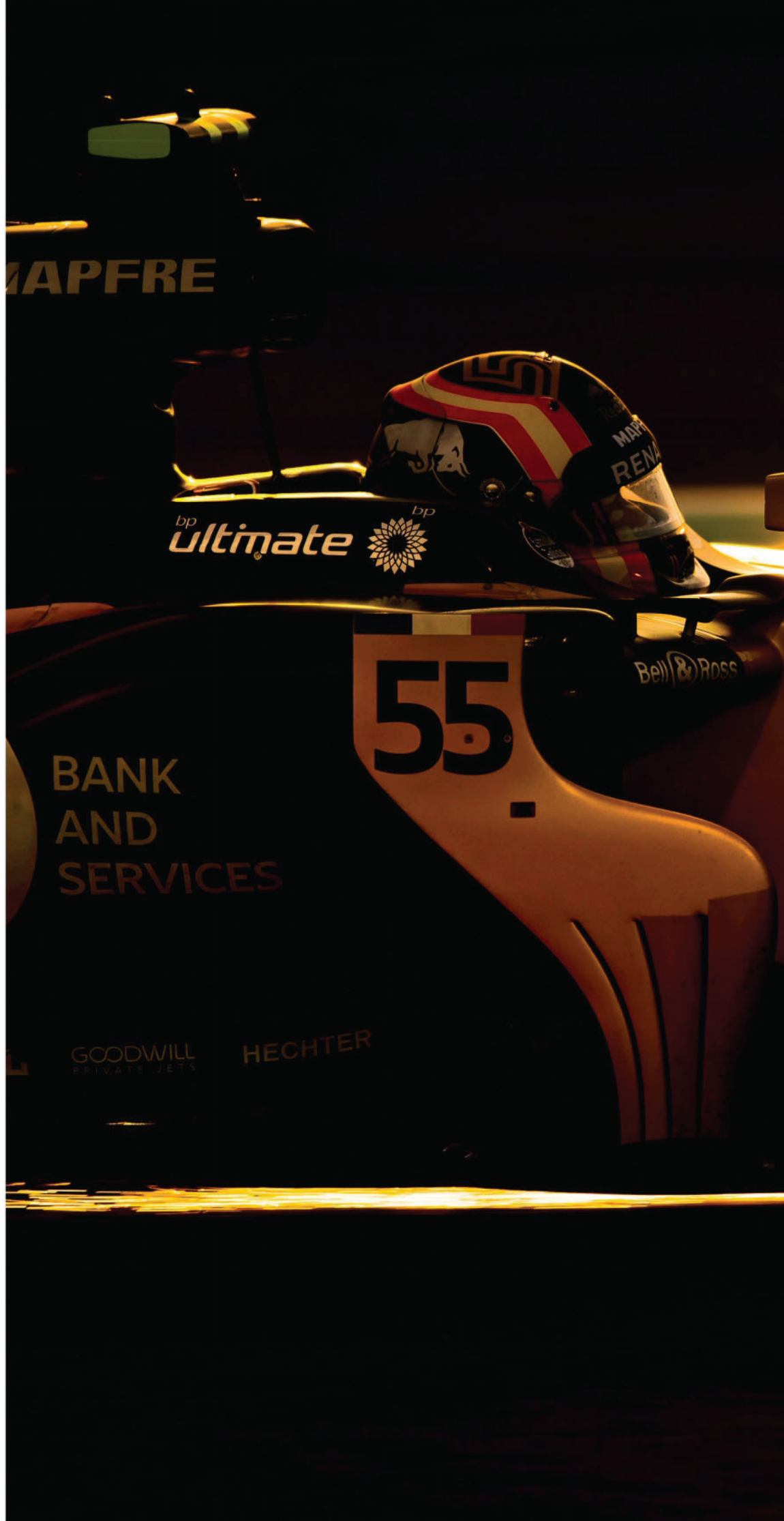


LAT IMAGES Lorenzo Bellanca

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

When 5.08pm, Saturday
25 November 2017

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
600mm lens, 1/1000sec @ F4





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Hamilton shines in season finale

This photograph of Lewis Hamilton was taken just 20 minutes before the first of these Parades (see page 8). I'm still in the room in the Viceroy Hotel, but for this image I'm using a longer 300mm lens and I'm shooting in the other direction.

The Mercedes has already rounded the apex of Turn 19 and is caught in the patches of shadows and sunlight that is created through the unusual-looking roof of the Viceroy Hotel. The direction of the light also extenuates the beautiful curves on the championship-winning Wo8.

The picture highlights the range of shots that you can take from the same place, but with different lenses.



Photographer



LAT IMAGES: Lorenzo Bellanca

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

When 2.22pm, Saturday
25 November 2017

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
300mm lens, 1/1600sec @ F3.5



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The sun sets on another year of F1

After 20 grands prix and nine months on the road, the Formula 1 season came to a close in Abu Dhabi and this sunset shot neatly encapsulates that mood.

This was also taken from the outside of Turn 3 as Valtteri Bottas is charging flat-out downhill towards the chicane on his first run in the first period of qualifying.

Bottas was quick all weekend and he was able to convert pole position into a race win, ahead of his champion team-mate Hamilton. Taken on an 85mm lens, to capture the palm trees, crowd and sun, you can see there is almost a purple effect reflected on the Mercedes, enhanced by twinkles of light.



Photographer



LAT IMAGES: Lorenzo Bellanca

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

When 5.04pm, Saturday
25 November 2017

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
85mm lens, 1/320sec @ F10





Red sky at night is lensman's delight

The secret of taking pictures in Abu Dhabi is maximising a very narrow time frame, just before sunset. I would say there's an optimum period of under ten minutes when the low-level sun produces some great effects.

For this picture of Sebastian Vettel, I am standing on the outside of Turn 14 and shooting across the track as they are accelerating out of the off-camber corner.

In that golden moment just before the sun dips below the horizon, you are praying for two outcomes: one is that a great driver/car combo is out on track and then that there is no cloud cover to dull the light of the sun. Thankfully, the skies in Abu Dhabi are always clear.



Photographer

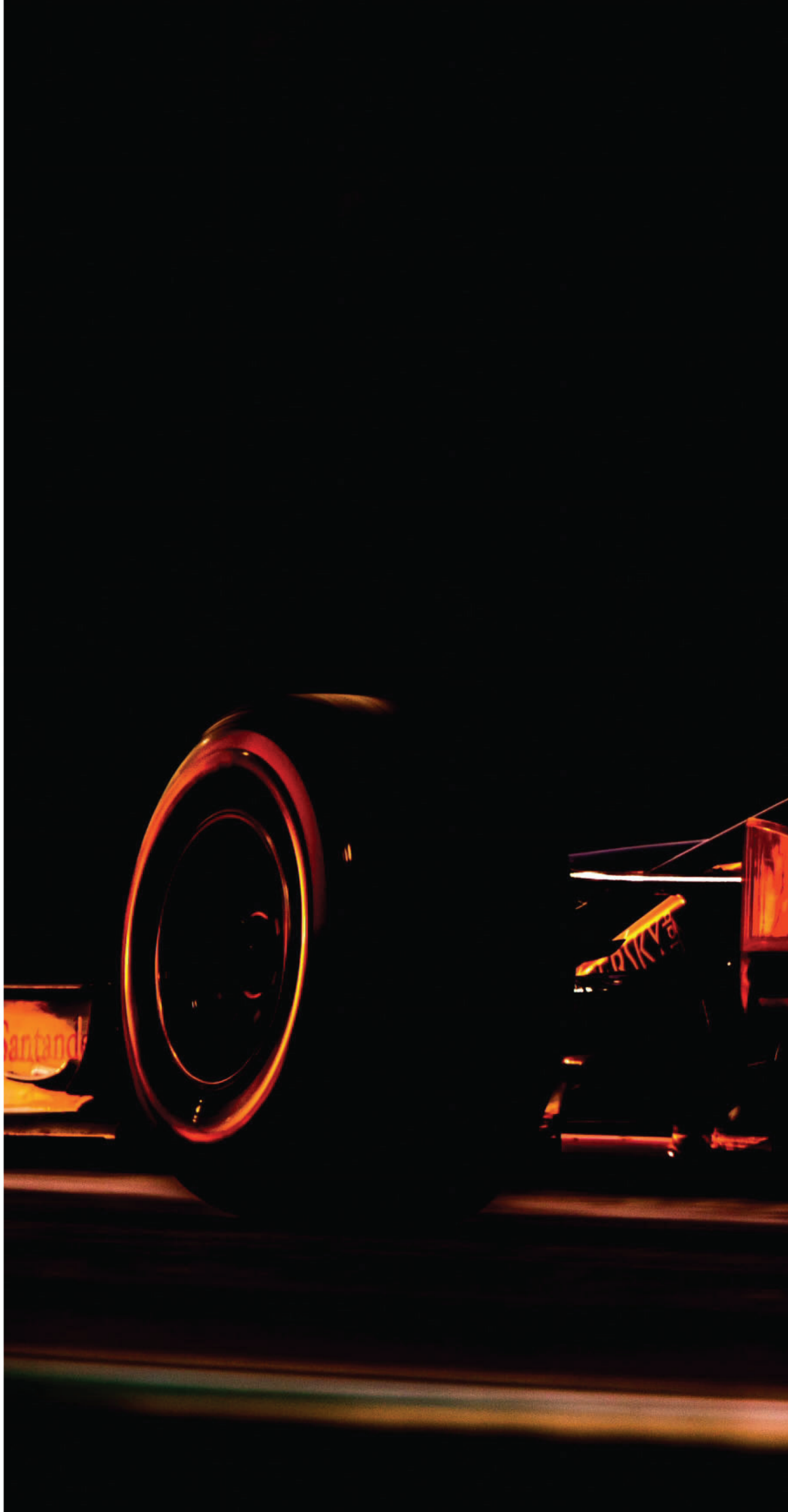


LAT IMAGES: Lorenzo Bellanca

Where Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

When 5.16pm, Friday
24 November 2017

Details Canon EOS-1DX MkII,
600mm lens, 1/320sec @ F8





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HUBLOT



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WHEREFORE ART THOU, ROMEO?

01 Formula 1 can be a mystifying world at times. A little more than three weeks after Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne said Ferrari could quit the sport if it was not happy with the way the engine rules went after 2020, the Italian was announcing Alfa Romeo's return to grand prix racing for the first time in 30 years.

Alfa Romeo – which is part of the Fiat Group, sister brand to Ferrari and very much part of Marchionne's remit – is to become title sponsor of Sauber in 2018, in a move that effectively makes the Swiss team a Ferrari junior team.

One of the drivers will be Ferrari protégé Charles Leclerc, a dominant Formula 2 champion in 2017 and one of the brightest young talents in motorsport. Managed by Nicolas Todt, Leclerc drove in four FP1 sessions and two tyre tests for Sauber last season.

Marcus Ericsson was also confirmed for another season, in favour of Ferrari's other young driver Antonio Giovinazzi. A Sauber featuring a large Alfa Romeo badge



Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne will enjoy a new political ally with the Alfa Romeo Sauber tie-up

was revealed at an event in Milan in early December and the new relationship with Fiat brings back to F1 one of motorsport's most evocative brands. Alfa Romeo spent seven seasons as a factory team between 1979-1985 – scoring just two pole positions – then supplied turbo engines to Italian minnows Osella until the end of 1988.

The manufacturer's heritage goes way back further than that, of course, from the glory days of the 1920s and '30s with legends Tazio Nuvolari and Achille Varzi, to winning the first two Formula 1 world titles in 1950 and '51 with Giuseppe 'Nino' Farina and Juan Manuel Fangio.

The move brings the number of prestigious car brands in F1 next year to six. In addition to competitors Ferrari, Mercedes, Renault and Honda, Alfa joins Aston Martin – which is expanding its relationship with Red Bull to become title sponsor – in using F1 as a marketing exercise to further its brand.

The partnership between Alfa Romeo and Sauber also further strengthens Ferrari's hand as F1 enters a delicate phase of political negotiations over its future.

Ferrari partners are expected to toe the Maranello line in such debates, so Marchionne now has a further ally which could cause F1's new owners some discomfort as they set forth into establishing the sport's new sporting and commercial regulations.

Sauber unveiled Alfa Romeo branding and Leclerc and Ericsson as their 2018 drivers in early December



F1's new owners are investing in the sport, but are reducing the prize money for the teams

Has Robert Kubica's post-season test convinced Williams he's the man for 2018?

A WINTER OF DISCONTENT?

02

Liberty's takeover of F1's commercial rights has been met with general positivity. Partly because it was clear that Bernie Ecclestone needed to be moved on, and partly because it was felt they were saying the right things about the need to promote and market the sport, and run it as a conventional 21st century multinational business, in a way that Ecclestone never did.

But as time has gone by this year, unease has increased, and the season ended in Abu Dhabi with an undercurrent of concern about Liberty on several different levels.

Perhaps foremost among these was the disquiet about the fact that F1's income – and therefore team payments – have gone down under Liberty for the first time in the modern era. The overall funding pot is projected to reduce by just under five per cent in 2018.

On top of that, Liberty has not been clear exactly what the teams will earn – a concern for the smaller ones who struggle financially – although it has offered an interest-free advance to any teams wishing to take it to ensure as much money is available next year as this.

The view of the bosses of Liberty is that a short-term decline in profits was inevitable given the changes to the way they are running the sport. They have a new headquarters, and have employed a significant number of new staff as they set up departments for sales and marketing, in addition to a sporting group to analyse ways to improve the on-track action – all aimed at making F1 better in future.

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner reflected the teams' general view of this when he said: "You have to invest in the business to accumulate. Liberty has had a big learning year, they have done a season now, they have applied the right specialists in the right areas, and they are forming their game plan for 2021."

"It is very easy to criticise on head count or spending, and it is just a different mentality to how Bernie operated. Bernie ran a very tight closed shop, he was the marketing department, he was the sales department, and it was very much a one-man show."

"Liberty are looking to put a bit more analysis into the future as well, and there is a cost associated with that. Inevitably there will be an investment which will have an effect on 2018, probably even 2019, but you would expect to see a return for sure two years down the road."

But fights are developing on many levels. There is the debate over the future of F1's engines, with Ferrari, Mercedes and Renault immediately pushing back on a proposal to make engines cheaper, simpler and more attainable for new entrants. Not because they object to



“YOU HAVE TO INVEST IN THE BUSINESS TO ACCUMULATE. LIBERTY HAS HAD A BIG LEARNING YEAR AND NOW THEY ARE FORMING THEIR GAME PLAN FOR 2021” CHRISTIAN HORNER

the principle, but because they felt it was presented as a fait accompli and were surprised by the proposals.

Since then, both Liberty and the FIA have rowed back a little, F1 sporting boss Ross Brawn publicly apologising in a major interview if the car manufacturers felt ambushed, and FIA President Jean Todt emphasising in Abu Dhabi at the end of the season that it was a “discussion”.

Todt has also toned down talk of a cost cap, saying: “It has to be a combination. We need to make regulations which would have some impact on the actual costs. To simply say we are going to make a cost cap, I don't think it would work. And so far any attempt did not work, so we have to introduce something more sophisticated.”

Liberty have also caused annoyance among the drivers. The Grand Prix Drivers' Association went to Liberty early on to say they had some ideas about how cars could be changed to make following easier, to therefore improve the racing. So when Brawn made a presentation to the drivers on this subject in Abu Dhabi and made no mention of the drivers' involvement in the process, they were understandably miffed.

And then there's the commercial side. The teams are up for helping promote the sport but not at any price. ▶



Ferrari's team boss Maurizio Arrivabene and F1 sporting boss Ross Brawn discuss the future

And some of Liberty's plans are not proving popular.

There is also a proposal to have an 'F1 launch' event in February next year – only for the teams to push back on timing and ask what exactly Liberty was trying to achieve.

The teams are not against the idea, but they pointed out they cannot say when their new cars will be ready, because it's always a race against time to be out for the first day of testing, and wouldn't it be better to do it closer to the first race?

Then there is the plan to have four further 'F1 Live' events in the fashion of last summer's fiesta in Trafalgar Square in London. One has been announced for the city of Marseille ahead of the return of the French Grand Prix at Paul Ricard next year. But the problem is that Liberty are expecting the teams to foot the bill themselves, on top of their reduced prize money.

F1 chairman Chase Carey, though, says that despite the points of contention he believes Liberty's first year as new owners has gone well.

"I feel good about where we're at," he said in Abu Dhabi. "We've made headway this year. It's early days, so we're not declaring victory, but I feel good about the momentum we've got."

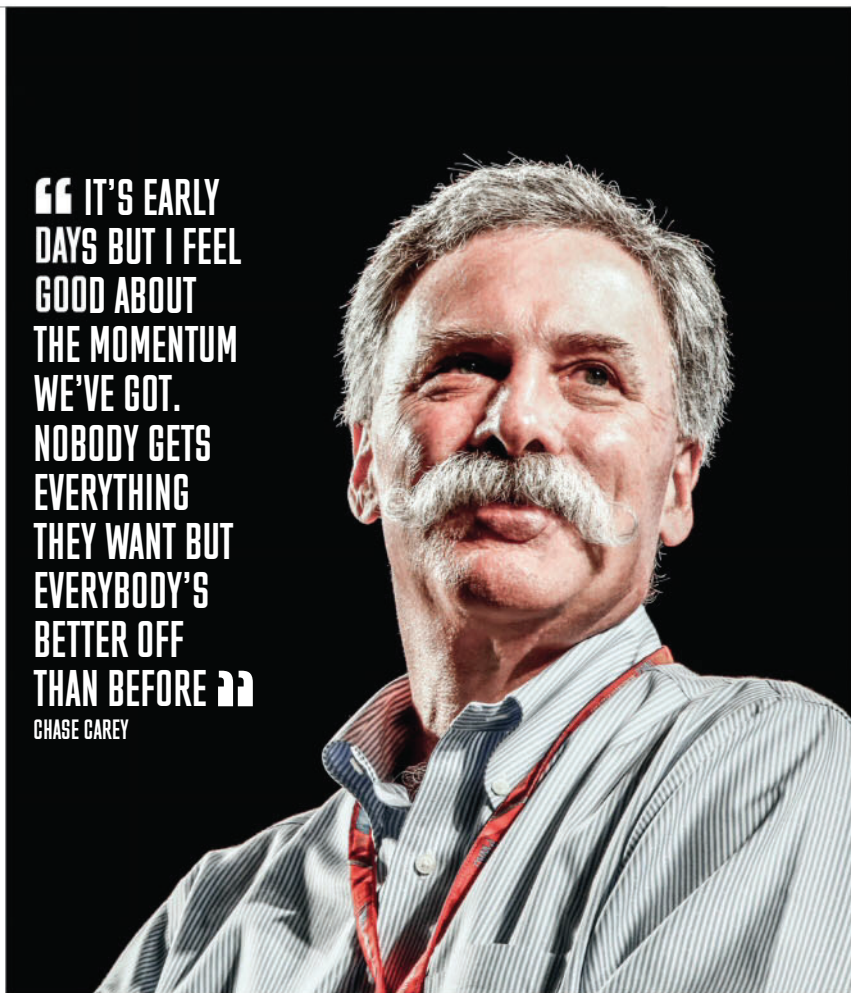
"The initiatives we have underway – whether it's cost, revenues, engines – the reality is that there is broad-based support for the general direction of where we're going. As you get into the specifics there are always going to be differences. That's just the reality of life. What we need to do is find the right compromises."

"Nobody gets everything they want but everybody's better off than they were before. Our goal would be to try and find those compromises and we honestly believe we're going to get a compromise."

He went on to add: "Realistically, to grow things, usually there's no free lunches."

“IT'S EARLY DAYS BUT I FEEL GOOD ABOUT THE MOMENTUM WE'VE GOT. NOBODY GETS EVERYTHING THEY WANT BUT EVERYBODY'S BETTER OFF THAN BEFORE”

CHASE CAREY



LAT IMAGES: ANDY HONE; STEVEN TEE; ZAK MAUGER

The teams accept that as a principle, but the problem for Liberty, as far as the teams are concerned, is that new management have been at the helm for ten months and have offered little information about what they will be doing, to address some of the sport's thornier issues.

The teams will be seeking more detail at the presentation Liberty is due to make at a meeting in early December. If not, there could be trouble ahead. ▶

F1 DIGEST THE MONTH'S BIG STORIES AT A GLANCE

02.11.17 Unimpressed by future engine proposals, Ferrari reiterate their threat to quit F1

06.11.17 McLaren confirm F3 champion Lando Norris as the team's new test and reserve driver



07.11.17 Marseille reveals it will host an 'F1 Live' street event in the build-up to next year's French Grand Prix

13.11.17 McLaren and Pirelli cancel their post-Brazilian GP tyre test over security concerns at Interlagos

16.11.17 Toro Rosso announce that Pierre Gasly and Brendon Hartley will remain at the Italian team for 2018

23.11.17 Pirelli reveal seven dry compounds for 2018, including the new blue superhard and pink hypersoft tyres



26.11.17 Formula 1 unveils their new logo following the Abu Dhabi GP podium ceremony

03.12.17 Nelson Piquet is presented a Gregor Grant lifetime achievement award at the annual Autosport Awards





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AND THE MUSIC STOPS...

03 As the curtain came down on F1 2017, the competitive players for next season were almost all in place. Barring Sauber, the only unknown was Williams, who were still weighing up a final decision on a partner for Lance Stroll.

The Canadian ended the season with two of his worst performances of the year, and his lack of obvious progress through 2017 – bar a couple of stand-out races in Baku and Monza – merely serves to underline the importance of the decision to the team.

Their reluctance to continue with Felipe Massa – who ran out of patience and announced his retirement instead of waiting, when he could have stayed in with a chance – was rooted fundamentally in his inconsistency, and a consequent inability to know where the car was.

Hence the interest in Robert Kubica, the feeling being that even if the Pole is not quite what he was seven years after he suffered the horrific rally accident that curtailed his career, he would probably be a) as quick as Massa; b) the same speed all the time, so they would at least have a sense of where the car was. In addition, there is obviously a huge PR boost around what would be one of the greatest comeback stories ever told in sport.

The Pole, who has only partial movement in his atrophied right arm as a result of that accident, tested in Abu Dhabi after the last race of the season in what Williams hoped would be final affirmation that he was ready to return.

Williams technical chief Paddy Lowe professed to have “no issues” around Kubica being physically capable of doing a grand prix weekend, but did not say specifically whether he felt he

was quick enough. Kubica set the fastest time by a Williams driver at the test – beating Stroll by 0.1secs, albeit on a different day, and Sirotkin by 0.5secs but on softer tyres – and gave the impression he thought he was ready.

“There are question marks that have to be answered for the team but also for myself,” he said. “I see big improvements day by day so I can expect things to be getting better and I am putting in a lot of effort and there is a good chance I am able to do it.”

Williams are set to make a decision before Christmas.

“THERE ARE QUESTION MARKS THAT HAVE TO BE ANSWERED FOR THE TEAM BUT ALSO FOR MYSELF. I’M PUTTING IN A LOT OF EFFORT AND I SEE BIG IMPROVEMENTS DAY BY DAY” ROBERT KUBICA



Kubica set the fastest Williams time at the post-season Abu Dhabi test as the team’s driver evaluations continue

F1 MASTERMIND

Your chosen specialised subject: the world’s greatest sport

- Q1** Alfa Romeo’s last win as a constructor in F1 was in the 1951 Spanish GP. Who was driving?
- Q2** Which one of these drivers did not record a fastest lap in 2017: Fernando Alonso, Felipe Massa or Sergio Pérez?
- Q3** Seven different constructors have won the 14 French GPs held at Paul Ricard: McLaren Ferrari, Williams, Renault, Lotus and which other two?
- Q4** What were the only two races in 2017 where Ferrari finished one-two?
- Q5** How many races did Nelson Piquet win in his final season in F1: one, two or three?
- Q6** Who scored more points for Renault in 2017: Carlos Sainz or Jolyon Palmer?
- Q7** Derek Daly finished his F1 career with Williams, but with which team did he start his first race?
- Q8** True or false: Lewis Hamilton led more laps in 2017 than the rest of the field put together?
- Q9** How many different tyre compounds, excluding Inters and Wets, will be available in F1 in 2018?
- Q10** Where was the one and only Moroccan GP held in 1958 and who won it?



- 1** Juan Manuel Fangio
- 2** Felipe Massa
- 3** Brabham and Tyrrell
- 4** Monaco and Hungary
- 5** One
- 6** Jolyon Palmer, eight to six
- 7** Ensign
- 8** False
- 9** Lewis led 527 laps to the field’s 669
- 10** 7



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THE RACER'S EDGE

PETER WINDSOR

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F2 feature race. 2017 F2 cars are narrower and generally smaller than their F1 counterparts, but I guess, if nothing else, this shows that Hermann Tilke wasn't all wrong when he designed YMC for the narrower F1 cars of that period.)

Anyway, it is what it is, as Michael Schumacher used to say, and what *this* is, is a Formula 1 era in which the start for the most part does define the race. That being so, let's mix the starts around a bit: this would be cheaper than either re-designing the circuits or suddenly reverting to narrower-track cars – and it would definitely throw a few wild cards into the mix, which I think is what everyone wants (at least in the short-term).

A STAGGERINGLY SIMPLE IDEA FOR F1 GRIDS

Correct. There are more important F1 things upon which Liberty should be focusing than new logos, wowing the fans in the streets of London, spending big on a 'celebrity'-studded USGP and turning much of F1's periphery into Disneyland.

Give 'em a break, though: they're only a year or so into the job. Ross Brawn always used to talk about "five-year programmes" whenever he was asked to turn around an F1 team, so we shouldn't expect too much from Liberty over the next couple of years as they attempt to make some kind of sense of what they've bought. TV ratings will probably continue to decline in this short-term; the midfield teams will continue to worry about budgets; and the F1 races as a whole will be run at ongoing losses. Liberty, though, are cash-rich, so hopefully we can expect in the immediate future to see some of the less important changes that Bernie nevertheless always tried to avoid: to wit more street circuit races, more US Grands Prix, more digital TV access, and more fans.

So, within the context of easy, quick fixes, here's another idea: let's re-think the starting grid – and



Modern races are often defined, if not decided outright, by what happens in the first few seconds

no, I'm not talking about reversing some of it or all of it. I'm thinking about getting rid of the staggered formation and inviting the pole-winner to select the side on which he would like to start.

This is born of a couple of things, not the least of which is the current buzz-phrase: "the race is decided at the start", which is another way of saying "we can't overtake with these cars on these circuits, despite DRS".

Lewis Hamilton, politely and diplomatically, was trying to suggest after Abu Dhabi that they re-design sector three of Yas Marina Circuit by getting rid of all the 90-degree lefts and rights. I agree that would be a major step forwards, but sadly I don't see them transplanting the Viceroy Hotel to another part of the island this side of the 22nd century. (I should remind readers at this point that Artem Markelov, the brilliantly elegant Formula 2 driver, passed no fewer than *four* cars in this section on his way to victory in the Saturday

Let's line the cars up side-by-side rather than stagger them. On the super-wide circuits – Silverstone is a good example – we could even revert to the old three-two-three grid layout. There would possibly be more incidents, but today's cars and circuits are much safer than they were 30 years ago. One of the main reasons for staggering the grid positions was to reduce the risk of a slow-starting or stalled car being hit by one doing 100mph. That remains valid to some extent, although today's start procedure has never been more organised. If there's even a whisper of an engine or clutch problem, the start is immediately aborted. And we have radios, remember – radios that work. Let's take advantage of that.

And I think side-by-side grid rows would be safer in one key respect: there would be less weaving in the acceleration zone. If Sebastian Vettel and Max Verstappen had been alongside one another when the lights went out in Singapore, I don't think Vettel would have floated across to an inside zone he hoped was car-free. The current space between the cars – like run-off areas in the corners – engenders a false sense of security.

Apart from changing the early-race order a little, I think a more closely bunched grid would also *look* better: remember those shots of side-by-side cars wheel-spinning away from the front row, drivers eyeball to eyeball? Bring it on – even at Monaco. And at circuits like Spa, where the tail-enders currently start way down at the exit of the chicane, a tighter grid would be a neater fit for a TV monitor – and would thus do a better job for sponsors.



Three-abreast grid layouts were commonplace until the mid-1970s, and had tremendous visual impact

“A MORE CLOSELY BUNCHED GRID WOULD ALSO LOOK BETTER: REMEMBER THOSE SHOTS OF SIDE-BY-SIDE CARS WHEEL-SPINNING AWAY, THEIR DRIVERS EYEBALL TO EYEBALL?”

I also think the pole man should again be allowed to choose the side of the grid on which he wants to start. Most times he will opt for the ‘clean’ side but there will be occasions when the run to the first corner is sufficiently short for the ‘inside’ to offer other attractive options. Interlagos is a good example. A biggish deal should be made about it after qualifying: the pole man decides, as he jumps from his car in *parc fermé*, on which side he’s going to start – and the announcement is made in much the same way that they spin the coin at Wimbledon.

I know. The grids these days are pretty sophisticated, what with their timing sensors and their paintwork, so some adjustment will be needed. These options, though, are somewhat less expensive or disruptive than some of the others on the table in the short-term; and, at the risk of being repetitive, they are what they are, which is to say that suggestions like this are not only a function of today’s races being defined by the start, but also of the phoney war period that is preceding the really *big* changes that Liberty inevitably are going to have to make at some point in that five-year future.



Would this year’s Singapore shunt have happened if all three cars had started alongside one another?



THIS F1 LIFE

PAT SYMONDS

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SOLVING THE OVERTAKING CONUNDRUM

2017 started with both promise and trepidation for F1 fans. The promise was of new, faster cars, and the trepidation was that the very changes that were made to produce these faster cars might lead to less exciting racing.

When the new-generation cars were first seen at pre-season testing there was universal acclaim for the aesthetics. It was enough to dispel the fears of many that the reversion to wider cars with broader tyres and larger rear wings would merely give an unwanted retro look.

The most meaningful test, however, would come as the racing season progressed: only then would the ability of the cars to race closely together become properly apparent.

New rules will often upset the established performance hierarchy, although the days of substantial revision giving a chance to the underdogs are probably long gone. Today the well-financed top teams are able to throw huge resource at whatever is presented to them, and therefore expectations were that Mercedes would continue to dominate.



Red Bull made great progress aerodynamically, pushing Mercedes hard in some later grands prix

The facts were slightly different and the challenge from Ferrari and latterly Red Bull produced some excellent racing.

That racing also showed that in spite of the new aerodynamic rules not intrinsically favouring close following, the cars did seem to be able to go wheel-to-wheel without too much difficulty. There was some evidence in the early races, however, that the

Ferrari was perhaps better behaved when in the wake of a Mercedes than was the case if the positions were reversed.

Much is spoken of the reasons that F1 cars perform badly when following closely. Much of it is uninformed and most of it is unproven. So let's consider some of the basics.

The downforce produced by an F1 car is often quoted by a number referred to as CL. This is the lift coefficient, and strictly speaking should be a negative number indicating that the aerodynamic forces are acting towards the ground rather than lifting the car. We tend to ignore this for simplicity. The lift coefficient is far from an adequate descriptor of the cars' total aerodynamic characteristics, though,

since it will vary depending on the attitude of the car. This change with variation in ride heights, yaw and roll is almost as important as the maximum value itself.

Lift coefficient is a non-dimensionalised number, which means that by itself it doesn't tell you the actual value of downforce achieved. Non-dimensionalised numbers are not common in everyday life, although one example is 'alcohol by volume' or ABV. This number, quoted on a bottle of beer for example, doesn't tell you exactly how much alcohol is in the bottle, and the same number will apply whether you're drinking a stein in Germany, a pint in England or a schooner in Australia. The total amount of alcohol in your beverage will be the ABV multiplied by the volume you're drinking.

So it is, in a way, with the lift coefficient. The total downforce, which is measured in kilogrammes (or, more precisely, Newtons), is a function of the lift coefficient multiplied by an area constant, the density of the air and the air speed that the car is seeing.

The density of air multiplied by airspeed is termed the dynamic head and is actually a pressure. You can experience this pressure and the force associated with it as a car passenger. If you carefully put your hand out of the window, you'll find that the faster the car goes the more your hand will be forced backwards as the dynamic head – and hence the force – is increased. What you're experiencing is actually a drag force but it's exactly analogous to the downforce produced by an F1 car. ▶

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“TO PRODUCE CONSISTENTLY CLOSER RACING, WE NEED TO CHANGE OUR WHOLE APPROACH TO AERODYNAMICS, CONCENTRATING NOT JUST ON DOWNFORCE BUT ON PRODUCING SURFACES THAT ARE ROBUST TO CHANGING ONSET FLOWS”



LAT IMAGES: LORENZO BELLANCA

asked this question of several drivers and teams, and they all report that this year's cars are actually more difficult to follow. The only improvement that they see is that the tyres are less prone to overheating and recover better if they are sliding more when behind another car. The answer, I believe, doesn't lie in the aerodynamics

but merely in the fact that the performance differential between the teams has reduced.

There's still much work to be done on producing regulations that force more benign aerodynamic designs.

To produce consistently closer racing, we need to change our whole approach to aerodynamics, concentrating not just on producing downforce but on making surfaces that are robust to changing onset flows. This needs to be coupled with resilient tyres, improved circuit design, and power units that allow more driver input into strategy. Overtaking will still not be easy, but will no longer rely on the enormous basic performance differential needed to complete an overtake today.

If the car comes up behind a truck you'll find that, at the same speed, the force on your hand decreases. This is because the truck is effectively punching a hole in the air and in so doing reducing the dynamic pressure on your hand. This is an inescapable fact of physics.

The lower pressure experienced in the wake reduces drag, thereby favouring the overtake of the trailing vehicle – so called slipstreaming – but unfortunately it also destroys the downforce proportionately. Naturally it's not as simple as this, since the disturbed air has two further destructive properties. The first is that it is turbulent. A car developed in a wind tunnel or with conventional computational fluid dynamics

(CFD) is subjected to nice clean air and works effectively in this regime. When the air is turbulent it is subjected to changing speeds, directions and pressures which play havoc with the carefully crafted surfaces designed to work in clean air. On top of this, the generalised flow of air behind the car will be upwards. This 'upwash', as it's called, is very visible in the rooster tail thrown up by a car in wet conditions. It is a fundamental of producing downforce that air must be displaced upward, and this upward motion is again presented to the following car in an unfavourable manner.

Why, then, does the evidence show closer racing this year? Unfortunately the answer is not that the aerodynamics are better. I have



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POWER PLAY

DIETER RENCKEN

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F1 Racing has seen a copy of a study into the feasibility of a 'world engine' commissioned by the FIA a decade ago. The basic premise is that common architecture (in this study, a four-cylinder design) would serve series ranging from touring cars and rallying, through sports cars and junior single-seaters to IndyCar and F1. There would be a number of permutations for cylinder heads, turbochargers and hybrid systems to provide differentiation, and brands would be able to share basic componentry.

The concept understandably bombed owing to the jejune nature of the basic design. The fact that Max Mosley, then the FIA President, was embroiled in political skirmishes at various levels did not help the cause, but some elements of the proposal had merit, and current FIA incumbent Jean Todt has recently alluded to these.

A variation of the concept is currently being floated in F1 circles, including a prescribed 'bottom end' which is being discussed by the (post-2020) Engine Working Group. Under this rubric,

manufacturers would share what are dubbed 'short engines', while each could develop their own 'top ends' – turbos, cylinder heads and valve train – to provide differentiation and badging authenticity.

Already there are moves afoot to standardise hybrid componentry, while F1 has long prescribed common vee-angles in the interests of cost saving. So why not do the same for crankcases?

Alfa Romeo engineers could, for instance, avail themselves of Ferrari short engines, then develop their own top end componentry and badged tappet covers; equally, Aston Martin could procure Mercedes bottom ends – Daimler owns a stake in the British manufacturer – and manufacture its own breathing bits, ready for supply to Red Bull Racing and Toro Rosso, or whomever. Lada power units based on Renault crankcases, anyone?

Taken a step further, common crankcase specifications for, say, F1, endurance racing and IndyCar, could entice multi-make manufacturers to produce a single bottom-end design for all three championships by spreading the costs across a trio of brands.

The Renault-Nissan Alliance could, for example, contest F1 with their French brand, WEC with Nissan, and IndyCar with Infiniti, each brand developing top ends to match their chosen series; ditto Ferrari, Alfa and Chrysler respectively. What chance VW Group eyeing F1 with Lamborghini, doing WEC with Porsche and sending Audi into IndyCar, were such regulations adopted across the Atlantic divide?

WE SHOULD BE PAST CARING ABOUT SHARING

Now that Sauber's Ferrari-powered 2018 car will carry Alfa Romeo branding, underpinning a wider "strategic, commercial and technical cooperation", the notion of 'badge engineering' gaining traction in Formula 1 opens up some intriguing debates. It's a particularly thorny topic given another possibility: that the concept could ultimately be extended beyond F1 by participating multi-make manufacturers.

Pedants will no doubt point out that Ferrari and Alfa Romeo have different ownership structures; however, the fact is that the two brands are essentially joined at the hip by the man at the top, Fiat/Ferrari boss Sergio Marchionne. Thus Alfa's serpent logo currently appears on the flanks of the Scuderia's cars in an arrangement that goes beyond window dressing – engines in Alfa Romeo's sportier variants draw on Ferrari tech, adding legitimacy to the branding.

In its basic form, engine sharing enables alliances to compete at the motorsport's sharp end under various brands; Ferrari engines could therefore carry Fiat, Alfa Romeo or Chrysler



Alfa Romeo have made a low-key return in recent seasons with logo placement on Ferrari's cars

badging. The Renault/Nissan/Mitsubishi 'club' has an equally broad product palette to pick from. And there's almost an embarrassment of branding riches within the Volkswagen Group.

Engine sharing does, though, create pitfalls. Alfa, for instance, are unlikely to be permitted to consistently beat Ferrari, even if they can. And yet that would create an also-ran perception for a brand whose high-end road cars are aiming to annexe Mercedes/BMW territory. At Volkswagen, the thought of VW's roundel trouncing Porsche would surely send Stuttgart's suits into apoplexy, particularly if their resources and expertise provided the hardware in the first place.

Such programmes therefore require assiduous brand management, hence engine sharing in F1 has generally found little favour within boardrooms despite being commonly applied in the road car industry. Anathema as the concept may be to F1 purists, it should not be written off.



I N C O N V E R S A T I O N W I T H

NIGEL MANSSELL

Twenty-five years on from his own world title, Nigel Mansell talks about Lewis Hamilton's success, what's next for Ferrari, and his next public appearance at the Autosport International Show

INTERVIEW JAMES ROBERTS PORTRAIT  LAT IMAGES: LORENZO BELLANCA

What are your thoughts on Lewis Hamilton's fourth title, and what can he go on to achieve?

I predict that Lewis will challenge Michael Schumacher's records in both race victories [91] and his seven world championships. If you consider that he is only 32 and I won my world championship when I was 39, then if he continues to get the support from Mercedes he has an incredible opportunity.

At the moment Lewis has 62 victories and with a hit rate of eight or nine wins a season then he only needs four more successful years to break all the records. He has had the most outstanding season and can be even better. I just hope he keeps his focus, embraces the chance and is excited by how much he still has to offer.

Where do you think it went wrong for Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari this year?

They made a fantastic start and seemed to be under control until some mind games started to play out. The incident in Baku [where Vettel drove into Hamilton] was unfortunate because without the stop/go penalty he would have won.

There's no question that Sebastian was rattled by a number of things, and as always, reliability plays a part. Sebastian's car did let him down on a couple of occasions and that's all you need when the championship is close.

We remember you in 1986, 1987 and 1991 just missing out on the championship. How do you pick yourself up again? How will Vettel cope next year, based on your own experience?

I think circumstances are different. When you have total support from your team and when you're outright number one and you can compete at that level, it's relatively easy to pull yourself back. You say to yourself: "Next year's my year."

Seb should bounce back very strongly; he should understand it was 50/50 between him losing the championship and the team letting him down with reliability and making some bad calls. Between Seb and Ferrari they have both done a fantastic job. Without those two this year, the championship would have been very dull.

"LEWIS NOW ONLY NEEDS FOUR MORE SUCCESSFUL YEARS TO BREAK ALL RECORDS"



How have Ferrari changed since your day?

Ferrari aren't just a race team, they're an institution. If you're an Italian anywhere in the world, you know who the Ferrari drivers are. You don't get the church bells ringing in Brackley when Lewis Hamilton wins a race. The church bells ring all around Italy when Ferrari win and I was part of that: it's one worldwide family. I'm not decrying the might of Mercedes, they are a fantastic corporation, but there aren't many teams in the world where the Pope has visited the factory. Ferrari are something very special.

But they're also political, because they demand success – and if they don't, sadly, they look for a scapegoat. But I will say, as a fan, what Ferrari have done, to challenge the might of Mercedes, was truly an awesome thing to watch and it was disappointing to see them fall short.

Fernando Alonso is following in your footsteps of winning in F1 then taking on both the Indy 500 and Le Mans. How impressed are you by his hunger to compete?

The thing with Fernando is that he's a racer. He's a huge talent and a great world champion, and he's been stymied throughout his career through no fault of his own.

I believe that Fernando can win several more championships. He's an unbelievable racer and I really hope that McLaren, with their new engine deal, can give him the goods so he can compete at the top level again.

The new season kicks off with the Autosport International Show in January. How much are you looking forward to it?

It's a great chance for the industry to come together at the beginning of the season, and for the fans to see the new cars being unveiled and to be able to meet drivers and teams. For motor sport enthusiasts there is something for everybody. It's very special – you can't miss it.



Nigel will be appearing at the Autosport International Show on January 13-14; for tickets, visit autosportinternational.com

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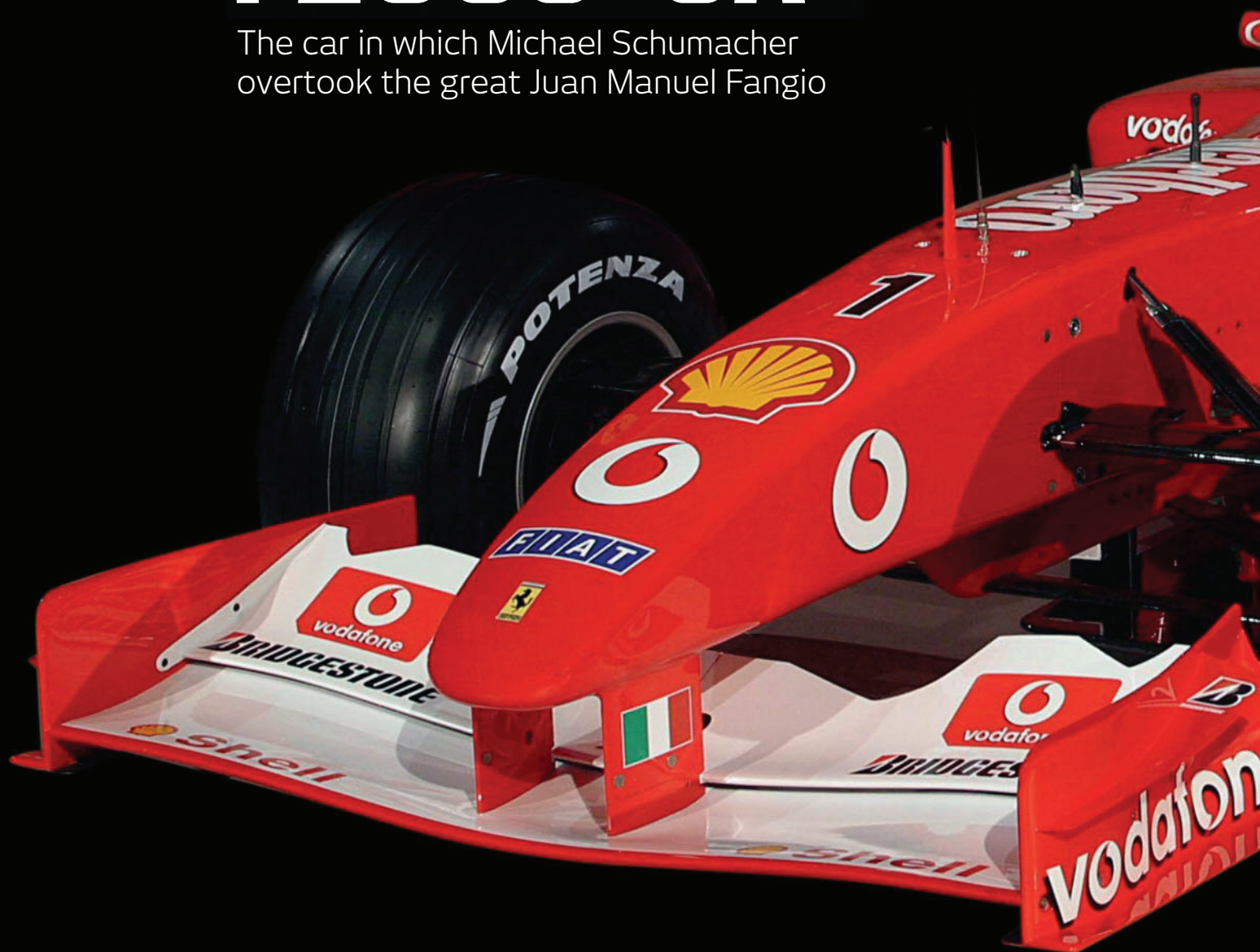
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THE FERRARI F2003-GA

The car in which Michael Schumacher
overtook the great Juan Manuel Fangio





NOW THAT WAS A CAR

No. 64



THE FERRARI
F2003-GA

The GA stands for Gianni Agnelli, a fitting memorial to the man who saved Ferrari and kept the Italian *tricolore* flying proud over Maranello. It was at the end of the 1960s that this titan of Italian business and politics succeeded where Ford had failed by negotiating a controlling interest to keep Ferrari solvent. On the face of it, Enzo maintained power over his scarlet empire – but in truth, it was Fiat’s ‘kingmaker’ who held the keys during the last 20 years of the Old Man’s life.

Now Agnelli himself was gone, mortal after all, as prostate cancer claimed him at the age of 81. Just a couple of weeks later the wraps would be removed from Ferrari’s new Formula 1 car at a suitably muted Fiorano launch. Following the domination of 2002, it seemed entirely predictable that Michael Schumacher and his red machine would continue to smash F1 into submission. And, yes, he would honour Agnelli’s memory as Italy saw fit, with a fourth consecutive world title and a personal sixth to surpass Juan Manuel Fangio’s five. But this was one that almost slipped away.

The F2003-GA, which is set to be one of the star exhibits at Autosport International this January, was a late starter when it rolled into F1 service 15 years ago. Michael had trounced everyone in the preceding F2002, finishing 67 points clear of best-of-the-rest team-mate Rubens Barrichello. Thus the team felt there was no rush to introduce the new model. The old one, in updated spec, would do nicely for the first four races.

Or so they thought. A troubled fourth in Australia for Schumacher ended Ferrari’s remarkable streak of 53 consecutive podium finishes, and a tangle with Jarno Trulli’s Renault resulted in only sixth in Malaysia. Then he spun out and retired in Brazil, his first non-finish since Germany 2001... This wasn’t going to plan at all.

An emotional victory at Imola, just days after the death of Schumacher’s mother, brought some equilibrium back to the campaign, and ensured F2002 bowed out in a manner suitable for one of the great F1 cars of modern times. Next up was Spain – and finally the curtain call for Agnelli’s Ferrari.

By this stage, chief designer Rory Byrne, technical director Ross Brawn, team principal Jean Todt and engine man Gilles Simon were way past experimentation. The F2003-GA was a clear and simple evolution of the masterful machines that had come before. New bodywork included sleeker sidepods and thus smaller radiators, with revised exhausts and an ever-tighter rear-end design further honing mammoth aerodynamic forces. Behind Schumacher and Barrichello’s shoulders, Simon eked more power from the new Tipo 052 V10, while the longitudinal gearbox shrunk in both weight and dimension. Normal service was surely about to resume.

A straight-out-the-box double one-two in Spain and Austria suggested as much. Schumacher was only third in Monaco, but he won again in Canada to enter the summer on top of the world. But thereafter, the story began to unravel. ▶





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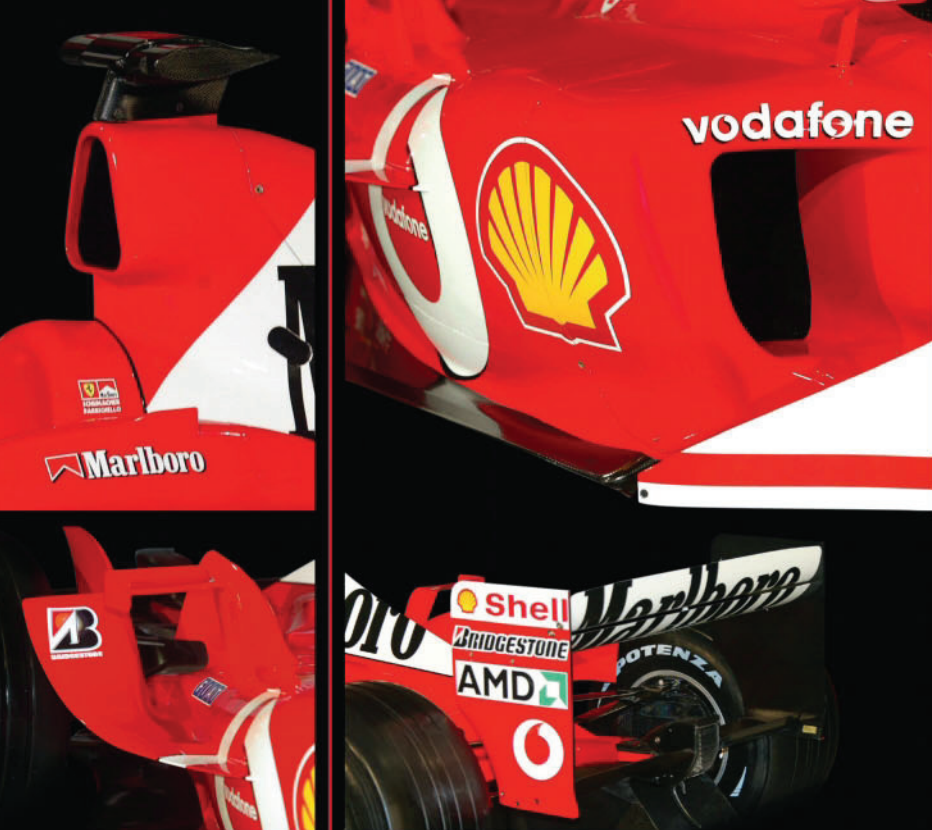
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FERRARI F2003-GA

SPECIFICATION

Chassis Carbon-fibre monocoque
Front and rear suspension Double wishbones, pushrod-operated torsion bars
Wheelbase 3100mm
Engine Ferrari Tipo 052 V10
Engine capacity 2997cc
Power 920bhp @ 18,600rpm
Gearbox Seven-speed semi-automatic sequential
Tyres Bridgestone
Weight 600kg
Notable drivers Michael Schumacher, Rubens Barrichello

RACE RECORD

Starts 24
Wins 7
Poles 5
Fastest laps 5
Other podiums 6
Retirements 3
Points 126

“MICHAEL MADE A MESS OF THINGS, QUALIFYING 14TH AND CLASHING WITH RIVALS ON THE WAY TO SCRAPING EIGHTH”

protested: they had evidence that the French rubber's construction was illegally changing shape under use. The FIA, to the wails of those who love a conspiracy, agreed. After two years of success, suddenly Michelin's tyres were deemed illegal.

Ferrari's form consequently bounced back at Monza. Schumacher won, and did so again at Indianapolis, where Montoya and Williams' title hopes fizzled out. At the finale, Michael just needed an eighth place to secure his crown.

In all, he'd won six times (five in the F2003-GA) to Räikkönen's single breakthrough win in Sepang. But the new scoring system, introduced to reward finishers down to eighth instead of sixth, had

done its job. Räikkönen could still snatch the title at Suzuka.

He certainly got close. As Räikkönen finished second to Barrichello, Michael made a mess of things, qualifying a lowly 14th and clashing with rivals twice on the way to scraping the eighth he needed. Just two points. That was all he'd won it by. "Empty and exhausted", Schumacher had been shaken on his way to that historic sixth title.

Still, the F2003-GA's legacy was safe. Byrne's latest masterpiece had won seven times – five for Michael, two perhaps more significantly in the circumstances for Rubens. The red machine had hit a glitch, but nothing more.

After the excitement of 2003, F1 would return to a familiar script the following season when the F2004 – the next evolutionary step in the quest to perfect perfection – swept 11 of the first 12 races. Schumacher was champion for a seventh time by France in July.

Match that, Mercedes. On second thoughts, please don't. 🚩

Michelin-shod McLaren and Williams offered a stern and convincing threat to the Bridgestone-tyred Ferraris through what turned out to be fascinating and competitive season. In all, eight drivers would win grands prix, with McLaren's Kimi Räikkönen and Williams' Juan Pablo Montoya maintaining title challenges into the autumn. From Canada in June, Schumacher wouldn't win again until Monza in September.

Between times, Barrichello scored what should probably be remembered as his best victory in a thrilling British GP at Silverstone. This was the day a deranged priest, Neil Horan, ran on to the Hangar Straight garbed in a tam o'shanter and kilt, causing mayhem but by luck nothing worse. Barrichello's wonderful drive, in which he twice passed Räikkönen for the lead, deserves to be remembered ahead of the track invader.

Aside from Silverstone, pickings were slim mid-season. Ralf Schumacher won consecutively for Williams, Montoya conquered Hockenheim, and Fernando Alonso became F1's youngest ever winner in his Renault at the Hungaroring.

Then the politics began. Rumours about the legality of Michelin's F1 tyres had been swirling and the row boiled to the surface as the summer faded. Bridgestone and Ferrari



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62	458 SPIDER Grigio Silverstone/Sabia E/Seats, Sat Nav, Carbon S/Wheel With LEDs, Carbon Interior, Carbon Rear Moulding, 20" Forged Alloys, 20,000m FSH	£159,950
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54	CARRERA GT GT Silver/Ascot Brown Leather, Bucket Seats, Luggage Set, Air Con, Porsche Online Pro Radio, Full History File, Totally As New, 599m From New.....	£POA
65	991 GT3 RS 4.0 LHD GT Silver/Black Alcantara & Leather, 918 Spyder Bucket Seats, RS Pedals, FI Exhaust, Clubsport Pk, PCCB, Front Lift, Dynamic Engine Mounts, Massive Spec, 4,500m.....	£179,950
66	991 GT3 RS 4.0 LHD Lava Orange/Orange Alcantara & Black Leather, Silky Black Alloys, PCCB, Front Axel Lift, 918 Bucket Seats, Sports Exhaust, Michelin Decals On Tyres, Sports Exhaust, 8,000m.....	£174,950
17	MACAN GTS White With Black Leather & Alcantara, PCM With Navigation, Panoramic Roof, Carbon Fibre Interior Pk, 21" Sport Classic Alloy Wheels, R'Camera, Switchable Sports Exhaust, 1,500m, As New.....	£69,950

OTHERS

14	McLAREN P1 LHD Volcano Yellow/Black Alcantara & Leather, Exposed Carbon Exterior, 20" Lightweight Alloys In Stealth, Carbon Roof Snorkel, Meridian Sound System, UK Supplied, 1 Owner, 1,500m.....	£1,595,000
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16	McLAREN 570S Blade Silver/Black & Orange Alcantara, Front Lift, Sports Exhaust In Stealth, 20" Stealth Alloy Wheels, R'Camera, Ceramic Brakes, Orange Calipers, Soft Close Doors, 6,700m, As New	£134,950
65	McLAREN 650S LHD Brilliant Silver/McLaren Orange, Sat Nav, Parking Sensors, Carbon Side Intakes, Great Spec, Delivery Mileage	£139,950
05	TVR SAGARIS Midas Pearl Yellow/Black Leather, 18" Spider Alloy Wheels In Black, Sat Nav, Aluminium Stalks, Clear Spoiler, Fibreglass Shell, Superb Example, 1 Of 200 Made, 53,000m.....	£59,950
04	ASTON MARTIN VANQUISH Meteorite Silver/Black Cherry Leather, Sports Dynamic Pk, Uprated Suspension & Brakes, Crystal Starter Button, 1 Of 94 Made, 2+2 Configuration, 27,500m, Immaculate.....	£84,950
16	ASTON MARTIN V12 VANTAGE S SPITFIRE 80 EDITION Duxford Green/Tan Leather, 1 Of 8 Worldwide, Tribute To The RAF Supermarine Spitfire 80th Anniversary, 680m, As New, Great Investment.....	£249,950
59	ASTON MARTIN V12 VANTAGE Onyx Black/Obsidian Black Leather, 700W Aston Martin Premium Sound System, Silver Contrast Stitching, 10 Spoke Alloys, Full AM Service History, 22,000m	£79,950
13	ASTON MARTIN DB9 VOLANTE Meteorite Silver/Sandstorm Leather, 20" 5 Spoke Alloys, R'Camera, H/Seats, Wind Deflector, Black Hood, Comfort Suspension 28,000m.....	£84,950
61	MERCEDES-BENZ SLS Matte Designo Allantite Grey Magno/Classic Red Designo Leather, Black Twin Spoke Alloys, COMAND With Sat Nav, Carbon Interior Pk, R'Camera, Immaculate, 31,000m.....	£149,950
61	MERCEDES-BENZ SLS ROADSTER Obsidian Black/Saffron, Sat Nav, R'Camera, Aircarf, Blind Spot Assist, 10,000m FSH, As New.....	£149,950
67	MERCEDES-BENZ S65 AMG CABRIOLET Canvasite Blue/Porcelain Leather, Driving Assistance Pk, Burmester Sound, AMG Exclusive Pk, Massage Seats, Blue Hood, 1,000m	£164,950
66	MERCEDES-BENZ G63 AMG Palladium Silver/Black Leather, Designo Exclusive Pk, Rear Entertainment, Sunroof, Harman Kardon Sound System, Privacy Glass, TV Tuner, 6,000m, As New.....	£109,950
66	BMW M4 GTS Alpine White/Black Alcantara, Clubsport Pk, Carbon Fibre Interior Pk, Racing Bucket Seats, Professional Navigation, 1 Of 300 Made, 1,500m, As New.....	£119,950

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AWARDS 2017



AS VOTED
FOR BY YOU

Wider, grippier, faster cars promised a new era of action and adventure in 2017 – but who made the biggest impact for you, the fans, this season? There’s only one way to find out – ask...

- TEAM BOSS OF THE YEAR **42**
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WORDS JAMES ROBERTS
PICTURES  LAT IMAGES



TEAM BOSS OF THE YEAR

Christian Horner

Red Bull Racing

One of Horner's strengths has been managing young drivers – a legacy, perhaps, of his days running his Arden team in Formula 3000. Despite a bad year in terms of reliability and a slow start on the performance front, he's managed the expectations of the youthful Max Verstappen – and, more importantly, convinced Max to extend his deal with the team until the end of 2020. The partnership with Daniel Ricciardo is arguably the strongest driver pairing in F1, so Horner will be tested in the coming years if the pair are squabbling over wins. Thankfully he can draw on his experiences of smoothing fractious tussles between RBR team-mates Sebastian Vettel and Mark Webber in seasons past.

With a new set of regulations for 2017, many predicted Red Bull would be fighting for the world championship. But power unit reliability and performance has fallen short again.

Horner's biggest frustration remains the engine formula. As a loyal Bernie Ecclestone ally, he has had to ingratiate himself with F1's new owners and has spoken eloquently of the need for change. He has always maintained that the drivers should be cast as the heroes who race the world's fastest machines – and they should be using a much simpler powertrain. As Horner has proclaimed on numerous occasions: "It's down to us to provide [our drivers] with a competitive car." Otherwise, as he knows only too well, they go looking for seats elsewhere.

HOW YOU VOTED

Christian Horner

Red Bull 35.5%

Toto Wolff

Mercedes 34.4%

Maurizio Arrivabene

Ferrari 9.5%

Robert Fernley

Force India 9.2%

Guenther Steiner

Haas 4.2%

Other 7.2%

"To win an award that has been voted by the public always has an extra special satisfaction, and I'm flattered for the second year in a row, despite not winning on-track, to collect this award. I'm hugely honoured and grateful to the readers of *F1 Racing* and it's nice to beat Toto [Wolff] at something this year. We'll be fighting hard to give the best cars we can to our drivers next year to hopefully take the fight to Mercedes and Ferrari."

Christian Horner



QUALIFIER OF THE YEAR

Lewis Hamilton
Mercedes



HOW YOU VOTED

Lewis Hamilton	68.0%
Max Verstappen	17.4%
Sebastian Vettel	5.2%
Fernando Alonso	2.2%
Daniel Ricciardo	1.7%
Other	5.5%

The Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montréal is a tricky little track to master. Its chicanes and short-radius bends require hard braking and precise rotation points with the car. The closer a driver can get to the edge of the concrete walls that line the exit of nearly all the corners, the quicker they will be.

In Montréal this June we witnessed a masterclass. In Q3, Sebastian Vettel went fastest on his first run, only to be eclipsed by Lewis Hamilton. On Vettel's second run he got within 0.004 seconds of Lewis. But then the Mercedes man demolished his own previous best time with an inch-perfect belter, setting the fastest lap ever recorded at Montréal and – more importantly – matching Ayrton Senna's 65-pole record.

When he stepped out of the car, Hamilton was handed a replica Senna helmet, a gift from the family of the fallen great.

"Ayrton is the one who inspired me to be where I am, and to match him and receive this is the greatest honour," said Lewis after qualifying that day. "I equalled Ayrton in race wins (41) a while ago so this has been my focus. As a kid I thought if I was lucky, I could emulate Ayrton and it's strange to think that now I have that many poles."

At Monza, just six races later, Hamilton set a new benchmark: he scored his 69th pole position to put him top of the all-time pole positions list – eclipsing Michael Schumacher's 68.

"It's awesome to receive this award again. It's been such a special year on so many levels, so much growth, and qualifying has been very solid. I always look forward to Saturday and try to squeeze every drop out of the car – and a little bit more. It's a really pure moment, when the car is at its lightest and most nimble."

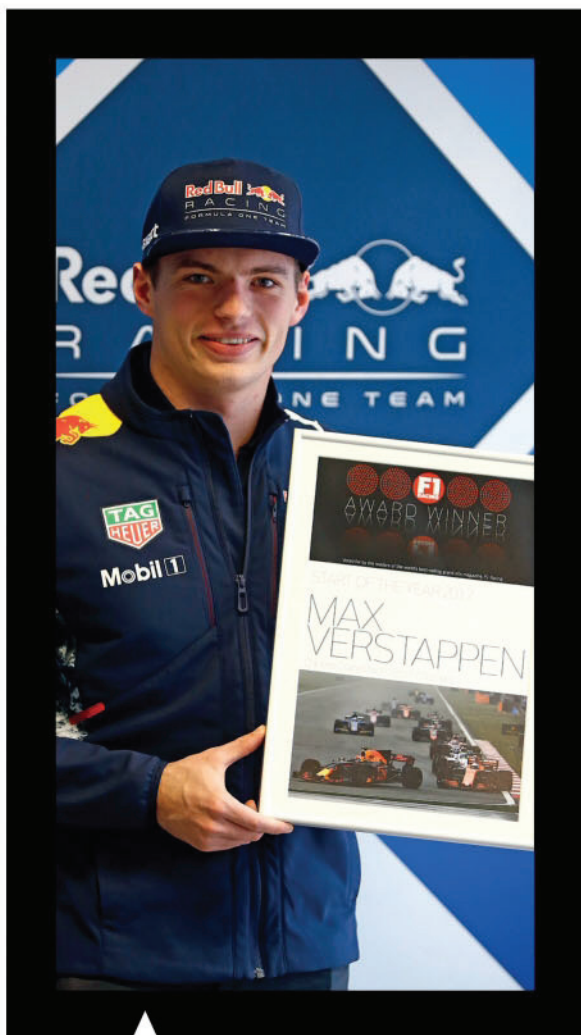
Lewis Hamilton





START OF THE YEAR

Max Verstappen P16 to P7 at the Chinese GP



“To get start of the year is great – I’d thought it might just be decided by the run off the line into Turn 1. In that case, I had a better start in Canada, which I see was rated the fourth best start of the year. But China, yeah, it just all happened so quickly. You just pick your moment. Inside, outside, cutting through the traffic... it was very special.” **Max Verstappen**

HOW YOU VOTED

Max Verstappen P16 to P7 (China)	57.9%
Valtteri Bottas P1 perfection (Austria)	17.2%
Fernando Alonso P10 to P7 (Belgium)	10.1%
Max Verstappen P5 to P2 (Canada)	8.7%
Valtteri Bottas P3 to P1 (Russia)	6.1%

The official Formula 1 video on YouTube from on board Max Verstappen’s Red Bull during his charge from 16th on the grid to seventh place at this year’s Chinese GP has had 1,009,012 views – at the time of writing. And it’s worth watching again and again.

A spark plug problem had demoted Verstappen to a lowly 16th on the starting grid. Drizzle on Sunday morning damped parts of the circuit, and the low track temperatures made the early running extremely slippery. But Verstappen was about to put in one of the laps of his life.

His initial getaway was good, but he was immediately boxed in by a slow Kevin Magnussen and a slick-shod Carlos Sainz. He carefully followed the field around Turn 1, then started to get aggressive on

the outside of Turn 2, fighting the oversteer on the gripless surface, and overtaking Sergio Perez’s Force India.

Entering Turn 6, Verstappen was super late on the brakes and easily passed Lance Stroll. Ahead of him, Fernando Alonso was also scything through the field, and Max followed the Spaniard as he went wheel-to-wheel with Daniil Kvyat around the quick left-hander at Turn 7. He passed Alonso around the outside of the switchback and set himself up to pass the Williams of Felipe Massa. This was the riskiest move on the lap, and with a late-braking lunge he made the apex of Turn 11 and claimed eighth place. The cherry on the top arrived when that position became seventh as Nico Hülkenberg scuttled for the pits.



"I'm proud to accept this award on behalf of the team. They have put so much time and effort into their job. You can't believe the hours that go in behind the scenes in training. We're really pleased with what we've done with the equipment we've got this year, and hope to make a step again next year."

Jonathan Wheatley, team manager



PITCREW OF THE YEAR

Red Bull Racing

The fight for the fastest pitstop of each race is a closely contested competition. The difference between the quickest and slowest is measured in fractions of a second.

Larger, heavier wheels made for an additional challenge this season, but last year's Pitcrew of the Year, Williams, continued their good form into the early races of 2017.

But in Sochi, Red Bull topped the quickest pitstop chart when Max Verstappen was

stationary for just 2.33 seconds. The team were also quickest in Monaco, with a 2.6s stop (equally impressive given the tighter confines of the Monte Carlo pitlane). In the the summer, though, Williams and Mercedes vied for top honours in the speediest pitstop league.

That was until Malaysia, when Max Verstappen's all-dominant drive was sealed by his pitcrew. Wearing their full-length fireproof overalls in the heat and humidity of Malaysia, the Red Bull

mechanics stopped the clocks at an incredible 2.21 seconds. It wasn't the fastest stop of the season, but it emphasised the significance of the team working together in harmony – and in difficult conditions – to take victory that day.

RBR team manager Jonathan Wheatley says that the procedure to change tyres has become second nature to the mechanics involved: "What the gun men are doing in a pitstop is amazing. We're seeing incredible reaction speeds."

HOW YOU VOTED

Red Bull	34.1%
Williams	30.8%
Mercedes	24.5%
Ferrari	5.6%
Haas	2.0%
Other	3.0%

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Lance Stroll



"To receive this is an honour, I really appreciate the support. There have been some highlights to the year, standing on the podium and on the front row. But we've also had our lows and it's been quite a journey. I'm extremely proud to be holding this award and hopefully we can build on this to achieve more in the future." **Lance Stroll**



It was a difficult start for Lance Stroll in his rookie F1 season. Before the flight to Melbourne he'd been troubled by numerous 'offs' in testing and his first few races were characterised by DNFs. Stepping straight up from FIA European F3 to F1 (and by-passing Formula 2) might have been a step too far, too soon.

That's not to say he was without experience of F1 machinery. He'd spent much of the winter running in various private sessions around the world in a 2014 Williams, but it was with the 2017-spec machine that he initially struggled.

But to be fair to the 18-year old, he was determined to ignore the naysayers, arguing that he just needed time. On the Saturday evening of Montréal there was a heated discussion between his father Lawrence and the team's chief technical officer Paddy Lowe. Whatever was spoken

seemed to work, for under the pressure of his home race, Stroll scored his first F1 points on Canadian soil with ninth place.

He went even better in Azerbaijan next time out. In a chaotic race where all those around him were losing their heads, Stroll finished on the podium, despite being pipped for second place by Valtteri Bottas as they crossed the line.

After Baku, he recorded seven straight finishes, banishing the popular belief that he couldn't stay out of trouble. And he put in an impressive qualifying performance in the atrociously wet conditions at Monza, to nail a front-row slot.

HOW YOU VOTED

Lance Stroll	67.9%
Pierre Gasly	24.4%
Antonio Giovinazzi	5.7%
Brendon Hartley	2.0%





HOW YOU VOTED

Ricciardo on Stroll & Massa & Hulkenberg

in Azerbaijan, lap 23, for P3 (Turn 1) **51.8%**

Ricciardo on Räikkönen

in Italy, lap 40, for P1 (Turn 1) **22.8%**

Bottas on Stroll

in Azerbaijan, lap 51, for P2 (start/finish line) **9.7%**

Vettel on Ricciardo

in China, lap 22, for P3 (Turns 5&6) **8.1%**

Vettel on Bottas

in Spain, lap 25, for P1 (Turn 1) **7.6%**

“Second best as well, awesome. The fans got it right – sweet! It was a good move, thank you kindly. I don’t think I’ve ever passed three cars in one move before, because Hülkenberg was there too. It was good fun and particularly in the last few years I’ve really had the blinkers on with some moves where I really didn’t care about the outcome. That was one of them.”

Daniel Ricciardo

OVERTAKE OF THE YEAR

Daniel Ricciardo

on Lance Stroll & Felipe Massa & Nico Hülkenberg in Azerbaijan, lap 23, for P3 into Turn 1



During the Azerbaijan GP weekend, Ricciardo struggled to hang on to the RB13 in low-downforce trim. When he hit the wall at Turn 6 in the final period of qualifying, he must have thought his chances of victory were long gone.

Ordinarily, starting in tenth place would have ruined his prospects of a good result, but this proved to be no ordinary grand prix.

“The odds of even a podium were pushed further back when we had to make an unscheduled

early pitstop,” explains Ricciardo. “I think I was as low as 17th after that.”

The wall-lined nature of a street circuit means any mistake is punished – and incidents usually require a Safety Car deployment while marshals remove debris from the scene. This closes the field back up, making for elbows-out restarts, which often lead to further Safety Cars...

With a long flat-out run from the last corner on the Baku street track to Turn 1, the art of getting

into a rival’s slipstream and using the ‘tow’ is hugely beneficial. And Ricciardo did that beautifully on one restart to leapfrog both Williams cars and Nico Hülkenberg’s Renault, only locking up at the point of turn-in: three cars in one move.

“We were all nearly four wide,” he says, “but I managed to get third and I think that was, in a way, the winning move. Once I saw the gap I was going to do everything I could to brake as late as possible and get that position.”



CAR OF THE YEAR

Mercedes AMG F1 W08 EQ Power+

HOW YOU VOTED	
Mercedes AMG F1 W08 EQ Power+	58.3%
Ferrari SF70H	24.1%
Red Bull RB13	11.9%
Force India VJM10	3.3%
McLaren-Honda MCL32	1.0%
Other	1.4%

Despite the verbose full name of the car, the Mercedes AMG F1 W08 EQ Power+ has been the class of the field – winning both the drivers’ and constructors’ championships – but it has also been tricky to master. Early on, team boss Toto Wolff described the W08 as a “diva”.

“It’s not been an easy car to get to grips with,” says Mercedes’ chief race engineer Andrew Shovlin. “And a lot of that is with the scale of the regulation change. We didn’t really have everything working together, especially in the early races.

“For us, it’s been one of the most difficult years we’ve had, not just in the championship battle, but so many elements of the car and tyre that we had to understand. But what you could see with the car is that when it’s in the right window, it’s quick.”

The all-dominant 1-2 performance at Monza (easily 30 seconds ahead of Vettel’s Ferrari) was quickly forgotten as it struggled in the hot, sweeping curves of Sepang.

“Yes, there have been highs and lows to the year and it’s getting difficult to design a car that’s fast everywhere,” adds Shovlin. “Circuits have such different requirements, but there’s always areas that we can improve – and it’s been important that we’ve done that faster than the opposition.”

And even when the title was sealed, Mercedes continued to bring new parts, to try and get a head start on next season.



“All of our focus in development is on looking at the areas we know we can do better. That’s how you don’t get distracted with what’s going on with the other teams. On-track we’ve had some fantastic battles, but most of that development has been taking place at the factory, and trying to be scientific in the way we break down problems and try and understand them to find a solution.”

Andrew Shovlin, chief race engineer (centre, right)



DRIVE OF THE YEAR

Max Verstappen, P1, Malaysian Grand Prix

There was a little joke that went around the Sepang paddock on the Sunday evening after Max Verstappen's second grand prix victory. In the build-up to the race, hapless Daniil Kvyat was informed by the head of Red Bull's young driver programme, Dr Helmut Marko, that he would not be flying to Kuala Lumpur. His seat at Toro Rosso had been given to Pierre Gasly.

The last time Kvyat was dropped from a team was right before the 2016 Spanish GP, when his drive at Red Bull was taken by Verstappen. The Dutchman won that race – and then won in Sepang when Kvyat was demoted again in 2017...

There was a lot of joy around the Red Bull hospitality unit that night. Max's family were in attendance, since that weekend he'd celebrated his 20th birthday. It was good timing, for after such a rotten year in terms of reliability and recent on-track incidents in Singapore and Monza, it was the right moment to quell any growing criticism.

In Malaysia, Verstappen took the lead on lap four – scything past pole-position holder Lewis Hamilton at Turn 1 – and was never threatened at the head of the field.

"After the season I've had, I think this victory came at a very good time," said Verstappen on the evening of his win. "Once I got past Lewis I could focus on my pace, look after the tyres, and speed up when I needed to."

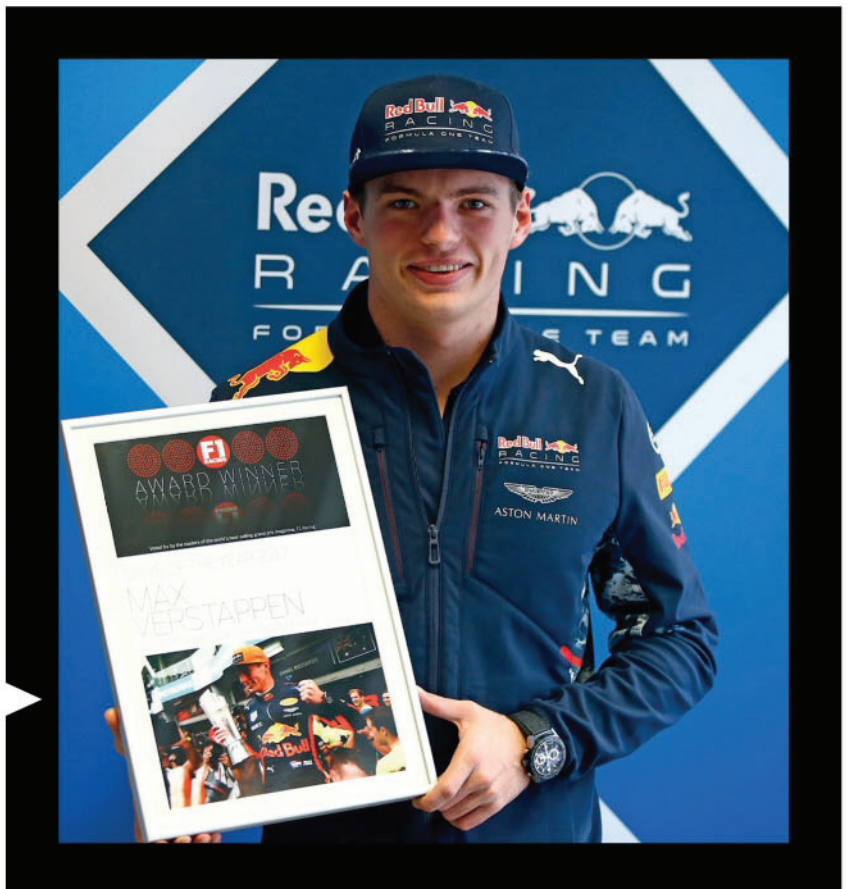
What Kvyat thought of the win, while watching on television at home, is unrecorded.

"Up to that point of the season I had a lot of really bad luck, and to go into a race and win was great. What I also liked was that my family was there and they got really emotional. It's not only been tough for me this year, but also for them. My career had always been going up and up, but this year has been a bit more of a roller coaster."

Max Verstappen

HOW YOU VOTED

Max Verstappen (Malaysia)	28.8%
Lewis Hamilton (Britain)	6.6%
Sebastian Vettel (Malaysia)	6.4%
Daniel Ricciardo (Azerbaijan)	4.6%
Max Verstappen (China)	4.0%
Other	49.6%





DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Lewis Hamilton

After he lost the 2016 world championship at the final race of the year, you sensed a renewed determination from Lewis to secure the trophy again this year – right from the off. Hamilton’s title rival Sebastian Vettel might have won the season opener in Australia, but Hamilton struck back immediately with victory in China.

He went wheel-to-wheel with Vettel in Spain and came out on top, and wasn’t rattled when the pair memorably made contact in Baku. Further strong wins at Silverstone, Spa and Monza set Hamilton up for the Asian leg of the championship.

Hamilton surpassed both Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher’s pole record this season, demonstrating a growing assuredness in his driving. He wasn’t making mistakes when the pressure was on, while Vettel was becoming increasingly fractious. The Ferrari man wasn’t helped by reliability woes, but the first few hundred metres of the Singapore GP effectively handed the title to Hamilton. And after that Lewis didn’t rest up, still striving, still pushing harder than ever.

This season, the 32-year old has been vocal about his switch to a vegan diet, looking for every advantage he can find. By adding another discipline to his life, he’s becoming more focused and an even fiercer competitor. After a fourth world title – matching Vettel’s tally – and with the prospect of more years left to race, he could well achieve more than becoming Britain’s statistically most successful F1 driver. He could even eclipse all the records set by Michael Schumacher.

Hamilton’s team-mate Valtteri Bottas has admitted he was surprised by how hard Lewis works. His competitors will have to try even harder if they want to dethrone him in 2018.



“Wow, I wasn’t expecting this one. Max [Verstappen] has driven exceptionally well this year. I think there is a lot of potential in their car, and while it has had reliability issues, when it has been right, he’s done a good job. To get the support that I’ve had and to get Driver of the Year, I can only thank the fans. It’s amazing to see the fanbase grow over time.”

Lewis Hamilton



HOW YOU VOTED	
Lewis Hamilton	37.8%
Max Verstappen	29.8%
Sebastian Vettel	9.5%
Daniel Ricciardo	8.0%
Esteban Ocon	4.0%
Other	10.9%



SPIRIT OF F1 AWARD

Fernando Alonso
McLaren Honda

Each year we present one award which isn't measurable by statistics. There's no win or pole record to hang this prize off, but we feel there is often a driver who is deserving of praise for their relentless commitment and never-say-die attitude.

In a season dogged by an underpowered and unreliable Honda power unit, Fernando Alonso has squeezed every last drop of performance potential from his McLaren.

"We found ourselves in a weak position with a lot of reliability issues with the power unit, but we have seen how strong the chassis is and the development rate has continued," says Alonso.

"This is a testament to how hard everyone has been working in the summer despite the poor results. I have to follow that momentum that we build in the team.

"When we realised we were not competitive, we didn't give up. If the team build a new front wing, you also need to push at the maximum, to return that commitment. It's important that they see that with your driving style."

In addition, Alonso made a bold attempt at the Indy 500 – a race he could have won – and next January will contest the Daytona 24 Hours as he looks to take on Le Mans in the future.

"It has been a special year, with the adventure of the Indy 500 in the middle of the season. We were expecting a lot more; with the change of regulations we felt we had an opportunity to close the gap with the front guys, but we found ourselves in a weak position. So it has been a little bit frustrating, but we kept working flat out."

Fernando Alonso



"If he could, he would race 52 weekends a year," says McLaren boss Eric Boullier. "This is his warrior spirit, this is what you wish for – and expect from – a Formula 1 driver, and I can only praise his will and his wish to race anything." 🏁



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WORDS ANTHONY ROWLISON,
JAMES ROBERTS, STUART COOLING,
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PICTURES PAUL RIPKE

“ I DID IT MY WAY ”

Lewis Hamilton has become Formula 1 world champion for the fourth time and in the process confirmed himself as a global icon, with a resonance extending far beyond his sport. He reveals all to *F1 Racing* about what it means to win on his own terms



It's touching that Lewis Hamilton still takes un-fakeably genuine pleasure at receiving reader awards from *F1 Racing*.

As we hand over frames celebrating his 'Driver of the Year' and 'Qualifier of the Year' accolades (see page 41 for more), that brilliant 'Aw, shucks' beam cracks irrepressibly across his face.

For a man who has achieved *so* much, so young, and for whom material rewards are now little more than a means of keeping tabs on his market worth, offering a gift garnered solely on merit – and, moreover, one whose recipient is adjudicated upon by our readers, his fans – remains a means of connecting with the essence of Lewis, untouched by celebrity or wealth.

"It's so great to have this," says the now four-time world champion, "and to be voted Driver of the Year by fans... Wow. All I can do is thank them and for giving me their support wherever I am in the world. We all travel so much in F1, but I still remember growing up in Stevenage and I hadn't even contemplated that one day somebody would follow me."

It's at moments like these, up close and personal with Lewis, that the kid within still radiates. Yes, he's a superstar – of course he is, now a rival to Senna and Schumacher for global eminence – yet the inner core remains remarkably unaffected.

And he has shown through another year of intense competition, for two thirds of which Seb Vettel and Ferrari offered a serious title threat, that his passion for the sport, and for racing, remains undimmed.

The stats tell part of the story: nine wins, 11 pole positions and a new outright pole-sitter's record (72 and counting) make him now the most successful British driver by any numerical measure. Equally telling has been the almost Zen-like approach to his craft this season; his failure to get riled by, for example, Vettel's lack of composure around 'biff-gate' in Baku, or the media pasting he received for choosing to snub the 'F1 Live London' street demo back in July.

These moments, which seemed so desperately important at the time, by some of those close to them, were viewed more dispassionately and with commendable detachment by the man at the eye of the storm: Hamilton himself. These were mere side-shows in a grander narrative: that of becoming Britain's most victorious – dare we suggest greatest? – racing driver.

For Lewis has known precisely what he was doing throughout 2017. Over the off-season he'd unpicked his failure (for that's what it was) to win the 2016 title against his ever-needily team-mate Nico Rosberg and worked out a plan of attack for the season ahead.

He'd benefit from having a quick but non-antagonistic team-mate in Valtteri Bottas, whose

contribution to the team's smooth running this year Hamilton is swift to acknowledge: "Valtteri's a great driver, who I'm enjoying racing with," he says. "But I don't mind who I race against – anyone in the world – as long as somehow you're able to maintain positivity in the team. Harmony is incredibly important for everyone to be enjoying what they do."

There was the catharsis, too, of the 'kitchen table session' with team boss Toto Wolff, during which grievances over supposed favouritism were aired and new shared goals established.

Lewis resolved still to play his own game, and present himself to the sport and the wider world in a manner that no F1 champion ever has before; but he'd strive to eliminate dips in form. These 'lost weekends' have previously been one of the few weak spots in the Hamilton armoury.

That's meant Bottas, for one, having to re-evaluate his assessment of Lewis's work ethic: "I always knew he was a good driver," confides Valtteri, "but I never knew how much he actually works. He works *hard*. He spends a lot of time with the guys at a race weekend, visits the factory quite a bit. And he's still just a normal human being, like the rest of us. Good manners, good respect and doesn't play any games."

When you're as stone-cold fast as Lewis Hamilton, game-play is never going to be the refuge of first resort: he (and others) know he can always rely on reserves of pure pace, whenever the chips are down.

The Belgian GP provided this year's definitive example: Vettel had the faster Ferrari in the latter stages of the race and had the speed to win. Hamilton, though, had every answer for his rival's attack, failing to yield even under immense pressure through Eau Rouge and Raidillon, then onto the Kimmeln straight. His microscopically perfect braking from maximum velocity into Les Combes on lap 34 after a Safety Car restart, with Vettel tucked under his rear wing *then alongside*, earned him the win and – in hindsight – proved a turning point in the championship. It was as vivid a demonstration of

Hamilton's sheer driving virtuosity as the season provided. No fuss, no error... *No way, José!*

He left Spa just seven points behind Seb, and Vettel would never lead the championship again. Monza fell inevitably to Mercedes, as Vettel salvaged third, but Ferrari thereafter imploded, snuffing out the interest in a title race that had so recently been acutely poised.

Hamilton's driving remained immaculate as Ferrari left an open goal: his win in Singapore was classic opportunism, his victory in Austin consummate. There, indeed, he opened a fascinating window into some of what he has experienced this year as he and the once-unruly Wo8 have learned each other's rhythm: "It felt like I was dancing with the wind," was his description of the sensation of caressing his Mercedes downhill from Turn 1 at CoTA, through the swoops of Turns 2 to 9 on a blustery, breezy, qualifying Saturday.

Reaching for lyricism, he continued: "The tyres feel like living tissue. That's why we have to treat them so carefully, to bring out their performance and maintain it."

Truly, this year Hamilton has attained new peaks of performance, with an on-track sensitivity, style and panache any true fan must acknowledge, even if they don't care for his colourful lifestyle beyond the cockpit.

"Still I rise" is his mantra and in 2017, indeed, he has risen above all-comers to force the championship to yield to his will.

“DID YOU DO IT YOUR WAY, LEWIS?”

we ask. "Yeah, I've done everything my own way," he chuckles, almost conspiratorially. "It's just me being the stubborn boy I am." And here's how... ▶



“ THIS YEAR WAS CHALLENGING ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, BUT IT WAS ALSO THE KIND OF CHAMPIONSHIP I’D BEEN HOPING FOR – A BIT LIKE 2008, WHEN YOU’RE FIGHTING ANOTHER TEAM. ”

F1 Racing: You seem to be saying that you won the world championship on your own terms this year. Is that how it feels?

Lewis Hamilton: I think through life there is always someone to say ‘do it this way’ or ‘do it that way’ because often you don’t know which is the right way and some people have already discovered it – or have an opinion about what it should be. So to succeed eventually in the way you truly believe is the right way for you, once you’ve discovered that, is an accomplishment I think you can be proud of.

I’ve got great people around me in my personal team and in the race team; that’s

why I say we do this together because when they turn up on the Thursday to the Sunday they’re there with me on the edge of their seats. If we fail together they feel the pain I feel. And if we win they feel the glory and the emotions – we win and lose together, it’s really cool.

I still feel that too, myself, from the other side. I’m a big, big fan of LeBron [James, the American basketball megastar] and when he’s getting those hoops, I’m there with him. But when he loses, I feel the pain and I feel like I share that emotion.

F1R: People often compare you with other Formula 1 ‘greats’, but more than ever you

seem to be your own man – and you’re reaching fans way beyond motorsport...

LH: All I can say to that is: ‘What works for you doesn’t work for me’. But it’s difficult to impose your choices. When I arrived in F1 everyone – legends, ex-drivers, the press – kept telling me: ‘This is the mould you have to get in, it’s square and so you have to become square, whatever your original shape’. This approach pushes you down, and suppresses you. It’s a big problem in today’s world: the suppression of ideas. It takes a strong positive mental attitude [to resist]. You have to believe in yourself, in your values, in the direction and the journey you’re making.

It comes with maturity, with work and pain. Sometimes I'd go back home after the races and I'd read what people wrote and it was like: 'If only you knew my heart. You talk shit about me, but who are you to judge me? I'm not trying to offend anyone, I'm only living my life'. But I'm very proud of being different, and of what we have done as a family. And this is right. You see people like Max Verstappen coming through, who's a different young character. You see what the Williams sisters have done in tennis – new people coming with new attitudes. We need it.

F1R: But how do you stay on top of what appears to be an absolutely hectic private life, alongside an incredibly busy F1 calendar?

LH: It's hard for me to remain in the same place for long, I admit. I get bored, so I'm always on the move. But there are days during the year when it's okay to stop: during the winter break, at my house in Colorado, in the middle of an amazing place for nature, I recharge my batteries. In Monaco I keep myself busy, I train, I run... But if you could see my schedule.

Earlier in the year I had a weekend in New York for a fashion show, then it was back to the UK on Sunday; on Monday I was at the factory in Brackley, then in Germany for the Mercedes AMG Project One launch, Singapore for the GP, in London again for an event, then Milan for the fashion week, Malaysia for sponsor appearances and the race, a couple of days in Hong Kong, the Japanese GP in Suzuka, and then in Paris. The fact is, I love to bounce here and there. I sleep on the plane and it's not even so necessary. I'm young. We'll sleep when we're dead...

F1R: So who would you bring along for a week in your world, if you could? We're talking drivers now. Your peers?

LH: From this era? Daniel Ricciardo. We can have a lot of fun together if we go for a week in Miami. But all-time? James Hunt for sure! He was so great.

F1R: If you don't mind us saying so, this all seems a bit at odds with your new vegan diet – or are we just missing the point?

LH: Ha! I feel great, but it is difficult to find food that you love as much as you did before. I found a burger, for example, which I love more than I did before. But it's hard to find as many things taste-wise that you like. It takes time to adjust but physically I feel the best I've ever felt. So it's about making that step... and now I'm there... The other day I was at dinner with my friends and I was watching them eat meat and

chicken and I felt sick to watch them.

I think there's an advantage, too, because ultimately it's about how you fuel, isn't it? So the more efficient fuel you get, the more energy you have. You want any advantage as a racing driver, don't you?

F1R: You've ended up as a dominant champion, but for the first two thirds of the year, you had a fantastic fight with Seb: wheel-to-wheel in Barcelona, Baku, Spa...

LH: This year was challenging on a personal level, but it was also the kind of championship I'd been hoping for – a bit like 2008, when you're fighting another team.

That's especially true against Ferrari, another historic team, which Michael Schumacher raced for and won championships for. Ferrari is the red car... and red's my favourite colour, so it's such a beautiful car to see on the track – but to fight it with a silver sword is, y'know, it's like the master sword! I'm really proud of that and to be able to battle someone else who is a four-time world champion, who's got great skill and a team that also knows how to win championships.

That's how every championship needs to be. I think it's what Formula 1 wants to see. It's what I wanted to see, growing up watching F1.

F1R: You and Seb actually seem to get on pretty well together...

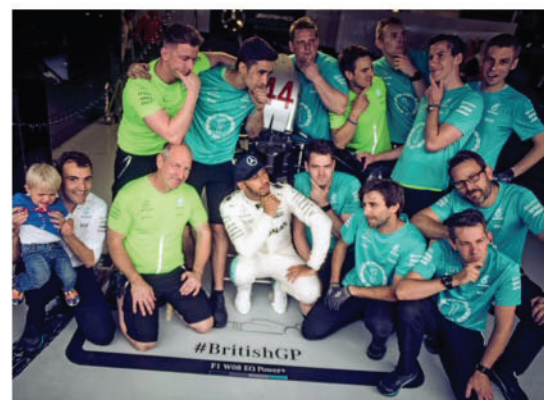
LH: We're not 20-year olds any more, are we? We're grown men and if you watch the great players and athletes in other sports, the mind is everything. The mind is what is in control. Naturally you're having a battle with the guy behind, but, you know – *'Keep your friends close and your enemies closer'*. I watch Sebastian, I know what he's achieved, I know how consistent he's been and I know where his strengths and weaknesses are. Same for his car, too.

Then if you look at an athlete like [Rafael] Nadal... The composure that they have through a game, and how they present themselves after a win or a defeat. Stars like that really set an example that I try to follow.

I try not to contain any negativity in my life, no matter what is written, no matter what people say. I've managed to build this kind of barrier to bounce off negativity because I think love conquers all and positivity conquers all.

F1R: Even after Vettel drove into you, in Baku?

LH: I think the media wanted that feud! But all of that, even today, seems a little bit odd. I hope everyone can really enjoy this year and some of the great battles we've all had. I'm not going to



Hamilton praises the dedication and passion of his crew, and the positive impact of team-mate Valtteri Bottas



try and give even more controversy next year. I hope that we just give you more raw racing, you know? That's what the sport needs, that's what we're struggling towards.

F1R: You mentioned Michael... Some of his records, which seemed out of reach, like 91 wins and seven titles... You're creeping up on them.

LH: Well even the idea of being a four-time champion seems out of reach for now. It's like I'm in space... It's not registering at the moment. But first and foremost, we all know how exceptional Michael was and his records have lasted for so long. Each year I don't set a ▶

goal to make records. I have a goal of improving certain areas where you feel you could be better. So it is very, very crazy to think that I've matched certain records. People talk about Michael's single-mindedness about his job, but to stand out in the world today, it's a lot harder, I think, because it's all been done before.

There's a lot of life to live beyond forty, but I can't come back to Formula 1, so there's going to be a point at which I say: 'OK, I've had enough'. I've already been blessed and had such a wonderful time here these last ten years. And I'm going to continue to – while I'm at my best – try to... I want to go out on top. That's my goal.

“
I APPRECIATE WHAT MAX DOES AND HIS TALENT. AND I DON'T FEEL ANY NEGATIVITY TOWARDS IT. I WANT HIM TO BE HIS BEST. I LOOK FORWARD TO HAVING MORE RACES WITH HIM SO I THINK I'M GOING TO HAVE TO STAY AROUND A LITTLE BIT LONGER.
”

Obviously each year I could do the easy thing like Nico [Rosberg], which is just stop and retreat with these four titles, but I think there's more in me. There's more to come, more of a challenge, as there's harder times ahead and I like that, I love that. That's challenging.

F1 Racing couldn't fail to notice the barbed swipe at retired 2016 champion Nico Rosberg. Clearly, no love lost between those two old foes.

F1R: You've now won more titles than your idol, Ayrton Senna, and you broke his pole record this year. Do you still measure yourself against him in any way?

LH: I don't ever really compare myself with





Ayrton Senna remains Hamilton's hero; this season the family gave him a replica crash helmet (below)



Ayrton. I think it's very hard to compare previous eras. The cars are so different and so on. But what I would say is that ultimately us racing drivers are great at getting into a car and exploiting its strengths and weaknesses and putting it to the limit.

Even if it were say, Fangio, if you put him on a jetski or whatever, he'd take it to the limit. We have this certain sense of awareness and higher limits than others, I guess. I do feel very proud to be in and amongst those legendary drivers, and we're in a different era where safety is so much further ahead but technology is too. The challenge Ayrton would have faced in his time is a lot different today, mentally.

We're maybe less physically challenged, but mentally more with all the electronics that you have to control. It's not one era that is more difficult than another, they're just unique in their own way. I really do think Ayrton would have continued to win more if he was fortunate enough to have more life to live.

That bright life of his was cut short. I've always said since I got the first championship [2008], I kind of liked the idea that I'm carrying a baton on and seeing how far we can push it. He inspired me as a kid, and even when he was gone, I still came back and watched his videos like it was just yesterday he was racing.


F1R: You've had a tough fight this year and it looks like Max Verstappen fancies a piece of the action too. What's he like to race against?

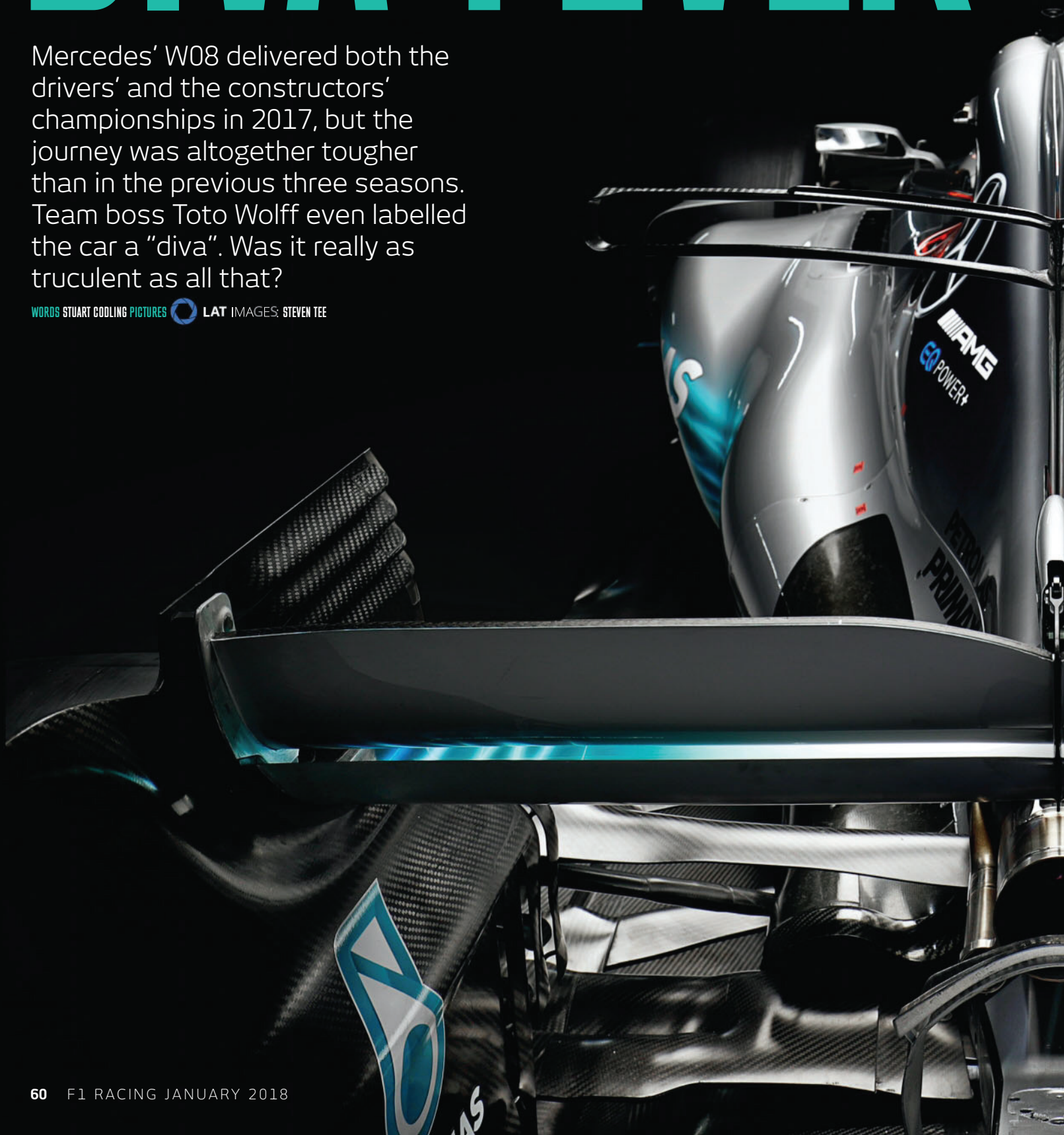
LH: Max has driven exceptionally well this year. He's been able to extract a lot of the potential from that Red Bull. It has a good aero package, and while it has had reliability issues, when the car's been right, he's done a wonderful job. It's exciting to see him emerge. Even as another driver I appreciate what he does and his talent. And I don't feel any negativity towards it. I want him to be his best and don't fear that. So I think I'm going to have to stay around a little longer. I look forward to having more races with him.

As do we all... 🍷

DIVA FEVER

Mercedes' W08 delivered both the drivers' and the constructors' championships in 2017, but the journey was altogether tougher than in the previous three seasons. Team boss Toto Wolff even labelled the car a "diva". Was it really as truculent as all that?

WORDS STUART COOLING PICTURES  LAT IMAGES, STEVEN TEE





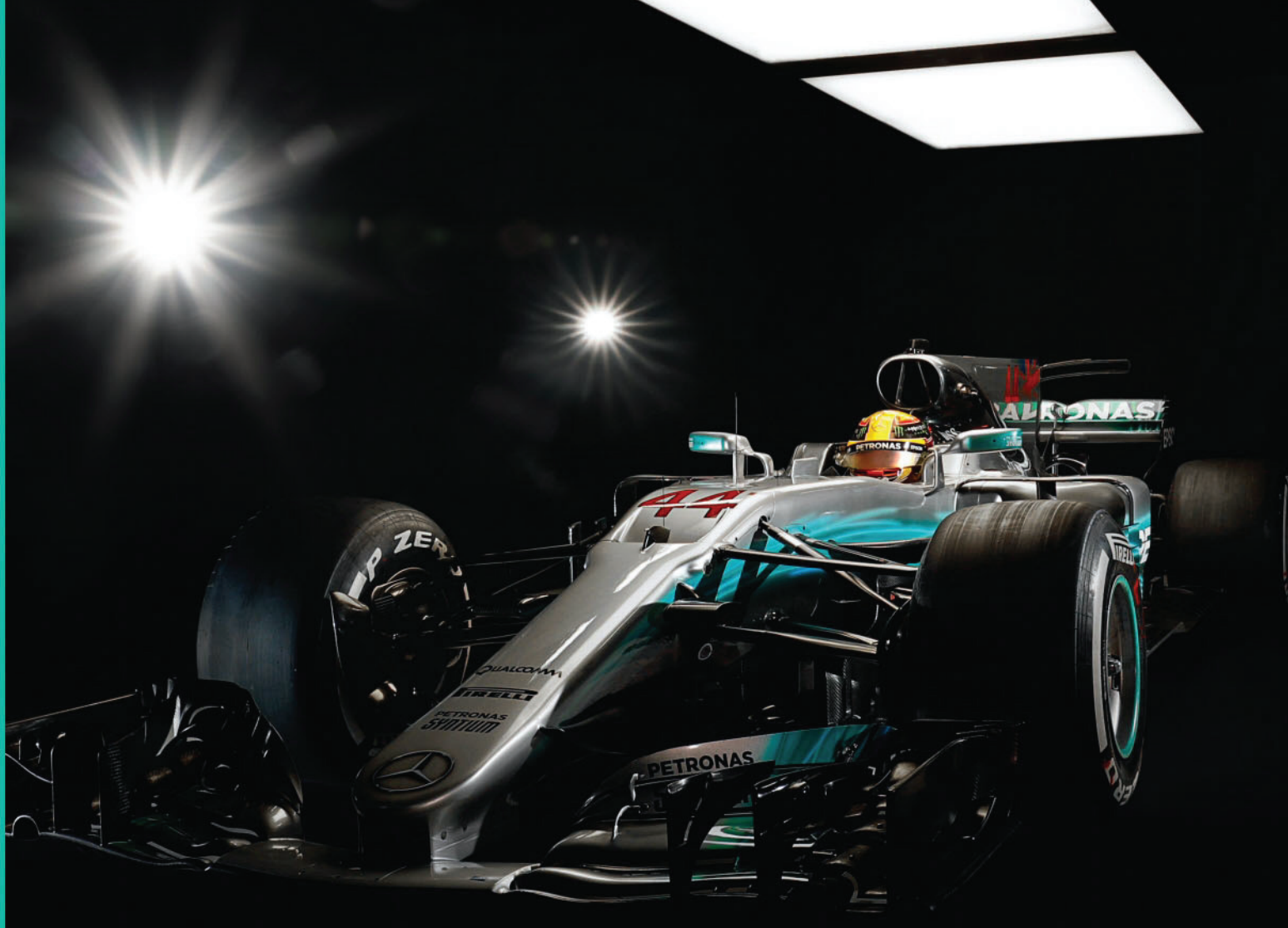
“I’M PROUD OF ITS FLAWS BECAUSE SHE’S NOT BEEN PERFECT,”

was Lewis Hamilton’s verdict on the Mercedes W08 on the day he won his fourth world championship. “While people have written that we’ve had the best car, I don’t believe we’ve had the best car. I think we’ve been the best team.”

Inarguably, and although Lewis sealed the title with two races to run, this has been the tightest season of the hybrid era. The popular narrative – one that’s already been documented extensively on the web,

in print and on television – has it that Lewis claimed the silverware in spite of a car that swung needily between being devastatingly quick and infuriatingly high maintenance. Had Sebastian Vettel not had his moments of madness in Baku and Singapore, opening into a wider *rosso corsa* implosion on the Asian leg, the outcome might have been different.

Indeed, Vettel led the standings for much of the year while Mercedes’ ▶



performance fluctuated between weekends – and even during them, depending on the tyre compounds available and if the track temperature changed. In Monaco Hamilton even failed to make Q3 when he was unable to bring the tyres on both axles up to their peak.

“You can say there is certain DNA in a car, and we have proved our car can go very quick in qualifying and in the race,” said team boss Toto Wolff after that debacle. “But it seems to be more a bit of a diva to get it into the right window.”

Mercedes continued to suffer the occasional off-weekend, or off-session, for the rest of the season, seemingly confirming the impression that the W08 didn’t want hotel staff making eye

contact, and had a preference for all the blue M&Ms to be removed from the bowl. But is this genuinely the case, or are we underestimating how much more competitive the resurgent Ferrari have been this year?

“We’ve always made cars that are a bit diva-ish – all teams have,” says chief designer John Owen. “When you have a half-a-second advantage [per lap], as we might have done in previous seasons, on the days the car is misbehaving you’re potentially still going to win anyway. And on the days it’s working really well, you don’t drive it as hard as you possibly could, so as to preserve the engine. You smooth out the ripples of performance across the course of a season.

“Singapore 2015 is quite well-documented as one of our low moments from that year. But then we weren’t great there in ’14 either, and went on to only just winning in ’16. There are certain circuits that don’t suit the car, and we go into a weekend expecting that. The main thing with this year, I think, is that Ferrari have done a great job and have been much closer to us. When you’ve got a close competitor, and your car has a bit of a wobble, they’re ahead of you – and it becomes a crisis because you’re not winning.”

The reason for weaknesses at particular circuits – or in certain conditions – recurring from year to year is that most teams carry over the essential philosophy of their cars from one to the next, thereby (as Wolff alluded) encoding certain characteristics into their proverbial DNA.

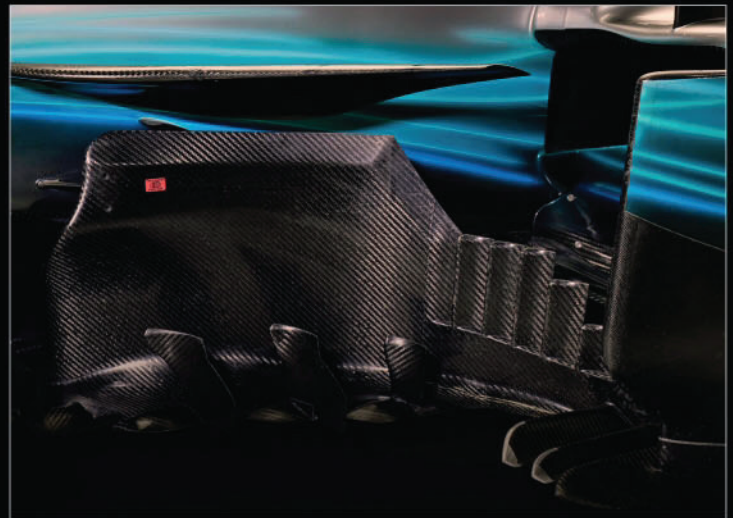
It’s a pivotal decision, fraught with perils: in choosing to start again from a clean sheet, with a completely new car concept, a team might have to abandon a vast trove of accumulated knowledge. Optimising the new concept might take months – or even entire seasons.

“WE’VE ALWAYS MADE CARS THAT ARE A BIT DIVA-ISH – ALL TEAMS HAVE. WHEN YOU HAVE A HALF-A-SECOND ADVANTAGE [PER LAP], AS WE MIGHT HAVE DONE IN PREVIOUS SEASONS, ON THE DAYS THE CAR IS MISBEHAVING YOU’RE POTENTIALLY STILL GOING TO WIN ANYWAY.”

JOHN OWEN,
CHIEF DESIGNER

On the increasing complexity of aero components:

"You see so many sophisticated details now, because it's easy within CFD to fix problems, change shapes, even find a degree of optimisation – in the past, you'd have been cutting out little bits of carbon in the windtunnel, so the shapes tended to be more two-dimensional."



On bargeboards: "They look, outwardly, like 2008-style solutions but they're quite different in the way that they're functioning because the front wing is so different. Pre-2009, wings generated a lot of downforce on the centreline, which

meant a different flow field under the car, particularly in the bargeboard area. In the current cars the centre of the wing is relatively unloaded – it's very loaded at the tips, so the airflow approaching the front of the floor is very different in direction."

Most teams now copy Red Bull's nose-down, tail-up car philosophy to some extent, but some have taken longer than others to get the most out of it – McLaren, for instance, are arguably only now on top of it, having first gone down that route in 2013. That's because it's one thing to copy a car's external aero features from pictures, quite another to understand how the overall aero 'map' works, how it changes in different conditions, and how the suspension has to be managed to give the aero a consistent platform.

It's interesting that Mercedes haven't gone high-rake yet – and neither have Williams, albeit with diminishing returns in their own car concept. Even before the hybrid power unit regulations came in, Mercedes fielded cars that were noticeably more flat to the track surface, relying on clever hydraulic systems within the chassis to remain so. But the FIA has been clamping down on those systems, first outlawing active interconnected hydraulics, then at the beginning of 2017 banning the passive systems several teams are believed to

have developed. That means Mercedes may have to consider change in future.

"I wouldn't say we're particularly hung up on anything on the car," says Owen. "We're happy to change anything about it. There *are* areas where we're different; the front-end aerodynamic philosophy of our car is pretty much unique, although Toro Rosso have some similar elements this season. Other than that, the narrow nose, and the things that go with that further down the car, are areas where we're unique.

"That was carried through from the 2016 philosophy, and there were other areas, such as the suspension, that were similar to before, but then you get to new areas, such as the bargeboards, where the W08 is very different. There were a few things we'd done on the 2016 car, the W07, at the front, the floor, that helped us in our understanding for 2017. We knew the rule change was aimed at shaking up the grid and that it would be a massive challenge to stay in front. We had to get the balance right in terms of how much resource we put into the W07, and

how much we put into this one. It was a question of starting strong in '16, and then when we'd done enough, very quickly moving as much effort as we could into the new car."

The 2017 regulations presented several unknowns, chief among those being how Pirelli's wider tyres would work. 'Blind' pre-season tests with mule cars provided mixed results ("Looking back, I think we could have done a better job, or got more out, of the tyre testing," says Owen). It was a double moving target: the mule cars were ballasted up to the right weight, but had nothing like the downforce required for Pirelli to accurately assess loadings. That meant both the teams and the official tyre supplier embarked upon the season not knowing what to expect, though some took a more positive view.

"It's always nice to have a regulation change," says Owen, "because [in a stable environment] you can get a little too focused on the detail. A rule change takes you back to first principles. From a designer's point of view that's a very enjoyable thing to do. ▶

MERCEDES' EMERGENCE AND DOMINATION OF THE HYBRID ERA

"I set the objective to build a 90 per cent car for 2017. It might seem strange not to aim for 100 per cent, but the problem you face in any new set of rules is that you can't be certain of the challenges you'll face along the way – how the rules evolve, whether the tyres behave differently from how you expected. There's a lot of unknowns there, so you aim for a car that can cover as many different circumstances as possible, and accept that it might not be the pinnacle of optimisation. That tends to come in the second or third year of regulation stability.

"We built a lot of adjustment into the car, the capability to react to things we saw. Unfortunately, most of the things we had to adapt to we hadn't seen coming. So we carried a lot of compromise through the year for things that didn't need to be changed and we struggled a bit with those that did.

"What I mean [by 'a 90 per cent' car] is that it's quite spacious in places. The reason for that was to enable us to react during the design process and move things round. We didn't know where the aerodynamic development would take us, to some extent – what areas of the car we'd need to find more space on for aero performance, what areas were safe zones where you don't find



2014

MERCEDES W05
Pole positions 18
Fastest laps 12
Race wins 16
Drivers' champion
 Lewis Hamilton



2015

MERCEDES W06
Pole positions 18
Fastest laps 13
Race wins 16
Drivers' champion
 Lewis Hamilton



2016

MERCEDES W07
Pole positions 20
Fastest laps 9
Race wins 19
Drivers' champion
 Nico Rosberg



2017

MERCEDES W08
Pole positions 15
Fastest laps 9
Race wins 12
Drivers' champion
 Lewis Hamilton

any aero. If you can move things around in the car and not have to reinvent every part of it with every new development, it's quite wise.

"We did have a very late change to one aspect of the power unit, and because of our philosophy we could accommodate it reasonably well. If that had happened on our 2016 car it would literally have been a case of tearing up the design and starting again. It was nice to have that little bit of breathing space, whereas for the next car we can afford to be a lot more aggressive."

The W08 has racked up 12 wins out of 20 grands prix at the time of writing, a respectable tally even if at least two of those victories eventuated through Ferrari – or their drivers – blundering. But that doesn't mean Mercedes have misgivings about moving on, conceptually speaking. Technical director James Allison has spoken of aiming for a car that's easier to "throw at a racetrack" and extract the maximum from.

"You think this car is a little bit tricky," says Owen, "but it's not massively more so than the others. If it were two-tenths faster, it would seem to be a lot less of a diva than people say.

"Having said all that, we know of a few things on this car that made it a bit tricky. Hopefully we'll have them fixed for the next one..."



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A YEAR IN CAMERA

Mercedes' Formula 1 team boss **Toto Wolff** speaks candidly about how his improved relationship with Lewis Hamilton, as well as harmony with new recruit Valtteri Bottas helped create championship success in 2017

Toto Wolff ushers us into the relative calm of his office. Outside is a cacophony of noise as Mercedes guests tuck into their noonday lunch. The title-winning team boss sits proudly at his desk, in a place of serenity, hidden away from the bustling São Paulo paddock. He glances at a series of pictures from the past season of racing.

Mercedes's photographer, Paul Ripke, has been granted exclusive access to the team, their drivers and management and *F1R* has a selection to jog Wolff's memory. The first is of team-mates Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas, and he reflects on how different the chemistry is between his drivers compared with the 'nuclear war' that existed 12 months ago between Hamilton and Rosberg.

"In terms of the relationship between the drivers in the team, I have been on an interesting

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS
PICTURES PAUL RIPKE

journey," he says, sipping his lemon tea.

"My belief was that an intra-team rivalry would be something that we'd be able to contain and not cause controversy. If there was to be a little animosity, I thought that would be good for both Mercedes and the drivers, because they would push each other on.

"The truth is that we weren't able to control it with Nico and Lewis, because there was too much baggage from the past. This new relationship with Valtteri has benefitted the team greatly, the dynamics are very positive, and it has helped both drivers."

There were occasions last season where Hamilton felt he wasn't getting the support from the team he needed. One was in the aftermath of the first-lap collision between him and Rosberg in Spain, while the other was in the season finale in Abu Dhabi, when he backed up his team-mate into the on-coming Ferrari of Sebastian Vettel.

During the off-season, Wolff invited Hamilton to his Oxford home and the pair opened up to one another about their frustrations. By clearing the air, Hamilton has been stronger this season and his mental composure has helped his performances behind the wheel.

"In any relationship, you always have ups and downs, but the most important thing is to communicate," confides Wolff. "We left our kitchen talk with a good feeling about each other, and now our personal relationship has moved on to another level. It's a relationship of trust and this doesn't mean there can't be difficult situations, but it's built on a lot of respect."

Wolff believes that part of the success this season, Mercedes' fourth consecutive title (and Hamilton's career fourth) has been down to their improved relationship and a more harmonious team. That positivity has manifested itself at various times throughout the year.

"When both Lewis and Valtteri played computer games together in the rain delay

on the Saturday at Monza, it was a genuine moment; it wasn't faked. I joked afterwards and said, 'this is going a bit far for me now – we need to have more of a healthy rivalry!'"

As he scans through the pictures we've selected from Ripke's treasure trove covering the 2017 season, we invite Toto to explain the story behind the images – some of which are rather unusual, to say the least... ▶



Hamilton and Bottas enjoyed playing video games together during rain delays at Monza

A YEAR IN CAMERA



“At Suzuka a couple of the engineers had a bad cold and were coughing in the morning debrief. I said to them that if they were going to be around the drivers, they needed to wear masks because I didn’t want the drivers to be ill on Sunday. An hour later, during our next debrief, they took the piss – when I came in I saw that everybody, including the drivers, was wearing face masks...”

“We’ve had fantastic performances, such as at Monza, but we’ve had problematic races. The W08 will be remembered as a very quick car, but a difficult one to handle and that’s why I used the word ‘diva’ this year to describe the chassis. It encapsulates it well, because a diva is a beautiful lady, but one that is capricious too.”

“This shot from Singapore encapsulates that because we were discussing how to sort the car out. It’s a pretty intense moment and these are always difficult for the team, but also very important – it makes us grow and develop. When we had our strategy meeting on the Sunday morning in Singapore, it was funny because the one scenario we never talked about was the one that happened [when both Ferraris collided after the start].”



“The management at Mercedes have a big responsibility of maintaining a good energy within the team and it’s down to a genuine interest in managing the characters we have. The bond and the energy is very

important and we haven’t lost any people from our camp. There has been no exodus like at other teams. The odd person has decided to pursue a different career, but the bond among us is strong.” ▶

Whilst rival F1 annuals come and go, **AUTOCOURSE – The World's Leading Grand Prix Annual** – is proud to have reached its 67th year of publication as the indisputable leader in its field.

The 20-race Formula One World Championship season is covered in its usual full depth, with hugely experienced paddock insiders Tony Dodgins and Maurice Hamilton dissecting the drama and intrigue that is always an intrinsic part of any F1 season. Their race commentaries are backed up by detailed results spreads, including lap charts and tyre strategies.

Mercedes-Benz again proved the class of the field, with Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas taking the lion's share of victories, however they did not have it their own way.

Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari returned to winning form in 2017, and the German driver took the title battle to Hamilton in a feisty and often controversial manner. In addition, the ever-resourceful, Red Bull Racing with Daniel Ricciardo and Max Verstappen also scored dramatic victories to deny the Silver Arrows total domination.

Renault and McLaren Honda endured a challenging year as they sought a return to past glories, whilst Sahara Force India showed the independents how to go racing as they led the race to fourth place in the constructor's championship for a second successive year.

The highly respected Mark Hughes, in his Team-by-Team review, looks at the technical development of every team, the feature is enhanced by Adrian Dean's beautiful F1 car illustrations.

As well as Formula 1, the sport's other major categories are all afforded ample coverage. The Formula 2 and GP3 championships, the key rungs on the professional single-seat ladder to the top are chronicled, as is the rise of Formula E, which is gaining big manufacturer support. In Sports car racing, Porsche, won Le Mans once again, and then swept to a WEC title triumph over Toyota, before taking their leave from the sport.

Also covered are the door-banging exploits of leading Touring Car series comprising of the WTCC, DTM and BTCC, whilst from the other side of the Atlantic, Gordon Kirby provides his always insightful analysis of the United States racing scene.

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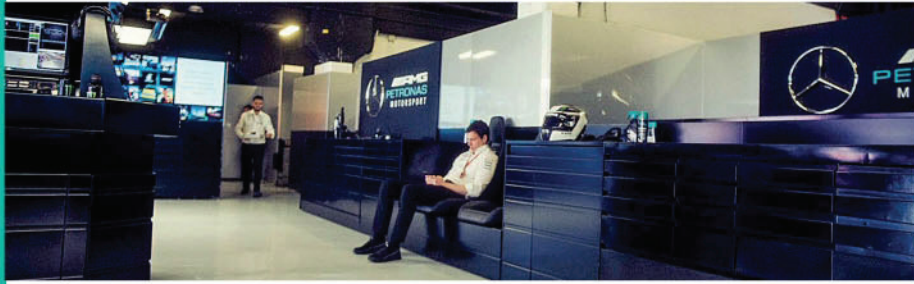
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A YEAR IN CAMERA



"The whole time I'm looking to try and develop the team. After every qualifying session I always need some time to myself to reflect. I like the solitude. I make notes on what I've observed, be that operationally in the garage, or some strategy, or how we've deployed something. It's an exercise in improvement."



"One of my allies is Niki Lauda. We spend hundreds of hours of a year flying and travelling together to the races, and sometimes Lewis joins us on the long-distance trips.

"Niki's role is very important because he's a mentor to the drivers. He's respected by them because he has three world

titles and he's a good sounding board. He fits into our structure very well and we get on in a very positive way. It was quite a bold exercise to put us both into a structure, because we've been able to manage our own companies without anyone else, but it has worked out really well."



"I think it's important to remember what Valtteri has said about Lewis's work ethic, because what you tend to see from Lewis is either what is on social media or in the tabloids: partying between the Caribbean and Los Angeles in a private jet. But there is also a hard-working, very diligent side to Lewis and Valtteri has realised that.

"Look at Silverstone. He generated a lot of controversy [by not attending the F1 Live London event] but five days later it was all forgotten when his fans were cheering for him. Winning at Silverstone in front of his home crowd was so important for Lewis. I've been working with him for five seasons now and in 2017 there has definitely been a step change in his work ethic."

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{ YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS }

STOFFEL

McLaren's not-quite-rookie opens up about pancakes, cobbles, Ayrton Senna, and his secret hankering to race at Bathurst

VANDOORNE

WORDS STUART CODLING

PHOTOS  LAT IMAGES: ANDY HONE

Midday in Mexico City and the baking-hot sun is radiating with squint-making ferocity – and yet some folk in the Formula 1 paddock, including our interviewee, are still wearing garb to ward off the morning chill. The proliferation of gilets – more, even, than you'd expect to see at the average Harlequins rugby match – makes for a peculiar juxtaposition with what would otherwise be a typically Mexican scene. The wind carries not a chill but the joyous waft of trumpet, violin and guitar, signalling the approach of a wandering mariachi band.

Stoffel Vandoorne greets us cheerily, alights upon a chair in the shade of the McLaren hospitality unit, and, barely pausing to examine the pile of question cards in front of him, picks up the whole deck.

"You can shuffle them if you want," *F1 Racing* offers.

"Why on earth would I want to shuffle them?" asks Stoffel in genuine bafflement.

"Some drivers accuse us of stacking the deck, so the difficult ones are at the beginning. Or the end."

He chuckles, shakes his head and draws the top card.

"Take a look at this first question!" he exclaims.

Why do people in Belgium eat fries with mayonnaise?

Edgar Contreras, Mexico

I honestly wouldn't know why, it's just a tradition. We do have all sorts of sauces though. Cocktail sauce is good – ketchup mixed with mayonnaise.

Does your recent turnaround in form have anything to do with Rob Wilson's coaching up at Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground?

David Fleming, UK

In a way, yes. I hadn't been to Rob in a while – the last time was maybe back in 2013. It was good to go back and have a kind of refresher, let's say, a reminder of the things we were doing a number of years ago. Rob is really good at sitting next to you, just in

an ordinary road car, and explaining the negative inputs you have into the car, and then working on that. I've found that even though it's not a proper race track, it's always been a good experience for me. ▶



STOFFEL VANDOORNE

YOU ASK THE QUESTIONS

If you could have something named after you would you rather it was a cake, a bridge, a hat or a dance?

Paddy Bates, UK

[He is flummoxed for a few seconds.] Everyone seems to go on about Stoffel's Waffles, so I suppose it should be a cake.

F1R: You could open a shop and call it Stoffel's Waffles!

SV: Why not? Moving on...

What motivates you in a race when you know the car is not capable of scoring points?

Aaron Petrauskas, Lithuania

First of all, you *always* have to be motivated, because there are only 20 drivers on the grid, 20 opportunities to do this. You should be happy and try to take the most out of the package you have. And in my case, there's so much to learn in my first year –

all the new tracks I'm going to, and a great competitor, Fernando [Alonso], next to me. I go into every weekend positive and try to make the most out of it.

How important was the year in Japanese Super Formula for you?

Marcel Nicke, Germany

It was a good experience for me and very different from what I was used to in Europe. I had to learn new circuits, deal with the cultural differences and experience different working

methods. So while it wasn't necessarily a year that I *needed* – because I was ready for Formula 1 before that – it was a great thing to do while I waited for an F1 opportunity to open up.

F1R: Did you get any crazy presents from the fans?

SV: I got loads – loads! – of crazy presents. Quite a lot of sweet stuff. Not good for the diet! But there's a great passion for racing there.

Which circuit do you enjoy the most and why?

Melodee Ghosn, USA

It has to be Spa – one of the greatest circuits in the world, and also my home event, so there's always a special feeling about racing there. It's a great atmosphere and to have all

that support from the fans is amazing.



If you had to choose another career outside of motorsport, what would it be?

Natascha Polderman, UK

Hmmm...

F1R: Cake shop owner?

SV: Ha ha! Maybe cycling, although I didn't start cycling when I was young, it's kind of a passion that has grown. It's been a great way of keeping my fitness

levels high, and it's a great thing to do to clear your mind when you arrive home from a race. When you're out on your bike, you don't really think much about the racing, and it's a great social thing. I have a few mates in the sport of cycling as well.

F1R: Well, cycling is a grand tradition in Belgium. Do you have a particular favourite event?

SV: Paris-Roubaix definitely [a brutal one-day event nicknamed 'The Hell of the North', featuring mud and long stretches of cobbled road]. In Belgium I like Liège-Bastogne-Liège [another infamously challenging race; in 1980 only 21 of the 174 entrants finished].

The McLaren team has such a great history in grand prix racing. Do you have a favourite McLaren moment from their past?

Lindsay McCallum, UK

That's a tricky question because there are so many. For me, it has to be Ayrton Senna's qualifying lap at Monaco in 1988. I think that it's great to be part of a Formula 1 team which has so many good memories.

In the history of F1, which driver do you most admire and would liked to have raced against?

Kevin Figgis, Ireland

Ayrton Senna. He was a big inspiration for everyone, and obviously one of the biggest talents

Formula 1 has ever seen. It would have been a pleasure and an honour to have shared a race track with him.



Vandoorne sweeps through Eau Rouge at his favourite track, Spa, but was only 14th in 2017





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Describe the most challenging corner of the Formula 1 season?

Patrick Six, Belgium

That's a tricky question to answer. On most circuits it's a case of how you put corners together, so I'd say sector one at Suzuka is an example of a very challenging and satisfying area to get right, as is

Maggotts-Becketts-Chapel at Silverstone. But if you want to name just *one* corner that's challenging in itself, the last chicane in Canada is very difficult.

Beer or waffles?

Wojtek Paprota, Poland

[Laughs] That's super-easy. Waffles. I don't do beer. That's strange for a Belgian, I know.

F1R: What do you put on your waffles?

SV: Well, I'm more of a pancake man, to be honest... Nutella or chocolate.

F1R: Nutella? Dangerous rocket fuel...

SV: I know, but it's so good!

Are you ready to lead a team like McLaren if Fernando decides to drive elsewhere?

Iqbal Rizal, Malaysia

Oh yes, 100 per cent. I've been with McLaren for four years and I feel very much at home here, and all the work I'm doing back at the factory is paying off. I think the team fully trusts my ability and commitment.

Who will be world champions first, you and McLaren, or the Belgian football team?

Victor Van Poucke, Belgium

Definitely me! We have some great Belgian football players individually, but the problem is they just can't play well together. So I'll be on my own, doing the job...

“
THE 1988
MCLAREN
MP4/4 IS THE
GREATEST
F1 CAR. I'VE
DRIVEN IT AT
GOODWOOD
AND IT'S A
CLASSIC
”

Do you really get a McLaren as a company car?

Phil Darby, UK

[Feigns surprise and outrage, then laughs] Yes! I have a black 570S. Although to be honest, I don't use it that much, because you don't use a car that often in Monaco. I'm usually on a bike.

F1R: Black, really? Tough colour to keep clean, and it shows up scratches...

SV: That's okay, it's parked in a garage!

How much have you learnt from Fernando Alonso while competing alongside him?

Michael Levitzky, USA

There's a lot – he's one of the greatest drivers in Formula 1, quick and experienced. It's been good to share a team with him, to see how he approaches a race weekend.

Do you think current F1 tracks with Tarmac runoffs (and thus, 'tracks limits') are an issue? Should F1 bring back gravel traps?

Pierre-Antoine Courtaud-Elsasser, France

Yes. Everyone loves the circuits that are more challenging, where there are walls close by – places like Monaco and Singapore. They give you more of a buzz when you do a proper lap. But, having more run-off is the way F1 is going, and it doesn't mean those circuits are less exciting – it's just different.

If you could invite four legendary Formula 1 drivers for dinner, who would they be?

Clement Bouchet, France

Mika Häkkinen – actually I was at a dinner with him last week anyway, but we were sitting quite far apart. Niki Lauda... hmm, who else? Alain Prost. And I would have said Ayrton, but...

F1R: Yes, no longer here. But if he were...

SV: Yes, definitely. Maybe Bruce McLaren as well. He sounds like he was a character.

If you could drive any F1 car from history, which would you choose and why?

Stuart Hilton, UK

The 1988 McLaren MP4/4. It's the greatest F1 car. I've driven it already at Goodwood and some McLaren events, but it's a classic. I'd drive it any day.

Fernando was granted permission to do the Indy 500. Which other racing event would you like to take part in?

AR King, UK

Not right now, but maybe one day, after my F1 career is over... I'd do Bathurst. It's a mega track. 🇦🇺



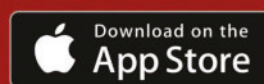
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BACK-SEAT DRIVERS

No driver races alone: his engineering and strategy crew are with him every inch of the way. Here's how the Renault 'prat perch' works...

WORDS MATT YOUSON PICTURE RENAULT SPORT F1 TEAM



1. Mattieu Dubois

Head of race strategy

On the pitwall, Dubois works with specialist strategy software, GPS and timing data to plot gaps, identify pit windows and plan tyre tactics. He works with another strategist at the circuit, plus specialists back at the team's operations room at Enstone. The role is advisory rather than executive: he passes on strategy recommendations to Renault's sporting director.

2. Alan Permane

Sporting director

With overall responsibility for making decisions on race strategy, Permane also takes charge of liaising with the FIA, via direct comms access to race director Charlie Whiting and technical delegate Jo Bauer (who's responsible for scrutineering). Communication is frequent and includes passing on information from drivers about the state of the track, as well as complaints of foul play.

3. Cyril Abiteboul

Managing director

As team boss, Abiteboul looks at the bigger picture and is accountable for any actions taken on the pitwall. He has the final say but is very unlikely to intervene in strategy decisions taken by those around him when the race is proceeding normally. During the race, he typically communicates only with the other people on the pitwall, rather than with race engineers working from the garage.

4. Ciaran Pilbeam

Chief race engineer

Pilbeam is the bridge between the two sides of the garage, which each have their own session plans and goals. He ensures that each driver's race engineer is aware of what the other car is doing, and passes useful information between the two groups. He is part of the strategy team during the race, as well as the primary point of contact for the operations room at Enstone.



5. Bob Bell

Chief technical officer
(alternating with Nick Chester,
chassis technical director)

While he doesn't take an operational role on the pitwall, Bell is the senior member of the design team at the track so he is always kept in the loop. He's present largely to inform of development efforts back at the factory, providing an extra degree of scrutiny that doesn't always come across in reports and debriefs.

6. Paul Seaby

Team manager

Seaby organises the pitstops. He is responsible for calling the pitcrew into the box, telling them which car is coming in, when it will arrive, what tyres to fit and by how much the front wing should be adjusted. He liaises with race engineers before the stops to determine the latter points. He is also responsible for any special instructions, such as stop-go penalties and nosecone changes.

7. Comms channels

All staff working on the pitwall plug into a comms panel, consisting of 20 channels, rather than a radio handset. This lets them communicate with different groups in the garage, staff at Enstone, and also with Race Control. Staff on the pitwall have a channel for communicating between themselves, and can access most of the other channels as well. They are able to talk to the drivers, but this would be very rare.

8. Data screens

It might look as if everyone on the pitwall is looking at different data screens, but usually it's just the same information configured and prioritised in different ways. Typical screens include timing data, GPS plots, weather radar, Race Control messages and the main TV feed. The exception is the strategist, who has bespoke race-prediction software. Data from individual car systems is generally not displayed on the pitwall.

THE LONG INTERVIEW

Just over a year ago Jenson Button thought he'd stepped out of an F1 car for the final time. A Monaco cameo came out of the blue and now, the road-dust having settled, Jenson sits down with *F1 Racing* to talk about setting the record straight in his new book, *Life to the Limit*, his special relationship with his late dad, and plans for 'retirement'...

THIS IS JENSON
BUTTON

INTERVIEW MAURICE HAMILTON
PORTRAITS ROBERT WILSON





ard to believe that it's 17 years, almost to the day, since I had my first one-to-one with Jenson Button. It was a nervy moment for us both as we sat down in the bland office of the insurance company who were sponsoring Williams and discussed his debut season in F1. I'd got off on the wrong foot at the start of the year by mildly questioning Jenson's qualifications (in F3) for a drive with a top team (an observation that John Button would cheerfully remind me of

when his boy went on to qualify superbly at Spa and Suzuka).

Our meeting that day was soothed by the quelling of doubts on both sides; a realisation on his part that I was not about to stick the boot in after a tricky season, and considerable relief on my side that the interview was not being stilted by a gangling 20-year-old bearing a grudge.

As we meet again in the more relaxed surroundings of a coffee shop in a smart London hotel, the passage of time and more than 300 grands prix is clearly marked. Instead of a slightly diffident lad with an anxious look, I'm greeted, with the usual firm handshake, by a tall besuited sports personality exuding the confidence that comes from having picked up 15 race victories and a world championship.

I've been fortunate to witness all of that first hand. But as a journalist in this business you only get to know half the story. The other half – or most of it – is in his book, which I found both enlightening and touching.

F1 Racing: Good to see you. You must be all talked out! How's the book launch tour been?

Jenson Button: Busy! But I'm enjoying it, even though we keep running out of time. You're supposed to sign a book every 30 seconds, or something like that. Of course, it doesn't work out that way because people have been queuing – some for hours

From small acorns...
Jenson's first outing in a kart, an introduction to two wheels and enjoying karting with dad John

JB's autobiography encompasses his whole career, not just his time in F1



– and you can't just sign the book and say "Next!" Everyone wants a quick chat, and that's fine. But it meant we ran out of time in places and some people will have been disappointed. That's a bit upsetting.

F1R: At least there's something for everyone in the book, because you cover your entire life.

JB: Exactly. But it means there will be different views about the book. Some people will be into Formula 1 and only interested in those chapters. For others, it will be all about the karting or something else. Have you read it all?

F1R: Every word! For me, it really got going in the second half; I really enjoyed that.

JB: There you are. Different bits will appeal to different people.

F1R: Maybe I'm giving the wrong impression because there were certain aspects of, for example, your karting career that I found interesting. You say, for instance, that karting technique is the 'fundamental of all racing'. I presume that's with reference to being precise, something that you've applied right through your career?

JB: For me, being precise was always key in a kart. A lot of that came from the Old Boy standing out on the circuit, telling me where to brake and commenting on what I was doing. I'd got to a point where I was scrubbing off a lot of speed because I was being so aggressive on entry, which meant I didn't really know where I was going to end up on the exit.

I learned always to use the smallest inputs possible to keep everything calm and not to scrub off speed because the engines in the first karting formula are only 60cc. You've got to keep the revs up. It was about being as smooth as possible.

F1R: Is it fair to say that sometimes worked against you in F1?

JB: Yeah, in some ways it hurt me. For instance, if tyre temperature was an issue, I struggled more than most because I was trying not to be aggressive and as gentle as possible on the tyres. I'm not keen on oversteer and that comes from never putting a kart in that position.

It helps me in certain situations. I can feel the circuit very well – particularly wet-dry conditions – through my butt as



well as my hands. But, at other times, like when I was teammates with Lewis, if the car was a bit tricky to drive, he could always get more out of it because he was more aggressive. It's just a different way of driving. Every driving style has its positives and its negatives.

F1R: You learned to use kerbs through karting because, as you say in the book, there's time to be found there. But you can also lose time. You have to work out which kerbs you can use and which you can't.

JB: Exactly. Sebastian Vettel is really big on using kerbs. He could do things that most of us couldn't do because the Red Bulls were amazing over kerbs. If you can make that work, the circuit becomes wider and you can carry more speed through the apex. That also carries through from karting; using as much of the track as possible to minimise the steering angle.

F1R: That comes across very well in the book.

JB: Shall I tell you why? The guy I wrote the book with, Andrew Holmes, knows zero about motor racing. I had to explain every single detail. It took forever and at times it was quite frustrating. But I think the book is better for it because it's explaining detail to readers who might not know a great deal about motorsport.

F1R: You also mention 'enjoyment' and its importance in your racing – and your life. Did that feeling still apply when you gave up the latter stages of your education and decided racing was your future? Surely there must have been a pressure to succeed that wiped out a lot of the fun element?

JB: No, because at 16 I didn't really think about that too much. You go after your dreams. You're so excited about possibilities. I know what you mean because, when I look at it now, I think: madness! Absolute madness! At 16, if it had gone wrong, what the hell would I have done? Luckily, I was too silly to think about that. You have this dream and you hope that everything falls into place. Now, more than ever, you need backing.

Back then, it was difficult to get money but you could still get yourself noticed. These days, they're spending as much going karting as we did in F3. It's crazy.



The finished article: exuding the confidence that comes with 15 grand prix wins and a world title

F1R: You talk about the dream. How did that stand up when your friend Danny Spence was killed? You were 14 and he was nine. That must have been a shocking reality check.

JB: It was the first time I'd ever dealt with death, especially in someone so young. It was really difficult. You feel invincible when you're that age. You don't want to crash, but you don't think anyone can get killed. Then you have to ask why would somebody make a sport that's so dangerous for a nine-year old. It didn't make sense. It was a horrible experience.

I remember going to the funeral and I've never seen so many people crying. At a funeral for one of your parents or a

THE LONG INTERVIEW



relative, it's horrible – but they've lived a life. Whereas Danny was nine. It was so emotional for everyone, but we had to be there. The best thing to do was jump straight back in a kart as soon as possible, otherwise you're going to struggle, or your parents are going to struggle putting you back in a kart.

F1R: In a way, though, it's a process any racer has to go through because it will happen at some point in your career.

JB: It is. I've watched footage of the first televised event I did, the Clay Pigeon SuperPrix, and there are four of us racing: me, Anthony Davidson, Justin Wilson and Dan Wheldon. And you realise two have gone. You don't think of that these days, but it still is a dangerous sport. Formula 1 may be way ahead of other sports in terms of safety and yet, no matter how safe it gets, the danger will always be there.

F1R: Talking about names from your racing past, and going back to karting, I was interested to read how highly you regarded Giorgio Pantano – and yet he never made it. What conclusions can you draw from that?

JB: He had unbelievable talent. But it's about adapting to certain situations. I remember watching him when he drove for a short time with Jordan in F1. He had quite an aggressive style and drove it like a kart. Your driving style will always be similar, but you have to adapt.

That's something I needed to do, particularly with Benetton in 2001. I was driving it like a lower formula car. I'd brake, carry speed through a corner and get on the power. I ended up with massive understeer at the apex and lost time. I had to work out how to brake later, transfer the weight, turn the car and then get on the power.

F1R: Talking about adapting, it was a massive step when you made your Formula 1 debut in 2000. You talk about your very first lap in Melbourne as being the best feeling of your career. I can understand that, but I would have thought there have been even more memorable moments?

JB: Crossing the line in Brazil to win the championship was obviously amazing. But driving onto the circuit in Melbourne behind Michael Schumacher – a two-time world champion at that time – was just the most surreal moment. Albert Park is a beautiful place anyway, but when you have the leaves swirling from behind a Ferrari with a V10 lump in it and Michael Schumacher driving it, for a lad from Somerset it was such a special experience. I clearly remember that moment.

F1R: So instead of letting that situation pile the pressure on you, you were actually feeding off it?

JB: Yeah, I had the biggest smile on my face. The biggest grin. I never felt pressure that year at Williams. I was very lucky with Frank Williams and Patrick Head; they were very relaxed.

F1R: Which is unusual because they can be quite tough. Patrick in particular doesn't suffer fools gladly.

JB: He only had a go at me once – I've described the moment when I threw it off in the pitlane in Hockenheim. They knew I was inexperienced. It was a good way to start my F1 career but, on the other hand, it probably hurt my next year at Benetton because they weren't so easy on me. It was a baptism of fire going in with Flavio Briatore and a difficult car.

F1R: And yet, despite all this, you somehow continued to have



fun. Was it a deliberate policy, or is that just the way you are?

JB: That's the way I like to be but, strangely enough, in the last few years of F1, I didn't have fun after races. It was: 'Get me out of here. I want to go home.' It had become just work by that stage. But through most of my career, especially on a good day, you had to enjoy the moment because you didn't know how many more moments like that you were going to have. I always celebrated hard; tried to get as many drivers involved as possible. And I had such a good crew of people around me. It just needed to be the five of us, drinking and talking shit basically!

I thought it was very important after a race to always have a blow-out with my friends – including the Old Boy, of course. He'd be there, even if he was falling asleep in the corner; he wouldn't want to miss anything!

F1R: Talking about celebrations, there's an interesting juxtaposition of characters in your book. One minute, you're talking about [Sir Richard] Branson making such a prat of himself one evening and, the next, you're talking about Prince Albert and what a lovely guy he is; the way you persuaded



2009: a dream year which saw a team go from a management buy-out to world champions. It all got a bit emotional when Jenson finally realised his goal of winning the title with Brawn



him to come and party with you after your win at Monaco. You didn't mean to make a comparison between the two men – it's just the way the stories fall in your book. But it illustrates the very different ways people deal with life, given the position they're in.

JB: I spent quite a bit of time with Prince Albert; I haven't chosen to spend time with Branson. The bit about him is a small part in the book, but I didn't want to leave anything out. That's one of the reasons I've done this book, because it's my life in my words. The media have reported me as saying in the book that Lewis is 'weird'. I said 'weird' and 'Lewis' in the same sentence but in reference to something Lewis did, which I thought was weird. It's not 'Lewis is weird'.

F1R: The ways of the media must have started to come across to you when you reached F1?

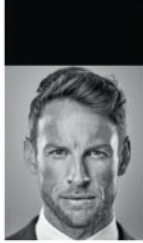
JB: It did – but not with you guys who write about F1 all the time. The biggest issue was with the guys digging the dirt. When it comes to racing and someone says I didn't drive well or made a mistake, that's fine. I understand that you're there to have an opinion. But it hurts when you're hit with stories

about your private life. You take a step back and shut down, which means we don't give as much to you guys as we should. We become robots because we don't want to say anything that gets wrongly interpreted and hurts us, or our families, or the team. But then you reach the stage where you've achieved something and can say what you want. That's why interviews have been a lot more fun for me over the past few years.

F1R: When you talk about having achieved, you're obviously referring to the championship in 2009. And that more relaxed approach led to the move from Brawn to McLaren, purely to take on the challenge of racing with Lewis. It's clear from the book that you really relished your time together.

JB: Yeah, we had some awesome races together; some great fights. There were times when he'd blow me away; there were times that I blew him away, like Spa 2012. Lewis was a tough guy to race against; it was an emotional roller coaster. He was a great team-mate to have because, when you beat him, you knew you'd done a mega job.

F1R: You mention watching the recordings of winning races, just to see the reaction of your family and mates. That must be ▶



emotional for you now, seeing your dad in the middle of it all?

JB: It is. The thing is not me crossing the finishing line, it's seeing everyone's reactions. Like when I won in Canada and the camera flicked to the Old Boy as Sebastian made his mistake on the last lap; that reaction of complete disbelief from Dad and the whole team around him. That's very special and gets me more emotional than looking at the results or the move itself.

F1R: I was lucky enough in 2009 to be standing by *parc fermé* at Interlagos. Your dad was right in front of me, waiting to greet you. I saw it all. That has surely got to be one of the greatest moments you've ever had?

JB: It was. First of all, it was a tough weekend anyway because the fans were being very difficult and booing me the whole time. But when I actually won the championship and climbed out of the car, they all cheered – and that was lovely. It's then that you realise they just love this sport, they are supportive and obviously they had wanted their guy [Brazilian Rubens Barrichello, Jenson's team-mate] to win. And then to see the Old Boy and give him a hug. I was holding him because I knew the cameras were there and I could feel he was crying because he was shaking up and down; his shoulders were going. So I held onto him for a bit, so he wasn't too embarrassed. It was an absolutely incredible moment – for us both.

F1R: Your close relationship with him really comes across in the book – and it's lovely.

JB: I've got to keep it light-hearted, or I get a bit emotional. Yesterday, during an interview, the presenter asked if I would read the dedication at the start of the book. I said: "No chance; that's not happening." So she started to read it. It was live TV and she started crying. I was, like: 'Oh, my God. I'm going to start too...'

F1R: Now that the book is done, do you get a lot of pleasure from seeing the thoughts about your father in print?

JB: I do. A lot of the interviews over the last few days have been largely about him. I'm sure some people might say everyone loses someone close at some point and I'm talking about him too much. He was my father and, yes, everyone goes through the horrible moment of a loved one passing away. But he was more than just a family member; he was the guy that made it all happen. I wouldn't be here talking to you if it wasn't for him. This is not just a book about motorsport; it's also about the relationship between a father and son.



Testing himself against Lewis Hamilton was a big reason behind the switch to McLaren after his title year

almost like a victory in F1 because it doesn't matter what you do: if it's a competitive field and you've worked your arse off, a win means a lot. It was pretty special. There are still little victories that I will have in my life away from motorsport. That's the sort of thing I love.

I will race in cars again in 2018, so I won't take triathlon as seriously. But I will have a go one day at the world championship for the full Ironman distance. That's the aim for the future. The good thing is you can do it at any age. In fact, as you get older, your fast-twitch muscle fibres go, but you become better at longer distances and endurance.

F1R: What category of car racing are you thinking about?

JB: Super GT in Japan is something I will do in 2018. They are immense fun to drive. They've got a lot of downforce, so it's about three or four seconds quicker than a DTM car and about ten seconds quicker than a GT3 car. It's proper quick.

F1R: Tell me about the Jenson Button Trust and what that is all about...

JB: Every year, we have the Trust Triathlon, involving charities. This year, we chose Barnardos because we had a children's triathlon, which was amazing. The adults' triathlon is 500 people; children's triathlon we limit to 200. In a week, it was sold out. The kids would do it with their parents; it was inspirational. There were some kids with disabilities; some struggled to walk, but they were able to do it. I'm in the privileged position where I can help by just using my name. It's the easiest thing; everyone in my position can do it and raise a lot of money for charity while having a lot of fun with a real family atmosphere.

F1R: Thanks for your time, Jenson. Good luck with that event – and with your new book, of course.

JB: Thanks! 🙏



Jenson's autobiography *Life to the Limit* is on sale now, priced from £20



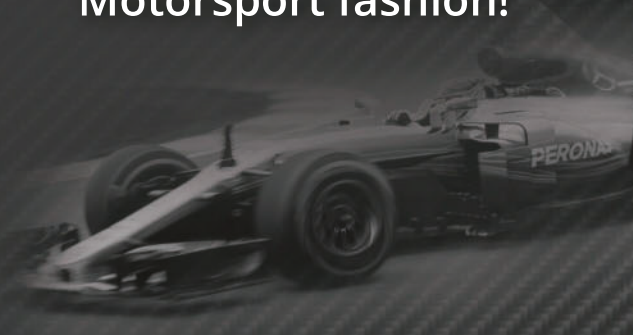
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MARTINI



Andrew Taylor

MY DREAM JOB

No.6



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PORTRAITS  LAT IMAGES: LORENZO BELLANCA

Williams F1 head of hospitality and guest experience

CV

Andrew Taylor
Age: 49

2014

Head of hospitality and guest experience, Williams F1

2011-2013

Project ops director, Olympic Park North

2004-2011

UK executive director and general manager, Wembley Stadium

1999-2004

Account manager, Compass Group

1989-1999

Head of UK corporate hospitality, Glenmorangie Distillery

“I’m not going to say it was a life-changing incident,” says Andrew Taylor, “but it did make me reflect quite a lot on the value of life.” He’s speaking of the 100 minutes he spent lost in the ice-cold waters of the North Pacific, having been swept off his yacht during the Clipper Round The World Race in March 2014. Here, 2,000 miles away from land, his nearest human company, apart from denizens of other ships (including his own crew, desperately searching for him), was 250 miles up in the International Space Station.

Taylor had been on a career break after orchestrating the design and operation of the food outlets in the Olympic Park for the 2012 Summer Games. He hadn’t envisioned being struck by the rudder of his own yacht as it went by at 25 knots – hard enough to convince him his legs were broken – or fighting to stay afloat in 30-metre swells, or only being hauled out by his crewmates just as hypothermia took hold.

“I got back on and we finished the race in spite of my [leg] injuries,” he says, “which was important for me, and when I got back I decided to write a book about it [available from www.179w.co.uk] and donate all the proceeds to charity.”

Taylor’s accident was on 30 March 2014, the day of the Malaysian GP. His yacht finished fourth, and he subsequently joined Williams, then in the process of transforming their image with title sponsorship from Martini and a new three-storey motorhome. His role takes in not only race weekend activities – the ‘guest experience’ in the motorhome and the Paddock Club – but also the conference centre at the factory.

“We’ve got one of the world’s largest publicly accessible collections of F1 cars,” he says, “and to share it, and to bring it

to life, is really cool. We’ve worked with professional guides to develop the tour and the stories that go with it.”

Hospitality is a key off-track theatre of battle as teams vie to woo investors. At European races the hub of that activity is the motorhome, which also doubles as a team operations centre.


“We have a team of 15 people who look after the building and its infrastructure, and 20 in the hospitality team, which includes chefs, front-of-house managers, hosts and bar staff. We rotate them through the year, so they might not attend all the races, but when they’re not working at the track they’ll be at the conference centre; that way we ensure quality and consistency of service across everything that we do.”

That’s why, even if you’re just popping in to the Williams motorhome to blag a takeaway tea in a paper cup, the colour of the resultant brew will match the exact Pantone reference for a proper cuppa. On a more nuts-and-bolts level it lets the team manage the absurdities of a racing calendar drawn up behind closed doors by men who fly exclusively in private jets.

“It’s a brutal schedule,” says Taylor. “Twice last season we had people working in four different countries at the same time. You have to trust them a lot. Over the past three years we’ve put enormous effort into establishing a Williams way of doing things so everything is delivered to the same standard.”

The team consult with Michelin-starred chef Michael Caines to develop the menus, which change to suit local produce and which vary between areas of the motorhome. The first floor offers restaurant-style fine-dining, with a six-course tasting menu, in contrast to the more relaxed ground floor.

“They suit different purposes,” says Taylor. “The ground floor is bustling, there’s a lunchtime buffet and good-quality coffee. If it’s hot outside, the first floor is one degree cooler than the ground floor; if it’s cold it’s one degree warmer. You note a difference although you might not know why. There are more soft furnishings on the first floor, the TV monitors aren’t as bright and there’s different music. All that, and working with Michael on the menus, visiting markets in different countries, matching wines – it’s that kind of detail I enjoy.”

One thing the schedule doesn’t permit is yacht racing. “On that front,” he says, “I’m strictly a spectator.” 

WORDS DAMIEN SMITH
PHOTOS  LAT IMAGES



THE SIX ERAS
OF FERRARI
CHAPTER 2
1961-1973

SWIMMING WITH SHARKS DROWNING IN POLITICS

The 1960s were a chequered era for Ferrari. Occasionally brilliant, they more frequently squandered their fabulous potential by fighting amongst themselves







DIVISIVE POLITICS, PETTY SQUABBLES, EGO-DRIVEN AMBITION AND THE ODD UNFORTUNATE MISUNDERSTANDING:

these were the defining factors of a Ferrari era still considered glorious in hindsight, but one from which a much richer harvest should have been reaped. Ferrari's rhythm through the Swinging Sixties and into the brash next decade lacked the solid backbeat of their hip new adversaries from the UK – largely because in Maranello the kingdom could never remain united for very long. Discord would always prevail over harmony.

But when they did remain in key, oh, how the Prancing Horses sang. Or perhaps that should be swam in the case of 1961, as a new Formula 1 chapter dawned.

The 156, dubbed 'Sharknose' thanks to its characteristic twin-nostril design, infuriated Cooper and Lotus, architects of the rear-engine revolution in the preceding three seasons. Reactionary, conservative Enzo Ferrari had been slow to accept the inevitable, and yet here was his team sweeping both constructors' and drivers' titles without breaking a sweat.

The trigger had been the new 1.5-litre engines that had cut F1 down in size, and potentially in stature if you listened to the up-in-arms Brits. They'd resisted the move and even put into place a breakaway Intercontinental Series for their larger capacity machines. Initially, Enzo backed them – then backed away. The consequence? A failed breakaway and an F1 world championship that was his for the taking, thanks to a 1.5-litre V6 already nicely warmed in his Formula 2 cars since 1957. With a wider 120-degree version pumping out 170bhp, Ferrari had a power advantage of around 20bhp over the four-pot Coventry Climax Lotus and Coopers of 1961.

Aristocratic German count Wolfgang von Trips and urbane American Phil Hill were good – very good on certain days – but neither were a match for Stirling Moss. Still, it didn't matter. 'The Boy' beat them in virtuoso style in his Rob Walker Lotus 18 at Monaco and the Nürburgring, but over an eight-round season he was outgunned. Even a rookie, Giancarlo Baghetti, could win

first time out in France, while Von Trips won in Holland and Britain and Hill in Belgium.

By Monza the title was a two-shark race. Then familiar tragedy cast a pall.

Von Trips died along with 14 spectators when an inadvertent collision with Jim Clark's Lotus sent his 156 hurtling into the crowd on the approach to Parabolica. Hill claimed victory and a title, but in such circumstances it had to ring hollow. Enzo wrung his hands once again at his "terrible joys" and pressed on.

He knew he needed Moss, and finally, for '62, the English patriot caved to Enzo advances – but only on the strictest and most demanding of terms. Stirling wanted a Sharknose of his own, but only if it was painted in the blue of *British* team boss Rob Walker, who would run the car. Surely Ferrari would never agree. It says everything about Moss's respect and status back then that Enzo said 'S'.

History dictates, of course, that Moss in a Sharknose remains one of the great 'What Might Have Beens'. A collision course with the banking at Goodwood ended the plan, Moss's career and almost his life. We'd never find out what he could have achieved in an F1 Ferrari.

In truth, up against Clark and Colin Chapman's groundbreaking monocoque Lotus 25, the answer might have been disappointing. In '61, the V6 power advantage had masked the 156's inferior weight and handling. Now with Coventry Climax and BRM V8s, the British cigar-shaped F1 missiles were hitting the target. Ferrari, after just one season of dominance, were on the back foot once again. And things back home were getting messy as a consequence.

Matriarchal Laura Ferrari had progressively grown more influential at her husband's side, particularly since the death of her son Dino in '56. Now her 'meddling' in the face of on-track disappointment led to an F1 implosion the like of which has never been equalled. Eight key staff members colluded to remonstrate with Enzo over his wife's corrosive influence, and





“ENZO FERRARI’S COLD CALCULATION THAT HIS COMPANY WAS BIGGER THAN ITS CONSTITUENT PARTS PROVED ON THE MONEY”

THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH, THE ULTIMATE TRAGEDY

Victory at Monza in 1961 would have earned Wolfgang von Trips the world title, but when his wheels interlocked with those of Jim Clark’s Lotus at 150mph, the results were catastrophic. And yet the race went on. Victory, and the championship, went to a horrified Phil Hill



they were rewarded with their papers: they had overstepped the mark and were out, sporting director Romolo Tavoni and designer Carlo Chiti among them. The exodus to ATS – Automobili Turismo e Sport – was supposed to be a direct answer to Ferrari’s insouciance. But the new F1 project would fail in less than a year. Enzo’s cold calculation that his company was bigger than its component parts proved on the money. Anyway, he still had his young genius to fall back on.

Mauro Forghieri was just 26 and a racing veteran of less than two years when he assumed authority for Ferrari’s racing department. His father Reclus had overseen the construction of Enzo’s first foundry from which a steady supply of engines and gearboxes would underpin the growth of a legend. As a graduate, Mauro had wanted to design aeroplanes, but with an encouraging push from Reclus he found himself making racing cars instead – for the most (in) famous name in the automotive world.

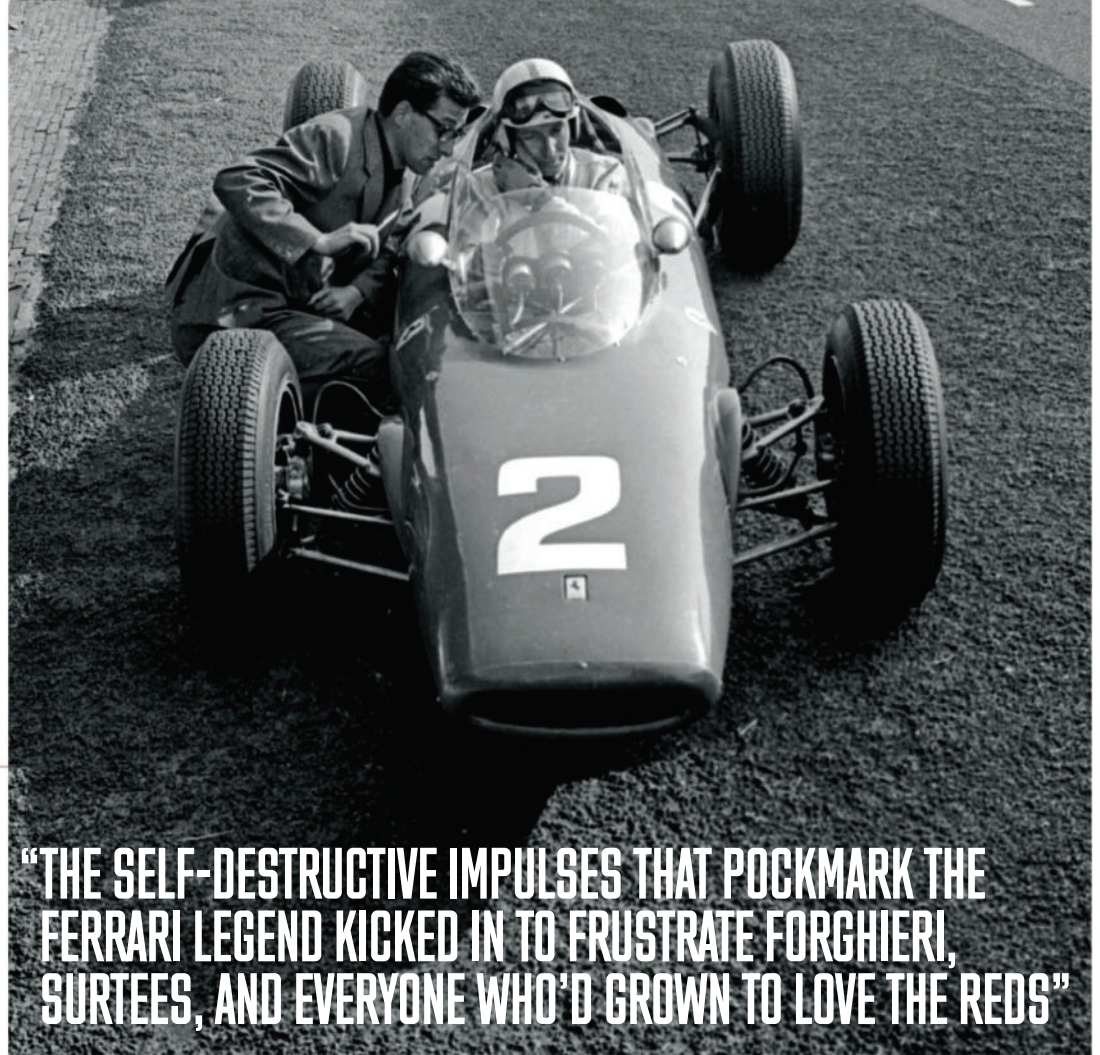
Forghieri was (and remains) a brilliant man, at home with both chassis and engines. His influence at Ferrari, inevitably for both better and worse given the volatile nature of this particular beast, would span three decades and feature key driver partnerships that would forge pure F1 gold. The first was with a single-minded – and very fast – Englishman, who was also still finding his feet in this shark-infested F1 world.

John Surtees had only shown a passing interest in cars before his four-wheeled competition debut in a Formula Junior at Goodwood in 1960. But the seven-time ▶



SURTEES AND FORGHIERI DELIVER THE TITLE

Regardless of the (complex) maths governing the three-way title fight at the 1964 season finale, John Surtees looked out of it when his Ferrari misfired down to 13th place on lap one. But it cleared its throat, rivals fell by the wayside, and Surtees secured the title on the last lap



"THE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE IMPULSES THAT POCKMARK THE FERRARI LEGEND KICKED IN TO FRUSTRATE FORGHIERI, SURTEES, AND EVERYONE WHO'D GROWN TO LOVE THE REDS"

motorcycle world champion, in need of a new challenge, recognised both his own potential and the opportunities on offer in the higher profile world of cars. Likewise, Colin Chapman spotted a star. Surtees, in a manner modern racing drivers wouldn't comprehend, found himself chucked directly into the F1 depths – and immediately started swimming.

It didn't take long for Ferrari to come calling, but Surtees, well versed in Italian machination after his years riding for MV Agusta, wisely rebuffed the advances using the reasoned logic that he needed more time to adapt to his new environment. Ferrari doesn't ask twice was the high-handed response – but as it turned out, that wasn't true. Enzo did call again, when his competitive chips were down at the end of '62 and in the wake of the mass ATS defection. This time Surtees was ready.

The Forghieri-Surtees affiliation bore fruit in that first season with a superb victory at the Nürburgring, then in '64 the momentum continued. Another win in Germany and glory at Monza carried *Il Grande John* to a three-way climax in Mexico City against Clark's Lotus and Graham Hill's BRM. In unfamiliar blue-and-white North American Racing Team colours (a visual protest to the continuous union unrest Ferrari grappled with in Italy during this time) Surtees grabbed an unlikely title with help from

honourable team-mate Lorenzo Bandini and Clark's smoky last-lap retirement.

What a turnaround from the debacle of '62. And in two-turned-four-wheeled man Surtees, here was a talisman with all-round engineering and racing nous around which Enzo could forge a new era of glory.

Except it didn't turn out that way. Those self-destructive impulses that pockmark the Ferrari legend kicked in to frustrate Forghieri, Surtees and everyone else who'd grown to love the reds.

The backdrop was a fundamental battle for basic economic survival, coloured most famously by the American snub. In the early 1960s, Ferrari's road car division was thriving, despite Italian domestic turmoil – and the Ford Motor Company wanted a piece of it. Enzo responded coquettishly to the advances and in '63 a 14-man Dearborn delegation decamped to Maranello.

They wanted 90 per cent. After 20 days of negotiation, they left with zero. To the delight of all Italy, and in a move that surely enhanced the burgeoning Ferrari mysticism, Enzo sent them back across the Atlantic with the proverbial flea flitting in their collective ear. Ford's hierarchy was furious and vowed cold, hard revenge.

That revenge would be exacted in the fields of Le Mans. Enzo had no love for the 24-hour French sportscar classic, but he couldn't ignore its global importance, to a degree that would

leave Surtees voicing his frustration that F1 development was negligible each year until the June slog-a-thon had been and gone. Still, the effort was surely worthwhile. Ferrari were unbeaten at Le Mans between 1960 and '65.

But Ford were relentless in their pursuit. Their 'kitchen sink' approach finally succeeded in '66 – and after 11 victories in 17 years, Ferrari would never win Le Mans again. Revenge was sweet.

In this context, you'd think Ferrari would value Surtees' contribution. Perhaps he did. He was certainly fond of John, in a manner that has echoes of his relationship with Tazio Nuvolari and later with Gilles Villeneuve. But that didn't stop Enzo from releasing a dragon on John's tail.

Eugenio Dragoni was a paper-pusher with strong connections to Fiat's Gianni Agnelli and was tasked with race team 'management' during this period. Surtees hated him. It didn't help that Dragoni's open ambition was to deliver Italy their first drivers' world champion since Alberto Ascari – or that his experience for the job in hand was no match for his ego.

The pair clashed at Monaco in '66 when Surtees wanted to use an old car instead of the new 3-litre version introduced for the 'return to power' regulations that had just come into force. Dragoni insisted he use the new engine.

The manager even quibbled with Surtees' epic performance in defeating Jochen Rindt's Cooper ▶

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“SURTEES NEVER DID REVEAL THE DETAILS OF HIS ROW WITH FERRARI, BUT THE ‘PERFECT PARTNERSHIP’ ENDED THERE AND THEN. FURTHER DISAPPOINTMENT AND TRAGEDY WOULD DOG THE TEAM”



Clark's Lotus 49 at Zandvoort. On that day in June, the F1 landscape shifted forever.

Unperturbed, Forghieri forged a potent new partnership with super-talented Chris Amon, while Jacky Ickx scored the Scuderia's last F1 victory of the decade at Rouen in '68. But the world had turned too fast for Ferrari. Enzo and his team were in desperate need of rejuvenation.

When it came the injection was a double dose. First, Agnelli succeeded where Ford's 'suits' failed and negotiated a deal with Enzo. Fiat bought 50 per cent of Ferrari in '69, ensuring greater financial stability at a time when yet again the great name could have sunk. Then Forghieri brewed some new magic at Maranello.

He'd briefly been shunted into the road car division as payment for F1 failures, but was restored to the race team in time to usher in his new baby: a potent, user-friendly flat-12 engine.

But Amon didn't get it. All he saw was smoke from the failures that dogged the first tests, and he chose to walk away from what turned out to be one of the greatest F1 engines in history.

The 312B of 1970 was the breath of fresh air Ferrari so desperately needed, and Ickx came close to a title that was eventually decided posthumously in favour of Rindt and Lotus. The low centre of gravity and clean air flow to the rear wing offered clear title potential. But with poor reliability, suspension design cul-de-sacs and tricky Firestones culminating in frustration, Forghieri was again punished into exile, this time to the 'experimental department'. But Enzo, to his credit, recognised that his own illness, and that regular failing of listening to the malicious whisperers that surrounded him, was once again threatening defeat from the jaws of victory.

As 1973 drew to a close, Forghieri was back to where he belonged – and with the protection of a sharply ambitious young lawyer above him, a buck-toothed Austrian in his cockpit and another revelatory innovation up his sleeve, he had all the pieces in place to carry Ferrari on its greatest adventure since the distant days of Ascari. 🏁

NEXT MONTH
1974-1980



FRICION IN THE TEAM LEADS TO SURTEES' DEPARTURE

A racer rather than a politician, John Surtees had scant appetite for any activity that didn't make his car go faster. Accordingly, he and team manager Eugenio Dragoni – a man of multiple agendas – were destined for conflict. Surtees walked out mid-way through 1966



in treacherous weather at fearsome Spa. Why, he unfathomably argued, had the Englishman allowed Rindt to lead for so long in their battle?

At Le Mans Dragoni insisted Ludovico Scarfiotti – nephew of Agnelli – should start the race. John, who died in March 2017, never did reveal details of the ensuing row with Ferrari – but the 'perfect partnership' ended there and then. And with it a possible second F1 title. Jack Brabham and his new Repco-powered eponymous F1 car might still have claimed the crown, but had Surtees remained in red he would surely have pushed him hard for the honour, and might have claimed another in '67, too.

Further disappointment and outright tragedy would dog Ferrari in the second half of the 1960s. In '67 Bandini would burn to death at Monaco, Brit Mike Parkes suffered career-ending injuries at Spa, and Ford introduced the Cosworth DFV V8 bolted to the back of Jim

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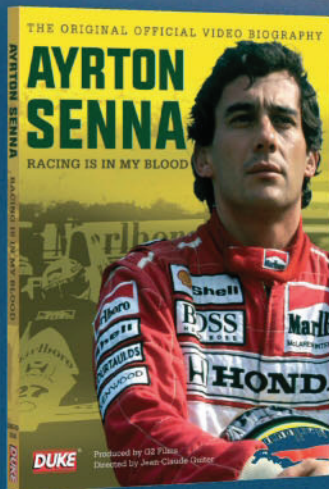
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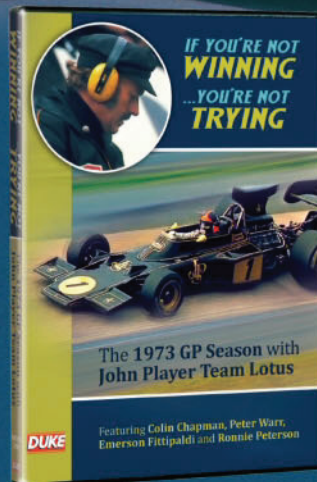
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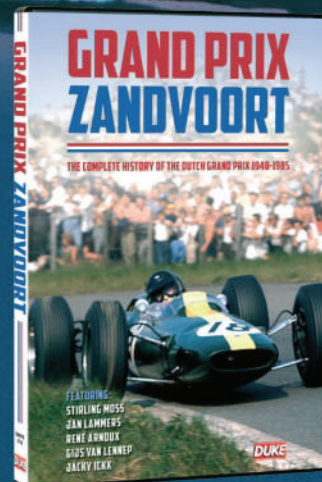
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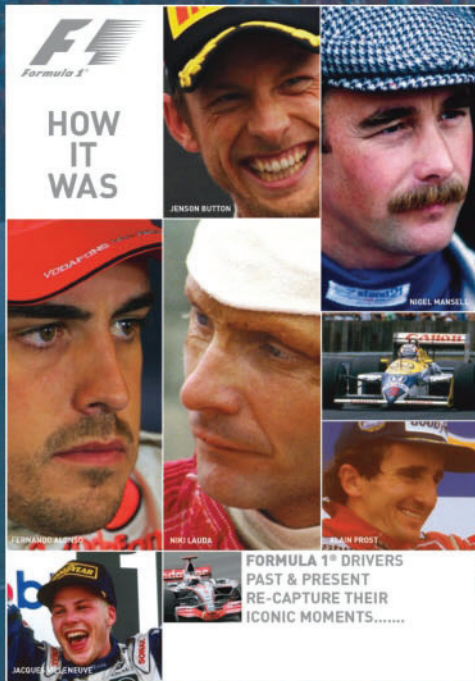


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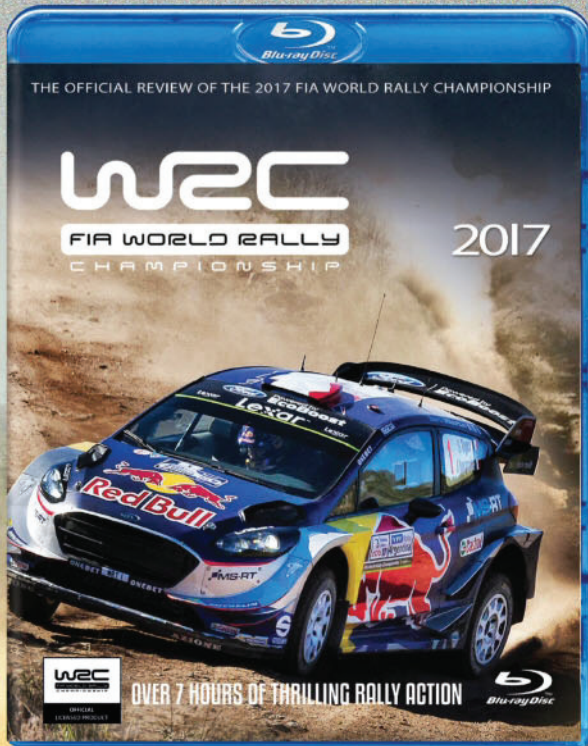
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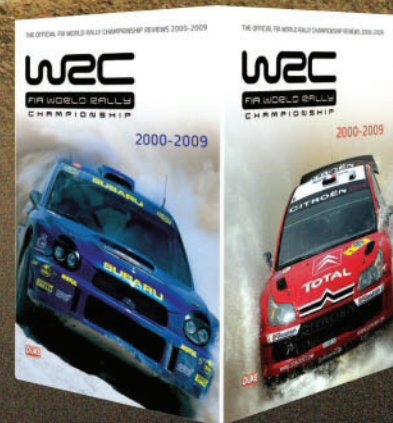
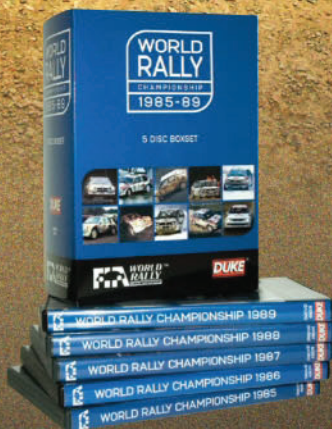
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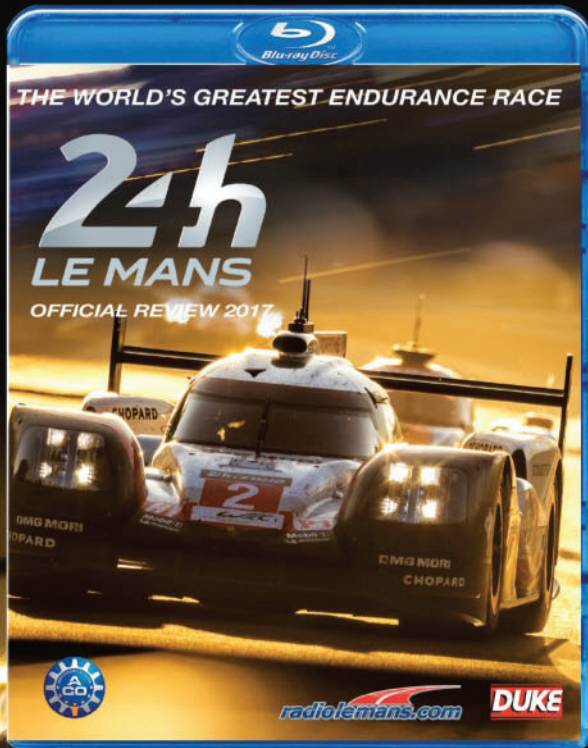
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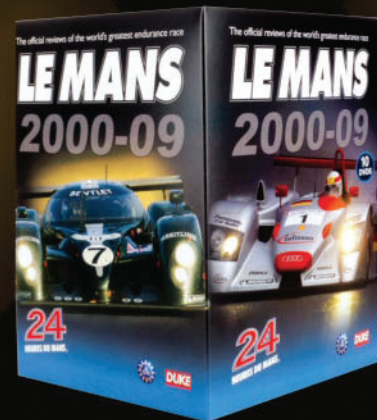
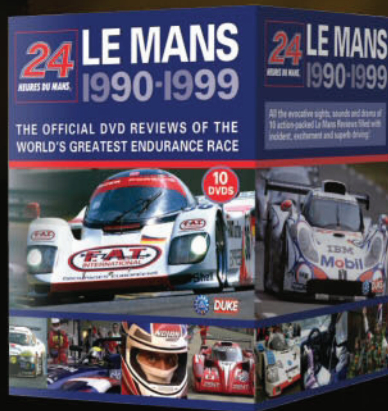
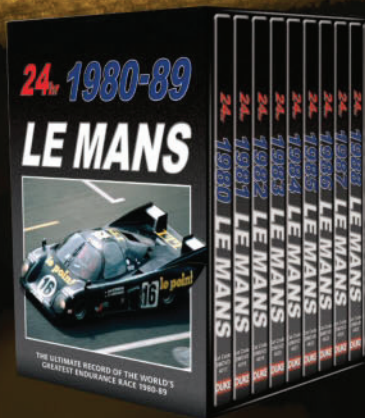


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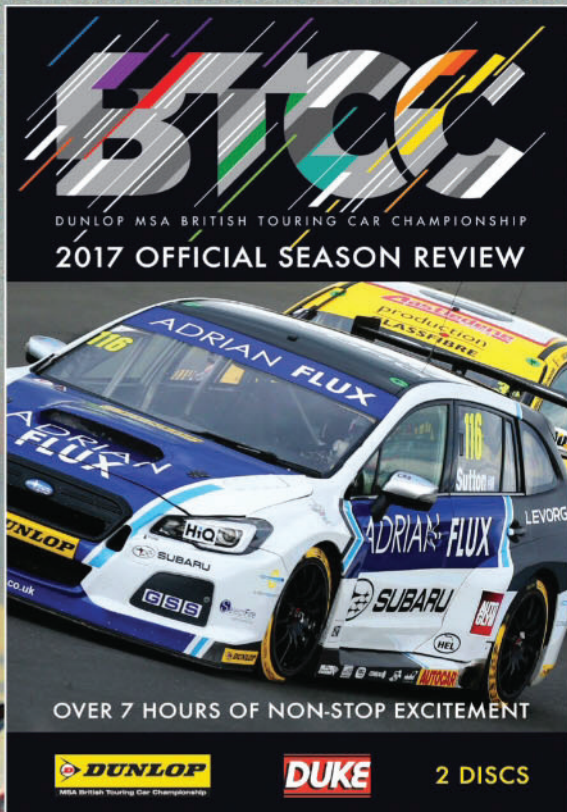
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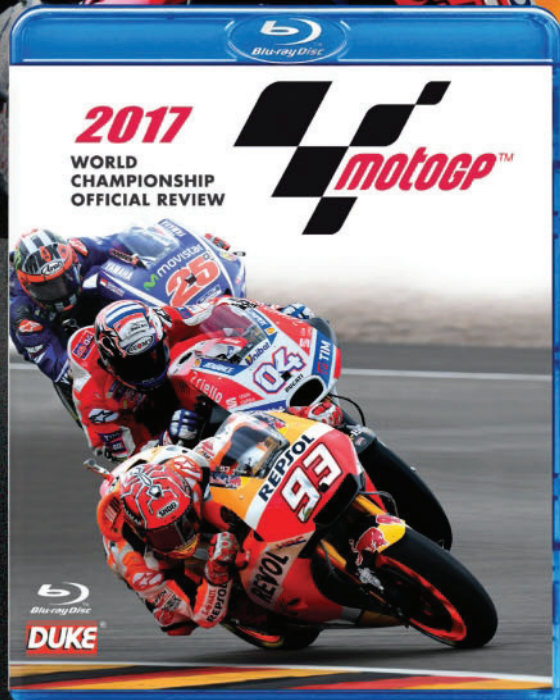


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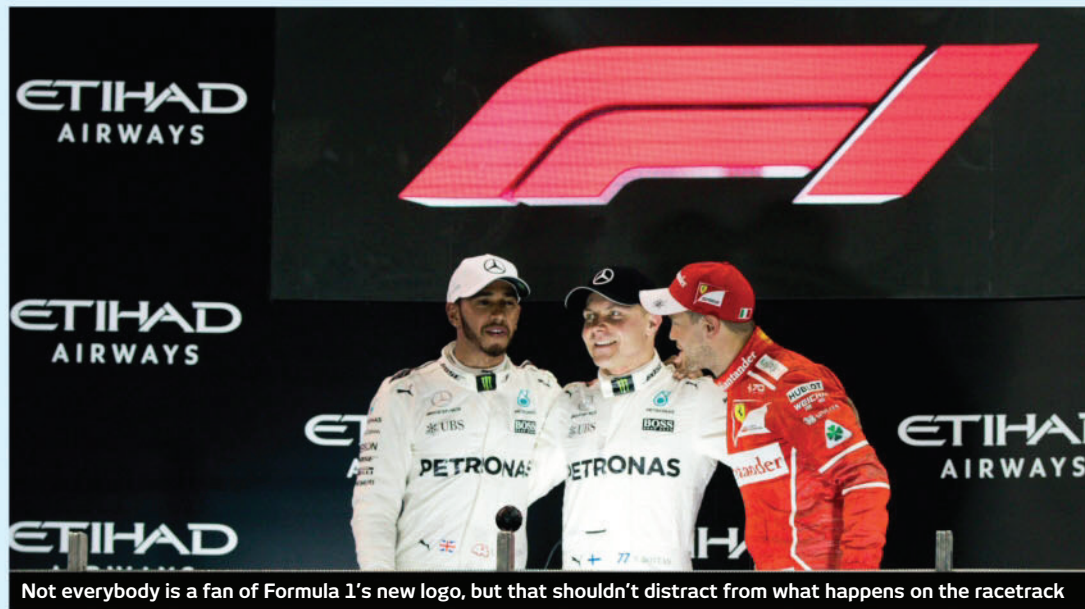
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Not everybody is a fan of Formula 1's new logo, but that shouldn't distract from what happens on the racetrack

What's in a logo?

I love Formula 1, I really do, but the fuss that some fans have made about the new logo really bores me.

Whether you like it or not, just move on. I'm also a fan of all types of motorsport, and it does seem that fans of other race series don't moan as much. IndyCar changed title sponsor from Izod to Verizon but the fans didn't kick up a fuss. Even when NASCAR title sponsor Monster changed the winning trophy, there wasn't much uproar.

So let's focus on the real matter at hand... the motor racing: man and machine, pushing each other to the limit. Let's not talk about what is effectively a font change to one letter and one number, F1.

Matt Lloyd
By email

Well done Lewis

Congratulations to Lewis Hamilton on securing his fourth drivers' world championship.

To win the world title has to be the ambition of all who enter the sport, right down to grassroots level, yet few ever succeed. To achieve it four times surely marks Lewis out as a special talent of his generation.

In the pantheon of British motor racing history, no driver has achieved what Lewis has. Some of the F1 records he has set, which will take a long time to be beaten if indeed they ever will, must mean he is one of the greatest ever.

His achievements are solely down to a lot of hard work and dedication, showing that you don't have to come from a privileged

background to achieve success, and are testament to the fact that a sportsperson can achieve any goals that they may set themselves.

The sight of Lewis crowdsurfing over my head, twice, will long live in the memory. Well done Lewis, a true champion.

Michael Brierley
Manchester, UK

Thumbs down for US TV: 1

I've just returned from a trip to the US where I had the opportunity to watch live coverage of the US GP. If Liberty Media are serious about increasing awareness of F1 in the USA, something needs to be done about the way it is presented on TV.

I didn't try to count the number of ad breaks but guess it was between 30 and 50, with almost

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as much total ad time as there was live racing. It would have been impossible for anyone new to F1 to follow the race. The format may suit American football and other stop-go sports followed in the USA, but it certainly doesn't suit F1.

Marcel Escudier
By email

Thumbs down for US TV: 2

I've been encouraged by the proposed changes Liberty Media have announced since taking over the sport. However, I was shocked to learn that they've awarded the US television rights to ESPN, whose bid includes showing the world feed with zero investment in a broadcast team with on-site production.

David Hobbs and Steve Matchett have been fantastic F1 broadcasters in the US for decades now, and having Will Buxton at the races has been great. Liberty have simply chosen a larger network, but not required anything from them to move the promotion of F1 forwards in the US. This is a critical error that needs to be fixed, or even more potential F1 fans will be lost.

Jim Factor
Austin, USA

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- > Pictures of the Year: the best photographs from 2017



FERRARI RETURN TO WINNING WAYS

After Valtteri Bottas lost out at the start, Sebastian Vettel's victory in Brazil was Ferrari's first since July



Victory in the Brazilian Grand Prix was Sebastian Vettel's first since the Hungarian GP in July, a stark indication of how the fortunes of Ferrari have waned since the summer break.

The outcome of the race was decided when the field descended towards Turn 1 on the opening lap. Pole-position holder Valtteri Bottas wasn't as clean away as Vettel, and as the pair braked into the downhill left-hander, the Ferrari just found the smallest of gaps between the Mercedes and the pitwall to ease into the lead.

Over the next 71 laps, Vettel managed to maintain a two-second margin to Bottas and that was enough to earn him his 47th Formula 1 victory and his eighth for Ferrari.

QUALIFYING

There was drama just moments into the start of qualifying as Lewis Hamilton made a rare mistake on his first flying lap and shunted his Mercedes hard into the barriers.

Having swept through the apex of Turn 6, he continued around the right-hander towards T7, but then his W08 bottomed out, sparks flew from the floor and nose, and even a world champion's reflexes couldn't stop the Mercedes rotating and clattering into the tyre wall.

"I was just taken by surprise," said Hamilton afterwards. "When the car bottoms out it stalls the floor, and that often happens when the tyres are cold. I haven't made any mistakes all year and it's

been a long time since I've put the car in the wall, but it's my fault and I take full responsibility."

Since Hamilton would start last, Mercedes opted to use Sunday's race to run new power unit parts, even though that would mean breaking parc fermé rules and consigning him to a pitlane start.

There was at least some joy for Merc as Bottas scooped pole position from Vettel's Ferrari on his last lap in Q3. Vettel had been quickest on his first run, stopping the clocks on 1m 08.360s, while Bottas was just 0.082s behind. The Ferrari failed to improve at the end, while Bottas set a 1m 08.322s lap, pipping Vettel by just 0.038s. The German conceded that he had been a bit too "chicken" braking into Turn 1 on his final lap.

Behind Vettel, his team-mate Kimi Räikkönen was third quickest, ahead of the Red Bulls of Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo (although the latter was carrying a ten-place engine penalty).

RACE

After four days of threatening rain clouds, São Paulo awoke on race day to clear blue skies and glorious sunshine. When the pitlane opened, half an hour before the start, Massa was the first to leave his garage, to a rapturous cheer from the local *Paulistas*. It would be another emotional farewell performance.

Interlagos is notoriously narrow, particularly through the tight Senna S of Turns 1 and 2, and contact between cars is typical on the opening lap. This year was no different. For Vettel, his strong launch off the startline and decisive overtake of Bottas for the lead into Turn 1 was the moment that sealed his victory in the race.

In contrast, after the joy of securing his third pole position in F1 on Saturday, Bottas was rather more subdued after the race on Sunday, conceding that he'd lost the victory in those crucial seconds.

The pace up front between the two was close the whole race; one mistake for Vettel could have allowed the Mercedes to get within DRS range and pounce, but Vettel made no such errors. He was backed up ably by the Ferrari pitcrew, who swapped wheels over half a second faster than Mercedes during the pitstop phase.

"Pace wise it was very, very close," added Bottas. "We put a lot of pressure under Seb, especially around the pitstop and we tried the undercut. I got pretty close, after he came out of the pits, but just not quite enough to try to overtake. So, yeah, definitely disappointed after a good day yesterday."

Remarkably, Bottas crossed the line just 2.706s ahead of team-mate Hamilton, who finished fourth thanks to his blistering drive through the field. His cause was ever-so-slightly helped by the



A rare off from Lewis in Q1 meant he started from the pitlane. Fourth was the best he could do...



Vettel celebrates his win (below) after a dramatic start (above) that brought out the Safety Car (above right). Massa was in the points in his final home race (far right)



“AFTER THE JOY OF SECURING HIS THIRD POLE POSITION, BOTTAS WAS MORE SUBDUED FOLLOWING THE RACE ON SUNDAY, CONCEDED THAT HE'D LOST THE VICTORY IN THOSE CRUCIAL FIRST SECONDS”

intervention of the Safety Car following a number of incidents on the opening lap.

As the field rounded the narrow Senna S there was plenty of contact, as a charging Ricciardo went a little wide over the exit kerb and lost momentum, triggering contact between Stoffel Vandoorne and Kevin Magnussen, who ricocheted into him. It was game over for the Haas and McLaren drivers, but Ricciardo was able to continue relatively unharmed, albeit at the tail of the field.

Just as the Safety Car was being deployed there was more contact heading into the double-apex right-handers of Turns 6 and 7. Force India's Esteban Ocon was attempting to overtake Romain Grosjean around the outside when the Haas driver

carried too much speed into T6, lost the rear of the car, and hit Ocon on the outside of the bend.

After four laps neutralised behind the Safety Car, racing resumed – and with it, one of the crucial moments of the race. Massa was able to jump Alonso for fifth place on the restart.

For the next 66 laps, Alonso kept up with the Williams, but despite every effort, couldn't quite make it past his former team-mate. It was an inspired drive from the Brazilian in his final home race before retirement. It was the result he wanted last year instead of that crash in the rain and an emotional walk down the pitlane. Not many drivers get the chance to say farewell twice. *Obrigado* again, Felipe.



1st	Sebastian Vettel Ferrari	1h 31m 26.262s
2nd	Valtteri Bottas Mercedes	+2.768s
3rd	Kimi Räikkönen Ferrari	+4.600s
4th	Lewis Hamilton Mercedes	+5.468s
5th	Max Verstappen Red Bull	+32.940s
6th	Daniel Ricciardo Red Bull	+48.691s
7th	Felipe Massa Williams	+68.882s
8th	Fernando Alonso McLaren	+69.363s
9th	Sergio Pérez Force India	+69.500s
10th	Nico Hülkenberg Renault	+1 lap
11th	Carlos Sainz Renault	+1 lap
12th	Pierre Gasly Toro Rosso	+1 lap
13th	Marcus Ericsson Sauber	+1 lap
14th	Pascal Wehrlein Sauber	+1 lap
15th	Romain Grosjean Haas	+2 laps
16th	Lance Stroll Williams	+2 laps

Retirements

Brendon Hartley Toro Rosso	40 laps – engine
Esteban Ocon Force India	0 laps – collision
Stoffel Vandoorne McLaren	0 laps – collision
Kevin Magnussen Haas	0 laps – collision

FASTEST LAP



Max Verstappen, 1min 11.044s on lap 64

FASTEST PITSTOP



Lance Stroll, 22.486s (entry to exit)

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



CLIMATE	AIR TEMP	TRACK TEMP
Sunny	28°C	54°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Hamilton	345pts	12 Hülkenberg	35pts
2 Vettel	302pts	13 Grosjean	28pts
3 Bottas	280pts	14 Magnussen	19pts
4 Ricciardo	200pts	15 Alonso	15pts
5 Räikkönen	193pts	16 Vandoorne	13pts
6 Verstappen	158pts	17 Palmer	8pts
7 Pérez	94pts	18 Wehrlein	5pts
8 Ocon	83pts	19 Kvyat	5pts
9 Sainz	54pts	Ericsson, Giovinazzi,	
10 Massa	42pts	Gasly, Hartley,	
11 Stroll	40pts	Button, Di Resta	0pts





PRIDE OF THE VALTTERI

A flaccid finale to an often brilliant season was still an important grand prix for winner Valtteri Bottas



Formula 1's fastest Finn won't lament the view that an otherwise exciting 2017 season ended inconsequentially under Yas Marina's floodlights. Valtteri Bottas's victory over Lewis Hamilton set him up perfectly for a stronger challenge in 2018.

QUALIFYING

Would the denouement, we wondered, arrive with a whimper or a bang?

Half the answer to that question was delivered by Bottas and his resounding pole position lap

around Yas Marina Circuit for the final race of 2017. He posted a 1m36.231s time, almost two-tenths faster than the 36.403s of his team-mate and fresh-minted 2017 champion Lewis Hamilton.

Very few grand prix drivers ever gain that kind of advantage over Hamilton – Formula 1's all-time pole position record holder of course (72 and counting) – so for Bottas, at least, this season was still far from over.

He'd been nip-and-tuck with Lewis throughout the session, going fastest of all early on, and

looking smooth and consistent throughout. But were we watching Bottas excellence or Hamilton failing to reach to the bottom of his talent well, now that the title was settled and his position as Britain's most successful driver in world championship history secured?

Lewis, for his part, reckoned he had no answer for Valtteri's speed and blew his pole shot with a poor final sector on his last timed run: he was 0.4s slower than Bottas, running wide on the exit of the final corner (Turn 21), just as he had earlier in the session. He also lost out at the T8/T9 left-right, carrying more speed in than Bottas, but exiting with rather less.

Sebastian Vettel led the non-Mercedes resistance, winding his Ferrari up to third place, but still 0.3s adrift of Hamilton and therefore half a second off the absolute pace.

“ABU DHABI CONFIRMED THAT WHILE THE SCUDERIA MADE A HUGE OFF-SEASON LEAP TO CHALLENGE MERCEDES AND THEIR WOB FOR MUCH OF THE SEASON, THE VETTEL-SF70H COMBO WAS ULTIMATELY SECOND-BEST”

A Ricciardo-Räikkönen-Verstappen mix from P4 to P6 offered no surprises other than an advantage of more than three-tenths for Dan over Max, stemming the flow of Verstappen's recent performance advantage. Dan reckoned hitting a sweet spot with tyre temperatures had been the key to his Ferrari-splitting success. Verstappen's relatively lowly position, meanwhile, resulted from his failure to nail his set-up after experiments with 2018 suspension components during FP1.

RACE

It comes to something when the highlight of a Formula 1 race is the sight of David Coulthard conducting podium interviews in a deerstalker-style double baseball cap. But so it was after the 2017 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, a race which, alas, had all the fizzle of an expired firework (and there were plenty of those peppering Yas Island in the wake of the post-race pyrotechnics).

Bottas's win, from pole, ahead of team-mate Hamilton, was impressive and confident, but his smooth efficiency did little for the 'spirit of racing' F1's owners Liberty Media are so keen to promote.

Hamilton, who tailed Bottas throughout, apart from some between-stops laps in the lead, nailed the problem with his analysis of the impossibility

YAS MARINA / 26.11.17 / 55 LAPS



Clockwise from above left: Bottas leads from the start; Massa battles Alonso for 9th place; Bottas holds Lewis off to win

of one F1 car passing another of comparable performance anywhere in the too-noodly third sector of Yas Marina Circuit. As Lewis noted, once both Mercedes had made clean starts and completed their single pitstops (from ultrasofts to supersofts) without drama, it would have taken a major Bottas error for the lead to change hands.

None came, apart from a brief lock-up by Valtteri at Turn 5 on lap 49. Suddenly, Hamilton, who'd been around 1.5s behind Bottas, was on his tail and threatening. Bottas didn't flinch, though, and with commendable *sisu* set fastest lap just three tours later: a 1m40.650s on lap 52.

And that was that, so far as the victory squabble was concerned, though its importance to the Bottas psyche as a foundation upon which he can build a stronger 2018 should not be undervalued.

Inevitably there were suggestions that Hamilton hadn't reached far into his box of tricks in pursuit of victory, though he swatted away any suggestion that he had somehow allowed Bottas to win. "I gave it everything today," he said. "He did a great job this weekend, as he has all year."

Ferrari were once again left chasing silver shadows under desert floodlights: Abu Dhabi confirmed that while the Scuderia made a huge off-season leap to challenge Mercedes and their

W08 for much of the season, the Vettel-SF70H combo was ultimately second-best.

Kimi Räikkönen's fourth was a predictable result, as was Max Verstappen's P5, in the wake of his practice and qualifying troubles. Throughout the 55 laps he was given a wild ride through the just-about-flat Turns 2 and 3; a lesser driver would have handled the challenge less deftly. Still, Max enjoyed better fortune than his team-mate, Dan Ricciardo, who became the first of only two retirements on lap 20, when hydraulic failure curtailed a likely run to fourth.

Among the happiest top-ten results was Nico Hülkenberg's sixth. His eight points were enough to vault Renault above Toro Rosso in the constructors' table and send an additional eight million championship bonus dollars into the team's accounts. Tidy – and welcome – after the pit-stop fumble for team-mate Carlos Sainz that left him without a secure front-left.

Sergio Perez and Esteban Ocon remained conjoined for seventh and eighth; Fernando Alonso was an entertaining ninth.

And exiting stage left with a last point in his final grand prix – number 269 – Felipe Massa, still standing tall, in his own diminutive way, after 16 memorable F1 years.

RESULTS ROUND 20



1st	Valtteri Bottas Mercedes	1h 34m 14.062s
2nd	Lewis Hamilton Mercedes	+3.899s
3rd	Sebastian Vettel Ferrari	+19.330s
4th	Kimi Räikkönen Ferrari	+45.386s
5th	Max Verstappen Red Bull	+46.269s
6th	Nico Hülkenberg Renault	+85.713s
7th	Sergio Pérez Force India	+92.062s
8th	Esteban Ocon Force India	+98.911s
9th	Fernando Alonso McLaren	+1 lap
10th	Felipe Massa Williams	+1 lap
11th	Romain Grosjean Haas	+1 lap
12th	Stoffel Vandoorne McLaren	+1 lap
13th	Kevin Magnussen Haas	+1 lap
14th	Pascal Wehrlein Sauber	+1 lap
15th	Brendon Hartley Toro Rosso	+1 lap
16th	Pierre Gasly Toro Rosso	+1 lap
17th	Marcus Ericsson Sauber	+1 lap
18th	Lance Stroll Williams	+1 lap

Retirements

Carlos Sainz Renault	31 laps – loose wheel
Daniel Ricciardo Red Bull	20 laps – hydraulics

FASTEST LAP



Valtteri Bottas, 1min 40.650s on lap 52

FASTEST PITSTOP



Sebastian Vettel, 21.221s (entry to exit)

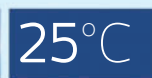
TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



CLIMATE



AIR TEMP



TRACK TEMP



DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Hamilton	363pts	12 Stroll	40pts
2 Vettel	317pts	13 Grosjean	28pts
3 Bottas	305pts	14 Magnussen	19pts
4 Räikkönen	205pts	15 Alonso	17pts
5 Ricciardo	200pts	16 Vandoorne	13pts
6 Verstappen	168pts	17 Palmer	8pts
7 Pérez	100pts	18 Wehrlein	5pts
8 Ocon	87pts	19 Kvyat	5pts
9 Sainz	54pts	Ericsson, Giovinazzi,	
10 Hülkenberg	43pts	Gasly, Hartley,	
11 Massa	43pts	Button, Di Resta	0pts





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WHY VISIT?

After a decade off the F1 calendar, the Austrian Grand Prix made a welcome return in 2014. Red Bull, the venue's owners, bankrolled a substantial upgrade to the former Österreichring circuit, which has the scenic Styrian countryside as a stunning backdrop.

The 2.68-mile circuit at Spielberg consists of only ten corners and a laptime just over the 60-second mark ensures plenty of value for spectators as cars pass them 71 times during the race. With Red Bull actively promoting the event, there is often an influx of Dutch spectators, who stay on the campsites during the weekend, and

noisily cheer on their hero Max Verstappen with a spectacular display of orange T-shirts and flags in the grandstands. Also, if you wish to experience a bit of F1 history you can still walk parts of the longer, old Österreichring circuit.

While the picturesque circuit is located north west of Austria's second city, Graz, just over an hour away, the well-trodden route to the countryside is from Vienna. Many Formula 1 fans start the week in the famous, historic capital before taking the two-and-a-half-hour journey to the state of Styria in the south of the country and the newly-refurbished Red Bull Ring.

WHAT TO SEE

Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens

Easily the most commanding structure in Vienna, the 1,441-room palace is visible as soon as you pull into the main train station. The impressive 17th-century building is accompanied by a large expanse of gardens including Roman ruins, the Gloriette and a range of sculptures dedicated to deities and virtues.

Kunsthistorisches Museum

Home to some of Europe's most prestigious works, Vienna's Museum of Art History is essential to the artistic essence of the Austrian



Natural History Museum



Schönbrunn Palace and Gardens



St Stephen's Cathedral



Kunsthistorisches Museum

capital. Artworks here include those by Raphael, Caravaggio, Rembrandt and Pieter Bruegel the Elder. A must-see destination while circumnavigating the Ring Strasse.

Belvedere Palace Museum

Particularly spectacular at night, the Upper Belvedere building is home to a world-class gallery and museum. A five-minute walk from the Karlplatz underground station, the site is perfect for a short jaunt around the palace or a full day exploring the gardens and museum. The gardens are littered with incredible sculptures

FAST FACTS

Currency £1 = €1.1

Timezone GMT or BST +1

Plug type Type F

Weather 19° C / sunny

Flight time London/Manchester to Vienna: 2hrs 30m (plus 2hrs 30m connection time to Red Bull Ring)

and fountains, while the museum itself is home to the works of Gustav Klimt.

St Stephen's Cathedral

Ascend the bell tower in the evening for incredible view across the city and a beautiful sunset dipping below the skyline. History buffs can delve into the catacombs below and take a journey through the changing face of the burial rituals and ceremonies surrounding the death of the rich and powerful in Vienna's history.

Natural History Museum

Packed to the rafters with everything from dinosaur exhibits, pieces of meteorites, stuffed animals, mineral collections and models, the Natural History Museum is a must if travelling with children. Grab an audio guide or tour to make sure you don't miss the museum's most fascinating sights.

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- Welcome drink
- Race day (Sunday) general admission ticket
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- Service charges, taxes & ATOL protection

WHERE TO STAY

Lindner Hotel Am Belvedere

This hotel is situated in downtown Vienna, close to the Belvedere Castle and the botanical gardens. It features an elegant design with rustic touches in the Heuriger (wine tavern), great gourmet options and a graceful yet casual atmosphere to ensure a delightful stay.

Ibis Wien Mariahilf Vienna

The affordable 3-star ibis Wien Mariahilf hotel offers 341 air-conditioned rooms. The hotel is located in central Vienna, next to the Westbahnhof train station, Raimund Theatre and Mariahilfer Strasse, Vienna's largest shopping street. St Stephen's Cathedral, the Schönbrunn Palace, zoo and aquarium are all within easy reach. The hotel boasts a restaurant, café bar and free Wi-Fi access.

Leonardo Hotel Vienna

The first Austrian hotel of the Leonardo Hotels chain is also situated in the centre of Vienna and located on Europaplatz, close to the biggest shopping street and a mere 200 metres away from the train station Westbahnhof. The Leonardo boasts 213 rooms and suites and the Vitruv restaurant. From this hotel the historic town centre can be easily reached by underground public transport.

**pricing correct at time of press*

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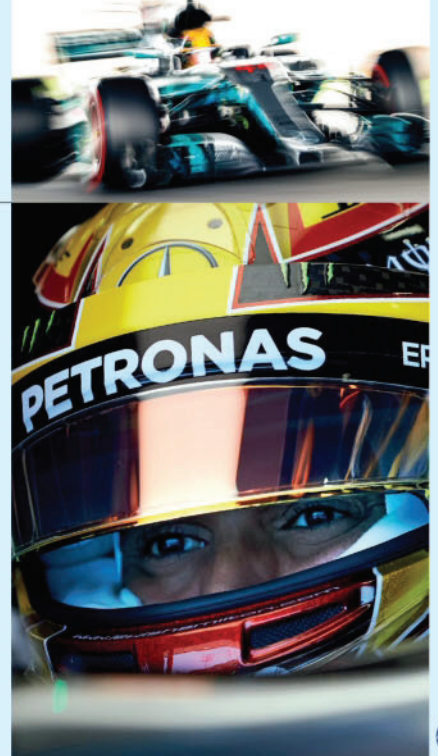
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LEWIS HAMILTON ME AND MY LID

Britain's first four-time world champ ran a competition to find his 2017 design. After his title success he'll need an update for 2018...



LAT IMAGES: STEVE ETHERINGTON; GLENN DUNBAR



My helmet design this year came from a competition I ran on Instagram, which attracted over 8,000 entries and was won by Raí Caldato from Brazil. It's a nice evolution of previous designs, with three stripes on the sides accompanied by three stars that represent my

championship wins [which was correct at the start of the 2017 season]. The green, yellow and blue are the colours of Brazil as a tribute to my racing hero, Ayrton Senna.

There's yellow throughout, reminding me of my helmets in the past, balanced in this design

with candy apple red. I've always led with yellow on my helmets and this goes back to my early days because my dad wanted to be able to see me clearly when I was karting and I was on the far side of the circuit: he wanted to know that I was alright.

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