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THE PARLOUS STATE OF F1

LEWIS HAMILTON



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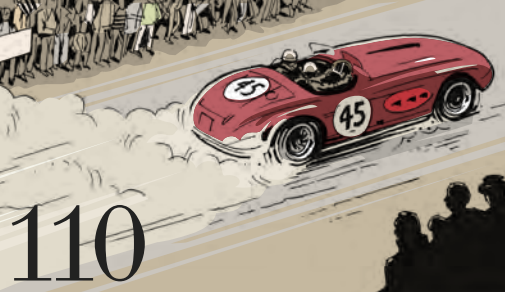
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WHEN THIS MAGAZINE'S regular editor and I met up in America for a road trip (you can read the details on page 67), it was fittingly in the wake of one of the big turning points of a season in which Tom Kristensen, Loïc Duval and I have clinched our first world titles.

That World Endurance Championship victory at Austin, back in September, marked an important weekend in our campaign – and already we are getting ready for the next one. We can't wait.

When sports car's first world championship since 1992 was announced for the start of last year, it was clearly long overdue. We've had some fantastic sports car championships and races for a long time now, but never a world title to go with them. In 30 years as a racing driver, I've only contested four world championships: one in karting, one in Formula 1 (I had a bit more chance of success in karting than I did with Toyota...) and then last year and this year in sports cars.

I've won American Le Mans Series titles when it was effectively a world championship, but this is different – no question. There is an extra aspect to it. From a competition point of view this is the hardest we've had, right now. And the future is extremely bright, too. When Peugeot pulled out on the very day entries closed for the first WEC last year, people were talking about the series' demise before it had even begun. In reality it was only a speed bump. Now Porsche is coming back for 2014, while various manufacturers are rumoured to be planning programmes. It's going to be good – and having won the title, I can't wait to begin its defence.



I REACTED IN TWO DIFFERENT ways to the news that my old friend Dario Franchitti is retiring because of the injury he sustained in his Houston Indycar crash in September. First off, I'm relieved he got out okay, because that was a big shunt. To know that he's out in one piece is a relief.

But the fact that it was this injury that caused him to hang up his helmet adds a tinge of sadness. That's not how any racing driver wants to stop. But ultimately, when you look back at the wee boy from Bathgate who ran his first kart race at Larkhall in 1984, and then



**ALLAN
McNISH**
GUEST EDITOR

consider three Indy 500 victories and four Indycar championships, never mind all the other races he's won and the status he holds in the US and our industry, I think he can put his helmet on the shelf with complete and utter pride. He's been an absolute superstar, a friend and somebody who has flown the flag proudly not only for Scotland, but for the whole of the UK. I'm very pleased he shared the same era as David Coulthard and myself, too.



IN THE PAST WEEKS AND MONTHS, I've watched Sebastian Vettel score his fourth consecutive F1 world title from the dual perspective of the Radio 5 Live commentary box and as a fellow driver. From the latter view, the execution of the way Vettel and Red Bull have gone about the second half of the season is absolutely exemplary. It was pretty much perfect, exactly the way you should do it: clinical, clean and tidy. He did what he needed to do, but no more.

He obviously had a significant amount in hand, no question, but to win four on the bounce... He's only had six seasons in total! That is a fantastic batting average and I don't care what anyone says: that is not down to luck or the car. There is a huge ability factor in what he has achieved, to get the maximum out of himself and the team – and also to get into the right team in the first place.

Now all eyes are on seven titles and what used to be seen as Michael Schumacher's unassailable records.

Heading into new regulations, you could probably back Renault to produce a good drivetrain and you would definitely back Adrian Newey and his group to produce a good car. His prospects for more titles are not looking bad...



THE THING THAT HAS SURPRISED me about the McLaren driver change for 2014 is that Sergio Pérez only had a one-year deal. As a young driver going into a top team, the first year was always going to be difficult – especially up against Jenson Button. Sergio has done a pretty good job, but obviously not outstanding. It wasn't a comfortable relationship like the one he had at Sauber, where expectations are lower. If the car had been good, I think Sergio would probably still be at McLaren for 2014. But it was a bit of a dog and he probably wasn't experienced enough to drag the best from it – or himself.

As for little Kevin Magnussen, I remember his dad Jan telling me how quick he was when he was just 16. At the same stage Jan was very quick and didn't crash. Kevin was fast, had the feel and the skill... but did crash. Now he's got that out of his system and, I have to say, he is very impressive. I think his mentality will fit well at McLaren but, as with Sergio, there is an expectation. He'll have to get on with the programme.

He's an interesting character, a dogged little fighter. I'm looking forward to seeing what he can do. The time is right for new blood – go for it.



Allan McNish settles in at the editor's keyboard. Luckily MS doesn't often do 24-hour shifts, so he didn't have to complete a triple stint



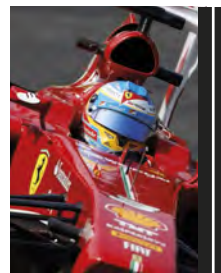
IT'S ALSO NICE TO HEAR A DRIVER decision that hasn't been determined by money. When David, Dario and I were coming up, sponsors were definitely easier to come by. Budgets were much lower; you could manage on a shoestring, even in F3. That is difficult now.

There is a lot of criticism of pay drivers, but the current guys in F1 can all definitely drive. Pastor Maldonado gets slated for some of his moves and rightly so, but he's won a Grand Prix from the front row of the grid, in Spain, soaking up pressure from Fernando Alonso for the last 20 laps. So we can't just underline pay drivers as bad. The difficulty for someone like Paul di Resta is that there are drivers around who have won GPs and have a lot of sponsorship dollars in their pocket. They're not necessarily future world champions, but they're good drivers.

In terms of support, today there is only Red Bull and, in the UK, Racing Steps. In my day we had Marlboro, Camel and others taking people through. The staircase was clear, with fewer options: we had only F3000. Now, is Renault 3.5 better than GP2?

The situation in the UK is worrying. I was very concerned through 2013 about the potential demise of British F3. I like the idea of Formula 4, having something reasonably cost-capped as an entry-level formula. I like the idea of a national F3 championship, a strong junior category on British circuits. Because right now, if you're 16 or 17, it would be quite easy to do all your junior racing and learning abroad. When we were growing up the British tracks were *the* tracks. That's not the case now and that is something we've got to address, so young drivers and teams can still cut their teeth in the UK.

Enjoy the issue.



IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE
Ferrari's 20 greatest Formula 1 drivers

ON SALE DECEMBER 28



CONTRIBUTORS

Australian racing journalist **Michael Stahl** has written for many home and US titles – and has a four-lane slot track in his garage, making us all jealous. Living in Sydney he was well placed to visit Brabham kingpin Ron Tauranac and hear a shocking confession (p102). Equally startling news – **Richard Heseltine** now owns a Lamborghini Espada. It's a long way from the Sprite with which Alec Poole, Richard's subject this month, began. As well as sharing the editor's chair with Allan McNish, **Damien Smith** and the new WEC champion have been on a Wild West tour. Read about their road trip on p67. Damien couldn't head back for Austin's GP, so F1 pundit **Adam Cooper** was our man on the ground. He's also landed an exclusive interview with a frank and open Lewis Hamilton – read it on p88.

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See page 100 for more details

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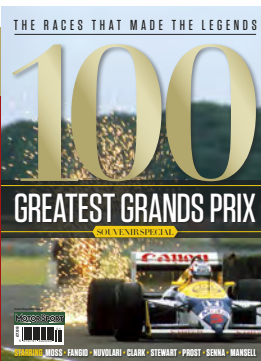
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THE MOTOR SPORT MONTH

IN PICTURES

OCTOBER 30, 2013

Burj Al Arab hotel

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Sebastian Vettel gets most of the good jobs, while former Red Bull racer David Coulthard is handed assorted PR stunts such as this. At least there are no reprimands for performing donuts on a hotel helipad in the Middle East.



NOVEMBER 17, 2013

NASCAR Sprint Cup

HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA

Jimmie Johnson (centre) celebrates with crew chief Chad Knaus after clinching NASCAR's biggest championship for the sixth time. His wife Chandra is taking the snaps. No, we're not sure about the headgear, either...



NOVEMBER 8-9, 2013

WEC, round seven

SHANGHAI, CHINA

While Allan McNish, Loïc Duval and Tom Kristensen clinched the main title before empty stands, Darren Turner and Stefan Mücke reclaimed the GTE-Pro points lead for Aston Martin.



NOVEMBER 10, 2013

MotoGP showdown

VALENCIA, SPAIN

Marc Márquez celebrates in front of an adoring home public. Second place in the final race of the year enabled the 20-year-old rookie to clinch the MotoGP title, 14 points clear of race winner Jorge Lorenzo.



THE MOTOR SPORT MONTH

IN PICTURES

NOVEMBER 14-17, 2013

Wales Rally GB

NORTH AND MID WALES

Mikko Hirvonen didn't last long on Wales Rally GB, crashing out on Friday morning. The event's switch from Cardiff to Deeside triggered a huge upturn in crowd numbers and created a few logistical headaches that need addressing for 2014, but that's a nice problem to have. The atmosphere was terrific.

CITROËN

BERNIE ECCLESTONE'S FUTURE AS Formula 1's boss could be determined by a London High Court trial verdict, which is due to be given early in 2014.

The trial began at the end of October and was coming to a close as *Motor Sport* went to press. It has shed light on Ecclestone's management style and the complex business structure he put in place to run F1. The billionaire has been in F1's driving seat for nearly 40 years, but his reign is at risk.

The threat comes from allegations that Ecclestone and his Bambino family trust paid a \$44m bribe (between 2006 and 2007) to Gerhard Gribkowsky, a former executive of German bank BayernLB. The bribe is said to have been paid to ensure that the bank sold its 47.2 per cent stake in F1 to the sport's current owner, the investment firm CVC.

In June 2012 a German court found Gribkowsky guilty of receiving the alleged bribe and sentenced him to eight and a half years in prison.

The charges against him were the catalyst for the High Court claim against Ecclestone, which has been brought by German media rights company Constantin Medien.

It has accused Ecclestone and Gribkowsky of conspiring to undervalue F1 through engineering the sale to CVC. Constantin claims it lost out as it had an agreement with BayernLB: it would receive a 10 per cent share of any proceeds if the bank's stake was sold for more than \$1.1bn.

BayernLB got \$765m for the stake so Constantin missed out on a payment and is suing Ecclestone, Gribkowsky, Bambino and the trust's former legal adviser for damages.

Constantin claims that CVC was Ecclestone's preferred buyer as it had agreed to retain him as F1's chief executive officer.

Ecclestone admits paying Gribkowsky but denies it was a bribe.

He says Gribkowsky threatened to tell the British tax authorities that he controlled Bambino if the money was not paid. Bambino is based off-shore, but Ecclestone is a UK resident so he would be liable to pay tax on the estimated \$4bn in the trust if he was found to be in control of it, which he strongly denies.

He says he paid Gribkowsky because those false allegations would have



Ecclestone's future hangs on court verdict

F1 tsar could be driven from his sport as London tribunal assesses conflicting evidence | BY CHRISTIAN SYLT

REX FEATURES

triggered a lengthy and probably very costly investigation.


When Ecclestone was asked in court why he did not report Gribkowsky's threats to the police instead of paying him off he said: "What would they have done? I informed them about a burglary we had. They did nothing." He added: "I was trying to keep all of this out of the tax people. That was the whole point of paying him. If I hadn't have wanted to do that, I wouldn't have paid him."

In May Ecclestone was charged in Germany with the criminal offence of paying a bribe. However the prosecutors have said they will not make a decision until next year on whether to bring him to trial, so they will be closely watching the civil proceedings in London.

If the case goes in Ecclestone's favour it reduces the likelihood that he will be put on trial in Germany, which in turn increases the chances that the long-awaited flotation of F1 on the Singapore stock market will be given the green light. There is a lot on the line as it is unlikely that Ecclestone would have the

"I was trying to keep all of this out of the tax people. That was the whole point of paying him. If I hadn't have wanted to do that, I wouldn't have paid him."

time to run F1 at the same time as mounting a defence in a criminal trial. Last year he said that CVC "will probably be forced to get rid of me if the Germans come after me. It's pretty obvious, if I'm locked up."

The court in London has heard evidence which Constantin has tried to use to build up a picture that Bambino and Ecclestone are prepared to pay bribes and that he is desperate to stay in power. The events at the heart of Constantin's claim took place more than five years ago, so the evidence in the case is not directly relevant to contemporary F1, and industry insiders already knew much of the detail. It 

MOTOR SPORT SAYS...

Damien Smith, Editor

It was business as usual at the US Grand Prix as civil court proceedings against Bernie Ecclestone and his off-shore Bambino family trust continued in London. The Formula 1 paddock has always existed in a bubble, and yet again the teams concerned themselves solely with the nitty-gritty matters of the moment. The future of who controls F1, and potentially how, was of low priority compared to high tyre degradation, performance 'delta times' and the like. There was a race to be run, and such matters – even if they were fundamental to the destiny of their business – required no comment, particularly as the case was unresolved.

Ecclestone travelled to Austin after a witness stand performance that was at times laughable. At one stage he was accused of "lying repeatedly" as he requested to "go back on" evidence he'd given. Still, we know only a fool would underestimate him. He might successfully see off Constantin's allegations and continue his iron rule (on behalf of those benevolent employers at CVC).

But if he fails, everything changes.

Even his boss admits as much. CVC co-founder Donald Mackenzie told the court: "If it is proven that Mr Ecclestone has done anything that is criminally wrong, we would fire him." He went on to say that Ecclestone finally admitted the alleged Gribkowsky bribe payments in February 2011 after having "forgotten" about it. As you do with \$44m.

We've stated our opposition many times to Ecclestone's questionable approach to running what is no longer his business. When he does go, on his own terms or otherwise, a period of F1 chaos is guaranteed, which is in itself an indictment of his leadership. Nevertheless, the rot runs deep, far beyond one man, no matter how influential.

Even without Ecclestone, the flawed

business model will remain: a private financier feeding off the revenues of a sport in dire need of reinvestment, most pertinently to ensure the survival of venues and races in its traditional markets.

If CVC cannot float its F1 stake on the stock market, the piecemeal sale of its interest will continue – most likely to other faceless investment companies that share the same profit-creaming priorities. So can any single entity break the system? We fear the answer to that question.

Historically, the teams – with most to win or lose – have shown themselves incapable of setting aside self-interest for the good of the sport. We can't rely on them. Logic thus suggests our best hope lies with the regulatory governing body.

FIA president Jean Todt is assured of a second term in office, now the challenge from David Ward has evaporated through lack of support. Todt has already worked hard to secure better terms for the FIA; now he must fight harder to win back the power his predecessor Max Mosley gave away so easily to Ecclestone at the turn of the century.

But he's hamstrung by EU competition laws that, quite rightly, won't allow the FIA both to regulate and promote the sport. And this is at the heart of how we arrived here in the first place. Over the years F1 has tied itself in knots to meet the letter of the law, as Ecclestone has worked tirelessly to hold on to power.

We don't pretend to have all the answers to the complex problems of running a sport with so many vested interests, but the fact remains there's an elephant in the room, and it won't be shifted until open and forthright discussions on the sport's future begin.

But while Ecclestone retains control that can never happen – let's face it, he'd hate it. Whatever happens in court, it's time for the man to go.

grabbed headlines nevertheless.

One of the most widely reported allegations was that Bambino's subsidiary Valper Holdings made payments of \$10m to Eddie Jordan, Alain Prost, Tom Walkinshaw and Frank Williams in return for them agreeing to stay in F1 by signing the 1998 Concorde Agreement. Acting for Constantin, Philip Marshall QC claimed that paying the money to the team owners rather than the teams was "very odd" and "a very strange arrangement".

Ecclestone revealed that he would not have needed to pay a bribe to ensure that he stayed in his job. If F1 had been sold to an owner that wanted to remove him, it is likely that the deal would have been blocked by the FIA. He added that, contrary to popular belief, "I don't want to die as CEO. I run the company... and as long as I've got control of the company, I will continue to be there. If I find that I haven't got control any more, I will leave and do something else."

It also emerged in court that Ecclestone had thought the "ideal person" to succeed him was former Ferrari team principal Marco Piccinini "because he was the manager at Ferrari for 12 years and was close to Mr Ferrari. So he knew a little bit about business as his parents owned three quite large banks and he was involved in the banks as well".

Although great attention has been given in court to Ecclestone's alleged bribe and quest to stay in power, that is only half the story. In order to win the case, Constantin doesn't just need to prove that Ecclestone paid a bribe, it also needs to prove that this led to F1 being undervalued and that, in fact, the stake was worth more than \$1.1bn.

No other bidder offered more than CVC, but Constantin claims that it would have paid more, or another buyer prepared to offer more would have been found if the alleged bribe had not been paid. Its lawsuit states, "Had it not been for the Unlawful Conduct, the BayernLB Holding would have been sold to CVC or another purchaser for full value in or about January 2006."

But it appears Constantin might have its work cut out to convince the judge, Mr Justice Newey, that Formula 1 was indeed undervalued. His decision on this will be pivotal to the outcome of the case – and perhaps to Ecclestone's future as F1 boss.



McLaren junior Kevin Magnussen has been rewarded, following his success in the 2013 Formula Renault 3.5 championship

Magnussen in, Pérez axed

McLAREN'S DECISION TO DITCH Sergio Pérez in favour of Kevin Magnussen is the most dramatic twist yet in an unpredictable F1 silly season that has left even the most astute driver managers struggling to keep pace.

The saga of Pérez's 2014 contract had been dragging on for some weeks. Initially McLaren appeared to be delaying confirmation of the Mexican's ongoing presence, in the hope that Fernando Alonso might be able to extract himself from Ferrari – presenting the team with a unique opportunity to grab one of the biggest players on the

market, despite the animosity surrounding his departure at the end of 2007. In addition, the delaying tactics were widely seen as a motivating exercise for Pérez and his sponsors.

After a strong race in India, and with Alonso long off the market, Pérez's retention appeared to be a formality. Behind the scenes, however, there was an increasingly strong push for McLaren protégé Magnussen, who had recently secured the Renault 3.5 title against stiff opposition. Crucially, the Dane had won a lot of support from the engineering team following tests at Abu Dhabi in November 2012 and Silverstone last July, along with good form in the factory simulator.

Martin Whitmarsh followed the logical path of trying to place Magnussen with another team for a learning year in 2014, but with so many experienced drivers on the market – and money an inevitable requirement – there were no takers.

In the end the team decided to do exactly what it did with Lewis Hamilton in 2007, and push Magnussen straight into a race seat. The big difference back then was a genuine vacancy, but this time the team dropped the man who just a few months earlier had been touted as its future star.

Whitmarsh summed it up succinctly when he said that Pérez had done nothing wrong, it was just that Magnussen existed – and the team could not pass up the opportunity to fast-track him into a seat. Pérez claimed he was totally shocked by the decision, but to his credit reacted with considerable class and delivered a solid race just a few days later in Austin.

The buzz around Magnussen suggests he really is something special, and McLaren has clearly convinced future partner Honda that the Dane will be the man to push the team forward.

Now he has to prove that he can thrive in the spotlight, as Hamilton did in his rookie year.

"He's like his father, who was also very, very quick," Whitmarsh told *Motor Sport*. "He's also quite a contrast to his father. So he's got the speed, but also the focus, the determination and the steeliness."

"He's demonstrated that this year in Renault 3.5: he set out to win the title, and he did it in style. He's grown and developed enormously."

Meanwhile, the next question is who might partner Magnussen in the first Honda year. Jenson Button has a contract only for next season – and Alonso's name continues to be associated with a return in 2015.

When asked by *Motor Sport*, Button said: "I'll give it my all and hopefully let my results do the talking next year..."

F1 race dates trimmed

CONCERNS ABOUT THE 22-RACE 2014 schedule originally announced by the FIA have proved unfounded as no fewer than three races have already fallen by the wayside.

Mexico, New Jersey and South Korea are all set to be dropped from the final calendar, which is set to be approved by the World Motor Sport Council in early December.

Bernie Ecclestone says that the New Jersey race, which he provisionally scheduled in the middle of a logistically impossible run of three races in as many weekends, starting in Monaco and ending in Montreal, is still short of sufficient investment.

"New Jersey won't happen because we still haven't got the finance together for that," Ecclestone told *Motor Sport*. "Well, it's not for us to get it – it's for the promoter, and he hasn't got it. I put it on the calendar because they keep telling me it's all going to happen."

NJ advisor Chris Pook insists, however, that the money has been found and the hold-up is down to various details that still need to be addressed when planning a street event.

The practicalities of upgrading the Mexico City venue, last used for F1 in 1992, have proved impossible. Hermann Tilke has been engaged to modify the layout and build a new pit and paddock complex, but it cannot be done in a year due to problems with the ground and a major concert venue within the site: this has to be moved, but has long-term dates booked.

Mexican promoters are now aiming for June 2015, and thus a back-to-back event with Canada.

"We're not going to lose Mexico, we never had it," Ecclestone said. "We hoped that it would happen, but unfortunately the circuit needs a lot of work doing to it. They know what we want, it's in our contract, so there are no secrets." *Adam Cooper*



— OBITUARY —

Henry Taylor

All-rounder Henry Taylor has died in France, aged 80. Entering racing via F3 in 1954, he won the Autosport championship in '55. Over the next three years he proved fast in a D-type Jaguar and achieved success in F2. Through 1960 Taylor drove a Yeoman Credit F1 Cooper, taking fourth in the French GP but also winning the Monaco Formula Junior race in a Tyrrell Cooper. The following year he drove a UDT Lotus 18/21, as well as the team's Lotus 19 sports car, suffering a major crash in the British GP. Although he recovered to race in one last GP, Italy, he then retired and returned to farming, but soon began rallying a works Cortina (while also racing for Alan Mann). A prominent member of the UK bobsleigh team, it was he who arranged for a team of Cortinas to drive down the Cresta Run. His career ended in 1966, but he became Ford's competitions manager and set up Ford Special Vehicles, before moving to France and establishing several boat businesses.

TechnoFile

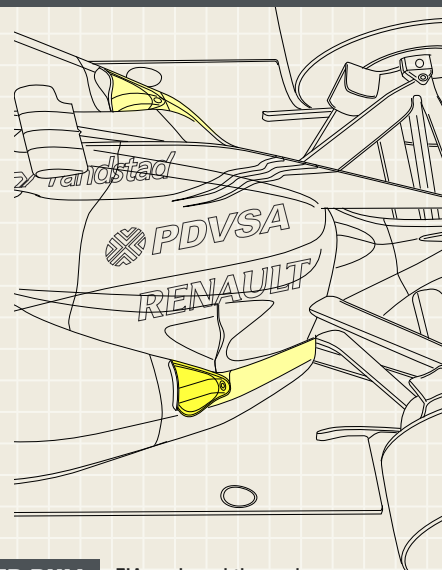
A glance at developments from the Formula 1 pitlane



WILLIAMS

Such were the problems Williams faced with its

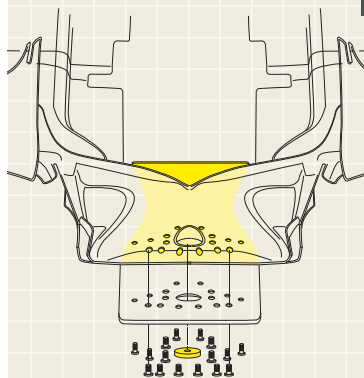
2013 car that a test of next season's set-up proved to be an improvement – despite the lack of blown diffuser effect. In 2014 exhausts must exit centrally above the gearbox and thus have no impact on the diffuser. In Abu Dhabi the team tried a development exhaust blowing upwards along the bodywork and therefore clear of the diffuser, theoretically robbing the car of downforce and lap time, but found the car worked better with these fitted and ran both in this form.



RED BULL

FIA on-board thermal cameras show that the front of the T-tray

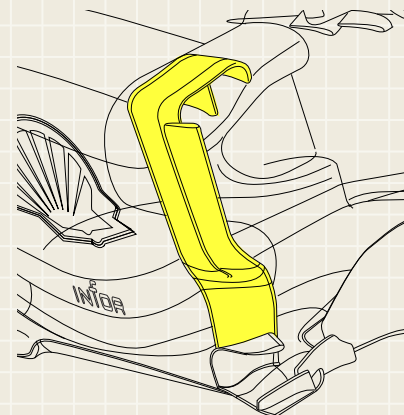
splitter on the Red Bull RB9 runs very hot. Despite rumours of super capacitors or KERS cooling inside the T-tray, the probable explanation is simpler. The RB9 has an extreme nose-down set-up to maximise aero performance, risking the T-Tray scraping the track. Undue wear of the legality plank means exclusion, but the rules allow one titanium skid block. This would wear away with Red Bull's set-up, so the team has fitted 16 bolts around the mandatory skid block – clearly overkill for mounting the plank, so the bolts appear to be there as additional skid blocks to prevent wear.



FERRARI

With the F138 going backwards on pace relative

to its rivals, small tweaks were still being tried in Abu Dhabi. These sidepod vane revisions followed on from those in Japan, the vertical vanes now curling over to form a horizontal vane over the sidepod. This creates an aerodynamic downwash over the sidepod, better to redirect the exhaust plume towards the diffuser. As with many of Ferrari's updates this year, the designs did not yield an improvement and were not raced at Yas Marina.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY CRAIG SCARBOROUGH



Brands Hatch last staged a major sports car race in 1996

Teams commit to Formula E

THE FRENCH DAMS TEAM, DTM regular Abt (in conjunction with Audi Sport) and Super Aguri from Japan are the latest teams to sign up for next winter's inaugural FIA Formula E Championship for electric vehicles.

DAMS, winner of a total of six Formula 3000, GP2 and Formula Renault 3.5 titles, has linked up with four-time world champion Alain Prost to create a new team for the series of city events, which is due to kick off next September. The new squad will race under the e.dams banner.

DAMS boss Jean-Paul Driot said: "Getting involved with Formula E was an obvious choice. Being a race enthusiast, I was immediately convinced by this new concept of using fully electric single-seater cars and believe it will shape the future of motor sport."

Prost said he was "very happy to be a part of the Formula E adventure".

Abt will enter as the Audi Sport Abt Formula E team. Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich said: "We've been watching this new project with great interest and are delighted that Abt Sportsline will be involved right from the beginning."

The latest additions leave only three team slots vacant for the 2014/15 series.

Cut-price Silverstone

SILVERSTONE CIRCUIT IS BEING sold for little more than £10m, according to recently-filed documents.

It follows the sale in September of a 999-year lease on 280 acres of land surrounding the circuit. The buyer was property group MEPC and it paid £32m.

Terms to sell a lease on Silverstone itself were agreed on August 8 and it is understood that its current management, including chairman Neil England, have been retained to run the circuit. As the deal was done before the BRDC's 2012 financial statements had been filed, it needed to show the value of the circuit based on the sale price.

The accounts have now been released and reveal that at December 31 2012 the track, plant and machinery had a value of £10.8m. Reflecting this, a BRDC member said that the club is getting "£10m for the lease and a rental of £2m per year."

The reason for the low price was

Blancpain set for Brands

International sports cars return to familiar terrain | BY GARY WATKINS

TOP-LINE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS car racing will return to Brands Hatch for the first time in almost 20 years, with a round of the renamed Blancpain Sprint Series in 2014.

The series started life as the FIA GT1 World Championship and was last season called the FIA GT Series. It will appear on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit on May 17-18, the weekend previously occupied by the Kentish venue's DTM fixture. The race marks a return of major sports car racing to a circuit with a rich history in the discipline, covering 19 world sports car championship fixtures between 1967 and '89 and its last such major event, the BPR-run Global Endurance GT Series race in 1996.

Championship promoter Stéphane Ratel explained that he had phoned Jonathan Palmer, boss of Motor Sport Vision, as soon as he saw that Brands was missing from the DTM calendar.

"I jumped on it as soon as I saw that the DTM would not be going to Brands in May and luckily I was able to convince Jonathan to come with us," he said. "When Jonathan does something,

he does it well. This is another step in the right direction for us."

Palmer believes Ratel's Sprint championship will flourish after taking the same name as the successful Blancpain Endurance Series.

"We know the BES is very successful and taking that brand over to the Sprint Series can only help it grow," he said. "It is a great series with fabulous cars, so I am sure it will be a great substitute for the DTM."

The extension of a sponsorship deal with Swiss watchmaker Blancpain means Ratel has been able to push through his plan to link the two series. Blancpain GT Series titles will be awarded on the basis of points scored across the seven-round Sprint Series and the five-event Endurance Series.

"This is more about having one integrated programme that we can promote together," Ratel said.

"Blancpain has built a name in the world of GT racing and become a kind of reference. Now we are receiving money from a sponsor rather than paying the FIA [a sanction fee], which means we can help our teams financially."



"It is a great series with fabulous cars, so I am sure it will be a great substitute for the DTM."

Jonathan Palmer, MSV Chief Executive

explained in a letter sent to BRDC members by outgoing chairman Stuart Rolt, on September 24. He wrote: "The value of an asset that has a locked purpose as a business (in Silverstone's case to be operated primarily as a motor racing circuit) is largely calculated from the profit that can be derived from it." Last year Silverstone made a net loss of £3.3m and Rolt's letter said: "Our circuit assets value reflects this."

The sale price stands in stark contrast to the construction cost of purpose-built F1 circuits that typically come to about £200m. It is also low compared to the price paid for other tracks. They include the Nürburgring, which according to media reports is being bought by Germany's national motoring club ADAC for £85m (€100m).



Mazda targets Le Mans

MAZDA HAS ASPIRATIONS TO run a new turbodiesel LMP2 engine (pictured testing, above) in the Le Mans 24 Hours. The engine is set to race in next season's United SportsCar Championship in North America.

Mazda announced its plans for the production-based SKYACTIV-D P2 powerplant at Le Mans in 2012, but race organiser Automobile Club de l'Ouest backed away from a commitment to allow the engine to compete in the 24 Hours or the World Endurance Championship. Now, Mazda will compete with the unit in the US and evaluate its performance ahead of a possible rule change in 2015.

ACO sporting manager Vincent Beaumesnil explained that a cautious approach was being taken for fear of destabilising the category.

"We have a good equilibrium in P2: we have a lot of cars and everyone is happy with the rules," he said. "What we have decided is that they should race in the USA for one season and then we will look what has happened and see what we will do."

■ Audi's 2014 Le Mans 24 Hours challenger has already hit the track. The new car, built to the latest P1 'fuel-formula' rulebook, ran for the first time on schedule at the end of September and had tested for a second time by early November.



GORDON KIRBY

DIXON ON THE CUSP OF GREATNESS

SCOTT DIXON'S ROAD TO HIS THIRD IndyCar title was a classic come-from-behind battle. Dixon and Chip Ganassi's team struggled through the opening races of the season and seemed to be out of contention after the Indy 500, where Dixon finished a distant 14th and team-mate Dario Franchitti crashed on the last lap. At that stage Dixon and Franchitti were eighth and 17th in the standings and the team's chances of winning a fifth championship in six years looked remote.

But Dixon, Franchitti and Charlie Kimball stunned everyone by scoring a superb one-two-three at Pocono on the first weekend in July. Dixon went on to win both races in Toronto the following week, won again in Houston in October and stole the championship from the grasp of Helio Castroneves and Team Penske. "It's pretty unbelievable," Dixon said. "I think Honda stepped up in the middle of the year. The power was better and fuel mileage improved."

The team's big breakthrough came at a Sebring test in June, where they worked on their shock absorbers to promote more mechanical grip.

Franchitti and Kimball were a big help in winning the championship, because they took many points from Castroneves over the course of the season. "Absolutely," Dixon said. "A lot of what I achieved this year was done by Dario and Charlie."

Dixon was very unhappy with his pit penalty at Sonoma in July and a crash with Will Power at Baltimore the following weekend. He believes IndyCar must revise its method of officiating races. "I think NASCAR and F1 do a good job in those situations," he said. "When they're in an uncertain area and aren't really sure, they wait until after the race to decide penalties. That stops rash decisions and enables you to listen to

both sides of the story and analyse.

"In F1 they listen to three people before they make any public decision, rather than just one. I think that takes out any biases and I think that's where we need to be. Hopefully, IndyCar will go in that direction."

Dixon thinks president of competition Derrick Walker will prove to be a positive influence. "I respect Derrick and what he's done in his career and know he'll make the right decisions, once everything is laid out. I think he's the right man for the job."

Dixon is disappointed to leave Honda behind, but confident that Ganassi made the right decision in switching to Chevrolet for 2014. "We were highly integrated with Honda on a lot of projects and car developments, not just the engine," he said. "There were also friendships we developed with a lot of people at Honda, which I'm sure will continue because we're all part of the same travelling circus."

"I haven't driven a Chevy so it's difficult to comment right now. I expect to do that for the first time in early December, but you look at the track record and they've done well. They won this year's two 500s and the 2012 titles for drivers and manufacturers, plus this year's championship for manufacturers. They look strong and reliable. We'll just have to see how it goes. All I can say is I'm glad I don't have to make this kind of decision."

Dixon has accumulated 33 wins over 13 years racing Indycars and is seventh on the list of all-time winners, behind AJ Foyt, Mario Andretti, Michael Andretti, Al Unser, Bobby Unser and Al Unser Jr.

Dixon showed his tenacity in spades throughout 2013. He's a very deserving champion and, with many years of racing ahead of him, is sure to go down in history as one of IndyCar's greatest drivers.

— OBITUARY —

Simon Phillips

Former sports car racer and entrant Simon Phillips has died at the age of 79. Phillips contested the Le Mans 24 Hours five times between 1976 and '82. He had a best finish of seventh in the last of those years, driving Viscount Downe's Aston Martin Nimrod with Ray Mallock and Mike Salmon.



...and Wall of Fame

Silverstone has launched a partnership with *Motor Sport* to include the legends of the magazine's Hall of Fame within the circuit's new Wall of Fame initiative.

The wall is to be built on the site of the circuit's disused Bridge Corner and is designed to become a major attraction for visitors. Fans can purchase stones featuring personalised dedications within the wall, which will include commemorative bricks dedicated to the elite group of Hall of Fame legends such as Sir Jackie Stewart, Sir Stirling Moss, Ayrton Senna and Niki Lauda.

Stewart launched the partnership



when he was presented with his commemorative stone. "It is fitting that Silverstone and *Motor Sport* are collaborating to form a lasting tribute to motor sport of all disciplines," he said.

Stones for the Wall of Fame are already on sale. Discounts are available to *Motor Sport* readers (quote code MSM10). To find out more, go to www.silverstonewalloffame.com

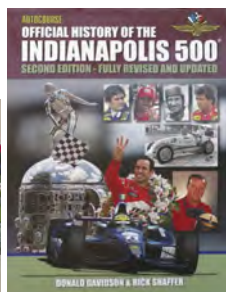
Renault returns to F3

RENAULT IS RETURNING TO Formula 3 with a new organisation that masterminded its victory in the 1979 European F3 Championship with Alain Prost.

ORECA Motorsport, which as French constructor Martini's factory team ran Prost to the '79 title, is developing a two-litre direct-injection powerplant for the new F3 engine formula introduced to Europe in 2014.

The ultra-successful French Signature team will return to F3 after a two-year absence to run the engine.

ORECA boss Hugues de Chaunac said: "ORECA had a fine record in F3 and our return to the discipline, which is reclaiming its historical place [on the sport's nursery slopes], will be a great moment."



REVIEWS

1967 Chris Amon, Scuderia Ferrari and a Year of Living Dangerously

John Julian

Decent books about Chris Amon are a scarce breed, so this adds welcome bookshelf diversity for a reasonable price.

One man's first season with a team might not be an obvious topic for a whole book (occasional, Lewis Hamilton-style cash-ins aside), but 1967 was a fascinating, tumultuous campaign, with Amon stepping into the aftermath of John Surtees's defection, Ferrari signing four F1 drivers but running fewer cars, the loss of Lorenzo Bandini and a concurrent sports car programme with the elegant 330 P4.

Author Julian spoke extensively to Amon and other drivers, including Surtees and Dan Gurney, but also contacted Ferrari insiders and dipped into a little lateral thought by tracking down Eva Marie Saint, who got to meet a few drivers while fulfilling a leading role in John Frankheimer's *Grand Prix*.

It's an engaging collage that paints a real-world picture of period life as a racing driver – and the accompanying photographs are consistently wonderful (no surprise, given that they are sourced from such as Klementaski, Bernard Cahier and Nick Loudon).

Each chapter has a suggested musical accompaniment: 46 years ago, there were almost certainly worse things to be doing than heading to Silverstone with Procul Harum's *Whiter Shade of Pale* on the car radio. **SA**

Published by David Bull, ISBN 978-1-935007-24-1, £35

Autocourse Official History of the Indianapolis 500

Donald Davidson and Rick Shaffer

Widely acclaimed upon its initial release in 2006, this official history was one of the weightiest and most thorough works of its kind – and has just become heavier still, with revisions that bring the story bang up to date (leastways until next May).

Co-authors Davidson and Schaffer are steeped in the event's heritage and their accumulated knowledge shines from almost every syllable. They start from the original concept – early track plans reveal that an infield road circuit was planned from day one, although it wouldn't materialise for another 90-odd years – and trace every detail of its subsequent evolution, a task they accomplish with great authority and insight.

The photos complement the prose perfectly and confirm that there has seldom been a cooler human than Mario Andretti, circa 1970.

It's yet another tome to savour in the company of a comfy chair and a bottle of malt (or possibly several, given the subject's breadth). **SA**

Published by Icon, ISBN 978-1-905334-82-7, £49.95 (£42.86 from autocourse.com)

Art of the Le Mans Race Car 30 Years of Speed

Stuart Codling and James Mann

The legendary Le Mans 24 Hours has welcomed some of the most beautiful cars ever to power their way onto a racing circuit. This striking and wonderfully presented book proffers a selection of machines, from the first race in 1923 to the present day.

Chronologically, each car is given

plenty of space and excellent, large format photos help illustrate why these machines continue to be loved many years beyond their glory days in the French classic.

Every car is photographed on an identical black background to give the book a stylish cohesion that is often lacking elsewhere. The text is brief but informative and contains quotes and comments from drivers and others close to the subjects.

The usual suspects are here – GT40, 917, 962 – but the whistling Rover-BRM and thunderous Cunningham C4R provide welcome and fresh diversions. **DC**

Published by Motorbooks, ISBN 9780760344378, £40

The Wild Roads The official book of the Peking to Paris 2013

Phillip Young and Gerard Brown

The current version of the Peking to Paris Rally has lost some of the pioneering spirit of the 1907 original, but in terms of visuals the modern age has the edge.

Only five entries took part in the inaugural run, but in 2013 100 cars set off from China. It's all documented in this photo-heavy volume and the scenery is as impressive as the machinery.

The book conveys a real sense of community spirit – it is dedicated to the memory of Emma Wilkinson, who died in a road accident during the event – and features diary entries and testimonies from teams. It's clear that making the finish wasn't exactly a walk in the park: "The camp is strewn with broken cars, beaten up almost as much as the occupants..."

The price might be a bit high, but so is the content's quality. **ACH** Published by the Endurance Rally Association, £80 from www.endurorally.com



Pittard takes top Surtees prize

University kart champ beats several fancied rivals... and sets his sights on a career in sports cars | BY ALEX HARMER

JOHN SURTEES'S OPINIONS ABOUT racing's convoluted nursery slopes are well known by now, but the Henry Surtees Foundation's annual karting challenge at Buckmore Park offers young drivers some great prizes to put their careers on the right path.

This year's winner had a decidedly old-fashioned start to his racing life and has the attitude to go with it, having started racing with his dad and worked his way through club championships. In the '50s that approach could eventually have landed you in Formula 1, but without financial backing many drivers' careers tend to stall nowadays.

When I sat down next to 21-year-old David Pittard at lunch – for no other reason, I must admit, than the lack of seating elsewhere – he was friendly and didn't laugh too hard when I told him the extent of my own karting experience. I asked what racing he'd been doing and he mentioned the British Universities Karting Championship, but not the fact that he'd won it in 2012, nor anything of his exploits in much

more advanced machinery. I'd seen his name near the top of the timesheets during practice and qualifying earlier in the day, but as I wished him good luck before the race he didn't strike me as a potential winner. He was quick, but too 'normal' in a room full of confident young racers who looked and acted the part. Perhaps that should have been the first clue...

David started karting when he was eight, winning club and national championships before moving on. "My dad's been heavily into motor sport as a spectator," he says, "and it's just something I've picked up from him. The older I got, the more I wanted to be part of it and I've been very lucky that my family has supported me.

"I've been car racing since 2009, when I did a part-season in the Toyota MR2 series with Montana Motorsport, where I had a couple of top-three results and scored my first win at the end of the year. We came back for a second year and took six wins from six races. At the same time I was doing the Sports 2000

series. A couple of mechanical failures didn't help us in the championship fight, but the pace was there."

"After MR2s and Sports 2000 we stepped up to the Britcar Endurance series, with the Strata 21 team. I got my hands on a Porsche Carrera Cup car, which was fantastic, and won the Class 4 championship with my team-mate Adam Sharp. This year we've done the Ginetta GT5 Challenge and really hit



Ben Barnicoat is a star karter – but even he found the HSF final tough

ALL IMAGES: JACOB EBBEY



Road to the top? David Pittard leads the HSF field into Buckmore's first turn, top, and later receives his award from John Surtees, above. Below, GP3 prize drive with Carlin in Abu Dhabi

the ground running, winning races and – even though we didn't complete the season – coming fifth in the championship. From here we're looking at British GTs or the Blancpain Endurance series."

David comes across as a young man who's got his priorities straight, studying motor sport engineering at Brunel University. "I enjoy it and, I if want to become a professional driver, then speaking the language of the engineers will help," he says, with some enthusiasm. David's setting himself up to succeed and appears to be one of many young drivers for whom Formula 1 is no longer the end goal.

"Recently," he says, "my big hero was Sean Edwards, someone to whom I looked up to massively. I should dedicate this win to him, really, because in the past couple of years I've followed his career avidly. Allan Simonsen was another who was talented and fortunate enough to be out there every weekend in

all corners of the globe. That's what I want to do."

For these kids the opportunity to win races and championships, competing as often as possible, is the name of the game. Pragmatism beats the big bucks and a rich racing life is better than fame. "My dream is to be a Porsche factory driver," says David. "Being Porsche Supercup Champion sounds pretty good. It's arguably one of the most competitive one-make series in the world. Those guys are flying all over the world, racing for Porsche.

"I've always enjoyed F1, but getting there just never appealed to me. There's a whole lot of money and people involved and it's difficult to forge a career. You see a lot of drivers coming out of the lower formulae into sports cars. The GP3 test [with Carlin] I won through the Henry Surtees Foundation is a fantastic prize, though."

Speaking only a couple of hours after what might be the biggest victory of his career so far, the excitement of the day hasn't yet evaporated. In his heat David finished with a lead of five seconds, untouched beyond the first corner. In the



final he eked out a similar lead before cruising home while Paul Janes and last year's winner Jack Aitken scrapped behind him.


"It's definitely not sunk in yet," he says. "I haven't stopped grinning since the finish. I had a fantastic start that gave me a comfortable gap over the second and third drivers. I knew they were quick and I could see them out the corner of my eye as I exited the hairpin, so I just kept my head down and my lines clean and brought it home.

"It didn't really feel like I was going to win it until I was coming through the last corner and I thought 'Oh my god!', so I was quite emotional. There are some big names here and I was able to mix it with them and beat them so I'm over the moon." This is David's third try at the HSF Challenge; he previously finished third and 10th. As far as he can remember he's only visited the Kent circuit five times before.

"I did the MSA club championship here in 2005, but didn't come back until 2011 in the British Karting Championship and for the Henry Surtees Foundation event. It's not really a local track for me, coming from Hertfordshire."

Karting hero Bill Sisley, who has run Buckmore Park since 1985, points out that recent experience is essential for this type of event. A number of F3 drivers were out there, getting blown away by the kids. "The ones that are karting now have an advantage because they're used to it," he says. "Even someone like Ben Barnicoat – who is a brilliant driver, no question about it, he'll be a Formula 1 driver if he has the chance – is doing international karts with very soft tyres. It takes you a day just to adapt to something with no power and no grip."

"You can't help but come back to your roots in karting," David says. "It's a very pure form of motor sport. Everybody's been there and it gives you a nice level playing field. I want to make motor sport my living and this has capped off a good year. I'm looking forward to the future, hopefully to becoming a professional driver."

He was unable to match high-calibre rivals such as Dean Stoneman and Oliver Rowland during the GP3 test, but there's no shame in that. The lesson will be used and stored as he continues to pursue his dreams. 

WEB SPIN

GUEST EDITOR ALLAN McNISH ON LOUD F1 CARS AND CHANGING ATTITUDES AMONG YOUNGER GENERATIONS

Allan McNish: I remember Senna testing at Silverstone in the McLaren in 1989. Hearing that V10 screaming down the back straight gave you a tingle down your spine. It sounded so beautiful.

I went with my son to Paul Ricard for the ELMS race. The first thing he did was put on his ear defenders saying 'this is really noisy, Dad'.

I recall the sound of that V10 with passion; he just thinks it's bloody noisy. What's he going to do in five, eight years? He's the future in terms of buying tickets, getting grandstand seats and taking his family. We have to prepare for their generation because we're getting old! We're not the future; we're the now and will be the past.

Nigel Roebuck: I think there will be a crossover. I won't want to go to races and hear silent cars. You'll pull in new fans but lose traditionalists.

Damien Smith: The strength of Le Mans is the diversity. I remember watching in 2009 – the Audis and the Peugeots came through with eerily no noise and then suddenly the V12 Astons would

What we're all talking about @ www.motorsportmagazine.com

AND ANOTHER THING

What our readers think of Vettel

PAUL SAINSBURY: Frustrated as I am with the tedious dominance, I enjoy Seb's quirkiness and British sense of humour. **RICH AMBROSON:** I get tired of reading about this great driver being booed. It was refreshing to read about his down-to-earth aspects. **TRENT:** Vettel is outstanding, but it's a shame he chose the route he did in Malaysia. **JSAVIANO:** OK, OK, I give in... he's a fine fellow. I wish this was more apparent on F1 weekends. While his stomping the field gets a bit tedious, don't blame him, blame Ferrari, McLaren, Mercedes, et al...

arrive. It was interesting to have the two together.

NR: In 1971 Emerson Fittipaldi ran a Lotus turbine at Monza. That was so silent you could actually hear the brakes come on. That was great because it was a one-off; it was a novelty, but I wouldn't want to listen to 25 of them...

AM: Mallory Park has gone into administration because of arguments over noise. The crux is, we've had problems with Croft and Mallory Park, Brands Hatch has had problems on [race] school days. That's only going to get worse. There's not much point in having racing if you don't have any tracks. It's something that's coming; we can't control it, we have to adapt.

ONLINE WITH OUR WRITERS

Alex Harmer

1: the latest and best Formula 1 film

"Bernie Ecclestone was very nervous of journalists and the kind of people who just want to get dirt," said director Paul Crowder. "But we wanted to celebrate the sport. Producer Michael Shevloff got him on our side within minutes. He cracked a joke that was such an insider thing to say and we looked at each other and knew..."

Karun Chandhok

The Indian Grand Prix is not dead

Contrary to what some may believe, Bernie really likes India and he is personally keen to have the Indian GP back because he sees the potential. The teams and FOM all have Indian domestic sponsors putting money into the race.



Simon Arron

The real Vettel

I conducted a one-to-one interview with Vettel in 2007 when, aged 19, he was BMW's F1 reserve. Within three minutes we were discussing Monty Python sketches and his penchant for scouring Heidelberg record shops for obscure Beatles vinyl.

Nigel Roebuck

Roebuck's legends: Mansell in the media

Mansell is an extreme case, however, and whatever one may think of the man he became, while he was around there was always something to talk about; no one was indifferent. Wherever he was in the world, he had fresh problems flown in daily; even when he won, he came across like Shylock selling wholesale.

TOP TWEETS

@Andrew_Frankel David Leslie would be 60 today. Still think of him and Richard Lloyd lots. Two of the best blokes I have ever come to know in this business.

@matoxley Marc Marquez funny in press conference: said he won crashing championship too. Obviously plans to have a drink tonight, joked he wants Monday test cancelled.



@olivergavin Two of my racing heroes: Derek Bell and Sir Stirling Moss, taken this year at Goodwood Revival. #Legends

@Damien_Smith Amusing reaction to Nigel's anti-Twitter piece. Of course, if he did dive in he'd have more followers in about 20mins than most of us...

@AnotherEdFoster Nigel Roebuck should be on Twitter. RT for yes, favourite for no. (I will show him the results...) [The result? 145 retweets, 11 favourites and counting...]



@harrismoney (Chris Harris) Reading @Motor_Sport on the rattler. Really is a top mag. Image of

@Andrew_Frankel is simply outstanding!

@tiff_tv (Tiff Needell) @harrismoney @Motor_Sport @Andrew_Frankel Baron von Frankel plus observer heading across enemy lines...

@Andrew_Frankel Most interesting figure from McLaren P1 data? The one that's not there. Why no Nürburgring time? They must have one. Has to be sub 7mins.

@AnotherEdFoster Belated congratulations to @AllanMcNish, Kristensen and @loicduval... WORLD CHAMPIONS!



HONDA

MAT OXLEY

MOTOGP'S NEW DIRECTION

NEXT YEAR MOTOGP TAKES THE NEXT STEP towards achieving its avowed intention of filling the grid with (roughly) equal machinery.

Following the recent introduction of low-cost, streetbike-powered (and therefore uncompetitive) CRT bikes, a new type of machine is now available to privateer teams. These bikes come from Honda and Yamaha, whom rights-holder Dorna had threatened with new technical restrictions if they didn't get into the spirit of MotoGP's egalitarian new direction.

Dorna told the factories they must offer for sale two bikes (for one rider) at a target price of €1 million. Honda has built a lower-cost version of its RC213V – with steel valve springs instead of the factory bike's pneumatic springs – while Yamaha is leasing 2013 YZR-M1 engines.

The manufacturers didn't want to comply but, if they hadn't, Dorna planned to introduce an rpm limit and control software, which the factories would do anything to avoid. Yamaha evaded two of Dorna's demands – it is leasing engines only and leasing rather than selling because it doesn't want its MotoGP technology in the public domain.

The Honda is already running, tested by none other than Casey Stoner (above). Honda's recently retired 2011 MotoGP champion was impressed – perhaps not surprisingly.

To close the gap down the grid, Dorna has granted benefits to these new privateer machines, to help them challenge the factory bikes. While privateers must use Dorna's Magneti Marelli-made spec software, they get to burn 20 per cent more fuel and use more than twice the number of engines in a season.

MotoGP veteran Colin Edwards had yet to ride his M1-powered 2014 machine when this was written, but reckons carrying a generous 24 litres of fuel will make him competitive, especially at tracks where some factory bikes

run so low on fuel that their management systems have to turn down the power.

"Theoretically, when you put all the numbers together, it looks like there's a definite possibility that we will be running near the front," says the Texan. "Any track where you see people run out of fuel on the last lap or the cool-down lap, those are the thirsty tracks, so that's where we might have an advantage over factory bikes."

Stoner – never one to dish out undeserved praise – had a ball on the Honda during testing. "The bike was good to ride and had great grip," he said. "I enjoyed it because the electronics package wasn't the same as the factory bike and it allowed me to ride a little more loose. The back end was stepping out into corners and out of corners, which got the blood rushing again and reminded me what I love about racing."

Now that's ironic, considering that Stoner walked away from MotoGP partly because he didn't like the lower-cost/lower-grade machinery coming onto the grid.

So, the million euro question: can these machines actually beat the factories?

"I'm afraid," says Yamaha's factory MotoGP project leader Masahiko Nakajima, without sounding like he means it. "On the straights at some circuits maybe they will have more speed because they can run full rich, so their maximum torque will be stronger, while we have to use a leaner setting. But then we will have our own software for driveability and cornering while they will have control software."

Nakajima is correct when he suggests that the factories have better software, but even more crucial are their riders: Yamaha has Jorge Lorenzo and Valentino Rossi on board, while Honda has Marc Marquez and Dani Pedrosa.

There's no doubt, however, that this new kind of privateer machinery is a big step in the right direction for MotoGP.



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SPARK MODELS 1:43 Audi R18 e-tron quattro £52.95 (pre-order £47.66)

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JEFF BLOOM

Belgian Group B revival

GROUP B RALLY CARS WILL feature prominently on the 2014 Boucles de Spa, Europe's biggest historic rally, with a special demonstration category running ahead of the main field.

The new section will be limited to 15 Group B cars that played a prominent role in either the Boucles de Spa or the World Rally Championship.

Aimed at cars such as the Peugeot 205 T16, Audi Sport Quattro, MG Metro 6R4, Ford RS200 and Lancia Delta S4, the category will be for cars in period Spa or WRC livery and there will be no timekeeping or results.

Significant Group A cars like the Lancia Delta Integrale, Ford Sierra Cosworth, BMW M3 and Subaru Impreza 555 may also be accepted.



JEFF BLOOM

Masters F1 titles settled

THE FIA MASTERS HISTORIC Formula One Championship has declared two champions for 2013, with American Tyrrell enthusiast John Delane taking the Pre-78 crown in a combination of Tyrrell 002 (top) and 006, and Greg Thornton winning the Post-78 division.

The more modern title went down to the last lap of the final race at Jerez and Thornton clinched the prize in the ex-Nigel Mansell Lotus 92/5 (above) run by Classic Team Lotus.

Graham Wilson retained the Gentlemen Drivers Pre-66 GT Championship, sharing his Lotus Elan with Andy Wolfe, while Leo Voyazides won the Masters Pre-66 Touring Car crown in his Ford Falcon.

New chapters of history

HSCC confirms extra race dates for 2014 season | BY PAUL LAWRENCE

THE HISTORIC SPORTS CAR CLUB has revealed a 2014 programme that continues the steady growth started four years ago – despite Europe's increasingly crowded historic racing calendar. During the new season, the club will organise 18 days of racing for its members, which is up from 15 in 2010.

High-profile events on the Brands Hatch and Silverstone Grand Prix circuits top the schedule, and there's a repeat of the 2013 Thruxton initiative, above, over the Easter weekend (April 19-20). There is a new Anglo-French fixture (September 27-28) on the Indy circuit at Brands Hatch, where a number of French historic categories will feature. The Silverstone International Trophy meeting will run on May 17-18.

"I believe we have a perfect calendar for next season," the HSCC's Grahame White said. "Our members will be able to race on all the major UK tracks."

The Brands Hatch Historic Super Prix will run on July 12-13 to avoid a clash with the Goodwood Festival of Speed (June 26-29), while the traditional Cadwell Park Wolds Trophy moves to a new mid-summer slot (June 21-22).



■ Tazio Nuvolari's victory in the 1938 Donington Grand Prix has been marked with a plaque at the venue. Kevin Wheatcroft, circuit MD Christopher Tate and Terry Cordy of watchmaker Eberhard unveiled it in November, accompanied by Nuvolari's 1934 8CM Maserati from the museum collection. The plaque is attached to Coppice Farmhouse, now circuit offices, which the pre-war track skirted. Despite fractured ribs after hitting a deer in practice, veteran Nuvolari shook off a minute's deficit to defeat potentially faster rivals.

In addition, the HSCC will again organise the racing element of several key events, including the Donington Historic Festival (May 3-5) and the Silverstone Classic (July 25-27).

Masters Historic Racing will kick off its 2014 European season in Spain, during the Catalan Classic Revival at Barcelona (April 4-6). The event hosts the opening rounds of the FIA Masters Historic Formula One Championship and the FIA Masters Historic Sports Car Championship, as well as the first Group C races of the new season.

Meanwhile, race organiser Carol Spagg has rationalised 2014 plans for both the Pre-63 GT and 1000km race series, in the face of growing financial pressure related to grid sizes.

"We had some great grids, but overall this is the second year running that I have had to subsidise the Pre-63 GT and 1000km series," said Spagg. The Pre-63 cars will combine with the Peter Auto Sixties Endurance series for Pre-65 cars and the 1000km series for sports-racing cars will share grids with Pre-72 cars in the Classic Endurance series.



PAUL LAWRENCE

Alfa duo overcome woes

PAUL WIGNALL AND MARK Appleton have taken their fourth Rally of the Tests win, despite major problems with their 1959 Alfa Romeo Giulietta.

The tough three-day rally, which recreates the RAC Rallies of the 1950s, took more than 80 classic cars from Chester to Harrogate via North Wales and the Lake District. Heavy rain throughout Friday and torrential rain on Saturday evening added to the challenge of the rally, which features special tests and regularity sections.

Wignall hit major trouble during Thursday evening's prologue section, when the alternator failed. It took until lunchtime on Saturday to source a replacement and the crew spent Friday swapping batteries in order to keep the car running.

As a result, Wignall dropped back on Friday and only took the lead on the final morning when the Porsche 356 of Jan Ebus/Iain Tullie dropped time on a regularity section. Ebus still finished second ahead of the Triumph TR4 of Ryan Pickering/Andy Ballantyne, which was fastest over the special tests.

Hopkirk party lures stars

ARI VATANEN, JOHN WATSON and Jimmy McRae are among famous names taking part in a 50th anniversary celebration of Paddy Hopkirk's 1964 Monte Carlo Rally victory.

The event will be held at the Titanic, Belfast, on February 22 and will include a cavalcade of Minis headed by Hopkirk in 33 EJB, the '64 Monte winner.

This will start from Stormont at 10am and finish at the Titanic Quarter, where the Minis will go on display on the Titanic slipway.

As a seven-time winner of the Circuit of Ireland, McRae is the only driver to have beaten Hopkirk's previous record of five victories on the event.

— OBITUARIES —

Kjell Qvale

Best known as a major importer of British and other European cars to the USA, Norwegian-born Kjell Qvale, who has died aged 94, was involved in many racing enterprises, including the famous concours at Pebble Beach and planning the Corkscrew bend at Laguna Seca. He created the Huffaker-BMC that raced at Indianapolis in the mid-1960s, built Genie FJ racecars, bought Jensen Motors and created the Jensen-Healey before building the Qvale Mangusta. He was also well known as a racehorse breeder.

Syd Fox

One of the leading national drivers of the 1970s has died after a short illness, aged 83. The Londoner first raced in the '50s and later drove for the works Gemini Formula Junior team. His versatility earned him seats in various sports cars and he won the 1968 Snetterton 500km in a Ford Mustang. Through the 1970s he was a multiple FF1600 and FF2000 champion and was notably linked to an aged Palliser 742, known as 'The Old Nail'. During the last year of his life, Fox was pleased to have a test run in the Macon FF1600 that he raced in 1970.



ROB WIDDOWS

INTERLAGOS AND ITS MANY CHARMS

"IN QUALIFYING YOU HAD TO TAKE IT FLAT. If you stayed on the road, and the lap was good, you were on pole. If you left the track there you were dead. Simple as that."

This was Niki Lauda talking about the first corner at the 'old' Interlagos, or the Autodromo José Carlos Pace as it's less commonly known, this being the daunting circuit that preceded the existing layout in the raggedy suburbs of São Paulo. Back then, the corner that is now the Senna S was a sweeping, hold-your-breath, balls-to-the-wall left-hander called, simply, Curva 1. Even now, despite several emasculations of the layout, Interlagos remains a wonderful place to go racing, for drivers and spectators alike, and the atmosphere is among any F1 campaign's best.

Deadlines prevent us carrying news of this year's race, the season finale, but the results are far from being the whole story. Some people love it, as I do, but others loathe it – and the same goes for Brazil itself. Suffice to say, the staging of the next Olympic Games will be a challenge for this most delightful and chaotic of nations. But locals adore motor racing and will be overjoyed at Mr Ecclestone's recent assertion that Interlagos will continue to host the Grand Prix for "many years to come". I hope this wasn't one of his wind-ups.

Strangely, and despite forcing just about every other circuit to modernise facilities, Bernie appears not to mind the tiny paddock, rickety buildings and shortage of VIP hospitality facilities. This pleases me greatly because race mornings at Interlagos (and Monza) are two of the main reasons to remain involved with Grand Prix racing.

I suspect this year's race was more of an end-of-term knees-up than usual, the F1 titles having been long ago decided. For the Paulistas, of course, only a victory for Felipe

Massa is good enough, he being their only real interest since Rubinho departed the fray.

Whatever the outcome, the fans make this race special, pouring in through the gates at dawn, ready to samba in the sunshine (or the rain, come to that). The grandstands move to the music as start time approaches and there isn't an empty seat in the place. The Brazilian GP, the climax of the season, is what sport is all about. Yes, favelas form part of the backdrop and the city can be an edgy cauldron, with wealth and appalling poverty side by side, but a season without Brazil would be unthinkable. Mr Ecclestone clearly agrees.

The end of November, in the modern calendar, is a time for reflection and a time to ponder what comes next. Both of Michael Schumacher's retirements came at Interlagos, first in 2006 with Ferrari and then again in 2012 with Mercedes-Benz. And now, at the end of 2013, we are in the midst of another period of extraordinary domination by a German racing driver.

There are grumbles about Herr Vettel having the fastest car, but that's what they said about Herr Schumacher winning with Ferrari. The Red Bull clearly is the best car, but what intrigues us now is how cleverly Adrian Newey interprets a completely new set of rules for next year. And how long will he stay in the sport? Might he and Ben Ainslie get together to challenge for the America's Cup in a Red Bull-sponsored yacht at some point? Red Bull enjoys the prospect of world domination and Mr Newey remains intrigued by what is essentially a Formula 1 boat. [See Letters on page 50 for an answer! – Ed]

Meanwhile, who will topple Red Bull from its perch by the time F1 reconvenes in Brazil next November? We have no idea – and that's what continues to make this sport so exciting.



DOWN THE YEARS IT HAS always been fun to own a car with a larger engine than normal for its size or weight, giving a resultant sparkling improvement performance-wise, to the astonishment of drivers of outwardly similar vehicles who have the misfortune to challenge it. Many years ago the late FLM Harris, editor of the lamented *Light Car*, possessed one of those rather spidery 10hp Lea-Francis cars with 'chummy' bodywork endowed with a 1½-litre twin-carburettor Meadows engine of the kind used in the later Frazer Nash sports cars... I have always envied owners of such 'wolves in sheep's clothing.' Now in 1961, we have the Austin-Cooper.

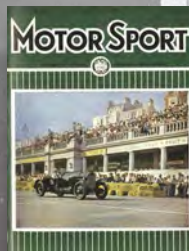
It is to the lasting credit of engineers Alec Issigonis and Alex Moulton that the BMC ADO15 possesses such in-built stability and strength that it can, virtually without modification, take 50 per cent more power (55bhp in place of 37bhp), in the form of a new engine of greater capacity, tuned to a prescription of the Cooper Car Company, makers of World Championship racing cars, following

their experience with Formula Junior cars using BMC engines.

The result is quite phenomenal performance from this popular, compact four-seater saloon, rendered usable by the aforesaid stability, deriving from the ingenious rubber suspension, tiny wheels and other factors, and the introduction of 7in Lockheed disc brakes on the front.

Much of the enjoyment of this performance derives from the fact that, apart from the name 'Austin-Cooper' front and back, the big tail-pipe and silencer and a slightly different grille, the appearance is unchanged.

Internally there is improved carpeting, upholstery and sound damping, a new heater, the remote gear-lever which should have been incorporated in all Minis from the commencement and a new oval instrument panel with water temperature and oil pressure gauges flanking the 100mph speedometer, this panel encroaching on the fascia shelf, which, however, accepts triangular parcels. The test car had a Smiths Radiomobile radio and Britax safety harnesses. There is now a roof lamp,



and choke, fascia lighting and heater switch and heater controls have been repositioned, the heater knob protruding rather too far when heat is turned off. New press-down internal door handles, set far back, are more inconvenient than the former wire 'pulls'. The spare wheel now lives under a shelf in the boot. Manually-cancelling wipers and doors devoid of 'keeps' and courtesy-light switches remain utilitarian aspects of the little car, and the overriders on the front bumpers wouldn't fend off a puppy.

First impressions are of less 'punch' than anticipated and lack of 'through the windscreen' retardation, but it didn't take long to appreciate that a very sensible balance between docility and urge has been struck in what, after all, is a production model, and that the extremely powerful and impeccable disc braking has been cleverly applied to permit maximum application, even on slippery roads, without disastrous loss of control. The splendid brakes are supplemented by a fine Continental-note horn. Normally roundabouts can be taken in top gear, but for good pick-up it is advisable to use third below 30mph, although the engine pulls away from 20 in top. The noise level remains high, but bearable.

The engine commences instantly, needs little choke and attains normal temperature in a mile or two. Oil pressure is reassuringly high, varying between 55 and 85lb/sq in.

The gear change is a great improvement, the lever splendidly placed, although after 3500 miles the action was too stiff. The synchromesh can be beaten and there is unpleasant vibration on the over-run at low speeds, which causes the driver to keep both hands on the wheel and may warm a rally driver's numb fingers but doesn't seem quite right...

I was privileged to use an Austin-Cooper in that warm red colour chosen, I believe, by Kay Petre, Colour Consultant to BMC, for a week when it was still so much on the secret list that even at the Longbridge factory I was not permitted to leave it in the normal car parks. Naturally, my main concern was to obtain acceleration figures, but first let me enthuse over the unexpected economy of this 'little bomb'. The range, full to dry tank, was 214 miles; it would be worthwhile

The sensational new Austin-Cooper photographed outside Cooper Cars Ltd at Surbiton, Surrey, England, the little factory from which so many World Championship racing cars have emerged. Beside the BMC saloon is an FJ Cooper, both of which obtain high performance from the 997cc BMC power-unit

AUSTIN COOPER

MINI-COOPER SPECIALISTS

Minispeed
www.minispeed.co.uk

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Cambridge Miniworks
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fitting a second tank, with change-over tap *à la* Jaguar, to increase the range to some 400 miles. Consumption of Esso Extra and National Benzole came out at 38.6mpg on a fast run to Birmingham and 35mpg, including cold starts, crossing London, and making one of the quickest runs from office to home I have done for many a long day. Performance testing reduced it to 32mpg, and driving auntiewise (a great strain!) put it to 39mpg; an overall average of 36.1mpg, which I regard as excellent economy from a miniature sports saloon that, if there is any red blood left in your veins, you cannot resist driving fast. Throttle linkage is well contrived but there was an annoying flat-spot around 38mph in top cog. Without occupants and with fuel for a mile the weight was 1372lb.

The performance is quite staggering. The lower gear ratios have been raised but top remains at 3.76 to 1. The speedometer quotes maxima of 29, 46 and 64mph in the indirect gears but will go to 30, 50 and 70 before very sudden valve crash intrudes. Seventy is a casual cruising speed and a sustained 80mph is well within the compass of this astonishing small car. Top speed will work up to some 85 or more, but you need a motorway to get it.

Acceleration is the Austin-Cooper's outstanding feature. An unbalanced speedometer needle made recording it difficult but a series of two-way runs, two-up, allowing for speedometer error, gave 0-60 in 17.1sec (normal Mini Minor 27.6) and a standing-start quarter-mile of 20.5sec.

Laurence Pomeroy concludes an appraisal of the Austin-Cooper written for BMC by remarking that "It not only takes you but also sends you." To me this is double-dutch, but after a week with this fascinating little car I can understand why racing drivers and other discerning motorists are placing their orders. It is good to know that, just as the original Austin Seven was sufficiently sound to lead to the highly successful Ulster sports model, so Issigonis' ingenious ADO15 design has proved capable of development into this 997cc version (still officially called an Austin Seven!), one of the quickest A-to-B vehicles I have experienced and, for the same reasons, an admirable town-car. I await release of its price with lively interest.

AUSTIN COOPER FACTFILE

Production: '61-'63
Power: 55bhp
0-60mph: 17.1sec
Max speed: 85mph

Original pocket rocket, exploiting Mini agility with ever-hotter motors. Faster 1071cc Cooper S of '63 and later 1275cc version brought huge race and rally success. Huge tuning options. Perfect spec: 1275 with subtle performance mods - and white roof.

AUCTIONS



A summary of classic and racing auctions from around the world - in numbers | BY ALEX HARMER

Bonhams

@ LONDON NOVEMBER 1

1903 Clement-Talbot Type CT4K

Estimate £350-£450,000

Sold for **£606,000**

Teak body, coachwork by J Rothschild et Fils. Owned by the same family since 1936. A staple of the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run since its inception

Select vehicles from the late John Coombs, including: 1952 Frazer Nash Targa Florio **£250-300,000**

@ LONDON DECEMBER 1

1994 Benetton-Cosworth B194

Driven by **Michael Schumacher** during his first championship season. Won the San Marino, Monaco, Canadian and French Grands Prix

@ OXFORD DECEMBER 9

James Hunt's helmet

Estimate £5000-7000
Bears the scars of Hunt's F3 flip at Zandvoort, 1971

Replica Niki Lauda helmet and race suit worn by Daniel Brühl in Rush
Suit signed by Brühl
Estimate £1000-1500

RM Auctions

@ PHOENIX JANUARY 16-17

1960 Porsche 718 RS Spyder

Chassis 718.066 Raced between 1961-64 with podium finishes in SCCA and USRRC events
Estimate \$2.8m-3.2m

DECEMBER AUCTION CALENDAR

- 1 BONHAMS** The December Sale, New Bond Street, London
- 2 SHANNONS** Melbourne Summer Classic Auction, Cheltenham, Victoria, Australia
- 3 COYS** True Greats, Lindley Hall, Royal Horticultural Halls, London
- 4 H&H** Chateau Impney, Droitwich Spa, Worcestershire
- 5 DVCA** Classic Collectors' Cars and

1966 Porsche 906 Carrera 6

Chassis 906-116 Winner of non-championship events at the Norisring in '68 and Hockenheim in '69 One of only three road-legal examples
Estimate \$1.2m-1.6m

1960 OSCA 850 S

Chassis 769 Class wins at Sebring in 1960 and 1962
Estimate \$600-800,000

@ PARIS FEBRUARY 4-5

1982 PORSCHE 956 CHASSIS 004

Finished third at Le Mans in 1982
Factory car driven between 1982 and 1984 by Derek Bell, Stefan Bellof, Vern Schuppan, Hurley Haywood, Al Holbert and Jürgen Barth
Estimate €2.2m

1973 Penske Porsche 917/30

Chassis 005 Built for Mark Donohue in his championship year but never raced
Estimate €2.2m

1955 Ferrari 750 Monza Spider

Chassis 0498 M Sold new to Luigi Chinetti. Raced in period by Harry Schell, Piero Taruffi, Phil Hill and Alfonso de Portago. Estimate €1.8m

Automobilia, The Gartell Light Railway, Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset

- 5-7 MECUM** Kansas City Auction, Kansas City Convention Center, Kansas City, Missouri
- 9 BONHAMS** Collectors' Motor Cars and Automobilia, Shipton-on-Cherwell, Kidlington, Oxford
- 15 BARONS** Annual Yuletide Classic and Collectors Auction, Esher Hall, Sandown Park Exhibition Complex, Surrey

Next season's fare

Mini, Merc, BMW and Jag prepare their menus | BY ANDREW FRANKEL



EVERY YEAR AT ABOUT THIS TIME the motoring media fills up with stories about cars that will go on sale in the year to come and explains why, yet again, it's going to be a vintage year for all those of us who love interesting cars.

But saying it's going to be a vintage year does not mean it's going to be a vintage year, it merely reflects the hope that if you believe it's going to be a vintage year you're going to keep buying the magazine to read about it.

As it happens, 2014 is looking like a pretty average year for new cars. I will next month have a brief trot through the cars that caught my eye in 2013 and I think it's been one of the better ones, certainly in the top five in the 25 years I've been doing this job. But next year looks quieter, so expect the media to make even more noise trying to make sure you don't notice.

Even so, and as ever, there will be a sizeable selection of interesting and/or important all-new cars to drive, and these are just some of them.



Porsche Macan: A baby Cayenne originally called Cajun (which would have been a much better name), based on the Audi Q5 but much modified hopefully to provide authentic Porsche dynamics. At launch engines will stretch from a 260bhp 3-litre diesel to a 400bhp 3.6-litre turbo but, as is traditional for Porsche, the range can be expected to grow and grow. Not only is a Turbo S model with at least 450bhp inevitable, talk persists of smaller, 2-litre four-cylinder diesels to tap into the meat of where the market for such cars lies. A 2-litre four-cylinder diesel SUV?

If that can be made to feel like a true Porsche, it will be one of the company's greatest achievements to date.

BMW X4: A likely strong competitor for the Macan from a company that, unlike Porsche, has been building compact SUVs for years. Like the X5-based X6, the X4 (left) is also based on a conventional SUV (the X3) but if the concept version and scoop photography is to be believed, it will also be uglier, less practical and more expensive. But like the X6, it should also meet with wild success in a market where image is all and the idea of a car that looks like a coupé (sort of) but with the driving position and theoretical off-road capability of an SUV appears close to irresistible. BMW will also in 2013 introduce the new M3 (that will also be called the M4 in three-door form) and its i8 hybrid supercar.



Mini: Hard to believe that BMW's Mini is about to enter its third generation; harder still that in all those years and despite the efforts of everyone from Audi to Citroën, no one has yet produced a more convincing alternative. The new Mini will be bigger but lighter than its predecessor, which will mean slightly less leg-folding for those in the back and even better fuel consumption, especially for cars fitted with a new generation of 1.5-litre three-cylinder turbodiesel engines. This is no mere facelift but an entirely fresh car based on a brand-new platform that will in time also host the first ever front-wheel-drive cars badged as BMWs.

Mercedes C-class: Of all manufacturers, it looks as if Mercedes is going to have the busiest 2014. First up is an all-new C-class, which is probably going to be the company's most important car launch since the last

C-class. We know it will follow the recent trend of gaining in size but losing weight and that much of the brain-melting technology of the recently released S-class will be carried over. By the end of the year we should also see the AMG version, likely to be powered by the same 4.7-litre twin-turbo V8 already seen in the SL500. Other new Mercedes-Benzes for 2014 will be the GLA crossover SUV and S-class variants including a coupé and the ultra-long wheelbase Pullman.



Jaguar F-type coupé: Insiders who've driven it say this is the F-type that best expresses Jaguar's sporting ambitions. Developed at exactly the same time as the convertible, but later to market for purely commercial reasons (Californians do love their drop-tops), the coupé features the same range of V6 and V8 engines, although most excitingly it is also likely to spawn an F-type RS with 550bhp – Jaguar's probable answer to the Porsche 911 GT3.

AMG takes Aston off-road

BUOYED BY THE RECENT announcement of a 'technical partnership' with Mercedes' in-house tuning division AMG, Aston Martin appears keen to expand the scope of its products, and in both directions.

The most significant development is

that the SUV project remains very much alive, despite there being no official news about the car since the launch of the controversial Lagonda SUV concept at the Geneva Motor Show in 2009. At the recent launch of the new V12 Vantage S, Aston CEO and chairman Dr Ulrich Bez told me: "Have we got prototypes running around getting ready for production? No. Is it still on the radar? Absolutely, yes."

It is believed that the tie-up with AMG has provided the impetus to get the SUV off the backburner and into the product pipeline as between them AMG and Mercedes would be in a position to offer an almost turn-key solution to Aston Martin, a fact not lost on Bez. "If you look at how Porsche and Volkswagen worked together to produce two completely different cars, it would be possible to have a similar arrangement with Mercedes so long as our car was clearly and distinctly an Aston Martin."

His words are chosen carefully and reflect a change in heart since the official position in 2009, when Lagonda was going to be relaunched as a brand in its own right. Since then Mercedes has suffered the demise of its own reincarnated Maybach name and it's clear neither company is in any hurry to repeat the experiment. So the new SUV will be an Aston Martin Lagonda, with the Lagonda name used as a model rather than as a marque.

As for timings, it appears highly unlikely that either Mercedes or Aston Martin would choose to adapt an existing SUV but would prefer instead to spin the Aston off an all-new design that could be created from scratch with such a dual purpose in mind, just like the Porsche Cayenne and VW Touareg. This means the earliest an Aston Martin Lagonda would be in the showrooms would be 2017, the date the current Mercedes M-class is due to be replaced. It is also highly unlikely that the Aston Martin versions of the car would be built at its headquarters in the Midlands. All Mercedes SUVs are built in the US and India and it is probable that the Astons will be built in one or other of those locations too. There is nothing new about Astons being built abroad by people other than Aston Martin employees: until recently all Rapide saloons were built in Graz, Austria by Magna-Steyr.



"You could say Sebastian has been too successful. Wrapping up the championship with four races to run is maybe not good news for us"
Andy Palmer, Infiniti Sales and Marketing

Morgan out of Morgan

CHARLES MORGAN HAS LOST HIS appeal against dismissal from the company that bears his name, so while he continues to own 30 per cent of Morgan shares and is still a beneficiary of the trust that owns the majority of the remainder, he will no longer play any part in the running of the business.

And while the official reasons for his dismissal have been cited as a series of minor managerial transgressions, it is widely believed that his departure is down to a fundamental disagreement with other board members (including other members of the Morgan family) about the firm's future direction. Charles Morgan is believed to want to expand the business with new models and into new markets, while those now in charge favour a more cautious approach of consolidation.

Since he has been in charge, Charles Morgan has been responsible for models including the Aero 8, AeroMax and, most notably, the 3-Wheeler that reintroduced Morgan to the US with considerable success and is credited in part with the company's return to profitability. He also returned Morgan to Le Mans. Rumours persist that he is considering trying to raise the money required to buy his family out of the business and return to its helm.

Slow down, Sebastian...

CAN YOU HAVE TOO MUCH OF A good thing? Yes, according to Andy Palmer, sales and marketing boss of Red Bull sponsor Infiniti, responding to a question asked by *Autocar* about Sebastian Vettel steamrolling the opposition into oblivion this season.

"It's a fact that we are in F1 to gain awareness of our brand, and that's all about getting eyeballs on screens," he said. "From that point of view you could say Sebastian has been too successful. Wrapping up the championship with four races to run is maybe not good news for us from that perspective."

Palmer went on to say that Infiniti was taking a long-term view and it's clear that being associated with such success can be doing Nissan's premium brand no harm at all. But would he rather Vettel won the title in a season-closing showdown that put millions of extra bums on seats all looking as his livery? You bet he would.

PORSCHE 911 GT3

Weissach faced a difficult brief but has come up with clever answers | BY ANDREW FRANKEL



A FEW WEEKS AGO, JUST before I was due to drive the new '991' version of the Porsche 911 GT3, I went for a long run up the road in its predecessor, the second-generation version of the 997 GT3. I'd like to say I did it in the interests of research and it's true it did occur to me that the experience would help me benchmark the new car. But that's not why I drove it. I drove it because I could.

GT3s are like that. At least they have been until now. I've said before both here and elsewhere that the old GT3 was my favourite road car and, as large swathes of countryside flowed with extraordinary rapidity beneath its centre-lock wheels, I found no grounds to modify the opinion. It was epically, momentarily, spectacularly good fun to drive.

The problems facing those charged with engineering its successor looked almost insuperable, and the fact the standard was already so high was barely the start of them. The next issue was that the future GT3 would have to be based on the new 991 platform and that forced a couple of highly undesirable hard points upon the team. Firstly it would have to sit on a wheelbase fully 100mm longer than that of the 997, thereby compromising the defining characteristic of the car that has distinguished it from every rival it has faced over half a century of production. Simply put and all other things being equal, the longer the wheelbase, the less agile your car will be.

The second feature the Motorsport division was powerless to change was the fact the 991 comes with electric steering. I've ranted about this before,

FACTFILE

£100,540

ENGINE
3.8 litres, 6 cylinders

POWER
475bhp @ 8250rpm

TORQUE
324lb ft @ 6250rpm

TRANSMISSION
seven-speed auto double clutch, rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 3.5sec

TOP SPEED 196mph

ECONOMY 23mpg

CO₂ 289g/km

not least because the fuel savings put forward to justify robbing a car of its steering feel equates to a free tank every 40,000 miles. Big deal.

Thirdly, Porsche was no longer going to be able to use the old Hans Mezger-designed motor that, among its many and varied claims to fame, includes Porsche's most recent Le Mans win in 1998. Instead it would adapt the new direct-injection engine used in lesser 911s, something designed primarily to reduce manufacturing costs.

And then there was the issue that Porsche could have avoided, but didn't. Ever since the first GT3 was built in 1999, every one of them has been fitted with a six-speed manual gearbox. No longer: the new GT3 has paddles.

But as I drove the old GT3, a final problem arose, one to which I couldn't see even the geniuses of Porsche

Motorsport finding a convincing answer. Simply put, one of the reasons the old car is so good is that, in certain regards, it's actually not very good at all. Like almost all old 911s, it not only likes to hop and skip its way down a decent road, it also has a fundamental handling imbalance that means it's inclined to exhibit generous slip angles at both ends. Part of the joy of driving it is utilising those tools Porsche puts at your disposal – flawless steering and telepathic throttle sensitivity – for dealing with these quirks. You feel that whatever skill you may possess is contributing to your safe, fast and sublimely entertaining progress from one point to the next. I thought it inherently unlikely Porsche would seek to retro-engineer these faults into the new car.

And they haven't. The new GT3 marks the biggest departure for the sub-brand since its conception nearly 15 years ago.

The numbers are impressive, stupendously so you might say. The new engine still displaces 3.8 litres but, compared with the old GT3, its power has risen 40bhp to 475bhp, more than enough to offset its modest 35kg weight gain. It develops that power at 8250rpm, but is happy to rev to 9000rpm. It's enough for the GT3 to hit 62mph in 3.5sec or, put another way, just 0.1sec more than a new 911 Turbo (despite lacking the Turbo's all-wheel-drive traction).

As you approach it certainly looks the part. Drop down into the seat and you'll be comforted by the fact it is still resolutely a two-seater, the alcantara-rimmed steering wheel and the very familiar cabin. The engine might be cheaper to produce but it sounds no less promising when you fire it up.

It still feels wrong to pull back a gear shifter than push forward a stick, but at least when you knock the suede lever across into its sequential plane, it requires you to push forward to change down. All other two-pedal Porsches do the reverse and, to the man or woman who got that particular modification signed off, you have my respect and admiration.

As does the car. It expands the ability envelope to a level never seen before at this price point, and in this regard it is a triumph. And you can forget the figures, for in the real world this car is far faster



even than they suggest. Its performance is so accessible it makes an old GT3 look inept and, yes, slow. The nose doesn't bob, the front end has the bite of a sabre-toothed tiger and in the quick stuff there is a level of stability beyond that of any road-going 911 of my experience. It has a four-wheel steering system that, by turning the rear wheels in the opposite direction to the fronts at low speed and the same direction at high speeds, effectively shortens or lengthens the wheelbase according to need.

Indeed the GT3 provides such confidence it will lap a difficult circuit in a faster time than a theoretically quicker car that doesn't provide such reassurance. The brakes are perfect, the steering as linear and accurate as you could wish. And if you were ever to be converted to the ways of the double-clutch transmission, this would be the car to do it for you. The new GT3 is a magnificent achievement of which all those at Porsche Motorsport who



Perfect braking is just one of the elements that make the newest GT3 a better car than the old, despite giving up staples of the GT3 breed such as engine and manual gearbox

made it should rightly be proud.

And you know what's coming next: the qualifier that explains why, in the case of GT3s, more is somehow less. And why, despite all this car's outlandish talents, I still prefer the old one. Except I don't feel that way. Not exactly, at least. There is a lot about the new car I like less than the old – the lack of a third pedal and its synthesised steering feel in particular. But there are also things I prefer. It's better looking, more civilised when you're not in a hurry, far less likely to mug you when you get it wrong and it possesses an even better engine, which I'd never have expected.

I'd probably still choose the older car for its transmission and the charm of its sometimes cursed ways. But one of the first rules of journalism is to write not for yourself but your reader: and it is my hunch that for most people most of the time – even GT3-minded people – this car is actually an even finer exponent of the GT3 art than the last. □

VOLKSWAGEN XL1

Startling to behold - and a real taste of the future



IF I TOLD YOU THERE WAS A Volkswagen that anyone could buy, but that it would cost £92,000, seat just two, fail to keep up with a Polo, be a nightmare to repair and be available only with left-hand drive, would you want one? Probably not. But what if I then told you that, all unrealistic official figures aside, if you drove the car briskly on a blend of urban and country roads and dual carriageway, it really would return a genuine 120mpg? Would that change your mind? Me neither.

But that is the proposition placed before you by the new Volkswagen XL1, a genuine, fully crash-tested production car on sale now, albeit in very limited quantities. VW said it initially planned to build 250 but made sure it had the capacity for 5000. Now it is “95 per cent certain” that just 250 will make it into production and, given that the largest single group of customers are museums and that an unspecified number remain unsold despite vast publicity, you can see why.

But whether a car with 67bhp could ever be worth a £92,000 price tag is hardly the point. The sensible way to



FACTFILE

£92,000

ENGINE
0.8 litres, 2 cylinders,
turbocharged

POWER
67bhp @ n/a rpm

TORQUE
89lb ft @ n/a rpm

TRANSMISSION
seven-speed automatic,
rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 12.7sec

TOP SPEED 100mph

ECONOMY 313mpg

CO₂ 21g/km

look at the XL1 is as a test bed that VW is placing into the public arena so it can test in real time with real people living real lives on real roads. It will then take its myriad technologies forward into cars you and I can afford.

These include a carbon fibre-reinforced monocoque, its tiny 800cc, two-cylinder diesel engine, associated hybrid electric drive and many refinements incorporated to minimise aerodynamic drag and rolling resistance.

The car is as extraordinary as it looks.

It is by a vast margin the most fuel efficient and environmentally friendly car in production. It has a drag coefficient of below 0.19 and, if you believe the official blurb, will do 313mpg or, to quote the official target, require less than one litre of fuel to cover 100km. It weighs just 795kg, or less than a Lotus Elise. And while it might not do 313mpg in normal driving, 200mpg is achievable if you're gentle.

To drive it is oddly entertaining. Once you've slid past the carbon gullwing door and fallen into your carbon seat, the inside is actually reassuringly normal, save for the rear-facing cameras in the door skins that replace the

exterior mirrors. As the car is little more than a metre high, the driving position is reclined, but it takes all 6ft 4in of me easily enough. To get going you just press the start button, select drive and squeeze the throttle whereupon the electric motor will glide you silently forward. With barely any weight at all on the front wheels and a 115/80 section front tyre, the XL1 neither needs nor has power steering.

It's quick enough to keep up with the traffic even just using batteries, happily zinging along at 60mph. Its shape is so efficient it requires fewer than 8bhp to maintain that speed. Take your foot off the accelerator and it barely slows at all, so even on the flat you can coast for what seems like miles. On a twisty road it even handles reasonably well.

It's let down by the uncouth nature of the diesel when it cuts in, the lack of over-the-shoulder visibility and limited luggage space, but what more can you expect from a mobile laboratory?

So should you rush to be one of the 250? I wouldn't, but wait with interest to see how much of its technology makes it into the mainstream and when. My bet is a lot, and soon. ☑



CATERHAM 620R

Ignore the tax disc and plates: it's a racing car

ONE DAY MANY YEARS ago, Caterham's then technical director Jez Coates turned up unannounced, tossed me the keys to the car he'd been driving and said, "Tell me what you think of that." He said no more about it, but I didn't need to do more than blip the throttle to realise its 2-litre Vauxhall twin-cam engine had been turbocharged.

I drove it up the road, hating almost everything about it: the lack of noise and throttle response in particular. When I said as much to Coates he simply said, "Thought so" and the car was never seen again.

But from that day to this I have wondered what a Seven might be like not with a turbo, but a supercharger. I need wonder no more, for the supercharged 311bhp, 549kg Caterham 620R is now a reality.

To all intents and purposes, it is a racing car to which the minimum possible has been done to make it both legal and viable for the public road. It even retains the sequential gearbox of the race version from which it is derived.

For years I have been fearing that Caterham would finally push the Seven further than it cared to go and I really thought this would be it. It wasn't the



power I thought might make the car undriveable, but the torque provided by the supercharger. But it's not: in fact it's really rather easy.

I'll qualify that because at first even quite experienced drivers would be forgiven for being terrified. Unless you are familiar with quite serious racing cars, the acceleration is likely to be an alien and quite off-putting experience. There's no time to savour the forces it applies to your body – you're too busy throwing gears at it, managing the traction and making sure you don't miss braking points. But as you acclimatise, so the fog clears and you become able to focus on what the car is doing.

Which is actually not very much. For

all its potential, the 620R is just like every other Caterham and a fundamentally stable, faithful companion. With that much power it will go very sideways if that's what you want, but it's not a natural state for the car in the same way as it is for, say, a Toyota GT86. Instead it wants to understeer just a little as you turn in and then adopt a neutral to very mildly oversteering stance on the way out. For a track day car, I'd not have it any other way. Moreover, the car is so accurate you soon realise the additional brain power you need to allocate simply to coping with the speed of the thing is more than offset by its ability never to stray off line and wobble onto a part of the track you'd not intended to use. I found the 620R utterly invigorating and entirely convincing.

If it has a problem it is that at £49,995, it is almost twice the price of a Supersport Seven whose modest 140bhp is no bar at all to enjoyment on road or track, whether driven fast or slow. By contrast, the only point of the 620R is to drive it as fast as you possibly can on a track. Do that and for the money I think it uniquely appealing. But if you want a Seven for the simple joy of driving anywhere, save yourself a small fortune and buy a Supersport instead. **Q**

FACTFILE

£49,995

ENGINE
2.0 litres, 4 cylinders,
supercharged

POWER
311bhp @ 7700rpm

TORQUE
219lb ft @ 7350rpm

TRANSMISSION
six-speed sequential,
rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 2.8sec

TOP SPEED 155mph

ECONOMY n/a mpg

CO₂ n/a g/km

MERCEDES-BENZ S63 AMG

Sumptuous speed from a limousine that's remarkably light on its feet



EVER SINCE BMW INTRODUCED the 535i back in, I think, 1981, I have loved high-performance saloons. The idea of a four-door family car that was the very picture of innocence but which was also able to keep up with Porsches and oversteer at the twitch of a toe was at the time all very appealing to the teenage me. And it still is.

But I've never felt the same about those few high-performance limousines I've encountered over the years. While a family saloon has to be an all-rounder, a long-wheelbase luxury saloon must be anything but. Imagine what Ferraris would be like if they suddenly had also

to be good off-road, or how a track-tuned Defender would feel in the forest. Turning a limousine into a sporting car is no different and by rights the result should be disastrous.

With its new S63 AMG, however, Mercedes has somehow dodged this bullet. As those who read my review of the standard S-class will know, the company's new flagship is the finest mass-produced luxury car the world has ever known, at least if you view it objectively in terms of things that matter to these cars such as space, ride and refinement. How could adding the imperative that it must also accelerate like a supercar and provide

FACTFILE

£119,565

ENGINE
5.5 litres, 8 cylinders,
turbocharged

POWER
585bhp @ 5500rpm

TORQUE
663lb ft @ 2650rpm

TRANSMISSION
seven-speed auto,
rear-wheel drive

0-62MPH 4.4sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
ECONOMY 27.9mpg
CO₂ 237g/km

commensurate handling do anything other than ruin the formula?

In fact, the S63 loses remarkably little comfort despite its fatter tyres and stiffer springs. Thanks in part at least to cameras that read the road and tell the suspension what's approaching, the ride quality remains fabulous. But when you boot James out of the driver's seat and take control yourself, you'll find yourself controlling a car so fast that the only reason it doesn't hit 60mph in less than 4sec is because it lacks the traction to do it.

It's even fun to drive: it steers accurately, corners flat and fast and will even adjust its line a little according to throttle setting if you so choose.

You can of course point to its bewildering catalogue of technologies in partial explanation of these abilities, but there's actually a far simpler explanation. You'd not be surprised to read that a BMW M5 was a fun car to drive, yet this vast, long-wheelbase barge of a Mercedes is just 25kg heavier, an insignificant impedance among cars like this. It looks huge, but it's actually quite light and in the driving experience, it shows.

All of which leaves those with the requisite £119,565 with something of a problem: to drive, or be driven? And that's a nice problem to have. ☑



A life on the ocean wave?

An interesting article by Damien Smith last month – I'd forgotten David Richards was a maritime anorak. I watched the 2013 America's Cup and you raised an intriguing thought: could we see a David Richards-managed, Adrian Newey-designed yacht crewed by Ben Ainslie in a few years? I'm sure British industry and backers would get behind that.

Mike George, Edinburgh

We asked Adrian Newey the question. Here is his response:

"I have spoken to Ben Ainslie and, although the America's Cup is interesting to me, it remains a very distant project and one for which I am not ready at present. I have too many challenges remaining in F1, especially with the regulation changes next year, so will not be pursuing it for now."

Eye of the Needell

With precious few great motor sport achievements to my name, I feel obliged to correct a minor glitch in Mike Doodson's otherwise excellent article on my good friend Nelson Piquet.

Quoting Cadwell Park as the scene of one of Nelson's greatest F3 victories, Mike recalls that the Brazilian started on slicks on a drying track and, having dropped back early on, surged past the likes of me, Stefan Johansson and Derek Warwick to take victory.

In fact I had been just as wise as Nelson and, in a far from competitive March-Dolomite, chased him past the early leaders and then set fastest lap as I closed in. Frustratingly I couldn't find a way past, but came as close as anyone to breaking his remarkable run of wins.

It was probably my best F3 drive and, at the end-of-season party, series sponsor BP honoured my effort with the 'Big Balls' trophy! Let the history books stand corrected.

Tiff Needell, Salisbury, Wiltshire

Stage management

And so the Wales Rally GB returns to North Wales. This is a good thing, as confirmed by the huge spectator numbers and general good feeling among, well, just about everybody.

For the first time in 15 years I was

tempted back to my homeland to camp out in a forest, wear a woolly hat and do what I used to do every November: watch our greatest motor sport event.

And what a fantastic spectacle it was. The cars might all look a bit 'samey', the sounds are nothing like as exciting as Group B cars on full beans and the entrance fee was extortionate for the privilege of a two-mile walk to the stage, but all that was soon forgotten.

One thing though: can the Forestry Commission be expected to allow this great event to continue given the amount of litter, beer cans and furniture – yes, furniture – left behind? Somebody even left a gazebo abandoned in the woods. Irresponsible louts might ruin the event for us all, as well as significantly harming the environment.

Owain Linford, Milton Keynes

Bitter-sweet memories

I began to read your recent article on François Cevert with some apprehension and finished it with a great deal of sad nostalgia. I saw François win his only GP at Watkins Glen in 1971 (my first F1 race) – a masterful drive. I also witnessed his coming together with Jody Scheckter at Mosport Park in September 1973, which looked worse than it was. I was also at Watkins two weeks later when he perished at the end of Saturday morning practice. At the time of the accident, I was at the loop at the end of the long straight after the Esses. The immediate aftermath of the crash was one of the most mysterious and ominous experiences I have ever known at a track. The whole place went completely quiet with five minutes of the session remaining and we all wondered what might have happened. No cars came by for the longest time – then a few trundled through at a crawl. One driver wasn't wearing his helmet and looked distressed, so we suspected something awful had occurred.

It's a sad but indelible memory.
Denny Gioia, Pennsylvania, USA

A diminishing breed

I enjoyed Nigel Roebuck's story (November 2013) on François Cevert, who was surely a rising star until fate intervened. Cevert was one of a then-diminishing breed of drivers who could jump into any open-wheel or



JEFF ALLISON

sports car and have a go. I have a photo (above) of Cevert and Jackie Oliver from the 1972 Los Angeles Times Grand Prix (Can-Am) at Riverside and have long found it poignant and haunting, because of subsequent events.

Thanks for producing such an interesting and informative magazine. Your passion bleeds through the pages.
Jeff Allison, Ken-Caryl Valley, Colorado



Cevert on pole position

Your Cevert issue now has pride of place on my bookshelf... wonder why? Thanks a lot for such an issue.

Angel Joaniquet, Barcelona, Spain

This charming man

They say the person you are is reflected by the company you keep, and what they say about you.

François Cevert was surrounded by solid people and I've never read a cross or bad word about him. He touched people with his sincerity and charm.

I very much appreciated Nigel Roebuck's story on François. Merci.
Paul Chenard, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Feud for thought

I enjoyed reading Simon Taylor's Lunch with... Ian Phillips. What an exciting and interesting life Ian has led. When is he writing his autobiography?

Among some fascinating stories, the gem that caught my eye was the tug-of-war between Jordan and Benetton over Michael Schumacher: Eddie Jordan and Phillips against Tom Walkinshaw and Flavio Briatore, with Bernie Ecclestone as referee – box-office stuff to rival Ali versus Frazier!
M Barker, Retford, Nottinghamshire

Tied up in Notts

I've just finished reading Andrew Frankel's highly enjoyable article on the Blitzen Benz.

However, when I saw the bit about Victor Hémary claiming "the only Land Speed Record set on English soil" my mind went back more than 30 years, to when my late grandfather used to take me for driving lessons in his old Morris Minor traveller. One day, when passing through Clipstone, Notts, my grandfather told me Charles Rolls (of Rolls-Royce fame) had set a Land Speed Record there. I assumed he must be mistaken, but a few years later saw a list of LSR record holders and Charles S Rolls was listed as having set a record at Clipstone, in a Mors Z Paris-Vienna.

I am now a grandfather myself and look forward to teaching my own grandson to drive. Before we pass through Clipstone, would it be possible for Mr Frankel to confirm his statement that the LSR has been set only once on English soil? I wish to be as accurate as possible when retelling such stories to my grandson!

Dale Wilkinson, Mansfield, Notts

I still believe the Blitzen was the only car to set a Land Speed Record on English soil. Although CS Rolls' valiant efforts almost certainly made him the fastest man on earth, the favourable gradient and a significant tailwind meant the record was never recognised. Even Rolls' biographer David Baines, in his excellent Why Not? The Story of the Honourable Charles Stewart Rolls, states: "Although the fastest man in the world, Rolls would never officially hold the World Land Speed Record..." AF

Back to school

I was reading your recent Richard Noble piece when I came across this quote: "Drag goes up with the cube of speed, so if you want to go twice as fast you need eight times the power for a given weight."

This is both right and wrong.

Firstly, vehicle weight has nothing to do with it. Secondly, for a given vehicle travelling at subsonic speeds, aerodynamic drag (a force) is proportional to velocity (speed) squared, not cubed. But the amount of power required to push through the air is, indeed, proportional to the cube of speed. This mix of squares and cubes seems to confuse many people, but the reason for it is actually quite simple. If you remember the schoolboy physics mantras 'work done is force times distance' and 'power is work done in unit time', then you have all the tools you need to understand it.

To calculate the work done in unit time and hence the power, we need to know both force and distance travelled. As aerodynamic drag is proportional to speed squared, and the distance travelled is proportional to speed, it follows that the power required must be proportional to speed cubed. If it takes 50hp to overcome the aerodynamic drag at 100mph then it will require 400hp to reach 200mph, and so on.
Keith Howard, Lydd, Kent

Grass guzzlers

Can *Motor Sport* get better? I didn't think so, but it seems I was wrong. Gordon Cruickshank's piece on Jim Gavin was a recent highlight.

Driving through Sevenoaks one Sunday 35 or so years ago, I saw a cardboard sign: "Lawnmower racing today". I followed the signs, paid, watched, went home to phone a couple of old motorcycle racing friends and told them, "There's something we need to be doing." And then I met Jim.

At the time I was working for Brands Hatch's advertising contractors. When the European GP was announced for 1983, it left the circuit short of time to organise its famous displays. I suggested a lawnmower race on the Clearways infield – and Angela Webb called Jim to say he had a Grand Prix support fixture.

My favourite Jim Gavin story, of

many, was the briefing before the annual 12-hour lawnmower race. "Safety is important," he said, "and this year we have given the marshals some yellow flags. If there is an incident they will wave them and you must slow down, but we haven't enough flags for all the corners. Even if you don't see a flag being waved, don't assume there hasn't been an incident." Wonderful!
Rodney Gooch, Castle Combe Circuit

Mountain debts

I raced at Bathurst most years from 1990 to 2001, as a self-funded backmarker. We always stayed at the James Cook Hotel, poshest joint in town (compared to sleeping under the truck in the pits).

I was a nobody, but in the early Nineties two things happened each year. My young children always got a photo with Wayne Gardner at the motel and my wife and I always had dinner with your recent interviewee Win Percy.

Both are great racers and utterly decent blokes.
Mike Conway, Sydney, Australia

The life of Riley

I am keen to trace any past member who took part in or remembers the formation of the Riley Register in 1954. In order to help us celebrate our Diamond Jubilee, we would like to hear from anyone who was a member in 1954, even if they are no longer the owner of a Riley. Anybody with period notes, photographs or cine film would be equally useful to us.

If you are able to help or put us in direct contact with someone who can, may be able to help, please contact conwayhall@btopenworld.com.
Conway Hall, Worcester

Enjoying one's lunch

I'm writing to say how much I enjoyed Simon Taylor's Lunch with... Ian Phillips in your November edition.

This is just the sort of thing I love to see in the magazine – insight from someone who was really there in the thick of it, with huge and varied experience, a sense of humour and perspective... and an inclination to tell it how it was.

Gwyn Pollard, Wapping, London 

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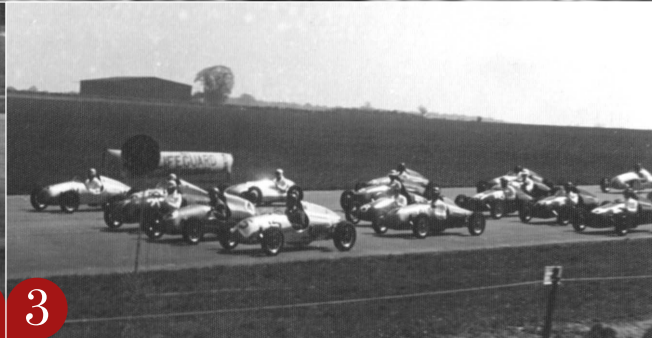
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JOHN BURKMAR

The mention of "safety ropes" in John's letter tells us we're a long way back – at the 1950 British GP at Silverstone, the inaugural World Championship event, where Britain's new world-beating BRM was shown...

- 1 Young hopefuls: Stirling Moss heads Peter Collins in half-pint Coopers
- 2 B Bira drove Enrico Platé Maserati
- 3 Rolling start for International F3 event
- 4 Raymond Mays demonstrates the already troubled BRM instead of making its intended race debut
- 5 King, Queen and princesses on lap of honour
- 6 John also saw '57 Mille Miglia: here eventual winner Piero Taruffi leaves Rome



Tom Kristensen Denmark's first champion

Since being inducted into our Hall of Fame in 2013 Tom Kristensen's been on a roll, adding a ninth Le Mans victory to his record total and now, at the age of 46, he is a world champion – Denmark's first in motor racing.

Heading into the penultimate round of the World Endurance Championship at Shanghai, Kristensen and team-mates Loïc Duval/Allan McNish held a healthy 40.75-point advantage over the sister



Audi of Marcel Fässler, André Lotterer and Benoit Tréluyer. The leading trio only needed to finish fourth to clinch the title and ran a conservative race to claim third. It was the only time all season they had finished outside the top two.

"It is a good feeling," said Kristensen. "This has been a special year in so many ways. I would like to thank all those who have trusted and supported me over time, especially my family. I'm very happy with this championship title and I feel I am part of the best team in the world."

The final race of the season takes place in Bahrain on November 30, giving the new world champions a chance to finish the year with a clean sweep of podiums.

Log on to:
www.motorsportmagazine.com/halloffame
to explore the career of Tom Kristensen
PLUS videos and career photo galleries

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magazine.co.uk



Nigel Roebuck

Will the new F1 regulations destabilise Red Bull? When will one of the top teams see sense and sign Nico Hülkenberg? And has F1's safety crusade taken a step too far?

IT IS THE EVENING OF SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, as I write, and a few minutes ago a Texan lady in my hotel asked me what seemed to her a very reasonable question. "Is anyone else," she said, "ever going to win another Grand Prix? I mean, do they all have to wait until this guy quits?"

As I said, a not unreasonable question. In the build-up to the US Grand Prix all they had heard about was Sebastian Vettel winning this race, winning that, clinching yet another World Championship – and now, at Circuit of the Americas, they had seen him take his eighth victory on the trot, something not even Michael Schumacher managed to achieve.

This time Seb didn't waltz away into the middle distance – although one suspects that he could have done – but still he came away with a full set from the weekend, taking pole, leading from the start and, for the hell of it, setting fastest lap just a couple from the flag. After qualifying Fernando Alonso joked that, "They could put a GP2 engine in that car and it would *still* be on pole..." I think he was joking, anyway.

What everyone is clinging to is the thought that, with the new regulations, 'blown exhausts' or 'blown floors' or whatever you want to call them will be out of the window in 2014, and then perhaps Vettel will have a little more of a struggle on his hands. Red Bull has made this technology work far more effectively than any other team, and Sebastian has mastered the technique – completely counter-intuitive, as other drivers have pointed out – of getting the most from it better than any other.

He is still only 26, and 'blown floors' have been in his repertoire almost from the beginning. Perhaps it's a little like Bernd Rosemeyer, Seb's fellow-countryman from three-quarters of a century ago: no one – not even Nuvolari – drove the wayward, rear-engined, Auto Unions like Rosemeyer, and many ascribed this in part to the fact that he never raced any other cars; that he had, in effect, nothing to un-learn.

Vettel's rivals, therefore, look with optimism to next year, hoping that, with the 'blown floor' gone, he and Red Bull might not have the dominance we have come to take for granted. One, though, who didn't wish to be named, was less confident: "Listen, Adrian [Newey] is still there, isn't he? You just *know* he'll come up with something..."

The weekend at Circuit of the Americas was again a great success, and the place has established itself as a firm favourite with the F1 community, but perhaps this time around everything was a little... paler than at the inaugural race a year ago. It's a fact that the 2012 US Grand Prix, wherein Lewis Hamilton's McLaren chased down and eventually beat Vettel, was a far better race than this rather pedestrian affair, but more than that there were signs of cutbacks here and there – hardly surprising, since the Ecclestone-negotiated CVC fee for the race has increased substantially, as tends to be the way of it, year on year.

In some countries, such a thing is readily accommodated by a government bureaucrat doing what he's told, and simply signing it off, but this is America and, as in Britain, there is not a cent of public money involved. Like Silverstone, Circuit of the Americas has somehow to stand on its own feet, and the fact that the crowd – while still extremely healthy by the standards of the day – was down from last year will be a concern to its management: 'the gate', after all, is the only source of income available to a hapless circuit owner these days, all other monies from the event being hoovered away.

Circuit of the Americas is a magnificent facility, and there is clear evidence that the money has been spent not on stupidly flashy buildings but on the things that matter at a race track, not least the circuit itself. The all-important paddock – trust me, they do *not* all feel the same – is just the right size, and thus feels welcoming and immediately familiar. Those who last year suggested it had echoes of Adelaide were on the money, and COTA could have been paid no greater compliment. Find me someone who prefers Melbourne and I'll find you a liar.

Over the weekend a revised, abbreviated 2014 World Championship was circulated, and to no one's surprise three Grands Prix on the original schedule – two of them New Jersey and Mexico – are no



“LISTEN, ADRIAN NEWWEY
IS STILL THERE, ISN'T HE?
YOU JUST KNOW
HE'LL COME UP
WITH SOMETHING”

longer there. This time next year work on the circuit in Mexico City will have been completed, allowing the race to be on the following year's calendar, but while there remain slim hopes that 'The Grand Prix of America', across the water from Manhattan, will take place finally in 2015, chances are put no higher than 50:50, and if there is ultimately to be a second race in the United States there is greater optimism for an eventual return – after 30 years away – to Long Beach. Such a development would assuredly be received with pleasure in the F1 community – as was the news that the Korean Grand Prix at deathless Yeongam has also been struck from the 2014 schedule. Something to do with money, apparently. That's a surprise, isn't it?

FOLLOWING THE ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX, WHICH brought him his second victory in a week, his seventh on the trot and his 11th of the season, Sebastian Vettel, I was amused to note, led not only the championship for drivers but effectively that for constructors, too. He had at that stage contributed 347 points to Red Bull's tally, while for Mercedes the combined efforts of Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg were good for only 334. After Austin it is even more conclusive than that: Sebastian 372, Mercedes 348...

Mark Webber, on pole in Abu Dhabi by virtue of an inspired lap, finished second in the race, but seemed quite relaxed afterwards, and if his personal enthusiasm for his team-mate has always been well under control, he took nothing away from his latest stunning performance: "Seb's in a sweet spot at the moment, for sure..."

Vettel, for his part, appeared almost bemused by the sheer ease of it all: "At times," he said, "I felt almost as if I was flying – you don't get cars like this too often..." Well, no, you don't, so when one comes your way, savour it and make the most of it, as did Schumacher with sundry Ferraris a decade or so ago. When you're in this almost surreal position, races surrender as soon as the lights are out and Sebastian, like Michael, must now arrive in a paddock subconsciously assuming that, barring the untoward, he will win on Sunday. Few racing drivers in history have experienced such a state of grace.

Hamilton recently declared that had Fernando Alonso been a Red Bull driver these four or five years past, his domination would have been greater even than Vettel's. That we'll never know, but what we can say beyond doubt is that as Adrian Newey and his team have yet further improved their car (as in the second half of the season), Vettel has gone with it all the way.

I remember talking to Mario Andretti about the Lotus 79 with which he won the World Championship 35 years ago. "When you have a car that's fundamentally better than anything else," he said, "everything else falls into place. OK, back then we didn't have the reliability they take for granted these days, but if the car held together the chances were you would win. And when you've got that inbuilt superiority, life gets easier all the way round because you don't have to push yourself – or the car – to the edge all the time..."

Vettel likes collecting statistics, and even when leading literally by a mile and more will quite often – to the despair of his race engineer – crank out a new fastest lap towards the end of a Grand Prix. It's readily there in the car, and he knows it, and what could ever be more dispiriting for the rest?

If it were not enough that Sebastian is a brilliant racing driver, with quantifiably the best car at his disposal, so it must also be borne in mind that to this point in his career he has had extraordinarily good fortune. I'll go with those who say 'You make your own luck' only just so far: I know what they're getting at, to some degree, but still the fact remains that Vittorio Brambilla won a Grand Prix and Chris Amon never did.

Having won, at the age of 26, virtually a third of the World Championship races in which he has driven, Vettel has rarely had need



of good luck, but when required it has invariably been there for him. Think of the championship decider at Interlagos last year, when he screwed up comprehensively on the opening lap, coming by the pits dead last and with a significantly damaged car: few would have bet a cent on that Red Bull completing the 71 laps, but it did – and in the sixth place Sebastian needed for the title.

Had Vettel's driving error cost him, had his car later failed, Alonso would have won the championship – as, come to that, he would also have done in 2010 had DRS been introduced one race earlier, for then he (and Webber) would have been able easily to deal with Vitaly Petrov's swift-in-a-straight-line Renault at the Abu Dhabi title-decider. In World Championships Sebastian leads Fernando 4-2, but it could so easily have been the other way round.

As it was, DRS did not make its entrance until the opening race of 2011, so for Vettel the timing was perfect, and recently I was struck again by how important that can be as Franz Tost explained why Daniil



“KVYAT HAS BEEN CHOSEN BECAUSE WE ARE CONVINCED HE HAS THE TALENT”

Kvyat had been selected by Helmut Marko to partner Jean-Eric Vergne at Toro Rosso in 2014.

“Kvyat has been chosen,” said Tost, “because this year he has shown very good performance in GP3, as well as in European F3, and we from Red Bull are all convinced that he has the talent and the natural speed to come into F1, and to become a successful driver straight away...”

The thought occurred that had Webber decided to call time on his F1 career a year earlier than he did, and had Daniel Ricciardo been promoted to Red Bull in his stead, logically the next step would have been for Toro Rosso to take Antonio Felix da Costa, who had excelled during 2012 not only in GP3 but also, later, in the Renault 3.5 series (as well as winning Macau’s F3 showpiece).

Unfortunately for him, da Costa’s 2013 Renault 3.5 campaign has been up and down, so it is Kvyat – with whom he shares an apartment – who has got the nod. One hopes that this is not the end of a Grand Prix career before it started, that da Costa doesn’t fall through the net,

but such is the way of recruitment to F1 these days that he very well might. Red Bull’s Young Driver programme is admirable in its intent, but as such as Jaime Alguersuari can tell you it is also singularly ruthless in its application.

Rumours persist that Kvyat’s selection for Toro Rosso has been in no way impeded by the gelt he reportedly brings with him. It might be true, it might not, but there is no getting away from the fact that, when it comes to choosing drivers, money talks these days as it never has before. We may be five years on from the financial meltdown gifted us by all those darling bankers, but for quite a time the paddock was shielded from immediate impact because existing sponsorship contracts still had to be honoured – even by taxpayer-rescued outfits like RBS.

Once those contracts expired, however, they were for the most part not renewed, and in the fiscal climate of the recent past it has been mighty difficult to replace them. “This paddock,” a team principal murmured to me a couple of years ago, “is a house of cards. There are three or four teams with financial security – and the rest are on the edge...”

Nothing has brought this into sharper focus than the recent controversy surrounding Räikkönen and Lotus. Kimi might be economical with words, but those to which he does give voice tend to be much to the point. When asked why he was leaving Lotus – a team with which he has been fundamentally happier than any other – for Ferrari, he didn’t come forth with a selection of PR sound bites about the thrills of Maranello: he was going, he said, because Lotus owed him money.

In the paddock at Abu Dhabi there was no sign of Räikkönen on the Thursday, and while ordinarily that wouldn’t have provoked much comment – Kimi doesn’t care for double-headers, and last year similarly didn’t show his face at Interlagos until Friday morning – on this occasion speculation mounted that he wouldn’t be seen in a Lotus again. Team and driver had not, after all, parted on the best of terms in India the previous weekend, following a late-race radio altercation, when Räikkönen foolishly held up team-mate Romain Grosjean, and was advised by trackside operations director Alan Permane to ‘get out of the f***** way’.

In the event Kimi did eventually report for duty in Abu Dhabi, having been sweet-talked by the team’s owners, but he made very clear the extent of his dissatisfaction: in 2013, he said, he had not been paid one euro.

Lotus team owner Gérard Lopez suggested that the problem has been one of cashflow (as also endured by Räikkönen in 2012): new investment from an outfit calling itself Quantum Motorsports was definitely on its way, he insisted, but it had taken longer than expected to transfer the money. OK...

For Lotus, the affair has obviously been a very public embarrassment, for this is a high-profile team employing – and failing to pay – one of the world’s greatest drivers. Within this saga, though, there are deeper implications for the sport, for Kimi is by no means the only F1 driver to go through 2013 without a pay cheque. Up and down pitlane there are teams in *dire* financial trouble.

This is why we are into an era of ‘pay drivers’ like we have never seen before. The plan had been for Hülkenberg to take over the Lotus drive left vacant by Räikkönen, but as the Quantum money appeared to evaporate, Nico gloomily reckoned that his chance had gone. A return to Force India looks to be his best option, but it says everything about the precarious state of F1 that for some time it seemed entirely possible that this gifted young man – destined for the heights, as far as I’m concerned – might actually be left without a drive.

Why? Because the six-foot Hülkenberg is not only heavy on weight – never a plus point for a racing driver, but especially not so in the forthcoming F1, wherein designers are having trouble getting their cars near the minimum weight limit – but also light on cash. Unlike many of his fellows, Nico doesn’t have a giant personal sponsor behind him, and while in a perfect world only talent would matter, life is rarely like that... and emphatically not so in these present times.

Hülkenberg already has four years of F1 behind him, but has yet ☐

– unaccountably – to drive for a top team. Signed by Williams for 2010, he was pushed out by Pastor Maldonado's *bolivars* after a single season, then spent a couple of years with Force India (the first as test driver) before opting to join Sauber.

When Lewis Hamilton left for Mercedes, Hülkenberg was considered too heavy by McLaren, who surprisingly went for Sergio Pérez, a decision many ascribed only to the fact that Pérez enjoys the patronage of Carlos Slim. Now Martin Whitmarsh has rightly taken a chance on promoting a young in-house driver (as with Hamilton seven years ago) and put Kevin Magnussen in the car for 2014.

If McLaren let Hülkenberg slip through its fingers, so also did Ferrari. Once it had been concluded that Felipe Massa's time was finally up, the choice was between Räikkönen and Hülkenberg, and we know who got the deal. My feeling remains that Ferrari made the wrong decision: at 26, Nico is eight years younger than Kimi (as well as dramatically cheaper), and looks ready to hack it with anyone in a top car.

In the late days of October Eric Boullier was saying that in 2014 the Lotus seat vacated by Räikkönen would be filled by Hülkenberg – or Maldonado. No one needs telling that Pastor can be *very* quick, but Nico is plainly on quite a different level. That said, what he doesn't have, of course, is a Venezuelan petro-dollars cheque with a surprising number of noughts on it, so without the promised investment from Quantum, his Lotus opportunity apparently disappeared into the ether.

You can say, if you wish – and I sure as hell wouldn't argue – that if there were even a possibility of a driver of Hülkenberg's ability missing out on a drive, that's proof enough that Formula 1 has lost its way. If it has long prided itself on being the technological summit of motor racing, so also it has blithely assumed itself to be the home of 'the best drivers in the world'. Yes, we have our Vettels and Alonsos, and at the very top level I continue to look upon this as one of the great vintages in GP racing history, but if – beyond the leading handful – the teams' choice of drivers is ever more dictated by 'ability to pay', the overall quality of the field inevitably dissipates. To a degree, that has been true for years, but never, I think, as overtly as now.

That said, in the short term, at least, there is probably no alternative. Many teams are fighting to stay alive, and until the financial climate improves significantly that situation will abide. It is not helped, of course, by the arrival of the new F1, with its prodigiously expensive 'hybrid' turbo engines. We've all got the message about motor racing's need to be seen to be green, and all the rest of it, and there's no doubt that the change in engine specification will encourage manufacturers – like Honda – to the sport again, but while that is of course good in itself the short-term financial implication for the smaller teams is calamitous.

People point out to me that the teams' slice of Bernie Ecclestone's cake is now bigger than it used to be (particularly so for the big four, Red Bull, Ferrari, McLaren, Mercedes), and quite right, too, since it is they who bake it in the first place, and if they stopped doing that he would have nothing to sell. As I've mentioned many times before, Bernie's genius as a salesman has made a great many people inordinately rich, and that of course has always been his powerbase: in the advent of dissension, the easiest way to shut people up is to stuff their mouths with dollars.

It never much concerned me that Ecclestone was himself becoming a billionaire on the back of F1 because, as I say, it was he who brought the big money to it in the first place, he who did a job that was beyond anyone else. I don't, though, entertain any such thoughts about those who now 'own' F1, who have contributed zilch to its well-being, let alone its growth, and indeed are actively harming its future.

It was back in April 2001 that the racing world learned, to its stupefaction, that FIA President Max Mosley had sold the commercial rights to F1 to Ecclestone, not only for a small fraction of their true worth, but – astonishingly – for 100 years, no less. "Have you ever in your life," Ken Tyrrell said to me at the time, "heard of *any* deal being negotiated for a *hundred years*?"

This was but a few months before Tyrrell's death, and the last time I ever spoke to him. If he was physically frail, his feistiness remained and this news from Paris appalled him. "Of course," he said, "you know what'll happen now, don't you? Bernie will flog the rights on to a bunch of bloody asset-strippers..."

We raised this possibility repeatedly with Mosley, but he assured us it could not happen. In anticipation of any such thing, he said, the deal contained what he liked to call 'the Don King clause', this a reference to the notorious boxing promoter, renowned for putting his own interests before those of others. The gist of this clause, Max smoothly told us, was that it gave the FIA the right to block any subsequent sale of the commercial rights which might prove other than beneficial to F1.

I never forgot Tyrrell's remark and thus, when it was announced in March 2006 that CVC Capital Partners had acquired 'majority control' of F1, I wondered how and why the deal had contrived to sidestep Don King, how the FIA had managed to persuade itself that the sport was safe in the hands of a private equity company, which

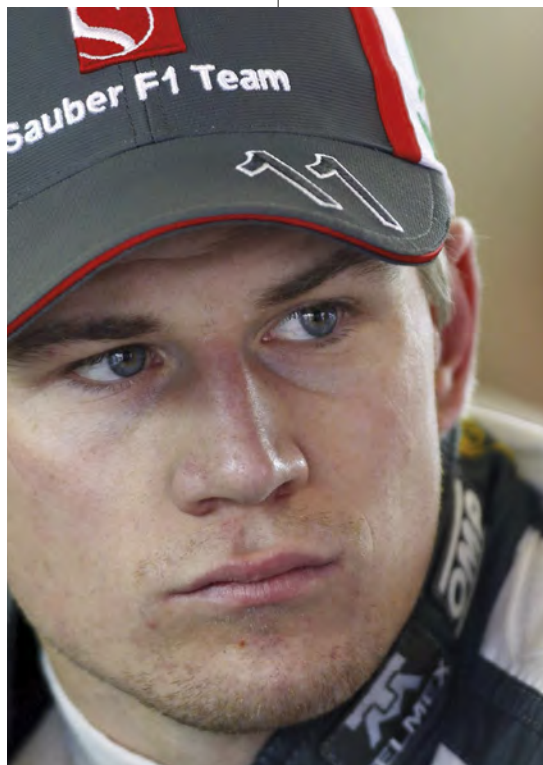
necessarily exists for no purpose save to make great gobs of money for itself and its investors.

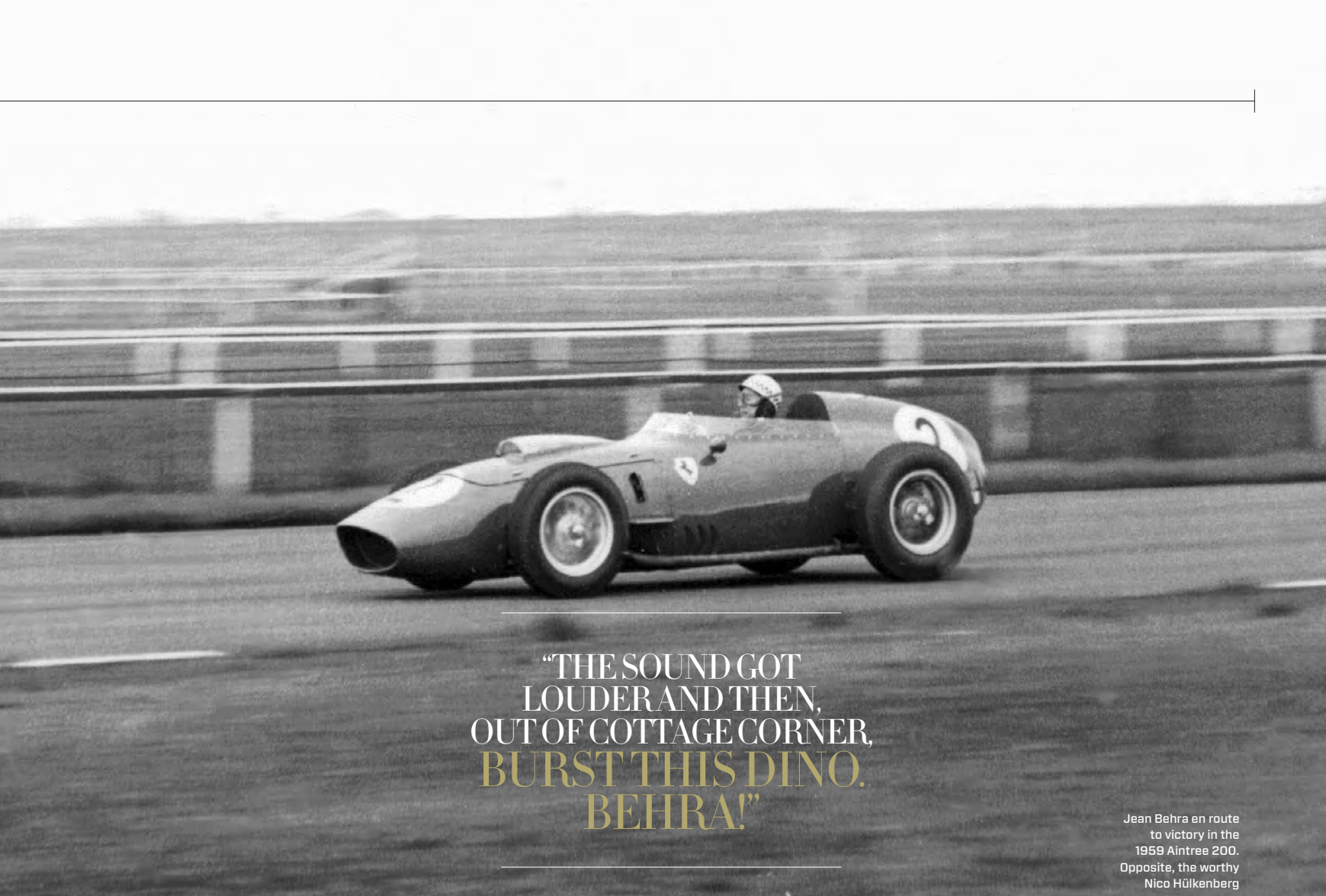
Seven years on, CVC has indeed done very nicely, thank you, out of F1, milking untold millions from it each year and putting back – as far as one can discern – not a dime.

When I think back to Mosley's time at the FIA, I am the first to agree that Max achieved a lot, most notably for safety within the sport, but by no means all that he did was good, and in my eyes he stands condemned first for the deal he made with Bernie, and second – even more overwhelmingly – that he did nothing to prevent F1 from sliding into the ownership of folk who didn't give a toss about it, who saw it only as a gravy train.

Undeniably it was smart of CVC to retain the services of Ecclestone, for they understood his unique role in this very specialised business, recognised his ability to do deals like no one else. For now, at least, Bernie remains in that position, but if developments in the ongoing Gribkowsky case cause that to change, one wonders how long it will be before the 'private equity company' – sorry, Ken – scarpers. About a minute and a half, I'd say.

As and when that moment arrives, there will be reason enough for the biggest party ever seen in motor racing, but until it does the World Championship will – apart from anything else – continue to abandon its faithful, and to spread to countries in which governments (not all of them despotic) are prepared to pay through the nose for the prestige of





“THE SOUND GOT
LOUDER AND THEN,
OUT OF COTTAGE CORNER,
BURST THIS DINO.
BEHRA!”

Jean Behra en route
to victory in the
1959 Aintree 200.
Opposite, the worthy
Nico Hülkenberg

hosting a Grand Prix, where thinly-populated white elephant ‘autodromes’ bring cheer to CVC’s investors and no one else. Ability to pay: whatever the endless claptrap about the need for a *World Championship*, it’s about nothing else.

And then there are the teams, of course, putting on the show, yet for the most part struggling to make any financial sense of it. One of Hülkenberg’s talent cannot take a drive – *any* drive – for granted, yet a well-connected adolescent with a sack of roubles apparently can, if we are to believe what we hear of Sauber’s plans for 2014. There is of course to be a Russian Grand Prix next year, personally negotiated with that nice Mr Putin.

Folk who should know assure me they are not blowing smoke when they say F1 is in a parlous state, with teams – several teams – on the edge of a financial precipice. Nero fiddles, apparently.

SATURDAY, APRIL 18 1959. WE GOT TO AINTREE AT about nine o’clock, and my dad parked near the fence in what was known as Picnic Loop, between two left-handers, Cottage and Country. As we got out of the car, we at once heard in the distance a racing engine that, in that era of four-cylinder Climaxes and BRMs, could only be a Ferrari.

The sound got louder – and then, out of Cottage Corner, burst this scarlet Dino 246, bearing the number 2. Behra! Past us he came, hard on it – and, believe it or not, wearing neither helmet nor goggles. Well, no need to stand on ceremony – it was only a quick test run, after all, requested by Ferrari to check that a misfire in practice had been cured...

It had, and later in the day my hero duly won the Aintree 200, the last victory of his life. I remember it all, not least his lap of honour, as he waved to the crowd, but when I think back to that day my first memory is of the bare-headed lap in the morning. If we’d arrived a couple of minutes later, we would have missed it.

This came back to me when Fernando Alonso gave Mark Webber a lift back to the paddock at the conclusion of the Singapore Grand Prix: it was another of those out-of-nowhere moments that one has always so much savoured, even more so in an era in which any kind of unconventional behaviour has been all but drummed out of the sport.

I’ll confess, though, that as Alonso dropped his buddy off, the thought occurred that almost certainly the stewards would be looking at this, and so they were. Later it was announced that both drivers had been given a reprimand, the lightest penalty available to the stewards, but if this meant little to Fernando it was a very different matter for Mark, who already had two reprimands against his name, and thus incurred a 10-place grid penalty at the next race, Korea.

Like many others, I was initially outraged that this time-honoured practice – remember Senna riding back with Mansell at Silverstone in 1991? – had resulted in punishment, and what really surprised me was that the ‘driver steward’ in Singapore was Derek Warwick, in my experience hardly a member of the milk and water brigade.

Warwick, however, put forward the stewards’ case simply and eloquently, stressing that Webber and Alonso had not been penalised for the ‘taxi ride’ *per se*. The problem, he said, lay in the way it started, with Fernando stopping his car in a dangerous place, and Mark running across to it without permission from the marshals.

Derek, as I would have expected, made clear he saw nothing **□**

wrong in a driver's getting a lift back on another car, but once they had seen video of how it began, the stewards had no choice but to take action. It was probably no more than inevitable, however, that at once there arose suggestions that henceforth the 'taxi ride' – in any circumstances – would be banned.

This is a curious world we live in. For years Formula 1 has increasingly tried to make itself more of 'A Show', and in ways that have sometimes seemed cheap and gimmicky, yet the paradox is that any attempt at 'showmanship' by the drivers appears to incur only wrath from the powers-that-be. I used to love it, for example, when victorious drivers would stop on their slowing-down lap, and collect a national flag – behaviour which is still *de rigueur* in MotoGP, but emphatically not encouraged in F1. Talk about 'lighten up'...

In India Sebastian Vettel – of course – won the race, but more significantly also clinched his fourth World Championship. After taking the flag Seb was reminded by his race engineer to follow the normal 'parc fermé' procedure, but in his elation he was having none of that, and instead by-passed the pitlane, pulled up in the middle of the start-finish straight and proceeded – to the delight of the crowd – to put the Red Bull through a series of smoky donuts. That done, he climbed from the car and ran towards the stands, mercifully thinking better of a Castroneves-style climb of the debris fencing, but nevertheless throwing his gloves into the crowd as he acknowledged their cheers.

It was a lovely moment of free expression in a tightly controlled world – but inevitably, as I watched Seb's antics, I thought, "This is going to cost you..."

And it did. Vettel may have enraptured his audience, but today's Formula 1 makes no allowance for moments of abandon. By not returning directly to *parc fermé*, Sebastian had 'broken the rules', and the Red Bull team was duly fined. With the system the way it is, the stewards had no alternative, but it all seemed so... *joyless*.

Rules have proliferated – multiplied – in F1 these last few years, as they have in the workaday world. "It's just changed a lot," remarked Webber after his Singapore incident. "That's the way it is now, mate, in sport and in life."

No argument there. I'm sure Messrs Newey, Horner and Roquelin, while enjoying Vettel's exuberance in India, were also wincing at what he was doing to his engine and clutch, but the stewards' concern lay with his breaking of the *parc fermé* rule. Why, that car could have been tampered with before it was brought back to the pits...

Mainly, though, the unsmiling response to any sort of *outré* behaviour from our Grand Prix drivers has its roots in 'elf and safety' and this extraordinarily – forgive my using the phrase – 'risk-averse' society we have become.

Look at the whole 'white lines' thing. So safe have the circuits become, so vast the tarmac run-off areas – particularly at the new

generation Tilkedromes like Abu Dhabi – that aerial shots give the impression that the track itself is no more than a suggested guideline for the drivers to follow.

When first we went to Turkey, and the already defunct (in Formula 1 terms, at least) Istanbul Park in 2005, the drivers were enthusiastic about it, particularly raving about the high-speed, multi-apex turn eight, but I remember something Juan Pablo Montoya told me about it: "On one lap I got it wrong and went into the run-off – Jesus, I was expecting to find a supermarket! The amazing thing was, though, that I got back on – and I didn't lose a place..."

That can't be right.

No one has done more to advance the cause of safety in motor racing than Jackie Stewart, and it may be said that every Grand Prix driver of the past 40 years is in his debt, but even JYS finds it absurd that a driver can make a mistake, go off the road, and not suffer for it – not in the sense of hurting himself, but in terms of losing time and positions.

In an attempt to put that right, we now have rules – which appear to vary from circuit to circuit, even from day to day – about appropriate punishments

for 'going over the white line'. I was appalled when Romain Grosjean's outside pass of Felipe Massa in Hungary – one of the most electrifying moments of the season – resulted in a drive-through penalty because all four wheels of the Lotus had momentarily, fractionally, gone over the white line at the exit of the turn. Amazing to think what such as Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher got away with over the years.

Thankfully the stewards in Abu Dhabi were smart enough not to penalise Alonso for his off-track pass of Jean-Eric Vergne, accepting that if Fernando had not gone over the white

line, it would have been a 'plane crash.

Recalling his days as a Grand Prix driver, Tony Brooks laconically remarks that, "Brick walls and trees and ditches instil a discipline, believe me..."

Brooks's argument is unimpeachable, but they are also right who point out that racing had to change, that safety had to become a priority: on one level it goes without saying that no one with a discernible IQ wants to see people get hurt or killed; on another, public sensibilities have changed out of sight, and were fatalities still even an infrequent occurrence, it is unlikely that in this day and age the sport could long survive.

Unsatisfactory as it is, therefore, probably we are stuck with 'white line syndrome', with passing manoeuvres being endlessly scrutinised and penalties handed out, but in Abu Dhabi Johnny Herbert was moved – bravely, I thought – to say that, "It's got *too* safe..."

Let's say it again: no one wants to see injury or death on the racetrack – but at the same time let no one try to tell me that the overwhelming focus on safety hasn't come at some cost to what Grand Prix racing was originally supposed to be. To borrow Mario Andretti's favourite maxim: everything has its price. ☒



“IT WAS A MOMENT OF
FREE EXPRESSION IN
A TIGHTLY
CONTROLLED
WORLD”

A portrait of Allan McNish, a man with short brown hair, smiling and wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is sitting with his hands clasped in front of him, wearing a watch on his left wrist and a ring on his left hand. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

Allan McNish

GUEST EDITOR... AND 2013 WORLD CHAMPION

“I’m delighted to be guest editor of *Motor Sport* this month - especially in the wake of our title success in the World Endurance Championship. In the following pages, I discuss life as a modern-day sports car racer during a Texas road trip with the ‘other’ editor - and also reflect on the personalities and cars (both good and bad) that have added colour to my 30-year racing career. It’s been a hell of a lot of fun...”

Don't forget to log on to www.motorsportmagazine.com to listen to Allan and the *Motor Sport* team on another of our award-winning audio podcasts.



Once upon a time in the West





“In the slipstream of my WEC victory in Austin, I joined *Motor Sport* for a two-day voyage of discovery around Texas... and talked about the strains and stresses of a modern racing driver’s life on the road”

writer & photographer DAMIEN SMITH

“YOU


BETTER WIN tomorrow,” I said to Allan McNish. “It’ll put you in a better mood for our road trip on Monday.” He smiled and shook his head. “Oh, you don’t need to worry. I’ll be fine, whatever happens in the race.”

But as we set out to explore Texas the day after Austin’s round of the World Endurance Championship, the three-time Le Mans winner makes a quiet admission: “Remember what you said the other day, about me winning?”

You were right. It’s better for you that I won.”

At 43, the fire still burns for McNish. He hasn’t changed as the years and race miles have rolled by. As I discover in our two-day adventure around the Lone Star State, Audi’s three-time Le Mans winner remains as intensely competitive, driven and as much in love with his sport as ever. Racing drivers have to be this way to do what they do. But I’d wager that none, at any level including Formula 1, are as committed to this life as Allan.

Now, I’ve been lucky to know him for a long time and, let’s face it, he’s hardly a closed book. McNish is one of the good guys, always a great interview and engaging company whether in a race paddock, restaurant or even the odd bar. But two days with me, in a situation from which he couldn’t escape? In life as on the track, racers don’t hang about, thriving on efficiency. They’re always looking for gaps – whereas at my pace I usually tend to miss them.

Nice guy that he is, would I test his patience? 



ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, ALLAN AND team-mates Tom Kristensen and L ic Duval had succeeded in stretching their lead at the top of the WEC points table. The victory in the six-hour race at Austin’s Circuit of the Americas had been hard won, as they tend to be at sports car racing’s pinnacle. Audi’s R18 e-tron quattro diesel had the edge on speed over Toyota’s lone TS030 Hybrid, but the petrol-powered prototype had the greater efficiency. Double-stinting its Michelins had kept the Toyota in the hunt, forcing the Audi crew to catch and pass its rival time and again after pitstops. Only at the end could Audi make its tyres last beyond one stint, and not until then was victory assured.

This, coupled with a bad day for reigning world champions Marcel F ssler, Andr  Lotterer and Beno  Tr luyer, in the other R18, gave McNish and co the edge to add their second six-hour win of the year to a tally also boosted by victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours: Kristensen’s ninth, McNish’s third and Duval’s landmark first at the ‘big one’.

“So where are we going tomorrow?” Allan had said to me in the press conference. Now that was the question. Determined to be organised, I’d plotted a route I hoped he’d enjoy. But this was my first trip to Texas and these places were just names on a map. Anything could happen.





DAY 1

Austin to Fredericksburg

80 miles, 1hr 30min

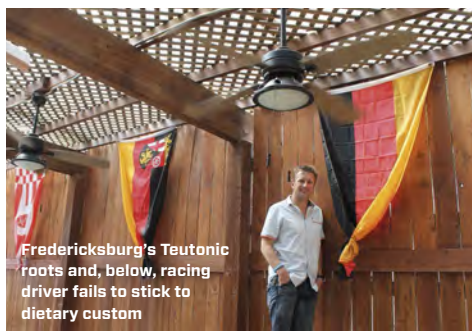
ON MONDAY MORNING I MEET ALLAN at his hotel and we load up the brooding black RS 5 Audi has provided. There's plenty of room for racing driver kit in the boot, plus the ugly trophy he has to show for his efforts. "I don't care what it looks like, it's what it stands for that matters," he says.

Allan has a calm glow of satisfaction this morning. The drivers had enjoyed a modest celebration (nothing excessive) and he appears well rested as we head west, navigating heavy road works as we edge away from Austin.

The traffic clears and Austin's 'hill country' opens up – it's barely rolling, but everything is relative in a land so flat. The race weekend over, Allan has been thrust back into normality, dealing with business on the phone. But now he relaxes. The real world can wait.

Travelling to races is a privileged life, but there's rarely time to see anything other than airports, motorways, hotels and tracks. Like me, Allan is relishing a chance to explore and find out what lies beyond Austin and the excellent but could-be-anywhere COTA.

We're heading out on US-290 to the town of Fredericksburg, a suitably Germanic destination for Audi's finest. German immigrants arrived here in 1846, naming the settlement after Prince Frederick of Prussia and quickly establishing a treaty with the local Comanches. As we drive, I relate to Allan what I've read: that German remained the dominant language into the 20th Century, and that even when WWI broke out the local paper stoked tension with its perceived pro-German editorial. Would the influence of



its founding fathers still be felt today?

Oh yes. As we head up the main street, delightful Fredericksburg retains all the hallmarks of an old Western town – with a heavy German accent. We park up and choose a restaurant for lunch – where the waiters speak German! We eat delicious Bratwurst and what passes for salad in these parts, and for the first time on our trip I press 'record' on my Dictaphone.



ALLAN IMMEDIATELY FOCUSES ON THE challenges he and Kristensen have faced this year. Everyone's favourite 'vets' team finally disbanded when Dindo Capello retired at the end of 2012, experienced – but much younger – Frenchman Duval stepping in to join Allan and Tom. Meanwhile, the spectre of Lotterer, Tréluyer and Fässler, already world champions and double Le Mans winners, is never far away.

"If you look at Loic, André and Ben, they come from a different experience background,"

Allan says. "They are from the computer era, if you like. It's interesting to look at what others do and see what you can learn.

"The longer you are in the business, the more your experience level widens, but also your way of working can narrow because you've found that this works, that works, this doesn't. It's good to have that broadened out again. This is not a detriment to Dindo because he was absolutely stunning. But Loïc coming in has given us a spotlight on other things, because we were so used to the routine, working in a certain way that had become second nature. This has shaken it up a little bit."

He tells me how for the first time in an Audi sports car he has switched to left-foot braking this year, having previously done so in Formula 1 and the DTM – although oddly Duval doesn't, despite doing so in Formula Nippon.

So when was the last time you heeled and toed, I ask him? "1997, in the Porsche. Gearboxes used to be the weak link of a racing car. The first time I drove an F1 car, at McLaren, I did the dogrings – which I've still got at home. I needed to learn to heel and toe because I'd never done it in Formula Ford, Vauxhall Lotus or F3. I just used to brake and crash it through the box. At the end of 1989, I did a McLaren test and an F3000 race at Dijon, where I lost second gear halfway through the race. So over the winter I practised heel-and-toe in a road car – a tomato-red BMW 316. Then I stopped breaking gearboxes. But it was only when I got to high levels of power and torque that I needed it."

So who taught you? For a moment, his face clouds and his voice tremors ever so slightly. "David Leslie. He taught me a lot of things. His final thing was how to drink whisky! Me and Dario [Franchitti], at a Scottish Motor Racing Club dinner."

Is there a technique then?

"What, heeling and toeing?"

No, drinking whisky!

"Oh yes. There certainly was with him. He knew how to sink a few, and so did his dad."

The Leslies played a huge part in McNish's career, helping him take the step from karting prodigy to the first rungs of the car-racing ladder. Leslie Jr, who died with veteran entrant Richard Lloyd in a light aircraft crash in 2008, remains a much-missed figure in McNish's life.

He takes another sip of Diet Coke. "It's funny, the top and bottom half of my body sometimes don't feel connected. I'm always surprised I can dance on the pedals and drive because gearshifting in road cars... hmm. It's like parking. They're not really my best attributes! And if you saw me dancing..."

"Along with bullet-proof gearboxes, buzzing engines is a thing of the past now, too. You used to have to loosen the seat belts on the way in, lean forward, click the little button on the back of the rev-counter to reset it, dip the clutch, wroom, wroom wroom! – and set it back to



7100rpm or whatever. That was what you did in Formula Ford. If not you'd get a bollocking from David Leslie Sr. It was the lesser of two evils..."

That thought triggers Allan to reflect on how the sport has changed – and why it is more competitive now than ever before. "You can use data to analyse and perfect – but so can everybody else. The ingenuity of being able to read a track and read a car, and do something and keep it as your wee secret has gone. There are no secrets now."

So to find that little bit extra – "is even harder." He finishes my sentence. "I watched an old Spa video on YouTube recently. The fifth-positioned car was Johnny Herbert, who was *four seconds* a lap slower than the guy in fourth on something like lap 10, and that sort of gap just isn't there any longer. The average level is higher but it's very difficult to consistently stay on that top peak.

"These are interesting times. My era has seen one of the biggest generational changes, in terms of the cars and how they've evolved, and how you drive them. You would always go for horsepower years ago whereas now you go for aerodynamics. I wouldn't say the most powerful engine has won the last four F1 world championships, but the best aerodynamics have and that means the best cornering speeds. It's not about the grunt down the straights, but how fast you go through the corners and that definitely wasn't the case 20 years ago. The



**"BECAUSE OF
THE G FORCE
WE EXPERIENCE,
OUR JAW
TWISTS"**

McLarens I used to test weren't always the best cars, but they had the best engines."

He offers some insight into the physical strain the modern driver must live with. "When I was in F3 I'd go for the odd run and do a press up or two if I could be bothered. You trained a little bit, but nothing compared with what you do these days. The g force you go through now is huge, you're hanging on to these things: 915kg of downforce in a sports car or 640 in an F1 car.

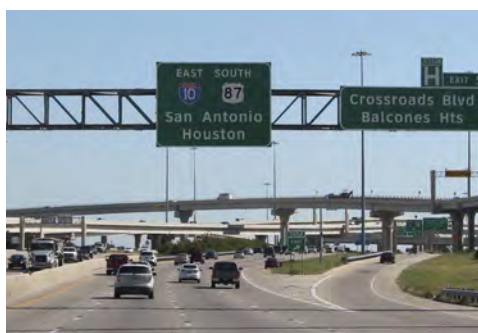
He surprises me by opening his mouth and pointing inside. "Because of the g force we experience, our jaw twists. You clench your teeth naturally when you're going through a fast corner and you hold your breath. You brace yourself into it, and your lungs and stomach are getting squashed into the side of your ribcage. If you've got a slight difference in your molars and they're offset top and bottom, and you're clenching... I've had mine reset a few times.

"Also, you build up neck and back muscles on one side more than the other. Look..." He lifts up his shirt to reveal plastic strips taped across his lower back. "It's standard stuff, because of the twisting on your hips, and the sort of pressure you're putting on the brake pedal. Probably 80 kilos of force four times a lap around Austin. That's quite a lot. That's why I got out after the one stint yesterday."

It gives some indication why three drivers can be better than two, even in a six-hour race. "There's no room for bad stints," says Allan.



Victory in Austin took McNish and co a step closer to the title, which was later clinched in Shanghai



DAY 1

Fredericksburg to San Antonio

70 miles, 1hr 20min

WE RETURN TO THE RS 5 AND I HAND Allan the keys. He'll drive the next leg, as we head south on US-87, picking up I-10 to San Antonio.

When I returned home and told friends about my road trip, most wanted to know who drove. When I said we shared, they were curious how I felt driving in front of a pro – and what it was like being chauffeured by a racing driver on the public road.

The answers are underwhelming on both counts. It's not true in every case, but for drivers who compete at the level of McNish, road cars are often considered tools for transportation and little else. It went unsaid on our journey, but Allan had no expectations of me as a driver other than to get us to where we were going safely, and in reasonable time. Likewise, when he drove there were no heroics. He lives in a performance world the rest of us

can barely imagine. Who needs the public highway for an adrenaline buzz when you race an R18 for a living?

We soak in our surroundings as we tour south. This is lush, arable farming country, with roads straight out of *Smokey and the Bandit*. As we chat, Allan is transported back to his early days in sports cars, when the promising single-seater career had inexplicably dried up. "Sports car racing was at the crossover point where saving the gearbox became non-existent," he says. "You didn't save the car, you just attacked it. I was of that mentality anyway because I didn't know much else. It was just that the races happened to be longer; you got out and someone else got back in.

"Now the cars are so robust we do have a bit of rubbing along the way. There were a few times over the weekend when the Toyota and Audis kissed each other and that's standard practice. There's an inch given, but certainly no more. The difference between winning and losing proves that sprint race mentality is here to stay. And it makes you smile."



THE RETURN OF PORSCHE AND NEW technical regulations will raise the bar once again in 2014. Golden era? We've seen nothing yet. "Next year will be fun," says Allan.

So how does he think Mark Webber will adapt as he walks away from Red Bull Racing and joins Porsche?

"First of all I think it's brilliant news for him. The facts are he will smile, he will enjoy his racing and he won't have all of the ancillary parts of F1 he doesn't like. He'll just enjoy himself and he'll feel loved. That's what I remember from my time at Porsche: these guys believed in me and in what I could do. You feel your worth there.

"In terms of the racing, he will find it hard, it will be cut and thrust, but he'll adapt quickly because it's like driving an F1 car in a lot of ways, just heavier. In terms of technology and



Racers feel no need to rush on public roads. Below left, McNish looks forward to racing against Porsche



the brain process to harvesting hybrid power and so on, he'll be of benefit to Porsche."

The F1 vs sports car comparison will be Webber's first hurdle. In lap time, the difference between pole at the 2012 Austin Grand Prix and this year's WEC race was about 12 seconds, but sports car performance should not be underestimated. "In terms of g force that is dictated by the weight which affects the agility, and that's where a sports car loses," says Allan. "But in terms of downforce, for Le Mans in low-downforce spec we've got more than F1 in high-downforce spec. And our drag in high-downforce spec, which is what we use for Austin, is less than an F1 car in low-downforce spec for Monza. So the efficiency is huge. In terms of grip, it's pretty impressive.

"As I say, the biggest difference is the weight. You have to brake a little bit earlier because you're stopping 300 kilos more weight from roughly the same speeds."



And Porsche itself: how does he feel about its return? For McNish, there's strong history here.

"It's funny with the Porsche guys because I know a lot of them," he says. "Some of the mechanics were at Audi, while Romain [Dumas] and Timo [Bernhard] raced with us, too. It is excellent to see them back because it

**"THAT SPRINT
RACE MENTALITY
IS HERE TO STAY.
AND IT MAKES
YOU SMILE"**

was 15 years ago – and it's been a long 15 years. They should have been back before now. When I re-signed for them at the end of 1999 it was for the 2000 car, which I drove. I did the roll-out at Weissach with Bob Wollek. We probably did 10-15 laps each. Bob went first. There was a discussion about who should drive it first. It's a big thing at Weissach, a special moment when a new car is born. Then after I drove, it went under the cover and would never be seen again."

The cancellation of the programme with an all-new open-top spyder was a body blow for McNish and the sport. "That would have been some fight with the Audi R8, no question," he says. "I'm not saying it would have won, because it was far too early to say that. But it was sad news when I heard it had been canned. Then again, if it hadn't I probably wouldn't have raced in F1 [with Toyota in 2002]. And I would never have raced with Audi. When every door closes, another one opens."



Steeped in history: McNish absorbs details at the Alamo Mission site in San Antonio. The chapel, below, is regarded as a shrine to Texan liberty



WE'RE NEARING SAN ANTONIO NOW and must concentrate on where we're going. You can't come to this city and not visit The Alamo. We head for the centre with no idea where to go, but soon spot some 'brown signs'.

For history it doesn't get better than this in the US. The Battle of the Alamo in 1836 followed a 13-day siege by Mexican troops, who eventually stormed the fort and killed the Texian [sic] defenders, including Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie. Today, the remains of the fort are a shrine both to the fallen Americans and to the foundation of a nation. Its symbolic power, and the reverence demanded of its visitors, leave a lasting impression.

We wander around the grounds, Allan taking his time to read the information boards and soak in the history. Happily, there is nothing tacky about this tourist trap; it's much like visiting a medieval English cathedral. A tour guide tells the story of the battle without notes or prompts, and it's a performance that holds us spellbound. America might boast fewer historical sites than Europe, but it knows how to honour those it has.

All too soon it is mid-afternoon and time to hit the road again. 



DAY 1

San Antonio to Corpus Christi

171 miles, 2hr 50min

THE GULF OF MEXICO ISN'T FAR AND A hotel next to a beach sounds suitable for a three-time Le Mans winner, so we set out for Corpus Christi, heading south out of San Antonio on I-37. Interstates are all very well, but they are not in the true road trip spirit, so we divert as soon as we can and pick up US-281 at Three Rivers. From the map, it appears more likely to deliver genuine Texan sights.

As we drive, we notice a chirruping coming from the air-con system. Sometimes it's in the dash, then it's behind the rear seats. At this point I remember the giant cricket that bounced in beside me when I was refuelling the night before. I never had seen it leave.

The landscape is now even flatter and largely featureless. But along the dead-straight road we pass through small settlements. They're rough around the edges. This is the other side of the US, less shiny and new – much less wealthy.

We're heading into oil country now and our surroundings have a harder edge. We pass a rundown and seemingly abandoned gas station. Beside the pumps sit a couple of old VWs very much in 'project' condition. We turn around and take a closer look. There's no one around and the passing traffic ignores us as Allan walks



Victory at Le Mans in 2013 and, above left, slightly less familiar territory

over to a couple of three-wheeled motorcycles that are missing just about everything bar their basic frames. He cocks a leg and takes a seat.

Behind the shack, more decrepit VWs sit forlorn on scrubland. These are Beetles, one a rusting pick-up mongrel that, fully restored, would draw attention at any classic car show.

We return to the leather comfort of the RS 5 and aim due south, for a town called Alice.

As we stop for fuel, we marvel at the collection of chromed-up juggernauts parked at the truck-stop. Americans do haulage so much better than us, and the same goes for their trains. The lonesome wail of a whistle alerts us to its approach and, as we leave the gas station, Allan tells me to measure its length via our odometer. The train runs on a track parallel to US-44, the road we've now picked up, and is heading in the opposite direction. We've travelled a mile before we spot its final wagon.

The light is fading fast as we pass through Robstown and soon we can see nothing unless

it's illuminated by the Audi's LED lamps. Then the most incredible skyline looms, towering skyscrapers shining by the light of 10,000 pinpricks against the blackness. It's eerie, like something out of *Bladerunner*. But Corpus Christi is still 20-odd miles away. This isn't our destination – it's a colossal oil refinery, almost a city in its own right.

The interstate leads us into Corpus Christi and we head for a giant steel lattice lit in Stars'n'Stripes colours. As we cross the Harbor Bridge, we spot a ghostly apparition moored below: the behemoth USS Lexington aircraft carrier that served in the Pacific during WWII. We check in to our hotel and stroll to take a closer look. Surprisingly, the place has the shabby, abandoned aura of the typical British seaside town. Everything close by is shut, so we drive back over the bridge to the marina for a seafood dinner.

Tomorrow we head for Houston and, subsequently, home.



DAY 2

Corpus Christi to Houston

241 miles, 4hr

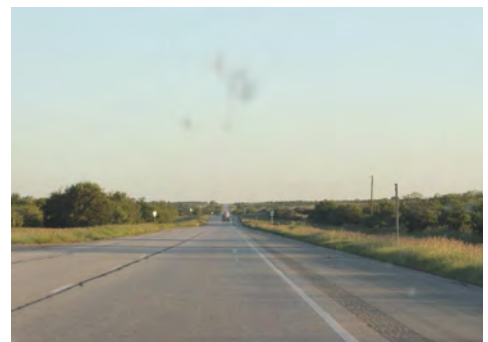
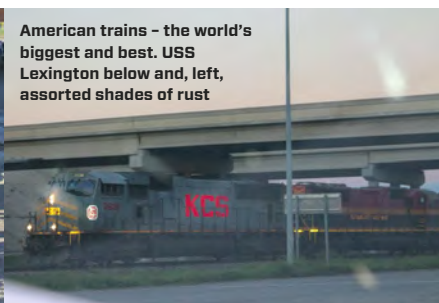
THIS INDUSTRIAL HARBOUR TOWN looks a lot better in the morning sun. Breakfasted and refreshed, we return to the RS 5 and set our course for Houston airport, factoring in a quick pitstop for a spot of shopping.

As we leave Corpus Christi a giant black cricket hops against our window and away. The air-con chirruping has stopped... our passenger has departed.

We choose I-35, which takes us over the impressive Nueces Bay and Lyndon B Johnson Causeways, then on to a dead-straight highway reaching into the horizon's heat haze. Giant-sized dragonflies bounce off the windscreen as we tour through flat farmland. A small, crop-spraying plane pulls moves worthy of a Pitts Special and several more snaking trains



American trains - the world's biggest and best. USS Lexington below and, left, assorted shades of rust





distract our attention as I press 'record'. I want to ask Allan about Le Mans.

"I don't really focus on it too much, but I'd have been disappointed if I'd finished on two wins," he says. "That probably wouldn't have been a fair reflection on my career."

He's taken plenty of satisfaction from his three wins at La Sarthe (so far), each of which – in '98, 2008 and 2013 – were hard won. But the latest was the hardest to enjoy, following the death of Aston Martin racer Allan Simonsen during the opening minutes of the 24 Hours.

"There's a picture of us after the race standing on top of the car and it looks like it could have been the last press shot on a long PR afternoon," says Allan. "It doesn't have any sparkle."

"When we walked upstairs to the podium there was an element of sadness. It definitely showed that sports car racing is a community. That was probably what hit me more than anything else – a genuine heartfelt loss, even from those who maybe never even knew the name Allan Simonsen. I've never felt anything like that before."

We reflect further on the harsh realities of motor sport. Houston is still a couple of hours away, and I've left it until now to ask him about retirement. It's always a sensitive question for racing drivers of a certain age.

Today, Allan must have total belief in his speed and ability to compete with the talented crew in the other car, not to mention the rivals at Toyota and Porsche. At the same time, he knows the end is in sight.

"I'm 43, and I don't think there's any question I've still got pace," he says quietly. "There are two things that are the limiting factor in a driver's career: one of them is the physical side – are you fit enough? Are your eyes good enough? And the other one is do you have the passion to be able to do it, to be able to keep up with the guys coming through?"

"Now, if you look at the weekend just gone or the last stint at Silverstone earlier this year, or the first lap in Brazil, I don't have much problem with that. But there will come a day... that will be the right time to give the other guys the reins."

"I'm not going to continue to race for the hell of it," he continues. "I won't be racing in five years, I can tell you that. But you have to have something else that replaces the energy that you put into driving, and something else you enjoy too. Because I've had 30 years of a hell of a lot of fun."

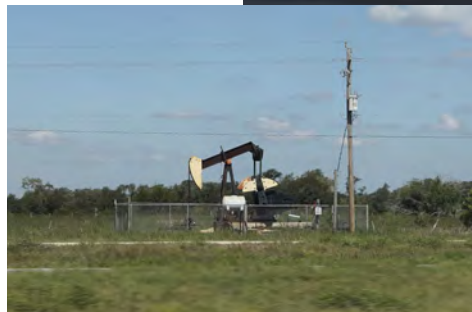


SO WHAT'S NEXT FOR ALLAN McNISH?

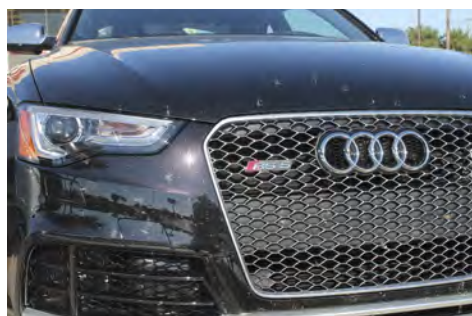
"I've always tried to have back-up plans, because you just never know what your employer is going to do," he says. "I've continued to do other things, businesses I've developed in the background. Television does interest me a lot. I enjoy that, and I've enjoyed



A rich selection of airports from which to choose, above. Farming contraptions you won't see in the UK, right. Below, a Texan speciality – the oil well



"THE STORE ASSISTANT TELLS ALLAN THEY HAVE ONLY ADULT SIZES..."



the Radio 5 Live F1 commentary stuff this year."

We've headed inland now, and have picked up the US-77 at Victoria. Ahead of us is Edna and El Campo, then on to Houston. The journey's end is in sight and Allan is reflective.

"Jason Plato Tweeted a picture of me and him recently, back in 1983. He looked like something out of a boy band... The thing is it has been a heck of long time. There have been a lot of good times, difficult races in between, a lot of hard work, but a hell of a lot of smiles. But the ones to come, that's what I'm really interested in. And that's it: I don't look back, I look forwards, the next race, the next thing. And that's what keeps pushing you, motivating you and giving you the adrenaline kick to get up at 5am to fly to Munich for a technical meeting. It's races like this past weekend that makes it all worthwhile."

"Dindo retired at the right time. He was still fast, he still enjoyed it, but he felt it was time. And he doesn't miss it. As a Scottish driver, I think I've got the best role model ever in how to get out of it, in Jackie Stewart. He knew when it was time."

With the record button on pause, I ask again about Porsche. Bookending his career where sports cars started for him would be fitting, and he acknowledges that. But to leave Audi, the team he describes elsewhere in this issue as "home"? It's hard to imagine. I push the subject anyway: have they approached you? But he gently pushes back. Even on a road trip, away from the hurly-burly, he's not about to discuss such matters with me.

We head for downtown Houston and a suitably Texas-sized shopping mall. Allan finds the store he needs and is recognised by a race fan who'd watched him win at COTA two days before. With an extra spring in his step, he takes a look at some trainers, but the store assistant tells him they have only adult sizes in this particular shoe... "Cheeky so-and-so," Allan mutters with a rueful grin.

For the first time since we left the Austin road works we hit traffic on the super-sized Houston highways that lead to the airport. But there's no panic. Time to hand back the sleek RS 5, which has been the perfect tool for our road trip: unobtrusively quiet, comfortable and stylishly understated.

Road trips offer a rare chance for 'time out' from the hectic pressures of life. For two days we were almost constantly on the move, and yet somehow it felt like we'd been standing still, putting all other matters briefly on hold.

For me, it had been a privilege to travel and spend so much time with one of the most respected sports car drivers in history. Allan assured me, to my significant relief, that he'd genuinely enjoyed it, too. He'd be too polite to say otherwise, but for both of us exploring Texas had been a welcome adventure. And I didn't even get him lost.



“It hardly seems possible that I’ve been racing cars for more than 25 years – and karts for a few seasons before that. I’ve met some great people and driven some wonderful machinery along the way, but there have been a few conspicuous duds, too. Overall, though, the positives outweigh everything else...”

Racers, rivals, fellow Scots...

1 McLaren MP4-5B

THE CHASSIS McNISH FINE-TUNED FOR AYRTON ET AL

It was a very easy car to drive, with a stable rear end. It had a huge steering wheel. Nigel Mansell drove with something that looked like a saucer, but this was a full-on dinner plate. It slowed everything down in the cockpit, but the car had a load of grunt and relied on that. It amazes me that we sat so high, with our head and shoulders exposed above the cockpit. There wasn't much safety in that area at the time.

2 Laurent Aiello

F3000 TEAM-MATE DURING A CATAclySMIC 1991 SEASON

I think he's the best touring car driver of all time, but when he wasn't interested then he wasn't interested, so he went off to be a DJ and run some pizza shops in Bordeaux. I wish I had the ability to walk away from something when I lose interest, as he did without a second glance, but anybody who can win so many touring car titles has to be stunning. He had a test with McLaren and Peugeot was pushing him to go into F1, but he just wasn't that bothered.

3 Mika Häkkinen

FORMULA VAUXHALL LOTUS TEAM-MATE WITH MARLBORO-BACKED DRAGON RACING, 1988

He didn't speak very good English when he first turned up in the UK, but he had supreme talent, no question. We tested together at Donington Park and it was the first time I'd encountered a driver who used left-foot braking, which gained him a bit of time through the Old Hairpin. It made me realise there were other things you could do to find speed – the spectrum was wider than I'd appreciated. He was hugely quick, although he didn't get his act together all of the time. When he did, though... If you think of other drivers' track records, I'm not sure two world titles do him full justice. He was probably the toughest rival I ever had, because you'd go to a circuit he'd never seen before yet he'd be bang on the pace by about lap two. He's a nice guy, too.

4 Lola T91/50

THE F3000 CAR THAT STRIPPED McNISH'S SINGLE-SEATER CAREER OF MOMENTUM

Mika Häkkinen was one of the best things to have around, the T91/50 was one of the worst. The previous T90/50 was blindingly quick on cross-plies in 1990... but also very good on radials in Japan. We tested on Avon radials at the end of the year, because that's what we'd be using in '91, and suddenly all the Reynards were faster. It was the first test, though, and we assumed everything would be fine because the T90/50 had done so well in Japan. But then we got the T91/50 and it was a dog. We were uncompetitive almost everywhere. We usually ran 2100lb front springs, but at Mugello we switched to 4500lb springs – they might as well have come off the truck. The car was the best it had ever been, though. We thought we'd cracked it, but then we went to Enna and it was a dog again. It was the worst car I raced, the worst season of my career



and the catalyst for me not getting into F1 earlier than I did. I was on the crest of a wave at the end of 1990, because everything had been going swimmingly, but the T91/50 gave me a big kick in the balls.

5 Ron Dennis

McLAREN TEAM PRINCIPAL DURING McNISH'S TIME AS TEST DRIVER

Ron was a very difficult man for me to understand at that point in my life. I never really built a relationship with him, even though I was contracted to him for three years. I never worked him out, but think McLaren might be suffering today because he's no longer at the racing team's helm. ☒





6 Porsche GT1

THE CAR THAT OPENED ENDURANCE RACING'S DOOR

I owe my career to this. At the end of 1996 I was twiddling my thumbs a bit. I'd done a deal with somebody and it hadn't come off, then Porsche called and invited me to try the GT1. It was quite soft, but had lots of power and was a car you could really race. It gave me the opportunity to show what I could do, once again, and for that reason I'll always feel affectionate towards it.

7 130R, Suzuka.

SCENE OF A DRAMATIC, BARRIER-VAULTING ACCIDENT DURING QUALIFYING FOR THE 2002 JAPANESE GP

I associate this with sore balls. I was on my fourth run – you had four sets of new tyres available at the time – and was seven tenths up on my previous best as I approached. I'd been so close to flat the previous lap that I decided to keep my foot in – I thought that would gain me another two tenths – but I hit a little bump, got into a huge tank-slapper and was aware I was about to crash at about 185mph, so it was never going to be a light impact... Afterwards I got out of the car and saw a cameraman I knew. He was saying, "Breathe, Allan, breathe..." I was gasping a bit, then got up and realised my balls were probably somewhere near my tonsils. The next day, I bumped into Jacques Villeneuve and he said, "That was a big shunt, a really good one, but when I saw you hold your balls I thought, 'There's a real man!' It did hurt, though.



8 Derek Higgins

FIERCE RIVAL IN KARTING, THEN AGAIN ON THE SPORT'S NURSERY SLOPES

Derek had huge feel and ability. On a cold, greasy December day at Rye House or Rissington, he'd be the one you'd have to beat – no question. He was quite volatile, too. He had a few off days, but he had great talent that was never properly fulfilled because he didn't have the whole structure around him to exploit it.

9 Jackie Stewart

COMPATRIOT AND INSPIRATION, FOR WHOSE FIA F3000 TEAM HE RACED IN 1995

Jackie was a guiding light for the current generation of Scottish drivers. He always had a nice, honest, helpful approach, whether or not we were driving for his family team, Paul Stewart Racing – which was usually a competitor to most of us. I'd also call him a friend. I never saw him race, but I went around Oulton Park with him in a Ford Escort Cosworth and you couldn't feel the gearchanges, the brake transition or anything. You could have read a book without feeling sick, yet he was flat out. It was stunning. There were quite a few of us there, me, David Coulthard, Gil de Ferran, Dario Franchitti, Ralph Firman, and we were all late on the brakes, powering into the corners and so on, but there was Jackie going around as if it were a Sunday drive and lapping as quickly as all of us – and sometimes faster. It was a real eye-opener.

10 Audi

HE'S BEEN ON THE PAYROLL (MOST OF THE TIME, ANYWAY) SINCE 2000

Home.

11 Le Mans 24 Hours

THREE WINS... AND COUNTING

I used to think Le Mans was a race for old men, which shows how naïve I was. In the early 1990s, though, there was an element of conserving the car, and being sure you didn't make any mistakes rather than actually driving fast. I was young at the time and interested only in going quickly. The technology has changed, though, and now it's all about driving fast – there is no thought at all about conserving the car. It began to change at about the time I became involved. If anyone has yet to attend Le Mans, they simply have to go – as a driver, fan, mechanic, whatever. You have to see the spectacle. It's impossible not to be affected and somehow it gets into your system. From a driver's perspective, it can be a very cruel mistress if you're fighting at the front... yet it can also be the best place in the world. Up and down the grid, I think everybody has their own Everest. For some it's the podium, for others it's simply finishing. It's a very special event and should be kept that way. 🏁





12 Toyota TF102

THE CAR IN WHICH HE SERVED HIS OVERDUE F1 BAPTISM

It probably wasn't too far removed from a Lola T91/50! It was very reliable out of the box, because we'd been testing since November, but ultimately it wasn't fast enough. And there was no development during the year because the team was already focusing on its 2003 chassis. It had a huge lack of downforce, but at least it worked quite well at Monza.

13 The 1989 F3 season

CHAMPION FOR A WHILE... BUT THE TITLE SLIPPED AWAY IN AN APPEAL COURT THE FOLLOWING FEBRUARY, FOLLOWING ASSORTED PROTESTS AND APPEALS

David Brabham and I won pretty much everything that year. I congratulated him straight after the decision was announced, but don't think either of us deserved to lose. By the time it was decided I was already looking ahead to 1990. What I remember most is my roll during qualifying for a race on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit. I bumped my head and went to see Sid Watkins. His synopsis was that I couldn't drive, so I thought, "Well, who the hell are you?" and went to get a second opinion. I visited another doctor, hoping for a more



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favourable verdict, and he asked whether I'd seen anybody else. I told him, "I've seen a guy called bloody Sid Watkins, who feels I shouldn't drive for a month, but that's no good because I'll miss two races." He said, "Well what the hell are you doing seeing me?" and phoned Sid! They took my medical certificate away. I went to Heathrow feeling really hacked off, because it seemed that the championship was slipping away, even though it was quite early in the campaign. I'd bought a ticket to Glasgow, but actually boarded a flight to Edinburgh. All the way, I was sitting next to a guy from Edinburgh, wondering why he was flying to Glasgow. When I disembarked and realised what I'd done, I decided that this Sid bloke possibly knew something. I felt fine for three days, but then for three weeks I was completely out of it. I always believed Sid after that.

14 Jason Plato

THE MAN TO BEAT WHEN McNISH BEGAN KARTING

I crashed into him in my first ever race, at Rowrah – the so-and-so was trying to lap me! At the time there were rumours that he took the first corner at Felton flat, which impressed the hell out of most 12-year-olds. Everybody else was braking massively. It's only a couple



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of years since I bumped into him in the bar, at an awards ceremony, and said, "Jason, I've got to ask, did you take the first corner at Felton flat?" He said, "You must be joking, are you nuts?" That was a relief, because I'd been worrying about that for 30 years... Everything he's achieved is a result of his own tenacity, because nothing was handed to him on a plate.

15 The 2002 Australian GP

HIS SOMEWHAT BELATED GRAND PRIX DEBUT

That was far too late, but you take it when it comes. I should have graduated when my career had proper momentum, but that takes us back to the Lola T91/50...

16 Snetterton 1987

JUNIOR FF1600 DRIVER BEATS THE STARS OF THE DAY... IN A ONE-YEAR-OLD VAN DIEMEN

I was doing the senior and junior races and my dad arrived during senior qualifying. He told me later that he'd been watching by the Esses and thought, "Poor wee lad, he's out of his depth," because I was driving through so tidily. In fact I qualified third, about half a tenth from pole, which was a bit of a shock. I got into

second in the race and passed Niko Palhares around the outside of Russell on the last lap. I didn't know whether I'd crossed the line first, but stuck my arm in the air as though I had and gave it the full celebration. That put me on Marlboro's radar, because they had scouts watching young drivers. It was a big turning point, because it took me away from Formula Ford. I was in line for a works Van Diemen drive in 1988, but I hated Formula Ford with a passion. The cars had no grip and bore little relation to anything I was used to. It was wheel to wheel combat in something completely alien. When I got into an FF2000, or a Vauxhall Lotus, it had grip and other things to which I could relate from karting. That was never the case with Formula Ford. I did OK, but didn't enjoy it. At the end of 1987 I think I'd have been quite happy to return to karting...

17 Ayrton Senna

McLAREN'S LINCHPIN DURING McNISH'S STINT AS TEST DRIVER

He had so much spare brain capacity, because for him driving was a matter of pure instinct. He'd talk about things that had simply never occurred to me at that stage of my career. He was computer, data analyst and engineer rolled up into a very fast racing driver. ☐



19

18 David Coulthard
FRIEND, FELLOW SCOT

He's rubbish at signing children's passport forms – I watched him cock it up three times recently. I kept printing them out for him and he kept signing in the wrong place, or else not signing them at all... David was a late bloomer, in my opinion, someone who got better and better as he climbed the ladder. To have a 13-year F1 career and stay with McLaren for so long, then switch to Red Bull and do all the stuff he still does... It tells me he's a very bright chap.

19 Dario Franchitti
LONG-TIME ALLY

He found his niche in America. In a way I'm pleased he didn't pursue the Jaguar F1 option, because it wouldn't have allowed him to go on and achieve all he has in the States. He was absolutely the right person in the right place and I respect him hugely.

20 PacWest Racing
CHAMP CAR TEAM FOR WHOM HE THOUGHT HE'D RACE IN '97...

I took part in a shoot-out and had been told the fastest guy would land the seat. I went on to set the quickest time in every possible way... and Mark Blundell got the drive! I wasn't happy, because I'd let lots of other opportunities slip in the assumption that the team would be true to its word. That was a frustrating time, and really tough, because I didn't think I could have done any more yet still the drive didn't materialise.

21 Jim Clark
SCOTTISH NATIONAL TREASURE

He was brought up and lived about 50 miles from my childhood home. He fired the spark that inspired Jackie Stewart and others and that later rubbed off on me.



23



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22 Dick Bennetts
WEST SURREY RACING BOSS, F3 MENTOR IN 1989

He taught me about engineering – that was his passion. He explained everything about setting up and working with a car. He's a very driven man, not business-minded but very racing minded. He's one of the good guys.

23 Tom Kristensen and Rinaldo Capello
AUDI COLLABORATORS, SHARED McNISH'S 2008 LE MANS WIN

Two of the best team-mates anybody could want – in the sense that they are friends, as well as drivers. My relationship with Tom just gets stronger and stronger. My mum has never met Rinaldo, but always talks about him as though she knows him and thinks he sounds a really nice bloke, which he is. 📧



“I’d prepared myself to be about

LEWIS HAMILTON IS IN a relaxed mood as we sit in the open lounge area on top of the Mercedes hospitality building in Abu Dhabi, a quiet refuge from the bustling paddock below.

He's a relatively late arrival from India. Most of his peers could hardly wait to leave Delhi for the UAE, rushing to the airport on the Sunday night after the race. Lewis travelled instead to Calcutta in his new role as an ambassador for

Save the Children. He has a genuine affection for kids, always apparent when he stops in the paddock for a picture or an autograph, and the extended Indian trip was an eye-opener.

"People try so hard to make you welcome and they do their best," he says, with a smile. "They've got beautiful kids there, too."

His latest charity role adds yet another layer to the complex personality that is Lewis Hamilton, a man who currently describes

himself on Twitter, sincerely and seriously, as 'F1 driver, artist, singer/songwriter/musician.'

Many people were sceptical when it was announced that Lewis would be leaving McLaren for Mercedes – even his own father had advised him to stay with the team that had been his home since he was first picked up by Ron Dennis as a 13-year-old kart racer.

A year on, no one is questioning his decision to head for pastures new... although not even Lewis could have predicted the tumble that McLaren's fortunes would take in 2013. And, equally, he insists that he didn't expect to win a race for Mercedes-Benz, nor earn a string of pole positions.

Nevertheless, Hamilton's overriding feeling about this year is that he has underperformed, in that his qualifying pace was rarely converted into a decent result. Before and after the summer change of tyre spec, he often struggled more than team-mate Nico Rosberg to get the most out of the Pirellis and, rightly or wrongly, he blames himself for that.

"Things have been above expectations this year in terms of the team's performance, and how I've got along with everyone," he says. "All those things are ticked off, they're great, but from my side of things I'm not 100 per cent."

10th at the start of the season..."

Lewis Hamilton was roundly criticised when he announced that he was leaving McLaren, the team that had moulded him since his early teens, to join rival Mercedes. The change has been beneficial, though, in more ways than one

writer ADAM COOPER

cent happy with my performance. I can't pinpoint exactly why. There have been some good races. The times when the car was really good, Monaco for example, I should have been on top of it, but I really struggled. I've been struggling mostly with the car and the electronics and everything."

In some ways winning the Hungarian GP was a bonus. What a lot of people failed to grasp last year is that Lewis had seen the bigger picture of the upcoming turbo era. He appreciated the strength of the technical team that Ross Brawn had put together – and understood that there were obvious benefits of driving for a works team that shared its ownership with the engine supplier.

"When I made the decision," he says, "I

escape from the apron strings of the team that groomed him.

"I feel like I definitely have more freedom at Mercedes," he says, before rephrasing his words. "It's not necessarily freedom, it's just that we had so many partners there. We had tons and tons of partners, 45 or something, and if you imagine for every partner you had to do five appearances... It was hardcore! Here we have fewer.

"McLaren's mentality is they've really got to source the money from sponsors, whereas here with Mercedes and Petronas the team hasn't got 50 sponsors to bring the budget in, so it's just a different mentality. Also they really understand that a driver needs to arrive fresh, clear in the head, fit and ready, that's the most important



ALL IMAGES MERCEDES-BENZ

knew where the team was going. I knew the plans they had, where the wind tunnel development was going, all that kind of stuff. And also I was conscious that next year we'd have a new engine from Mercedes. It just seemed like the right place to be, especially with the rules changing as well. There were tons of things that I had to consider. I'm proud that I made the choice, but it was difficult. Even my family said I should stay – my dad told me to remain with McLaren!

"Just to arrive at the first race and be in the mix... Jeez, I'd prepared myself to be perhaps about 10th or something like that at the start of the season, just in case it was really bad, and it was way better. It's been a real blessing to come here – and also for it to turn out so positive after people were so negative about the move. I really just have to lift it up to God.

"There's a reason why I felt the way I felt, to make those decisions."

You don't need to be a shrink to view Hamilton's departure from McLaren as an

thing. It's just a slightly different approach, and one that fits me a little bit better."



IT'S NOT JUST A CHANGE OF SPONSOR workload that has played a role in clearing Hamilton's head. Lewis has always had a complicated private life, one that reflects his emotional personality. His on/off relationship with singer Nicole Scherzinger is rarely far from the headlines, and things have not always run smoothly with father and former manager Anthony. He readily admits that at times he's been distracted.

"Definitely," he says. "I don't feel that it's affected me this year – I think I've grown a lot. Through even the toughest part of this year, I won in Hungary. But in previous years I really struggled. Particularly part-way through 2010, and I would say in 2011 mostly, I was a disaster – I was a nervous wreck that year."

So girlfriend issues can potentially affect his demeanour over a race weekend? He laughs.



Hamilton en route to victory in Budapest – his first F1 win for Mercedes – and, left, in a happier frame of mind

"I don't have any girlfriend issues, I'm one of the most eligible bachelors now! Well, it doesn't help to have negative energy around you, and to carry it around with you like baggage without even realising it's there. But I don't feel that this year I've had any baggage, so I've been able to go through the year enjoying it, really. Small patches of the year were tough, but everyone goes through those experiences.

"I think I've just matured a lot. I pray a lot, and over the last five years I've been bringing more and more God into my life, and that's been making a difference this year more than ever. And that's why I'm so happy every day."

That happiness is often communicated to the public via Hamilton's busy Twitter feed, filled with messages of love and peace, mixed with quotes from Gandhi and other sources of inspiration. Purists may find some of it a little grating, but it's a reflection of the real Lewis.

"I read a lot about Bob Marley and his approach to life, and he felt like he could create peace by creating this beautiful music, and



“I PRAY A LOT AND HAVE BEEN BRINGING MORE AND MORE GOD INTO MY LIFE. THAT’S WHY I’M SO HAPPY”

through that music share and spread love. I really respect that kind of approach. I guess I’m in the position where I can speak to several different people, say ‘Have a great day, keep your head up and try to think positively’. And if I can make a difference to one person, that’s a cool thing to be able to do.”

Isn’t he worried that he’s a little over-exposed on Twitter and elsewhere?

“No... Look at Sebastian, he doesn’t show anything. I guess people don’t fully know him as well as maybe you do or I do from the little time I get to spend with him. People really knew Ayrton, I think, and I’d like people to know me. I wear my heart on my sleeve. It gets me in trouble a lot of the time, but that’s the way it is and I’m not going to hold back because sometimes negativity comes with that.

“I like to share the experiences I have. I come from a very normal background, and so many people from where I was from would love to be doing what I’m doing, so I like to share those experiences. Not to put it in their faces or

anything, but to show them what you can do, and what’s possible.”

He has a genuine respect for his fans: “For me it’s just crazy, because I grew up in this small town Stevenage, which is nowhere. Who would have thought that I’d have people consciously going to buy my T-shirt or wearing my cap or making a banner with my name on it? I’m just so grateful for that kind of thing, the effort that people make. There’s so much positive energy out there.”



HE HAD A WIN AND POLES, BUT WHAT Lewis didn’t do in 2013 was fight for the World Championship. His first and only title in 2008 is starting to seem a long time ago. There have been signs of frustration after another afternoon driving his socks off for relatively little reward while up ahead Vettel has logged yet another victory with apparent ease. Lewis downplays any negative feelings.

“It’s not frustrating,” he says. “I wouldn’t use

frustrating as the word. It’s just, interesting... There are so many great drivers here. Many of them can win the World Championship, some of them have come and gone, and never had a car like I had in 2008, they didn’t have a car like Sebastian has, or Michael had, or Fernando had.

“And there are drivers that never made it into F1 that also had the potential to do that. Marc Hynes [1999 British F3 champion and one of Lewis’s few close friends in racing] was massively talented; arguably he could have come in and done a great job, and there are other people like that as well.

“You never know how the rest of the years are going to go. Fernando might stop before he wins another World Championship. That would be weird for me, because he’s such a great driver. Like Kimi for example... If Kimi leaves the sport with only one World Championship I’d be really surprised, because growing up watching him in F1 he was spectacular. But that’s the way the sport is, you just have to

kind of step back and change your mindset. If you're lucky enough to have a year when you have a car that allows you to do something, you just have to grab it with both hands.

"When I came into F1 I didn't have any expectations. When I watched F1 before I got here I was always wondering, 'Can I fight with Fernando, can I fight with Michael?' I was sure I could if I had the chance. And then when I got there I fought with them, or at least with Fernando. I definitely didn't expect to have the big drop in performance in 2009, and then I didn't expect the following years to be so bad. In my career, every year I was at the front. Actually, one year in karting was really bad, but it was a good learning year. When we had a competitive car I was always at the front.

"It's been interesting, if not perfect, but I've been fortunate first just to stay in F1, to have the wins that I've had each year and the success that I've had, to be able to move to a new team and continue to have success, being able to have my family, being able to travel, all those kinds of things. I think I just have to count my blessings."

He insists that he's not envious of Vettel's run of success.

"It would have been nice to fight with him during these years. I guess I had my time. I was

very, very fortunate when I came into the sport, not many people get to come in and be in a top team and have a chance to fight for the World Championship in the first year, and I was very, very fortunate to do that. Most others haven't. And then it's been his time to shine – it's been a long period for him to shine. I hope that at some stage I have my time again."

Will that chance come in 2014? It's still anyone's guess as to how the formbook will look come Melbourne and, typically, Lewis is erring on the side of caution.

"I don't know how it's going to be, it might not go so well. But they will still be two incredible learning years. I get to work with a great group of people and I should learn a lot during that period. But ultimately the goal is to train my arse off this winter, so next year I'm fitter than I've ever been, in the best mental head space and hopefully one of the best cars."

He then checks himself momentarily and adds a fascinating postscript.

"I actually don't want to have the best car by a long way. I'd like to be able to fight with Fernando, be similar in pace, but through driving a little bit better finish ahead of him. And the same with Vettel, maybe, that would be cool. I don't want to win because I'm that much faster, you know what I mean?" ☑

"I DON'T WANT THE BEST CAR. I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO FIGHT, BUT BY DRIVING A LITTLE BETTER FINISH AHEAD"



Five seasons have passed since Hamilton won his world title, but the fans still love him



KNOWING WHEN TO BREAK FREE

Anthony Hamilton used to manage his son, but a parting of the ways became inevitable

WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY came for Lewis to leave McLaren, his father Anthony

was initially against the idea, in essence on the grounds of loyalty to Ron Dennis and Martin Whitmarsh. He eventually came around to it, however, in part because Mercedes had also played a big role in his son's career.

"I was heading towards staying with McLaren for various reasons," says Anthony. "But I didn't influence Lewis's decision in any way whatsoever. He made his own decision.

"It's exactly the same as having your dad as your manager. At some stage you're going to break free. The trouble is that as managers, as parents or whatever, you actually don't know when to let go. It's the individual who breaks the stranglehold, if you want.

"I think Lewis had to go. He's not a little boy, he's a grown man. It was, 'Thank you very much for everything you've done for me, but you've really got to start treating me like a man, or I'm going to have to go.' And maybe he got to that sort of point where he wanted to control everything for himself.

"From a personal perspective he seems much happier with his personal life, his home life. He had an up and down issue with Nicole – I don't know whether that's on or off, your guess is as good as mine! That emotional strain aside, the rest of his life is in good shape."

Meanwhile Niki Lauda, the man who ultimately persuaded Hamilton to join Mercedes, has no regrets.

"You need speed and killer instinct, and he has all that," says the Austrian. "The rest is not a problem. I have a good relationship with him. We speak on a regular basis, and I like him."

DANIEL LION'S

Formula 1's most coveted spare seat has passed from one Australian to another. How is Daniel Ricciardo likely to fare at Red Bull? We asked some of those who know him best

writer SIMON ARRON

YES YOU WINGS

IN THE DEN

SPEED

BELL



S

ERIAL CHAMPIONSHIP winner Trevor Carlin had just flown in to join his team at Albacete, Spain, for a test ahead of the 2009 British Formula 3 season. "Our car had yet to turn a wheel when I arrived," he says, "but already the engineers were saying, 'This new bloke's going to be bloody good'.

He'd taken them around in a road car the previous day, but despite not knowing the circuit had the place sussed straight away. He impressed us from minute one."

That 'new bloke' was Daniel Ricciardo.

Fast-forward to the year's end and – British F3 title duly clinched – Ricciardo was back in Spain, this time participating in Formula 1's official young driver test at Jerez, with Red Bull. A couple of days later I bumped into team principal Christian Horner at an awards ceremony in London. Our paths crossed on the steps as he was heading for a cab, me for a soggy stroll to the tube. Conversation was necessarily brief, but there was time for Horner to conjure a few nuggets from Jerez. "I'll tell you what," he said, "Daniel Ricciardo looks bloody good..."

The 24-year-old's promotion to a full-time Red Bull seat was confirmed last September, after weeks of fervent speculation in the wake

of Mark Webber's pre-British GP announcement that he was quitting F1 in favour of a long-term World Endurance Championship contract with returnee Porsche. Ricciardo's name was instantly in the frame, along with those of his Toro Rosso team-mate Jean-Eric Vergne and Lotus metronome Kimi Räikkönen (although Horner briefly implied that Fernando Alonso might be in the mix, too, a timely bit of mischief rather than a serious proposition). Realistically, though, it was a straight fight between Ricciardo and the Finn.

"Having considered all the options," Horner says, "Adrian Newey, Dietrich Mateschitz, Helmut Marko and I weren't just looking for someone who'd do the best job for us in Melbourne at the start of 2014 – we wanted to consider the longer term and felt Daniel was the right choice.

"Foremost and utmost he has the speed – and last summer's Silverstone tyre test reaffirmed that. He put in a very impressive performance. That was enough to sway the pendulum.

"We don't know how good or bad the 2013 Toro Rosso might be, but we've seen Daniel consistently drag his car into the top 10 on the grid when we suspect it probably shouldn't be there. And at Silverstone we ran him back to back against Sebastian Vettel with the same chassis, same tyres, same fuel load and very similar track conditions. He performed exceptionally well."

Ricciardo accumulated a strong CV on his

opportunity to learn about F1 weekends in a low-pressure environment. His team-mate was former Red Bull junior Tonio Liuzzi, a useful benchmark even if his mainstream chance had long since elapsed. Ricciardo soon had his measure and his reward for 2012 was a berth with Toro Rosso, which brings us to the present.



"DANIEL ALREADY HAD THE BASIS FOR success when he came into F1," says Toro Rosso team principal Franz Tost. "He proved it in the junior categories and on top of that he has incredible commitment: he's one of the guys that stays latest in the evening, talking to his engineers, and for me that's very important. He is willing and motivated to keep studying and learning, especially on the technical side.

"His interest in that has increased during his time in F1. In junior categories you don't have the same need or possibilities to study data – you might have one engineer working with you, whereas in F1 you have race, data and engine engineers, a technical director, a race strategist... There are so many different ways to develop your knowledge, but I've met many youngsters who didn't recognise as much. They seem to think, 'That's it, I'm in F1 – I've reached the pinnacle'. They don't understand that when you arrive in F1 you are right at the bottom of the learning curve and what they've done before is a bit like kindergarten. When you reach F1 it's time to start really working – and Daniel understands very well that he needs to use the technical tools at his disposal."

He was similarly thorough during his formative years, too.

"He's a wonderful bloke to work with," Carlin says. "He's very capable of delivering a good lap on fresh tyres – he has a very good feel for the available grip and knows exactly how to use it. I think he's shown that several times in F1, too. He gives terrific feedback and our engineers really enjoyed their time with him. On top of that he has a fantastic personality. That permanent smile is absolutely genuine, but it conceals a steely determination."

On the surface his F1 results don't differ greatly from those of recent team-mate Vergne, so – as with everything in modern F1 – Red Bull's logic has been dissected to the tiniest degree and generated much more speculation than was strictly necessary. The team maintains a veil of discretion about its youngsters, and in public references them only in glowing terms, but privately insiders will admit that – for now, at least – Ricciardo has an edge over Vergne in like versus like comparisons.

"Even when I watched him in F3," Horner says, "the thing that always stood out was Daniel's incredible natural pace. Coming into F1, there's an incredibly steep learning curve" □

"HE HAS A FANTASTIC PERSONALITY. THAT PERMANENT SMILE IS GENUINE, BUT CONCEALS A STEELY DETERMINATION"

path to the top. After a successful karting career, he graduated to cars in 2006 and finished third in the Formula BMW Asia series. He was added to Red Bull's young driver roster before the 2008 season, when he won the West European Formula Renault title and placed second in the Eurocup. Then came the fruitful switch to British F3, with Carlin, and that impressive F1 outing at the year's end. He spent the next two seasons in Formula Renault 3.5, finishing second and fifth in the standings, but by the summer of 2011 he was dovetailing his apprenticeship with Grand Prix outings for now-defunct backmarker HRT. Red Bull had more race-ready juniors than it had seats, so placed Ricciardo elsewhere to give him an

because drivers have so few opportunities to test. Daniel's had his opportunities with HRT and Toro Rosso and now I think he's ready to step up. Regardless of talent, it takes any driver a period of time to adapt – especially in the recent era, with limited test mileage and complicated tyres.

“When he first ran with us at Jerez in 2009, he adapted with effortless ease. He has an undramatic driving style but finds it very simple to extract a good time. He repeated that 12 months later, when we tested him again in Abu Dhabi. He gets the most from the car without hustling it. He has a great natural ability to feel the limit and we've seen that many times on our simulator – he was always impressive on that. He belongs to a generation of computer gamers, but even so his understanding and feedback were exceptional and served as our benchmark for quite some time.”

It's not simply the speed element that has impressed Tost these past two seasons. “Daniel is also very disciplined,” he says. “Take the last Korean GP, for instance. We called him in for the last pitstop and sent him out on option tyres with about 25 laps to go. Felipe Massa was running one second behind and we told Daniel to keep the gap like that without destroying his tyres – and he did it brilliantly. He controlled Massa while at the same time looking after his car – he wasn't locking wheels or anything like that, but kept things smooth and maintained exactly the right pace to hold position and keep his tyres alive. Unfortunately he developed a brake problem just before the end, so didn't

finish, but prior to that it had been a really good drive.

“We saw something similar at Suzuka in 2012. He had Michael Schumacher behind him and drove very intelligently for a number of laps to stay ahead. He never offered Michael the slightest chance.”

And, like Carlin, he believes appearances are deceptive. “I know Daniel is always smiling,” he says, “but you shouldn't be fooled. I think he was probably born that way, but a friendly face doesn't mean he's not a ferocious racer – he's hard, but fair.”

Does the Austrian think Ricciardo is now the complete package, and thus ripe for the next big step?

“Is any F1 driver truly complete?” he replies. “You can always develop and improve. Perhaps Daniel needs to be tougher on the first lap, but

**“RED BULL
NEEDS TO GIVE
DANIEL THE
SPACE TO GROW.
HE KNOWS WHAT'S
EXPECTED”**

that will come. And in any case, Red Bull will help make his opening laps easier because he'll be qualifying and racing towards the front.

“He's more mature now than he was when he first joined us. He knew he had a lot to learn, but he embraced that and now has a proper F1 mindset. Is he ready to take a big step? Absolutely. I think Red Bull made the correct decision and don't foresee any problems. Daniel lives and breathes F1. He's very committed and I expect him to do a good job.”



RICCIARDO IS ONLY THE SECOND RED Bull junior – after Vettel – to graduate to the senior team. The sport's nursery slopes are littered with cast-offs from a scheme that promises much, but whose guiding light Helmut Marko expects even more. Dropped to make way for Ricciardo and Vergne, previous Toro Rosso drivers Sébastien Buemi and Jaime Alguersuari did a perfectly adequate job during their stint with the team, but in this domain mere adequacy is insufficient. Neither is likely to race in F1 again, but by the time they'd been pensioned off – in their early 20s – they'd accumulated more than 100 GP starts between them, the kind of opportunity that will remain beyond most youngsters' reach.

Red Bull's no-nonsense approach was visible again towards the end of the 2013 season. Russian Daniil Kvyat was promoted from GP3 to replace Ricciardo... while his main rival for the drive, Antonio Felix da Costa, was packed off to Snetterton to compete in a club-level F3 event that would make him eligible to participate in the approaching Macau GP. One moment you're touching F1's hem, the next you're sitting in a Norfolk paddock café savouring the musk of egg and chips.

Ricciardo has bypassed such pitfalls and Horner insists he'll be given time.

“There are no particular targets,” he says. “We need to give Daniel space to grow. He knows the environment, the work ethic and what the team expects of its drivers. He's participated in our briefings, he's worked with the engineers on the track and during simulation tests. He knows the team and that means the bedding-in period should be fast and smooth, but it's still a massive step in terms of the pressure that's coming.

“He'll be under the spotlight and is coming up against somebody who, in my opinion, is the best driver in the world. It's a very tough marker, so it's important that he doesn't put himself under too much pressure and allows himself to settle into the role.”

Carlin wasn't in the slightest surprised when news broke of his former charge's elevation. “During our season together,” he says, “I developed the impression that it was absolutely inevitable he would make it to the top. In fact I'd have been amazed if he hadn't.”



Red Bull's decision makers believe Ricciardo has frequently flattered his Toro Rosso

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European F2
Championship, 1984:
Tauranac liaises with
works Ralt-Honda
racer Roberto Moreno

The Pragmatist

Ron Tauranac's racing cars won championships at almost every level - including Formula 1. We tracked down a no-nonsense engineer whose designs blended speed and efficiency with common sense

writer MICHAEL STAHL

IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO pinpoint where the old Formula 1 became the new, it might well have been on the deck of a yacht at Monaco in May 1971. Present were two men: one was Bernie Ecclestone, the yacht owner, and the other, rather less at home in this setting, Ron Tauranac.

On a handshake, the Anglo-Australian designer agreed to sell Brabham, the business he had jointly founded 11 years earlier with his great mate, Jack. Tauranac had engineered Brabham into a powerhouse racing car constructor, with F1 titles to its name.

Under Ecclestone, Brabham would cease building production cars. F1 management, it seemed, had become a matter of suits and sponsors, not gritty *garagistes* and customer cars. So Tauranac went off to found Ralt and do what he did best: design dominant racing cars.

It's difficult to picture Tauranac in the context of modern F1. Now 88 and residing in Sydney, he has not mellowed in his zero-tolerance

approach to pretension and nonsense. Tauranac was notoriously focused, a workaholic, surly to the point of being anti-social. He was dedicated to the pursuit of efficiency and the elimination of weakness in his cars. Born in Gillingham, Kent in 1925, Ronald Sidney Tauranac was three when his parents moved to Australia. He returned there in 2002 following the death of Norma, his wife (and book-keeper) of 48 years.

Tauranac was shaped by his childhood, Royal Australian Air Force recruitment and engineering studies in Australia. His father, a boilermaker, found employment on the docks in Newcastle, 100 miles north of Sydney. There a second son, Austin, was born in 1929.

School classes in drawing and handcrafts encouraged Ron to apply for an apprenticeship as a draughtsman at the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation. He left school at 14 and, this being 1939, there would be plenty to do.

The family settled in Bondi Beach, Sydney in 1940. Tauranac's training at the CAC, where he redrew American aircraft plans and designed tooling for production, led to a profitable sideline in building surfboards. With maple sides, cross-members and plywood decking, they weren't unlike an aircraft wing.

At 18 he was accepted into the RAAF and began training in Tiger Moths, before switching to Harvard fighters in Canada. There, one of his close mates made a navigational error and crashed fatally. "That was about the last time I had an emotion," Ron says. "It weighed heavily on me and I thought about it for a long while, but after that it didn't worry me. I just never got emotional again." ☐

His first post-war jobs were with steel merchants and engineering shops, which honed his skills in metallurgy, machining and drawing. In 1947 he was assigned to the design and construction of a new chemical plant for Colonial Sugar Refining. He was soon able to buy his first car, an Austin Seven.

On a Sunday afternoon drive in the Austin, he happened upon a group of pre-war cars racing on an airstrip. He met brothers Bill and Jack Hooper, Sydney motorcycle engineers who had built a Triumph-powered single-seater inspired by the new 500cc F3. Tauranac had already seen a raceworthy MG for sale, for £500. "I didn't have £500," he says, "so thought I'd build a car instead."

The Ralt (Ron and Austin Lewis Tauranac) Special was powered by a Norton 500cc engine the brothers would continually refine. The same went for the chassis, with Ron given a lesson on the car's competition debut at Hawkesbury Hill Climb in 1950. "I'd read that inter-leaf friction was all you needed for a damper," he says. "I didn't have money to buy dampers, so believed what I read. Before the start of the hill, there was a ditch near the edge of the road. With no restriction on the droop, the wheel went into that, rolled underneath and tossed me over." He awoke in hospital with 14 facial stitches.



THROUGH THE RALT SPECIAL, RON MET fellow RAAF ex-serviceman, racer and engineer Jack Brabham, in 1951. Brabham was already an established speedway star and a rising talent in circuit racing. He also had a knack for delighting sponsors, in an age before sponsorship was permitted. But the stardom wasn't all one-way.

In the 1954 NSW hill climb championship, Brabham lined up his Cooper-Bristol against Tauranac's spindly 500cc Ralt 1, by now running on nitro-methane. Brabham finished second, sandwiched between winner Ron and his brother Austin's special, Ralt 2.

Brabham went to the UK in 1955, initially racing an ex-Peter Whitehead Cooper-Alta F2 but soon working, and driving, for Cooper. The friendship with Tauranac continued in a technical collaboration conducted by airmail.

Early in 1960, Tauranac was preparing five Ralt single-seater chassis (eventually to surface as Lynx Formula Juniors). Brabham, who felt he was outgrowing the autocratic atmosphere under Charlie Cooper, had a better idea. In *The Jack Brabham Story*, he wrote: "Ron's design and manufacturing capabilities were always central to my ideas of independence. As 1959 world champion, my new garage business in Chessington had got off to a good start and during that winter I was able to offer Ron a job in Britain. He was the only bloke with whom I'd have gone into partnership. He was conscientious to a fault and peerlessly straight."



The BT18s of Jack Brabham and Denny Hulme lead the F2 field, Reims 1966. Opposite, from top: Gavin Youl in the FJ MRD (later BT1); Tauranac and Brabham, Belgium 1970; Jochen Rindt in the BT26, Spa 1968

Ron put Norma and four-year-old daughter Jann on a boat to England. He was to fly via America, where he race-engineered Jack's Cooper Monaco at Riverside on April 3. Tauranac had more than engineering on his mind. "I thought I was going to drive in England," he says. "That was one of the reasons I went. But when I got over there, I realised that if I drove and anything happened to me – we had no money, so what would my wife and child do? I decided I couldn't take the risk." Was he a good driver? "I was quick," he says, "but a bit too aggressive."

Brabham's Cooper contract meant Tauranac had to operate in secrecy. By day he tuned Triumph Heralds and Hillman Imps, for Jack Brabham Motors. At night in his Surbiton flat, he designed a Formula Junior for Motor Racing Developments, their 50/50 joint venture.

The MRD Formula Junior was ready in the summer of '61, Australian Gavin Youl finishing second to Alan Rees' Lotus on its debut, the attention forcing Brabham to downplay the MRD project as a kit-car being developed for

the Australian market. Charlie Cooper wasn't fooled. "Suddenly we had to build an F1 car," Tauranac says. "We'd wanted to do that, but it happened a bit earlier than we expected."

The Formula Junior was renamed the Brabham BT1 and Jack drove customer Lotuses until he could race the BT3 F1 car in the 1962 German GP. Tauranac, whose second daughter Julie arrived in 1962, just toiled. "I worked days and well into the night," he says. "Sometimes I'd go home for breakfast and then back to work again..."

How did he rate Brabham, the driver? "He was always good," he says. "He never won at a speed greater than necessary... He just tried to save the car. He knew what made things work and how to preserve them. He was the best technical driver.

"When [Jochen] Rindt was racing for us, he was a little bit quicker than Jack – not a lot – but we'd have to take his cylinder head off and reset all the valve gear after every race. Jack's would just go on forever."

Were they the perfect partnership? "I don't

know about perfect, but it worked. We weren't talkers, either of us. We'd speak if we had something to say, but never had an argument."

Tauranac viewed his job as developing a racing car business. This mindset would colour designs that often appeared conservative, particularly when framed against the *avant-garde* efforts of Colin Chapman at Lotus.

In 1964, Dan Gurney scored Brabham's first championship grand prix victory in France, with Jack third. It satisfied Tauranac more that, in the same year, Brabham built and sold about 50 cars, spanning several categories. F2 was booming and, while running the Cosworth-Ford SCA in 1964, Brabham was cultivating a relationship with Honda.

"Jack met Honda when he was at Cooper," Tauranac says. "They'd bought something [a Cooper-Climax] and wanted some help, I think. On his way to the Tasman Series, Jack called in there. So when they were going to bring their F2 engine along, they contacted us.

"I built a car [the BT16] around it and towards the end of 1965, we tested it. We told them what needed fixing and they agreed. In '66 we won everything with that."

Indeed, in F2 the 'works' Brabham BT18-Hondas of Jack and team-mate Denny Hulme won all but one of the championship rounds. Rising star Jochen Rindt pipped the boss by two-tenths of a second at the Brands Hatch final, in a privateer Brabham-Cosworth.

"Instead of leading like other drivers, Jack always dropped back and let them pass to make a proper race," Ron says. "It wasn't just for the show – it stopped us destroying F2, because we were the only ones with that car and engine."

In 1966, of course, domination in F2 and F3 was merely the icing on the cake. Jack won his third world championship, becoming the first to take the title in a car bearing his own name. Tauranac had designed the BT19 F1 chassis to accept the stillborn Coventry-Climax flat-16. Meanwhile, Jack discovered the Oldsmobile F85 alloy-block V8 and had been pushing Repco to develop it as a 2.5-litre Tasman unit.

"I had to use that chassis and accommodate the Repco," Ron says, "so that influenced the design of the cylinder head. They couldn't do the engine the way it was intended."

The steamroller success of 1966 coincided with Tauranac's return to more direct involvement in F1. Behind the scenes, the business structure had changed. "When the formula altered for '66, I told Jack I didn't want to do F1. I couldn't develop the cars and wasn't going to meetings. We could sell the cars to Jack for £3000 less engine and he'd be able to do his own thing. I think Jack looked around for a drive – I don't know that for sure – but he came back and suggested we did a joint company again, increasing my wage from the original £30 a week. I think I just doubled it."

Still, Tauranac's interest in F1 glitz was



"RINDT WAS A LITTLE BIT QUICKER THAN JACK, BUT NOT A LOT"



illustrated on their return flight in Jack's Cessna after Monza, where the championship leader had been forced to retire with an oil leak.

"Coming into Fairoaks we saw all these people and I wondered what they were doing there. Jack said, 'They're waiting to interview me because we won the world championship'. That was the first I'd heard about it. All I knew was that we hadn't finished the race."



DENNY HULME BEAT THE BOSS TO THE title the following year and Tauranac has fond memories of the easy-going Kiwi. "He could work on the car, mechanically, but wasn't that involved in set-up. He just said, 'She'll be right'. I got on well with all the drivers, really. Dan Gurney I knew better than many. When they made their own car, I can remember sorting it out for them at Indianapolis. I don't think he knew much about engineering, but he was a nice guy."


The team's 1968 season was dogged by valvetrain problems with the quad-cam Repco 860, against the ascendant Lotus-Cosworth 49. Following Lotus's Monaco lead, Tauranac's semi-monocoque BT26 took wing at Spa.

"I'd put little bibs on the nose in practice. Jack did a lap and said it was great, but wanted balancing downforce at the rear. Chapman saw that and, I think it was at Rouen, Lotus had a huge wing on the back, mounted on the suspension rather than the chassis."

Collapsing wings would lead to their banishment by the following year's Monaco GP. Tauranac's solution was an integrated ducktail at Zandvoort. "But I made a mistake and put it on for the first day. Chapman flew his team home and they came back with one for the race. The number of times that happened, and Chapman just copied us..."

In 1969 the now Cosworth-powered BT26A was the only spaceframe chassis on the F1 grid, yet Brabham finished second (to Matra) in the championship for constructors. "I only got into monocoques when you had to have bag tanks [1970]," Tauranac says. "There was an aerodynamic problem with them, because you couldn't shape the thing as well as you could with bodywork." It wasn't widely known at the time, but Jack's smooth-talking manner with manufacturers had given Tauranac access to the industry-only MIRA wind tunnel since 1963.

The decade would end with Tauranac as an F1 team owner. Jack sold his stake in the business to his partner at the close of the 1969 season, intending to retire. The new monocoque BT33-Cosworth enticed him to stay for one more season, 1970, in which Jack enjoyed an Indian summer as an F1 front-runner.

It was, of course, the best of times, the worst of times. No driver ever died in one of Tauranac's Brabhams, though this was probably a matter of luck. In any case, it's a record 

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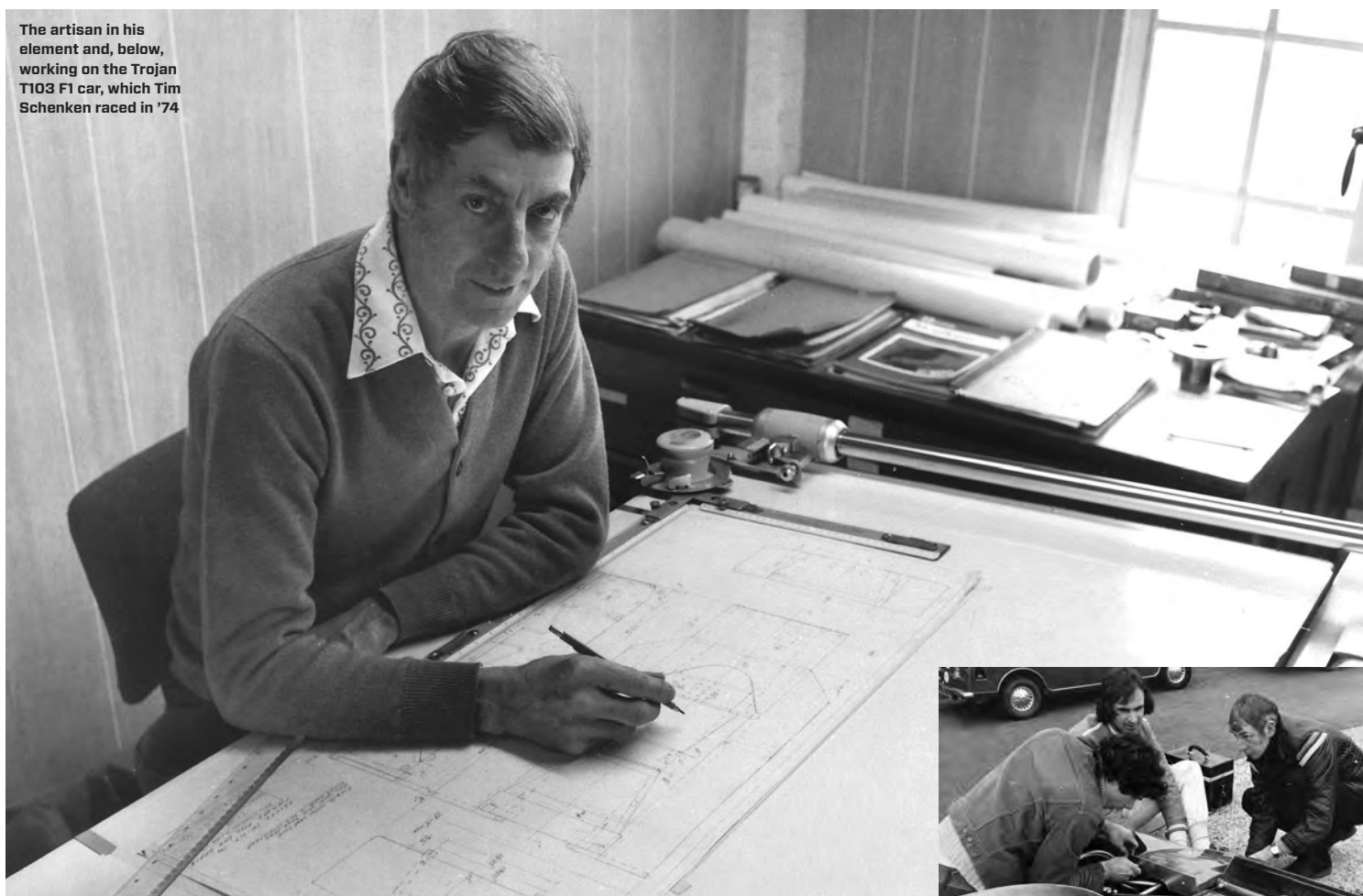
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The artisan in his element and, below, working on the Trojan T103 F1 car, which Tim Schenken raced in '74



that means nothing to Tauranac. Asked how the deaths of such as Rindt and Piers Courage affected him, Tauranac barely raises an eyebrow. “It didn’t. If something had broken on the car and caused an accident, I’d have been concerned and I’d make that bit stiffer or something. That never really happened. You just live what you’re doing.”

Brabham’s departure at the end of 1970 had an unexpected effect. “Jack and I would stay with the mechanics until 10 o’clock at night,” Ron says, “and then we’d have dinner. But when Jack was no longer driving, there was no one with whom to eat dinner or, indeed, socialise at all. I didn’t like that very much.”



WHICH BRINGS US TO ECCLESTONE’S yacht. “Bernie wanted to form a partnership,” Ron says. “I said no. I’d been in a partnership with a friend for years, and it tended to restrict what you could do. I told him I wouldn’t do that, but would sell the team if he wanted.”

There was also the matter of sponsorship, at which Jack had been a master. “I was hopeless – I wasn’t going to dress up in a suit and go into London trying to get sponsorship. I just wanted to design cars.”

Ecclestone agreed to buy Brabham for “asset value”, which Tauranac had calculated at £130,000. Then, at the 11th hour, Ecclestone said he’d pay £100,000. “I wasn’t a smart businessman,” Ron says. “I should have said ‘Look Bernie, you can’t go back on your word, we agreed to this’. But I thought about it for three minutes and agreed.”

“The other thing I’ve only just realised, after reading various accounts from England, is that we had £50,000 in the bank! That should have been added as an asset, or I should have drawn it out. But I didn’t do any of those things.”

The deal with Ecclestone included Tauranac staying on, but it was soon evident that his services were thought less than essential. He returned from a long weekend to find motorcycle designer Colin Seeley occupying his chair. Tauranac continued designing Brabhams at home, where it had begun. After a few months, the cheques stopped arriving.

“It’s just the way it was,” he says. “I don’t remember any ill feeling and I never had words with Bernie. But he lost money on the company, I gather. They didn’t know how to do the production racing cars that I did. I think everyone’s experienced the same thing. Now Bernie’s a multi-billionaire, I can’t see why he

wants to carry on that way. But it’s all embedded into his way of doing things, isn’t it? He’s got to win at everything. I did things ethically correctly, but it seems he doesn’t.”

Tauranac was quickly in demand as a consultant, early customers including Guy Ligier and Frank Williams, whose Len Bailey-designed Politoys TX3 needed sorting. Then he took the family for an extended Christmas holiday in Australia.

While there, he received a letter from Peter Warr at Lotus. “It said Colin Chapman would like to see me. When I got back, he said he’d like to offer me a job. I was going to be chief engineer. He took me through the factory, and showed me the gatehouse, which was a mansion, virtually. It was arranged that my family would live in that. It was all agreed, but that was during the weekend.

“Then he rang early on Monday and asked me to put it on hold and not to tell anyone ☐

for a while. So I said, 'Well, if you can put it on hold, so can I. I heard no more about it!'

F1 was changing. McLaren's customer car shutdown opened an opportunity for Tauranac at Trojan, designing the T103. There, Ron would employ a young Patrick Head. "We were good friends. We still communicate a bit on email. I think we trusted each other. He's quite a good designer."



THE RALT STORY BEGAN IN 1974 WITH A visit from a bespectacled, wild-haired Australian named Larry Perkins. He'd had some F3 success in a Brabham BT41 the previous year, and now sought advice on his GRD chassis.

From gut instinct, experienced eye and neurons connecting like a network of chassis tubes, Tauranac knew Perkins would be better off starting from scratch. "Larry wanted to do it, so I knew I was going to build a car for him. Two [Brabham] agents, Chuck McCarty and Ulf Svensson, subsequently heard I was building cars and they each ordered a couple. And then Larry's brother ordered one.

"I made the RT1 so there was room to add petrol tanks for the next formula up, because you needed different amounts of fuel for F3, F2 and Atlantic. As you went up you could put on bigger brakes. A customer could buy bits to upgrade it."

The Ralt RT1, of which 165 were built from 1975-79, ran in all of those categories – and was very quickly a winner. In Tauranac style, it wasn't about fashion (the Ralt logo was designed by daughter Julie, then 13). Where the rival March had featured a monocoque since 1972, the RT1 still had a spaceframe. There was a sound reason.

"We had these privateers racing all around Europe, and if they had an accident with a tube-framed car, they could weld it and fix it. If you had a monocoque, the car had to come back to the UK for the right bits."

In 1977-78, Tauranac penned two F1 designs for Teddy Yip's Theodore team – and there was much contemporary F1 thinking in the Ralt RT2, an aluminium monocoque F2 car built for Toleman. The RT2 spawned the spectacularly successful RT3 (F3), RT4 (Atlantic/Pacific), RT5 (SuperVee) and the RH6 F2 that would reunite Tauranac with Honda.

The RT3 carried a generation of young stars, including Ayrton Senna, and there was also success in F2, where Geoff Lees, Jonathan Palmer and Mike Thackwell won three European titles in four seasons (1981-84). Tauranac was at his drawing board, at the races, at the top of his game... and selling up to 80 new cars per year.

"Ralt was so much more successful than Brabham as a company," he says, "but we didn't do F1 and so didn't get the publicity."



Ron with 1983 European F2 champ Jonathan Palmer. Below, Geoff Lees heads for the '81 title

In the latter half of the '80s, the rise of rivals (notably Reynard) made the going tough. It didn't help that aerodynamics now ruled and Tauranac, the chassis-whisperer, wasn't as interested. March came to him with an offer. He endured five frustrating years of umbilical attachment to Ralt, under the fickle financial management of March, and was then thrown a lifeline by old friend Nobuhiko Kawamoto, who commissioned him to design a single-seater for Honda's racing school at Suzuka.

A cosy Honda consultancy withstood a brief interlude with Tom Walkinshaw and the Yamaha-engined Arrows, a job that came within a lap of making history. "Walkinshaw had a problem. I looked at it and told them it was all to do with oil circulation. I fixed those things – and Damon Hill should have won the next race [Hungary 1997]."

By then into his 70s, with daughters living in the US and Australia, Tauranac had a nice income from having invested the proceeds of Ralt and the Honda consultancy. Then, in October 2001, Norma collapsed at their Surrey home. Ron struggled to help her to her feet and called an ambulance, but with a ruptured aorta

she was beyond saving. "Not long after that," he says, "I decided I had nothing really to keep me in England."

Ron's sister-in-law found a modern apartment in Bondi, barely a mile from where he'd sold surfboards 60 years earlier. Greg 'Pee Wee' Siddle, the Australian who'd managed Nelson Piquet and Roberto Moreno in F3, dispatched Tauranac to cast an eye over the V8 Supercar team employing one of Siddle's current charges. In fact, Siddle had already done a lot more. In 2002, Tauranac was awarded the Order of Australia. It was Siddle who'd nominated him and rounded up influential referees.

Does Tauranac watch grands prix today? "I lost interest to some extent when I was no longer involved," he says, "but mainly since all this tyre business started. I'm a bit interested in the aerodynamics, all these little winglets and things around the front end, but you can't make a judgment without getting in the wind tunnel and seeing what goes on."

Tauranac has no capacity for musing, for merely being a spectator. He can't help but look at everything in calculated terms. Even, it was disconcerting to hear, about the mechanics of existence. "I've been looking for ways to commit suicide when I can't achieve something every minute of the day. I just don't want to be bored, but I can't think of any way of taking my own life without it affecting other people.

"I knew someone in England who jumped off a railway bridge, but the train then stops and all the passengers are affected. At the least, it delays them. But I've got to be able to live a life and do something. I don't want to have to have someone looking after me. That's just bloody stupid, isn't it?"



Alfonso de Portago

Spanish nobleman of huge sporting prowess, but charm and wealth were no proof against the motor racing gods



Alfonso António Vicente Eduardo Ángel Blas Francisco de Borja Cabeza de Vaca y Leighton, the 17th Marquis of Portago, was born in London on 11th October 1928.



A Spanish nobleman's son, and godson of the King of Spain, Alfonso was born into a life of privilege.

Following the untimely death of his father, the young Marquis and his mother left the family estate in Biarritz and moved to The Plaza Hotel in New York.



An exclusive education equipped the young Alfonso with four languages. Perfect preparation for the restless, international life that lay ahead.

While still in his teens 'Fon' could be found in the night clubs of Paris, rebelling against his noble upbringing...



or indulging his latest whim, regardless of expense, and with little regard for his own safety.

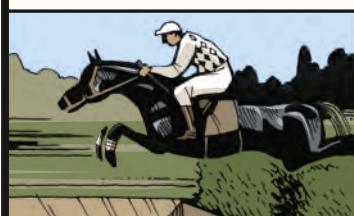
At the age of 17 he reputedly won a \$500 bet by flying his aeroplane under a Florida bridge - a dare-devil escapade that landed him in jail.



He's really going to do it!

But behind the thrill-seeking and excess could be found a genuinely talented sportsman.

He was a fine fencer, and a champion diver, but the Spaniard's first real passion was for horses.



Despite his 6ft frame de Portago became steeplechase champion of France, and competed at the Grand National on two occasions - all with the enthusiasm of the gentleman amateur.

And with three friends he formed the Spanish national bobsleigh team.



With only a few weeks of practice, the unlikely quartet took on the infamous Cresta Run, achieving a fourth place finish at the Winter Olympics.

Wealthy, handsome and living life to the full, Fon had no shortage of female admirers. He married at 20, having proposed to the disarmingly beautiful American Carroll McDaniel on only the second day of their acquaintance.



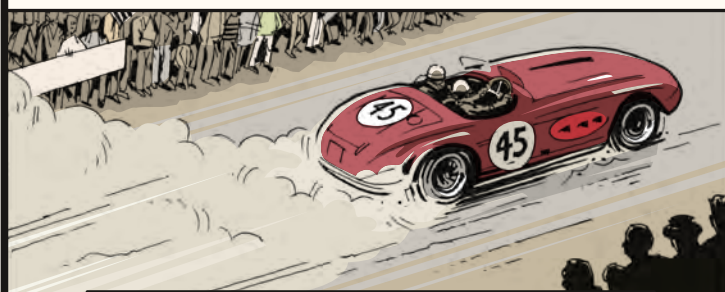
But marriage failed to rein in the free-spirited Marquis. Fashion models, show girls and Hollywood stars would be numbered amongst the more high-profile conquests that punctuated his life.

Fon's introduction to motor racing was as impulsive as any of his relationships.



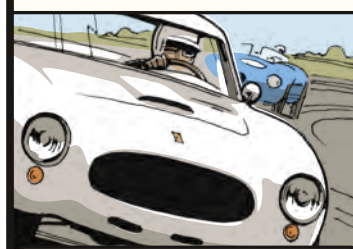
While attending a New York car show de Portago met the Ferrari importer, Luigi Chinetti.

A few months later Fon was on the start line for the Carrera Panamericana, acting as Chinetti's co-driver in the hair-raising border-to-border road race across Mexico.



He had thrown himself in at the deep end once more. Chinetti had fired de Portago's interest and promptly sold him a brand new Ferrari 250MM

By early the following year de Portago had teamed up with the experienced American racer Harry Schell.



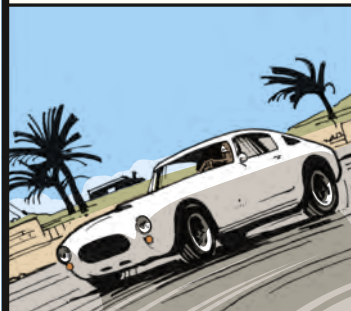
The pair came second in the 1000 Miles of Buenos Aires, Fon's first race in his own car. He headed back to Europe for the summer of '54 with a burning new passion.

Money was never an object. Leaving his Ferrari in the US, de Portago acquired a Maserati for European competition.



But he failed to make it through the Le Mans 24 Hours.

He enjoyed greater success in the Bahamas, reunited with his 250MM for the Nassau International Speed Week.



Victory as a privateer was an impressive result. Never lacking in self-belief, Fon began to hanker after a works drive and awaited the offer from Ferrari.

Ferrari came calling. The firm was prepared to offer de Portago a Formula 1 car - provided he bought it!



With the deal done, Fon headed to Silverstone for the 1955 International Trophy.

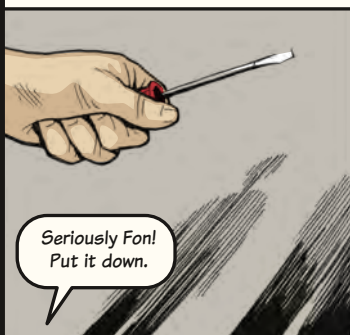
He would crash out, destroying the Ferrari and breaking his leg badly.



OK Mr Portago, just you relax.

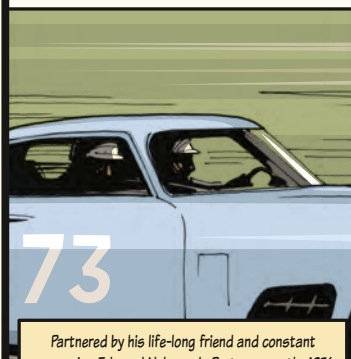
The accident did little to dampen his enthusiasm. Once recovered de Portago picked up where he had left off, pushing his sports cars harder than ever.

With little mechanical knowledge, and even less sympathy for his cars, Fon developed a reputation as a car breaker.



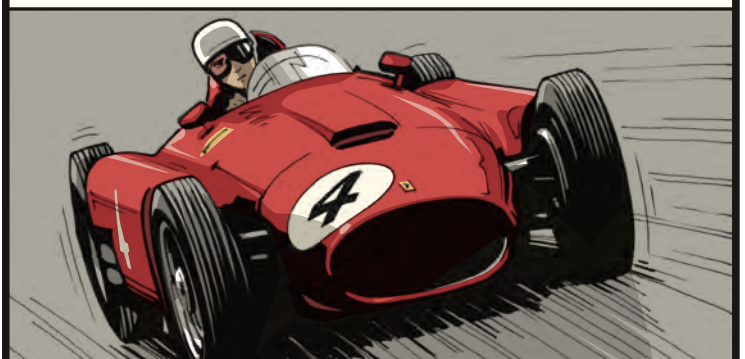
Mechanics would break into a sweat as he jokingly approached his car brandishing a screwdriver.

But when he did finish a race he was invariably at the sharp end.



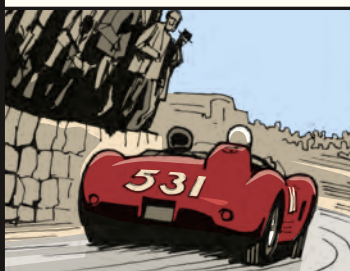
Partnered by his life-long friend and constant companion Edmund Nelson, de Portago won the 1956 Tour de France Automobile, beating the Mercedes of Stirling Moss into second place.

At last Ferrari took note. Fon was offered a works contract. He would represent the team in sports cars, and join Fangio, Collins, Musso & Castellotti as a fifth FI driver.



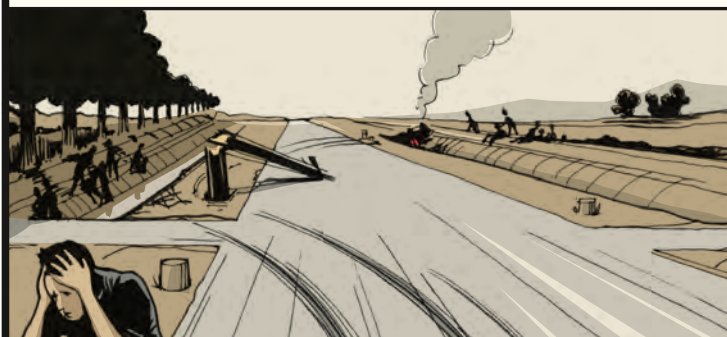
The highlight of his six FI starts was the British Grand Prix. Fon shared second spot on the podium with Collins, having handed his car over to his team-mate, and championship contender, when Collins' car expired late in the race.

May 12, 1957. A field of almost 300 cars had entered the 24th Mille Miglia, the fearsome open road charge from Brescia to Rome and back.



De Portago had driven his Ferrari to its limit for more than 13 hours. In an effort to save time he dismissed his mechanics' suggestion that a badly worn tyre should be changed.

Lying third with just 30 miles left to run, Fon pushed even harder. He was travelling at 150mph when the damaged tyre finally gave way, the car pitching left with de Portago helpless to control it.



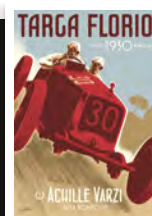
The devastating accident claimed the lives of de Portago, his co-driver Nelson and nine spectators, five of them children. The public outcry that followed ensured that the Mille Miglia would never be run in its full competitive form again.

Alfonso de Portago's record as a driver might have been modest, but there can be little doubt about his standing as the most versatile of sportsmen.

And he was truly one of life's great characters.



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{ LUNCH WITH }

GIL DE FERRAN

He never raced in F1 but achieved great success in America, and remains one of the foremost Brazilian racers of his generation

writer SIMON TAYLOR | photographer JAMES MITCHELL



THERE'S A HISTORY OF young Brazilians who came over to learn the European motor racing way, grabbed everyone's attention by winning the British Formula 3 Championship, and rapidly rose towards the upper slopes of Formula 1. The glittering list, with eight world titles between them, includes Emerson Fittipaldi, Carlos Pace, Nelson Piquet, Rubens Barrichello and, of course, Ayrton Senna. Gil de Ferran was another Brazilian who won the British F3 Championship – pretty well dominated it, in fact, in 1992 – and was widely expected to follow the same path.

But after a couple of fraught tests, Gil decided to stop chasing the F1 rainbow and move to America. There, in nine dramatic seasons, his achievements included consecutive CART Championship titles, plus a brave Indianapolis 500 victory while he was still recovering from serious injuries. Then, having retired from single-seater racing, he did find himself in F1, but on the other side of the pit wall as BAR's sports director. At past 40 he

raced again for his own ALMS outfit, then set up an Indycar team with Jay Penske. Now he's an eloquent ambassador for Formula E.

This is a man who has seen motor sport from many different angles, so I asked him to join me for lunch when he was passing through London en route from the Singapore GP, where he'd been doing some sponsor work, to his home in Florida. Having spent much of his 20s in the UK, he said his favourite food was bangers and mash – only because, as a penniless Formula Ford driver, he couldn't afford a decent steak. So we went to Smith's, opposite the famous Smithfield meat market in east London, where Gil knew his choice of steak tartare followed by medium rare Chateaubriand could hardly be more fresh. Horseradish and peppercorn sauces and a glass of Malbec helped it on its way.

Many young Brazilian racers come from wealthy backgrounds, but the de Ferrans were strictly middle-class. His engineer father ultimately rose to be Ford's head of product development in Brazil, but when Gil wanted to go kart racing seriously at 14 his parents had to make sacrifices. "We had the minimum set-up: one chassis, two engines, two sets of wheels. ☐"

Some of the other kids had lots of engines, spare chassis, paid mechanics. But my father taught me to love the mechanical side, and I became fascinated by it. We kept records of everything – I still have all those notebooks – and after every race weekend he and I would put together a job list. Each day when I got home from school I would pull the kart apart and work through the job list before the next race. And in all my karting we never had a retirement due to a mechanical problem. I was third in the championship my first year, and won it my second year. In my third year I missed several rounds because I had to study for university entrance, so I finished third.

“I got into university to read engineering, but wanted to move up to race Formula Ford. It was only meant to be for fun, because my studies had to come first, but some family friends helped me buy the car in return for their companies’ names on the side. We tried to run it like we’d run the kart, from our garage at home on a tight budget, and it was tough. In karting I’d been a winner, now I was nowhere. During the second year it was still going badly, and we sat around the dinner table at home and had a family chat. We agreed I was spending our friends’ sponsorship money and getting them no results, and maybe I should just stop.

“Then a little thing happened which was one of those life-changing moments. At a race I borrowed a water pump belt when mine broke. Back in São Paulo I took a new one to the guy who’d lent me his spare. This man, Armandio Ferreira, was running a professional three-car team. I told him I wasn’t getting anywhere and was thinking of stopping. He said one of his drivers was pulling out, so he had a seat. I said, ‘OK, how much?’ and he quoted me a figure which was three times the money we had.

“I went home, we had another round-table conference, and finally my father said, ‘I will find the funds to pay for the rest of this season. After that, either you do well enough to raise your own money, or it’s finished’. Now, with a strong car and a strong engine, everything changed. I was running at the front, I started to win races and the next year, 1987, I won the title. Armandio became, along with my father, one of the biggest influences in my life. He was an excellent judge of character, he knew how to get the best out of me and he was very strong technically. At the old Interlagos, 4.9 miles around, he’d stand at each corner, cigarette hanging from his mouth, three stopwatch, pen and notebook, timing every car to see where we were gaining and losing.

“Now I was Brazilian FF Champion, and for the first time I started to consider making motor racing my life. I was still at university, but in the end my parents said, ‘It’s your life, and whatever you decide we wish you well.’ About now I met Ayrton Senna. He was a god to me, like to the rest of Brazil. He told me: ‘To



GIL DE FERRAN CAREER IN BRIEF

Born: 11/11/1967, Paris, France

1987: Brazilian FF1600 champion **1988-89:** UK FF1600
1990: UK Vauxhall Lotus, second; Euro Opel Lotus, third
1991: British F3, third **1992:** British F3 champion
1993: FIA F3000, fourth **1994:** FIA F3000, third.
1995-2003: Champ Cars/Indycars **2000-01:** CART
champion **2003:** Indy 500 winner **2008-09:** ALMS

succeed, you must put yourself in a situation where everything is on your own shoulders.’ What he meant, I think, was: You need to take responsibility for your own performance, you have to put the pressure on yourself, because only you will decide how good you are. Not the team, not the car, not anything else. It’s all down to you. I never forgot that.

“I decided to come to Europe to do Formula 3, and after my local success I raised £30,000 from Brazilian sponsors. But I soon found that would only buy me into a minor Formula Ford series. Ayrton gave me an introduction to Ralph

Firman, and Ralph placed me with a team based at Silverstone to do the Esso Championship.



“THAT FIRST YEAR WAS JUST AWFUL.

In sunny Brazil I had a good life at university, a beautiful girlfriend, a nice circle of mates. In England it was cold and usually raining, I was living in a bed and breakfast in Silverstone village, I had no money, no friends, my conversational English was very poor. I was very lonely. And my career had gone from P1 to P Nowhere. Every race was dreadful. In Brazil the team was around me, supporting me. These guys just gave me the car and told me to get on with it. Like a lot of people who come from abroad to race in the UK, I was viewed as a PW [a paying wanker]. And I had to get used to radial tyres: in Brazil, FF ran slicks and wings.

“It took me a few races to realise that my engine was hopeless. I said to the guy running the team, ‘I don’t think this engine’s any good.’ He said, ‘That’s your engine, deal with it.’ So, in despair, I called Ralph, and he lent me a Scholar engine. The next race was at Thruxton. I’d never been there in my life, and in a 15-minute qualifying session I was second quickest. That gave me more confidence, but I was still an angry man, I felt the whole world was against me. In the race I crashed. The rest of the season was like that. I was competitive, but I was crashing, I was doing stupid things.

“Then I managed to raise some money to do just one Formula 3 race. I hired a Class B Reynard from Techspeed for the last round of the British F3 Championship on the Silverstone GP circuit, and back on slicks and wings I felt at home at once. I qualified it on Class B pole ahead of the favourite, David Brabham, but at Stowe on the first lap we touched. I spun, and restarted dead last. I climbed back to finish second, so that wasn’t bad for my first F3 race.

“After that Rick Gorne at Reynard offered me an F3 ride for £50,000. I went back to Brazil, but I could only raise £30,000. So Rick put me with Alan Cornock at Fulmar, in effect the works Reynard FF team.” Gil’s eight wins in 1989 were half in the British series and half in the Esso, only enough for third place in each. But his speed had been noticed by Paul and Jackie Stewart. After a Donington test Gil signed a long-term contract with the ‘Staircase of Talent’, starting in Formula Vauxhall.

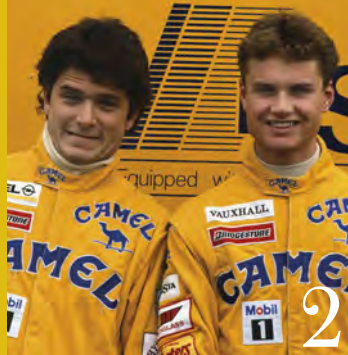
“The Stewarts are an extraordinary family. Jackie, Helen, Paul, Mark, I love them all. To this day, 23 years later, Paul is one of my best friends.” To underline this, later in the meal Gil’s mobile rings: it’s Paul Stewart. “With my father and Armandio, Jackie was another huge influence on my life. I learned so much from him.

“So for 1990 I wasn’t a PW any more. I wasn’t actually paid, but for the first time



1

1 Making his name with a works FF1600 Reynard in 1989 2 Graduating to Formula Vauxhall Lotus with Paul Stewart Racing in 1990 (embryonic David Coulthard on the right) 3 FVL action - de Ferran did well in Europe and the UK



2



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4 Winning at Silverstone en route to the 1992 British F3 crown 5 Dawn of a fresh chapter with Hall Racing - Laguna Seca, 1995 6 Pau GP victory in 1994, when de Ferran was an FIA F3000 title contender 7 Leading the Champ Car field into Turn One at Homestead in 2000, the year of his first championship success in the United States



6



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8

8 Trading places: de Ferran chats to Jenson Button in 2006, having accepted an F1 management role with Honda 9 Leading team-mate Castroneves at Texas in 2003 - Gil won his final single-seater race 10 Final ALMS race, in special Chaparral livery



9



10

“FOOTWORK OFFERED ME
A TEST AT ESTORIL, BUT I
COULDN'T FIT. I WAS LIKE
A FROG IN A
SARDINE CAN”



I didn't have to pay. Some stickers on the car from Brazil helped with my day-to-day living, and I earned £20 here and there doing tuition at the Silverstone school. It was a great time.

David Coulthard, who was 19 then, he was my team-mate. He's still a very close friend. And there was this girl Angela working for the team, doing admin, PR, lots of stuff. She became my wife. I rented a little flat near the team base: it wasn't easy to have fun in Milton Keynes then, but David, Paul, Angela and me, we managed it. That was a good season. I finished second in the British championship and third in the Euroseries, while David was fourth and fifth.

"The next rung on the staircase was F3, of course, but Jackie lost some of his sponsorship for 1991 and had to stand me down. By now I was very friendly with the guys at Reynard, Adrian himself, Rick, Malcolm Oastler, and they put me into the team's development F3 car. Testing at Thruxton I had a massive crash, barrel-rolled, got bad concussion: for a couple of weeks it affected my eyesight badly. In the end Edenbridge Racing, with Peter Briggs and Roly Vincini, ran the car. After a few problems we got it right by mid-season. I took five poles and won three rounds – including the British GP support – and ended up third in the championship behind Rubens and DC.

"For 1992 Jackie and Paul were able to take me back, and it was all good. I loved that Reynard 923: the car fitted me like a glove, and on the limit it just felt like an extension of my arms. In 16 rounds I was on the rostrum 14 times, I won seven rounds and by August we'd clinched the British Championship. I ended up with almost double the points of the runner-up. That brought me a Williams F1 test. It was fixed for November 11 1992, my 25th birthday.

"So the day comes, I'm very excited – and it's raining. I turn up at Silverstone, and Alain Prost is there testing the new 1993 car. I'm to drive Nigel Mansell's '92 car. I'm in heaven – except it's really hard for me to sit in it. Nigel is broad, but not as tall as me. I've got no room for my elbows. I go out in the rain and, before I start going quick, my elbows jam in the cockpit and I do a slow spin. I can imagine the guys in the pits rolling their eyes. They get the car restarted, I go back to the pits, and I say, 'I'm going to have to cancel the test. I can't drive it like this. Think what you like, but I don't want to make an idiot of myself and crash your car.' They say, 'Maybe we can cut a few holes in the seat to fit your elbows,' and they butcher this beautiful carbon seat, they alter the pedals, and they say, 'Right, you've got 15 laps. Five laps and in, five laps and in, five laps and that's it.' And it's still raining.

"The first five laps I was about 3sec off Prost's times. The second five I was about 1.5sec off. The third five I was a couple of tenths off him. It doesn't mean much: the conditions were changing all the time, and



Australia 2001: de Ferran and Penske celebrate a second straight CART title

Alain was just shaking down the new car, I'm sure he wasn't really pushing it. But I was pretty happy. After that I talked to the team about becoming a test driver, but they went for DC, who had already done a season in F3000. So for 1993 it was F3000 for me, with Paul Stewart Racing."

Gil won his second F3000 race from pole, and was second at Spa and the 'Ring, but had five DNFs. In 1994 he was tipped to win the championship, and after five rounds, with two wins and two podiums, he was on target. Then at Spa he spun off on the first corner, driving back from dead last to fifth, and in the final round he was the innocent victim of a tangle. Result: third in the series.



STILL HE WAS PURSUING F1. "I HAD talks with lots of teams but they never led to anything. Maybe I was too naïve, maybe they just didn't think I was good enough. But I could never get a straight answer, not even when I asked how much sponsorship I needed to bring. Nowadays I suppose all that stuff is done by managers. Anyway, Footwork (Arrows) did offer me a test at Estoril. Again I couldn't fit in the car, I was like a frog in a sardine can. After 20 laps I was so cramped I came in, and while they were trying to make more room for me I went behind the pits to go to the toilet. I was walking between two of the trucks, looking down thinking, this is not going so well. And I hit my head on a swing-up locker door on the side of the truck. Split my head open, blood everywhere, game over.

"On a spare weekend in 1993 I went with Rick Gorne to watch the CART race at Michigan, and it blew my mind. Nigel Mansell, Emerson, Mario Andretti, all these great names wheel-to-wheel around a two-mile oval, massive atmosphere, huge crowds filling the open stands, and the fastest race lap was more than 227mph. I thought maybe if it's good enough for F1 champions it's good enough for me. And I met some of the team guys like Jim Hall and Derrick Walker." Hall, who'd designed and raced the ground-breaking Can-Am Chaparrals in the 1960s, was now running Teo Fabi in CART.

"The next summer I'm leading the F3000 championship and I go testing at Monza. And, dumb idiot, I have a big accident, come back to the UK wearing a neck brace. I'm sitting at home feeling sorry for myself and the phone rings. Guy with an American accent, very direct. 'This is Jim Hall. Fabi can't do our next test. I see you've been going well, I'd like you to sub for him.' I'm really excited, I say, 'Sure, of course, when is it?' He says, 'This weekend.' And this was Wednesday.

"I had to clear it with Paul and Jackie, and they were very supportive. Jackie sent me to a doctor in London who said I'd probably be all right and gave me some pain killers, and next day I'm on the plane. The test was at Big Spring, Texas, a scruffy little track out in the desert. I fitted the car fine, and it was a joy: no traction control, no electronics, just a basic racing car with huge power, power like I couldn't believe. I got on very well with Jim and the team, and I got under the track record.

"So he offers me a three-year deal. He says, 'As soon as your F3000 season is finished I want you over here, testing.' That's exactly what I wanted, to work hard, prepare myself, learn the Reynard-Mercedes and the CART way of doing things. Jim meant business. He wasn't Penske or Newman-Haas, his car wouldn't have the ultimate development of the very top teams, but I knew I could work with his guys and get the best out of it. So I signed." For Gil it began a nine-season CART/Indycar career.

"To begin with Jim took some flak: Who the hell is this guy, why is Hall signing Mr No One? But at the first round in Miami, after all our work over the winter, I took provisional pole on Friday. That dealt with the flak. I ran third in the race until the gearbox went." The rest of the season brought mixed fortunes, but Gil won the final round at Laguna Seca, making him Rookie of the Year.

For 1996 Hall Racing switched to Honda power. "Honda was very serious about what it was trying to do, and I did a lot of development work with them. It was the start of an important relationship for me." There was a win at Cleveland, some seconds and thirds, and sixth in the Championship, but then Hall's main sponsor Pennzoil pulled out, and Jim's team shut down. So Gil found a berth with Derrick Walker. □

By now Firestones were the tyres to have, and Walker's team was signed with Goodyear. "From the beginning we're not as fast as we should be, and I start over-driving the car. Round 1, Homestead, I crash in practice, and I crash the spare in the race. Round 2, Surfer's Paradise, I crash at the start. I've destroyed three chassis in two weekends. Then comes Round 3, Long Beach. On Friday I earn provisional pole, then on Saturday I come round that blind curve and there's a car stopped. I hit him at 170mph, rip the left side off my car. So we miss Saturday, but I keep my pole. I lead the race, but my tyres are graining badly, and every time I stop for fresh tyres I'm losing another place. I'm getting more and more angry, pushing harder and harder – and I hit the wall. Crash no 5 in three weekends.

"That's when I had a moment of clarity, a life-changer. I told myself I had to stop doing this, I had to understand my racing better. I walked back to the pits and apologised to the team. I could have blamed the tyres, but I was the guy pushing the pedals, and I told them it was my fault. I said it wouldn't happen again. That year I ended up second in the series to Alex Zanardi."

One of those finishes, on the road circuit at Portland, went into the history books as the closest ever. "The race started wet and then it began to dry out. I was leading, and I decided my best bet was to make my wets last. Mark Blundell stopped for slicks and he was coming

is one of the most naturally gifted racers I have ever seen. When it comes to car control, he does things with a racing car that very few can do.



"APART FROM PORTLAND, I WAS HAVING a thin time. I'd gone from Man at the Front to Yeah, he's OK. But somebody who understood what was happening – because his team was on Goodyears too, and by his standards he hadn't been doing well for a couple of years – was Roger Penske. In July 1999 Roger sent word that he wanted to speak to me. I didn't know him at all, but I knew what a legend he was. In Indycar terms it's like a summons from Enzo Ferrari. Roger was making big changes for 2000, switching to Reynard, Honda and Firestone, and he wanted me in there, along with the rising Canadian talent Greg Moore. We met, and we did the deal in a day. Roger doesn't waste time. Then, in the final race of 1999 at Fontana, having his last race for Forsythe Racing, Greg was killed. It was shocking. We'd already spent time together, talking about being team-mates the next season."

From the start Gil and Penske were an ideal combination, and their mutual respect was clear. Gil's dedication to developing the Reynard-Honda 2KI, and his intelligent racecraft, reminded some of that supreme relationship that Penske had built 30 years

Moreno and Kenny Brack, was clinched by Gil in the final round at Fontana – where his qualifying average was 241.426mph, a closed circuit world record that still stands.

"CART was amazing then. The engines, 2.65-litre V8 turbos, came from four manufacturers: Honda, Mercedes, Toyota, Ford. Penske was Honda's number one team, and they were throwing the kitchen sink at it. We were running 950 horsepower all year long, and for the super-speedway races we'd optimise the engines with a more peaky rev-band for even more. Running on your own around the D-shaped two-mile oval at Fontana you don't lift anywhere, and for that last round Honda came up with a qualifying engine with well over 1000 horsepower, and probably a life of 50 miles. It was a grenade. CART had banned pneumatic valvegear, so it had old-fashioned steel springs, but it still ran to 17,000rpm.

"People used to road racing think ovals are just about sitting there, going flat all the time. It's much more complex than that. For instance, the cars run six-speed gearboxes. First, second and third are for accelerating from the pits and restarts, but the other three are all top gears. Sixth is draft gear, fifth is lead gear and fourth is traffic gear. If you're slipstreaming somebody your potential maximum speed will be higher than if you're leading, with no-one in front to give you a tow. So draft gear is slightly higher than lead gear. And if you're working through traffic you'll need a ratio that's slightly lower again. Indycar is different in almost every way from Formula 1, but I think one reason why Adrian Newey is such a brilliant force in F1 is because he's done time with Indycars, and he must have taken some lessons from that environment – certainly aerodynamic lessons."

The next year, 2001, Gil won the CART Championship again, after a great battle with Kenny Bräck. "Kenny was fast, smart, and hard as nails. In September there were two new European CART races a week apart, at Lausitzring in Germany and in England at Rockingham. We'd all just landed in Germany when the dreadful news came through of the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington. I'm in Berlin, my wife and kids are 5000 miles away in the US, all flights have shut down, it's like World War III has broken out. Seeing those TV pictures over and over, it wasn't good. Then in the race comes Zanardi's dreadful accident. We were all sure he would die, we didn't think he could survive that. That was a black weekend.

"We arrive at Rockingham and the circuit has weepers – that's what we call it when moisture seeps out of the track surface and it won't dry out. The race is due on Saturday, and on Thursday and Friday it's too dangerous to run. On Saturday they decided it's dry enough, we get a few familiarisation laps and then we line up in points order for the start. After dreadful understeer problems in Germany I'd

"CART WAS AMAZING THEN. HONDA CAME UP WITH A QUALIFYING ENGINE WITH WELL OVER 1000 HORSEPOWER"

at me like a freight train, and Raul Boesel was there as well. On the final lap we were three abreast as we went for the line, and Mark took it by inches." Officially Blundell's winning margin over Gil was 0.027sec, and with Boesel the three of them were covered by 0.055sec.

"I still had the Goodyear problem in 1998 and 1999, although they were really trying to get it sorted. In '99, as well as 22 race weekends, I did 75 days of tyre testing. I did have one win, at Portland. At the end everyone was trying to make their fuel last, but our strategy was go flat out and have a splash-and-dash eight laps from the end. And it worked.

"The guy I beat that day was Juan Pablo Montoya, and I'm delighted to see he has just signed for Penske and is coming back to Indycar. As well as being a real character, Juan

earlier with Mark Donohue. The American racing press dubbed Gil 'The Professor' because of his analytical approach.

"If people compare my relationship with Roger to Mark Donohue's, that's very flattering, but I'm a driver, I'm not an engineer. I just want to understand more about the car and what it's doing, to get the best from it. I'm the only person who can experience what the car is doing, so I'm the engineers' eyes and ears, and my job is to communicate back to them accurately, so that they can act on the information. And driving for Penske you have so much resource behind you, such a powerful infrastructure to support you. It's like being a kid in a candy store."

The 2000 championship, fought out between Gil, Adrian Fernandez, Paul Tracy, Roberto

gone to a completely different set-up, and I had no idea how my car would handle. But it worked. I had a great battle with Kenny for the lead. He got by me in the traffic on the penultimate lap, but I used the backmarkers to dive-bomb around the outside in the very last corner of the race, and won by half a second. After the previous 12 days, that felt good.

“By now CART was beginning to come apart at the seams and Roger made the decision to move to IRL in 2002, running Dallara-Chevys for me and Helio Castroneves. Helio won the Indy 500 and I was second, and I was leading the series for much of the year. Then at Chicagoland I had a massive accident. I don’t remember anything about it, but you run inches apart there, and race speeds are 220 plus. Apparently the car in front of me had a fuel pressure drop, his engine coughed, and I was straight into the wall. I had bad concussion, and I was out of things for the rest of the season. I wasn’t sure how it would feel getting back in the car, but in the first 2003 round at Homestead it all felt fine, and I was second. Round 2, Phoenix, everybody’s saving fuel to get to the end so Roger brings me in for a late splash. I storm back from about 20th, and with 13 laps to go I’m passing Michael Andretti for fifth. We touch, I’m backwards into the wall, the car catches fire, I’ve got neck and back fractures. And concussion again.

“I missed the next race, and come the first week of practice for the Indy 500 the doctors said I could get back in. At first I just could not drive the car. I’d lost my feel, my precision, I felt meat-handed. I went back to the hotel and I thought this is career over. But gradually it came back. I only qualified 10th, but I knew we had a strong race car, and Roger made a couple of good strategy calls. I kept moving up, but whenever a yellow dropped the pace the pain returned, in my back and shoulders, cramp in my hands. I said to Roger over the radio I can’t move my arms, I can’t keep the tyres warm. But once we were racing again I felt no pain.

“Helio was leading. He had started from pole, I had started mid-grid, so I was running more downforce than him. If you have clear road ahead you need the speed, if you have to deal with traffic you need the grip. So I knew I couldn’t match him on sheer speed. But I had an advantage in the restarts after the yellows, when the tyres were cold, and that’s when I was making up places. I got up to second and dropped back a bit to watch and work the traffic. When he got chopped by a backmarker in Turn 2 and had to come off the gas for a split-second I had a full head of steam and I went by him. I managed to stay ahead during several more restarts, and I won.”

At the end of the 2003 season, approaching his 36th birthday, Gil won the final Indycar round in Texas to finish runner-up in the series, and announced his retirement. Then one of his



“I WENT BACK TO THE HOTEL AND I THOUGHT, THIS IS CAREER OVER”

contacts at Honda suggested that his intelligent, analytical approach could be useful in the BAR Formula 1 team. By the end of 2005 Honda owned 100 per cent of BAR, and was looking to improve its recent poor form. Gil joined as Sporting Director, responsible to team principal Nick Fry. “It was very much a full-time job, and I moved with my family to Oxford. I was in charge of the racing side, drivers, race engineers, mechanics, 120 people. My prime task was to create harmony and get the best out of everybody. In 2006 we had a tough season, but Jenson Button got pole in Australia, and in Hungary, from 14th on the grid, he won.

“The better I got to know Jenson, the more I admired him. He’s not Mr Ego. His precision is amazing – looking at his traces, you wonder how he can show such consistency. And when it’s a wet/dry situation he’ll maximise the grip brilliantly and get the most speed out of any conditions. At McLaren he has maybe not been able to show how much sheer speed he has.”

In 2007 Honda slipped from fourth in the Constructors’ Championship to eighth, and during 2008 Gil left the team and moved back

to America. “I was frustrated, really. So many of the guys were first-rate and stayed on as the team became Brawn, and they’re still there at Mercedes. But I felt bogged down in internal politics. Honda is a great company run by wonderful people, but in racing you need sharpness of focus and commonality of effort, and we couldn’t always get that.



“BUT I STAYED FRIENDS WITH HONDA, and got together with HPD – Honda Performance Development – to run in the American Le Mans Series. I set up De Ferran Motorsport, and I found myself back in the cockpit. I was 40 years old, and I didn’t know if I’d still be quick, but I soon got back on the horse again. As team-mate I hired Simon Pagenaud, a young Frenchman who’d been going well in Champ Car. For 2008 we ran in LMP2 and had some good races. For 2009 we moved up to LMP1, and won five out of 10 rounds, but the David Brabham/Scott Sharp Highcroft Acura just beat us on consistency.

“Laguna Seca was my last race as a driver, and we decided to honour Jim Hall, who’d given me my first chance in America. We painted the car Chaparral white, we invited Jim along, we had some of the original Chaparrals displayed in the paddock. And, to make it a beautiful weekend, we won. In 2010 I went into partnership with Roger’s son, Jay Penske, to run in IRL as De Ferran Dragon Racing, running the Brazilian Raphael Matos, who was Rookie of the Year in 2009. He had four Top 10 finishes and ran in the top three at Indy, but for 2011 we couldn’t raise a decent budget and I decided to step out. Jay continued, and Dragon Racing is a good two-car team now.

“Since then I’ve served on the advisory committee looking into IRL’s rules, done some TV work for NBC, and now I’m an ambassador for Formula E, the FIA’s electric class due to start in September 2014. It’s a fascinating way to showcase and develop a new technology – and we all know how racing forces the pace of technological development. It’s serious: the electric motors will be made by McLaren, the batteries by Williams and the chassis by Dallara. Ten two-car teams will contest a 10-race series on street circuits in cities around the globe, and the cars will do 150mph.

“If they get the rules right, it really will benefit production cars of the future. Traditional racing won’t go away – we’ll still have F1, Le Mans, Indy, NASCAR. But there’s room for this initiative, because it will connect with ecologically efficient road cars of the future. Since my first kart I’ve always loved the technical side. And motor racing, from F1 down, is always about the technology. It will never lose its fascination for me.”



Richie Ginther may have qualified at the head of the field, but almost seems to know a blown piston will ruin his race. "He seemed an uptight sort of guy," recalls Neil



In contrast, Bruce McLaren is full of smiles by the Cooper transporter, though in the event, after putting it on the front row, an electrical fire would end his Cooper's race



Looking more like a rugby player than a Formula 1 driver, Innes Ireland takes a fag break, top. Left, his battle-scarred helmet. Below, Innes and Jim Clark lean on the pit gates



PRIVATE VIEW

A 'YOU WERE THERE' SPECIAL

That prime non-championship Formula 1 race, the Oulton Park Gold Cup, is the venue for Neil Dockray's striking driver portraits

YOU WON'T NOWADAYS FIND MANY PEOPLE who travel to the Oulton Park Gold Cup by coach, but that was how Neil Dockray made it in 1962 – a Wallis Arnold outing from Leeds. “We set off at about 5am,” he says, “but you don’t think about that in your teens.” Neil still regrets he had no camera with him at the 1961 race, when Stirling Moss scored the only 4WD F1 victory in the Ferguson, but he made up for that with some fine portraits from '62, particularly of his personal hero Innes Ireland. “He was the star of the first meeting I ever went to, at Full Sutton in Yorkshire in 1958, and he remained my favourite.” Neil was to be disappointed by the Scot’s race this time, as his UDT Lotus-Climax’s clutch failed – not that it mattered as he had incurred a 60sec penalty for a jump start. “My interest was always in the paddock,” says Neil. “Anyway I only had a 50mm lens on my Agfa camera, so action shots were hard. But you got a great view if you climbed on a brick building that was right by the track. Sometimes you’d find the teams there too! Everyone was friendly, even to a lowly spectator.” Neil’s race-going days are gone, but he retains one motor racing ambition – to trek out to the memorial plaque to Innes Ireland near Rubha Reidh lighthouse, Wester Ross, where the driver’s ashes were scattered. 📷

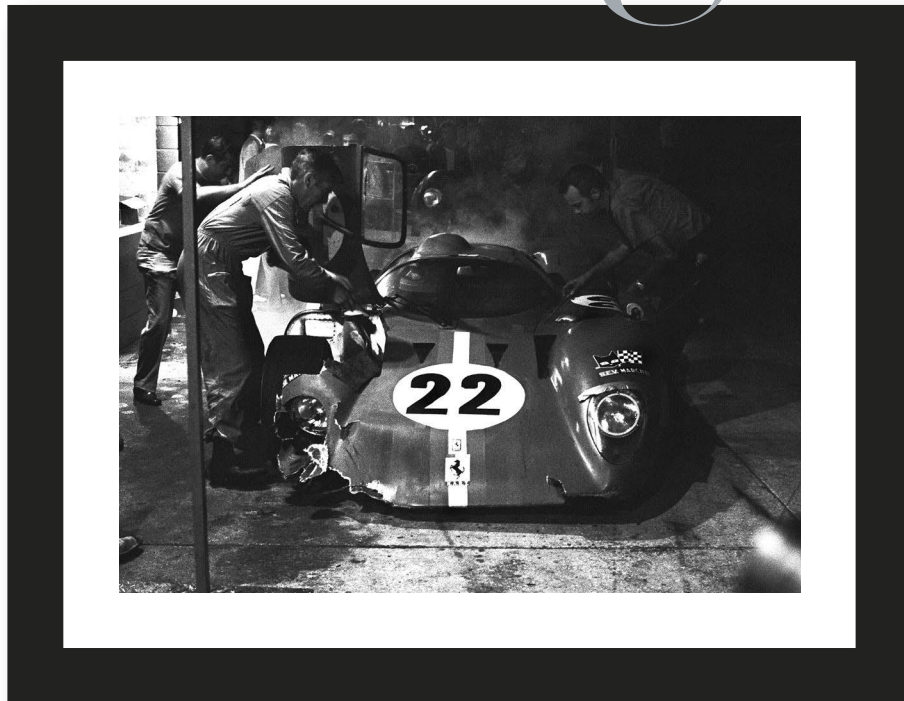


Masten Gregory - sporting his trademark Peter Sellers-style specs - would bring the UDT-Laystall team (below left) its best result of the day. He took his Lotus-BRM to sixth place



Ginther in brighter mood, talking to BRM chief Tony Rudd in the grass paddock that endured for years at the circuit. Among all the sports jackets, Richie could only be from the US...

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Mitch Evans

The Mark Webber-backed teenager who hopes to become the first F1 Kiwi since the mid-Eighties. Simon Arron spoke to him

BLINK AND YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED Mike Thackwell's Formula 1 career. Despite the rich promise of his youth, the 1984 European F2 champion started only a couple of world championship Grands Prix – and the second of those, Canada 1984, was the last in which a New Zealander graced the sport's top table. For a country buoyed by the exploits of Chris Amon, Bruce McLaren and Denny Hulme, the drought has been long.

There are many, though, who believe a remedy is nigh. Auckland-born Mitch Evans was one of the younger drivers in the 2013 GP2 Series – he turned 19 last June – but he doesn't lack for experience. "New Zealand is quite flexible when it comes to giving youngsters a competition licence," he says, "and I did a couple of Formula Vee events aged 13..."

He'd served a solid karting apprenticeship by then, supported by his racer father Owen – long-time holder of New Zealand's land-speed record. "Dad put me in a kart when I was four," Mitch says. "I was miles off the pace, but absolutely loved it. He then bought a kart for my sixth birthday and things went from there."

They went pretty well, too.

"After some success in karts," he says, "I had a choice between pursuing a racing career or playing rugby league, at which I was pretty good back then. I played for Auckland representative teams, but opted for motor racing."

After that Formula Vee flirtation, he switched full-time to cars in 2008, finishing second in the New Zealand Formula Ford Championship, second in the 2009 Australian Formula Ford series, second again in Australian F3 (2010) and then scooping the following season's Toyota Racing Series, during the course of which he won the New Zealand GP at Manfeild... aged just 16. The runner-up? The


not-much-older Daniil Kvyat, Toro Rosso's new F1 recruit.

While competing on the 2009 Australian GP support programme, Evans had a chance meeting with Mark Webber. "He gave me a tour of the Red Bull garage," Evans says, "and for me that was huge – I was 14 and had always followed Mark's career, because it seemed unusual to have somebody from our part of the world in F1. I subsequently tried to get in touch, to thank him for his time, but didn't know how! Fortunately, though, I had a really good season and Mark contacted me. He and his partner Ann Neal wanted to give me some help. They began mentoring me in 2010 and started managing my career the following year."

He now rents a house at the end of Webber's drive and the two frequently train together. "Mark has become a bit of a big brother over the past couple of years," Evans says, "and he's been able to give me all sorts of useful advice, which is great. He's given me a bit of financial help, too, and I also have a few Kiwi sponsors, including the Giltrap family [Kiwi businessman Sir Colin Giltrap is a well-known motor sport benefactor]."

Evans made his European debut in 2011, racing for MW Arden [co-owned by Webber] in GP3, and instantly established himself as a front-runner. He led the championship for a while, but a string of misfortunes stifled his challenge in the season's second half. Staying put, he lifted the title

in 2012 and remained with Arden for the step up to GP2. In his first season he notched up podium finishes – and might have won at Silverstone, until he was penalised when an electronic glitch caused him to break the pit speed limit.

"If we can stitch together another budget," he says, "the plan is to do a second year in GP2, challenge for the title and see where that takes me. I'm not going to get to F1 by buying a drive, that's for sure, so it's down to me to prove I deserve a chance..." 



CAREER IN BRIEF

Born: 24/6/1994, Auckland, New Zealand
2008-09: 2nd, NZ Formula Ford **2009:** 2nd, Australian Formula Ford **2010:** 2nd, Australian F3
2011: 1st, Toyota Racing Series; 9th, GP3 Series
2012: 1st, GP3 Series **2013:** GP2 Series

Pluck of the Irish

writer RICHARD HESELTINE

The old adage that ‘nice guys finish last’ isn’t strictly true, but they rarely finish first. To succeed in motor sport at a high level requires steel-plated self-belief. That and a certain clear-eyed ruthlessness.

But there are exceptions. Reeling off a list of **Alec Poole’s** achievements in motor sport is met with a look of playful incredulity from the man himself. That and a shrug, as though his career has been one long lucky streak. As a former works BMC driver, one with a British Saloon Car Championship title on his résumé, he has every right to brag, but instead appears baffled by the attention.

"It isn't as though I'd planned a career in motor racing," he says. "My grandfather built up a motor business just outside Dublin, importing MGs and Wolseleys and so on. Later we got involved in assembling them in southern Ireland, too. In the 1960s the British Motor Corporation was one of the biggest car manufacturers in the world. We thought it would always be there. Anyway, I was sent over to England to become a BMC apprentice in order to learn the ropes. You'd get shunted around departments and soon learned to use your time to your advantage. You'd get transferred to SU

Carburettors, the glassfibre shop; anywhere that might prove useful to the cause. At the end of the week, most other apprentices would go home while guys like me, who came from farther afield, would work on our cars and enter whatever event we could. It could be a driving test, a road rally and so on. That is how I got started."

After initial runs in an MGA and an MG Midget in the early '60s, Poole soon began to attract attention on track aboard a series of Frogeye Sprites. The most successful was a 'bitsa' built on a pocket-change budget. "The MG factory at Abingdon was the place to be as an apprentice, especially as

that was where BMC's Competition Department was located. I was moved to Abingdon and soon got the lie of the land. In the grounds of the factory was a Sprite shell that had been used by the company that made the convertible roofs. It had been returned to the works after it was of no further use. I didn't mess about. I went straight to John Thornley, who was the general manager there, and explained that I was looking to build a race car. He enjoyed winding me up, making me work for it. From me it was all 'yes sir, no sir'. He looked very serious, and insisted that he couldn't just give it away. It would cost me five whole pounds!

"Geoff Healey then let me have a one-off aluminium front end and a glassfibre rear, while Eddie Maher came up with a 1275cc engine from the experimental department and Jimmy Cox of Special Tuning bought it up to Formula Junior-spec. I think I had maybe £25 invested in it." Our hero claimed the John Gott Trophy spoils in 1965, dovetailing sports car exploits with runs in another shoestring racer – a demon Wolseley Hornet that dominated its class in

Ireland and also beat John Rhodes' Downton Mini on the Brands Hatch GP circuit that season. "There was a rationale behind using a Hornet," Poole says. "It was a bit like when I was racing the Sprites. You'd have all these other Austin-Healey guys using Sebring-style nosecones, fastback roofs and whatever, but you got more attention if your car looked relatively ordinary, when it wasn't expected to be quick. And that was the same with the Wolseley. It had been brought over to Ireland for appraisal and was then used as a courtesy car before I got my hands on it. I gradually



developed the car until it was about the fastest thing out there. You'd be up against 15 or so Mini Coopers and having the only Hornet got me noticed."



YET IT WAS ABOARD ANOTHER development hack that Poole made the leap to international player. In May 1966, he and friend Roger Enever descended on a sodden Brands Hatch for the Ilford Films 500 endurance race where, improbably, the duo finished third overall behind a 7-litre AC Cobra and a Ford GT40. They were sharing a borrowed MGB. "We got a bollocking from clerk of the course Nick Syrett for using all of the track and quite a lot of the grass, but it was a great result. That got us thinking that we should look at long-distance races. Anyway, lying around the factory in Abingdon was an MGB that had been used for testing the five-bearing version of the B-series engine. We were able to wangle a deal and we then set about turning it into racing car. Roger and I did the 1966 Marathon de la Route in it, which

was 84 hours around the Nürburgring – both the Nord and old Sudschleife. It was so foggy, you had to drive around from memory and it wasn't an easy circuit to learn. That year we'd lapped the entire field at one point but then a driveshaft broke with four hours to go. I went back the following year, sharing a works Mini with Clive Baker and Roger. It was foggy most nights, naturally, and I overtook Vic Elford's Porsche shortly before leaving the road. I rolled the car and Vic told me later that he'd wondered how a helicopter had managed to land in the fog, not realising that it was just my car's headlights going around and around in mid-air...

"I loved doing the long-distance stuff. In 1966 Roger and I did the 1000km race at Montlhéry and in '67 we tried to do as many big events as we could afford, towing our MGB behind an old Z-series Magnette. That year we also did the Monza 1000km race. Roger's dad – Syd Enever, MG's chief engineer – kindly filled both of the B's 12-gallon tanks before we left. We then drove around the corner and drained both of them so that we had enough fuel for the Magnette. Luckily, we managed to get some more petrol out of Shell at the track but even then we were broke. We were

camping, too. Well, we finished the race with bald tyres and somehow won our class. Then we went to Spa and won our class again. We now had prize money so found ourselves a hotel. We never did go back and retrieve our tents! One of the things I remember most fondly about those Continental races, though, was meeting Denis Jenkinson. He took an interest in what Roger and I were doing, and wrote some very nice things about us in *Motor Sport*. His encouragement meant a lot to a couple of young lads."

Jenks wasn't the only one who'd noticed Poole, the crack Chequered Flag equipe offering him an F3 ride in a Brabham BT18 that same season. "I hadn't really considered single-seaters before, because you needed to be built like a jockey to fit in them and I certainly wasn't," he says, laughing. "I was too tall to be comfortable and probably weighed 16 stone. I got the call from [team owner] Graham Warner, who was keen to see how I'd get on. He was also trying out Tim Schenken. I did a race at Silverstone, and then another at Crystal Palace, but I wasn't really in the hunt. I beat Tim, though." ■

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Standing out from the crowd: Poole's Hornet at Dunboyne in '67 and, below, racing a Frogeye Sprite two years beforehand

Poole's results in long-distance races also led to a works MGB seat for the '67 Targa Florio.

"That was quite an experience. Arriving in Sicily in those days was like going back in time 100 years. Unfortunately, Andrew Hedges crashed our car before I got a chance to drive it." Then there was a factory Healey outing for the following year's Le Mans 24 Hours. "That was the year that the race was held in September rather than June, because of the student riots. That meant it got dark that bit earlier, which made for a long night. It also rained a lot. Roger and I were sharing one of the streamlined Sprites, which were capable of maybe 140mph flat out.

"I have two abiding memories from that race. The first involved Roger and I persuading Geoff Healey to let us put a small aluminium strip on the car's bobbed tail, creating what was in effect a spoiler. He grumbled about us young whippersnappers and our new-fangled ideas. The thing was, in doing so we found about 3mph and the car was also more stable on the Mulsanne Straight. My other memory is of talking with Geoff before the start. I asked him if we should change from the practice tyres to a new set of race tyres. He replied with something along the lines of 'They were OK last year', which I took to mean that starting on the practice tyres had worked well last time around so we should go the same way. It was only later that it dawned on me what he actually meant: we were using the previous year's race tyres! We finished 15th overall and received the *Motor*

"IT WAS ABOUT THE FASTEST THING OUT THERE. YOU'D BE AGAINST 15 MINIS, SO THE HORNET GOT ME NOTICED"

Trophy as ours was the first British car home."


That year Poole joined the British Vita Racing squad for an assault on the European Touring Car Championship, before stepping into an Equipe Arden Cooper 970S for a British Saloon Car Championship campaign in '69. "We had an incredibly quick Mini. Jim Whitehouse built some great engines, and managed to get a lot from ours with fuel-injection, eight-port heads and so on. We had a



good season." By which he means he won the title outright...

Poole also joined great mate Paddy Hopkirk and Tony Nash to finish second in that season's gruelling London-to-Sydney Marathon. Unfortunately, a clash with Richard Longman's Mini at Brands at the end of '69 put a dampener on things, Poole recovering in time to tackle the 1970 World Cup Rally alongside Roger Clark in a Ford Escort: they made it as far as Brazil before connecting with a civilian's VW.



NO MATTER, POOLE CONTINUED TO race Minis, his Complan-backed Cooper putting out 190bhp once it gained a turbo part-way through 1970. Other radical Minis followed, before Poole came out of left-field for a tilt at Super Saloons. Though nominally a Skoda 110R, his housed a two-litre Cosworth BDG four-banger. "The car belonged to Derek McMahon who sponsored me, and Dick Bennetts did our engine. We gave the 

Vauxhalls a fright [he was second to Gerry Marshall in the '75 Tricentrol series], but then we started coming up against rebodied F5000 cars. To my mind, they spoiled a good category.”

So Poole moved back to sports cars, rounding out his frontline driving career with Diego Febles Racing. “I got to know Diego when we did some end-of-season races in the Caribbean in the early '70s,” he says. “He’d raced in Cuba before Castro took over and was now living in Puerto Rico. I joined him for Le Mans in '76 in an ex-Peter Gregg Porsche 3.0 RSR. Unfortunately, we didn’t finish as the gearbox broke. Our best result was two years later in the Daytona 24 Hours. We had a great race and made up a lot of ground as the turbo cars broke. We ended up third overall [and class winners]. We then did the Sebring 12 Hours and were well up the order at half-distance, in about fourth place. I was having this almighty battle with another Porsche – had been for about half an hour – and got past him just as this wheel came flying past. I remember thinking ‘great, that’s him out’. Then I put the power down and realised it was one of mine.”



THERE WOULD BE FURTHER OUTINGS, but business interests soon took precedence. Then followed a full-time comeback from the other side of the pitwall as Nissan Europe’s competitions manager, Poole masterminding the marque’s BTCC campaigns during the '90s.



Gerry Marshall leads from Nick Whiting and Alec Poole at Dulton Park, 1975. Below, hassling John Myerscough’s Anglia at the same venue six years earlier. Above, on Datsun’s books in 1974



PETER MCARDEN

EVENTS OF THE MONTH

WALES RALLY GB ❖ SHANGHAI SIX HOURS ❖ ROGER ALBERT CLARK RALLY

Sébastien Ogier flew to victory in Wales, after taking control during the early stages



VOLKSWAGEN

WRC
Wales Rally GB

N

OT SO MUCH AN EVENT OF THE MONTH, THIS, AS ONE OF the finest of 2013. Its success, though, was founded on the clamour surrounding the stages rather than anything that happened within. A move to rallying's North and Mid-Welsh heartland generated a bumper crowd and a vibrant atmosphere, with numbers being such that spectators occasionally had to be turned away.

World champion Sébastien Ogier was in control from Friday morning, when a string of fastest times gave him a useful – but not insuperable – advantage over hat trick-chasing Volkswagen teammate Jari-Matti Latvala. The Finn then dropped 12sec on the first run through Hafren – “Too much,” he said, “when you are fighting for tenths” – and was never truly close again. He reduced his arrears to 17sec on Saturday afternoon, but Ogier pulled away slightly before the leg's end. Latvala's efforts to fight back subsequently triggered a couple of mistakes, including a spin (and stall) in Clocaenog on Sunday morning. ❑

EVENTS

OF THE MONTH



Thierry Neuville finished third to secure second place in the championship

Such as Latvala and Dani Sordo are natural showmen – and exuberant to the core – but Ogier is essentially Alain Prost on mud, less visibly dramatic than his peers but devastatingly effective.

This was his first Rally GB success – and his ninth WRC win of the campaign. “I got off to a great start,” he said, “and after that wanted to control my lead. Jari-Matti was always close, though, and I know this is one of his strongest rallies. It wasn’t easy keeping him behind.”

More than a minute adrift of the VWs, Thierry Neuville took third in his final event before switching from Ford to Hyundai – and that was enough to secure second place in the final championship standings, ahead of Latvala. Mads Ostberg (Ford Fiesta), Andreas Mikkelsen (VW Polo) and Martin Prokop (Ford Fiesta) completed the top six. Mikkelsen briefly threatened to make it a VW 1-2-3 clean sweep, but dropped time on Sunday morning when he spun in Dyfnant and then clouted a bank in Clocaenog.

Penalised five minutes for using his ninth chassis of the season, Sordo took



Fans flock around Citroën’s servicing bay in Deeside, above left. Sign of the times, above right. Mikko Hirvonen, below, retired on Friday after a dramatic roll



seventh in a tough event for Citroën, after Mikko Hirvonen and Robert Kubica both rolled on Friday. Kubica’s car was fit to restart on Saturday, but within two stages it was back on its roof – this time terminally.

Hirvonen’s co-driver Jarmo Lehtinen accepted blame for their accident: he missed part of a pace-note, so they were one gear up – sixth rather than fifth – and in the wrong place when the car began to tumble.

Local favourite Elfyn Evans (Ford Fiesta) finished eighth to secure his maiden WRC2 win, while Quentin Gilbert (Citroën DS3) was best of the WRC3 runners in 14th overall. Six places adrift, Sébastien Chardonnet (DS3) finished second in class to secure the inaugural WRC3 world title.

Olympic skeleton gold medallist Amy Williams made a class-winning World Rally Championship debut, navigating Tony Jardine’s ProSpeed-run Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX to 26th place. She also endeared herself to the crew by furnishing them with a handsome supply of home-baked chocolate brownies... *Simon Arron*

WEC Shanghai Six Hours

AUDI SCORED double gold in the penultimate round of the World Endurance Championship at the Shanghai Six Hours. Allan

McNish, Tom Kristensen and Loïc Duval became world champions with a steady drive to third, while André Lotterer, Benoît Tréluyer and Marcel Fässler claimed a last-gasp victory ahead of Toyota.

McNish and co, who needed only to finish fourth to seal the title, opted for a conservative run aboard their Audi R18 e-tron quattro after failing to overcome a handling imbalance in practice and qualifying.

They ran behind the two Toyota TS030 Hybrids and their team-mates throughout the event, moving up to third on the retirement of the Toyota shared by Sébastien Buemi, Anthony Davidson and Stéphane Sarrazin.

Toyota had a clear edge over rivals Audi in the opening exchanges and looked to be heading for victory after Lotterer sustained a puncture shortly after his first stop. The Audi drivers struggled on the softer of two Michelin compounds and a switch to hards only began to pay dividends as the race progressed.

Lotterer started the comeback after his unscheduled stop and then Tréluyer drove an



impressive triple stint, but the outgoing champions only came back into the frame during the penultimate hour. The Davidson car retired from the lead with suspension problems after the TS030 shared by Nicolas Lapierre and Alex Wurz had sustained a puncture of its own. This was a triple whammy for Toyota: it lost more time than the Audi had done earlier, the unscheduled stop meant pitting again and, worse still, it would have to complete its final stint on the softer Michelin.

Wurz rejoined after a final splash-and-dash with 33 minutes to go, just ahead of Tréluyer. On the 'wrong' tyre, however, he was unable to defend his position. *Gary Watkins*

From left, McNish, Duval, Audi motor sport chief Dr Wolfgang Ullrich and Tom Kristensen celebrate

PAUL LAWRENCE

Steve Bannister made amends for defeat in 2012 while, below, fifth-placed Owen Murphy scored the best result for anything other than an Escort



Roger Albert Clark Rally

STEVE BANNISTER AND KEVIN RAE BEAT ALL challengers to score their second Roger Albert Clark Rally victory when the annual highlight of the historic rallying season ran across three tough days of competition through Yorkshire and the Scottish borders.

At 62 years old, Bannister is a legend of national rallying in his Ford Escort Mk2 and repeated his 2007 victory to become only the second driver, after Gwyndaf Evans, to win the event twice.

A year earlier, 'Banner' had lost the rally by just 17 seconds to Marty McCormack.

"After the fight with Marty in 2012, and losing out on the last stage, this has made amends a little bit," Bannister said. "This is the best event of the year for historic cars, so it is great to win it again."

The 10th anniversary of the event, which recreates the forest-based RAC Rallies of the 1960s and 1970s, was a big hit with competitors and thousands of spectators. Friday evening featured six stages in the darkness of the Yorkshire forests, while Saturday's route headed north into the daunting Kielder complex before an overnight halt in Carlisle.

Sunday provided the sting in the tail, with 70 competitive – and conspicuously icy – miles in the border forests.

Two drivers took the fight to Bannister, but Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis and Jason Pritchard/John Millington were caught out by the same deceptive right in the Pundershaw stage, Pritchard on the first run and Robinson on the second. Both crews' Ford Escorts rolled and were badly damaged.

In their first rally together, Paul Griffiths and Richard Wardle moved up to claim second from Seamus O'Connell and Paul Wakely as Ford Escort Mk2s dominated the podium once more. Tim Pearcey and Neil Shanks drove a fine rally to fight back into fourth after losing time with a low-speed roll in Duncombe Park on Saturday morning.

The first non-Escort home was the ex-Russell Brookes Sunbeam Lotus of Owen Murphy/James O'Brien in fifth.

Other major winners included Belgians Stefaan Stouf/Joris Erard (Ford Escort Mk1), who won Category 2, and veterans Bob Bean/Malcolm Smithson (Lotus Cortina), who again



topped Category 1. Having rallied for more than 50 years, Bean drove brilliantly and moved clear as rivals Ian Beveridge/Peter Joy (Volvo PV544) retired with engine problems.

After early suspension failure, Martyn Hawkswell and Nick Welch recovered to win the concurrent Open Rally and complete a hat trick of wins in their non-historic-spec Ford Escort Mk2. *Paul Lawrence*



Rear passenger Smith fights to retain his hat as Laidlaw's 1904 Panhard et Levassor crosses Westminster Bridge

London to Brighton Veteran Car Run

PARK LANE, 5.45AM ON A SUNDAY MORNING. No, *Motor Sport* isn't stumbling home after a night on the tiles. It's the morning of the London to Brighton Veteran Car Run, and to take part in this wonderful tradition the early bird catches the worm – or in our case a 1904 Panhard et Levassor.

The sight of Edwardian horseless carriages chugging out of the darkness is ghostly, as if motoring's founding fathers haunt the deserted roads of London as the city sleeps. Fresh off trailers, a steam car boiler is stoked into life and a Congestion Charge-friendly electric pioneer trundles past in complete silence, on a warm-up before joining the Serpentine start in Hyde Park.

In the best traditions of Bill Boddy, *Motor Sport* is cadging a lift to the south coast, joining recently retired historic racer Irvine Laidlaw in his pride and joy. Mechanic, car preparer and co-driver Phil Stainton offers much-needed coffee, before I climb on board beside Lord Laidlaw's wife, Christine, in the back of an immaculate maroon four-seater.

The 15hp four-cylinder Panhard, known as The Old Lady, is relatively modern among this

company. It was the 237th car to be sold by CS Rolls in the same year he met Henry Royce and co-founded what would become the most celebrated automobile manufacturer of them all. The car was a wedding present to Hugh Marsham-Townshend, cousin to Charles Rolls, whose family would found the Western Motor Works through Rolls employees H C Bennett and chief test driver Arthur Priest. The company, a Vauxhall/Bedford agent, would maintain the Panhard until 1954 when Marsham-Townshend, in an act of generosity, gifted the car to Bennett. It remained in the family until 2005, Lord Laidlaw purchasing it in 2008 with the intention of taking part in the LBVCR. He has completed each run held since, boosting our confidence of making it to Brighton this morning.



“THE 15HP FOUR-CYLINDER PANHARD IS RELATIVELY MODERN AMONG THIS COMPANY”



The brass catches the light as dawn breaks and Irvine (no formalities required) selects first gear from the four-speed sequential transaxle chain drive. It's not yet 7.30am, but large crowds have gathered as we cross the startline with a parp-parp of the horn. Down Constitution Hill, around Buckingham Palace (but no sign of Her Maj), along Birdcage Walk and into Parliament Square, smiling faces and cheers greet us as we make our way. It's snug here in the back, the ride is firm but comfortable and we're thankful for a crisp, dry morning instead of the heavy rain that dogged last year's run.

Across Westminster Bridge, cars are already pulling up and bonnets are raised. By Brixton, we counted more than 30 early casualties. Here, bleary figures that have clearly spent some time on the tiles stare in confusion as we pass, motoring down the A23 and on to Streatham, Norbury and Thornton Heath. This grim trunk road has never been so pleasant... All the way, locals wave. Traffic is not usually popular around these parts, but it is today.

The route diverts through South Croydon rather than tackling the long drag up the



Purley Way, thus missing the site of the old Croydon Airport from which so many of WB's foreign adventures began. In Purley we rejoin the A23, motor through Coulsdon, cross the M25 and head through Merstham, Redhill and on to Horley. Flasks of hot chocolate laced with something stronger keep the chills at bay, as Irvine presses on to the checkpoint in Crawley High Street. We've made it to the George Hotel in just two hours.

A welcome bacon roll, a top-up of water (for the car, not us) and we're back on the road, leaving the A23 at Pease Pottage to join picturesque B-roads and head into the beautiful Sussex countryside. At Handcross and Staplefield large crowds and local car clubs welcome us with cheers, and my face begins to ache from smiling... Through Cuckfield and on to Burgess Hill the Panhard is cracking on, but my colleagues warn that Clayton Hill and the South Downs await.

Momentum is key and, with so few revs available, downchanges on ascents are to be avoided. But we catch older cars, and thus earlier starters, just as we begin the ascent. The climb becomes a crawl, but as oil and

Pier pressure: finishers make it across the line on Madeira Drive, above. Waving is compulsory (left and above right). Three-strong Napier team assembled in Hyde Park, below

water temperatures rise The Old Lady never stutters. We reach the top with a cheer from the volunteer marshals and swoop down to the A23 and the run into Brighton.

Joggers and dogs scatter as we trundle through Preston Park, make our checkpoint and then head through Brighton's dingy streets. It's not a race, but the competitive spirit is inevitable and there's little quarter given as we cut past traffic queues of 'moderns'. No one seems to mind, goodwill being on overflow for this special occasion.

On to Madeira Drive and the seafront. The sonorous tones of dear old Brian Jones welcome us, just three and a half hours after he'd seen us off from Hyde Park. Irvine is delighted; his best run yet from half a dozen attempts. It's not quite 11am as we park up, with only about 10 cars ahead of us.

The 1902 Darracq of Allan White had been the first of a remarkable 341 of the 385 starters to complete the 60 miles before the 4.30pm deadline. Pink Floyd drummer Nick

Mason was among the field as, too, was celebrated cinematic icon Genevieve, a 1904 Darracq.

For the first time in its 117-year history, commemorating the original Emancipation Run of November 1896, an official competitive element was included. A regularity test involving cars averaging a precise speed between two controls was a welcome addition, the 1902 Mors of Philip Oldman claiming the inaugural trophy.

But the star feature of the day was a trio of fabulous racing Napiers, lined up together on the event for the first time and recreating the team that contested the Gordon Bennett Cup races of the early 20th Century. The trio included the 6.5-litre Napier in which SF Edge won the 1902 race between Paris and Innsbruck, the first international victory for a British car – and painted in glorious British Racing Green to boot. It was one of many heart-warming sights on a glorious autumn morning. *Damien Smith*



ON THE ROAD WITH

SIMON ARRON



Possibly the only man with both F1 and Mallory Park media passes. Next stop...?

www.motorsportmagazine.com/author/simonarron/



Promising American Jake Eidson heads Festival winner Niall Murray into Paddock

JEFF BLOOM

KENT BUY ME LOVE

Brands Hatch, October 26-27: some fresh pep for an old favourite

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME IN years that I'd attended the once-compulsory Formula Ford Festival, my appetite having been sapped by the event's dwindling glamour – a consequence of the familiar 1.6-litre Kent engine being dropped in favour of the 1.8 Zetec in 1993. Since then, mainstream

Formula Ford has become steadily less plausible... while Kent-engined cars have remained hugely popular among the grass-roots cognoscenti.

This year, to general acclaim, the Festival was handed back to the Kent community – which had recently played

only a supporting role at the event. Few anticipated that the overall winner might graduate to F1 any time soon, but the racing was bound to be good...

It was fitting, as I drove through the gates at breakfast o'clock on Saturday morning, that the first thing I spotted was the snout of a Van Diemen RF80 in the paddock – this a chassis that only slightly predates my first Festival, in 1982. Back then it ought to have been quite a tricky meeting to cover single-handedly, with 200 cars on the entry list, but it was actually very simple. You sat in the Paddock Hill Bend grandstand to chart the action... and once their

race was run, the leading drivers would all come to watch from the same place: you didn't have to scour the pits looking for them, because they gravitated towards the best seat in the house.

There were only about 50 cars entered this time – enough for two heats, although the cars were then mixed and matched for two notional semi-finals before the main event. Some of the machinery was fairly new, but there were many welcome by-gones – including Conor Murphy's Marlboro-liveried Van Diemen RF83. Thirty years earlier I'd interviewed a newcomer who raced an identical car at this same event, little appreciating how Carlos Sainz's career might proceed...

Among the seasoned campaigners, the Festival showcased some promising youngsters this year, too. America-based English writer Jeremy Shaw has overseen the Team USA Scholarship scheme for the past 24 seasons and exports his drivers to contest the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy.

"I still don't think there's any substitute for Kent Formula Ford in terms of developing racecraft," he said, not that his charges seemed to have



Niall Murray, Ivor McCullough and Jake Eidson dispute third place in the second semi-final. Above, Conor Murphy's 30-year-old Van Diemen



Support race chaos: James Turkington flips and, below, whose line is it anyway?

much to learn. Jake Eidson, 18, and Joey Bickers, 21, had no previous experience of standing starts – and Californian Bickers was unused to the concept of rain, but you'd never have guessed as much from their performances. They were first and second respectively in damp heats, but dropped back a little in the semi before Eidson stormed from 11th to fifth in the final (in which Bickers discovered another Festival tradition – the accident).

Niall Murray won the feature race in virtual darkness on Sunday, but had to pick his way through what had, at one stage, been a nine-car lead chain. It was a reminder that – in terms of spectacle – there are few substitutes for simple, wingless chassis that slide around and allow drivers to race, uncompromised, a matter of millimetres apart.



ALL IMAGES SIMON ARRON



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE FORD KIND

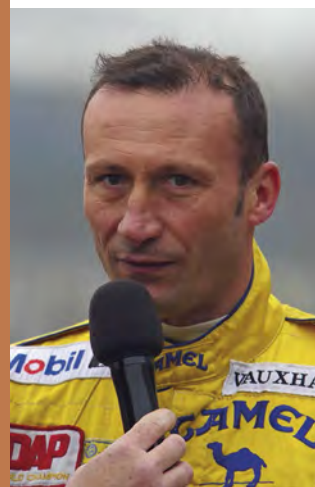
Silverstone, November 2-3: a nice warm feeling, despite the biting breeze

FROM THE REVITALISED FORMULA Ford Festival to its natural successor... First run in 2001, the Walter Hayes Trophy espouses everything that was good about the original Snetterton and Brands Hatch Festivals, with a three-figure entry and six heats required to distil the field to 72 semi-finalists and beyond.

The Saturday morning approach was a throwback, too, with brisk progress possible along deserted Northants lanes. The circuit was cast in dense haze when I arrived, the kind of conditions that might delay activities in some spheres of the sport, but soon the air was ripe with a familiar Ford Cortina rasp.

One of the first cars on track was a Van

Vincenzo Sospiri discusses the passage of time... shortly before he was asked to replace his 1990 overalls



Diemen RF88 bearing number 159. It had been 25 years since Vincenzo Sospiri won the FF Festival – and a dozen since he raced anything regularly – but he was back on familiar terrain. There was originally a deal to reunite the Italian with his own RF88 of yore, but that fell through so instead he drove something similar. Initially, he wore the same Camel overalls he'd used in 1990, when winning the British Vauxhall Lotus title (and finishing second in the



Richard Tarling eventually got the best of an epic scrap in the Historic final. Below, WHT winner Scott Malvern. Bottom, Chris Mealin runs wide



Opel Euroseries). "They're a little bit tight here," he said, pinching his ribs, "but not too uncomfortable." The stewards viewed things differently, however, pointing out that his racewear was long past its sell-by date, so he had to find an alternative before racing began. Despite a little rust – and his car's relative age – the Italian made it through to the final, albeit towards the back. It was a decent effort in difficult conditions, with rain and sunshine alternating on the opening day and a constant bracing wind. In a previous life I might have spent parts of this weekend on the media terrace in Abu Dhabi, watching yachts bob in the harbour, rather than standing at the exit of Becketts in waterproof trousers...

As at Brands Hatch seven days beforehand, the racing was clean and largely close, although Scott Malvern made an early break in the final to render the most significant contest a little one-sided. American Jake Eidson

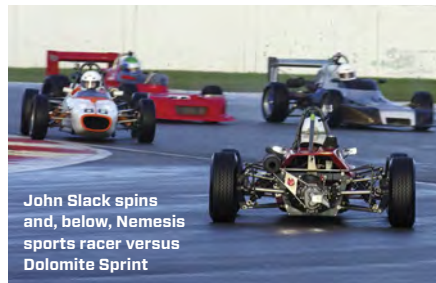
impressed again, challenging for second until a spin dropped him to seventh.

The Historic final proved to be one of the weekend's highlights, Richard Tarling beating Sam Mitchell by 0.077sec as the top four finishers were blanketed by about eight tenths. Mitchell's older brother Ben showed well, too, taking ninth in the main event with a Van Diemen loaned by well-known racer Martin O'Connell and an engine provided by preparation specialist Simon Hadfield. "This is the romance of racing," Hadfield said, "a few people clubbing together to help a talented young driver who doesn't have much money. I hear some teams want to charge about £20,000 for this event..."

As well as FF1600, resourceful organiser the Historic Sports Car Club arranged separate Formule Libre events for sports/saloons and single-seaters, with different fields each day. Libre is almost an extinct concept nowadays, but was once a staple at most British clubbies – including the much-lamented end-of-season Silverstone events promoted by such as the Peterborough Motor Club.

Early on Sunday morning, with the paddock fairly quiet (bar one bloke tenderly spannering the front suspension of a Royale RP27) and the main commentary box temporarily silenced because a rabbit had chewed through some key cables overnight, I overheard a couple of sports/saloon competitors chatting. "This is the way to do it," said one. "Briefing at half eight, practice at nine, race at 11 and home in time for lunch..."

The upshot was an opportunity to watch 1970s F2 Marches taking on more recent F3 machinery while tiptoeing around assorted lapped clutter... and I can't recall the last time I witnessed a Le Mans-spec Lola EX257 prototype competing legitimately against a Triumph Dolomite Sprint.



John Slack spins and, below, Nemesis sports racer versus Dolomite Sprint



LOWES SWINGS, SWEET CHARIOTS

Brands Hatch, October 19-20: a sumptuous stage for the BSB showdown

BIKES ARE MAT OXLEY'S TERRITORY and will not become a regular part of this column (despite the evidence of two consecutive issues), but my first live British Superbike experience was too enriching not to merit mention.

The stage, of course, was borderline perfect: as has been mentioned before (quite often), the Brands Hatch GP circuit is a paragon of splendour and serves as a perfect complement to anything with wheels. And then there was the intensity of the title fight, with Shane Byrne and Alex Lowes separated by one point while Josh Brookes, James Ellison and James Westmoreland remained in contention, leastways mathematically.

It's a long time since I've seen Brands Hatch's terraces, paddock and, indeed, media



Key moment as Alex Lowes gets ahead of Shane Byrne in race one, to seize a title initiative he'd maintain until the weekend's conclusion

centre quite so busy – an atmosphere, then, to suit the occasion. Nor could the tension have been scripted: Brookes took straightforward victories in races one and three, but won the second only after his tyre strategy paid dividends at the final corner. That was almost incidental, though, as the top two shadowed each other's every move. Lowes just beat Byrne in the first race, to take a slender championship lead... and held it after both tumbled, separately, in the second. Byrne stormed through the field to pass Lowes and reclaim the advantage during the finale, but Lowes nipped ahead again before the end to secure the title.

After the flag, they paused at the foot of Paddock Hill, hugged each other and performed burnouts for an appreciative audience. Note that neither received a reprimand for their effervescence.

I'll be back... 📷

HISTORIC SCENE WITH

GORDON CRUICKSHANK



One wheel in the past: searching out what's new in the old car world

www.motorsportmagazine.com/author/gordon-cruickshank



"No, Hastings, zis one is definitely ze real thing..." Hugh Fraser, David Suchet and co-star Alfa Romeo

POIROT'S LAST CHASE

A car in disguise and a crash that never happened - time to send for the little Belgian detective

YOU'VE SEEN *BULLITT*; you've seen *Ronin*. But we all know that the best car chase ever filmed comes in an episode of ITV's *Poirot*, when the baddie's Vauxhall Light Six is pursued around seaside Bosham by Captain Hastings' 'Eliso Freccia'. As the YouTube label says, it has GEESE! And CROCKERY!

When your excitement has subsided you might rewind and decide that the 'Eliso Freccia' bears a remarkable resemblance to a short-chassis Alfa Romeo 2900A. Which, given the

immense value of every 2.9 left, might cause a wince when it rams the cornered Vauxhall causing apparently more than skin-deep injuries to its Milanese nose.

There was only one of these sophisticated twin-supercharged eight-cylinder sports cars bearing that blue/grey livery, the car restored and owned for many years by that fount of 8C Alfa knowledge Simon Moore. After watching *The Adventure of the Italian Nobleman* again recently I asked Simon about the filming, and how it felt to see his precious charge being used as a battering ram.

This particular episode weaves the

GORDON CRUICKSHANK

usual murder into a blackmail plot hinging on a beautiful Italian lady who is part of the sales team for an exciting sports car, the Eliso Freccia. Captain Hastings, who is considering buying one to replace his faithful Lagonda, goes to the showroom for a test drive and agrees to buy one, seduced as much by the lady's lingering glances as by the machinery.

"I think the art director may have had a soft spot for 2.9s" says Simon, "because he'd done two charcoal drawings of the cars, which you can see hanging on the walls of the showroom. And now they're hanging at home!" The smart Central London 1930s showrooms are actually an Avis depot behind Oxford St, opposite Selfridges. "They also borrowed Rodney Felton's 2.9 to dress the showroom scene," Simon adds.

Once Poirot has unwound the twisted threads of fraud and deceit, they lead to a south-coast port where the blackmailers plan to escape by boat, until thwarted by our heroes.

"Filming at Bosham was tricky," says Simon. "There's such a high tide range that continuity was a problem. When the tide was right and they'd got the car and the boat in shot, some guy with an iridescent green windsurfer would go sailing back and forwards behind..."

"I'd agreed to loan them the car for filming, but made it clear that they could not drive it. So when you see Hastings driving, it's me dressed up, not Hugh Fraser, and when the Italian woman is driving, it's my wife Elly in the same outfit. The close-ups of Hastings grimacing at the wheel are done on the low-loader. But the director came to me and said 'when Hastings

leaps off the boat into the car and sets off in pursuit we just can't do the continuity unless Hugh actually drives off in it. And after all he is used to a centre throttle on the Lagonda...' So I said okay.

"The engine's running, Fraser leaps off the boat and into the car, puts it into first successfully – first and third are different on a 2.9 'box. But he's used to this slow Lagonda, so he gives it a bit of welly and lets the clutch up, and the 2.9 takes off like a bat out of hell. There's a big wall opposite, but thankfully he remembered where the brake was, stamped on it and came to a halt. He got out a bit ashen and said 'I didn't know a pre-war car could accelerate like that!'"

Just deserts served up by Captain Hastings. Bottom, low-loader used to film driving close-ups



After a spirited chase in which the wheezing Vauxhall heels like a dinghy through corners at, oh, dozens of miles an hour, the brave captain rams the bad guy's car. "They parked both cars nose-to-nose, then reversed them apart. When they reversed the film it looked like a prang."

To show the resulting damage the film crew built a mule with nose, bonnet and front wings copied from Simon's car. "I think it was Williams & Pritchard who measured up the car and did the panelwork," he says, "and it was built on a Beetle chassis pan. It was driveable, just for moving it around. For the accident they set about it with hammers, then pushed it against the Vauxhall for the scene where Hastings hits the baddie and knocks him over the bridge into the water." Followed by a close-up of the rueful look on Hastings' face as he checks the damage and is told this was to have been his new vehicle...

"It all works pretty well," Simon thinks, "though there's one continuity fault where the Italian girl gets in the car wearing gloves but Elly is driving without gloves. But I can see why people work as extras. The food! It's non-stop!" For anyone who hasn't visited a film shoot, it's an eye-opener: the hub of the day is a double-decker bus whose sole duty is to continuously produce four times as much food as the entire crew can eat, from dawn to dusk. It's an occupational hazard of acting.

"They looked after us very well," Simon recalls. "Both the main actors, Hugh Fraser and David Suchet, were very nice guys. I actually missed the first showing of the episode, in February '93, but someone taped it for me. I still have the VHS! It's still on regularly, even in



Duncan Hamilton Ltd
Lola T70 Mk1 spyder

Supplied new to John Cannon in the USA, this ran in the Sebring 12 Hours and other Can-Am races and was driven by Walt Hansgen too. Recently rebuilt, eligible for Goodwood.

£POA, www.duncanhamilton.com

DREAM GARAGE
What we'd blow the budget on this month



DK Engineering
Maserati 250F

An unraced 250F! One of the Cameron Millar cars, built up on parts he bought from Maserati. In the Fielding collection ever since but now recommissioned. A unique chance...

£POA, www.dkeng.co.uk



Cheshire Classic Cars
Arrows A8

Remarkably unspoiled survivor from the heroic turbo era. Chassis 2, driven by Boutsen and Berger in '85, Surer and Danner in '86, comes with broken BMW motor, hence price.

£49,995, cheshireclassiccars.co.uk



the States. I get phone calls from American friends asking, 'Is that your car?'"

In fact it no longer is: a few years back Simon had to admit that a knee problem was stopping him making proper use of it, and it has now gone to a private collection in the USA. Meantime, having already published the definitive works on both 2.9 and 2.3 8Cs, he has occupied himself writing an equally impressive history of Alfa Romeo Grand Prix cars. It's due out shortly from Parkside. I can't wait.

For years Simon thought no more of the crash mule and its battered nose, until an e-mail arrived showing what later happened to it. Starting from those few panels, someone built up an entire car on a new chassis, using Jaguar XJ 3.4 running gear and a glassfibre rear end. It may not look quite like a 2.9, but it's a testament to one enthusiast's determination.



Top: it's only Alfa car! Mule on VW floorpan used for moment of crash. Above: baddies with fine taste in transport

Crash dummy was later rebuilt on bespoke chassis with Jaguar power

A BOY'S OWN STORY, FROM ANOTHER ERA

Dated and implausible, perhaps – but a 90-year-old tale of early racing has its own charms

IT'S A SUCKER FOR A DIRIGIBLE. OR AN air-yacht, or a steam submarine, or an invincible battle tank, if it appears on the cover of an Edwardian boy's adventure book. There's a section in my library devoted to these century-old glimpses of a future that never happened, books I collect as much for their colourful and inventive covers as anything. But I read them – it seems rude to the ancient author not to, although to be honest they're mostly terrible tosh serving only as a quick palate-cleanser between proper books. But tosh can be fun, and some of it is woven round motor racing, in that brave pioneer period when riding mechanics clung on to leaping, undamped chassis, pumping oil and shouting to the driver when a rival was trying to pass.

As a break before tackling something serious I've been indulging in *Knights of the Wheel*, by Alfred Edgar. Though published in 1926, it reads more like a pre-WWI adventure, what with aero engines and road racing, and a villain called Black Perro.

Clearly the author knows about racing: our boy hero rebuilds a car after Kop hill climb and while their French Grand Prix is held at the fictitious "big town of Ficheux" they then head off to Monza Speedway – built only a few years before the book – to battle Fiats, Sunbeams and "strange white Benz with their engines at the back, streamlined to a needle-like point", rivals to their supercharged 'Wilson'. (Well, as a racing car name it's no

more unlikely than Williams...). Edgar's descriptions of Monza autodromo (at "a town about the size of Swindon") and the mountainous San Sebastian circuit have an eye-witness ring to them, as do his technical paragraphs. When I picked this up in a country bookshop I thought I'd made a discovery, but a little research showed that Alfred Edgar was the real name of the better-known Barre Lyndon, author of *Combat* and *Circuit Dust* among many racing titles. As Alfred Edgar he wrote hundreds of short stories for boys through the 1920s, many about motor racing with splendid titles such as *Garage Jim's Star Turn* and *The Red Knight Wins!*, but all this was on top of working as a racing journalist – hence his knowledge of the sport.

The boy's stories are very juvenile, which may be why he later adopted a pen name, but as Lyndon he proved he could write for grown-ups, graduating to Hollywood where he wrote stage plays and some famous screenplays – *Hangover Square*, *The Greatest Show on Earth* and *The War of the Worlds* among them. (One was on TV recently – *The House on 92nd Street*. It was awful.) Born in 1896, Edgar/Lyndon was still writing thriller scripts for television in the 1960s, including for *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*, but for me the charm is back in that innocent era when Britain had yet to realise that the label Great was slipping away. Only then could Edgar have his racing characters singing 'The

Speedmen's Song':

Smoke and dust! Win or bust!

Rev that engine or she'll rust!

Show your breed! Snatch the lead!

Put your foot down hard and SPEED!

Wincing doggerel or period whimsy? You decide – but remember he was a 19-year-old Edwardian when he wrote that. (Actually that's no excuse, is it?)



FROM THE ARCHIVES WITH

DOUG NYE



Our eminent historian dips into the past to uncover the fascinating, quirky and curious



In his half-century as a writer Doug has been lucky enough to handle some great cars - like Mic Comber's Alfa 1500


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WHERE DID 50 YEARS GO?

Reeling from realising he's been at it for half a century, Doug recalls some significant people - and cars - who helped shape his career

I AM WRITING THIS ON November 3, 2013, which in my little world is quite a steady date, because 50 years ago - on November 3, 1963 - I shook my father's hand, gave my mum a hug and set off on a train to Swanley Junction, Kent, to start my first full-time job. Alan Brinton and John Blunsden, editors of *Motor Racing* magazine, had taken me on as hapless drudge and bottle-washer, working in a Portakabin in the café car park at Brands Hatch circuit. Somehow I'd managed to convince them that since I perched on the loo every week and

memorised *Autosport* from cover to cover, they needed my encyclopaedic knowledge (ahem) of club racing.

A sister publication in that little group was *Airfix Magazine* and my prime duties were to assist its editor, Darryl Reach, building plastic kits and writing reviews. At 18 - and three weeks - I'd stumbled on a way of being paid to pursue a hobby. Darryl and John in particular taught me the journalistic ropes and I revelled in access - for free! - to the Brands test-day paddock, then club meetings and eventually Boxing Day Brands and - into 1964 - the national and international scene. I've been stuck 

in the same rut ever since.

But today I have just watched Sebastian Vettel absolutely demolish all opposition to win the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Not only was he driving a high-tech Red Bull-Renault festooned with flaps and tabs and aerobendy gizmology of a nature (and materials) almost unimaginable in 1963, but the race itself was taking place on a Tilke playmat circuit painted onto Tarmac laid on what 50 years before had been a sun-baked coastal waste. Not only that, but the race started in late-evening light, progressed through the Gulf States' brief dusk and ended in floodlit night. In Formula 1 terms, again – a scenario and space-age spectacle simply unthinkable back in '63.

So what else has changed? Very much. The day before I donned my duffle-coat and wrapped my striped school scarf round my throat – at mum's instruction to "wrap up warm" – and set off for Swanley Junction, David Piper and erstwhile Cooper works Formula 1 driver Tony Maggs had just shared the former's Ferrari 250 GTO to win the Kyalami Nine Hours in South Africa. David had shipped his hard-raced car down there and I believe drove it on public roads out from the dockside in Cape Town, through the Karoo desert and up onto Johannesburg's plateau. The pair won the race and eventually the GTO would be hammered back again to the Union Castle shipping line dock and home, costs for the trip comfortably covered.

Back then a private owner really could



Trying Colin Crabbe's Auto Union for size before unappreciative audience

BP LIBRARY

make his motor racing pay, whereas today stupendous sums need to be inveigled from commercial sponsors if there's to be any prospect of breaking even on a season's international motor sport. What I find most depressing, however, is the sight of deserted grandstands for almost any motor race meeting below major championship level – while at endurance races short of Le Mans the number of pass holders within paddock and pits seems to be a multiple of those rare and hardy souls occasionally identified on the other side of the track as paying spectators.

During my few years with *Motor Racing* at Brands Hatch, I also worked with Darryl Reach as weekend press officer... and it was a really bad weekend if we saw fewer than 4000 spectators massed around the valley for a BRSCC or Maidstone & Mid-Kent MC (for example) club race meeting. It was affordable and on Sundays there were few conflicting sporting attractions.

But perhaps the most telling difference between the current motor racing scene and that of 1963 is that we don't bump off as many good guys as was the case back then. We peripherals – us chaps who didn't so much do it as merely write about it – regularly felt the loss of heroes, acquaintances or friends – and perhaps it hardened all our attitudes, toughened us up, to some extent made us quite callous. But that's just the way it was.

My mentor and colleague Darryl Reach went on, with our commercial manager Patrick Stephens, to found a book publishing company that in 1968 produced Dr Michael Henderson's treatise on motor racing in safety. Mike's masterly compilation of accident statistics spelled out indelibly the effectiveness of proper seat belts in combination with roll-over protection. He demolished the long-held belief that in a sizeable shunt it was safer for the driver to be thrown clear, and in effect he provided the really significant ammunition that Jackie Stewart then had the balls to fire at a complacent motor racing mindset, us included.

Way back at the dawn of motor sport, Damon Runyan had written that the Wooden Wonder of Playa del Rey – California's pioneering board speedway – had "burned down with a great saving of life". That's exactly what Dr Michael Henderson helped achieve back in the late 1960s, upon a platform provided by two of the blokes I was fortunate enough to begin work with at Brands Hatch... groan... 50 years ago.



GOOD THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES

... but talk to the chassis designer before you begin building him a Formula 1 engine

BACK IN THE EARLY 1980s, JOHN Barnard established himself as the dominant design leader within Formula 1. His composite chassis, electro-hydraulic finger-flip gearchanges and brutally pared-down overall packaging proved both race-winning and trend-setting. He was certainly no politician and tended to bulldoze his way over – or through – any views contrary to his own. I remember him blistering Porsche on one occasion and saying, "Engine designers seem to pay more attention to how they can mount their latest baby on a test-house dyno than how a chassis designer can ever hope to make it fit into a Formula 1 car." It was against such a background that the TAG Turbo-by-Porsche V6 engine, which carried McLaren, Lauda and Prost to multiple World Championship honours, was packaged, constrained and confined dimensionally to JB's requirements and almost entirely to the complete distraction of Hans Mezger's engineers at Porsche Weissach.

In recent times, it seems that racing engine



Packaging is as vital as power: steered by John Barnard, TAG V6 in 1987 McLaren showed how to do it

designers have learned that lesson and learned it well. Modern Formula 1 engines are tiny when seen in isolation, outside the car on the workshop floor. Back in 1991 Adrian Reynard began to build a friendly relationship with Yamaha of Japan and was developing Formula 1 ambitions. He had 18 people on his F1 project team, had built a wind tunnel, developed software and data acquisition systems, investigated four-wheel steering and designed an in-house active suspension system. Seeking a suitable engine he had spent time courting Nissan and Toyota but, despite both having 3.5-litre endurance racing engines under development, they were aggrieved at being ill-treated in the World Sportscar Championship. Yamaha had no such political grievances, but in practical terms its motor racing record was pretty poor and its centre-seat OX-99 'supercar' project had become a laughing stock.

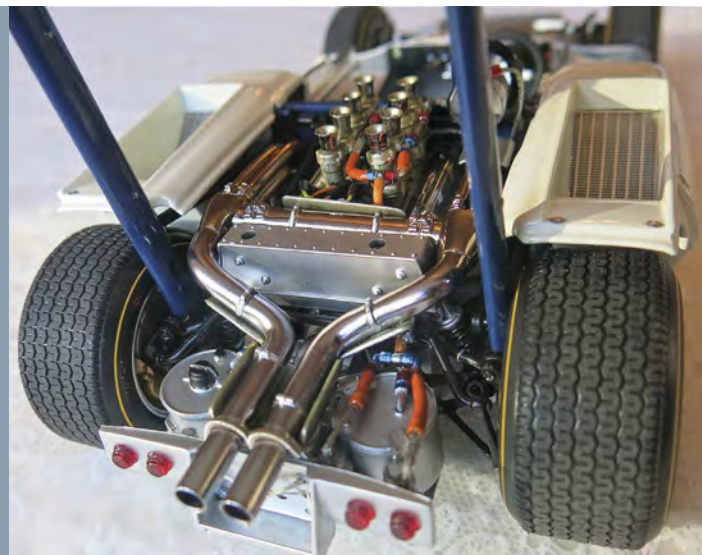
There was a real possibility that a Reynard

F1 car would emerge with Yamaha power, but when the British engineers saw the full specification of the proposed engine their jaws dropped. Adrian Reynard is on record as recalling that once his team was provided with engine dimensions, weight and cooling requirements, his team was "Dismayed at the size of the radiator ducts we would need. The Yamaha V12 was not that powerful, yet it was big, heavy and in terms of heat rejection it was basically a pressure cooker..."

Reynard and his then-designer Rory Byrne were unconvinced about Yamaha's promised 700bhp, but more so by its proposed V12's sheer size. He avoided falling into the same trap as Jackie Oliver, Alan Rees and their Footwork/Arrows project with the Porsche V12, which was effectively two TAG Turbo V6s combined in tandem – immense, over-complicated, under-powered, clumsy and no credit whatsoever to Zuffenhausen's finest. Reynard found himself chasing his tail after time and effort wasted with Yamaha.

He approached Michael Kranefuss of Ford to use the Cosworth HB engine, but Tom Walkinshaw as a Benetton partner had beaten him to it. Any HB would only be available on a leasing deal that Reynard – having failed to secure any sponsorship in those recession years – could not contemplate. Consequently the British constructor found his options restricted to vanishing point. The recession was threatening to topple even his core business and, by August 1991, it became plain that the writing was on the wall for the F1 programme and that September he closed it down. The core team found new berths at Benetton, and the team's 1992 car demonstrated clear lineage from Reynard's long months of clean-sheet research, while the formal stillborn design, wind tunnel model and active ride programme sold to Ligier for £400,000.

Reynard would bounce back from this chastening experience and impending bankruptcy was averted, or in practice postponed as the marque went on to boom most notably in the US-based CART series. But perhaps size is the key here – not just engine size, but also company size, budget size, scale of ambition and a penetrating appreciation of what is possible... and what is not.



NOT ALL SPAM MAIL IS BAD NEWS

This was one mighty attractive model that Doug was delighted to meet...

JUNK MAIL ON THE INTERNET IS A PAIN, but just occasionally it throws up something of real interest. I began spitting blood when my e-mail system was deluged by sales material from an American model company named Exoto. I haven't a clue how they got my address, but every couple of days another colourful, seductively illustrated missive would arrive extolling the delights of its latest 1:18-scale Jaguar D-type, Chaparral 2F, Lotus 49 or Ferrari 312B and its 1:43 transporters. It was nice to see what was available, and the fine detail shown in the photos was quite incredible, but prices of \$500 to \$1500 or more were way beyond my interest.

But I didn't hit the spam key and the e-mail deluge continued. And then I noticed that some prices were tumbling, until they became affordable. So – very reluctantly – I expressed some interest, and at their bargain basement sale prices one or two Exotos now reside – to Mrs Nye's boundless delight – out here on the Surrey fringe. Having spent long years entranced and intrigued by Chaparral and being a Cobra Daytona Coupé admirer I have to say that Exoto's renditions of both – replete with wiring, piping, the finest gauze covers, even true-scale spare-wheel retaining bungees in the Cobra's case – are fantastic to behold. It might have begun with junk mail, but I've become a fan. Oh dear... 📧

The 1992 Benetton had clear Reynard genes





PARTING SHOT



MAY 30

1976

MONACO GRAND PRIX

The Portier grandstand is packed as Jacques Laffite (Ligier JS5-Matra) prepares to swap daylight for darkness during the 34th Monaco GP. The Frenchman was classified 12th in a race won by Niki Lauda (Ferrari 312 T2). Jody Scheckter and Patrick Depailler were second and third in their Tyrrell P34s – and the only drivers not lapped by the winner.



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