



PRESS RELEASE

STREET THEATRE: SINGAPORE TIED TO FORMULA ONE TRADITION

'Monaco of the East' to add fresh drama to Grand Prix racing history

3 September 2008 – On September 28, 2008 Singapore's new 5.067-km Grand Prix track will take its place in a long tradition of street circuits in the FIA FORMULA 1 World Championship™ – and simultaneously reinforce a growing trend.

Within the current Grand Prix calendar, Australia, Canada and most famously Monaco all boast highly-regarded street circuits, while not one but two newcomers – Singapore and Valencia – bring new urban settings to Formula One™.

The story of street circuits is like that famous film: the good, the bad and the downright ugly. While Monaco, the world-famous race run through the streets of Monte Carlo, remains the undisputed jewel in Formula One™'s global crown, a number of street circuits have come and gone over the years.

Perhaps surprisingly, there have been only two seasons in Formula One™'s 59-year history where there was no street race, way back in 1952 and 1953. Although Monaco, the oldest of all the street races, was one of the six Grand Prix venues on the original World Championship calendar in 1950, the Principality dropped off the calendar for the next four years. Once back, it quickly took centre stage.

"When you think of a street race," says Formula One™'s most experienced driver, Honda's Rubens Barrichello, "the first thing that comes to mind is Monaco – which is a crazy place to be racing if you think about it! But the race is so special and has such an amazing atmosphere. I was very surprised at how well the Valencia Street Circuit was set-up for the first race there; I expect Singapore will be of the same standard and I'm really looking forward to the challenge of racing there."

One of Singapore's avowed ambitions is to make this track 'the Monaco of the East', and it's not hard to see why. Synonymous with glamour, glitz and Grand Prix racing, Monte Carlo has been the waterside setting where some of the greatest names in the sport's past forged their reputations – men like 'Mr Monaco', Englishman Graham Hill, who won five times on the Monaco streets: a hat-trick for BRM from 1963-65, and back-to-back victories for Lotus in 1968-69.

That remarkable record seemed likely to remain unbroken – until a young Brazilian by the name of Ayrton Senna da Silva came along. Senna, annexed the Monaco GP no fewer than six times, the first also for Lotus in 1987, the rest all with McLaren, the team with which he won his three world titles. The late, great

Brazilian still holds sway as the man who has won more street races than any other driver in World Championship history.

Up to and including Valencia this year, there had been no fewer than 139 such races on 13 tracks as disparate as Adelaide, Casablanca, Long Beach and Montjuich in Madrid. Senna had won 14 of them; next up was the most recent prince of Formula One™, Germany's Michael Schumacher, who won 13 times on the world's street circuits before retiring at the end of 2006.

The good, the bad and the downright ugly, we said. Among the good, along with Monaco, we must list Australia's two street circuits, Adelaide and Melbourne, in a country that celebrates its silver anniversary as a Grand Prix nation in 2009. Two utterly different challenges, one always ended the Formula One™ year, while the other remains a fixture at the start of each new season.

Also in there is the one American street circuit to have found favour with drivers and Formula One™ scribes alike, Long Beach. From 1976 to 1983 the California circuit with its famous landmark, the former Cunard liner Queen Mary, staged some thrilling races. No driver ever won it more than once, nor two drivers of one nationality!

Montreal, too, has established its own reputation as a fine track in the middle of a Formula One™-friendly city. Canada's favourite motor racing son, Gilles Villeneuve, was the first to win in 1978 on a circuit that was named for him after his untimely death in 1982; the circuit by the mighty St Lawrence Seaway has missed only one World Championship year since that inaugural 1978 race.

The bad? Well, none of the Iberian street circuits – Montjuich, Montalto, Oporto or Pedralbes – seems to have etched itself into anyone's list of favourites, but when it comes to the downright ugly, the US takes the cake.

Remember Phoenix, where an ostrich race once attracted five times as many fans as the Formula One™ event on the other side of town? Or Dallas, where Finland's Keke Rosberg wore the 10-gallon hat as the one and only winner? Or Detroit, with its stop-go, right-angle turns around the Renaissance Center, where Senna was a three-time winner?

And that's without even taking another American venue, Las Vegas, into account: it wasn't even a 'proper' street circuit but a concrete jungle in the middle of a massive car park. For the record, Aussie Alan Jones and Italy's Michele Alboreto were the two winners there in 1981 and 1982 respectively.

So where will Singapore sit? Among the good, naturally: it's a 'proper' circuit with some very fast stretches, some unique features, like its two bridges in quick succession, and of course its absolutely unique nocturnal setting, the subject of the second in this series of background studies.

"I have driven the new Singapore street circuit on our simulator, which gives you a good idea of how the lap will be laid out and the braking points," says Barrichello, whose nine victories do not include one on a street circuit.

"It doesn't give you any projection of how it is going to be racing at night and under the lights however! My approach to preparing to race at a street circuit is very similar to the way that I approach a permanent circuit. I don't back off in any way because of the fact that most of the lap is lined with barriers; you have to treat kerbs and walls exactly the same and be on the limit without taking unnecessary risks."

Uniquely Singapore, too, is the high-rise backdrop punctuated by reminders of the city-state's rich and often turbulent past – the Padang at its heart, the beautiful old Cathedral of St. Andrew – and strikingly new features like the 'Singapore Flyer' in the very heart of the Formula One™ precinct at Marina Bay.

It's uniquely Singapore: but it's also the latest addition to the long and varied list of street settings in which the dramatic history of Grand Prix racing has taken shape.

About 2008 FORMULA 1™ SingTel Singapore Grand Prix

The inaugural 2008 FORMULA 1™ SingTel Singapore Grand Prix will take place on 28 September 2008 on a street circuit of public roads around the Marina Bay area. The race will be the first held at night in FORMULA 1™ history and is the first street race in Asia.

About Singapore GP Pte Ltd

Singapore GP Pte Ltd is the race promoter for the FORMULA 1™ SingTel Singapore Grand Prix. It holds five-year renewable rights to stage the Singapore Grand Prix, beginning with the 2008 Season. The company is a partnership between Komoco Motors and regional events company Lushington Entertainments, via its parent company Reef Enterprises.

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