



THE INSIDER

RENAULT 

GP2 ASIA SERIES Bahrain//Qatar

CAMPOS CLOSING

CAMPOS SCORES BIG IN QATAR BUT DAMS STILL LEADS TITLE RACES




Q&A WITH
D'AMBROSIO

GP2'S NIGHT RACE
IN PICTURES




HÜLKENBERG
WE CATCH UP WITH
GP2'S RISING STAR

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RUMBLE STRIP AROUND THE PADDOCK

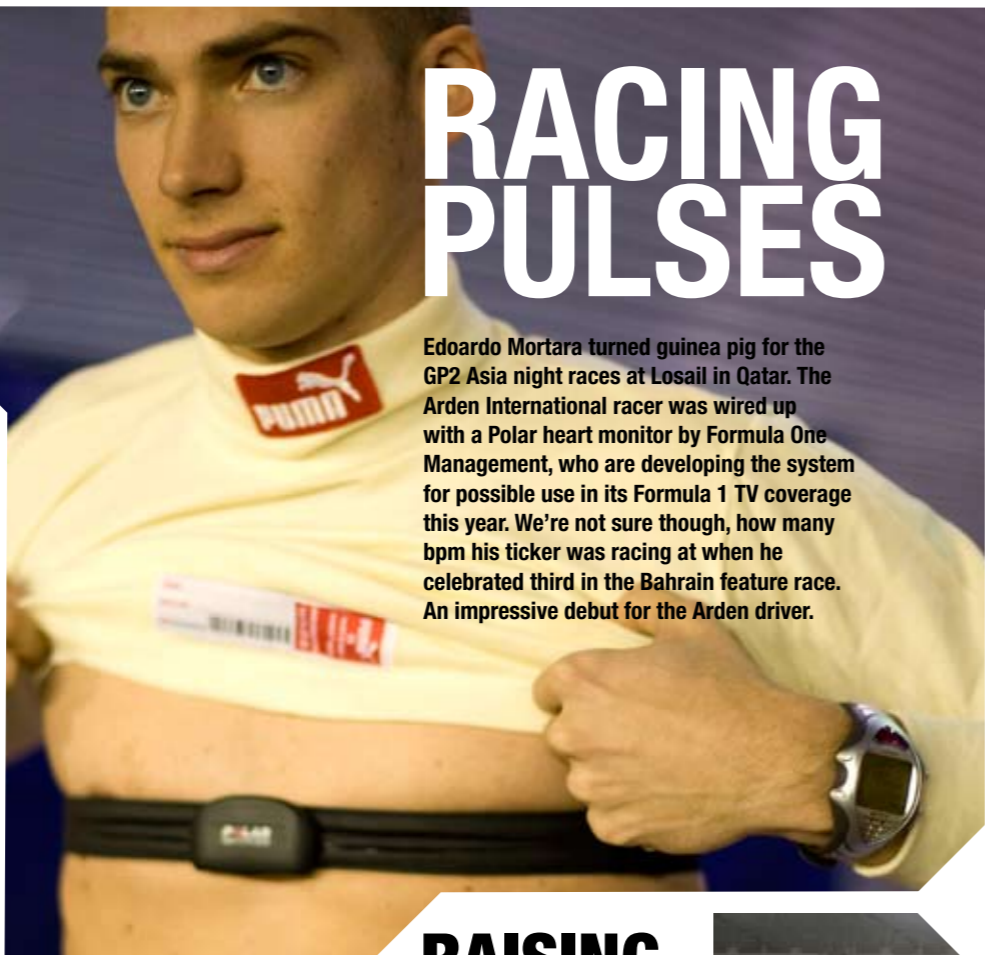
RACING PULSES

Edoardo Mortara turned guinea pig for the GP2 Asia night races at Losail in Qatar. The Arden International racer was wired up with a Polar heart monitor by Formula One Management, who are developing the system for possible use in its Formula 1 TV coverage this year. We're not sure though, how many bpm his ticker was racing at when he celebrated third in the Bahrain feature race. An impressive debut for the Arden driver.

THE GP2 INSIDER

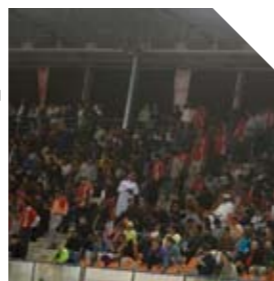
The GP2 e-zine has had a polish over the winter months, and will now be getting even closer to life in F1's leading feeder series.

This year we will bring GP2 fans even more candid news and features from around the paddock and the pitlane. The goal is to convey as much of the series' energy, excitement and personalities as possible. So welcome to the first issue of the Insider!



RAISING THE ROOF

The Qatar grandstands were rocking for the first-ever night race, thanks to the My Qi-Meritus.Mahara team. Its sponsor, Questnet, had invited 5,000 fans that packed the stands along the start/finish straight. Among them was a local



band, which made lots of noise with their drums while, alarmingly, waving swords around over their heads.



DIDIER DOWN BUT NOT OUT

GP2 Series technical director Didier Perrin has been in the wars. Despite having mastered the art of 'chair walking' in the flooded Monza paddock

last year, to avoid getting his feet wet as the waters rose, dare-devil Didier had a mishap remodelling his new house and broke his knee. Ouch!



YELMER WALKS AWAY

Yelmer Buurman praised the strength of the Dallara GP2 chassis after a feature race startline shunt at Qatar when he struck Sakon Yamamoto's stalled car at 105mph. Buurman, whose car caught fire in the crash, said: "I was flat-out in fourth gear and I didn't see him before I

hit him. I'm okay, but the right side of my car is gone." The wreckage was so bad, that the safety car had to take the pack through the pitlane while it was cleared. Both men walked away from the crash, and Yamamoto's car was even ready to race in Saturday's sprint event.

THE LINE FRONT END NEWS

GP2 Series organiser Bruno Michel



COST CUTTING

GP2 Series organisers have announced a range of measures to help cut costs in GP2, while preserving the series' reputation for thrilling racing.

In a scheme that has been agreed by all GP2 teams, chassis-builder Dallara will significantly reduce the cost of some car parts, while wind tunnel and seven post rig testing will be restricted.

The official mid-season testing will not take place this year, and team staff will be limited to 13, reducing to 12 for the second half of the season.

GP2 Series organiser Bruno Michel said: "We cannot ignore the world's financial crisis that affects us all. However, we did not want to change the quality that has been at the heart of the success of GP2 since 2005. The balance is very difficult to define, but we are trying to to keep the series as successful as ever."

"We are confident that our plan will help everyone go through the difficult period we are in."

'09 LINE-UPS TAKE SHAPE

The silly season has got sensible in the last few weeks, with a number of team's confirming their GP2 Series rosters. So who's heading where...

One key piece of the jigsaw fell into place when iSport, the 2007 champion team, revealed it had given up waiting for Bruno Senna's F1 plans to happen or not. It confirmed Diego Nunes, who

raced for DPR last year and Piquet GP in the Asia Series, alongside Giedo van der Garde.

"We felt we had to confirm our line-up for the good of the team," said team principal Paul Jackson. "We wish Bruno well and hope his F1 plans come off." One ex-iSport driver who will be back this year is Karun Chandhok, who has signed for GP2 newcomers Ocean Racing Technology.

The big question marks hang over Racing Engineering, who powered Giorgio Pantano to the drivers' title in 08, and last year's teams' champions Barwa Team Campos. Racing Engineering has confirmed only young Spaniard Dani Clos, while Campos is yet to name it's lineup.



GP2 stalwart Chandhok is off to ORT for '09

NIGHTRACE A SUCCESS

The first-ever GP2 Series night race at Losail International Circuit in Qatar was hailed a huge success.

The floodlit circuit, produced two exciting races with plenty of overtaking.

GP2 Series Organiser Bruno Michel said: "We are extremely pleased with how the first night racing in GP2 turned out. Everything went perfectly: the track conditions were good, including the

visibility. We also had a good crowd, especially for the feature race on Friday evening." The President of the Qatar Motor & Motorcycle Federation, Nasser Bin Khalifa Al Attiyah, said: "It was a big success and I'm very happy with the way ourselves and the GP2 Series collaborated in such a professional way. I hope to have a continuation of this in the future."



GOOD MONTH

CAMPOS

The reigning GP2 Series teams' champion are starting to come good. Sergio Perez has chalked three podiums in the last four races and forced his way into the title fight. His ascent has coincided with an upturn of form for the entire team, culminating in a second and third then a 1-2 in Qatar.

DAMS

Despite not living up to his own high standards in Qatar, Dams' Japanese driver Kamui Kobayashi leads the driver standings, while team-mate Jerome d'Ambrosio is looking very strong after an inspired double podium in Bahrain.

NICO HÜLKENBERG

We've resisted tagging him the Incredible Hülkenberg thus far, but it hasn't been easy! Two poles and 27 points from his first two races have marked him out as one to watch, and put his ART team back on the map.

YELMER BUURMAN AND SAKON YAMAMOTO

Their crash on the Qatar grid was one of the most dramatic in GP2 for a while. Both men were unhurt though and Yamamoto's ART team even managed to get him out for the sprint race.

MICHAEL HERCK

Although still only 20, Herck has been involved in GP2 since the start of 2008. Despite building up a weight of experience he is struggling to find his rhythm in the Asia Series and currently lies 21st in the overall standings.

BAD MONTH

AWAY FROM THE TRACK

NICO HÜLKENBERG ANYONE FOR TENNIS?



I have to say that I'm a pretty regular young German guy, I think. I enjoy chilling out with my family and friends, like to watch DVDs and go to the cinema, but don't think I'm lazy or anything. Two days without any physical activity and I get a little crazy!

My sport away from racing is tennis. I like playing it, although I'm not as good at it as I am racing cars. I also love to watch it on TV: the Australian Open semi-final between Verdasco and Nadal was unreal five hours of play, and then Nadal has one less day to recover than Federer before



the final, and beats him anyway!

I love Nadal's style so much, because he puts so much effort in and celebrates every point he wins. Federer is very cold; shows no emotion.

I think so much about motorsport, but I have to switch off sometimes. Music is very important in my life. I like house music, R&B and hip-hop. The best album in the world is Disco Boys, Vol 9. That is world class; the best ever!

I also like watching comedy films very much. I think Adam Sandler is a really funny guy, but Don't Mess with the Zohan wasn't so good. Just watch the clips, they're the only funny bits in it.

THE BETTER HALF

ISABELLA BONETTO (DURANGO)

What's your job?

"I'm team co-ordinator, so I look after all the logistics. I am new to this sport, because I used to work for Lufthansa for 10 years so I know all about booking flights! I looked after some key accounts, as well as dealing with the customers."

This must be very different, how did you arrive at Durango?

"I'm not sure! I like motor racing a lot, and I've been following it a lot since my family told me all about it."



This is a very male dominated sport, what's it like for you?

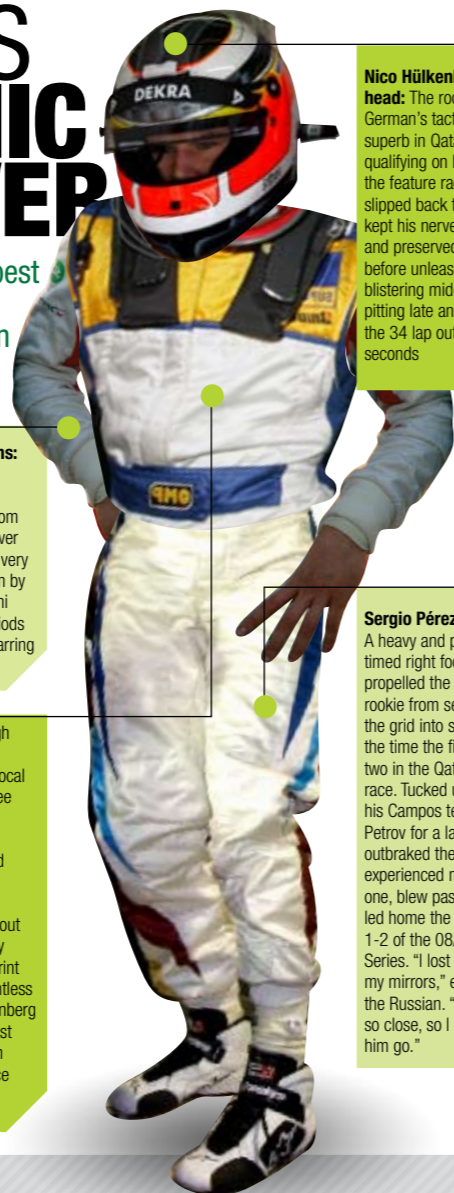
"It's amazing, but it's not easy sometimes. I have to be very strong with them, to make sure they listen. I have to understand the male mind, to impose myself on them."

You're not alone in this paddock, do you have some girl friends here?

"The girls of GP2 are fantastic. Very friendly, and we get along very well."

GP2'S BIONIC DRIVER

Made up of the best bits of the best drivers in Bahrain and Qatar



Nico Hülkenberg's head: The rookie German's tactics were superb in Qatar. After qualifying on Pole for the feature race, Nico slipped back to third. He kept his nerve though and preserved his tyres before unleashing a blistering middle stint, pitting late and winning the 34 lap outing by 13 seconds

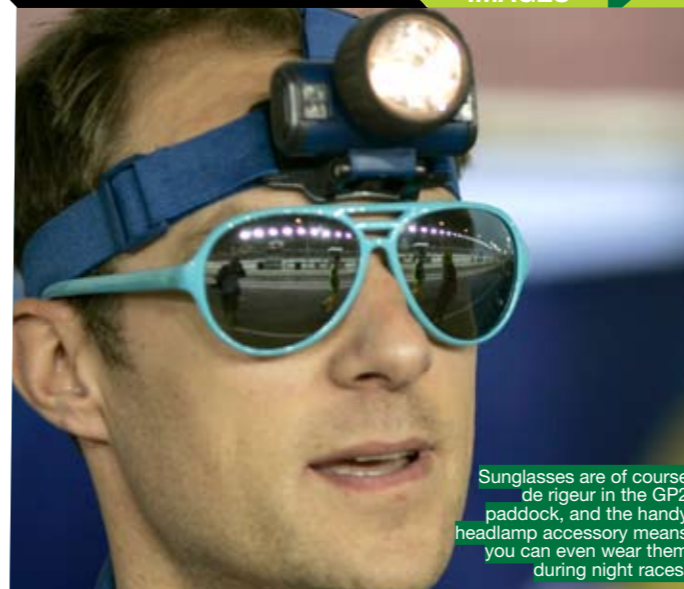
Jérôme d'Ambrosio's arms: Davide Valsecchi may be in second overall, but it was d'Ambrosio who emerged from Qatar with bragging rights over the Italian. He followed up a very impressive display in Bahrain by snatching fifth from Valsecchi after the pair spent long periods of the Qatar feature race sparring for position.

Javier Villa's torso: A tough heart and a lot of guts. Not what you'd want from your local butcher, but lovely stuff to see from a young, hungry racing driver. Villa out-qualified the likes of Davide Valsecchi and Vitaly Petrov for the Bahrain feature race, then, after the disappointment of missing out on pole for the sprint race by one place, he started the sprint from ninth and put in a relentless charge to fourth. Nico Hülkenberg squeezed past him on the last lap but Villa still came in fifth to record his best result since Shanghai.

Sergio Pérez's legs: A heavy and perfectly timed right foot propelled the Mexican rookie from seventh on the grid into second by the time the field hit turn two in the Qatar sprint race. Tucked up behind his Campos team-mate Petrov for a lap, Perez outraked the more experienced man at turn one, blew past him and led home the first team 1-2 of the 08/09 Asia Series. "I lost him in my mirrors," explained the Russian. "He was so close, so I had to let him go."

THE GALLERY

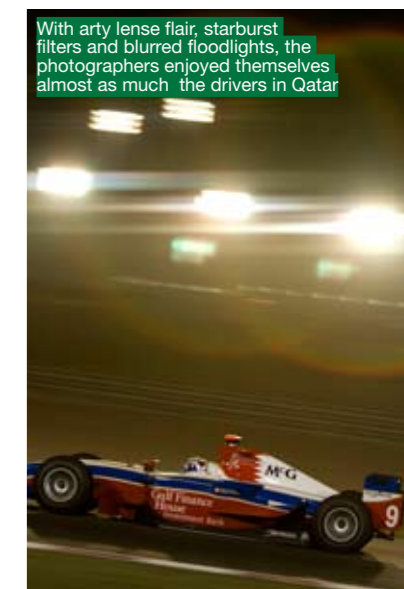
CLICK HERE FOR RACE IMAGES



Sunglasses are of course de rigeur in the GP2 paddock, and the handy headlamp accessory means you can even wear them during night races!



Dams principal Jean-Paul Driot watches the action in Bahrain



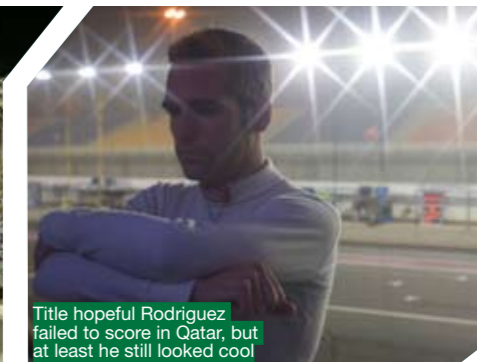
With arty lense flair, starburst filters and blurred floodlights, the photographers enjoyed themselves almost as much the drivers in Qatar



A local band provides entertainment for the paddock in Bahrain



Sergio Perez (L) and Vitaly Petrov celebrate Campos 1-2 in Qatar



Title hopeful Rodriguez failed to score in Qatar, but at least he still looked cool

Q&A JÉRÔME D'AMBROSIO

The night racing looks really cool, but did you have to prepare any differently from a regular race?

Not really, other than walking the track at night instead of the daytime, because it would have looked different. It's darker obviously! But there's so many lights here that you can see quite well. The cool thing is the lights on the steering

wheel: they really glow in your face. Everything seems a bit more shiny at night, but you just get used to it.

Bahrain was a great weekend for you?

Yeah, we were very competitive. Qually was brilliant, and everything came together. Some tracks seem better than others for us. Qatar was a bit different because everything was new, we had no baseline, but it went pretty well and I scored points.

Kamui has been a strong team-mate, has that helped?

Yeah, definitely because he really pushes me and I push him. He was ahead of me at the start of last year, then I got ahead of him, and now he's started the Asia Series

better than me. It helps when you have good data to compare with.

So what's with the designer stubble? Nothing! I don't like to shave on race weekends because the helmet strap rubs under my chin. I started not shaving at Shanghai, but it's nothing special, not meant to be a superstition or anything. Everyone has made a fuss about it though!

Have you got any superstitions?

No, not at all, okay, we all have little things, maybe the underwear when I get to the track but I try to reduce that. I can condition you so that if you don't get, say, the right underwear or balaclava it can create a problem. So no, no lucky pants for me. No way!



Jérôme d'Ambrosio, whose pants are not lucky

CLICK HERE FOR JÉRÔME'S PROFILE

RACE PREVIEW

MALAYSIA//SEPANG

TRACK LENGTH
5.543 KM

2008 POLE POSITION
ROMAIN GROSJEAN (ART)

2008 FEATURE RACE WINNER
VITALY PETROV (CAMPOS)

2008 SPRINT RACE WINNER
KAMUI KOBAYASHI (DAMS)

VITAL STATS

GP2 Asia rejoins the F1 calendar at Sepang as the official support race for the Malaysian GP.

FREE PRACTICE

DATE 03 April
TIME 11:55am

QUALIFYING

DATE 03 April
TIME 4:00pm

FEATURE RACE

DATE 04 April
TIME 3:45pm
LAPS 33

SPRINT RACE

DATE 05 April
TIME 11:30am
LAPS 22

GETTING THERE

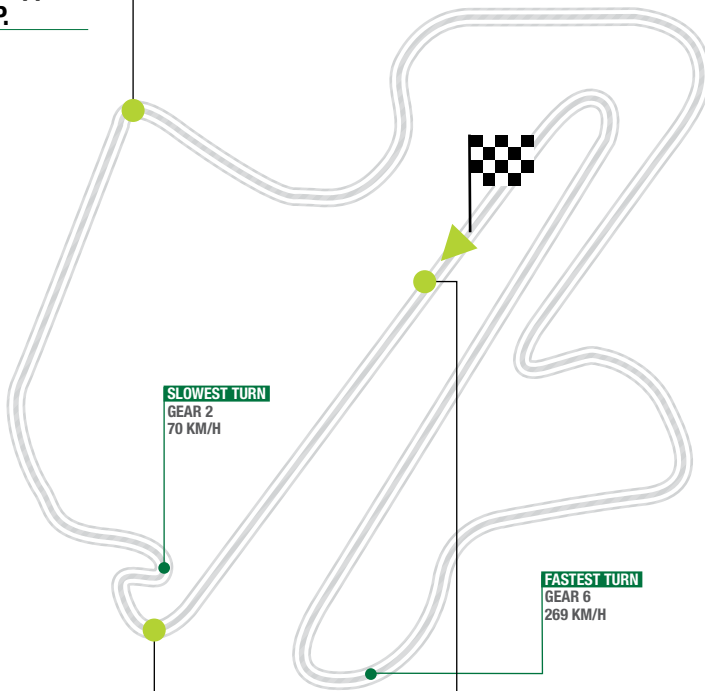
NEAREST CITY Kuala Lumpur
NEAREST AIRPORT KL International

2008 CONDITIONS

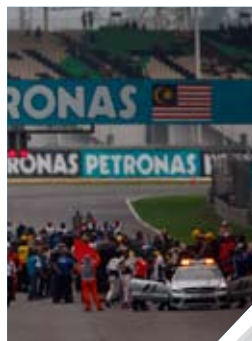
WEATHER Clear with showers
TRACK TEMP 40°C



2008: Bruno Senna drifts out of contention for the title As rain fell on lap one of the feature race, Senna spun at turn four while leading. A second spin at turn one finished his race and the Brazilian left Sepang 17 points adrift of leader Romain Grosjean.



2008: Kamui Kobayashi sets up his first GP2 win After a wet, wild feature race, Kobayashi started the sprint from 4th, charging off the line and taking the lead at turn one. The Dams man held on confidently for 22 laps to record his ever GP2 win, ahead of Grosjean and Petrov.



Kobayashi celebrates in Bahrain

2008: Mayhem on lap one A red flag on lap one kicked off the feature race in Sepang last year when sudden rain, cars fitted with slicks, stalling starters and midfield spinners contrived to throw up more incidents in lap one than many other race series can lay claim to in an entire weekend.

THE GUIDE BY Peter Thompson - Meritus team boss



SEE You must visit the Batu caves and its 272-steps of natural rock formation. Go and walk through the forest canopy at FRIM (Forest Research Institute Malaysia), where you can look down and see the animals in the jungle. And try the Elephant Sanctuary in the mountains of Kuala Gandah, where you can swim with the elephants.

EAT You've got to try the traditional footpath food. Some of the best food is the cheapest and is sold on just about every street. We go out and eat Sunday lunch as a family of seven for about \$15. My kids love a dish called roti canai for breakfast, which is kind of a pancake cooked in oil. Not very healthy, but delicious.

SLEEP If you want luxury, you can stay at the Mandarin Oriental and overlook the Petronas Towers for about the same price-per-night as a three-star in Qatar! The main attractions are spread throughout the city, so you can stay in the middle of downtown, and while you're there you must seek out Chinatown.



The Kuala Lumpur skyline at night

CLICK HERE FOR FULL STANDINGS



Drivers' points

1 Kamui Kobayashi	39
2 Davide Valsecchi	29
3 Nico Hülkenberg	27
4 Sergio Pérez	25
5 Roldán Rodríguez	22
6 Jérôme D'Ambrosio	21
7 Vitaly Petrov	19
8 Javier Villa	12



Teams' points

1 Dams	60
2 Campos	44
3 ART	34
4 Durango	29
5 Piquet GP	22
6 Arden	13
7 Super Nova	12
8 My Qi-Meritus.Mahara	8

Campos closed the gap in Qatar

