

RENAULT BRIDGESTONE



THE INSIDER

ISSUE 35 ABU DHABI



2010 SEASON ENDS ON A HIGH

Perez wins Abu Dhabi season finale as Rapax seals 2010 teams' championship



GROSJEAN
MASTER CHEF



GP2/11
SHAKEDOWN



PERRIN
GP2 ASIA PREVIEW

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GP2/11 CAR GOES LIVE

The dust has barely settled on the 2010 season, but the teams are already looking forward with the inaugural shakedown of the 2011-spec cars at Paul Ricard this week.



Each team has one car for the outing, which provides them with an opportunity to gain familiarity with the new machinery before it is put into action at Abu Dhabi in February. While the cars are being shipped out to the Middle East, the second-generation cars are coming in the other direction.

The GP2/08, which took Giorgio Pantano, Nico Hülkenberg and Pastor Maldonado to their titles in 2008, 2009 and 2010, ran for the last time at the Yas Marina circuit.

GP2 STARS GAIN F1 EXPERIENCE

As Formula 1's premier feeder series, it is little surprise GP2 drivers featured heavily in the F1 rookie tests at Abu Dhabi this week. At least 10 of the current grid will be given the opportunity to put an F1 car through its paces. ART's Jules Bianchi was called up by Ferrari, team-mate Sam Bird (below) tests with Mercedes and iSport's

Oliver Turvey with McLaren. GP2 champion Pastor Maldonado was set to test for Williams and HRT, and Jerome d'Ambrosio with Renault and Virgin. Sergio Pérez has his first outing with Sauber, while Rapax's Luiz Razia is suiting up for Virgin Racing, while Arden's Rodolfo Gonzalez and Coloni's Vladimir Arabadzhiev will run with Lotus.

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PÉREZ ON SONG

Sergio Pérez brought his GP2 career to a close with a dominant victory in the feature race at Abu Dhabi. The Mexican was able to pass polesitter Oliver Turvey off the line and took a straightforward win, with Turvey and Sam Bird joining him on the podium. Reigning Asia Series champion Davide Valsecchi took victory in the

sprint race ahead of Rapax's Luiz Razia and DAMS' Romain Grosjean. New series champion Pastor Maldonado endured an uncharacteristically tough weekend, finishing both races outside the points.

• Pérez will join the ranks of GP2 graduates in Formula 1 next season after securing a race seat with Sauber, where

he will suit up alongside fellow ex-GP2 star Kamui Kobayashi. Pérez, who raced with Arden and Barwa Addax in his two seasons of GP2, said that he was thrilled with the opportunity.

"F1 is the dream of every young racing driver, and that dream is about to come true for me," said the 20-year-old.

D'AMBROSIO GETS F1 MILEAGE

It was a long break between Monza and Abu Dhabi, but few drivers filled their time better than DAMS' Jerome d'Ambrosio. The Belgian was snapped up by Virgin Racing to take part in

Friday practice sessions at four of the last five F1 grands prix – Singapore, Japan, Korea and Brazil. He was set to enjoy more F1 seat time for Virgin and Renault in the rookie test at Abu Dhabi.



RAPAX SCOOPS 2010 TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

Rapax completed its dominance of the 2010 GP2 season by sealing the teams' championship in the final round at Abu Dhabi. Drivers' champion Pastor Maldonado was unable to add to his points tally, but a welcome return to form by team-mate Luiz Razia proved to be enough to put the Italian squad clear of Addax in the standings.

The likeable Brazilian crowned his weekend with a great podium finish in the sprint race.

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GP2 GRID TAKES SHAPE FOR 2011

The 2010 season was hardly over before teams began signing drivers for 2011. As *The GP2 Insider* went to press, two grid spots had already been secured. Inaugural GP3 Series winner Esteban Gutierrez will begin his GP2 career with the ART team after securing a deal. DPR's Michael Herck will carry new colours next year after being signed by Coloni. Meanwhile, Stefano Coletti will return to the series after signing with Trident. The Monegasque contested a few rounds with Durango in 2009, and spent this year in GP3.



KRAL, TUNG RETURN

Super Nova rookie Josef Kral made a welcome return to the field in Abu Dhabi after being sidelined with a back injury following an accident at Valencia.

The Czech driver wasted no time, taking eighth in the feature race and backing it up with another points finish by being fifth across the line in the sprint race.

Ho-Pin Tung was also back in the cockpit for the first time since his crash at Hungary, although he swapped his familiar DAMS colours for those of Racing Engineering. Tung stood in for rookie Christian Vietoris, who was ruled out of the race through illness.



FAREWELL TO BRIDGESTONE

As well as being the final race for the second-generation GP2/08 car, the Abu Dhabi weekend was also GP2's final race with tyre manufacturer Bridgestone, which has been a central part of the GP2 family ever since the inaugural season in 2005.

Turn the page for an exclusive interview with Bridgestone's Hiroshi Yasukawa about a memorable six-year relationship.



2010 SEASON IN PHOTOS

Q&A

MARCO CODELLO
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Q: You have a big logistical challenge with the new cars over the next few weeks ...

MC: There are a few elements to consider. First, it's a new cycle for GP2, which means new teams, so we had to make sure that this season ended this year and the new one started next year. So we couldn't have the Asia Series running across two calendar years like we have in the past.

We also follow the F1 calendar, so we had to accommodate GP2 Asia within that. And there are also the logistics of getting the cars to where they need to be on time. So that's why things are slightly different to last year.



Q: Where are the new cars at the moment?

MC: The teams received one car in October, and the first engine was delivered two weeks ago. The first shakedown is at Paul Ricard on 18 November, with each team running one car. This happened while the main series was going on, so the teams had to concentrate in two directions. But all the GP2 freight for the main series final round left Europe at the end of September, so while it seems busy, it was planned to allow the teams to cope.



Mexicans Sergio Perez (left) and GP3 champion Esteban Gutierrez (right) meet their country's president, Felipe Calderon



Bridgestone bid a fond farewell to the GP2 Series at the tyre manufacturer's final race in Abu Dhabi



Jules Bianchi was off to a flyer in Barcelona, the Frenchman claiming the first pole position of the 2010 GP2 Series



Spain's Dani Clos was another winner, taking victory in the sprint race at Istanbul in May



Pastor Maldonado leads the field in Turkey – the first of six successive wins which eventually took the Venezuelan to the 2010 title



Arden International's Charles Pic celebrates winning the first race of the season in Barcelona in May... seems like a long time ago now



After wrapping up the GP2 drivers' championship early, Pastor Maldonado had plenty of time to design a new helmet

ABU DHABI STATS

1:48.559s

OLIVER TURVEY'S POLE TIME AT YAS MARINA

21.065s

SERGIO PEREZ'S VICTORY

MARGIN IN THE ABU DHABI FEATURE RACE

5

NUMBER OF POINTS SEPARATING RAPAX AND ADDAX IN THE TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

Q&A

HIROSHI YASUKAWA
DIRECTOR, BRIDGESTONE MOTOSPORT



How big a challenge was it to create a tyre for a high-level one-make series like GP2?

There has always been a good relationship between Bridgestone and the GP2 Series. The GP2 organisers are very dedicated people and they provided us with all the correct information needed in order to produce the right tyres for GP2.

Along with our ideas and experience from our research and development, we were very well equipped to develop and supply innovative Bridgestone Potenza tyres.

Do you think Bridgestone has played an important part of the series' success?

I believe that the last six years of the Bridgestone-supported GP2

Series have been very successful. Even though the tyres will change for 2011, hopefully this category will continue to be a great success in the future. It has been an honour to support driver development in GP2.

How rewarding is it to have played such a central role in helping drivers like Lewis Hamilton prepare for F1?

It is very rewarding. Bridgestone has worked with Lewis Hamilton since he was karting, and for the majority of his racing career he has used Bridgestone tyres. We are very proud of the part Bridgestone has played in both Lewis' and many other drivers' racing careers.

AWAY FROM THE TRACK

ROMAIN GROSJEAN
DAMS



"When I am not racing, I enjoy cooking. My favourite things to cook are foie gras, truffles and chocolate – not together, although maybe with a bit of imagination!

When I have time, I go to a restaurant near my place and spend the afternoon in the kitchen: I really enjoy doing that, cooking and trying out

different things. I'm not sure why I enjoy cooking. I wouldn't say it's relaxing, but it's like giving something special to another person.

You don't cook for yourself, you cook for others – it's a way to show love and to give pleasure to the other person, and that's what I enjoy the most about it."

CLICK HERE FOR ROMAIN'S PROFILE

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TWO-THIRDS OF ALL THE GP2 RACES HELD AT ABU DHABI'S YAS MARINA CIRCUIT SO FAR HAVE BEEN WON BY iSPORT

RACE PREVIEW

ABU DHABI

YAS MARINA (11-12 FEBRUARY)

TRACK LENGTH
5.554KM

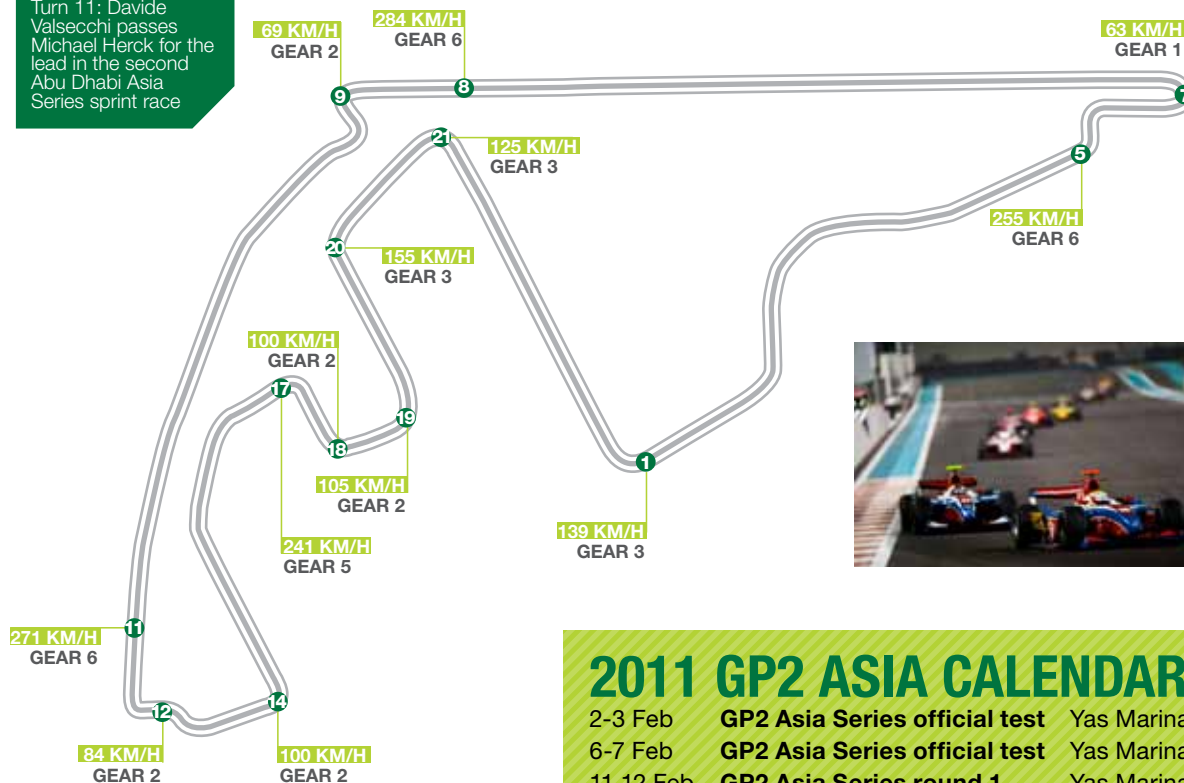
2009 FEATURE RACE WINNER
DAVIDE VALSECCHI (iSPORT)

2009 SPRINT RACE WINNER
CHRISTIAN VIOTORIS (DAMS)

2009 track temp
33°

2009 race weather
30°

Turn 11: Davide Valsecchi passes Michael Herck for the lead in the second Abu Dhabi Asia Series sprint race



Turn 20: Oliver Turvey passes iSport team-mate Davide Valsecchi on the penultimate lap of the second GP2 Asia Series feature race to take the lead

2011 GP2 ASIA CALENDAR

2-3 Feb	GP2 Asia Series official test	Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
6-7 Feb	GP2 Asia Series official test	Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
11-12 Feb	GP2 Asia Series round 1	Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
18-19 Feb	GP2 Asia Series round 2	Sakhir, Bahrain
12-13 Mar	GP2 Asia Series round 3	Sakhir, Bahrain (F1 support)

EXPERT VIEW

DIDIER PERRIN
GP2 TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



“For the teams, Abu Dhabi will be quite a different experience with the new GP2 car. It has a new gearbox, a completely new aero package and, of course, Pirelli tyres.

The combination of the Pirellis and the new aero package will make

a tremendous difference to how the car behaves compared with the GP2/08, so the teams will really start with a blank sheet.

I suspect that it will take some time for the teams to learn how to get the maximum from the car, especially with just two

tests to prepare before the first Asia Series race.

They won't be able to rely on their data from the old car, so we might see a bigger discrepancy than usual between the teams. It depends on how quickly they can understand how the new car works.”

STATS

177.732km/h
AVERAGE SPEED OF CHARLES PIC'S ASIA SERIES POLE TIME AT ABU DHABI LAST SEASON

1.969s
DAVIDE VALSECCHI'S
WINNING MARGIN IN THE SECOND ASIA SERIES SPRINT RACE AT YAS MARINA

[CLICK HERE FOR DIDIER'S PROFILE](#)