

And it's GO GO GO

The definitive I-S A-Z guide to all things F1.
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In case you couldn't guess from our name, we like letters here. So when it came time to tell of all things F1 (oooh—a number and a letter—that makes us all tingly), an A-Z guide was practically irresistible. So if you think you know all there is about F1, you might be surprised at what you'll find in this very handy, very I-S A-Z (yowza!) guide for both speed fiends and clueless newbies alike.

Ayrton Senna



There are 17 F1 races in this calendar year. And at every one of them you'll find the tousled-haired visage of Ayrton Senna fluttering from flags, worn with somber pride on T-shirts and etched in the consciousness of all true F1 fanatics.

The brilliant Brazilian lost his life on May 1, 1994 when, while leading the San Marino Grand Prix, his Williams-Renault inexplicably smashed into a concrete barrier at 310 kilometers per hour.

In an era when racing was more about the driver than the car, Senna was a ballsy, combative and brooding, quick-thinking, don't-give-a-flying-f**k anti-hero. Right from

the get-go of his career, he could eke out a point from nowhere in cars that were little more than scrap pieces of junk.

It was in late 1980s when Senna carved out his legend; dragging with him a whole generation of fans who loved his fiery overtaking antics—the guy could squeeze through an eye of a needle if he really wanted to.

There is a YouTube clip of the normally cool, calm and collected Michael Schumacher breaking down and weeping like a baby on the day he equaled Senna's number of victories (41) in 2000. Schumacher went on to win an astonishing 50 more races, overhauled his hero's "65 poles" stat and won seven world championships. But even the great Schumi knows that the magical Senna will forever be F1's greatest driver.

Blue and silver can

Talk about Bull power! After entering the fray in 2005, Red Bull Racing has come into its own this season, amassing 105.5 points so far—more than their previous four seasons combined!

Team Red Bull is also known for its equally fast and furious parties—which have gained a reputation as the soiree to be seen at during any F1 race week. Drivers, supermodels and a fine sprinkling of glitterati make the pre-party on September 23 at the soon-to-open Wave House one hot ticket you should strive to get your hands on (at least the one hand that's not holding a Red Bull—for a weekend this chockfull, the high-octane beverage will be to people what fuel is to a race car!).

Champagne

Sure, the spectacle of F1 drivers corking champagne magnums on the victory podium and spewing it on their respective exultant teams is a tad pornish. But guys will be guys.



This tradition in motorsport began after American Dan Gurney sprayed champagne on the podium after winning the Le Mans 24-hour race in 1967. Before this, drivers simply walked away (no fun, eh?) with their bubbly booty after collecting it.

But it won't just be victorious drivers who'll be necking down some choice alcohol this weekend. Thousands upon thousands of glasses will be served at the plush corporate boxes (where jewelry will be rattled by the passing cars) while those in the more modest sections of the circuit park will have to make due with \$8 33-cl cups of beer.

Devil's Bend

F1 isn't the first time drivers have tried to outwit and overtake each other on Singapore's roads. Devil's Bend on Old Upper Thomson Road was an infamous stretch of narrow bends and sharp turns when we hosted Grand Prix racing in the 1960s and 1970s. Several drivers met their end here and now that portion of the road is rumored to be haunted.

Eloquence

Oh, how we hark for the days when Nigel Mansell used to call a spade a spade and a tw@t a tw@t. In this new sanitized world of F1, the obscenely overpaid drivers are too scared of saying the wrong thing for fear of upsetting their sponsors.

So we are left with Kimi Räikkönen's standard "I'm happy to win today" non-speak, Lewis Hamilton's "Wow, everything went well today" and Mark Webber's "Yeah, wicked mate."

Rewind a couple of decades and you'll find this snarly swipe from Ayrton Senna to the bratty Eddie Irvine: "You're not racing! You're driving like a f**king idiot. You're not a racing driver, you're a f**king idiot!" Ah, the good ol' days.

Freeloaders

This is Singapore; nothing—even a measly view—is free. But with tickets costing somewhere between a fool's ransom and a princely wage, there are bound to be a few who'll do anything to get in on some of that racing action. Here are some tricks:

Grab a white cane and dark glasses and tell the folks at the entrance that your race pass lanyard got nicked while you were getting mugged.

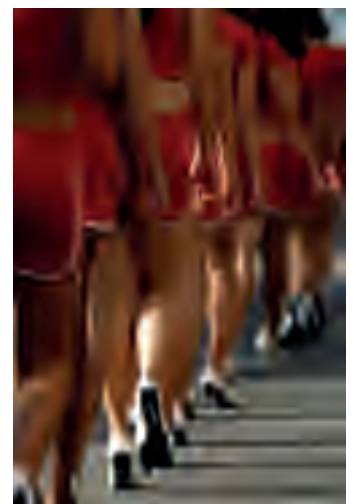
Hide under the chassis of an Old Chang Kee delivery truck.

Wear your NS police/army/civil defense uniform, channel your inner Denzel Washington, and look like you're rushing in to avert a potentially dangerous situation.

Grid Girls

With hot, throbbing engines, speed, tight shiny suits, burgeoning egos, and loads of thrills and spills, you'd think F1 wouldn't need anything else to get testosterone levels surging. Yet, enter the Grid Girls.

A mainstay in any speed-respecting competition, the Grid Girls are there to add even more eye candy to the F1 sweet shop with their sugary grins and yummy outfits (after all, how long can you just watch cars go round and round?). Earlier this year, a nationwide televised search for these nubile, young things was conducted after which only three were selected and then one singled out to grab



the top prize (see the girls, including winner Low Shu Min, posing merrily away at www.singaporegp.org/grand-prix/singapore/singtel-grid-girls-2009).

We're not sure about you, but out of the field of original "hotties," some sure as hell strike us as "notties"—we leave you to segregate them. One thing is certain, with a TV show following them to various F1 stops and events, these girls have seen their fair share of action.

Hotels

Maybe you're kicking yourself for not having booked a room with a hotel near the race circuit. Well, we think you're smart because you saved a bundle. But, if you want to burn through cash faster than a race car goes through tires, you can still grab a three-night package priced at \$6,600 at The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore (7 Raffles Ave., 6337-8888) or a room with a view of the race at the Mandarin Oriental Singapore (5 Raffles Ave., 6338-0066) for \$1,500. We say a much better deal is to find a rich but lonely tourist, work your charms and score a night's stay the old-fashioned way. Or just loiter around the lobbies of the big hotels—there's bound to be plenty of unfinished food and drink lying about, and some of those overstuffed chairs look like they'd do for a night's sleep.



Idiots

OK, maybe you missed the inaugural F1 last year, and this year marks your first appearance at the track. Fair enough, but still, there's no reason to exhibit poor race-watching skills. So, no sitting on the steps, no standing up for hours at a time (adrenaline-fueled on-your-feet cheers are cool), and no screaming into your mobile to have yourself heard over the roar of the race. And get there on time so some dude won't miss the all-exciting first new seconds of the race just because you blundered hurriedly into the wrong row. In short—don't be an Idiot!

Jesus

By this, we mean to salute the drivers who met their maker out on the track (and we don't mean car maker). Fortunately, the FIA has been working hard to improve the sport's safety standards and Ayrton Senna remains the last man to have died out on the F1 track when he crashed into a wall on the exit of the Tamburello curve in San Marino in 1994—a day after Roland Ratzenberger died during Saturday qualifying.



or artificial obstructions, may also be placed at specific points along the track to slow the cars down.

Kitty Litter

Also known as the run-off area, these sand and gravel traps are used to slow down straying cars before they slam into the padded barrier. Another important safety feature of the race that you'll probably see at least once in action is the Safety Car. This non-racer deliberately sets the pace at the head of the queue, and is used when organizers feel that the safety standards on the track are compromised. Chicanes, or artificial obstructions, may also be placed at specific points along the track to slow the cars down.

Lollipop Man

That guy with the stop-sign stick when the drivers come into pit. Does he have the worst job in the world or what? Here are some other crappy jobs in F1:

Fifth Wheelman: For those of you who didn't know, there is actually a specific guy in each F1 crew that is designated the entirely arduous job of wiping their driver's visor—a bit of a fifth wheel if you ask us.

Debris Collector: F1 drivers are messy guys for the most part, leaving bits of their cars all over the track at times. And

you know how Singapore feels about litter. These guys keep the track nice, tidy and fine-free.

Awards Distribution Technician: We are talking about the poor, sopping wet and sticky sods that are in charge of handing the champagne over to the race winners. The only taste of bubbly they get is when it gets sprayed all over them moments later.

Marshals

Dudes with flags. Marshals are usually volunteers and are more than happy to be exploited as free labor in order to get up close and personal with their favorite cars and drivers. Here's what they learn after their extensive training:

Yellow Flag: Caution; no overtaking/safety car out. Yellow with red stripes: Track is slippery (usually oil). Red: Race stopped, slow down and return to pit lane. Black, with a car number: Car must return to pit lane within three laps and not restart race. Blue: Depends on what is being done to the flag. If it's stationary, you are about to be lapped; if it's being waved, let the other car through immediately; and if it's rolled up, there is no race today, why are you in the storage cupboard?

Nicknames

From The Professor to The Iceman, F1 is full of them. Here are some funny ones: Kimi Räikkönen is sometimes called "Räkä" which translates into "snot" in English. Juan Pablo Montoya was often referred to as "El Gordito" (little fat man). Giancarlo Fisichella is known as "Fizzy Cola." And, not a nickname as such, but Ricardo Rosset's own crew once rearranged the letters in his name to spell "TOSSER."

Orgy

From the energy consumed by the street lighting to fuel and engine costs, to indulgent parties, F1 is undoubtedly an orgy of excess. In fact the total budgets of all 11 F1 teams in 2008 stood at over US\$3 billion.

For evidence of an honest-to-goodness orgy though, we need look no further than Max Mosley, the current (but soon to be ex-) president of the FIA. In early 2008, a video was released of him taking part in a WWII-themed orgy with five prostitutes.

Pit stop



Everyone needs a break from the action every now and then, so here's a few places we recommend you check out:

Marina Square: Step out of the noise and commotion of the race and into the noise and commotion of this nearby mall. There are a variety of coffee shops, restaurants,

bars and retail outlets where you can be un-F1'ed for a bit.

The Esplanade: Yeah, yeah—culture, schmulture. You'll love it best for its bathrooms and aircon on race day.

Food and Beverage stalls: These will be sprinkled liberally throughout the grandstands and they've promised that the wait-an-hour-for-your-beer problem will go away this year thanks to more taps.

Quitters!

BMW has announced that it's withdrawing its support from team BMW Sauber after the 2009 season (so be sure to snap a few good photos—they might be worth something on eBay someday). The people at BMW tried to camouflage the announcement in green, saying that they'd like to focus more on ecologically sound products and programs than fuel-and-tire-burning F1. But the more likely truth is something we all became more familiar with in 2009—they're not getting paid, son! At press time BMW Sauber only had 20 points to their name while leaders Brawn-Mercedes were sitting on the top of the boards with 146. It just goes to show that no matter how Bling your Motor Works are, sponsors like winners, baby. Especially in economic downturns.

Romance

Ah, the purr of the engines in our ears. The heady scents of burning rubber and fuel in our noses. The sheen of spotlights pouring over the sleek seductive curves of each car. There's going to be romance in the air alright. You betcha—oh, um, excuse us. Well, ah, even if you don't get turned on by the sheer naked spectacle of the race, there will be parties aplenty involving water, giant Ferris wheels, lots of skin, tons of cash and buckets of booze—just the right recipe for amore we say.





Beyoncé

And in case you were wondering about the love lives of our beloved track jockeys, fear not. Lewis Hamilton has said of his alleged breakup with Pussycat Doll girlfriend Nicole Scherzinger: "That is bullshit. We are still together." Damn, just when we were getting ready to make our move.

Staples, Mavis

Yes, yes. We know we could have taken the easy way out here and gone with Singapore as our "S" choice. We are, after all, the new darling on the F1 circuit (up yours, Monaco). But instead of focusing on how new and glam we are, we thought we'd use this space to talk about something old, erm, we mean older. Mavis can growl like Ferrari hustling for pole position and has been doing so both with and without her famous family since 1969. Like a vintage sports car, she's only gotten better with age. Don't miss her thought-provoking, politically-oriented music slathered in a rocking gospel sauce at 8:30 Friday night on the Padang.

Travis (et al.)

Mavis isn't the only jet-lagged singer you'll be able to see performing inside

the race circuit. As long as you have at least a walk-around ticket you'll also be able to catch Scottish rockers Travis, British DJs Carl Cox and John Digweed, and—for better or worse—the Backstreet Boys, among other international acts. Local faves like Electrico and Dawn Ho will be doing their things too and roving performances from the likes of Wicked Aura Batucada and Strikeforce guarantee there'll be rhythms everywhere. Download the complete color-coded concert schedule at www.singaporegp.sg.

USA

They just have to show up everywhere, don't they? We put them here though, to do a bit of nose-thumbing. They don't really get the glam thing, do they? Mention car racing in the old US of A and chances are people think beer bellies baking in the hot southern sun at a Nascar or IndyCar race. F1 with its chic-ness and champagne-ning doesn't stand a chance over there against brutish Budweisers and ho-hum hot dogs, does it? So take that USA, we're cooler than yew-hoo. (But um, they still do have that Obama guy. And Angelina Jolie. And that guy she's married to. And freedom of the press. Hmm ... OK, OK. We take it back. Can we still be friends?)

Venues (for live music)

So, if ear-splitting engine revs aren't exactly music to your ears, then here are some less hectic options for your listening pleasure outside the circuit park. Fueling the Formula One fever is F1 Rocks which will see some of the world's biggest music acts like No Doubt, N.E.R.D., Jacky Cheung, Simple Minds and Beyoncé descend upon Fort Canning Park on race



Mavis Staples



Travis

weekend. If you haven't got tickets yet (\$175-450) for this high-octane musical extravaganza, you'd better burn rubber and race down to your nearest Sistic outlet. Another venue is The Arts House River Promenade (1 Old Parliament Lane) where Timbre will be holding Kinesthesia—a music festival featuring leading Asian musicians like Indonesia's answer to Jimi Hendrix, Gugun and his band The Blues Shelter.

Winning (at all costs!)

Winning is one thing, but trying to win at all costs is another. The ultra-competitive world of F1 racing is no stranger to controversy and has seen its fair share of scandals on-track and off. The biggest was 2007's spygate which saw McLaren

being fined a record US\$100 million after being accused of using leaked information from rival Ferrari. Then there was the recent Crashgate which happened right here during our Formula One debut (we should be proud!) involving Renault. Renault's Nelson Piquet Jr. crashed on lap 13, bringing out the safety car just after team mate Fernando Alonso had driven a short 12-lap first stint. It played into Alonso's hands perfectly and he was able to leapfrog the field and take the checkered flag. At press time, their participation in this year's race is still under question as on 16 September, they announced that they will not contest FIA charges of race fixing. Managing director Flavio Briatore and director of engineering Pay Symonds have resigned over the controversy.

Xtra Xtra

For those of you that couldn't cop a race ticket on time, here are some places around town where you can view the live screenings of the race. Zoom on



down to the Johnnie Walker Black Lounge at Clarke Quay. This two-storey pop-up venue in Clarke Quay's central fountain will be the place for great drinks, great music and non-stop night race action. Ink Club Bar (Lobby, Fairmont Singapore, 80 Bras Basah Rd., 6431-6156) will also be screening the race on its big screens. Don't forget to fuel up on one of its irresistible trio of F1-themed drinks. Other places you can stay in the thick of the action but without being jostled about with the hordes of Ferrari fans are The Penny Black Victorian London Pub (26/27 Boat Quay, 6538-2300) and Turn:Styles (45 Circular Rd., 6536-1524).

Yelling

With decibel levels reaching stratospheric levels, this is what you'll be doing if you want to have a conversation with the guy sitting next to you. At full throttle, a Formula 1 car's noise level could go up to 140 decibels (dB), just shy of the ear-splitting 150dB produced by a jet engine. Anything above 110dB is bad for Mr. Eardrums. So before your ears have a blowout, we suggest you use earplugs which you can get in a pack with a poncho at the gates for \$2. Alternatively, you can head to Hung Brothers (#03-83 Sim Lim Square, 1 Rochor Canal Rd., 6336-9989) to get yourself some Etymotic High-Fidelity Earplugs (\$25) that reduce noise but don't muffle speech.

Zzzzzz

F1 critics' main gripe about the sport—it's one big snooze fest! Even ex-world champion Nigel Mansell was quoted as saying that Formula One is so boring that he cannot even bear to watch it on television. Former drivers, fans and critics always lament about the lack of on-track drama that F1 races of the '60s and '70s had aplenty. The cut and thrust of wheel-to-wheel entertainment ended when team bosses handed the reins of the car into the hands of race strategists who plan the pit stops and determine when a driver needs to pop in a quick lap. Now all you get is a pretty parade of million dollar cars playing on-track musical chairs. But fret not racing fans, the cars and portions of the Singapore course have been redesigned to increase overtaking—so the sport might just be getting back on its thrill-a-minute track.

