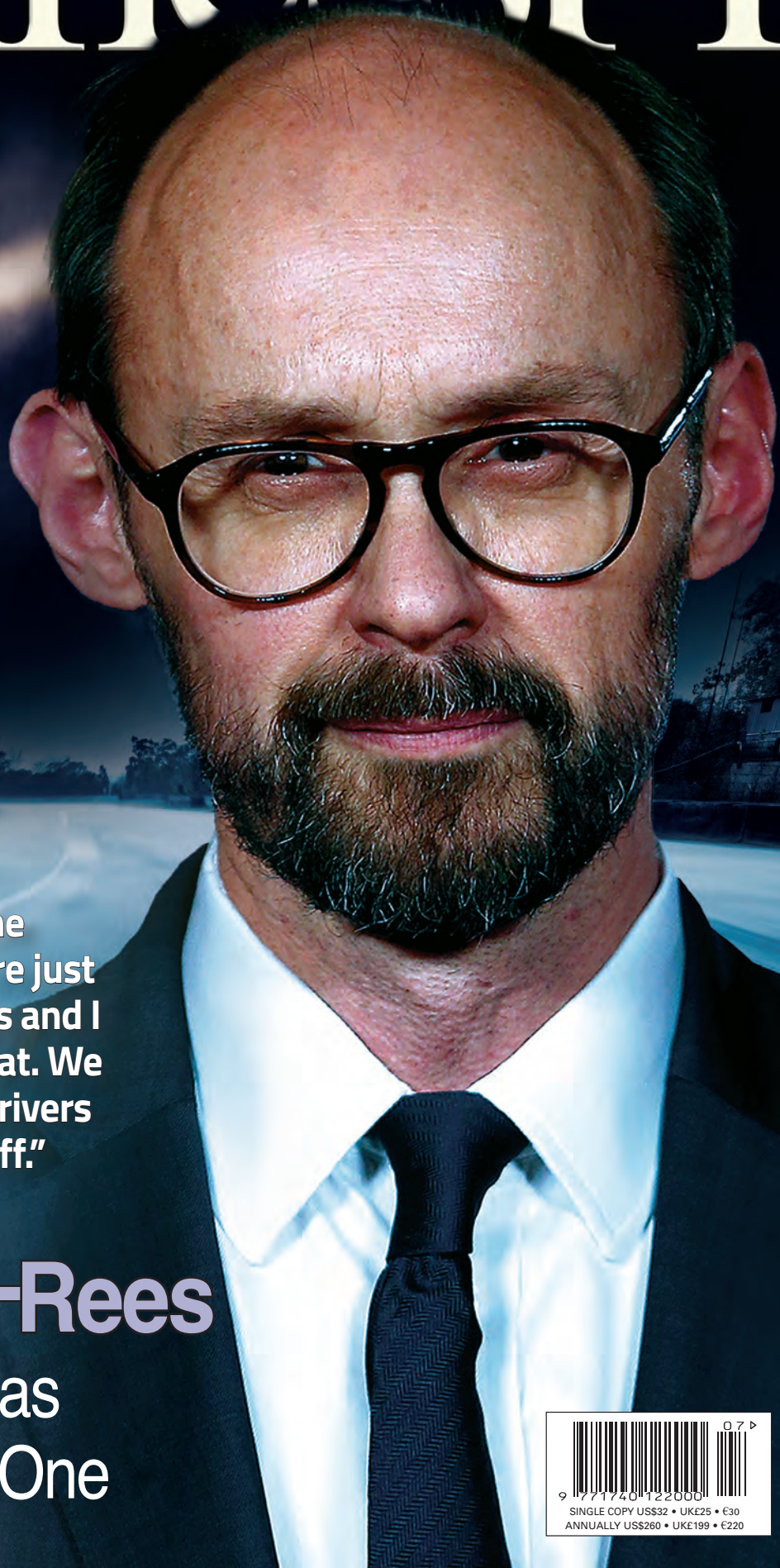


THE NINE LIVES OF MARTIN BRUNDLE

FORMULA ONE'S BUSINESS MAGAZINE

BusinessF1™

July 2022
Vol 7 Issue 7



"We're not inventing the controversy. It's there. We're just trying to distil it into a series and I think we do a good job of that. We basically humanise these drivers and take their helmets off."

James Gay-Rees

His soap opera has defined Formula One



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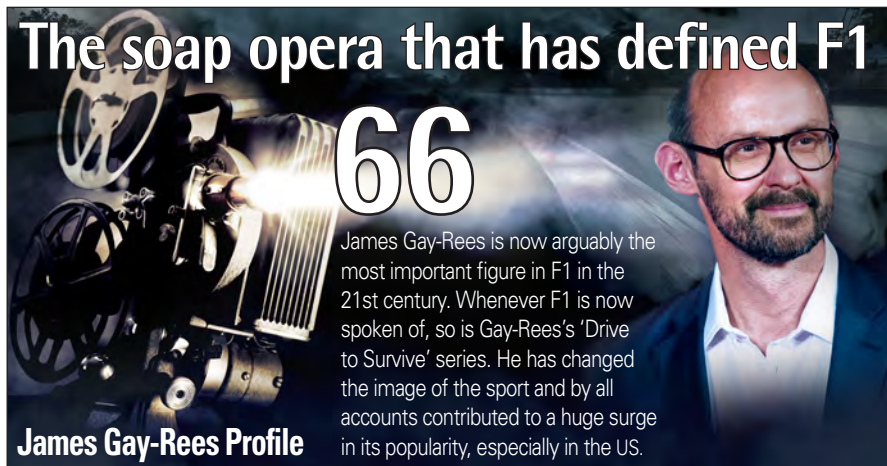
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BusinessF1™

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The soap opera that has defined F1

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James Gay-Rees is now arguably the most important figure in F1 in the 21st century. Whenever F1 is now spoken of, so is Gay-Rees's 'Drive to Survive' series. He has changed the image of the sport and by all accounts contributed to a huge surge in its popularity, especially in the US.

James Gay-Rees Profile

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One of the more regrettable moments in James Gay-Rees's career came when he agreed to airbrush Adriane Galisteu out of Ayrton Senna's life in the eponymous documentary film. Fortunately, that story has been chronicled elsewhere and Gay-Rees has never explained or apologised for the travesty.



84 Tragic Overture

In the mid-seventies, American motor racing was changed forever by three tragic events that changed the course of history and had cataclysmic consequences for single seater racing in the US. A tragic aircraft crash and the unexpected death of the patriarch and his heir in the space of three years effectively destroyed USAC and launched NASCAR's rise to be the dominant motorsport series in the United States.

90 Destiny is all

Martin Brundle challenged Ayrton Senna strongly during an electrifying year of Formula 3 racing in 1983. So how did Senna go on to achieve immortality with 41 wins, three world championships and 65 poles from 161 starts in a Grand Prix and Brundle achieve effective obscurity with zero wins, zero world championships and zero poles from 158 starts in a Grand Prix.



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The start of the Monaco Grand Prix was a complete farce as the stewards and the race directors argued about what to do. What they did do was to no one's satisfaction.



44 The fight to the finish

In June last year, Aston Martin revealed that its Swiss dealer was entitled to a four percent royalty on every mid-engined car. It was yet another material fact that had been excluded from Aston Martin's IPO prospectus. It prompted Lawrence Stroll to cancel the deal.

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Matt Bishop has declared that the practice of good public relations in Formula One is worth lap time to the Aston Martin team and its drivers. Despite the doubtful premise, it is quite persuasive stuff.

50 Car crash television

The car ran over a minefield and crashed, that is the way Martin Brundle describes his own pre-race introduction to a Grand Prix generally known as a Gridwalk. Brundle is one half of a double act with Ted Kravitz's Notebook.

56 Goodbye Formula One

Prince Albert and Michel Boeri are prepared to say goodbye to Formula One if the Automobile Club de Monaco cannot renew its historic deal with Formula 1 Group. The contract has now expired and officially there is no race in Monte Carlo in 2023. So if no one does anything it is over, at least for next year. That is the reality.

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Letters

Letters to the editor should be addressed to Tom Rubythorn, Editor-In-Chief, BusinessF1 Magazine, Billing Wharf, The Causeway, Cogenhoe, Northampton, NN7 1NH, United Kingdom or send by email: editor@businessf1magazine.com Letters may be edited for brevity.

Great journalism

Dear Tom,

I've really enjoyed *BusinessF1* over the last year, please thank the team for all their hard work and great journalism.

Yours,

Kevin Sampson
PGS Exploration UK Ltd
13 Second Avenue
Walton on Thames
Surrey
KT12 2HW
United Kingdom

The editor replies: It is hard work because many stories are looking well into the future which is of course what readers really want to know.

Creative adventure

Dear Tom,

I can't wait to catch each page of *BusinessF1* with its outstanding research and narrative. I just love the whole creative adventure that is *BusinessF1*. F1 is *BusinessF1*.

Yours,

Sarah Thomas-James
The Beach House
Langland Bay
The Gower Peninsula
Swansea
SA3 4QE
United Kingdom

The editor replies: Yes, each issue is a creative adventure, because each issue is different and a challenge.

Wonderful execution

Dear Tom,

BusinessF1 is my favourite automotive publication. Wonderfully executed. I have given one subscription as a gift already and plan on gifting more.

Yours,

Richard J. Mancuso
President
Lake Forest Sportscars
990 North Shore Drive
Lake Bluff
Illinois 60044
United States of America

The editor replies: We are very grateful for Richard passing on the message of the magazine, which keeps us going.

No brown nosing

Dear Tom,

It's great to read a magazine that does not constantly brown nose Formula One.

Yours,

David Brodie
Dingledell
Whitchurch on Thames, Oxfordshire
RG8 7EX
United Kingdom

The editor replies: It's an honour to receive any communication from David Brodie, who is a legendary figure in Formula One for helping Sir Frank Williams start up his eponymous Formula One team. Of course, the tight-fisted Sir Frank forgot to allocate David any founder shares. But without his help one doubts what happened would have happened. And it's a great honour to have David as a reader.

The TT is motorsport

Dear Tom,

I have no doubt that *BusinessF1* will have something to say about the five deaths on the Isle of Man at this year's TT. I have a good friend in Ireland who is seriously keen on road racing and he took me to the North West 200 road race in Port Rush/Coleraine. It's hard to credit what I saw in these politically correct 'safety-first' days - full of top line racers and very serious amateurs on world class super bikes racing on open roads next to grannies sitting in their gardens drinking tea. The bikes going past at over 200mph. Almost no barriers, telegraph posts, stone walls, cars parked (off the 'track' in people's drives) kids sitting on walls. Scenes of the film 'Grand Prix' with the scene at Spa back in the 1960s came to mind.

I've not been so close, with no protection at all, to machines at that speed since I watched Formula One testing in the early 1970's.

They had not had a race there for about three years due to the plague and the crowds were huge. The welcoming nature and friendliness unexpected.

The sheer passion for this type of racing despite the danger was intense. This event is the test run for the Isle of Man TT races so a really big event.

Seeing such an event close up opened my eyes to what is utterly absent in F1, F2, F3 and Formula E and much other motorsport, possibly with the exception of Le Mans 24 hours - raw passion - and an openness that Formula One has forgotten totally as it becomes more embroiled in 'keeping the money for the few' rather than being open to new teams coming in and finding 'genuine' ways of making itself available to fans (real fans, not corporate guests).

Yours,

Frank Bolster (no relation)
Bann Cottage
Coleraine
County Londonderry,
Northern Ireland, United Kingdom

The editor replies: Lots of sympathy with the above. Personally, I would remove the halo from Formula One cars and replace it with something else far less intrusive (two side halos and a six-inch windscreen or something like that). But not the dreadful contraptions they have fitted to IndyCars.

Motor racing is now much safer than horse-riding or even golf and there will be much (justified) congratulation in many quarters for that. Formula One has two problems: the halo and the Alcatraz type fences that have invaded some circuits. There are much better ways of achieving the same thing.



TOM HARTLEY JNR

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These monster machines can no longer be justified in an age of sustainability. It's a bullet Formula One has to bite and the sooner the better before any more cash and the world's resources are wasted.

Paddock Patter

The inflation truth Formula One won't face up to

You've been reading in these pages for a long time that the FIA's Financial Regulations are a farce and the Cost Cap won't work, in fact can't work. Other journalists are gradually catching up and also some team principals are starting to see the light. The Cost Cap was set too low in the first place.

When it was set the top three teams were spending around double the current cap. So they were being asked to halve their budgets. Since then, inflation has raged and costs have risen naturally by 30 percent. So, the Cost Cap, as it exists now, allowing for inflation should be \$182 million for 2022.

Two sets of books and a good PR exercise

It's no real secret, so I may as well say it here. The top five teams are keeping two sets of books, a real set and a set for Hugo Bush, the FIA Cost Cap supremo, to look at. That is the only way they can comply with the Cost Cap in 2022.

And although you might not think it, *BusinessF1* supports the introduction of the FIA Financial Regulations (Cost Cap) because it is good PR for the sport. But trying to rigidly enforce it at \$140 million a year is a fool's game. Enforcement should have been made voluntary and self-policing, then the system would have had a chance of working.

A sensible solution would have been to agree

a Cost Cap of say \$350 million for everything a team spends plus an annual uplift for inflation. This would have meant the top three teams having to knock \$50 million of what they were spending in 2020. It would have served to keep costs sensible and put a damper on driver salaries. That sort of all-enveloping Cost Cap, which would include drivers' salaries and capital spending would be readily accepted by everyone.

The second phase would have been to put a Cost Cap on the five engine makers of say \$225 million a year, again self-policing. Everyone would be happy with that and more importantly, be happy to comply.

Wind tunnels

Formula One should have banned the use of wind tunnels years ago as it has banned everything else. Wind tunnels are nice toys for aerodynamicists but they are dinosaurs in the modern age - dinosaurs which consume huge, and I mean huge, quantities of electricity.

And truthfully 90 percent of what is done in a wind tunnel can be done on a CFD super computer.

Of course, it's not nearly as much fun to do it on a computer as it is on a proper wind tunnel but these monster machines can no longer be justified in an age of sustainability.

It's a bullet Formula One has to bite and the sooner the better before any more cash and the world's resources are wasted.

Time to sort out this joke series

The World Endurance Championship (WEC) is a joke and has been for several years. Yet no one gets the joke. Richard Mille is a sensible enough fellow, he must be, he runs a successful watch making enterprise, yet he is involved in the high-level decision making for this joke. The current structure of the LMP1 class (if anyone actually knows what that is) is actually the biggest joke in motor racing history.

The series is some sort of joint venture between

some company in Paris, the ACO and the FIA. The three sets of jokers put on six races a year which do no one any credit at all. Because of the FIA Cost Cap in Formula One (and only because of that) there is some interest coming from major manufacturers next year. But if the same jokers are still in charge that will dissolve away soon enough. It's time for the FIA to get a proper grip of the WEC and sell it to a commercial operation who could run it properly.

The dangers of defiling Monaco

There is little doubt that Stefano Domenicali and Greg Maffei are trying to put the screws on the Monaco Grand Prix. By declaring it a three-day event and making it the second race in a double header, the attempted destabilising of Monaco was unsubtle. Domenicali was also briefing journalists that Monaco could lose its place on the calendar because of poor facilities and the design of the track. The design of the track is not the issue, the issue is money. Maffei and Domenicali want Monaco to cough up \$30 million a year to hold the race, \$25 million more than it is currently paying. Prince Albert and Michel Boeri will not agree and have countered by cheekily asking Formula 1 Group to pay it to stage the Grand Prix. Although no one really knows, the Monaco track must cost between \$30 million and \$40 million to build every year and the running costs cannot be cheap.

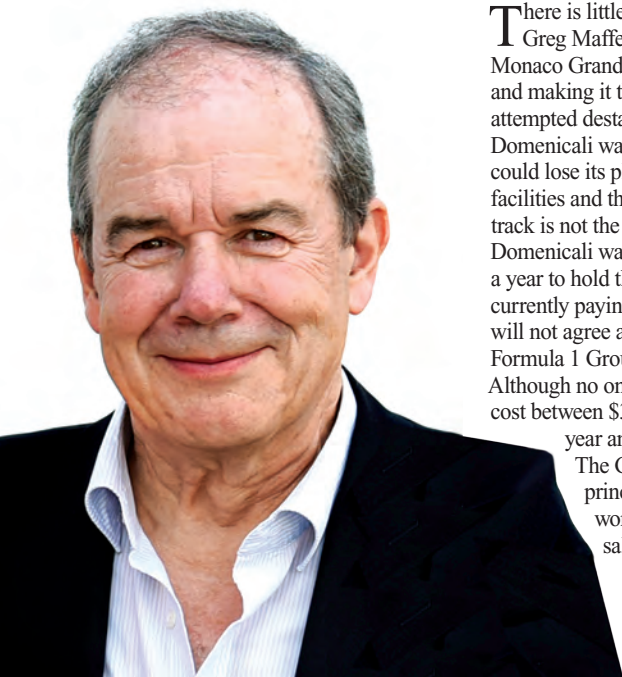
The Grand Prix is a popular attraction in the principality and delivers a sales tax bonus worth maybe \$50 million a year, plus the sale of tickets, probably worth another \$15

million. All in all, the Grand Prix breaks even. But the double header and three-day weekend did a lot of damage to the race. Sales tax revenues were down and many of the usual events were cancelled. It just wasn't the same as when the proceedings were spread out over a whole glorious week. That destabilising of Monaco is dangerous for Formula One and the prospect of losing the race altogether is unthinkable. There isn't another Monaco in the world, its unique and believe me, I have looked.

But the dangers of losing it are real. The 10,000 indigenous and the 40,000 non-indigenous citizens of Monaco generally do not like the race and the disruption it causes. Prince Albert, himself is actually indifferent. Only the traditionalists at the Automobile Club de Monaco hold it altogether and Prince Albert happily goes along with it. But make no mistake, Monaco can do without Formula One but Formula One cannot do without Monaco. And if it ends up having to do so it will be much the poorer for it.



Tom Rubython Editor-in-Chief



Crisis looms for Aston Martin boss as car maker debates Stroll could face the sack

It is becoming increasingly clear that Lawrence Stroll, the Chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings Plc, will not survive, if the car maker loses its various legal cases against Nebula Project AG, the Swiss company that conceived the Aston Martin Valkyrie hypercar and guaranteed the financing of its development in a joint venture agreement with the car company called Nebula.

The cancellation of the Nebula joint venture has become a bet-the-farm event for Stroll personally. Stroll made the decision to cancel the deal, said to have been against the advice of some of his advisers, although this has never been confirmed. At the same time Stroll also closed down the St Gallen Aston Martin dealership owned by

AF Cars AG.

Any judgment in favour of Nebula and AF Cars could run to as much as \$250 million. That is a quarter of the whole value of Aston Martin and would immediately render the company insolvent and threaten its future. One observer said: "The importance of winning this case cannot be overemphasised for Aston Martin. This could turn into a life and death event. I cannot see how Lawrence will be able to remain on the board if the case is lost."

It is the gamble Lawrence Stroll took when he unilaterally cancelled Aston Martin's joint venture agreement with Nebula Project AG, whom he claimed has withheld more than \$14 million of customer deposits that had been paid towards its \$3.5 million

Valkyrie hypercar.

It is understood that some customers fully paid for their cars in advance and other customers paid partial deposits. Aston Martin was under the impression that all deposits should have been paid to it. That is disputed by Nebula Project AG.

Baenziger and Kamelger were the owners of Nebula Project AG and AF Cars AG, the holding company of St Gallen. The St Gallen dealership no longer exists and the building has been sold. Baenziger and Kamelger invested \$35 million of their personal money into St Gallen and the business was valued at \$50 million when it was closed down. Baenziger and Kamelger are believed to be claiming this amount separately against Aston Martin.

Aston Martin Lagonda has

also filed a complaint with the Swiss criminal court alleging AF Cars and Nebula Project AG mishandled money belonging to it. It is the equivalent of accusing Baenziger and Kamelger of theft.

The legal action is another unravelling of former chief executive, Andy Palmer's deals that has never been disclosed to shareholders. An Aston Martin spokesperson admitted the proceedings are an "extraordinary event."

The Aston Martin case, appears to be straightforward – that St Gallen owes Aston Martin \$14 million in deposits. But it is far from that. The writ appears to have been prompted by the stunning discovery that Nebula has the right to a four percent royalty on every mid-engined model that Aston

Sports car manufacturer makes pre-emptive legal strike in Switzerland Aston Martin fails in secret bid to bankrupt Nebula



Lawrence Stroll, Chairman of Aston Martin Lagonda, has made a secret pre-emptive challenge in the Swiss courts, principally the Cantonal Court of Appenzell Ausserrhoden, to have Nebula Project AG made bankrupt.

Nebula Project AG provided Aston Martin with a \$100 million guarantee to cover the development costs of the Aston Martin Valkyrie with the backing of one of their biggest customers, the renowned Swiss car collector,

Albert Orbrist.

Aston Martin Lagonda Global Holdings Plc. (AML) unilaterally terminated the joint-venture in June 2021 simultaneously cancelling all agreements with Nebula Project AG and other companies led by Dr Andreas Baenziger and Dr Florian Kamelger, including the largest Aston Martin dealer in the world St Gallen.

Aston Martin Lagonda has since embarked on a series of 'scorched earth' legal action

against Baenziger and Kamelger seeking to, as one person close to the situation described it, "wipe them off the face of the earth." The various actions have alleged both bankruptcy and fraud.

At a hearing on 8th March 2022, lawyers for Aston Martin tried to prove that Nebula was insolvent but the sitting Judge was not persuaded and dismissed the claim.

Dr Florian Kamelger who runs Nebula with his business partner, Dr Andreas Baenziger

were naturally pleased with the decision which was not a surprise as Nebula's balance sheet was well within Swiss solvency rules. Kamelger has stated that it is a well-known legal ruse to try and disable a company in bankruptcy proceedings in front of separate proceedings.

No one is sure on what basis Stroll tried to bankrupt Nebula as it was not insolvent. It could only have been on the basis of Aston Martin's potential claim against Nebula and its inability to meet the claim if it was proven.

Nebula and Aston Martin Lagonda formed its joint venture

cost of losing legal action if he loses Nebula case

Martin is likely to make in the next 10 years.

It is well known that the discovery of the existence of the Nebula royalty deal came as a shock to Lawrence Stroll. There was no mention of the deal in the IPO documents in 2018 and no mention of it in the three sets of annual accounts that have followed. The deal could have meant Aston Martin owing Nebula \$200-\$300 million over the next ten years which will come straight off Aston Martin's bottom line.

Last June Aston Martin said in an official statement: "In 2016, the prior management team of Aston Martin entered into an arrangement with Nebula Project AG to underpin the development of the Aston Martin Valkyrie

and certain other mid-engine programmes. Under the terms of this agreement Nebula Project AG was to receive royalty payments, which could have been significant over time, linked to production volumes of these programmes and Nebula Project AG meeting its funding commitments. As a result of the termination of this commercial agreement with Nebula Project AG, Aston Martin is no longer liable for any of these potential royalty payments."

Dr Baenziger and Dr Kamelger were known to be very upset by the words "no longer liable for any of these potential royalty payments." They said in a statement: "Contracts have to be honoured despite any shareholders and management changes."

after the Swiss doctors conceived the car which became the Valkyrie and took the project to Dr Andy Palmer, the then chief executive of Aston Martin. Palmer was unable to finance it and the two Swiss doctors stepped in with a guarantee.

Nebula underwrote the entire development costs of up to \$100 million in return for a four percent royalty on all future sales of the Valkyrie, Valhalla and Vanquish mid-engined model cars. The deal was potentially worth \$350 million to Nebula but its legal claim for damages and compensation for the deal being cancelled is \$190 million.

On 22nd June 2021, Aston Martin Lagonda released a statement that said it was no longer liable for the royalty payments which investors had no previous knowledge of. The official statement included the crucial words "no longer liable for."

Dr Florian Kamelger, Chairman of Nebula said: "We are delighted by the Swiss

Court's decision, which brings this dispute to its proper forum: the arbitration commenced by Nebula in London in November last year, with claims in excess of £150 million (\$190m)."

The Swiss doctors' formerly successful dealership, Aston Martin St. Gallen, also had its dealership cancelled.

(See Insight story 'Fight to the finish' on page 44).



Alonso and Morselli's fashion business is sold to Revolution Brands

Alonso splits with his Kimoa partner

Fernando Alonso has split up his business and personal relationship with Linda Morselli and the couple have gone their separate ways. The split follows the sale of 75 percent of Alonso and Morselli's Kimoa fashion label to US fashion conglomerate, Revolution Brands late last year.

Alonso retains a 25 percent share in the business but is no longer responsible for funding. Since it was founded in 2017 Kimoa has run up losses of close to \$4 million. The brand sells shirts, swimsuits, sweaters, shoes and sunglasses online and from one physical store located in Spain. The original business plan called for more than 100 shops to be opened within the first five years but that never happened. Alonso and 33-year-old Morselli decided to sell after the 2021 accounts showed a loss of \$750,000 million on sales of only \$1.4 million. They realised that the brand was much bigger than the actual sales and they had taken it as far as they could.

Kimoa was set up as a clothing brand that would match each of the co-founders' unique lifestyles; Morselli and Alonso are both outdoor fanatics with snowboarding and skiing being a favourite activity. Alonso said the inspiration for the brand was the Californian lifestyle.

Alonso and Morselli did not receive any money from the sale and Alonso is committed to carrying on as a brand



Linda Morselli has split with Fernando Alonso. The Kimoa business has been sold.

ambassador. In all, the venture has been a heavy loss maker for Alonso as he has given up personal sponsorship worth at least \$10 million in order to promote Kimoa.

When the business was sold, they both realised they had

little in common and Morselli took up with Argentinian actor, Benjamin Alfonso and left Alonso.

Likewise, Alonso has now embarked on a new personal relationship with Austrian, Andrea Schlager, 39, who

formerly worked for Bernie Ecclestone's Formula One Management company and is now a television presenter for Red Bull owned channel, ServusTV. The two have told friends they intend to keep their relationship a personal one and will not be going into business together.

The split has caused surprise in the paddock as the business and personal relationship between Morselli and Alonso was considered a strong one. The relationship was severely tested last year on the morning of Thursday 11th February 2021 when Alonso was out cycling near his home in Lugano, Switzerland, Alonso was hit by a car and his jaw was broken, causing considerable damage to his teeth. When Morselli reached the hospital in Berne she took charge of his treatment and found a top maxillofacial surgeon to treat him. Alonso was back in the cockpit very quickly and he credits Morselli's quick action for saving him months of rehabilitation.

Morselli is considered a prime catch, her previous boyfriend, before Alonso, was Motor GP world champion, Valentino Rossi. She was with Rossi for many years but the relationship ended in 2016 and she took up with Alonso soon after that.

Morselli is said to have no regrets on her split from Alonso and said: "My philosophy now is to live in the present."

She has enjoyed a career as an actress appearing on television and in movies.

F1 car regulations going the wrong way

Newey bewails overweight cars

Red Bull Racing's Chief Technical Officer, Adrian Newey has said Formula One is going in the "wrong direction" in the design of cars. Newey says weight limit changes have become a problem. Newey said that Formula One cars were following the trend of road cars which are also getting heavier. Newey said he would prefer

low weight and aerodynamic efficiency to the current set-up.

He said: "In just a few years, the weight limit has increased from a low 600kg and 30-40kg of ballast on board to cars with 800kg and more. We are all working like crazy to make that happen to achieve the currently prescribed minimum weight. In short, the cars have become bigger and

heavier and not particularly aerodynamically efficient because they have a lot of air resistance.

"Obviously this wrong direction is the same in which the general automotive industry has recently developed – ever larger and heavier cars and the people's obsession, whether they drive on batteries or on gas, the biggest issue is the amount of energy it takes to move the damn thing, regardless of where that energy comes from."



Adrian Newey: Cars are too heavy.

Lando Norris is adamant F1 cars should not race in the wet. But he is not a good wet weather pilot.



McLaren driver says there should be no racing in rain Norris doesn't think modern Formula One is safe in the wet

Lando Norris, the McLaren driver, has broken ranks with the rest of the Formula One community and wants racing in the wet to be banned. He was alone amongst Formula One personnel who thought the Race Controllers were correct in delaying the rain affected 2022 Monaco Grand Prix by 68 minutes until the track was dry.

Norris said the decisions made were “the right call” and that the conditions were clearly not safe: “I know there have been questions asked about the delays, but I honestly think the stewards got it about right.”

Norris seemed to have no sympathy for spectators who were kept waiting in the rain and the tens of millions of people watching television on a Sunday

afternoon who had their plans disrupted.

He did admit: “I would have been asking the same questions myself as a spectator. We all want the best show possible. But it was not safe.”

Norris said people could only realise how bad the conditions were until they got behind the wheel: “It’s only when you are actually in a Formula One car, feeling brake temperatures, the tyre temperatures, the grip levels, that you can truly appreciate what is possible and what is not. And it was not safe on Sunday. You literally couldn’t see five metres in front of you during that first attempt to get the race underway. Ultimately, it is me that is risking my neck out there.”

Norris’s opinion is definitely a

minority view and he is possibly the only driver who thinks that way. He is not rated as a wet weather driver. He threw away certain victory leading the 2021 Russian Grand Prix when it started raining and he put his car off the track. Norris dominated the race until the rain fell. He eventually finished the race in seventh place.

Lewis Hamilton, who has a reputation as a rainmeister took an entirely opposite view. He said:

“When it first started raining, we could have gone. I’m glad the rain came but it didn’t really open up much opportunity.”

Hamilton was contemptuous of the FIA’s explanations for the delay: “We’re Formula One drivers - that’s definitely not a good reason. I was saying ‘Let’s go’ when it

was just drizzling a little bit at the beginning.” He added: “I’m sure when we talk in the drivers’ briefing room we’ll discuss it, but we should have started the race.”

Hamilton’s Mercedes teammate, George Russell, also felt that the Grand Prix could have begun at the original time.

Amongst the team principals, Christian Horner was the most adamant the race should have started on time. He said it was “chaotic with tyres coming on the grid, off the grid.” He added: “You can argue it both ways and it’s always a little dangerous to try and pre-empt the weather. We’d have been better starting the race, and then reacting to the downpour.”

See Insight article ‘Collective Indecision’ on Pages 40-43

Swiss customers dominate high priced sports car sales

Fifth of all hypercars are sold in Switzerland

It has been revealed that Switzerland is now responsible for 20 percent of all hypercar sales. Hypercars are generally now regarded as 800-1,000 horsepower

costing \$2 million or more.

Hypercars are mostly made by Ferrari, Aston Martin, Lamborghini and McLaren. 17 percent of all Aston Martin

Valkyries are being delivered in Switzerland and 20 percent of all LaFerrari’s and 16 percent of all McLaren P1s were also sold there.

Approximately 13 percent of all Porsche 918s were delivered to Swiss dealers. The same is true for the new Mercedes-AMG One model.

The figures were confirmed by former Swiss sports car dealers, Dr Andreas Baenziger and Dr Florian Kamelger, who conceived the Aston Martin Valkyrie for the Swiss market.

Switzerland is the home of some of the biggest private car collections in the world including that of Albert Obrist, a renowned collector.



Albert Obrist with his beloved silver LaFerrari he drives every day.

Ferrari PR man decamps Colajanni leaves F1 for tennis

Luca Colajanni has a new role as Director of Communications at the Federazione Italiana Tennis after he silently disappeared from the Formula One paddock before the start of the season.

56-year-old Colajanni is a 30-year veteran of sports communication, in soccer and motorsport. He was previously responsible for Scuderia Ferrari’s external relations. Colajanni was at Ferrari from 2002 to 2013. He then went to work for Formula 1 Group and the FIA before returning to Ferrari in 2020.

Driver wants sacked race director to be recalled after Monaco fiasco

Vettel makes strange call for Masi's return

Sebastian Vettel, Aston Martin Racing's number one driver, has made a strange call for Michael Masi to be restored to the Race Director's job in Formula One. Vettel said there had been teething issues following the introduction of two new Race Directors in 2022, which he expected. He then said that Formula One is missing the experience that Michael Masi brought to his role: "What we are missing now is the experience that Michael had and brought to the job because he did it for so long and grew up with it." However, Masi had only been Race Director for three years and it is thought that Vettel may have been confusing Masi with Charlie Whiting, who was Race Director for 21 years.

Vettel also called for his fellow drivers to find a way to work closer with the FIA to bring improvements in the sport, saying: "It is not an easy position now because there is more focus and more spotlight on what is happening at Race Control. But I hope things calm down and we find a way to work together. You cannot make everybody happy, but we need to try and make both sides more happy."

Vettel has recently been criticised by President Ben Sulayem for his voluble support of gay-rights causes. Ben Sulayem is not homophobic but he believes that politics have no place in Formula One.

Vettel has admitted that he is tired and confused after 15 years as a Formula One driver



Michael Masi would return as Race Director if Sebastian Vettel has his way.

Sebastian Vettel is the third most successful driver of all-time with 52 Grand Prix wins behind Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton.

and the non-stop travelling. He has strongly hinted that the 2022 season could be his last. He says he will decide his future during the Formula One summer break. His recent comments on many issues have been described as "erratic." A person previously close to Vettel said: "I suppose there are signs of a mid-life crisis but Seb is a good guy."

Aston Martin Racing says it is keen for him to stay for a third season although it is not clear if that is really true. There are rumours that he has already been told he is out in 2023 but will be allowed to leave on his own terms.

Vettel is possibly seeding the

process when he said that leaving his young family at home is getting more and more difficult for him. He said: "I enjoy driving the car but there are other things I don't like. After so many years, the usual stuff comes up that you don't understand at the beginning."

It is a very similar tone to the one adopted by Kimi Räikkönen last season when he realised it was his last season when he was pushed out by his team.

Vettel has admitted he is scared at the thought of being sacked and retired after 15 years of racing. He knows there is no chance of his securing a drive at

another team even if he waived receiving a salary. "I don't know what life after Formula One looks like and I don't think any sportsman knows what the next life looks like. You can have certain things lined up but you don't know and that is the truth. I don't expect to find something tomorrow which I am really good at because I have found something in my life that I am really good at and it is hard to find that again. How many times can you win the lottery? I have done motor racing for my whole life and it gives you security, in terms of the schedule being made by other people."

Interim role for lawyer before CEO is recruited

Rao temporarily replaces Bayer at the FIA

Shaila-Ann Rao has taken over from Peter Bayer as Secretary General at the Federation Internationale de L'Automobile (FIA) based at its Geneva office. Bayer was moved in last month after Bayer was abruptly fired by President Ben Sulayem.

Rao is a very experienced executive in the sports industry. She has over 30 years' experience of working in Britain, France and Switzerland. She is a lawyer by background,

previously being General Counsel at the Mercedes-AMG F1 team. Before that she was the FIA's Legal Director from 2016-2018. Before that she ran Sportfive, the sports marketing agency subsidiary of the Lagardère Group.

In her interim role, Rao is responsible for the FIA's sport department and the FIA's sport clubs and implementing decisions taken by the FIA World Motor Sport Council and managing the secretaries

of the various FIA Sporting Commissions.

Rao graduated from the British University of Warwick and studied law at Lancaster Gate, London.

She is also believed to be one of the frontrunners for the new post currently being advertised to be the first chief executive of the FIA. Other frontrunners are Hugh Chambers, currently Chief Executive of Motorsport UK, the national governing body of British motorsport.



Shaila-Ann Rao is a candidate for the CEO role at the FIA.

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