



## An Aside With Joe – Let's Get on with the Proper Game of Motor Racing

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**Me:** Welcome to An Aside With Joe - Let's Get on with the Proper Game of Motor Racing. On the line again, two weeks since we last spoke to Joe I believe, hopefully sitting comfortably waiting to discuss Formula One with us with another glass of wine, how are you Joe?

**Joe:** I'm sitting with a glass of wine in a fairly comfortable chair and willing to discuss Formula One.

**Me:** It makes a world of difference you not being in various parts of the world and unable to communicate. We know where you are now.

**Joe:** The glass of wine definitely helps no question about it.

**Me:** What's happened since we last spoke, we went racing in Monza?

**Joe:** Yeah we did it was a very interesting event, I thought it was an exciting race interesting strategically, I mean it's interesting what is an exciting race I think it's how you watch it as to whether it's exciting or not, I thought it was exciting and I think that it was a good result for Brawn it was a very clever strategy I think the others tried their very best and I think that it was, I mean, going to Monza is such a pleasure because it's the only proper race track left, the only place where you see cars really going for it big time. Spa is good but Monza is better so it's always a bit of a treat, although we had a bit of a minor kerfuffle going on in the paddock but the race track was good.

**Me:** Does it feel like there's a bit of a going away vibe as it's the last race in Europe before you head off or is it just business as usual?

**Joe:** No there's very definitely a sense of going away I mean one of the things that we have, we are humongously spoiled in the Formula One paddock in the European races we have these lovely motor homes where people look after us and are nice to us and you build up relationships with the people and it's always a bit sad in September when you have to say goodbye to everybody because a lot of them don't go travelling off around the world with the rest of us so it is a bit of a goodbye, you also say goodbye to about half the press corps because you won't see them again. The costs of Formula One being as they are, last year the Japanese Grand Prix had the smallest press corps I've ever seen in many years, 20 years, it'll be interesting to see this year but the level of cost involved in travelling around the world is such that you lose a lot of people.

**Me:** Sure.

**Joe:** I mean with you on the flyaways it means you get better access, it has to be said.

**Me:** Because there's less of a scrum during interviews or?

**Joe:** Well there's still scums to a lesser or greater extent so I mean Europe is very much the cauldron of Formula One and the flyaway events are very much more, slightly more rarefied is the best way of putting it.

**Me:** Was it any different this year because you didn't have to nip off to Canada and then come back?



**Joe:** Well it saved a pile of money. No I mean people love very much the Canadian Grand Prix is one of the great races of the year but it's a wack of cash in the middle of the year now if you happen to be on expenses from fancy companies that's fine, it doesn't bother you at all and you go off and eat lobster and live happily ever after but for normal folk trying to balance all the budgets it was a bit of pain in June to have to sort of lob in a bunch of cash to get to the States I certainly won't have any worries about going back there next year I mean it's a terrific race track, it's a great town, very enthusiastic people, it's just a shame you can't come up with an American race to twin it with because that's what's really needed to make things financially viable for the teams is to have two races for basically the cost of one.

**Me:** Is there any word whether or not they've got a good deal in order to afford this what's changed between them not being able to afford a race and suddenly now they've got one?

**Joe:** Probably the local government has realised that if they want to have a race they have to pay up. The locals were making a pile of money from all the visitors and politicians being what they are like to make money don't like giving it back, even if it's not their own money so they had to have a little pressure applied. When the race disappeared they woke up to the fact 100 million dollars disappeared from their cities economy, in fact it is Canada's biggest sporting event so I think the whole country woke up to the fact that 'duh we've lost this, lets get it back' as to how exactly where the moneys coming from and all the rest of it I actually don't know the ins and outs I'm not even sure the deal is entirely done yet, it seems to be the case as happens at most of these races the local government is going to come in and save the day.

**Me:** Do we know, are we any further forward on a concrete calendar for next year? I know last time we spoke there were various drafts being bounced around left right and centre.

**Joe:** No it'll be a long time before there is anything like a serious calendar I would think. There's all kinds of problems that we need to see what can go where and who's going to be ready in time, is Donington going to be built or not? Are the Koreans going to make it? We'll get the basics but I wouldn't expect a full calendar until December.

**Me:** Monza obviously should be on there next year and just going back to that race just briefly we saw some new faces on the track. Tonio Liuzzi made his debut.

**Joe:** Well he's not a new face he's been around, the world has forgotten about Tonio Liuzzi more the pity. I think he did a terrific job and it was very hard to say because the strategy he was on could have come out before just in front or just behind of Raikkonen and Sutil but it actually was entirely possible he could've ended up on the podium. It would've been a matter of five seconds one way or the other which would have been a hell of a showing unfortunately the car broke down so in the finest traditions of Tonio he was unlucky on the day but hopefully we'll see some more of him I think he showed very clearly that he can hack it with the big guys and good for him.

**Me:** Fisi handed over his seat to Tonio, we saw Fisi wearing red. He was ok debut for the Ferrari team but do you think he could've done better?

**Joe:** Yes I think he could but having said that these are complicated pieces of machinery as Luca Badoer proved, not slowly but he did prove it. The major problem with them is how they react with the tyres and where Badoer was completely at sea was getting the tyres to work and Fisichella has more experience of that obviously with the Force India but making them work at the right moment with the Ferrari wasn't necessarily the easiest thing to do. In fact he didn't do a bad job I think that the major problem was that he crashed whenever it was, Saturday morning basically compromised his qualifying and the qualifying compromised the race so he should have done better really.



**Me:** In hindsight do you think he made the right decision in the end?

**Joe:** No probably not, but for him it was the right decision you know, he will now be able to tell his grandchildren in the finest traditions of Luca Badoer that he was a Ferrari driver. This is something, it's all about the passion involved to give up a potential winning car to become a Ferrari driver I think is brilliant. I think it shows that Fisi's hearts in the right place and well good for him and I hope that he has the last few races give him decent reward and a few points so that he can say that he was a half decent Ferrari driver and I think that that was his childhood dream and fulfilling dreams is part of what Formula One is all about so you know. He's won a few races in the past some of them a bit fluky but if he won a race in a Force India well good for him but choice between Force India and Ferrari? No contest really.

**Me:** Numbers were down, I was reading on your blog earlier this week that numbers in Monza were down as they have been at many races this year. Given that there was an Italian driving an Italian car competitively was that a bit of a surprise?

**Joe:** Not really because a point I keep banging on about is the fact that Formula One is pricing itself out of the market asking more and more from the spectators and the spectators who are in the middle of a recession, people like you and I who are looking at things and going blimey how am I going to pay the bills this month and they're going to go 'well yes, I'd love to go to Monza and watch it but no not this year' so you know Formula One it's all very well living in this high fluting world of high finance and the all the rest of it but if they're not careful they're going to drive away the audience. The prices are too high, they must come down.

**Me:** Luca di Montezemelo has come out and said something similar it is one of the key issues that FOTA must address. What do you think they can do? Do they have any sway over FOM who are I guess setting the prices by setting the race fees?

**Joe:** It's basically a domino effect it's very simple the ticket prices are dependent fundamentally on what promoters can afford. Promoters have to pay 10% more every year in their race fee contracts because that's what they're being forced to do and the only way they can do that is to either get money from their local governments or to raise the ticket prices. Generally speaking governments particularly at the moment aren't interested in giving money to motor races therefore the ticket prices have to go up therefore the number of seats being filled goes down, it's as simple as that. Now you can say its FOM's fault but it's not really FOM's fault because FOM is in existence these days to pay the debts of CVC Capital Partners and CVC Capital Partners borrowed 2.6 billion dollars on the securities on the future profits of Formula One and basically turned the sport into a large cash cow. They've gone off with the money I don't know what they're doing with it probably bumping on caviar on a regular basis at that sort of price but these people have got no passion for the sport, they are simply using it to make themselves rich and their investors, it's a sort of get rich scheme and really the bottom line of it is nothing much can be done until 2012 and in 2012 the teams should not agree to a similar deal they should say 'if you want to come and play we are the stars of this game get lost or give us a better deal' and not just give us a better deal but give the whole of the sport a better deal because fundamentally CVC are just taking money and giving nothing back. They add no value to the sport.

**Me:** Formula One is doing the business on track though we have a compelling battle in terms of the drivers championship now even though Red Bull have pretty much managed to wipe themselves out we've still got two team mates who are going to have to go at it for the next couple of races. Do you think Rubens Barrichello really has a hope of chasing down Jenson or do you think it's now a one sided battle until the end?

**Joe:** If we look at the last few races who has been the dominant person in the team? I think it's a very clear picture, of why that is is an interesting point you know the bottom line of it is that Rubens is currently the man leading the



way, Jenson's going to have to up his game. Can he do it? Probably, it depends largely on the set of the cars and Jenson while being a very quick driver has never been renowned for his ability to analyse technical problems he just drives very quickly and very beautifully whereas Rubens has a lot more skill in this respect so there's no reason why Rubens would necessarily sacrifice the possibility to win a world championship by doing set up work for Jenson. I don't know how they're going to handle that one but I think the lovey dovey atmosphere that exists between the two team mates may not necessarily make it until the end of the year. At the moment they're talking like a pair of newlyweds.

**Me:** But they have been all season.

**Joe:** I'm not convinced anymore, I have to say, I think there might be a certain amount of how shall we say, fiction going on there which is inevitable this is the culmination of both of these guys careers they are struggling to be world champion. Jenson obviously has the advantage because he's got points in hand but Rubens has won two races and scored a lot more points than Jenson has in recent races. The interesting point will be the championship will probably not be settled by Brawns alone because it's who's ahead of them on the road. If there's enough people ahead of them obviously they will be low scoring, if they're low scoring it works in Jenson's favour if Rubens is winning and Jenson's not scoring then Rubens on the balance of competitiveness between probably four or five teams because you know one weekend suddenly Red Bull will be quick one weekend McLaren will be quick the Force Indias amazingly suddenly popped up and were very quick, Ferrari we've seen win. I think that's about it in terms of real winning potential I think there's a lot of tosh talked about some of the others but you know those are the ones who can actually win.

**Me:** The emphasis this season seems to be happening within the engine department which is surprising given that we've got homologated engines which aren't supposed to change year on year and yet we've seen the balance of power swing in Mercedes' favour to the point that now Red Bull are openly blaming Renault on the loss of their championship this year. Do you think that homologation rules are actually working or is it time not to drop them and say what we really want is a competitive engine market?

**Joe:** No what we want is cheaper engines because right now Formula One needs engines and they need them to be fairly cheap because money is hard to find. Mercedes have done a better engine, better development if they're working in areas where there is leeway to improve the engine and they've improved the engine while good on them, that's the argument. If the others have not been doing that it's their own fault. Certainly some of them, I mean Toyota has fallen fairly well behind I would say that's a fair comment. Red Bull were pretty competitive up until a couple of weeks ago and I think probably when the track is right for them they'll be competitive again I don't think it's a massive difference in horse power I think the one thing that has made a difference is KERS where you can set the order on the first lap using KERS and on tracks where you can't over take that's all you need. At Spa Fisichella definitely had a better car than Ferrari which won the race but there was no way he could get past so I don't think you necessarily look for outright horse power I think where the Mercedes has done really well is to improve the midrange and the oomph if you like the punch out of the corners and if you're allowed to do it well good on them for doing it.

**Me:** Can you see that order changing again next year or are the manufacturers have time to do something in the off season or are we looking at another dominant year of domination from Mercedes?

**Joe:** I have no idea but I suggest given the number of people queuing up trying to get their hands on Mercedes engines people rate them very highly.



**Me:** What do you make of the deal with Brawn between Mercedes and the Brawn team and how do you think that's going to effect at McLaren?

**Joe:** Well it's been clear to me for a while that Mercedes McLaren relationship is not quite as good as it used to be, largely to do with road car projects but also to do with just general the way in which the partners have been together a very long time were reacting to one another. One would be for example Mercedes Benz to leap in at the start of this year with an advertising campaign saying the customer finishes first, the customer always comes first or something like that but they didn't and you have to ask why they didn't and the answer as to why they didn't was because they weren't allowed to because of contractual agreements with McLaren. It was not wise of McLaren to stop that I can see why they did it obviously they have a special relationship and they don't want some other team coming in and nicking it.

**Me:** Yeah.

**Joe:** If they are going to build their own road car without a Mercedes connection and they are going to do other things that annoy Mercedes they have to expect that Mercedes might in the fullness of time look at things and go 'it doesn't make sense really to do this we should do that' I think what they've done is they've effectively got themselves a racing team they can control because they can't really control McLaren and in a couple of years time when all the McLaren clauses are done then they can have a new relationship, they are saying at the moment that the McLaren relationship will continue. Logically I don't really go for that I think that if you take a step back and look at the strategic development I know I sound a bit like Ronspeak there, the strategic development of McLaren, they've now built this rather nice looking road car which is there to compete with Ferrari, it has a McLaren engine in it. Exactly how that's a McLaren engine is another matter but basically they designed bits and people are building bits and it all gets put together by McLaren. OK they may not necessarily build every part of it themselves it's enough that it's their engine, it'll be a good engine too I'm sure you'd expect the McLaren McLaren road car to be accompanied on the race track by a McLaren McLaren racing car. While they're all saying that everything's fine and dandy and lovely my feeling is that ultimately any investment in an engine building business in Formula One which may sound very expensive but it's not that expensive in the overall scheme of things particularly if you can offset the cost by supplying engines to other people as well.

**Me:** How long do you think it will take?

**Joe:** They've got loads of times because they've got a contract with Mercedes Benz that I think lasts until the end of 2011 so we are talking about if they started work now they'd easily have an engine up and running. It's just a matter of how it was organised whether they bought or whether they just bought in people, what facilities they need, the foundries, there's a number of things they could do you can just buy one of the existing engine companies or you can go around and cherry pick the best people and they can do you a nice engine company of your own. We'll have to see.

**Me:** Good stuff. We have to say hats off to you this week for GP+ magazine which was fantastic.

**Joe:** I was unkind about some people wasn't I?

**Me:** Well it got a positive reaction my favourite bit actually was the parting shot.

**Joe:** It was ever so slightly expected that we would see the back of Flavio and I wrote, it was interesting actually I did get one or two emails on Monday from people who read it saying 'isn't this a little bit ahead of the game' basically I was saying 'goodbye Flavio, it's been nice knowing you' kind of, well sort of it's been nice knowing you, the goodbye



Flavio bit was definitely true but I can't say it was entirely correct saying 'it's been nice knowing you' but it definitely said 'goodbye Flavio, don't come back.' I heard a couple of people saying 'isn't this rather prejudging it' but by Wednesday or whatever day it was it was all done and dusted. It was very clear at Monza that this was a man in a terminal dive with smoke coming out the back so I think he made a fundamental mistake when he sat down with the Brazilian press corps, I don't know if it was Thursday or Friday I can't remember off the top of my head, but he began to talk about Nelson Piquet Jr's sexual preferences and I think that was one step beyond any kind of defensible position, defensible position sorry I'll speak English, I think that was a sign of desperation. I think there was also a press release put out sort of saying that he was going to take criminal, he had initiated criminal proceedings which was clearly not from Renault because you can't initiate criminal proceedings as a private individual, you just complain to the police, they do that and any lawyer would have known that.

**Me:** Did he just make it up?

**Joe:** No I'm sure he was very upset about Nelson Piquet and maybe he did complain to the police but whatever it was he put out a press statement saying something which Renault wouldn't have done so it was very clear it didn't come from Renault and it was just, all the signs were that there was a fairly desperate situation had developed and it was all going to come to a head and it duly did. For those of you that don't read Grand Prix +, shame on you! But the picture in question was a picture of Flavio waving out of the motorhome to somebody in the paddock which looked as though he was waving goodbye really.

**Me:** It's excellent, I really do like it and if anybody hasn't subscribed to GP+ presumably you'd still advocate the purchase of it even with only four races to go because you still get all of the back issues.

**Joe:** Absolutely, you're buying, our next edition is our 50<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Me:** Is it?

**Joe:** Oh yes it is, we're going to paint the town yellow or something. It's our 50<sup>th</sup> edition and you buy all 50 so you have an instant archive of the last two years of Formula One, you get the final four editions of the year and we'll give you one in December as well as a sort of round up as part of the deal so it's still a great deal you get 50 magazines for 25 quid and then next year you can sign up again and give us another 25 quid.

**Me:** Talking about that we were just discussing this evening on our site, Nick was complimenting you on the fact you don't automatically sign up existing users for another year it's not an automated renewal, it's just you pay your money and then it's up to you to come back if you're still interested.

**Joe:** If you like it you're going to come back, that's our view and it's also like the growth of it, you know it's to do with people saying to people 'well have you seen this because it's really good' because that's the best way to create an audience is for people to talk to people and say 'you've got to get this because it's just terrific' and if you have people like that you then have an audience that has a very high return, I mean grandprix.com has a return readership level apparently, so I'm told, of something like 73%.

**Me:** Goodness me.

**Joe:** Which is colossal in web terms and people keep coming back time and time and time again which is lovely but it's all based on the fact I don't think I've spent a single dollar advertising grandprix.com ever. It's just grown over time and that's what you have to do to make really strong magazines is just grow it over time.



**Me:** I know that I've been reading for years and years and years and I keep coming back so you're absolutely right but I think this week's GP+ was just fantastic. It just caught people because with all the controversy of the weekend people were just desperate for more information and obviously it came out straight after the race.

**Joe:** We nearly got it right on the Peter Sauber one but they kept throwing out new people, the Malaysian thing was happening but it was happening with a different lot, so it was very hard to get it all right, there is a rather strange Arab stroke European investment trust which is now the owner of BMW Sauber. It's almost impossible I've tried quite hard to find out who it is, it's virtually impossible because it's all hidden off shore so goodness knows who it is but presumably if it's BMW they're dealing with good people so we didn't have much to worry about. Peter Sauber would not be dealing with bad people anyway.

**Me:** We did have a question, RG asked, wondered if you knew what the chances of this new team appearing on the grid next year were because obviously they don't appear to have a place at the moment.

**Joe:** They don't appear to have a place, well if you put it this way, if there are 14 teams building cars and they all make it then there'll be 2 extra cars I don't think that's a huge disaster if that's the case. Are there going to be 14 teams? I doubt it, I have a vague suspicion that somewhere along the line we're going to lose one more. It could be new people who are talking a good game but not really delivering the goods, it could be manufacturers who are looking at the numbers and going oh my god do we really want to do this, it could be Renault. I have to be careful when I used the word spanked obviously but they are up for a bit of punishment one way or the other, whether it's their fault or not is not ultimately the case because they own the team and were responsible for what it does. There's certainly a lot of potential for change so having a sort of ace in the hole if you like is not a bad idea.

**Me:** Lotus are coming to the fore being given the final spot as it currently is. Suggesting they're going to be building their cars in Malaysia, is that a feasible thing to be doing?

**Joe:** There's no reason if you own enough aircrafts why you can't do things like that and it's good for the local industry and blah blah blah all the reasons they come up with. Is it a realistic way of doing business? Probably not, but there's no harm in trying because really, USF1 is going to do the same thing, they're going to build the cars in America and fly them backwards and forwards and they have this wonderful theory that their chassis will be back in the factory before the trucks from the European races get back to England. That's true up to a point I suppose until air traffic control is involved but these things are possible in the modern world so let's see particularly the Malaysian team is mixed up with Air Asia so if they can't find a spare aeroplane right now nobody wants to fly anyway so there's a few spare aeroplanes in the world.

**Me:** They do have a handy test track at the front of their potential garage with the entire of Sepang.

**Joe:** I suppose if you like rain, yes, the value of a test track is interesting in as much as how much testing is going to be allowed? There are people campaigning to have more testing at the moment which of course will push up the budgets we have to really see what level of funding Formula One can really afford, we're still trying to work that out at the moment but cutting back on the number of employees is a major step forward. It's not good for everybody because lots of people are losing their jobs but on the other hand if there are new teams are being created there are jobs being created as well. When I went to visit Worth Research where they are building the Manor/Virgin cars I bumped into an awful lot of people who previously worked at Renault so I think you'll see a large element of that, of people from one team disappearing off and going to another team so the actual job losses in the industry as a whole, there'll still be some but there will be an awful lot of people just transferring to a different team and a sort of redistribution of human wealth if you like.



**Me:** Do you think Red Bull have suffered for the loss of Geoff Willis? I know he was in charge of keeping things reliable in that team since he's gone they seem to have more mechanical problems than they have in the last couple of years.

**Joe:** An interesting thought process. I'm sure that the team would say no. There you go, there's a good answer isn't it. Pragmatic.

**Me:** Will he pop up anywhere else or is he on a permanent sabbatical?

**Joe:** I'm sure Geoffrey will pop up somewhere he's a talented fellow it's really a question of who wants him. It's a bit like Mike Gascoyne it's the same thing, we'll see. I don't know when or if he'll turn up again but once these guys get a taste for it they tend to come back.

**Me:** Do we know who's going to be running Renault at Singapore assuming they're allowed to race there?

**Joe:** Who'll be running Renault, I would suggest it will be the same team of people with the exception of Flavio brackets whose ultimate involvement in the practical day to day running of the team was about 0 and Pat Symonds who had a bigger role but even so it was more an executive than a day to day man really.

**Me:** Gavin did ask, he was reading GP+ this week and he noticed that you mentioned that you were going to Place de la Concorde on Monday.

**Joe:** Well I'm not now.

**Me:** You're not now that Flav's gone.

**Joe:** I can't wave goodbye now can I. I presume he won't be there, well he might be there I don't know, I mean I might I don't know, probably not actually because I stood outside the Place de la Concorde on the pavement many times and it's a very unrewarding experience I generally find, particularly as you can't really talk to people at lunchtime because I see from the dossier you had to tick the box if you wanted to get your lunch with the world council.

**Me:** The FIA do seem to have a problem with leaks for some reason, what's going on there?

**Joe:** Well I think they want the answer to that themselves, it's quite funny because everyone assumes, let's face it they are professional leakers. Lots of stuff has been leaked by the FIA over the years to further their causes but in this case there is no furthering of the cause that I can think of by leaking all the stuff that's leaked and judging by the reaction of the people within the FIA as to the leaks its sort of 'who's leaking this stuff' so if they're asking the question it's obviously not them. You can have conspiracies and conspiracies and the rest of it and it's all a big bluff and really they are secretly leaking it and blah blah blah but the reality is they're not, somebody else is. There's a number of different theories as to who might be doing that. One thing I think you can say without a shadow of a doubt that is that it's not Renault who are leaking stuff. I don't think it does anyone any good, there is a stained campaign day in day out drip feeding out information that makes the team looks bad.

**Me:** This must be a precedent in Formula One terms.

**Joe:** I think people know, put it this way, the journalist whom leaks are made generally has some idea as to who's leaking to who. I'm happy to admit I often get leaked to by various different parties, that's part of the joys of the job



and one of the reasons you build up relationships is you're making yourself useful as a good landing place for leaks to come. This stuff has been appearing in places you wouldn't expect to see it and this is what caught everybody by surprise is it was just appearing in places that never get leaks. That was a sort of element of chaos when it first started going 'who on earth is causing this' and what you do is you ring up your favourite leaking sources and say 'oi what's going on' and the answer you get is 'well it's not us your honour.' So there is a bit of an investigation going on as to who was doing that and there's a few people I've noticed getting a bit nervous when it was suggested that the leaking was probably not a good thing and there might be investigations going on, one or two of the journalists looked a bit white.

**Me:** Mentioning no names.

**Joe:** Mentioning no names, no.

**Me:** So you're not heading to Paris on Monday or you're probably not heading to Paris

**Joe:** Well I'm practically there already so it doesn't matter, I can decide on the day if I wish to go.

**Me:** What are your plans for Singapore depending on whether or not you go on Monday?

**Joe:** Well I thought I'd nip over there and check in the Renault garage to make sure that Flav really isn't there. No, I don't really have any plans, I believe that Jean Todt is going to be there so I might go and meet the new remodelled Jean Todt and see if he has become a warm and cuddly person as I am reliably informed. Just go about my business, I mean it's a very odd race meeting Singapore, as everything happens at absolutely the wrong time and as a result of that there's almost no functions because nobody really wants to go out for dinner with anybody at three o'clock in the morning which would be the normal time if you think of end of qualifying or end of practice sessions in the evening in Europe you'd have functions. Translated all on to Singapore time you're looking at three o'clock in the morning and then in the morning when there's daylight everyone is asleep so it's all very bizarre. I found it last year quite a lonely weekend actually, you live in your, you don't really eat properly because when you're going home and feeling that you should be eating everything is shut. It's just a very weird out of kilter feeling I mean it's a very nice town and they do a terrific job but that was my major feeling of last year was sitting in the press room eating sandwiches.

**Me:** Doesn't sound that appealing at all.

**Joe:** Which rather sort of defeats the purpose of promoting tourism in Singapore but that was the reality you know. There are some lovely areas and I'm sure if I have half a chance I will go and find them.

**Me:** Last year was rumoured to be very expensive. How did you find the prices?

**Joe:** Very expensive yes. I think they might have learned a little bit, some of the hotels took a fair beating last year and were handing out rooms in the days before the race for very little money because nobody wanted to pay their ridiculous prices they'd originally asked. It often happens like that and things settle down. I remember I went out to eat one evening in Singapore and was quite shocked last year by the cost of the meal, maybe that was because I picked a bad restaurant I don't know because I haven't had much time to discover otherwise really. The sort of topsy turvey world is one we have to sort of get our heads around this year. Perhaps last year being the first time we might not have done it right entirely, I turned up in the paddock one day at lunch time and couldn't find a soul. I thought 'it'll be open soon' but the place was completely deserted.

**Me:** And how does that affect the publication of GP+?



**Joe:** Haven't thought about it much.

**Me:** What happened last year?

**Joe:** Good question. What happened last year? We produced a magazine and it came out. I can't remember to be honest. I think I probably worked a lot through the night that's what usually happens. I guess we'll probably finish it by about five o'clock in the morning. This last week it was five and a half hours and the race finished at 3.30, I am not good at sums, nine o'clock, I think I finished it and filed it at 10, maybe 9.30 something like that.

**Me:** I know we got around to talking about midnight or one o'clock in the morning.

**Joe:** Normally if you go to the Grand Prix + website it says the time it came out every week. The first thing I do is put a cover up there, a couple of hours after the race this is going to be the cover it says 'coming soon' and then when it comes out, this week's one I think says five and a half hours after the race.

**Me:** It does. No idea I'd never seen that before. There you go, I learned something new today.

**Joe:** Basically it's a sort of a check as to how we are doing so last week it was six hours I think but even so that's still pretty quick but we only have a couple of places where we have problems where we have to fly on an aeroplane between publication and production. It should be done it should be done by if we finish at five o'clock in the morning Singapore time that would be I don't know, nine o'clock at night probably something like that which would be about the same time as normal actually in Europe.

**Me:** Presumably with the case being done and dusted Monday before the race.

**Joe:** Case? What case would that be then?

**Me:** I believe something is happening in Formula One, I'm not sure.

**Joe:** Oh, you mean a Renault like scandal, yes.

**Me:** Could we have a scandal free weekend in Singapore?

**Joe:** Well you'd hope wouldn't you? I think we've probably done enough scandal for now. I think that we need to see what the FIA does, I think there has to be a suitable punishment of some sort or rather for all concerned to a lesser or a greater extent but we need to see firm action and we need to see consistency and if that's done then I think you can look at the positive elements of it which brackets there aren't many but the positive element is in the reaction being a solid strong reaction saying we will not put up with this kind of thing. I'm not sure it warrants six pages of The Times or whatever it was today but it's a fairly outrageous scam is the only word you can use for it really, that they pulled and they got caught and rule number one in all these things is don't get caught if you're going to do it, fine, but don't get caught. I think I wrote in Grand Prix + 'live by the sword die by the sword' so that's the end of that lot. Move them out, clear out, get the team sorted out pointing in the right direction and let's do it properly as opposed to that kind of win at any costs cynicism which is just horrid really. What's motor racing about? Answer, not that. Motor racing is about Fisichella being in a Ferrari and being happy to be there giving up a potentially winning car in a Force India, that's what it's about. It's about drivers driving fast, not about cynical little twerps coming up with daft plans it's just I'm just sick and tired of people winning for the sake of winning. I want to see people who



want to win and really win for the right reasons and I think the sport's had enough of those kind of people throw them out ban them for life and let's get on with the proper game of motor racing.

**Me:** Ok and if we don't speak to you before anything to look forward to in Suzuka?

**Joe:** Suzuka is a terrific race track and I think it'll be interesting to see how the various cars do on the various tyres with the various temperatures, everything is so variable this year it's very hard to call who's going to be competitive where it's interesting it's a fascinating championship and I hope we have a really fascinating build up to the finale. we're going to go off and disappear to Brazil after that and then back to Abu Dhabi so it's all a bit of brain bendingly tiresome but you know it's a dirty job but someone's got to do it, he said with his glass of wine in one hand.

**Me:** Leaning back talking about Formula One.

**Joe:** Exactly.

**Me:** Joe thank you so much for catching up with us and for answering all of our questions. We hope to speak to you very, very soon.

**Joe:** Ok I shall be on the end of the phone I'm sure.

*Transcript by Amy.*

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