



## Episode 9 – Japanese Racing Green?

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[Intro: Rich Reich, Keeping Up With the Race]

**Chris:** Hello and welcome to Sidepodcast, Episode 9 – Japanese Racing Green. Go on then.

**Me:** Well, you know, previously, I might have mentioned that I didn't like the smashed egg look of the Renault? You know, the look, yellow and the orange and the white, just kind of thrown with abandon over the car.

**Chris:** Lots of colours.

**Me:** Well, did you see what Honda released this week?

**Chris:** Yes.

**Me:** My goodness.

**Chris:** Well, it was only two colours. Blue and green. You should like it.

**Me:** There's many colours on there. Firstly, there's black.

**Chris:** Yea, there's a black bit.

**Me:** And there's yellowy-brown bits. I hate it. I hate it more than I hate the Renault. I actually like the Renault in comparison. Side by side, I'm falling in love with the Renault.

**Chris:** Why do you hate it?

**Me:** It's almost as if they've got Steve Wonder to design it, that's really how I feel about it. As if someone has just looked at a car, and they've looked at a picture of a globe, and they've superimposed one on the other and went, yea, that'll do. It doesn't fit, it doesn't look particularly good, it doesn't look like the earth.

**Chris:** I think what they're trying to do is they wanted to have the back bit with the curve of the earth, so they couldn't fit it all on, because it's only a small car.

**Me:** So they wanted it to look spherical, on a flat car?

**Chris:** You can see what they were trying to do, though. It may not have worked, but that's why they've got the black bit at the back.

**Me:** Forget about why they're doing it, forget about the premise of the whole eco thing for the moment, as a piece of design, it is appalling. You know when the Toro Rosso came out last year, and you looked at the Toro Rosso and went, that's just a fluffy cloud. That's a red, fluffy cloud, it doesn't even look like a bull. Because you can't superimpose a bull on a Formula 1 car, right? You remember that came out and they raced all year with it, and it didn't once at any point look like a bull was chasing anyone. It's like that but worse.



**Chris:** The thing is, the Toro Rosso didn't look bad, it just didn't look like a bull, whereas this looks bad.

**Me:** It's supposed to look like something and it doesn't, it fails in every way, shape and form. Nick Fry has said publically, in interviews, they've tried a couple of different designs and not all of them have worked, and they might refine it further. Might I suggest that they refine it completely? Going back to the black thing you were talking about, you know, with the curvature of the earth across the engine? Apparently they did that for technical reasons rather than any altruistic reasons. Apparently the heat of the engine and the exhaust coming from the back of the car would melt the look of the earth, rather quickly. The transfers would just come peeling off, the delicate detail.

**Chris:** The stickers.

**Me:** I think it's unfortunate that the world would be destroyed by an engine.

**Chris:** It's ironic.

**Me:** There is really, they sidestepped that issue really. It would look quite terrible if they were racing round and slowly bits of countries would start peeling off. Like, North America would just disappear, it would melt and just be horrible. They've set themselves all sorts of chaos this year. Imagine if one of the endplates gone, there goes Russia. Didn't need that bit anyway, go quicker without Russia. Do you know what I mean? It's just gonna be awful.

**Chris:** Well, you know, you're not the only one that doesn't like it.

**Me:** Oh surprise.

**Chris:** A spokesperson for the European Federation for Transport and Environment has said: "What we know from our research is that Honda is far from reaching its EU fuel efficiency target for new cars sold. In other words, we'd rather they concentrated a bit harder on the day job."

**Me:** And hired a designer.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** But at least they're trying to do a good thing. The website they've set up to go along with it is myearthdream.com. It launched at the end of February and it's basically a way to pledge your support to the cause and get your name on the car. I say pledge your support, I mean pledge your money.

**Me:** But no, hold on, didn't Nick say they didn't want the money?

**Chris:** Yea, Nick Fry did an interview with Autosport.com and he said: "The pledge, we hope, will be that they will change their personal behaviours in some way that is environmentally friendly, and if they wish so, and it is not necessarily tied together, then people can also make a donation to an environmental charity. They can even pick a pixel somewhere on the car and put their name on it."

**Me:** That sounds familiar. Didn't some guy last year do the Million Dollar Homepage? Whereby, anyone could buy a pixel on a homepage.

**Chris:** Yes, put some advertising on it.

**Me:** So that's not very original an idea is it?



**Chris:** No.

**Me:** I tell you something else, didn't Justin Wilson have quite a similar idea in Formula 1 a couple of years back, when he offered shares in himself, where people could come along and buy bits of Justin Wilson, in order to keep him in Formula 1?

**Chris:** I'll have an ear please.

**Me:** I think, isn't it put together by that guy that did the Spice Girls?

**Chris:** Simon Fuller.

**Me:** Yea, I believe he's been given full range to do whatever he wants with the Honda advertising program, and he's ripped off all these ideas from last year and years gone by, and rehashed them.

**Chris:** Nothing original.

**Me:** Nothing original at all, they're flat out of ideas.

**Chris:** Anyway, Sidepodcast, we tried to pledge because we're all about the environment. I went to the website and I clicked on Make A Pledge. You get to choose the bit of car you want your pledge to show up on although your name only appears on the website at the moment. Apparently it's going to be on the car later in the season, which is a bit rubbish. You can choose on the car, and obviously we chose a sidepod. I entered the required information and picked the pledge we were choosing. You can pick between things like sharing a car or walking to work, or turning off the tap when you brush your teeth.

**Me:** Hold on a second, wouldn't it be great if one of those options were to share a Formula 1 car?

**Chris:** Do you know anybody with a Formula 1 car?

**Me:** No.

**Chris:** Probably not then. Simple and easy things that make quite a difference, not Formula 1 cars. You couldn't continue until you selected a donation, an amount between 1 and 10,000.

**Me:** So it's an optional pledge then, as long as it's greater than zero.

**Chris:** Exactly, I'm pretty sure he was lying when he said you don't have to donate.

**Me:** Or confused, don't call him a liar, he might be misinformed.

**Chris:** Okay, fair enough. I decided that Sidepodcast would have to think about the transaction, because we don't like liars, and I backtracked from the credit card page by clicking cancel. Myearthdream.com then thanked me for my pledge and said they would email me when it was going to go live on the website.

**Me:** So they have bad designers and now they have bad website programmers.



**Chris:** It was weird, I didn't donate, and they still thanked me. So like you said, either he wasn't lying or their website is a bit screwed. I know which one I think.

[Sweeper]

**Me:** It's not entirely selfless, this whole pledge thing.

**Chris:** No, I mean, the whole thing really sidesteps the issue of not having any major sponsors since BAR quit.

**Me:** That marketing department has consistently failed to find any big name sponsors in its entire existence.

**Chris:** I think this year, Vodafone were a potential sponsor, but they obviously chose McLaren instead. Going the route of "We don't need any sponsors, we're going to donate everything to charity," that conveniently deflects attention away from the lack of interested parties. Also, by showing their interest in the environment within Formula 1, they're hoping that the caring persona will be reflected onto the car as well. I think a while back there was a host of Honda road car adverts, trying to explain the green direction the company was going in.

**Me:** Oh, what was the annoying theme tune on those?

**Chris:** It went something like: "Make something, change something, make something, change something, make something better."

**Me:** I hated those.

**Chris:** Yea, they were quite annoying, obviously they didn't work on me at all. Yea, so Honda will be hoping that this is another step in the right direction. I have a quote from the Honda Racing chairman Yasuhiro Wada.

**Me:** Who?

**Chris:** I'm not saying it again.

**Me:** Oh, I like it when you say that.

**Chris:** "Honda constantly strives to be innovative in both its technology and its thinking, and to sincerely respond to the demands of customers and society. Honda has always made great efforts to contribute to the conservation of the environment in its corporate activity." But then a climate campaigner for Greenpeace said: "It's not an environmental revolution, it's a paint job." Which is the best soundbyte ever. Whether we approve or not, it has got them in the news. Everyone is talking about it, I haven't been able to find a Formula 1 blog or a sports news site that hasn't mentioned it. Here we are dedicating practically an entire podcast to the subject. It's not hurting them, really, is it?

**Me:** I'm not sure if we're talking about them positively.

[Jingle: "You're listening to the Weekly F1 show from Sidepodcast. Don't forget to check out our store for t-shirts, mugs, keyrings and more. All the information's on the homepage."]

**Chris:** It's not just the sponsorship side of things that Honda are using to promote environmental concerns. I think both Button and Barrichello drive hybrid cars, and Nick Fry drives a diesel. They've signed up with a company called Carbon Sense, which after some research, appears to be a consultant sort of company, that will help you get a bit



greener. The website didn't really give much away. Honda are also doing the mundane but essential things such as turning off computer screens and using energy efficient light bulbs. They're doing a car sharing scheme, I'd share a car with Jenson any day.

**Me:** I bet you would. Just in the name of efficiency, obviously.

**Chris:** Doing my bit for the environment. One interesting idea they have for this year is they hope to have their motorhome in the paddock powered by solar cells. That's much better than that enormous Red Bull Energy Centre, which is quite clearly living up to its name and using a ton of energy. Maybe we should call it the Waste of Energy Centre. It's enormous. Super Aguri have decided that they're efficient because they're small. I'm not entirely sure how that follows but they are definitely small.

**Me:** I think what they mean is they're efficient because they're recycling their chassis. They had an A23, they turned that into an SA05, then they've got the RA06, that's becoming the SA06.

**Chris:** Definitely one way to recycle. Ferrari, they really do everything that the FIA tells them to. A Ferrari spokesman has said: "The company respects the highest standard required by Italian law." That statement says absolutely nothing and basically means that they're doing nothing as well.

**Me:** And they make inefficient road cars, too.

**Chris:** Renault are the real winners on the green front. Their factory in Enstone is basically carbon neutral with renewable energy sources and huge amounts of recycling. They recover waste metal that saves 20 tonnes a year, and their waste disposal systems have reduced lorry traffic by half. An onsite sewage pumping station brought about an 800% saving in energy use. That's an incredible amount. No wonder they're your favourites.

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** The FIA state that they have been carbon neutral since 1997. This means that they offset the competition of the cars and the travel of personnel worldwide, by planting trees, and helping with threatened forests. But they're not really all that green, are they? There are big flaws in the competitions, such as the qualifying system in Formula 1.

**Me:** That's a great qualifying system. Let's go round and round and round, what are they doing, why are they going round and round and round, what's the point of going round? They're burning off fuel.

**Chris:** For no reason whatsoever.

**Me:** They're taking fuel out of the ground, they're putting it into a tank and then they're driving round and round until it all runs out again.

**Chris:** Coincidentally this week, they've decided to push back some of the eco-friendly ideas they'd been planning for 2010 to 2011.

**Me:** These are the heat and exhaust gas recovery systems, you're talking about there. I think they've postponed it to keep in sync with the engine change regulations that are going to come in. They're going to try and make engines last four races.

**Chris:** Four?



**Me:** Yea, it's a cost cutting idea that, rather than an eco idea. It is to encourage high efficiency and bringing in the use of bio-fuels.

**Chris:** You'd have thought they could just bring those plans forward, rather than pushing everything back.

**Me:** Too obvious.

**Chris:** Another development will be that they'll completely free up driver aids, because they need the sport to push future technology that is relevant to the road car.

**Me:** You mean, they're trying to make F1 have a point.

**Chris:** Exactly. At the moment, road cars are better than Formula 1 cars, aren't they?

**Me:** Your average BMW probably is. A little bit slower, but technically better.

**Chris:** Max Mosley, he said: "If we have teams with research programs, the object of which is to increase efficiency, then that has a direct effect on road cars. Provided F1 increases the speed with which automotive products appear, then that's justified." That's nice, having to justify his own sport. So, what have they done to road cars, then?

**Me:** Oh, all sorts of things. Specifically tyre safety, a lot of work that Bridgestone are doing with the FIA has improved car tyre safety. Carbon fibre brakes, they came from Formula 1. You get those on your high end cars. I'm not sure if active suspension came from Formula 1, did that come there first, or did it start in road cars? I think Formula 1 brought that in too. And those flappy paddle gearboxes, that I know you love.

**Chris:** Well, then, it's all been worth it, hasn't it?

[Sweeper]

**Chris:** So for all your criticism of Honda and the FIA for not being able to save the environment, what is Sidepodcast going to do? Well, you know what, until you can come up with your own good ideas, I think the best thing I can do is switch off your microphone, that should save a few kilowatts.

**Me:** [Very faint] Oi!

**Chris:** Well, it sounds like I'll be doing this show by myself next week, so join me for the 2007 season preview. You'd be a fool to miss it.

[Out: Rich Reich, Keeping Up With The Race]