



Le Var

SPECIAL EDITION

**THE FRENCH
F1 GRAND PRIX
AT LE CASTELLET**

THE PAUL RICARD CIRCUIT

48 years of dedication
and innovation

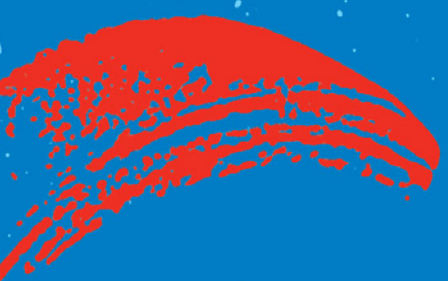
F1 GRAND PRIX

The return to France!

THE VAR, SPORTING EXCELLENCE

Rugby, sailing,
triathlon, cycling,
rally...

PAUL RICARD



PAUL RICARD

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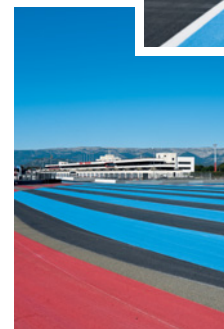
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Shown opposite: The finishing straight in front of the grandstand on the Paul-Ricard circuit

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"The return of the French F1 Grand Prix, an exemplary synergy"



Marc Giraud, Chairman of the Departmental Council of the Var

What does the return of the Grand Prix to the Var actually mean?

A huge sense of pride! A big gamble! And the definitely righting an immense wrong.

The Var is proud to have the French Grand Prix once more, 10 years after it disappeared from the Formula 1 calendar. Holding it at Paul Ricard harks back to the wonderful sight of great champions, like the 1973 winner, Ronnie Peterson, Niki Lauda, in 1975, James Hunt who won in 1976, or two-time winner, Nigel Mansell in 1986 and 1987 and, of course,

Alain Prost, who won in 1983, 1988, 1989 and 1990. It embodies prestigious teams who have thrilled racing car fanatics, such as Lotus, Williams, Renault, McLaren and Ferrari, plus the fervent spectators who watched the races unfold. That's what makes the department so delighted to renew its ties with motor racing history, bonds that should never have been broken in the first place. It's also a gamble as, after 10 years without a race in France, and 27 at Le Castellet. The French Formula 1 Grand Prix has to win back the

drivers, teams and spectators and convince them that the Var is the natural home of the world's most celebrated motor racing event. This return is a gamble we hope to win and right a double-wrong; the Grand Prix leaving the Var and the race being dropped, pure and simple.

How have all the arrangements for the race actually gone?

There's been an exemplary synergy between Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region* the Var Department** and Toulon Provence Méditerranée Me-

tropolitan Area, the Var Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Nice-Côte d'Azur Metropolitan Area, Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolitan Area and the Sud-Sainte-Baume Agglomeration. They all teamed up in a Public Interest Group (GIP), to organise the return of the French Grand Prix to the Var. Each made their own contribution with a palpable desire to succeed. It's a proper team and, if I may be so bold, one that has victory in its sights and has got what it takes to get there!

The Var Departmental Council* has made a financial commitment over several years. What is the purpose behind this investment?

The Department's contribution amounted to 220,000 euros in 2017 and will rise to 2 million euros, each year for 5 years, from 2018. This seems a lot of money, but we need to factor in the expected economic and tourism benefits, as well the visibility that comes with the race. The FIA and Liberty Media wanted public sector partners involved and we answered the call!

What are these expected benefits?

They're substantial. Total short-term economic benefit for the whole region is valued at 65 million euros and we estimate that a large part of this will fall to businesses in the Var. There will also be 70,000 spectators a day attending the 4-day event. The department's tourism image as France's top destination (excluding the Ile de France) will be further enhanced with this worldwide event. Finally, the race shines a giant spotlight that showcases the Var's image and reputation to a global audience



of almost 500 million television viewers on all continents.

More generally, the Departmental Council is a key partner in sport. What main priorities are you working on in terms of sports policy?**

The Departmental Council's policy, which I instigated in 2015, is based on the values of performance, excellence and quality. There are two priorities. Firstly, our policy fosters the growth of physical and sporting activities by promoting access to a wide range of supervised sports and by building capacity in the sports movement. Secondly, it asserts the Var's sporting image by promoting the its competitive prowess and boosts its appeal.

Initial undertakings target aid for sports clubs in the Var. We give priority support to those clubs that voluntarily seek to secure federation approval to guarantee the quality of services they provide. This applies to supervised activities or equipment. The introduction of the "Sport Découverte" pass lets young people from the Var try out different sports. Already, a lot of secondary school pupils have registered to use it. The Var's competitive enthusiasm and sporting achievements led us to promote our athletes competing in national, European and world championships. They are real ambassadors for their

disciplines and help promote the Var's sporting ability. We also introduced a performance and excellence reward scheme for amateur athletes in individual or team sports and we organise a "Var Champions Gala Evening" to mark the occasion.

Finally, we support the growth of a separate, supplementary offer for the department, to nurture its active image, coupled with the strong potential and huge appeal for nature-based sport. Concerning the latter, one of the aims is to pursue and enhance activities that tie in with the PDESI. This is a cross-cutting, operational tool for planned development and the promotion of nature-based sports activities. It combines various sports, environmental, tourism and sociological-related issues, but connects with image and promotion too.

The Departmental Council will be at the Paul-Ricard race track, in the Exhibitors' Village. What will visitors see there?**

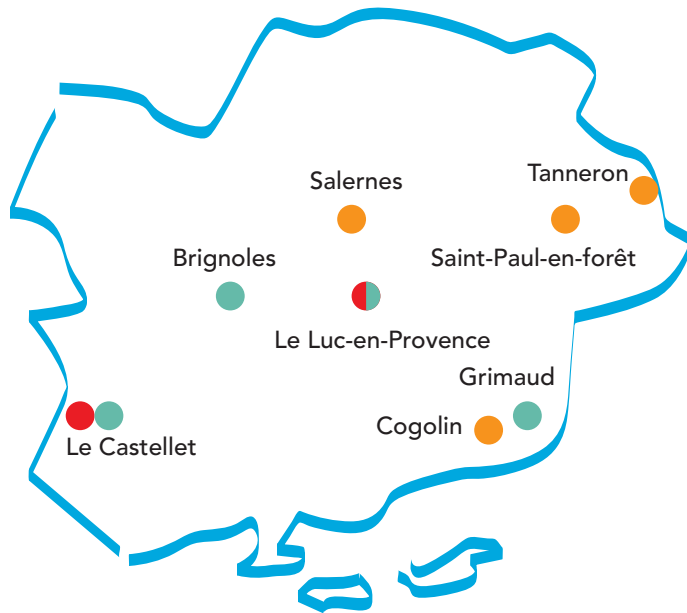
There will be a whole host of Var sporting excellence! A Var which offers a different, fun and appealing side to sport, that acts as a counterpoint to motor sport. It doesn't clash with motor sport but complements it. We've got fresh air, the sea and above all, wall-to-wall sunshine! ■

* One of the 13 Regional Councils in France

** One of the 96 Departmental Councils in France

MOTOR SPORT

in the Var



8 approved permanent race tracks in the Var (accreditation renewed every 4 years).

- HIGH-SPEED*
- KARTING**
- MOTO CROSS**

* More than 200 km/h: national approval from the National Commission for Research on High-Speed Circuits (Commission Nationale d'Étude des Circuits de Vitesse)

** Less than 200 km/h: Prefectural approval

4,412

individuals from the Var are members of the French Motor Sport Federation (FFSA).

64

the number of editions of the Rallye du Var, the final race of the French Rally Championship, in November 2018.

27



the number of years it took for the French Grand Prix to return to the Var.

2,900 km

D83

of roads maintained by the Var Departmental Council* so you can drive safely.

18

major motor sport events organised this year at the Paul Ricard circuit.

50

companies based in the Var working in various motor sport sectors (design, manufacturing, racing driver schools, marketing, etc.).

6,000

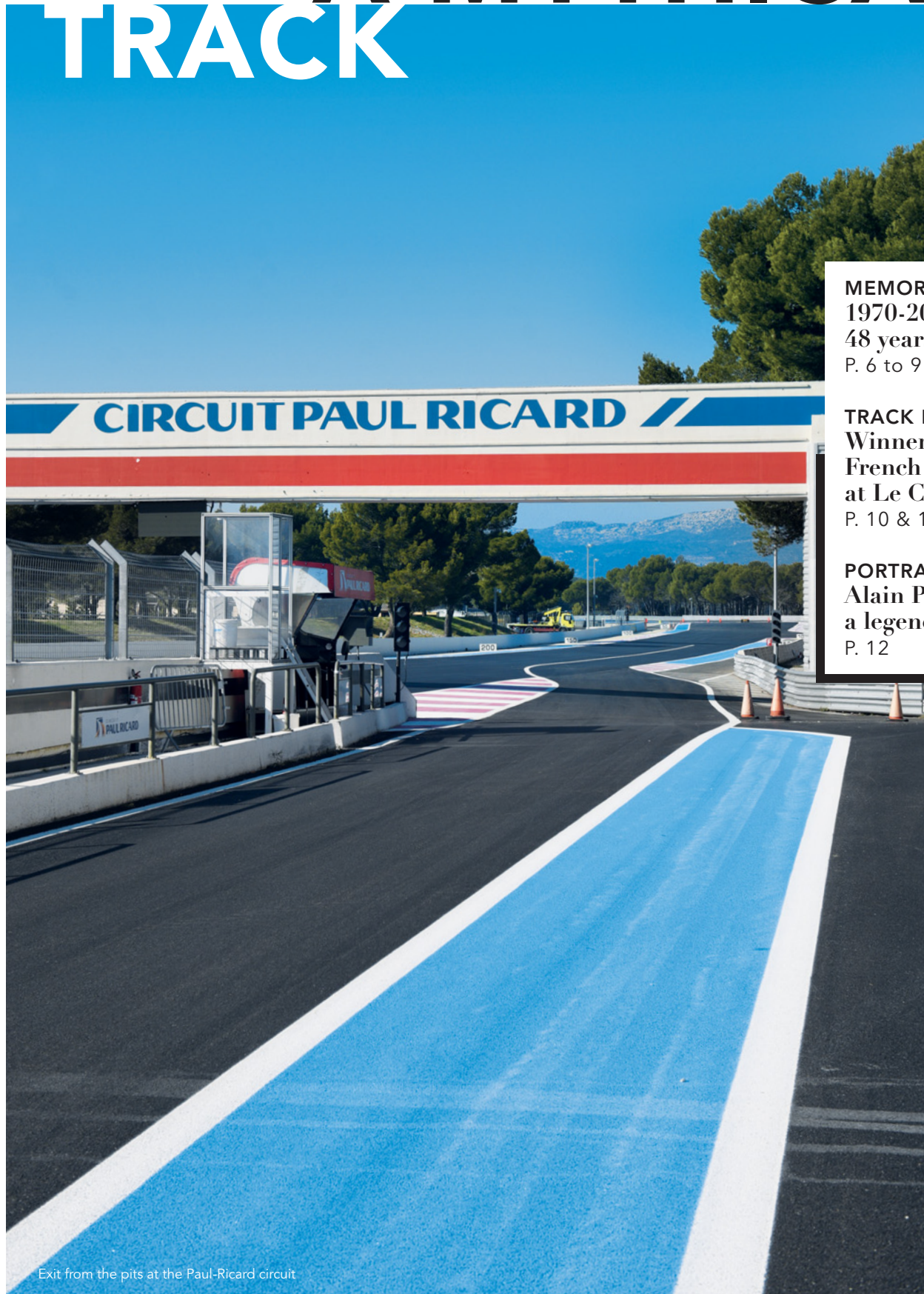


secondary school pupils attend workshops each year to learn about road safety.

2,000,000 euros

allocated each year for 5 years by the Department to the Public Interest Grouping to organise the French Grand Prix at the Paul Ricard circuit, in Le Castellet.

PAUL-RICARD A MYTHICAL TRACK



Exit from the pits at the Paul-Ricard circuit

MEMORIES
1970-2018:
48 years of history
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TRACK RECORDS
Winners of the
French F1 Grand Prix
at Le Castellet
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PORTRAIT
Alain Prost,
a legend
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1970-2018: 48 YEARS OF HISTORY

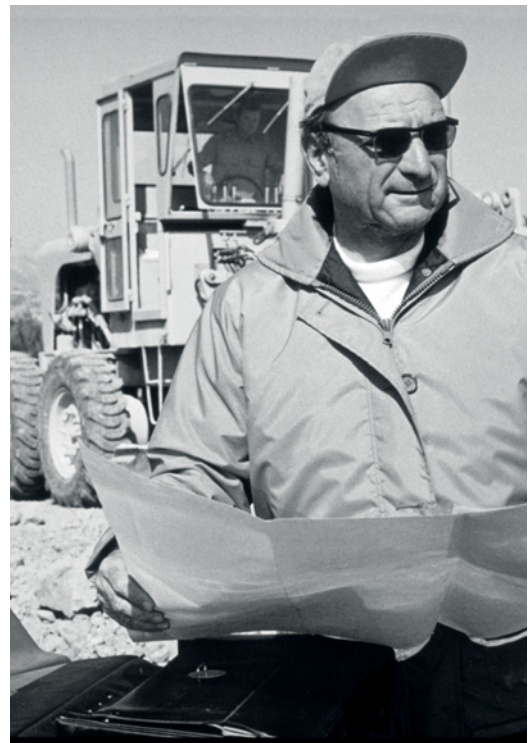
Some call it Le Castellet, but most of the time it's Paul Ricard. The race track in the Var was built in 1970 and still harbours the soul of its creator, Paul Ricard. Here's a look back at almost 50 years of history.

THE SOUL OF A VISIONARY

It all started back in the 1960's, when Paul Ricard, the inventor of the famous aniseed-flavoured alcoholic drink, acquired a huge tract of land on the Camp du Castellet plateau. He quickly set about using it to promote his brand by targeting a young and dynamic audience and linking his product to popular activities. Jean-Pierre Paoli, who created and then managed the circuit, remembers Paul Ricard as *"one of the first French entrepreneurs to refer to the 'leisure civilisation' and do something about it. Now, everyone talks about leisure, but at the time it was revolutionary!"* Paul Ricard saw motor sport as a great opportunity, but he was also someone who loved to build things even more than starting businesses. *"He built Les Embiez, Bendor, and factories all over France. Managing architects and engineers to make them produce something lasting was really important for him"*, reminisces Jean-Pierre Paoli.

BUILDING A STANDARD-SETTING RACE TRACK

After a series meetings and discussions with experts, Paul Ricard tasked Jean-Pierre Paoli with developing the circuit. At the time, Paoli, who later became a very good racing driver, knew nothing about motor sport. So, he decided to create the track layout by drawing on the skills of certain French racing drivers. He also brought in Johnny Rives, a specialist journalist with L'Équipe magazine. *"In October 1969, he met with racing drivers, Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Jean-Pierre Jabouille, François Mazet and myself, on the Camp du Castellet plateau. There was nothing there, just heathland!"*, according to the journalist. *"He said, Paul Ricard*



Paul Ricard, Builder



Building the Paul-Ricard circuit

Aerial view of the Paul-Ricard circuit



© Archives Ricard SAS

would like to build a race track here, so how do you think we can do it?" We all gave him advice, especially Jean-Pierre Beltoise, the top French racing driver at the time, who was well acquainted with safety matters during races. So, on the back of all this input, he drew up the first plans for the circuit which was built at the blistering pace of a few months. The first race was held in April 1970". The circuit was very well received by the racing community! It was ultra-modern in terms of safety and really raised the bar compared to the others. At the time, it wasn't unusual for there to be deaths during races and there were many serious accidents. The drivers started to ask questions. "The ideal race track had dips, humps and spectacular turns but it was also very dangerous. Drivers' attitudes were changing. They wanted an end to it! And the Paul Ricard circuit arrived at that precise moment", explains Jean-Pierre Paoli. Paul Ricard took the example of motorways that were being built at the time. "He added safety measures to the specifications which he sent to me for this master project; a wider track, at least 12 metres wide, with no vertical turns, i.e. no dips or humps. To improve safety on and around the track, we took the example of motorways and installed double crash barriers. The drivers were delighted to discover a circuit where they could have fun without fearing for their lives. Paul Ricard was also very demanding when dealing with the public, such as the reception of spectators, but also the stands and paddock, so that everyone, professionals and spectators alike were welcomed in the best possible conditions".

THE TRACK'S FINEST HOUR

On 18 April 1970, the first F2 race was held, as a trial run, while one year later, in July 1971, true recognition came when Paul Ricard hosted the French Grand Prix. The world's best racing drivers discovered the track and some, like Jacky Ickx, already deemed it to be "Europe's number one racing circuit in all respects". From then on, the Paul-Ricard circuit was on the calendars of international races. The first Motorbike Grand Prix was held there in 1973 and in 1978, the Bol d'Or endurance race took up residence. Up until 1999, the circuit held a total of 14 F1 Grands Prix, 13 Motorbike Grands Prix, and 22 editions of the Bol d'Or! It also diversified into truck, side-car, saloon car races and a whole host of events and concerts in the paddock. "All the top names in motor and motorbike racing have come to Paul Ricard, which is testament to the track's sporting success", states Jean-Pierre Paoli.

However, in 1990, Paul Ricard lost the French Grand Prix after 4 consecutive years at Le Castellet. It switched to Magny Cours in 1991, which had just been thoroughly refurbished. Why did this happen? "What was the cutting edge of modernity and safety in 1970 was far from it by 1990", explains Johnny Rives. "We would have had to reconfigure the



© Archive Les amis de Paul Ricard

Opening ceremony at the Paul-Ricard circuit

Pits – Paul-Ricard circuit



© Photothèque Ricard SAS

track layout and make considerable investments”, he explains. Also, the French Grand Prix came up short in terms of popular success. There were rumours that François Mitterrand, the then-French President, had a hand in this change of venue. For Jean-Pierre Paoli, who was also part of the team that renovated Magny Cours, “this assumption has been widely exaggerated. You need to remember that Le Castellet was an ageing track with financial difficulties”.

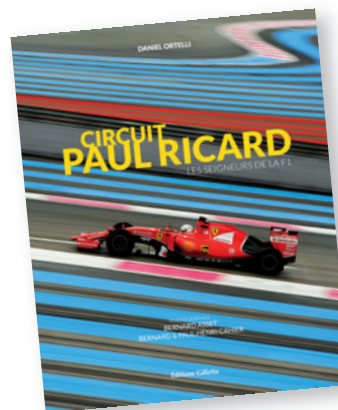
A HIGH-TECH CIRCUIT

Paul Ricard died on 7 November 1997 and with the involvement of Bernie Ecclestone, the Ricard’s heirs sold the circuit to the Excelis Company. Philippe Gurdjian came in to head the company and undertook a gargantuan redevelopment programme resulting in an outstanding race track reserved exclusively for private testing and closed to the public. In the 2000’s, the track became a modern and experimental centre, combining design and safety. Considerable alterations were made, especially run-off areas on turns. Gravel traps and rows of fences were removed and tarmac with different coloured abrasive bands was laid to slow cars overrunning the racing line. The circuit was renamed Paul Ricard HTTT (High Tech Test Track) and in 2006, it was approved by the Fédération Internationale de Automobile (FIA). In 2007, the FIA named the track a top centre of excellence for safety in motor sport. “*The circuit was once again an international benchmark*”, states Jean-Pierre Paoli. “*All circuits built since then have largely been inspired by Paul Ricard!*”

RE-OPENING TO PUBLIC

Ten years after it was closed to the public, the circuit opened its doors again in 2009, on the decision of a newly-installed management team. Work was undertaken to cater for up to 10,000 spectators and the first LMS (Le Mans Series) race served up a spectacle that many enthusiasts have been waiting a decade for. 2010 proved to be even better, with international races and a celebration to mark the circuit’s 40th anniversary! All the legends that graced the track were there. It was the start of a new era and a business diversification strategy was launched, with the return of the Truck Grand Prix and the Bol d’Or endurance race, after 16 years absence. In addition, the track held music festivals and Xtrem Park also opened (see pages 22-23 and 26). Now, with the French Grand Prix for the next five years, Le Castellet is taking on a new international dimension, yet retains the soul of its creator. ■

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE TRACK



Daniel Ortelli’s book, “*Circuit Paul-Ricard, les Seigneurs de la F1*” (the Paul Ricard race track and the gods of F1), takes a look back at the track’s finest moments. It also reviews the 14 F1 Grands Prix that were held there. The book is illustrated with photos by Bernard Asset, as well as Bernard and Paul-Henri Cahier, and is published by Editions Gilletta, priced €29.90. It’s a must for all Paul Ricard fans!

www.editionsgilletta.com



© Circuit Paul-Ricard

LMS (Le Mans Series) race at the Paul-Ricard circuit

The winners of THE FRENCH F1



1971 / Jackie Stewart

The first winner of the French Grand Prix at Paul Ricard is Scotsman, Jackie Stewart, in a Tyrrell. He beats François Cevert, also driving a Tyrrell, which causes a sensation with the spectators!



1973 / Ronnie Peterson

Ronnie Peterson triumphs in a Lotus-Ford, with François Cevert (Tyrrell) again taking second place on the podium.



1975 / Niki Lauda

Niki Lauda wins in his Ferrari 312 T, a second and a half ahead of James Hunt (Hesketh Ford Cosworth).



1976 / James Hunt

After his Hesketh team folded, James Hunt made a last-gasp move to McLaren and wins the French Grand Prix, just a few months before his World Championship triumph.



1978 / Mario Andretti

A brilliant Lotus one-two, with Mario Andretti finishing first and Ronnie Peterson, second. The team just introduced some new inventions for its cars, with ground-effect. This gave them spectacular aerodynamic effects and was quickly copied by the other teams.



1980 / Alan Jones

French driver, Jacques Laffite, starts in pole position but Alan Jones (Williams-Ford) wins. This was his third victory of the season before going on to win the World Championship.



1982 / René Arnoux

A historic French triple finish in front of ecstatic spectators. Alain Prost (Renault) is beaten by René Arnoux, also driving a Renault, with Didier Pironi (Ferrari) third. Fourth place also goes to another Frenchman, Patrick Tambay.

GRAND PRIX *at Le Castellet*



1983 / Alain Prost

Alain Prost's first win (in a Renault) at Paul Ricard, and sixth Grand Prix victory of his career.



1985 / Nelson Piquet

Brazilian, Nelson Piquet (Brabham) wins the French Grand Prix. A computer glitch puts Alain Prost (McLaren) second, in front of Keke Rosberg (Williams), but the mistake is rectified and the Finn finishes 6 seconds behind Piquet.



1986 / Nigel Mansell

Following a fatal accident, the track is altered and reduced to 2 km. Nigel Mansell, in a Williams, finishes first in front of Prost and Piquet.



1987 / Nigel Mansell

The Williams-Hondas of Mansell and Piquet literally blow their opponents away. Alain Prost (McLaren) finishes third, in front of Ayrton Senna.



1988 / Alain Prost

The two best drivers, Prost and Senna, drive for the same team (McLaren). After a troublesome pit-stop, double-champion Alain Prost, overtakes his rival in mid-race on the exit of Signes and goes on to win at Le Castellet for a second time.



1989 / Alain Prost

The rivalry between Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna, both driving for McLaren, reaches its peak. Prost wins pole position by 25-thousandths of a second. Senna has to abandon on lap one leaving Prost to comfortably take the chequered flag.



1990 / Alain Prost

Alain Prost takes his third consecutive victory at the Le Castellet track and his first for Ferrari. The Scuderia hadn't won the French Grand Prix since 1975! It's also the final curtain for Paul Ricard. In 1991, it became official, the French Grand Prix would now be held at Magny Cours.

Alain Prost, **A LEGEND**



© Bernard Asset

Four-time world champion, Alain Prost, is undoubtedly the best ever French racing driver. He is still the only Frenchman to have won four Formula 1 (F1) World Championships and the only driver in the world to have won the French Grand Prix four times at Le Castellet, 3 of them in consecutive years!

Born in 1955, Alain Prost (later known as “The Professor”), fell in love with motor sport at a young age. In 1973, he became French Junior Karting Champion, then won the European title. In 1974, he became France Senior Champion before graduating to single-seater racing in

1975. He cut his teeth in Formula Renault then Formula 3 (F3) and was a runaway success each time, winning the French Formula Renault Championship and European F3 Championship. His first F1 race was with McLaren in 1980, in Argentina, before signing for Renault-Elf in 1981 when he won his first French Grand Prix at Dijon! He won at Paul Ricard for the first time in 1983, dominating the race after starting from pole position. In 1984, he re-joined McLaren but had to wait until 1988 to record his next victory at Le Castellet despite winning two World Championships in 1985 and 1986. On 5 July 1988, he was once again in pole position, this time with none other than Ayrton Senna, the best team-mate he had ever had. Senna was also his fiercest opponent, but Prost executed a perfect move towards the end of the race by overtaking Senna on the exit of a long turn. In 1989, he set the fastest qualifying time and once again started the French Grand Prix from pole at Paul Ricard. Senna was forced to abandon on the first lap, leaving Prost free to win the race. At the end of the season, he secured his 3rd World Championship, but announced he was changing teams. In 1990, he won at Le Castellet for the 3rd consecutive time (and 4th time in his career), this time at the wheel of a Ferrari. In 1993, after a season commenting instead of driving, he won his 4th F1 World Championship. In all, the French driver won 51 F1 races from 199 starts.

Alain Prost is the last French racing driver to have won at Le Castellet, but maybe not for much longer... ■

AN EXCEPTIONAL LOCATION



BEHIND THE WHEEL
A very challenging
F1 race track
P. 14 & 15

GREEN LIGHT
A special F1 circuit
P. 16 & 17

A MEETING WITH
Stéphane Clair
P. 18 & 19

RECEPTION FACILITIES
A modern venue
P. 20 & 21

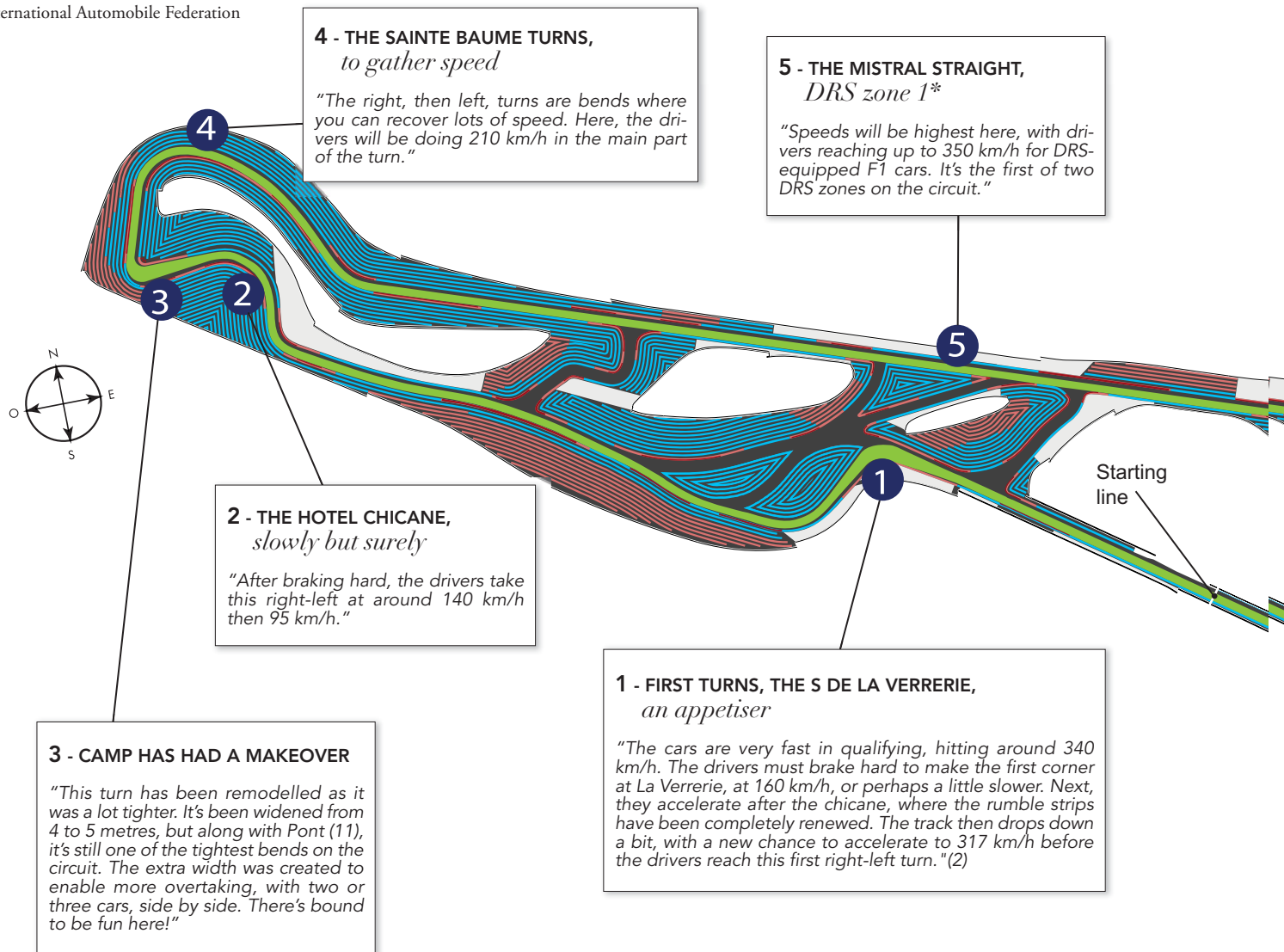
THRILLS AND SPILLS
An activity-packed
circuits
P. 22 & 23

Pits at the Paul-Ricard circuit today

A VERY CHALLENGING *F1 race track*

Paul Ricard has one of the sharpest accelerations on two straight lines, from 95 to 345 km/h. It also has flowing, technical curves, not to mention the ultra-fast Signes curve. Race Track Director, André Rey, takes us on a lap of this new track layout, never-before tested in F1, and gives us a sneak peek at the circuit's estimated speeds based on the FIA simulator*.

* International Automobile Federation



4 - THE SAINTE BAUME TURNS,
to gather speed

"The right, then left, turns are bends where you can recover lots of speed. Here, the drivers will be doing 210 km/h in the main part of the turn."

5 - THE MISTRAL STRAIGHT,
*DRS zone 1**

"Speeds will be highest here, with drivers reaching up to 350 km/h for DRS-equipped F1 cars. It's the first of two DRS zones on the circuit."

2 - THE HOTEL CHICANE,
slowly but surely

"After braking hard, the drivers take this right-left at around 140 km/h then 95 km/h."

3 - CAMP HAS HAD A MAKEOVER

"This turn has been remodelled as it was a lot tighter. It's been widened from 4 to 5 metres, but along with Pont (11), it's still one of the tightest bends on the circuit. The extra width was created to enable more overtaking, with two or three cars, side by side. There's bound to be fun here!"

1 - FIRST TURNS, THE S DE LA VERRERIE,
an appetiser

"The cars are very fast in qualifying, hitting around 340 km/h. The drivers must brake hard to make the first corner at La Verrerie, at 160 km/h, or perhaps a little slower. Next, they accelerate after the chicane, where the rumble strips have been completely renewed. The track then drops down a bit, with a new chance to accelerate to 317 km/h before the drivers reach this first right-left turn."(2)

*Drag Reduction System: this system reduces the drag on the cars using a mobile device fitted to the rear wing of a Formula 1 car. Cutting aerodynamic drag means that the car loses downforce.

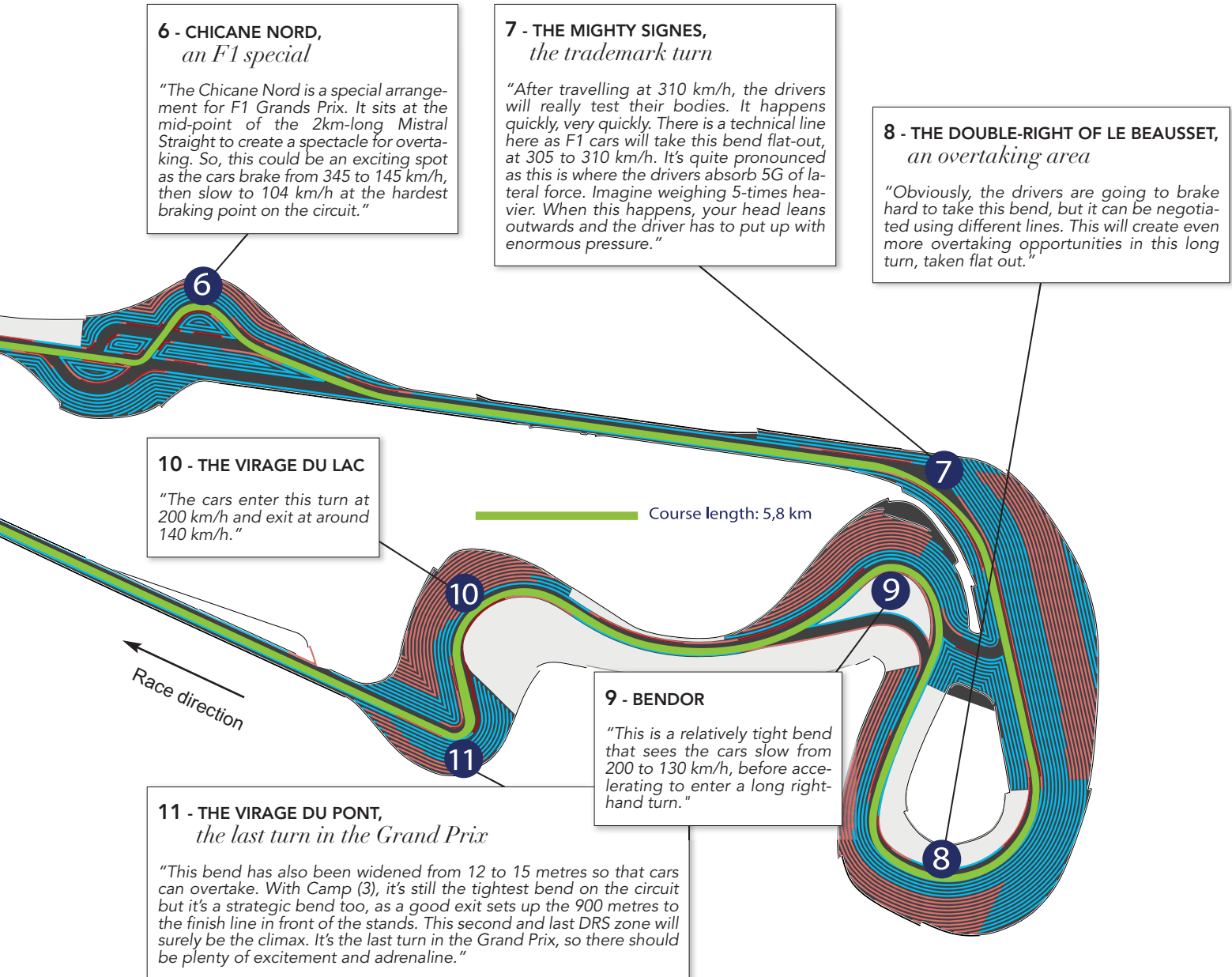


André Rey
has been Paul Ricard Race
Track Director for 6 years.

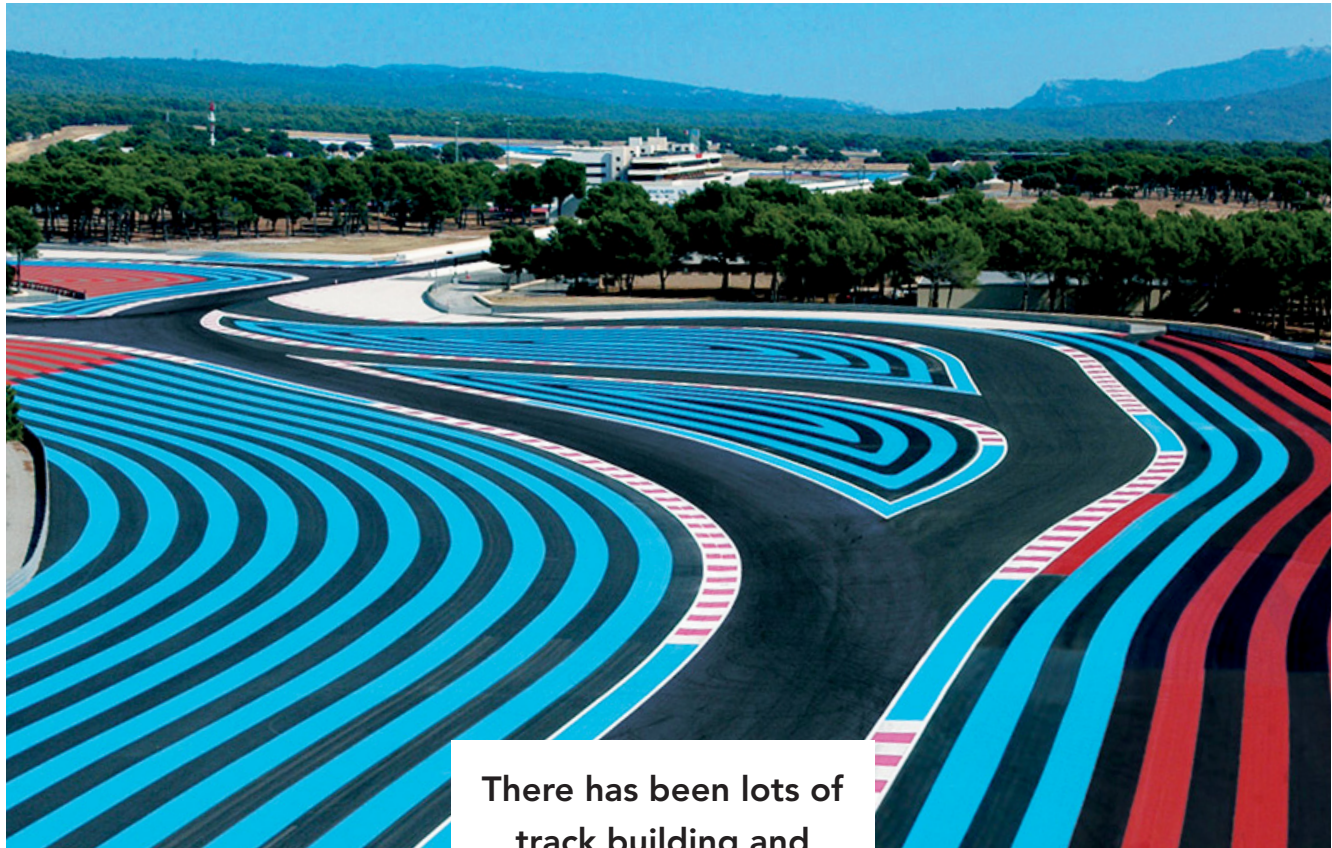
He oversees safety matters and the technical track management and adapts the circuit to various regulations (cars, motorbikes, trucks, etc.). During races, he manages all track officials, such as the Marshals* who he briefs for each race. He is also tasked with organising and managing the necessary safety services (fire, ambulance, etc.). For Formula 1, he will be F1 Race Director, Charlie Whiting's, right-hand man on the day of the French Grand Prix. Between the stands and the track, he can rely on the efforts of 350 people.

"THE REAL CHALLENGE FOR THE 2018 PAUL RICARD CIRCUIT WAS ADAPTING THE TRACK TO MODERN-DAY FORMULA 1 WITHOUT WATERING IT DOWN"

* Marshal, race official



A SPECIAL *F1 circuit*



© Circuit Paul Ricard

There has been lots of track building and maintenance work at the Paul Ricard circuit, in readiness for the French Grand Prix. But that's not all. Many facilities have had to be modified before the green light.

ONE LAYOUT AMONG 180 POSSIBILITIES

Providing space for braking, accelerating and overtaking meant several months of work on the circuit to prepare a challenging 5.8 km track, with everything being approved by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). Out of the 180 track solutions considered for the Paul-Ricard race track, one quickly stood out. It switched between tight bends, two straights and a high-speed curve. Three turns on the track had to be altered to accommodate this option. La

Verrerie was widened to make the start easier and the very slow turns at Le Camp and Le Pont were also widened to quicken speeds in the bends

and encourage overtaking during the race (see circuit walk-through, pages 14-15). Finally, a chicane now splits the Mistral Straight to provide new overtaking opportunities.

RED AND BLUE RUN-OFF AREAS, THE RICARD BRAND

Although not a new invention, the colourful blue and red-hued strips were a world-first when they were introduced in 2000. They can still be seen on the Paul Ricard track, but are more eye-catching than ever. These colour strips provide a safety system when

cars leave the track. *“If a car enters a turn too fast, it runs into the first blue strip which has almost as much grip as tarmac. This gives drivers a chance to get their cars back on line. If they are travelling too fast, the red strip is more abrasive and slows them down”*, explains Paul Ricard Race Track Director, André Rey.

“TECPRO”, FLEXIBLE BARRIERS

“Tecpro” barriers are made by a local company and when arranged one behind the other, form a plastic fence connected by internal straps. If a crash occurs, *“the structure crumples without creating a hole. It absorbs the impact and retains the objects much like a safety net”*, explains André Rey. Buoyed by its success, Tecpro barriers can now be found on all race tracks worldwide. They meet FIA standards and tyre walls supplement the barrier system alongside the track.

A NEW TRACK

The track had not been resurfaced since modernisation work in 2000, so 5cm were planed off and a new coat of tarmac applied. As racing cars are very fast, with lots of downforce, it will last longer and meets the Formula 1 specifications, which state that *“the surface must still be a pleasure to drive on, which means that it must be as smooth and regular as possible, without any defects. But to ensure it remains a pleasure to drive, it mustn't be too smooth or abrasive”*, explains André Rey. The pit-lane has also had the same work done to it. In total, 10,000 tonnes of tarmac were used to resurface 90,000 m² of track.

A SAFETY TEAM PRIMED FOR D-DAY

The control room is located on the ground-floor, adjoining the paddocks. It houses the Race Director and their assessors. André Rey, from the Paul Ricard circuit, will join them as the intermediary between Charlie Whiting, from the FIA, and the track officials. André Rey will be his right-hand man and must deal with his requests during the race, such as removing broken-down or accident-damaged cars, or cleaning the track and surrounding areas, etc. He's been preparing for this, with his team, for months. *“We have tried to cover the largest number of situations”*, but he is well aware that on race-day, unexpected events are inevitable, though



not insurmountable. *“This is a first. We know that all eyes will be upon us. If we make a single error, our image will be torn to shreds.”*

RESTYLED RECEPTION FACILITIES

Aside from the race running smoothly, there is the small matter of hosting 65,000 spectators each day for three days. The Paul Ricard circuit had to design its reception facilities, such as the construction of a new media centre to house 500 people and a new 16,000 m² paddock. There are also



a whole host of support races taking place around the French F1 Grand Prix. *“We installed temporary stands providing 51,000 seats and there are 3 new entry gates on the west side, with new footbridges, which have been opened to speed up spectator access”*, explains Paul-Ricard Circuit Director, Stéphane Clair. ■

Stéphane Clair, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE PAUL-RICARD CIRCUIT

**“6.5 million euros have been, or will be,
invested in circuit facilities to host
the 2018 French Grand Prix”**



After several years of work to return the French Formula 1 Grand Prix to the circuit, what did you feel when you heard the news last year, that Paul Ricard had been chosen?

I arrived in 2011 and there was already a dream of F1 returning to Paul Ricard. I always believed in it even if nobody else did. People have always taken me for a dreamer, or a lunatic, living up on my plateau. So, we worked discretely to avoid the stumbling blocks that we encountered before. We signed our contract with the FOM* without anyone knowing. It was the culmination. We were rebuked for it, but we didn't get any negative reactions either.

Do you know what made the difference?

You've heard the expression, "when the stars are aligned"? Well, it was just like that. I mean, there was local support, F1 and the FOM were changing and needed France, and we are a country with a strong motor sports reputation. Then, there was the Paul Ricard circuit, which has kept a high profile. Put these things together and the equation was solved, on paper at least. But, we needed the spectators to answer the call. They are our main income and you can't be complacent. It's people coming to watch the event who pay the lion's share. And that's that. All the rest is down to the FOM, trackside advertising, team registration fees, TV and image resale rights, etc.

Did local authority support play a key role in returning the F1 Grand Prix to France?

It was vital, as the successful bid we put together was based on local authority support. We went to see the commercial rights holders, Formula One Management, with a local business plan backed by a Public Interest Grouping (GIP). Up until then, the bid was a national one, but ultimately, it failed to garner enough local support. When I took up the baton, we focused our efforts on economic matters, not sporting ones. The Departmental Council** and the Var Chamber of Commerce and Industry had always backed the return of the Grand Prix, but we were well aware that the bid needed greater energy and inspirational leadership. At that moment, we presented the bid to the Mayor of Nice, Christian Estrosi, who was soon to become President of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region. And that's when it all started.

The Public Interest Group was established to return the Formula 1 GP to the Paul Ricard circuit, but what will its role be in the future?

The Public Interest Group is committed to the Grand Prix for 5 years and during this time, it will be tasked with promoting the race. I mean, it needs to make the race work. Spectators and partners must be found, promotion campaigns launched, ticketing, etc. The 2018 Grand Prix is not a trial run, it's got to work faultlessly from start to finish.

What makes Paul Ricard one of the finest circuits in the world? What makes it special?

First of all, we are just a few kilometres from the coast, at the foot of the mountains, in the middle of the countryside and in a sunny spot. When you enter Paul Ricard, you get the impression you are going into a park. We have scenic facilities, there's an uninterrupted view all the way to the sea. The track itself has a special layout. Visually, and graphically, its blue and red stripes are known the world over. It's our moniker and a model for other circuits. Ultimately, though, in contrast to newer circuits, what makes this a magic place, is that Paul Ricard has a history and a past.

Since 2001, there has been a huge amount of renovation work done to the circuit. What other changes have you had to make to host the French Formula 1 Grand Prix, in particular?

We had to make even more improvements to track safety as the 2018 Formula 1 cars are going faster. So, we had to add some safety equipment to the track sides, like, for example, FIA-standard fences, tyre walls and Tecpro block barriers (see page 17). We also had to redevelop a certain number of paddocks as F1 is not just the Formula 1 cars on the track, but 3 other races which support the main event. As we expect 65,000 spectators, we built or renovated many reception areas and, as a result, we also revamped all our networks. All in all, the Paul Ricard circuit invested 6.9 million euros in 2018 to host the French Grand Prix.

Do you already have a figure for economic spinoffs for our department?

It's €5 for every €1 invested. The benefit for the local economy has been estimated at €65 million. Clearly, most of it will go to the Var, where the circuit is based. All the hotels along the coast, from Saint Tropez to Toulon will enjoy high occupancy rates and there will be lots of jobs created or safeguarded for the people of the Var.

Aside from the race, how have you and your team dealt with the international dimension of this event?

Our team has expanded. On race day, I'll be supervising 600 staff to run the race. And that's just circuit staff, then you've got security, hostesses, caterers and various other service providers. When you add the teams too, some 3,000 people will be working during Grand Prix week.

After the F1 Grand Prix the challenge for Paul Ricard will be to stay the course in the long-term. What strategy have you put in place?

We are already managing. The circuit is leased 300 days a year and on the other days, it's subject to a certification order that requires it to be closed for 50 days a year. Right now, clearly, we are not going to have enough days. The maths is simple, F1 takes the track out of circulation for 3 weeks, what with installation, deliveries and dismantling. By adding the Grand Prix to our calendar, we had to find new slots for our customers and find clever ways of having a relatively balanced yearbook. What makes the circuit turn, is our business over the year and not F1, which up to now has required a lot of effort. That said, the image-related spinoffs have been incredible. Next year, when the Paul Ricard circuit has been included in video games and official guides, etc., the impact should be considerable. In fact, it's already started. A famous Italian car-maker has approached us as they want to make a special "Circuit Paul Ricard" series.

Do you think that the arrival of a huge American group like Liberty Media* taking the wheel of F1 is going to change things?

Yes, because Bernie Ecclestone invented the economic model for F1. He has been an amazing businessman. He created value out of nothing. That said, he no longer wanted to change the model, which he thought worked fine. Now, he acknowledges that the arrival of the Americans opens up a channel that he didn't dare touch, social networks, people and lifestyles and popular culture. The American model is geared to spectators. Their F1 show is a fine example. They want to show Formula 1 in the street, with the general public. For Europe, they chose France and they are making considerable efforts to attract a younger 15-35 audience, with smart circuits where spectators can have tablets to follow the race on an app. ■

* Formula One Management, (FOM), a group of companies tasked with promoting the Formula 1 World Championship, bought out by Liberty Media in January 2017.

** One of the 96 Departmental Councils in France.



A MODERN *venue*

The Paul Ricard circuit has made some big changes over the last few years. There's 150 hectares of green spaces, a choice of 3 to 5-star hotels, a flying club, now an airport, and an Xtreme Park. The track offers visitors a modern venue dedicated to tourism and leisure while being fully committed to ambitious sustainable development goals.

We know that Paul Ricard loved to do things that were made to last and now, 48 years after it was first built on the Camp du Castellet plateau, the track has the latest modern facilities. *"The circuit is environmentally-friendly and has become a model for many other sports facilities"*, states Stéphane Clair. In fact, Paul Ricard has been part of a sustainable development approach for the past ten years and there are several ongoing activities in the company, such as installing an API warning system to measure air quality. Rain water from a 60,000 m³ reservoir irrigates planted areas and supplies fire hydrants. *"All recoverable waste is sorted and recycled. For example, we collect 2,358 litres of used engine oil every year, and 2,273 tyres in 2017"*, counts Track Sustainable Development Manager, Nathalie Reitzer. Noise, of course, is central to the company's concerns. *"We installed four sensors to measure noise levels 24-hours a day and subsequently invested considerable sums to reduce them. We added an 8m-high, 800m-long, earth bank to the Signes*

curve and planted thick hedges near the karting track, as well as along a mound by the stands", points out Stéphane Clair.

In line with energy transition measures, *"98% of office lighting and access roads use LED bulbs and we've installed 20,000 m² of photovoltaic canopies in the car parks"*, adds Nathalie Reitzer. They have even thought about visitors arriving in electric cars. Recharging points have been installed and, besides, *"we've added twelve electric vehicles to our company fleet and soon, we'll have a facility dedicated to hydrogen technology"*, she continues. ■

FROM FLYING CLUB TO AIRPORT

With more than 11,000 annual aircraft movements, the private airport of Le Castellet gets planes from around the world. *"We have customers who come to use the circuit or stay in the hotels and the airport is acts as a helicopter transit facility for the Gulf of Saint Tropez, Nice or Monaco"*, explains Stéphane Clair. A luxury concierge service attends to their demanding customers' every need. *"Thrill-seekers can also book extreme flying experiences from our airport, on an L39 Albatross military training plane."*



An activity-packed **CIRCUIT**

What with an F1 driving school, an Xtrem park, a full schedule of events for 2018 for 2 and 4 wheels, on the track or at the circuit complex, Paul Ricard is a great leisure venue for all the family.



© Circuit Paul Ricard

DRIVE A MODERN F1 CAR AT PAUL RICARD

Winfield Racing School set up shop at the Paul Ricard circuit in 2016 and offers you the amazing opportunity to learn to drive one of Kimi Raikkönen's ex-racing cars. The school joined forces with the Renault Sport Formula 1 team and is the only racing school that lets pupils drive a modern, 700 bhp, F1 car. The school is based in the same spot as the old Renault Sport Formula 1 team building in the 80's and 90's. Winfield "offers ideal facilities, with direct access to the track", points out Paul Ricard Managing Director, Stéphane Clair. The hallmarks of the race driving programme are experience, commitment, emotion and exclusivity, with an ultimate aim that you'll, "never watch a Grand Prix in the same way again".

www.winfieldracingschool.com

AN XTREM PARK

Xtrem park has been created for both children and adults. This haven for extreme activities opened in 2015 and boasts a zip wire, quick jump and free jump, quad rides in 1,500 hectares of enclosed parkland, racing simulators, karting, a kids' club, guided visits of the circuit and, of course, motorbike racing lessons with Easy-monneret, or on four wheels, with Auto GT drive. But, the kids can also have fun behind the wheel at ComIgrand and there are some ten other attractions open from Wednesday to Sunday at the circuit. "Xtrem park has only been open three years it's been a runaway success, both with thrill-seekers and children who love the special areas and events that we have put together just for them. Young people are our future audience", emphasises Stéphane Clair.



© Morgan Mathurin - Circuit Paul Ricard

2018 RACING PROGRAMME

Paul Ricard has a packed, all-year-round, programme of motor sport races, but also hosts other sports events too! There are a whole host of happenings to choose from, so come down to the paddocks and find out more.

4th EDITION OF THE "ÉVÈNEMENT VÉLO ET RUNNING"

► 30 June & 1 July

The programme includes, two 6 and 24-hour cycle endurance races, for individual entrants or teams, and running races on the morning of 30 June, one of which, "La Castellane", is reserved for women and another for children ("La Pichoun").

Inscriptions at www.evenementvelo.fr



© Circuit Paul Ricard

DIX MILLE TOURS

► 1 & 2 September

Dix Mille Tours brings together 300 historic racing cars, from 1950 to 1990, to fight it out on the track. There will also be 600 vintage cars on show too!

Enclosure, free.

Paddock access €15.

Free for under-16s.



© Circuit Paul Ricard

FUN CUP

► 8 & 9 September

Around one hundred Beetles in race-trim and thirty Mitjet 2Ls, will each meet for the FRC Championship (Fun Racing Cars) Fun Cup and the Mitjet 2L Endurance Championship. Come and enjoy a colourful and friendly atmosphere down at the track.

Enclosure, free,

Paddock reserved for 2018 members.

BOL D'OR

► 14 & 16 September

The 82nd edition of the most famous 24-hour motorbike race will see 500 riders battle it out over 3 races. There will also be more than one hundred exhibitors. There's a packed programme of events and exhibitions to keep the 65,000 visitors amused.

Tickets from €70 to €86.

www.boldor.com



© Circuit Paul Ricard

SPARTAN RACE

► 6 October

More than 6,000 participants and spectators will be making their way to this one-of-a-kind obstacle race, one-of-a-kind because it is run at night! Runners can enter various races based on their category, from juniors to pro level. Each circuit is scattered with natural and man-made obstacles that competitors must negotiate by running, jumping or climbing.

Numbered bibs from €59.

www.spartanrace.fr

FFSA FRENCH CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIPS

► 13 & 14 October

The Paul Ricard circuit is the venue for the final races in the French FFSA GT Championship, where the victories and honours will be awarded. The programme also contains other key disciplines, such as the Porsche Carrera French Cup and the Porsche GT3 Benelux Cup Challenge, the Peugeot 308 Racing Cup, the French F4 Championship and, for the first time, the Boss GP Championship.

www.south.gt4series.com



© Circuit Paul Ricard

FINALE INTERNATIONALE RENAULT CLIO CUP

► 3 & 4 November

The International Renault Clio Cup Final is a showdown between the fastest, most skilled, drivers from the Spanish, French, Italian and Central European Championships, i.e. nearly one hundred competitors. They will also be joined by the best from the Chinese and British Clio Cups, at the wheel of the 4th generation Clio Cup.

www.renaultsport.com

RALLYCIRCUIT

► 8 & 9 December

The 2nd edition of Rallycircuit is open to everyone, amateur or pro. It's a spectacular rally race with a difference as it is run on the track, within the confines of the Paul Ricard circuit. Legendary motorsport champions will battle it out, racing modern and historic rally cars around the track, with various personalities sitting alongside.

www.rallycircuit.fr



THE FRENCH F1 GRAND PRIX



**THE FRENCH GRAND
PRIX RETURNS TO LE
CASTELLET**

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© Adobe Stock



The French Grand Prix returns to **LE CASTELLET**

While the last Formula 1 race in France was run Magny Cours in 2008, it's the legendary Paul Ricard circuit at Le Castellet that welcomes back the French Grand Prix for a minimum of 5 years. Here's a sneak peek behind the scenes of this return.

In 2012, the deal was almost done! The French F1 Grand Prix was to return to the World Championship calendar, at Paul Ricard. Alas, for political and economic reasons, the idea failed to take root. Nevertheless, the plan was there and its authors, Eric Boullier, Racing Director with McLaren, lawyer, Arnaud Péricard and Gilles Dufeigneux, ex-Inter-Ministerial Delegate for major sporting events, had no intention of letting it drop. That's why, with Stéphane Clair, Managing Director of the Paul Ricard circuit, the then-Mayor of Nice and future President of Provence-Alpes, Côte d'Azur Region, Christian Estrosi, together with various other local stakeholders, including local authorities, pulled out all the stops to make the French Formula 1 Grand Prix a reality. A Public Interest Group (GIP)* called "Grand Prix de France – Le Castellet" was set up. The Var Department Council joined the group straight away, which brought together all relevant stakeholders to best deliver the organisation for this international, flagship event. The race will not only benefit the people of the Var, but the whole area, especially the local economy and the automotive industry. The anticipated spin-offs for tourism and the economy are an estimated €65 million. The Departmental Council had already contributed €219,200 in 2017 and this will rise to €2 million in 2018 and for the next 4 years. ■

* Members of the GIP "Grand Prix de France – Le Castellet": Provence-Alpes, Côte d'Azur Region, the Var Departmental Council, The metropolitan areas of Toulon Provence Méditerranée, Nice Côte d'Azur and Aix-Marseille-Provence, the Urban Community of Sud Sainte Baume, the Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Var Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Excelis Company, which owns the Le Castellet circuit.

Chase Carey,

PRESIDENT OF LIBERTY MEDIA

The Chairman of Liberty Media, Chase Carey is a new face in F1. Although less well-known than his predecessor, Bernie Ecclestone, from the point of view of his professional career and his reputation, he will have no trouble in making himself known on the motor racing circuits. At the age of 62, the ex-boss of 21st Century Fox1 – a partner and trusted advisor of Rupert Murdoch - is described as a fine negotiator.

It's been a year since Liberty media bought the F1, you succeed Bernie Ecclestone, what will be the Carey footprint?

It's not down to me, this is no longer a one-man show. The Liberty Media group decided to make a long term investment in what we consider to be the greatest racing show

on the planet. There's a group of people, headed by Sean Bratches, working hard to continuously improve our sport, to increase the fanbase, to get the most out of it, something which didn't happen much over the past few years. And there's another group headed up by Ross Brawn, a man of vast technical and racing experience, working together with the FIA on drawing up a framework for the technical and sporting regulations in the short and long term, while also collaborating with the promoters to look at ways of improving the circuits to make the racing even more spectacular. Hitting these and other targets is the mark we want to make on Formula 1.

You wish to raise Formula 1 even higher. More specifically how do you plan to develop the F1 brand?

We want to exploit Formula 1's great potential that was left untapped over the previous decade, especially in the digital sector. We firmly believe that Formula 1 is a great entertainment with sport at its heart. We want to grow both sides, developing the concept of a Grand Prix as a show, appealing to an audience not just made up of hard core fans. That's why, following on from the great success of last July's London F1 Live show, in 2018, we are organising four F1 Festivals in major cities – Shanghai, Marseille, Berlin and Miami – around the time that the Grands Prix are taking place in these countries. At the same time, we want to make the sport itself more spectacular and on this front, we are working with all the stakeholders, the teams and the FIA, while keeping in mind the wishes of our fans, who are Formula 1's most important asset. With that in mind, right from the start we have worked hard to find out who they are, what they like about the sport and what else they would



© Liberty Media

like to see. It's an area that was never studied in detail previously, but one that we believe is crucial.

As of this 2018 season, you put an end to a tradition in F1, the presence of the "grid girls", these young models indicating the location of the single-seaters on the starting grid. What justifies this choice?

Honestly, we believe that the presence of grid girls is no longer relevant or appropriate for Formula 1 and its fans, old and new the world over. While there's no denying they were part of a certain element of Formula 1's iconography for decades, we have to bear in mind that the grid girls served no real purpose. Instead, we felt that the moments leading up to the start could be the opportunity to introduce an initiative that would be more relevant and interesting for fans, especially the younger ones. That's why we have introduced, along with the FIA, a new initiative called FIA F1 Future Stars, which involves, at every Grand Prix 20 kids chosen by the local motor sport governing body to be part of the race ceremony and in proximity to their Formula 1 heroes on a Grand Prix Sunday.

You were not yet at the head of F1, when the FOM accepted France's candidacy. How do you feel about the return of our country to competition?

France has played a great part in the history of Formula 1 and we are therefore delighted that this Grand Prix is back on the calendar, after an absence of a decade. It explains why we have chosen Marseille to host one of this year's four F1 Festivals. We believe there is a lot of interest in this sport in France and that it deserves to celebrate that fact with a pair of events, the Grand Prix itself at the wonderful Paul Ricard circuit and the Festival in Marseille, which runs from the 20th to 24th June and which I'm sure will be a great success. ■

Jean Todt,

PRESIDENT OF THE FIA

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) has shaped the history of motor sport for more than a century now. Jean Todt has presided over this influential sports management organisation since 2009, working to supervise the world's leading races, including its flagship event, the F1 World Championship.

What do you think about the return of F1's return to France, at the Paul Ricard circuit, in Le Castellet?

As President of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, I'm naturally delighted that the French Grand Prix has returned to the Formula 1 World Championship calendar after a 10-year absence. France and motor sport have a mutual history, from the very beginning and it's no surprise that the French term, "Grand Prix" is still used. The French Grand Prix also figures among the world's leading races, like the Le Mans 24-hour race. The choice of Le Castellet, in the Var, one of the most beautiful departments in France and one of the country's most attractive regions, Provence, builds on a glorious past, that started back in 1970's and 80's and which forms an additional strength for its success.

Do you know the circuit?

I saw it develop and I went to the first race that was held there. It has a unique atmosphere. I like the distinctive track layout, with its legendary Mistral Straight, or the famous Signes curve, but I also admire the modernisation work that has been done to the circuit, like the bigger stands and the new media centre.

There were very in-depth discussions between the FIA, the circuit, the GIP, the FOM (bought out by Liberty Media in early 2017) and various specialists about the track layout for the 2018 French Grand Prix. Did the Federation have any essential criteria?

Of course. The safety of the drivers, the race officials and spectators during qualifying and the race is a prime concern for the FIA. Circuit safety is one of the main pillars and we have made progress on this front over the last few years.

What kind of relationship do you have with Liberty Media, which is now in charge of the organisation and commercial operations for F1 races?

It's excellent. We each have our own roles. The FIA oversees motor sport and is responsible for regulations and its long-term development. Liberty Media is the promoter which takes care of the commercial and economic sides. This necessary difference doesn't stop us from furthering common aims, like making the race more exciting, boosting safety and keeping a hand on costs.

The organisation that you preside over is the benchmark authority for sporting and regulatory matters concerning the F1 World Championship. Can you, in a nutshell, give us some of the main changes to the sporting and technical rules for 2018?



In terms of safety, this year we have introduced the Halo. This is a major innovation for single-seater cars, in F1, but also in F2, F3 and Formula E. It's a kind of hoop that sits above the cockpit to better protect the driver's head, especially if an accident occurs when a piece of bodywork comes loose, like a wheel. We made this change after a unanimous

and legitimate request by the drivers themselves, following several serious accidents. Then there are several aerodynamic alterations, like the end of the rather ugly shark fins on the back of the cars, as well as some changes to engines, such as stricter controls over oil burn.

In 2015, you were named Special Envoy for Road Safety by the Secretary General of the United Nations. How do you tackle this issue?

I support safety on the track and on the road too and I think of motor racing as a laboratory to make advances in this field. Each day, 3,500 people die on the world's roads, including 500 children. Over a year, this represents 1.25 million deaths

and more than 50 million people injured. We have to fight this unacceptable scourge by applying fundamental rules in all four corners of the world to protect each one of us. These are respecting speed limits, wearing seatbelts and helmets for motorbikes and mopeds, not drink-driving or using telephones when driving. Tackling this problem is essential for me. ■

NOT JUST A RACE, *an event!*

THE PROGRAMME, DAY BY DAY

► Thursday 21 June

On your marks, get set, go! The weekend starts on Thursday for the lucky ones with 3-day passes. Thursday is when the teams finish setting up their motorhomes, which they assemble for each Grand Prix. They are used to host team members and their guests but today, the drivers are also working, walking the track to pinpoint the tiniest detail.

► Friday 22 June

After setting up and getting familiar with the track, it's time to fire up the engines! The free practice sessions are today's highlight. The drivers take part in the first **Formula 1 free practice session** from 12pm to 1.30pm and their first encounter with the French Grand Prix track. This stage is vital for the teams to check and adjust the settings on their cars, as well as testing new pieces of equipment. A second free practice session is held from 4pm to 5.30pm, when teams can assess changes to settings made after the first few laps. The drivers also assess tyre performance and study their behaviour for the race. While waiting for the main event, spectators shouldn't miss the free practice sessions for the **Masters Endurance Series, GP3 Series, Formula Renault Eurocup and Formula 2 races**, the 'anteroom' for F1. Racing drivers in this last category start qualifying at 5.55, followed at 6.50pm by GP3 Series qualifying.

► Saturday 23 June

The day starts with the third free practice session which focuses on performance and preparations for the **French F1 Grand Prix qualifying session**, which takes place later the same day, at 4pm. Qualifying is run in three parts and determines the starting grid positions. There are also Formula Renault Eurocup and Masters Endurance Series qualifying sessions, which are held early in the morning, with the races run later in the day. Also, don't miss the **Formula 2 race**.



© EPAA / The air force

► Sunday 24 June

All spectators are in the starting blocks to watch the **French Grand Prix** while the adrenalin steadily rises with a series of races in the morning, including the **Masters Endurance Series, GP3 Series, F2 and the Formula Renault Eurocup**. Before the green lights at 4.10pm, look up to the skies to see a flypast by the **Patrouille de France**. Finally, world famous DJ, David Guetta, will bring this popular event to a close, with a **special trackside concert**.

THE PROGRAMME, HOUR BY HOUR

► Friday 22 June

9.30 am: Masters Endurance Series – Free practice
10.25 am: GP3 Series – Free practice
12 pm: Formula 1 – Free practice session 1
1.55 pm: F2 – Free practice
4 pm: Formula 1 – Free practice session 2
5.55 pm: F2 – Qualifying
6.50 pm: GP3 Series – Qualifying
7.45 pm: Formula Renault Eurocup – Free practice

► Saturday 23 June

7.30 am: Formula Renault Eurocup – Qualifying 1
8.25 am: Masters Endurance Series – Qualifying
9.15 am: Formula Renault Eurocup – Qualifying 2
11.30 am: GP3 Series – First race
1 pm: Formula 1 – Free practice 3
4 pm: Formula 1 – Qualifying
5.30 pm: F2 – Race 1
7 pm: Masters Endurance Series – Race 1
7.50 pm: Formula Renault Eurocup – Race

► Sunday 24 June

9.35 am: Masters Endurance Series – Race 2
11.10 am: GP3 Series – Race 2
12.20 pm: F2 – Race 2
1 35 pm: Formula Renault Eurocup – Race 2
2.40 pm: Drivers parade
3.56 pm: National anthem
4.10 pm: Formula 1 – Race



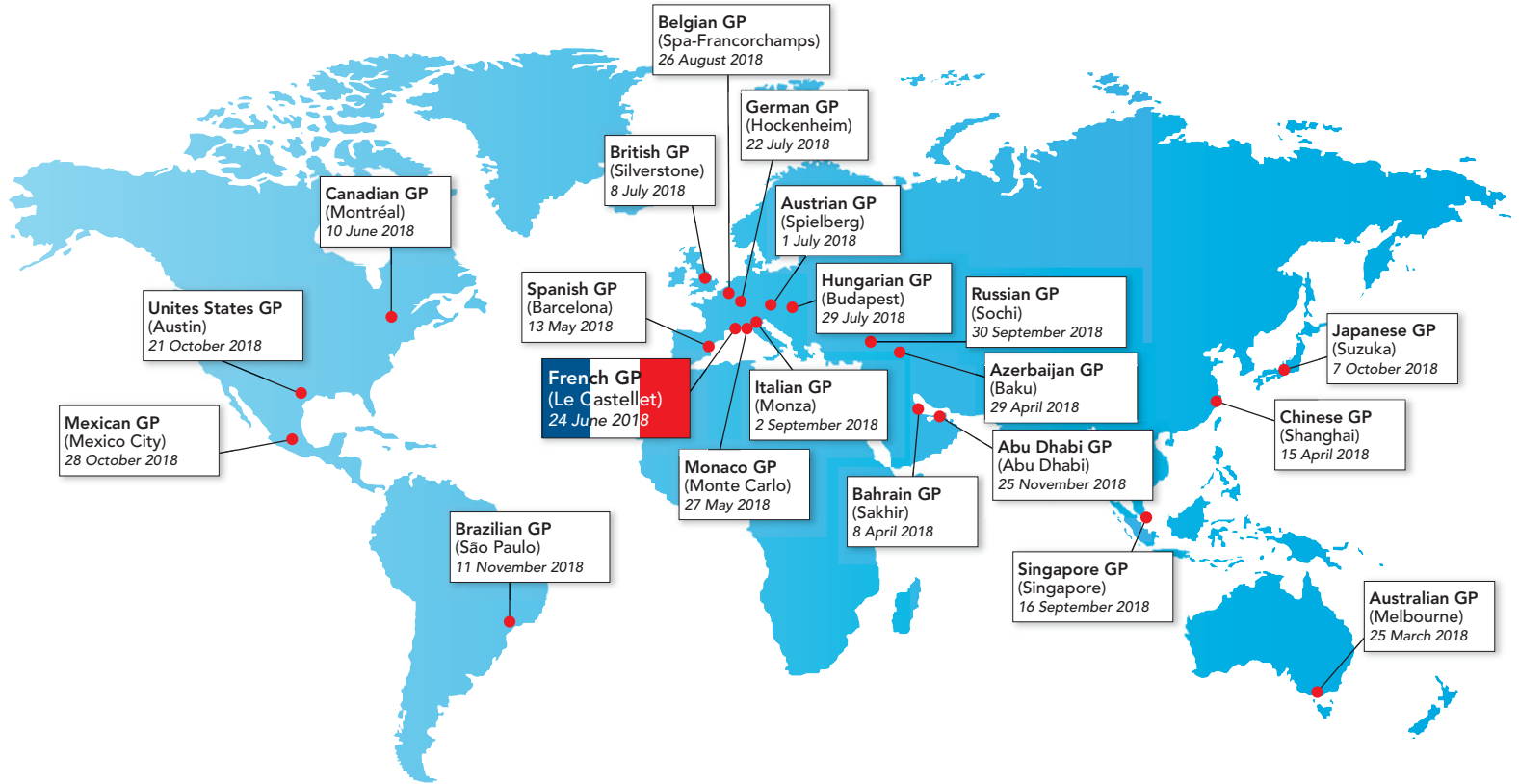
End of the day: Concert by David Guetta


(free and open to all those with 3-day passes, or a ticket for Sunday).

Official ticketing:
www.gpfrance.com


* Not all events had been announced at the time of going to print.

An international EVENT



5,8 km 
The length of the Paul-Ricard circuit hosting the French F1 Grand Prix


8
The French F1 Grand Prix is the 8th race in the 2018 F1 World Championship

20 
Drivers in ten teams, 3 of whom are French

65,000
spectators per day expected for the race weekend

€6,000,000 
The average cost of a Formula 1 racing car

5 
The number of cameras that can be fitted to a Formula 1 car

500 millions 
television viewers watch the F1 Grand Prix worldwide

500
journalists, writers and photographers follow F1 each year

€65 M
of expected tourism and economic benefits locally

THE TEAMS *and drivers*

The 2018 Formula 1 season began in Melbourne, Australia in late March, when motor racing enthusiasts discovered the new cars,

constructors and their drivers, with each team fielding two drivers at each race. New faces include, Sergey Sirotkin at Williams and Charles Leclerc at Sauber, who both competed in their first F1 races alongside seasons professionals such as Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes), Romain Grosjean (Haas) or Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari). They will all be on the start line for the French Formula 1 Grand Prix at Le Castellet, on Sunday 24 June.

MERCEDES



Mercedes AMG PETRONAS MOTORSPORT

44  77 

Lewis Hamilton age 33

Valtteri Bottas age 28

© Mercedes

FERRARI



SCUDERIA FERRARI

5  7 

Sebastian Vettel age 30

Kimi Räikkönen age 38

© Ferrari

RED BULL RACING



ASTON MARTIN Red Bull RACING

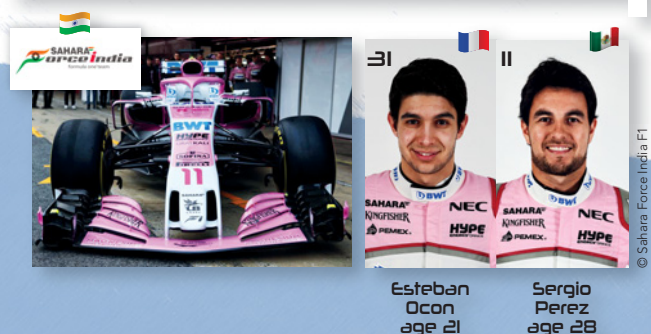
33  3 

Max Verstappen age 20



Daniel Ricciardo age 28

© David Clenihew/RedBull Content Pool

FORCE INDIA



SAHARA Force India

31  11 

Esteban Ocon age 21

Sergio Perez age 28

© Sahara Force India F1

17

The car number that was withdrawn by the FIA as a mark of respect to Jules Bianchi, who died in 2015, aged 26. No driver can compete with the number 17.

RENAULT



Carlos Sainz Jr age 23
Nico Hulkenberg age 30

© Renault Sport Formula One

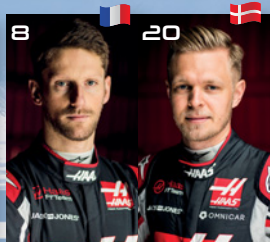
WILLIAMS



Lance Stroll age 19
Sergey Sirotkin age 22

© Williams F1

HAAS



Romain Grosjean age 32
Kevin Magnussen age 25

© Haas F1 Team

MCLAREN



Fernando Alonso age 36
Stoffel Vandoorne age 26

© Mc Laren

SAUBER



Marcus Ericsson age 27
Charles Leclerc age 20

© Sauber

TORO ROSSO



Brendon Hartley age 28
Pierre Gasly age 22

© David Clerhew/Red Bull Content Pool

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Jean Alesi

"NEVER LET UP"

Jean Alesi, ex-F1 driver and winner of the 1995 Canadian Grand Prix, is delighted the French Formula 1 Grand Prix is returning to Le Castellet. What's more, he is the circuit's ambassador and it's where he started his racing career almost thirty years ago.

Ten years after the last Formula 1 Grand Prix in France, the race is returning to the Paul Ricard circuit, at Le Castellet, in the Var. *"I've been waiting a long time for this"*, says ex-Ferrari driver, Jean Alesi. *"It almost became an embarrassment as the years passed without a Grand Prix. No one around the world could understand why we no longer had our own Grand Prix"*. So, the announcement was *"excellent news"* for the French ex-racing driver, *"even more so, as it was coming back to Paul Ricard, where I started racing"*, he adds. That was back in 1989 and that year, Jean Alesi started his first Grand Prix on the Var circuit, with the Tyrell team. He qualified 16th and fought a good race coming 4th. It was a promising debut for the man from Vaucluse.

"These memories are always there. Each time I drive to Le Castellet, these images come back to me". He won the Canadian Grand Prix in 1995 and finished his career in 2001, having driven for six teams and stood on the podium 32 times. Despite all this international experience, he still has a special attachment to the Var circuit where he is now the track ambassador. His task is to be *"ensure the pre and post-race activities run smoothly, as well as the race itself"*. So that everything goes well, a whole series of improvements have been made to the circuit. *"Lots of alterations have been made, not on the track itself, as we've kept the legendary turns like Signes, the Double Right at Le Beausset or the "S" at La Ver-*

rierie. It's more about safety where the track has been transformed. Already, at the time, it was ahead of its time for safety measures, but the difference now is like night and day. You really notice the safety features on this circuit".

This year, the track is new for all the drivers competing. *"I advise them to discover this track but also to offer us a great race. A lot work has been done to provide them with these excellent facilities"*. It's going to enable the new generation of drivers to enjoy themselves and give the spectators a real treat. *"This circuit is designed so that the drivers never let up. Turns like Signes, require immense physical strength as the centrifugal force is huge. You have to be very fit, but also very accurate too"*.

Together with his son, Giuliano, a member of the Ferrari Driver Academy, Jean Alesi is reliving the thrill of driving at Le Castellet. *"I am a little like his guardian angel"*, he smiles. *"When I started, I asked the same questions he does. I understand his worries and anxiety and I take away lots of pressure related to this. But, I never get involved in helping him learn to drive."* ■

See the video of the interview with Jean Alesi at www.var.fr

Yannick Dalmas

"ACCURACY IS VITAL"

Yannick Dalmas caught the motor racing bug at the Paul Ricard circuit. After having been a Formula 1 driver and a four-time winner of the Le Mans 24-hour race, the man from the Var is now a consultant driver with the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA).

Yannick Dalmas is one of those humble sportsmen who, despite outstanding victories and an international career, has kept his feet on the ground. The ex-F1 driver and four-time winner of the Le Mans 24-hour race, is still attached to his native Var. *"I'm relishing the fact that the F1 Grand Prix is returning to the Var"*. He grew up in Le Beausset, near the Paul Ricard circuit, and now lives at La Cadière-d'Azur. Yannick saw this mythical circuit take shape when he was a boy, where he would later race several times. *"I was really just a kid the first time. It was the 1973 French Grand Prix. My father took part in a historic race driving a 1918 Ford, with me as passenger. The car couldn't go faster than 80 km/hour back then, but we won a small trophy and I met François Cevert in the paddock. We looked at each other and I've got to say that that was the defining moment that made me become a motor racing driver later on"*. Yannick Dalmas' first races were on a motorbike, before graduating to single-seaters, from Formula 3 to Formula 1, the highest category where he raced his first Grands Prix. The man from the Var then changed direction. *"It was difficult for me to refuse the challenge of the Endurance Racing World Championship"*, he explains. *"It was a*



great human adventure, with a high technical level". So, he threw himself into the challenge and swapping speed for endurance, he won the Le Mans 24-Hour Race four times with four different constructors. Consistency, work-rate and perseverance paid off for the driver, who experienced his *"finest years"*. He still takes a certain pride in his victories and shares them freely. *"Throughout my life, and during my sporting career, I have been lucky to meet certain people with whom I made the right choices, for the right outcomes. In endurance racing, you never win or lose on your own"*. Nowadays, Yannick Dalmas is a driver advisor with the FIA, working with race directors and stewards. As an expert in his field, he looks favourably

on the various changes made to the Paul Ricard circuit to offer drivers even more safety. *"The circuit has been a pioneer in safety measures, especially with wide run-off areas and highly abrasive tarmac in different colours"*. The Var-based track is a renowned benchmark for safety standards and is known to be highly-regarded by the drivers. *"Although it looks flat, its topography is very varied"*, he points out. *"There are on-camber and off-camber, or very quick turns. There are hard braking areas and a winding section. You really have to be sure of your line and the position of your steering wheel. Accuracy is vital"*. ■

See the video of the interview with Yannick Dalmas at www.var.fr

FORMULA 1, *a review in 10 points*

Never been to a Formula 1 race? Pole position and paddocks mean nothing to you? Do the qualifying sessions mystify and you still haven't worked out how the points are split between the drivers? Here's a quick recap of a few concepts to impress your friends before and after the Grand Prix.

TEAMS



Ten teams will be competing for the 69th Formula 1 World Championship. They are Mercedes, Ferrari, Red Bull, Force India, Williams, Renault, Toro Rosso, Haas, McLaren and Sauber. Each team fields two drivers on the starting grid.

PADDOCKS



This area is reserved for team members, where the cars are parked and prepared. The teams set up and dismantle their giant motorhomes in the paddocks at every different each race, to cater for members of staff and their guests.

QUALIFYING



Qualifying sessions are held the day before the race and split into three sessions, Q1, Q2 and Q3. The first lasts 18 minutes after which the five slowest drivers are eliminated. In Q2, the 15 remaining drivers have to do their best in just 15 minutes. When it finishes, the five slowest drivers are again eliminated. In Q3, the 10 drivers still on the track fight it out for pole position.

TYRES



Pirelli is Formula 1's sole tyre supplier. In 2018, the company expanded its range to offer the teams nine different types of rubber. From super-soft (with pink markings) to hard (blue), including ultra-soft (purple) and intermediate rubber (green), the choice is greater, but the teams must content themselves with just three types of tyres per Grand Prix. So, they have to make the right choices.

POLE POSITION



This is the first place on the starting grid.

ENGINE



The rules are strict for engines. Now, instead of four, just three engines are authorised per season and per car. This measure has forced the teams to be a lot more careful in how they manage their equipment, otherwise they will be penalised.

PENALTIES



This season, the way penalties are applied has changed to reflect new engine and component quotas. If the authorised number of replacement parts is exceeded, the driver loses places on the starting grid. If a driver reaches 15 penalty places, they are automatically sent to the back of the grid, regardless of their qualifying times.

POINTS



At the end of each Grand Prix, the first ten drivers score points. The winner gets 25 points, second 18 points and third 15 points. The others get 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2 and 1 point for 10th place. The teams also get the cumulated totals of points from both their drivers.

HALO



The halo is new for the 2018 season. It is a kind of hoop fitted above the cockpit. Although criticised for being ungainly, the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) has ordered its introduction to better protect drivers' heads in the event of an accident.

AERODYNAMICS



In physics, aerodynamics focuses on the study of any relative movement between a body and the air surrounding it. When applied to F1, this science helps design single-seater cars that can go very fast but remain stuck to the ground. Various parts of the car contribute to improving aerodynamic performance, such as wings.

THE VAR IN POLE POSITION



DYNAMISM AND CREATIVITY

P. 38

TEAM SPIRIT

Oreca, racing ahead

P. 39 to 42

INNOVATION

Electric 55 Charging, a switched-on start-up

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UNEXPECTED

Bernard Asset, the embedded eye

P. 46 & 47

DISCOVERY

The go-karting circuit at Brignoles

P. 48

CHAMPIONS

Cyril Raymond / Jean-Baptiste Franceschi / Hugo Margailan

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NOSTALGIA

Caring for beautiful motors

P. 52 & 53

BEHIND THE SCENES

Tech3, crazy about motorbikes

P. 54 & 55

ROAD SAFETY

The Department's commitment!

P. 56

© Tech3 team

Tech3 team racing



The Var sits in the centre of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region* and stands out for its investment in motor sport and innovative vehicles. The department has several circuits, including Paul Ricard, and hosts some iconic competitions, making it especially evocative in terms of sporting gatherings, but also specialist companies and champions.

Although the return of the French Grand Prix to Le Castellet is the event of the year, the Var also boasts other highlights. For example, there's the Rallye du Var, in November, where the Department's wonderful winding roads provide an ideal playground. Each year, this challenge brings the French Rally Championship to a close and is, according to specialists, one of the finest tests in the sport. As for motorbikes, the department has a high number of bikers and Europe's biggest motorbike dealers. Several exclusive motorbike events are organised, such as the Harley Davidson Eurofestival, in Saint Tropez, one stage of the French Moto Tour Series, or the Bol d'Or endurance race.

DYNAMISMISM & *Creativity*

or the Bol d'Or endurance race.

The Var is also home to, or is the birthplace of, several racing drivers and teams, such as ex-sports car champion, Ange Barde, or Cyril Raymond who represents a new generation of competitor in rally cross. The Tech3 motorbike team is also making a name for itself in endurance racing. Some fifty companies, including Oreca, a world leader in the industry, are all active in various motor sport sectors, such as design, manufacturing, race driving schools and marketing, etc. These successful Var-based companies combine passion and advanced technology, exemplifying the Department's get-up-and-go attitude and creativity.

Innovation is also about opening up to tomorrow's automobile markets (clean engines, electric vehicles, battery storage and range, composite materials and lighting) and new types of ecological transport (drones, ships of the future, etc.). The maritime enterprise cluster, which is based in the Var, or Ceema (a research and test centre for autonomous models), are key players in this field. But, there are also lots of SMEs and start-up companies based in the Var which are all setting out their stalls. These include Astron Fiamm Safety (see *Le Var Magazine*, No.3 - summer 2017, available for download at var.fr), VN Composites, Createch Composites, UFO, Plus de Borne, Atechsys, Ecolostation or ADS Technologies.

The Var has a wealth of expertise, places and renowned players which all contribute to it in their own way, making it a Department in pole position! ■

■

* One of the 13 Regional councils in France

SIGNES
Oreca,
**RACING
 AHEAD**

In the world of motor sport, Oreca really is an institution which over 45 years has developed technological know-how tried and tested by the greatest racing drivers. The group, based at Signes in the Var - near the Paul Ricard racing circuit, is nowadays a leader in the construction of endurance racing cars. But not only that.



The World Endurance Championship (WEC) promises to be a great show this year! This exceptionally long 14-month 2018-2019 Super Season will end in France in June 2019 with the Le Mans 24 Hours. This will be the first and only time that this flagship championship race, which gave its name to the different championship categories*, will host this event twice in the same season. And we can count on the Var. Or at least on Oreca, the Var-based business which has designed and built seven of the cars taking part in the competition! The Group has five cars in the LM P2* category lined up for the start of the championship. And it is also present in the premier class, with 2 cars for Rebellion Racing, which signals its return this year in LM P1*. The Swiss team, which won the World Championship last season in the LM P2 category with an Oreca 07 (see page 42), has renewed its trust in the Var car constructor for this new 2018-2019 Super Season.

A few months before the start of the competition, the young drivers from the Swiss team were in the Var, at the Signes business park, finalizing the manufacture of their bespoke seats. “*The moulded shape must be perfectly adjusted to offer optimum comfort during races which are physically very demanding*”, explains Xavier Cheese, Oreca’s metal fabrications engineer. Eight weeks later, only a few hundred metres from the company’s works, final trials took place at the Paul Ricard Circuit in the run up to the World Endurance Championship in early April.

Also present in the stands were some 20 Oreca engineers supporting Toyota Gazoo Racing as part of a technical partnership deal signed with the leading car manufacturer in 2012.

ENDURANCE AS A BRAND

For Hugues De Chaunac, Founder Chairman of the Oreca Group (see box), increasing collaboration justifies the work carried out over the years. *“The company has been operating since 1973. We started as a straightforward racing team. 8 years ago, we moved into racing car construction”*, he explains. *“We build everything except the engine. From design to track support of customer teams, our goal is to develop cars that are ever more efficient. It is a business which grows every year in terms of workforce and turnover”*. The group is currently the largest exporter of endurance cars and a world standard in this field. Over the past twelve months, Oreca has built 30 prototypes for all the Championships across the world! And of the thirty cars at the starting line at various international endurance competitions, 20 came from the Var!

These performance gems took a long time in their design by the research department. Each part was then manufactured in house in composite materials, before being transferred in the assembly workshop. It is here that all Oreca cars

take shape. In a friendly atmosphere, the staff turns hours of discussion into reality. Each worker careful in his movements. Here, respect is the image of the seriousness and reliability which are the

founding values of the company. The aerodynamics are not tested in the wind tunnel, but by using a software program. *“When a car leaves the workshop, it is like a child who is off on its travels”*, reflects Julia Falzoi who, as communications manager at Oreca, echoes the views of the workers, technicians, and engineers who are busy at their work. *“We follow all the races with a great deal of excitement. So much has been invested in making the best possible car. You have to live the experience from the inside to understand. When the car wins, there is an immense sense of satisfaction”*.

COMPETITION FOR DNA

Oreca has acquired technical excellence through competition which was the leitmotif for its creation. *“Initially, we were a small racing team”*, recalls Hugues de Chaunac. *“The opportunity for a partnership with Elf (later becoming Total - Ed) quickly enabled us to persevere with the World Championship”*. The Oreca team distinguished itself in F3 and

F2 with the greatest French car drivers who returned again some years later in F1. Didier Pironi, Patrick Tambay, Alain Prost, etc. Jacques Laffite and René Arnoux thus became European F2 champions with the Oreca team. Alain Prost,



European F3 champion. Yannick Dalmas and Jean Alesi, French F3 champions. Between 1977 and 1986, the team won the Monaco Grand Prix seven times.

“For all the major French racing car drivers, we were the foothold giving access to F1, a little like a preparatory class for a bigger school,” comments the manager. In 1990, the small business at the time based at Magny-Cours, moved to the Var, close to the Paul Ricard circuit. It was the first to set up in the Signes business park where it acted as a spearhead. It has abandoned the single-seater but tackles new challenges, always with the desire to win. It has invested in rally-raid, rally-cross and rally cars. But also, super touring races, GT races and races on ice. When it arrived in the Var, the company’s employee numbers increased from about 50 to 240. It is structured around an “Engineering & Production” department and a “Motor” department which remained at Magny-Cours where engines are built.

Whether under its own name, for independent teams. or on behalf of constructors, it wins in every field at the highest level. Amongst its greatest successes are the outright victory at the 1991 Le Mans 24 Hours with Mazda, three FIA GT World Championships between 1997 and 1999, pole position at the Daytona 24 Hours in 2000 with Dodge, but also the Junior World Rally Championship in 2003 and the World Rallycross Championship in 2015 with Peugeot Sport. The company has accumulated more than 350 competition victories. It has expertise in place which enables it to grow other businesses alongside.

DIVERSIFICATION AS AN ECONOMIC MODEL

Capitalizing on its success, the company has established the Oreca-Store, originally as mail order and then on-line since 2008. From race suits to roll-cages, brake discs to tyres, it offers a wide range of parts and accessories to enthusiasts and those who participate in motor sports. Well-known brands and also its own label. 45,000 products are currently listed. Including, for fans, items from major brands and motoring sponsors. An unrivalled selection in France. Every day the company ships 400 to 500 parcels from Signes right across the world.

Oreca Events has a presence in the events management field. It designs events for its customers. *“For the French Grand Prix, for example, we support groups such as Renault which rely on us to invite their important customers. We are involved with Press trial events, conventions, seminars, or events for the automotive sector but also for other sectors. We*

have an excellent global brand image from the technical point of view”, confirms Hugues De Chaunac. *“This image, linked to success in the automotive business, is a wonderful visiting card for the largest companies”.*

Another recent example of diversification: Oreca won a call for projects from the FIA to design and make an R4 kit with a view to a new rally category. Its all-purpose R4 kit consists of a turbocharged petrol engine and a four-wheel drive. It has been on the market for several months and it can be adapted to any vehicle. The parts being off the shelf and the components standard, it enables operational savings of 40%. Even more in performance and efficiency. ■



www.oreca.com

* The different World Endurance Championship (WEC) categories all start with LM which means Le Mans. LM P1, standard category for constructors, means Le Mans Prototype 1. LM P2, reserved for independent teams, Le Mans Prototype 2.



ORECA 07 - PACKED WITH PERFORMANCE

First of all, there was the Oreca 01 in 2009, the only car built and operated by Oreca as a team, which finished fourth at the Le Mans 24 Hours and first of the independent teams. Then the Oreca 03 in 2011, a prototype designed for LM P2. Next came the Oreca 05 in 2015, a closed cockpit prototype in line with the new LMP2 regulations. The Var team's most recent creation: the Oreca 07 launched last season in the LM P2 category. Ventilated carbon brake discs, adjustable shock-absorbers, gear box with paddle shifters and pneumatic control, etc. Under its carbon and Kevlar bodywork, the Oreca 07 has 930 kg of the best technology. A clever blend of expertise, know-how and boldness through which the Var company reaches a new level.

HUGUES DE CHAUNAC: DRIVING A WINNING TEAM

An enthusiast since he got hooked by it at the age of 15, thanks to his first Le Mans 24 Hours, Hugues De Chaunac has never stopped loving the atmosphere and the ambiance of the race circuit. He still lives every race with the fervour which makes the victories sweeter and the defeats full of fight. Because besides being a motor sport enthusiast, Hugues De Chaunac is a competitor, a business man, a developer, a visionary. Although initially he only thought of racing cars as an occupation for one or two years after leaving his School of Commerce, he is now the head of a business which employs 240 people. The Group, whose head office is in Signes, has sites in Magny-Cours, France, in Shanghai, China, in Hong Kong, and an office in North Carolina, USA.



LA CROIX-VALMER

ELECTRIC 55 CHARGING, *a switched-on start-up*

The Var-based company Electric 55 Charging advocates an exponential development of electric vehicle re-charging points in France. It is in the Var that it has connected up its first re-charging stations and tested a completely new model which is economical, virtuous and respectful of the environment.

A start-up atmosphere at Electric 55 Charging. It is 1:50pm and the lunch break. At the corner of a desk, the founder, the two managers and the apprentice engineer share a meal. Sandwiches and fruit juice are on the menu. Smiles and a warm welcome as well. Romain Vincent, the Chair and Managing Director of the company, formerly called “Plus de bornes”, hastens to make room for us, apologizing for welcoming us to such a sparsely furnished office “*We wanted to remain in La Croix-Valmer, so it is a real stroke of luck for us to have acquired these premises. It was formerly a*



house which we have not yet fully refurbished”, he explains. “We have just gone over some of the paintwork before taking on new members of the team.” Within a few months, he has hired two managers and an apprentice. Previously, he was on his own managing everything. “Which cost me a few sleepless nights”, this leading young entrepreneur smiles.

It all began in 2013. Employed by Enedis, an EDF subsidiary responsible for electricity management and distribution, Romain Vincent requested a 5 year leave of absence into order to establish the business. The time required to develop the germ of an idea he had in mind. As an electronics and computing engineer he wanted to develop an economic model based around renewable energy and electric cars in the certainty that the more recharging points are accessible, the more motorists will resort to such vehicles. A foolish bet on the future? “My basic idea was really naïve”, admits Romain Vincent. “But I wanted to give it a go and we signed our first contract in Saint-Tropez. Four recharging points were installed at the end of 2013.” Plus de bornes was born at that moment. Subsequently renamed as Electric 55 Charging, the Var-based company is the only French start-up to roll out a private re-

charging point network available to the public. For a long time, nobody knew how to make the user pay for recharging a car. With Electric 55 Charging, a new economic model made its appearance. “The charging point should contribute to the development of renewable energy. We have no choice other than to go in this direction”, is this entrepreneur’s analysis. “For us, the aim is to place a maximum number of charging points at strategic locations without imposing anything on the user”, Romain Vincent continues. “Our job is to manage a network, not a clientele. We therefore rely on existing payment solutions, using cards or smartphones. Just like electronic toll collection systems, the solution selected by the user is of little importance, it is accepted by our recharging stations.”

At the moment fifteen charging stations, each offering two individual charging points, are in service, mainly in the department of the Var. They are entirely manufactured in France. “The objective for the year is to bring one hundred extra terminals into use, mainly in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur region”, Melissa Linger, who is in charge of infrastructure development, said enthusiastically “Thanks to a fund-raising effort in late 2017, we have the finances necessary. We now have to find the locations”. The team is relying on local authorities as regards the positioning of



the recharging points. Based on the principle that it is not up to each commune to provide the investment in and maintenance of such equipment, the company’s MD has offered them a new economic solution. A kind of win-win situation, based on an agreement between the municipality and the company. The former takes care of the necessary prerequisites for the installation of the charging stations on its highways - accessibility and connection to the electricity network - and grants the company public authority permission. In exchange, Electric 55 Charging provides the charging station(s) and maintains and operates the infrastructure. To cover its operating costs and its investment, it invoices the charging costs to the users. Thus,



via this Var-based start-up, the municipalities provide a service to all electric vehicle users, and particularly those within their administrative areas. “We want to strategically position our charging stations near where people live and in business areas, so that users can recharge their cars while they are, for

example, at the hairdresser’s”, Melissa Linger adds. “We call this “opportunity charging”. Specifically, you take advantage of every stop to recharge your car.”

Since they themselves use electric cars, they well understand users’ habits. “There are in fact three ways of rechar-

ging your vehicle,” she explains. “Slowly, at home. Very quickly, at the charging stations at motorway service areas. Or, for the daily needs, plugging your vehicle into charging points in city centres, like ours.” In this case, you have to assume roughly €3.50 per hour for a recharge giving an electric range of 100 kilometres. At that rate, and given the current number of charging points in service, the start-up’s business is not yet profitable. In 2017, it achieved a turnover of approximately €80,000. “This is a long-term market, based on a virtuous circle, says Roman Vincent taking comfort in this. We have to achieve a minimum size in structural terms. For this, we must generate demand and 100 charging points are insufficient.”

This Var-based entrepreneur is fairly confident, betting on mind sets moving in the direction of his business. “The motives of electric vehicle users is not only financial”, he thinks. It’s a generational thing. Nowadays more people are aware of the environmental impacts of their behaviour.” As proof, a few years ago, in France, electric vehicles represented only 0.01% of sales of new vehicles. Currently, they have a 1.5% share of the market. Electric 55 Charging has gambled everything on this niche. ■

www.e55c.com



Melissa Linger was recruited by Electric 55 Charging founder, Romain Vincent, to deploy the network of charging points.

Bernard Asset, THE EMBEDDED EYE



For 45 years Bernard Asset has been immersed on the world of Formula 1 with the aim of immortalising the best races. The photographer has more than 500 Grand Prix under his belt. His pictures, published in the international press, are currently available as limited editions. Meet him, at Bandol, where he chose to live 7 years ago.

Bernard Asset with the photo that made his name, in 1982, on-board with Alain Prost (above) and an image of Ayrton Senna, from 1989, in Barcelona (below).

Bernard Asset has not only captured the key moments of the greatest races. The photographer, who was in the very first cohort to graduate from the Gobelins “Ecole de l’Image” in Paris, has been living Formula 1 from the inside for forty years. “When I started, it was still amateurish. You could into to the pits, wander around between the engine parts. Nowadays, it’s very tightly controlled. The constructors are afraid of spying. There’s a lot of money at stake”, the photographer muses. He has rubbed shoulders with successive generations of racing drivers, from Jacques Laffite to Lewis Hamilton, from Niki Lauda to Romain Grosjean. It was with Alain Prost in 1982 at the Dijon circuit that he took the most striking photo of his

career. A spectacular snapshot! The first of a series that earned him the nickname in the profession as the “embedded photographer”. At the time, there was no on-board camera. But Bernard Asset wanted to offer the public a seat in the single-seater. “I always tried new angles”, he comments. “I suggested to the Renault racing team that I climb in behind the driver. They accepted. I was astride the bonnet of the engine, behind Alain Prost who was not yet a champion. It was his 3rd season. I was attached to the ROPS with a simple harness to hold me on when I let it go so as to take the photo. The car was going at 80 km/h, it couldn’t go slower because of the compression-ignition engine. It was impressive.”

The picture (see page 46) would be widely distributed in specialist magazines. Last year, this exceptional photo was even put on display at the Fondation Cartier in Paris, at the Auto Photo Exhibition. It was one of only two Formula 1 photos to be selected: a matter of pride for the photographer who took it from this angle, a signature, an approach repeated several times with other drivers at other circuits.

These and many other photos adorned the magazines of the Michel Hommel press group for which Bernard Asset worked until 1985: *Auto hebdo*, *Échappement* and *GP international*, well-known to enthusiasts, used him as their main photographer. "I've had privileged access to all the Grand Prix. It gave me recognition in the F1 world and helped me a great deal subsequently", he says. He conti-

nued his career as a freelance, collaborating with the Vandystadt Agency, turning his attention to other sports events such as Roland-Garros tennis tournament - about which he collaborated in an official book with Yann Arthus-Bertrand, and the Olympic Games in Albertville and Barcelona. Never far from Formula 1, he co-signed the book *Les seigneurs de la F1* (see p. 8). His photos, nowadays offered as limited editions, are the subject of an exhibition this summer at the port at Bandol. Some forty photos are on display until 30 June. ■

www.bernardasset.com



February 2006 at the Paul-Ricard circuit. Bernard Asset embeds his camera in Fernando Alonso's Renault R26 (followed by his team-mate Giancarlo Fisichella).



René Arnoux waiting to get into his car at the Ferrari garage during tests at the Paul-Ricard circuit in 1983.



Bernard Asset, "Embedded Photographer", behind Yannick Dalmas at the wheel of his Larrousse during tests at the Paul-Ricard circuit in the winter of 1993/94.

MEMORIES

► THE MOST PUBLISHED PHOTO

The accident at the 1980 Monaco Grand Prix in 1980 at the 1st corner. The car of the Irishman Derek Daly, in a Tyrrel, literally flies over the others. "Fortunately, there were no injuries."

► THE MEETING

In 1983, the photographer took a photo of Paul Ricard at his family home near the circuit. "He was a very ordinary person who liked painting in his spare time. He welcomed us behind the bar that he had at his house. He offered us a Pacific: the drink had just come onto the market! If I had come across him in the street, I would never have imagined he was behind all that".

► A STOLEN MOMENT

In 1997 at the Imola circuit, Jean Alesi had just had a mechanical break-down during tests for the San Marino Grand Prix. "He went to sit in the track stewards' cabin. I took the picture seconds before everybody came to see him. He's the driver I feel closest to, a friend."

► THE MOST MOVING PHOTO

In February 1994, the photographer immortalised Ayrton Senna meeting one of his fans, during test runs at the Paul-Ricard circuit. "She was an old lady, a devotee, who was in an old people's home and who had put in a request to Renault. Faced with her insistence, the team accepted. She arrived in an ambulance for an autograph. In the end, the meeting lasted 20 minutes. They were both in tears. Ayrton Senna offered her his helmet. He died a few weeks later, on the Imola circuit."

THE GO-KARTING CIRCUIT AT BRIGNOLES, *a breeding ground for champions!*

**Jules Bianchi, Franck Montagny, Charles Leclerc!
Many Formula 1 drivers learned their craft go-karting
at the Jean Vial circuit at Brignoles. Since it was built
in the '60s, it has gained a reputation for training real
champions.**

987 metres long, 8 metres wide, FFSA* approved, the go-karting circuit at Brignoles offers a whole bundle of thrills to all those who use it - be they experienced or inexperienced. The circuit, a short hop from the city centre, is one of the most famous in the Var. It even has an international reputation and it is not uncommon to see the great names of F1 driving there. Jules Bianchi, of course, who was born locally, did his first laps here and often took part in events here before his tragic accident. Charles Leclerc, the driver from Monaco who has signed up this season to F1 also started here, just like Franck Montagny who was on the starting grid for 7 Grand Prix in 2006. But this is not all, Michael Schumacher has also been seen driving the circuit, and even Daniil Kvyat, the Russian driver, has his go-kart here all year-round.

It is also because of its racing team that the go-karting company Brignoles

Karting Loisirs is talked about beyond the Var Department boundary. Very focused on competition, it currently has some thirty drivers, aged between 7 and 60, who achieve very good results. Yannick Iglesias, the current manager of the circuit, explains how it chose to be in this position. *"It's mainly due to a succession of circuit managers who were motor sports enthusiasts, sometimes drivers or fathers of drivers, like Jules Bianchi's dad. I, myself, come from a family that has been much involved with go-karting. My father introduced my brother and me to this sport when we were little. We became drivers. And now, my son Louis, who's 10, has taken up the baton!"* Louis Iglesias is not a nobody in the go-karting world. In 2017, he was crowned French Champion in the 9-11 category, he won the French Cup and the World Final in Portugal against 35 other drivers from the four corners of the globe. But he keeps a cool head and continues to train every week on the Brignoles circuit, suppor-



Circuit Manager, Yannick Iglesias, with his young karting champion son, Louis, and his mechanic father, François.

ted by his father and granddad, François, who is his official mechanic. *"It is a very demanding sport",* says Yannick confidently. *"It requires excellent physical condition and an irreproachable lifestyle right from early childhood. There are a lot of good drivers but very good drivers are very rare. As at the top level of any sport, many sacrifices have to be made. But what is most important is to be able to have trust in oneself and in one's team. Because it's not often realised that there is a whole team behind a driver."*

The Brignoles circuit is very active, organizing several races every year: at least 3 club races, 2 regional races, and 2 national ones. The manager still has many projects in mind and for future years wants to develop the circuit further by welcoming, for example, the French Championship to Brignoles! ■

Brignoles Karting Loisirs
+33 (0)4 94 69 20 12 / www.bkl.fr

* FFSA: Fédération Française du Sport Automobile (French Motor Sport Federation)

RALLYCROSS ACE, *Cyril Raymond*

Cyril Raymond, who was born in Saint-Raphaël, has made his name in rallycross, a discipline which is little known in the south of France. Twice World Champion in the RX2 category, he dreams of moving on in the short term to the premier class in this discipline, the RX World Championship.

Talented, prodigious, phenomenal... There is no lack of such descriptions when talking about Cyril Raymond. They are the best of accolades. Exceptional. Besides being the 2016 and 2017 RX2 Rallycross World Champion, he also won the North American Championship in the same category last year. Logical progress for this young driver, twice crowned French Champion in the junior category in 2013 and then in Super 1600 in 2014. However, this was all unforeseen. *“When I started in rallycross, it was my last chance! I seized the opportunity to get involved in a discipline about which I knew nothing and in which there were already many experienced drivers. So I was leaping into the unknown. It was a risk, but it was essential for my career”*, says Cyril Raymond. This 25-year-old from the Var belatedly discovered this discipline which is much more popular in the north

of France. *“The show and the spectacle associated with this sport immediately attracted me.”* After many years go-karting, then a few laps in an F4 single seater, he made a radical shift to his career. He exchanged the circuits for mixed gravel and tarmac race tracks. At number 5 on the starting line, there is no love lost between drivers. *“In rallycross, you have to keep up a good momentum. The race barely lasts five minutes. It’s a five-lap sprint with your foot on the floor from the start. It’s very fast and good television”*, he explains. *“It’s like in an arena or football stadium with sometimes as many as 70,000 spectators there who have come to see a popular event.”* After being spotted, he signed a professional contract in 2017 with the Swedish, Olsbergs MSE Team before becoming an official driver for the Red Bull Team in 2018, when he took part in the Euro RX Championship. *“And next? At the moment I can’t tell you, but I think I’m on the*

right track to take the wheel in the top category”, indicates this young sportsman who dreams of rubbing shoulders with another French champion, Sébastien Loeb, in the RX World Championship, the highest-level in Rallycross.

Cyril Raymond has not, however, forgotten his native Var. He still lives in Saint-Raphaël and works regularly at the French School of Go-karting at the Paul-Ricard circuit, as an instructor. *“It’s thanks to this job that I can earn my living at the moment”*, he says. *“It is an activity that I highly appreciate, because it enables me to share what I have learned and discussed with many people, particularly children.”* He has at heart a wish to pass on his enthusiasm for motor sport which, as in his own case, is born on the go-karting circuit. ■

See the video of the interview with Cyril Raymond at www.var.fr



© Jaanus Reer / RedBull Content Pool

Le Var, RALLY COUNTRY

Every year in autumn, the Var Rally brings together the biggest number of participants in a rally in France. In 2017, there were more than 180 on the starting line. Two young men from the Var were amongst them - Jean-Baptiste Franceschi and Hugo Margaillan - who did themselves particularly proud at the French Junior Rally Championship when they took first and the second place on the podium! Meeting.

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi,
21, French Junior Rallies Champion (Fayence)



Hugo Margaillan,
21, French Junior Rallies Runner-up (Puget-Ville)



How did you become a champion?

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi: Ever since I was little, I have been immersed in world of rallying. My father used to do it and he passed on his enthusiasm to my brother and me. When I was 18 and had got my licence, I did my first season in the French gravel and tarmac championship. These are two different surfaces that must be fully mastered because that's where everything plays out! Then I drove for 2 years in "Formule de promotion" (Formula race for aspiring young drivers) for Peugeot. I had some good results but not much luck really - mechanical problems etc. Last year, I took part in the French Junior Championship. It was an exceptional year. With my co-driver, we won 4 of the 5 rallies we took part in. And in the one we didn't win, we were second!

Hugo Margaillan: I've been an enthusiast from a very early age. My father introduced me to go-karting when I was very young. When I was 16, I had the opportunity to do a "testing" practice drive that made me even keener to take part of motor racing competitions. I had my first racing car when I was 18, a Saxo N2. I started out doing a few rallies in the region. After a few good results in the French Cup, I decided to venture into Formule de promotion and into the French Junior Championship. A Championship in which I was French runner-up last season.

See the video of the interview with Hugo Margaillan at www.var.fr

What are your plans for the current season?

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi: The triumph in the French Junior Championship has qualified me to take part in the World Junior Championship this season. It's a dream come true. There are 14 participants from 7 different nationalities. There are 5 rounds - in Finland, Turkey, Corsica, Sweden, and Portugal. I am also driving in 5 other rallies in the WRC 3 World Championship, two categories below the professionals. Being on the starting line at 10 rallies in the World Championship! That's magical! This year, the FFSA - the French motor sport federation - is giving me a lot of help. I've got into the French team.

Hugo Margaillan: This season I'm changing my focus slightly. We previously had the chance to take part in the Var rally, in a premier class car. And we achieved some very good results. It's something of a springboard for the 2018 season. We should be taking part in several rounds of the tarmac Championship in a premier class car. Alongside this, we're going to race in Formule de promotion for another marque, so as to continue building up experience in the face of stiff competition and especially to drive on gravel.

Will you be taking part in the Var rally again this season?

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi: A lot of us think that the Var Rally is the very best rally on the French Championship calendar. It's a race I love. I've already done it 3 times. Last year, I finished first in my category out of 42 cars at the start. It was a great result. This year, it's unfortunately not in the programme but if an opportunity comes along, I'll take it!

Hugo Margaillan: Being on the Var Rally starting line at the end of the year is the icing on the cake. As far as I am concerned, it is the best rally of the season. And I don't say that because I come from the Var. It is an event that brings together an exceptional team, very well managed organization, really wonderful roads! I'll do all I can to be there.

How did you chose your co-driver?

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi: Romain Courbon, my co-driver, and I have known each other ever since our school days. At the time we were both rally enthusiasts and everyone said we'd do it together. Except for one season, when he wasn't available, we have always been together. Trust between driver and co-driver is a must but so is complicity. The race is a time of extreme concentration and, above all, tension in the car must be avoided.

Hugo Margaillan: My team, CHL Sport Auto, French Rally Championship Drivers Champion and French Rally Championship Team Champion introduced me to my co-driver, Sébastien Pujol. He's more experienced than me, he's 40 and helped me a great deal last season. The co-driver has a crucial role, he points you in the right direction. Absolute trust is essential. Neither must make a mistake!

Two drivers from the Var leading in the French Junior Rally Championship. Is there any competition between you?

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi: We met last year. We got on well straight away. Even though we were competing against each other all season, we helped each other out. We still send each other messages before our respective races.

Hugo Margaillan: No competition between us, on the contrary, it's more about sharing. We exchange information about rounds we've done previously. Sometimes we even meet up for that reason!

What does the return of the French Grand Prix to Le Castellet mean to you?

Jean-Baptiste Franceschi: It's exceptional! It is wonderful to see the Grand Prix back in France. But in the Var, that's even more fantastic! When it comes to motor sports, the Var department is really dynamic. It will be a fantastic race and a great party for everyone involved. I don't know whether I'll be able to be there, but I'd really love to.

Hugo Margaillan: It's great to see it back! It's a great opportunity for the Var. We are talking about huge economic benefits, jobs created, etc. and for sport, it's marvellous. We have some new young French drivers in F1. We will be able to see them develop on home ground. I'm sure it's a wonderful set-up for welcoming a brilliant Grand Prix! I'll try to be there to enjoy the return of F1 to France.

SIGNES

Caring for BEAUTIFUL MOTORS

Mac Burnie Classic Cars in Signes is one of some dozen Var-based businesses which bring back a shine to old cars. State-of-the-art restoration to better preserve the original vehicles or fully restore them is the work done to order by this business to satisfy their lucky owners.



All the classic car collectors say so. Owning a classic car is to revive memories, sounds, smells, the feel of tarmac under the accelerator, the rediscovery of the thrill of driving. Enthusiasts imbued with such thoughts seek that rare gem: a car evocative of a bygone age which time has not quite erased. When they have found it, they often have to spruce up the beautiful creature and restore all its pageantry before climbing into its driving seat so full of history and plying the wonderful little lanes of the Var. Mac Burnie Classic Cars has become a specialist in the restoration of vehicles. At its workshop, at the Signes business park, some dozen cars bear the mythical names of motoring history: Bentley Continental, Jaguar MKII, Mercedes 190 SL, MG, Morgan, etc. They await examination, diagnosis, the removal of time's ugly misfortunes, disassembly and reassembly. The company has been working for 10 years on adding their aura to old cars, especially English ones, but without any discrimination. It was set up in 2007 by Michel Mac Burnie, an engineer who had worked at the highest level in motor sport. In July 2017 it was bought by Michel Orlando - the former owner, Michel Mac Burnie, having returned to the F1 circuits. Whether it is partial or full restoration, engine repair, or work on the suspension, the bodywork, the upholstery, or the woodwork, the business adapts to every requirement. *"We take care of all the mechanical parts: gear box, engine, electrics. We have the skills to*

take apart the whole engine and to start from scratch with each part, re-assembling them as new”, the new manager, who has gathered around him enthusiastic and experienced specialists, explains. “We sub-contract the upholstery, the restoration of the leather, the body- and paint-work by approaching craftsmen whose professionalism is well-known and who possess special equipment. Most have premises locally: in Signes, Six-Fours, Solliès-Pont, etc.” The more a car has of its original parts, the greater its value, and from this springs a strong demand for the repair of the original parts rather than changing them.



It can take up to two years to fully restore a vehicle. Time enough to cement the relationship between owner and restorer. “We are not a traditional garage. A customer often entrusts us with more than one car: we’re taking care of one of his dreams. A trusting relationship is essential. It often turns into friendship”, confesses Michel Orlando. ■



PRESTIGE GATHERINGS

Although the department has original locations dedicated to veteran cars such as the Private Motor Collection at La Gard, the Var also has a number of festive events where you can admire the motors of yesteryear: at Le Castellet (Historic Tour and Sunday Ride Classic for motorcycles in March), at Plan-de-la-Tour (Festival auto retro in April), at Fréjus (Retro Auto Forum in June), at Sainte-Maxime (Retro Maxime in June), at the Gulf of Saint-Tropez (Harley-Davidson Eurofestival in June), etc. In several communes in the Var, rallies are even organised every month: in Fayence, Vidauban, Six-Fours, Sainte-Anastasie-sur-Issole, etc.

BORMES-LES-MIMOSAS

TECH3, *crazy about motorbikes*

The MotoGP™ is the motor cycling equivalent of the F1 World Championship. And the only French team in the competition is based in the Var, at Bormes-les-Mimosas! Remaining partnered this season with Yamaha, Tech3 will demonstrate the prowess of its engineering and experience on the world's biggest circuits.

280 hp for 148 kg. It is a powerful beast. With more than 360 km/h under the seat, testing deceleration and acceleration and balance and agility on motorcycle circuits demand skilful artistry from riders. A challenge that cannot be met without the backing of a solid team. 19 races, including 7 outside the European Union, are on the MotoGP™ programme for the 2018 season, launched in March in Qatar. The only round in France was at Le Mans last May. Until it ends in November in Valencia, Spain, the Tech3 team will give its all to win. The team from the Var, the only French team in the competition, races in the two top categories of the championship. In the premier class, the MotoGP, the team from the Var defends its colours with two talented drivers under the Monster Yamaha



© Tech3 team

The Monster Yamaha Tech3 Team competes in the MotoGP World Championship.



Chief mechanic, Guy Coulon (centre) and rider, Johann Zarco (right).

Tech3 name: Johann Zarco, the young French motorcycle racer holding the most Grand Prix titles, from whom much is expected, and the Malaysian Hafizh Syahrin. In Moto2, the second championship category, and racing under the Tech3 racing badge, the challenge is taken up by two promising young riders: the Dutchman Bo Bendsneyder and the Australian Remy Gardner, the son of the first MotoGP World Champion in 1987. Spare parts, wheels, essential equipment in the lock-up! For every race, impressive logistics have to be organised. "When we travel by plane, there are about ten tonnes of equipment to be shifted", Hervé Poncharal, the Tech3 team manager and one of its founders, emphasises. "When it's in the European Union, we need 7 articulated lorries." An experience this Var-based business has coped with for 29 seasons.

FINDING THE BEST SETTINGS TO WIN

In 1990 the team raced for the first time in the 250 cm³ category on Honda and Suzuki bikes. The team had been created a year earlier by Hervé Poncharal, who was himself a former rider and at the time was in charge of the competition at Honda

as a "magic mechanic". He genuinely orchestrates the riders and the technicians and puts his experience to notching up victories. Year on year, the Var team earns its stripes. In 1999, it signed up with Yamaha and became its official team. From three at the start - hence the name Tech3 - the team grew to 40. Adjustments to the suspension, the seat, the engine mapping, the tyres - each item has its speciality.

"We work on machines that we are not allowed to modify. Our job is to optimize the configuration depending on the circuit, the rider's style, the weather

France. "I wanted to take off", he says. "I was very attached to Bormes where all my family lived. Settling down there was obvious." He joined up with Bernard Martignac, who has since left, and Guy Coulon, considered in the motorbike world

conditions, a whole series of parameters. The number of possible settings is infinite. For each race, we must find the best combinations to give us a win", explains Hervé Poncharal, describing the daily life of the team. At Bormes-les-Mimosas, the team has 6,000 m² to prepare for the competition beforehand. Having been with Yamaha for 20 years, Tech3 signed up to a new partnership last March with KTM, the constructor in the news for the upcoming season. "We are very happy to partner with Tech3 in 2019. It is a team with very many years of experience and it has picked up many wins in the world championship. Their professionalism will make us stronger", the Austrian constructor declared in the Press. As we await the Var team turning this new corner, the Var will follow its performance this season with close attention! ■

www.teamtech3.fr



The Tech3 racing team at the start of the Moto2 World Championship.

The Department's **COMMITMENT:**

INTER-SCHOOL ROAD SAFETY CHALLENGE

Lack of safety on the roads particularly affects young people. In order to raise awareness of these dangers in the Var, the Departmental Council and Road Safety Office launched the inter-school challenge more than 20 years ago. It is co-funded by the State and the Departmental Council as part of the PDASR (Departmental Road Safety Action Plan).

The principle is simple: to make pupils work throughout the year on road safety issues - but in a non-compulsory way - by producing drawings, posters, poems, videos, models, etc. It is all about making them aware that roads represent a real danger if road users fail to behave appropriately. At the end of the school year, the artwork they have produced is assessed by a jury and prizes are given to the winners. The schools which have signed up to this also benefit from one to two-day educational awareness-raising workshops.

In the 2017-2018 school year, 20 schools in the Var* took part in the programme. It concerns Year 7 and Year 9 pupils - nearly 6,000 pupils.

Year 7 classes took part in the workshop "School transport safety" organised by the ANATEEP Association which works to improve school transport and collective transport for young people. After a theory-based workshop, pupils are presented with scenarios in which they have to practice evacuating a coach. As to the Year 9 pupils, they analysed an accident portrayed in the film "La Route de Marc". They also discussed the importance of fastening one's safety belt and wearing a helmet when on a bike, the risks when out with one's friends, and also the prevention of addictive behaviour such as the consumption of alcohol and taking cannabis. Another workshop "What do I do when I see an accident?" enabled them to know how to react effectively. Organised by the SDIS (Departmental Fire and Safety Service) or the Protacc Association (Protection from accidents), this workshop explains to these young 14-year olds when to call for help, how to make safe an area where there has been an accident, and how to administer first aid.

These activities enjoy a lot of support from pupils who remain involved throughout the year. ■

MAISON DE LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE (MUNICIPAL ROAD SAFETY OFFICE)

La Maison de la sécurité routière for the Var (MSR-Var) was set up by the Prefecture and the Department Council of the Var. Its main aims are:

- To inform and assist road accident victims and their families (Assistance to Victims unit),
- To inform about road safety and to raise awareness of the public in general,
- To promote the development of preventative action (advice to projects, teaching tools, stakeholders, partnerships, etc.).

www.msr83.fr



***THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**

- ▶ Jacques Prévert – Les Arcs
- ▶ Gustave Roux – Hyères
- ▶ Sainte Marthe – Cuers
- ▶ Marie Mauron – Fayence
- ▶ Pierre Puget – Toulon
- ▶ Joliot Curie – Carqueiranne
- ▶ Externat Saint Joseph – Ollioules
- ▶ Henry Bosco – La Valette-du-Var
- ▶ Jean Rostand – Draguignan
- ▶ Henri Nans – Aups
- ▶ Joseph D'Arbaud – Barjols
- ▶ Marcel Rivière – Hyères
- ▶ Peiresc – Toulon
- ▶ La Marquisanne – Toulon
- ▶ Victor Hugo – Gassin
- ▶ Reynier – Six-Fours-les-Plages
- ▶ Paul-Emile Victor – Vidauban
- ▶ Yves Montand – Vinon-sur-Verdon
- ▶ Villeneuve – Fréjus
- ▶ La Guicharde – Sanary-sur-Mer

THE VAR EXCELLENCE IN SPORT



AHEAD OF THE FIELD

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DATES

Top sporting events
all year round

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ELITE CLUBS

Toulon Rugby Club /
Hyères Toulon Var
Basketball Club /
Toulon Saint-Cyr
Var Handball /
Saint-Raphaël Var
Volleyball / Saint-
Raphaël Var Hand-
ball / Toulon Elite
Futsal

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OUTDOORS

A breath of fresh air

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PERFORMANCES

Champions gala /
Julien Prudencio /
Victor Crouin

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© Annabelle Lhuillier-Bonnal (Ville de Toulon)

The "Louis Vuitton America's Cup World Series" in the Bay of Toulon.

AHEAD *of the field*

The Departmental Council for the Var is a major player in sport throughout the Department. "Sport everywhere and for everyone" sums up the Department's Sports Policy. Overall, it is structured around two key objectives. On the one hand, it is all about promoting the development of physical and sports activities by encouraging access to managed and diverse opportunities to practise sports, supporting moves toward sports in order to develop skills. On the other hand, it tends to affirm the sporty image of the Var by promoting the sports performance of the Var and strengthening the attractiveness of the department in this field. Resolutely oriented towards making accessible the widest range of physical activities, the Departmental Council's guiding principle for the Var is to make a specific point of maintaining a top-level sports offering and quality facilities.

The Var has nearly 230,000 registered members across all the sports clubs in the Var, almost half of whom are under 18. As an important element of education, integration and social life, sport specifically contributes to preventing failure at school and reducing social inequality. This is why the Departmental Council of the Var has recently created the "Pass'Sport découverte" (Discovery Passport) which enables young people from the Var to try out various sporting activities during the school holidays. The Department supports Usep - an organisation which teaches sport to primary level pupils, and UNSS - a national sports organisation for middle school and secondary school students. As a partner in the Departmental Committee for people with a disability and the Departmental Committee for adapted sport, it ensures that people with a motor, sensory, or psychological disability, can

also access sporting facilities and practice the sport of their choice. Fully involved in the enrichment and promotion of sport in the Var, top-level sportsmen and women, elite clubs in the

Department, and sporting events of a national or international nature are also supported by the Departmental Council which nevertheless, does not overlook all the other clubs, in particular those which have been awarded a federation seal of approval, the guarantee of the quality of the staff and the facilities on offer.

Since 2017, the Department Council of the Var has rewarded the excellence of young athletes at the Var Champions Evening which it instituted. This is a financial bonus for excellence and performance, to give recognition to young athletes between the ages of 12 and 25. As for the elite clubs, they benefit from financial support to a total of €1,930,000. In exchange, the professionals who train there participate in projects of general interest which take the shape of off-site training, conferences, and meetings with the young people of the Var. Finally, the Department of the Var affirms its sporty image by supporting events that go beyond the Department such as the Var Rally, the Tour Cycliste International du Haut Var-matin, Naturreman Var, the Var Verdon Canyon Challenge trail and, of course, the French Formula 1 Grand Prix. ■



TOP SPORTING EVENTS

all year round



© Tour du Haut-Var Matin



© Boucles cyclistes du Haut-Var

FEBRUARY - LES BOUCLES DU HAUT VAR CYCLE RACES*

Each year, *Les Boucles du Haut Var* attracts some twenty amateur cycling teams. The 16th edition will be on 11 to 14 February 2019 and, as always, includes four day-long cycle races criss-crossing the roads of the Haut Var.

www.velosporthyerois.com

FEBRUARY - LE TOUR DU HAUT VAR-MATIN CYCLE RACE*

The *Tour du Haut Var* is not just the only professional cycle race in the Department, but one of the oldest too! This year, it celebrated its 50th anniversary and, as always, top international teams enjoyed the mild winter weather. This February, they competed in two routes of over 150 km with some steep climbs thrown in, as is common in the Var. The next edition is on 16 to 17 February 2019.

www.tourduhautvar.com

MARCH - THE GULF OF SAINT TROPEZ INTERNATIONAL MARATHON*



The inaugural Gulf of Saint Tropez International Marathon was held on 25 March, in a friendly, carnival atmosphere. Over 5,000 runners took part, all in costumes! The event meant that the runners were able to appreciate a different side to the scenery and treasures around the Gulf of Saint Tropez. There were three races, a 42 km marathon, a 2x21 km marathon in pairs and a relay marathon run in teams of 4, 6 or 7. Buoyed by its success, the Gulf of Saint Tropez International Marathon will be held again next March 2019.

www.marathondugolfedesainttropez.com

MAY - THE SEMAINE DE PORQUEROLLES*

Each year, on Ascension Day weekend, the famous *Semaine de Porquerolles* regatta attracts 700 competitors in over 70 racing yachts. This year, the 20th edition takes place on 9 to 13 May where the teams can enjoy the wonderful scenery of the Bay of Hyères and the National Park. This round of the Mediterranean Championship bears out the friendly, sporting spirit coveted by event co-organisers, the Hyères International Yacht Club and Porquerolles Yacht Club.

www.semainedeporquerolles.com



* Event supported by the Departmental Council

MAY - THE FRENCH ELITE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIPS*

The best French swimmers from 170 clubs across the country will give their all on 21 to 27 May, at Saint Raphael, to qualify for the European Championships in Budapest, in August. It will be the third time that the Saint Raphael swimming arena hosts the French Elite Swimming Championships. The event is organised by the town's swimming club, which has 717 members, including 360 young swimmers.

www.natation-saintraphael.com



MAY - THE FRENCH MOTORBIKE TOUR SERIES

After 3 days in Corsica, the 2018 Motorbike Tour Series finishes up in the Var. Toulon hosts the final stage of the tour on 12 to 13 May, with a 400 km endurance race and the highly anticipated climb up Mount Faron, which towers over the city. It's a spectacular route that attracts hundreds of spectators. The Var's capital city has been the venue for this must-see stage since 2003 and the event is organised by the people of the Var.

www.moto-tour.com



© Moto tour series

JUNE - THE VAR VERDON CANYON CHALLENGE*

This year, the 26th edition of Var Verdon Canyon Challenge takes place on 22 to 23 June. Out in the open, with the stunning backdrop of the Gorges du Verdon, this cross-country event offers four races, a 60 km ultra-trail with a 4,000m height difference, a 30 km-long trail with a 1,700m height difference and two other 10 km and 5 km races. This is an extreme sport event in breath-taking scenery, which is proving to be very popular with runners.

www.verdoncanyonchallenge.com



© Var-Verdon canyon

JULY - LA PORQUEROLLAISE*

The Polynesian canoe, or "Va'a" has become a very popular sport. The Toulon Va'a Club was formed some 20 years ago and is one of the first of its kind in mainland



France. It also organises the *Porquerollaise* international race. This year's race is on 6 to 8 July, in Carqueiranne, which will resound to Polynesian beat for 3 days solid. There will be a whole host of events and performances to celebrate the race's 20th anniversary.

<http://porquerollaise.free.fr>

* Event supported by the Departmental Council



© Vélo sport hyérois

JULY - THE FRENCH TRACK CYCLING CHAMPIONSHIPS*

Almost 300 cyclists from all over France will meet at the Hyères Velodrome on 11 to 18 July, to dispute the French Track Cycling Championships. The meeting includes several races, such as the sprint, keirin, points, tempo, pursuit and the omnium. As well as all the action on the track, there will be plenty of events and demonstrations for spectators!
www.velosporthyerois.com

JULY - THE TOUR DE FRANCE YACHTING RACE CALLS IN AT HYÈRES

The *Tour de France à la Voile* yacht race is the must-see summer event. This year, it calls in at Hyères on 19 to 20 July, for the penultimate stage of the race. This Var town will host the race, with lots of new additions, like a spectators' area, live daily news, or a whole host of prizes to be won by the public. The Var has a highly promising crew competing in the race supported by the Departmental Council, comprising members of Toulon Yachting Club (YCT) and the Hyères Yacht Racing Organisation Committee (COYCH).

www.tourvoile.fr



© YC Toulon



© Circuit Paul-Ricard

SEPTEMBER - THE BOL D'OR

On 14 to 16 September, the Paul Ricard race track, at Le Castellet, will host the 82nd edition of the most famous endurance motorbike race. 200 teams from around the world will battle it out for 24 hours to win the three "Bols" or trophies; the gold and silver Bols d'Or, or the classic Bol d'Or for classic bikes. The race returned to the Var-based circuit 4 years ago and kicks off the 2018-2019 World Endurance Championship.
www.boldor.com

SEPTEMBER - THE DUC D'ALBE*

Hyères Catamaran Club (CMH) started the Duc d'Albe catamaran sailing race back in 2000. It's gone from strength to strength since then to become the largest European meeting of racing catamarans in the Mediterranean. So, make your way to Hyères, to Ayguade beach, on 22 to 24 September, to marvel at some one hundred crews hard at work.

<https://ducdalbe.com>



* Event supported by the Departmental Council

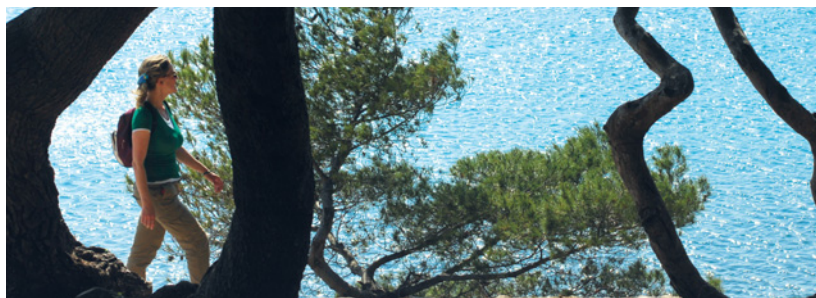


© Voiles de Saint-Tropez / Photo Gilles Martin-Raget

LATE SEPTEMBER - THE VOILES DE SAINT-TROPEZ REGATTA

The *Voiles de Saint-Tropez* regatta combines both legendary yachts and ultra-modern models, highlighting the most sublime and precious aspects of sailing. This wonderful regatta takes place on 29 September to 7 October, under the steady hand of the Société Nautique de Saint-Tropez sailing club and marks a real high-point of the autumn. The town and its port are transformed into a forest of iconic boat masts, both large and small, while out on the water sailing enthusiasts can once again enjoy a great show!

www.lesvoilesdesaint-tropez.fr



OCTOBER - THE SEMAINE VAROISE HIKING FESTIVAL*

The *Semaine Varoise* is a week-long hiking festival, offering 91 different walking trails throughout the Var from 29 September to 7 October! It is organised by the Departmental Hiking Association, in conjunction with various walking clubs in the Var and is open to all regardless of ability, from family walks to sporting endeavours. The event comes after the Walking Festival, held in May, which celebrates hiking each year in a different town or village.

<https://var.ffrandonnee.fr/>



© Natureman Var

OCTOBER - VAR NATUREMAN TRIATHLON*

Var Natureman has been organised by the Verdon Oxygène Association since 2012 and is now a major event for triathletes. Once again, the setting for the 2018 edition on 5 to 7 October is the amazing Verdon river, where 1,400 runners will converge on Salles-sur-Verdon in a friendly, family atmosphere. Competitors will tackle several races, including a long-distance course with a 2 km swim, 90 km bike ride and a 20 km run.

<https://natureman-var.fr>

* Event supported by the Departmental Council



© ASO / Thomas Maheux

OCTOBER - LE ROC D'AZUR MOUNTAIN BIKING EVENT

Le Roc d'Azur is the world's top mountain-biking event. Each year, it attracts more than 20,000 participants, 300 exhibitors and 150,000 visitors. Mountain biking aficionados are keenly awaited for the 35th edition, on 10 to 14 October, at the Base Nature de Fréjus and the trails around Roquebrune-sur-Argens. This internationally-renowned competition pits together cyclists from over 50 different nationalities. In addition to its purely racing dimension, there are more than 25 races and trails for all ages and abilities. In short, it's the biggest show dedicated to mountain biking.

www.rocazur.com

OCTOBER - THE GC32 TPM MED CUP*

After the America's Cup, in 2016, Toulon Provence Méditerranée Metropolitan Area hosts a new prestigious regatta, the GC32 Racing Tour Grand Final, which takes place on **10 to 14 October 2018**. Sporting the exclusive title of GC32 TPM Med Cup, the waters of Toulon harbour have enticed foil-born catamaran crews with just one objective in mind: to lift their boats out of the water and reach the maximum speed to win the race. It'll surely be a mind-blowing demonstration that these 10-metre-long flying boats have in store for us!

www.gc32racingtour.com



© GC32 Racing Tour



© Rallye du Var

NOVEMBER - THE RALLYE DU VAR AND CLASSIC CAR RALLY*

This is one of the department's biggest events in the sporting calendar. It attracts hundreds of participants, including top rally drivers, like Sebastien Loeb, and thousands of spectators too. The 64th edition of the *Rallye du Var* takes place on **22 to 25 November**. This year, it once again marks the finale of the French Rally Championship. The start and finish will be at Sainte Maxime, while the route, a technical challenge highly regarded by the drivers, criss-crosses some fifteen towns and villages around the Gulf of Saint Tropez and the Massif des Maures hills. In addition to the main rally, the 24th classic car rally gives spectators the chance to admire vintage sports cars that have left their mark on the sport.

<http://var-rallye.fr>

THE FRENCH OCEAN RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Toulon hosts the French Ocean Racing Championships on **1 to 4 November**. The event is organised by the Regional Canoe Kayak Committee and is intended to be the biggest national competition of long-distance kayak and Polynesian Va'a canoe ocean races. The meeting attracts some 500 competitors and volunteers from all over France and overseas departments. It combines four single and tandem kayak championships and 1 to 6-seater Va'a canoe competitions.

www.canoe-paca.fr



© Toulon Va'a

* Event supported by the Departmental Council

Toulon Rugby Club, A LOCOMOTIVE

Toulon Rugby Club has won everything in the Top 14 and the European Championship. They play in red and black, with an emblematic sprig of Lily of the Valley, their anthem



is "Pilou-Pilou" and their father is Félix Mayol, who founded the team 110 years ago. The players of Rugby Club Toulonnais really create a buzz for their loyal Var supporters.

Ever since the RCT was founded in 1908, by a generous singer, Félix Mayol, it has tasted defeat, but most of all, memorable triumphs. It was the first European club to win the European Cup three times in a row, in 2013, 2014 and 2015. It even won the French Championship for the fourth time in 2014, to secure an historic double of European Cup and Top 14 Championship.

The supporters have stood firm, in ever greater numbers, through tears and joy. Now, 18,000 of them crowd into the refurbished stadium, with its unique atmosphere, and strike up "Pilou-Pilou", the war-cry that galvanises the Toulon players and unnerves their opponents. Coming to play at the Mayol stadium is like entering the cauldron. Although the club always aims to win, its President, Mourad Boudjellal adds, "winning, sure, but it's also about starting out on a new sporting cycle by stressing the importance of training and bringing up young players from Toulon". To achieve this, the club President has sought support for the 2017-2018 season from, "one of the

best technical experts in French rugby, the ex-international, Fabien Galthié. He'll have the support of the ex-Grenoble manager, Fabrice Landreau, and the Australian, Manny Edmonds, for the backs and Marc Dal Maso who continues his role with the Toulon forwards". This season, player recruitment, "was top quality, with arrivals such as young international players like Raphaël Lakafia, Facundo Isa or Hugo Bonneval, together with more seasoned professionals like Chris Ashton and Malakai Fekitoa", adds the President. As both a businessman and Club President, Mourad Boudjellal has taken RCT to a new level since he arrived in 2006. The club made ever more ambitious signings, such as Tana Umaga from Pro D2, or the arrival of English star, Jonny Wilkinson. Success has spawned numerous activities with young people from the Var and, since 2016, RCT also has a women's team. ■

► **PRESIDENT:** Mourad Boudjellal

► **TECHNICAL STAFF:**

- Manager, Fabien Galthié,
- Trainers, Fabrice Landreau, Manny Edmonds, Marc Dal Maso.

THE 2017-2018 TEAM

Emerick Setiano (France), Florian Fresia (France), Jean-Baptiste Gros (France), Laurent Delboulbes (France), Levan Chilachava (Georgia), Marcel Van Der Merwe (South Africa), Xavier Chiocci (France), Anthony Étrillard (France), Badri Alkhasashvili (Georgia), Bastien Soury (France), Guilhem Guirado (France), Corentin Vernet (France), Dave Attwood (England), Jocelino Suta (France), Juandré Kruger (South Africa), Romain Taofifenua (France), Samu Manoa (United States), Swan Rebbadj (France), Charles Ollivon (France), Duane Vermeulen (South Africa), Facundo Isa (Argentina), Jean Monribot (France), Juan Martin Fernandez Lobbe (Argentina), Mamuka Gorgodze (Georgia), Raphaël Lakafia (France), Rudy Gahetau (France), Alby Mathewson (New Zealand), Eric Escande (France), Sébastien Tillous-Borde (France), Anthony Belleau (France), François Trinh-Duc (France), Jonathan Wisniewski (France), Louis Carbonel (France), Malakai Fekitoa (New Zealand, Tonga), Mathieu Bastareaud (France), Rico Buliruarua (Fiji), Bryan Habana (South Africa), Chris Ashton (England), Josua Tuisova (Fiji), Jp Pietersen (South Africa), Semi Radradra (Fiji), Vincent Clerc (France), Hugo Bonneval (France), Jonah Placid (Australia).

www.rctoulon.com



© Olivier Pastor / TPM

Hyères Toulon Var Club *Basketball,* **THE LOVE OF THE GAME**



Hyères Toulon Var Basketball Club was founded in 1990, after the merger of two teams, Hyères and Toulon. This season, the elite basketball team from the Var is playing to stay in the Pro A Championship and is pulling out all the stops to make top-level basketball popular with the people of the Var.

Ten young players from different nationalities have joined the team to wear the HTV colours. These are yellow for home matches at the Palais des Sports, in Toulon or at the Espace 3000, at Hyères, and blue for away matches. Hyères Toulon Var Basketball Club is one of 18 top flight French professional clubs and plays on the Pro A Championship for the 2017-2018 season. Although it has the smallest budget in the division, it works tirelessly to promote the sport. After first being promoted to the Pro A Division in 2001, the team returned to Pro B in 2012, but won the league in 2016 to regain a place in the top tier for the following season. The team's goal is to defend its Pro A status for the 2017-2018 season, with highly-motivated players. "We are a team that gives nothing away", proudly states coach, Emmanuel Schmitt. Schmitt was the youngest player in the French top division and also played for HTV. He joined the club as coach in 2017 after doing a sterling job managing the Swiss national team. Training sessions combine the languages of Shakespeare and Molière as the team has a high contingent of Americans among the 10 players. "The rules allow up to half the team to be composed of foreign players", explains the club's management team. "The club recruits young players who need to play to show what they can do and HTV offers them this springboard. For most of them, it's their first professional contract and for many of the Americans, their first time outside the United States. So, we do all we can to help them adapt to their new home, but the weather helps." With limited means, the team turnover rate is 80% each season.

"We are not on a level pegging with the other teams, with average annual budgets of €4 m, even up to €10 m for the biggest clubs. Our budget is around €2 million. The local authorities, including the Var Departmental Council* help us a lot, but we have to grow our own resources", add the team managers.

The elite team is a model for the 400 HTV club members and the Department's many young basketball players. In return for the Departmental grant, the players take time out when not competing to take part in training sessions around the local area, discussion sessions in English and sports clinics throughout the Var. We organise these activities to provide, "interesting moments when the players and the public can meet. For professional sports players, it's all about giving advice, promoting the various occupations among the club's staff and playing with young people", emphasise the club members. ■

► **PRESIDENT:** Christian Giannini

► **COACH :** Emmanuel Schmitt

THE 2017-2018 TEAM

Luka Asceric (Serbia), Terry Smith (USA), Raymond Cowels III (USA), Corentin Lopez (France), Reggie Arnold (USA), Vafessa Fofana (France), Digue Diawara (France), Jordan Tolbert (USA), Alexandre Chassang (France), Ferdinand Prenom (France).

www.basket-htv.com

* One of the 96 Departmental Councils in France





Toulon Saint-Cyr *Var handball team,* **ALL WOMAN!**

Toulon Saint-Cyr Var Handball (TSCV) was formed in 2007 and is the leading light of women's handball in South-East France. The club is now a benchmark for training too.

In 2005, Toulon and Saint Cyr handball associations took the first step to combine their Elite Division 1 and National League 2 teams. Despite the new line-up suffering relegation to Division 2, the clubs completed a merger in 2007 to create Toulon Saint-Cyr Var Handball Club. The team immediately regained their place in the top flight, in 2008, and stayed there. From 2010 to 2012, TSCV reached even higher to win the French Championship and the French Cup, two years running.

Today, apart from the trainer and a handful of staff, this all-female club* represents 250 members, with more than 1,000 event-specific memberships issued each year during organised activities.

TSCV teams compete in all competition categories, from under-10s to the top tier. Training is the foundation for this. As a result, the club opened a training centre in 2011, which

readies 8 players to join the team each year after a 3-year training programme, built on sporting excellence. Trainees work alongside professional players to

share their experience and guidance and ultimately, the best of them can join the first team. The training centre is recognised as being one of the best in the whole of France and there is also a preparatory training centre for 16-18-year olds. Currently, half the team playing in Division 1 was trained at the club, providing just the right balance of women bringing in their experience and those graduating from the club's training scheme. To this end, two top players, Siraba Dembelé and Laurisa Landre, joined the team in July. Both were part of the French team that won the World Championship, in 2017.

While all club members extol the values of self-fulfilment, self-respect and respect for opponents, camaraderie and an appreciation of hard work, the players are also empowered to promote and defend women's sport, especially at the highest level.

TSCV is one of France's top women's handball teams and its targets for the

season include, finishing in the top 5 of the French Championship, reaching the French Cup final and even winning it to qualify for the European Cup. Now, there are some fine challenges that this team is raring to take on! ■

* Mixed teams are allowed up to 11 years old, so the club's youngest teams also include boys.

► **PRESIDENTS:** Jeanne-Marie De Torres et Perrine Paul

► **D1 COACH:** Sandor Rac

THE 2017-2018 TEAM

Dounia Abdourahim (France), Ewa Andrzejewska (Poland), Alexandra Bettacchini (France), Laurène Catani (France), Marina David (France), Laura Gaudefroy (France), Olivera Jurisic (Denmark), Yulia Khavronina (Russia), Jessy Kramer (Netherlands), Djeneba Tandjan (France), Ekatarina Vetkova (Russie), Sabrina Zazai (France), Meryle Crevel (France), Lidija Cvijic (Serbia), Camille Depuiset (France), Mariam Eradze (Iceland), Morgane Pannequin (France), Emma Puleri (France), Laurie Puleri (France), Marie-Charlotte Rittore (France), Léa Serdarevic (France).

www.tscvhb.fr



Saint-Raphaël Var Volleyball,

A TEAM FULL OF FIGHTING SPIRIT

The memory of winning the French Championship, when they beat Cannes in 2016, remains etched in the minds of the club's members and supporters. The victory was even more of a surprise given that Saint Raphaël Var Volleyball were not due to play in League A that season. But, that doesn't mean they didn't deserve it!

"I still see the players in my mind when we won the semi-final", reminisces Club President, Christine Girod *"thanked them because what they did was already amazing. But I sensed that wasn't enough; they wanted the Cup! They're a team with a fighting spirit"*. Their finest hour was not down to luck but the result of many long years of effort, tenacity and, of course, hard work. Team trainer,

Giulio Cesare Bergoli, deputy coach for the Italian national team, pushes the players to give their best, in the game and technically too. He doesn't hesitate to make the players repeat exercises again and again until they get things just right. He frequently uses video footage to show the women their mistakes or weaknesses and pushes them to improve their performance. The target in mind is for Saint-Raphaël Var Volleyball to be one of France's top five clubs.

"Our victory in 2016 raised the bar and made us one of the best teams in the country", considers team captain, Liesbet



Saint-Raphaël Var Volleyball Club was founded in 1947 and became a women-only team in 1976. The club is one of the top French teams and attracts many international players, all aspiring to repeat the high of 2016 and become French Champions once more.

Vindevoghel. The Belgian player joined Saint-Raphaël Var Volleyball three years ago and can't see herself playing anywhere else. *"At 38, it's the pleasure I get that keeps me wanting to play professionally. You have to keep the passion burning in your efforts and you can do that here. Saint-Raphaël is really my favourite club"*, she adds.

Saint-Raphaël Var Volleyball Club began life in 1947 but became a women-only club in 1976. It has around 200 registered young players from age 6 to 20 and the most talented and tenacious of them may, one day, join the professional team. ■

- ▶ **PRESIDENT:**
Christine Girod
- ▶ **TRAINER:**
Giulio Cesare Bergoli

THE 2017-2018 TEAM

Karolina Goliat (Belgium), Kristiine Miilen (Estonia), Amandine Giardino (France), Julie Oliveira Souza (France), Liesbet Vindevoghel (Belgium), Julie Mollinger (France), Julieta Lazcano (Argentina), Alexandra Erhart (France), Natalia Valentin (Puerto Rico), Ludivine Casali (France), Keisha Leggs (USA).

<https://www.srvvb.fr>



Saint-Raphaël Var handball, **A CLUB WITH VALUES**



Saint-Raphaël Var Handball is ranked among the four best clubs in France and regularly qualifies for the EHF European Cup. Its success makes it an attractive club for French and foreign players.

Saint-Raphaël Var Handball (SRVHB) embodies values of humility, tenacity, camaraderie, generosity and courage, both in the team and the way it plays. You can see these ethics, loud and clear, on the court at the Palais des Sports, in Saint-Raphaël, where the players train and play for the Var club's colours. *"Our team is built on respect for others and a daily desire to show the will and courage to challenge yourself"*, emphasises Jean-François Krakowski, Club President for 30 years and whose name now features on the Palais des Sports arena. *"This way of doing things, coupled with an attractive and competitive strategy, helps us stay at the top of the table."* The SRVHB team has played in the French first division since 2006 and is regularly ranked among the four best teams in the country. In recent years, the club has also qualified several times for the EHF European Cup. *"We were the only team this season to have beaten Montpellier and we managed to win in Berlin, which is a little like beating Real Madrid at the Bernabeu"*, smiles Jean-François Krakowski.

"Our victories come from hard work and self-sacrifice", says Professional Team Captain Aurélien Abily. *"We mustn't forget how lucky we are to be paid for something we love doing. This really goes for Saint-Raphaël, as there is a strong team spirit that has helped us experience some special moments together"*. Under the watchful eye of trainer, Joël da Silva, players joining SRVHB find it hard to leave. As a result, the team stays pretty much the same year on year and the club now has several players that have been picked for the French team. These include Adrien Dipanda, Xavier Barachet or Raphaël Caucheteux, who joined the national squad for the first time in 2018. *"He thoroughly deserved his first cap at 32"*, comments Jean-François Krakowski. *"Firstly, it mattered to him, but it was also important for the club too"*. So, under the sunny skies of Saint-Raphaël, the club nurtures the dream of one day adding a European Champion's star to its shirt. ■

► **PRESIDENT:** Jean-François Krakowski

► **TRAINER:** Joël da Silva

THE 2017-2018 TEAM

Aurélien Abily (France), Xavier Barachet (France), Raphaël Caucheteux (France), Alexandre Demaille (France), Adrien Dipanda (France), Wissem Hmam (France), Miroslav Jurka (Czech Republic), Artsem Karalek (Belarus), Nicolas Krakowski (France), Geoffroy Krantz, Alexander Lynggaard (Denmark), Mihai Popescu (Romania), Daniel Sarmiento (Spain), Alexandru Simicu (Romania), Arthur Vigneron (France).

www.srvhb.com



Toulon Elite Futsal

IS ON THE RISE

Nicknamed “the little reds and blacks”, the players of Toulon Elite Futsal compete in Division 1 and already have a fine record in the team’s short 10-year history. Here’s a club formed by a bunch of football-playing friends with a bright future in an up-and-coming sport.



The founders of Toulon Élite Futsal didn’t hang around with a place up for grabs and a sport to explore. It took them barely 3-years to secure promotion to the first division. The club opted to join the French Football Federation* (FFF) seven years ago because prior to carving out a name for itself and securing a loyal fan base, “we were just a bunch of mates that liked to play football. We had more fun outside classic matches, playing in small groups on little pitches because the game was faster and you got the ball more often. In fact, we loved playing futsal, without really knowing we were actually playing the game”, says Founding President, Sassi Ben Naceur. He took an interest in this sport and started an association in 2008 called, “International Saint Roch” with his friend and fellow-player, Farah Gouled. “Back then, we were members of the National Association of Futsal Clubs, which complies with the World Futsal Association code. After a string of good results, the District du Var

Football Association contacted us to join it, as the FFF is tasked by the Ministry of Sport to develop and organise Futsal.” This new federation meant new rules and the players had to adapt on the pitch “because FIFA only allows football to be played with the feet, while with the AMF, you can touch the ball with your hands”, explains the player. So, International Saint Roch changed its name to, “Tout simplement, Tous ensemble” (quite simply, all together) and from then on, the matches kept coming and the results too. The President and ex-player has a head full of memories and remembers the time when they got promotion. “The club was promoted to Division 1 in 2011-2012 and we played at the Palais des Sports, in Toulon, where we won 3-2 against Port de Bouc. That evening, we said to each other that we had it in us to play in the French Championship.” Once in Division 1, the team changed its name to Toulon Élite Futsal and now competes against well-established teams with numerous foreign players. The club

is growing and signed two good Brazilian players, together with a new trainer, the Italian, Felice Mastropierro. “He really helped us and brought his experience.” Now, Lluís Bernat Molina is at the helm of a team considered to be, “one of the best teams in France, capable of winning the French Championship”, concludes its President. ■

* Two international federations have been arguing over who governs Futsal since the 1980’s. On one side is the International Football Association (FIFA), which wants to regain control of what it considers to be a variation of its discipline of football. Opposing it is the World Futsal Association (AMF ex-Fifusa) which has staked its claim on the sport.

- **PRESIDENT:** Sassi Ben Naceur
- **TRAINER:** Lluís Bernat Molina

THE 2017-2018 TEAM

Paulinho Garibaldi (Brazil), Maciek Urtowski (Poland), Anthony Cazalas (France), Valentin Albertini (France), Jebali (France), David Busquets (Spain), Rafita Berlanga (Spain), Eduardo (Italie), Kennedy Ofong (Spain), Nilton Tavares (Cape-Verde), Pupa Furtado (Portugal), Thiago Souza (Brazil), Farah Gouled (France), Raymond Santiago (France), Soufyan El Hafyani (France).

m.facebook.com/ToulonTEF



© Sassi Ben Naceur / Toulon Elite Futsal

Orienteering, caving, climbing, hiking, cycling, cycle touring, rowing, hang gliding, archery, sailing, canoeing, diving... In the Var, all these countryside sports can be enjoyed! From the Verdon cliffs to the seabed off the Golden Isles, from the Saint Cassien Lake to the Sainte-Baume massif, from Estérel to the banks of the Argens, from the Plaine des Maures to Mont Lachens with its peak at 1,715 metres, the department has many locations which offer a wide range of possibilities. Because roaming the natural surroundings combines pleasure with well-being, the Departmental Council wants to encourage their development. It supports some fifteen departmental committees which bring together more than 100,000 licensed operators, providing them with more than €100,000 annually in grant aid. It is also working on drawing up a list of the spaces, sites, or itineraries for sport in the countryside, as well as local circular walks. The Departmental Council has even put in place the *Equi'découverte* network: a 450-kilometre route through the Var from north to south... on horseback!



Kitesurfing on Almanarre beach, at Hyères.

A BREATH *of fresh air*



Champions gala, **REWARDING EXCELLENCE**

For the second year running, the Department Council is rewarding young athletes from the Var, aged 12 to 25, all award-winners for their sporting endeavours in the "individual disciplines", "team individual disciplines" and "team sports" categories. The champions gala evening for the 2017-2018 season will be on 4 December at the Palais Neptune.



2016/2017 SEASON AWARD WINNERS WERE:

- ▶ 70 champions in the "individual disciplines" category;
- ▶ 92 champions in the "team individual disciplines" category;
- ▶ 4 teams in the "team sports" category:

the Toulon La Garde university basketball team (French university N2 division champions), the "Comanches de Toulon" women's softball team (French champions with 11 consecutive titles), "Crabos" RCT Junior rugby union team (French under-18 champions, with 2 consecutive titles) and the "Sporting Treiziste Toulonnais" 1st senior rugby league team (French DN1B division champions).

The Department Council is proud of its young athletes and wanted to show its gratitude by encouraging and rewarding them. Sport, especially high-level competition, requires unwavering commitment and so the Department began organising a champions gala evening since last year to reward them.

In 2017, Marc Giraud, Chief Executive of the Var Departmental Council* handed out awards to more than 250 top-level athletes. A total of €85,500 was awarded, €49,500 for individual awards and €36,000 for team awards (in the individual and team sports categories). This year, awards will be given directly to athletes for individual disciplines, while team awards in individual or team disciplines will be given to clubs. The amounts vary based on an established scale, from €500 for a French Champion in an individual discipline, to €3,000 for an Olympic Champion or Paralympic Team Champion.

For 2017-2018, we can already look forward to top sports champions from the Var, like Arthur Bauchet, from Grimaud. Arthur is the youngest of fifteen athletes in the French team who competed at the Paralympic Winter Games in PyeongChang, this March. He won silver medals in the Super-G, Standing Slalom, Standing Super Combined and Standing Downhill events. That's some achievement! ■

* One of the 96 Departmental Councils in France



Ever since Julien Prudencio was a small child, adrenalin has coursed through the veins of this thrill-seeker. After trying out a variety of board sports, like skateboarding, surfing, wakeboarding or snowboarding, he set his sights on pastures new. Two years ago, he discovered wake surfing and became Amateur World Champion in June 2017!

Julien Prudencio, **20, WAKE SURFING**

Wake surfing is a fast-developing water sport that consists of surfing waves (or the wake) produced by a boat. “*The perfect wave is about a metre high, where you can have fun doing surfing moves!*”, explains Julien Prudencio. After practicing for just a few months, the young man managed the astounding feat of becoming Amateur World Champion by winning several world competitions at the Grau du Roi, in France and Zurich, in Switzerland. Battling against the best riders at the time, he kept his head as he is a born competitor. “*Ever since I was a kid, I love competing with others and showing them*

what I’m made of!” These two victories meant he qualified for a competition in Canada which, unfortunately, he couldn’t go to. “*As I finished in the Top 10 in the world, I was invited to this major event, which takes place each year in November. But I was working then and my boss couldn’t let me go!*”. But it’s a matter of time! Julien hopes to have just as much success this year and to be invited back to this world-class international competition. That’s why he decided to become self-employed to better manage his time. In April, Julien opened his wake surfing business at the old port in Saint Raphael. He juggles daily training, his morning wake surf coaching courses and

organises giant bananas boat rides in the afternoon. “*I train for an hour almost every day, in the early morning, at 5 or 6 am, when the sea is at its calmest. Compared to surfing, we need a flat, calm sea. I’m not yet able to make a living from my sport, but I’ve just become semi-professional, which is a big step!*”

When he created his company, Wave Azur, he wanted to make wave surf accessible to everyone in the Var, especially in the vicinity of Saint Raphael. ■

www.wave-azur.com

Victor Crouin, 18, SQUASH

Since last September, Victor Crouin has been one of the world's top 100 senior professional players. What's his sport? Squash. Victor's inherent ability, his intelligence and perfectionism, have helped this man from Toulon become European Champion, seven-time French Champion and 2017 World Junior Vice-Champion. He is a top athlete who is now seamlessly combining sport and studies. In September, he's off to Harvard, the prestigious American university, but he will still play for the French national team. Here's a look at his career to date.



It would be a cliché to say that it came naturally to Victor when he was small, but he loved squash, playing at the age of 6 with his father, Emmanuel, a top Level-1 squash player and coach at the Av'nou Squash Club, in La Valette-du-Var. While Victor played both tennis and squash, from 4 years old *"I went with my dad to lots of his tournaments and squash is a lot of fun when you are small"*. His level of tennis was excellent but the pressure to continue playing, plus his first victory as French Squash Champion at 10 years old, swayed his choice; he decided to become a squash player. It was a choice that Emmanuel Crouin was dreading. *"I never dreamt of being a father and a coach"*, he tells us. He still has this challenging role now as Victor Crouin has taken a break from his studies to devote himself to playing in professional tournaments. Up till then, he had been winning victories each year with the French national team as

a high school student at the CREPS elite sports training facility for upcoming athletes, in Aix-en-Provence. He finished his studies there, gaining a Science Baccalaureate *"with honours in June 2017"*, before adding, *"Then I applied to go to an American university where I was accepted in 5 different colleges. I visited the campuses and finally chose Harvard"*. Now, just before heading to the United States, young Victor Crouin has *"come home"*, as he says, to the Av'nou Squash Club in La Valette-du-Var, with his father, who is now the owner and Chairman of Toulon-La Valette Squash Association. It's an impressive achievement for a young top-class athlete, now an adult. But when you think that a squash player hits their peak at 27 to 28, 18-year old Victor Crouin has many fine years of competition ahead of him! Here's someone to keep an eye on. ■

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