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25 MARCH 2008

GP2 SERIES Season Preview

# Faster sleeker better

GP2's new car and drivers  
get set for the 2008 season



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**GP2 ASIA ROUND-UP**  
ROMAIN GROSJEAN WINS THE TITLE



# New horizons for GP2

With ART Grand Prix's Romain Grosjean now crowned as the first GP2 Asia title winner, the focus turns to the start of the 2008 GP2 Series in Barcelona, Spain

Nothing stands still in motorsport – certainly not ART Grand Prix's Romain Grosjean, who clinched the inaugural GP2 Asia crown in dominant fashion this month. But, even as the French ace celebrated his title in Bahrain, he'll have been looking ahead to the start of the GP2 Series in Barcelona this weekend – a season which promises plenty of intrigue thanks to an influx of new drivers, the debut of a new car and a new circuit in the form of the Valencia street race.

## GP2 Asia proves to be a huge success

The Middle-Eastern and South East Asian-based GP2 Asia – aimed at taking the GP2 concept to emerging motorsport countries, and helping expose their future driving stars – has proved a huge success in its first year. Drivers from outside Formula 1's traditional proving grounds of Europe and South America made up the bulk of the grid,

and did plenty of winning. In Grosjean, GP2 Asia has produced a worthy champion who joins the crop of drivers hoping to win the next GP2 crown and follow in the wake of former champions and F1 graduates Nico Rosberg, Lewis Hamilton and Timo Glock.

## New GP2 car for the 2008 title hopefuls

Awaiting the 13 teams and 26 drivers who make up this year's grid are a number of exciting challenges – most notably the introduction of an all-new GP2/08 car. Designed to be closer than ever to F1 design and performance, it's faster, sleeker and better, but still provides a level playing field in which the next generation of F1 talent can hone their talent and show their skills. Predicting who will ultimately win the championship is anyone's guess, but one thing is clear from the level of competition that we've seen in GP2 Asia: we're in for a great year!

13

teams taking part in this season's GP2 Series

26

GP2 drivers, representing 18 different countries

10

rounds, with a total of 20 races making up the season

8

former GP2 race winners, and six GP2 returnees

10

new graduates from GP2 Asia and two newcomers joining the grid

## GP2 ASIA SEASON REVIEW

# New Asian champ predicts tough fight for GP2 Series

**Newly crowned inaugural GP2 Asia champion Romain Grosjean has said he's not expecting an easy ride to the GP2 Series title, despite having secured the Asian crown two races before the end of the season.**

The French ace – who is Renault's official F1 test driver – will stick with ART Grand Prix as he continues his rookie GP2 year. However, he says that the wealth of quality drivers in the GP2 Series in 2008 will make winning the title a tough task.

"I always said GP2 Asia was the best way to learn about the GP2 Series," Grosjean explains. "My performance surprised people, but I'm lucky to be part of a good team that I know well from the Formula 3 Euroseries. We work well together.

"The GP2 Series will be a different environment. I'll be a rookie again, with a lot to learn – starting with developing the new car and learning new tracks. For the title, I think that I'm more of an outsider. Andreas Zuber, Pastor Maldonado, my team-mate Luca Filippi or Giorgio Pantano – they're really the men to beat. They have the experience. I'm here to spice things up a little."



## BUEMI CLINCHES SECOND

Trust Team Arden's Sebastien Buemi took second place in the GP2 Asia drivers' points at the final race of the season in Dubai.

The Swiss ace closed in on Barwa International Campos Team driver Vitaly Petrov in the standings with second place in the feature race. The Russian then retired from the sprint with a fuel pressure failure, allowing Buemi to clinch the runner-up spot.

ART Grand Prix took the teams' trophy, with Trust Team Arden finishing second.

# 5 MOMENTS THAT MADE GP2 ASIA GREAT

**As far as first seasons go, you can't get much better than GP2 Asia's inaugural year. 10 races in four countries, a total of six race winners, 13 drivers on the podium, five fastest lap setters and seven different pole sitters. Here are our five favourite moments of 2008...**

**1 Romain Grosjean's double in Dubai.** ART Grand Prix's French rookie grabbed the GP2 Asia headlines with a record-setting double win in the season opener. "All in all, it was an amazing start to the year," he said.

**2 Ben Hanley's Indonesian express.** The Barwa International Campos driver motored from 18th place to third on his debut in the Indonesian feature race. "It was a horrid race for 90 per cent of the drivers," Hanley said. "But great for me."

**3 Fairuz Fauzy's near-home victory.** One for the family as Super Nova Racing's Malaysian star scorched to victory in the Indonesian sprint race. "To have my wife, my new son and parents all cheering me on the podium was fantastic," Fauzy explained.

**4 Kamui Kobayashi's double sprint win.** In the Malaysian sprint race, the Dams ace became the first Japanese driver to win in GP2. He backed it up with a victory in Bahrain. "It was great to win on two F1 tracks, and in front of the F1 teams," he said.

**5 F1's next generation podium?** The feature race podium at the F1 support event in Bahrain was made up of Romain Grosjean, Sebastien Buemi and Kamui Kobayashi – all F1 test drivers. Was this F1's first glimpse of its future stars?

## Q&A

## Bruno Michel



The GP2 Series boss looks back on a successful first GP2 Asia season, and looks ahead to the start of the GP2 Series campaign

## So, we've come to the end of the first GP2 Asia season. How do you think it has gone?

When you launch something new, you never know if it's going to work or not. Even a few months before the start of the season, it was hard to find drivers, especially Asian ones. But, in the end, we had nine Asian drivers. This was important, as developing young drivers and promoting GP2 in Asia was the main purpose of this series.

## What about next year? Will we see any changes or new tracks?

In terms of regulations, I don't think there will be any changes. New circuits? Of course. As F1 goes to new circuits, so will we. We need to be careful not to adopt too many races, though, for cost and logistics. The idea behind GP2 Asia was that GP2 teams could race in both series without problems.

## Who has impressed you in Asia?

We've had a lot of great races, but Romain Grosjean, in particular, is showing that he is capable of doing great things in the future.

## What about the Asian drivers?

GP2 Asia proved that we can find strong drivers from this part of the world. Kamui Kobayashi from Japan won races, and Fairuz Fauzy from Malaysia also did very well.

## The new GP2 Series is almost here. How excited are you about the season ahead?

Very excited. The new GP2/08 car looks very promising, especially next to the outgoing car, and I'm sure we'll have some great racing. We've seen amazing times in the tests, and since the teams haven't been able to do a lot of set-up work, it will make things interesting through the year.



## New GP2/08 offers pleasure... and pain

The drivers lining up for this year's GP2 Series reckon that switching to the new, faster GP2/08 car for 2008 could be a pain in the neck – quite literally!

The sleeker, more modern Dallara-designed chassis has more mechanical and aerodynamic grip than the outgoing car. This means faster lap times and more thrills for the drivers, but also higher cornering speeds and more work at the wheel. Expect a few fatigued muscles – especially on the neck, which takes the brunt of the g-loading – at the end of the long Saturday feature race.

Barwa International Campos driver Vitaly Petrov – at 180cm and 80kg – could bench press GP2's more petite drivers, but even he noticed the demands of the new car. "After the first test in Paul Ricard, it was really difficult, physically," he says. "This new car must be quite similar to a Formula 1 car around the corners – it has a lot more g-force. Wow, it was hard on the neck, the arms. It was unbelievable. I'd never driven anything that attacked these muscles this much."

Ben Hanley agrees. "The new car is definitely more physically demanding to drive," he says. "It has got so much more aerodynamic grip. Plus, the steering weight is a lot heavier and there's a big difference in the braking distances into the corners. You certainly feel that on the track."

One thing is for sure – across the board, all of this year's GP2 Series drivers are fans of the new car. "It has got larger bargeboards, more downforce, a twice-as-efficient front wing, different front-suspension torsion system," says Christian Bakkerud. "It's going to be awesome around high-speed corners. Worth the massage afterwards, isn't it?"



### 2008 GP2 SERIES – DRIVER LINE-UP

NO.	DRIVER	NAT.	TEAM NAME
01	Karun Chandhok	IND	iSport International
02	Bruno Senna	BRA	iSport International
03	Luca Filippi	ITA	ART Grand Prix
04	Romain Grosjean	FRA	ART Grand Prix
05	Vitaly Petrov	RUS	Barwa International Campos Team
06	Ben Hanley	GBR	Barwa International Campos Team
07	Christian Bakkerud	DEN	Super Nova Racing
08	Alvaro Parente	POR	Super Nova Racing
09	Jerome d'Ambrosio	BEL	Dams
10	Kamui Kobayashi	JPN	Dams
11	Javier Villa	ESP	Racing Engineering
12	Giorgio Pantano	ITA	Racing Engineering
14	Sebastien Buemi	SUI	Trust Team Arden
15	Yelmer Buurman	NED	Trust Team Arden
16	Davide Valsecchi	ITA	Durango
17	Alberto Valerio	BRA	Durango
18	Adrian Valles	ESP	Fisichella Motor Sport International
19	Roldan Rodriguez	ESP	Fisichella Motor Sport International
20	Mike Conway	GBR	Trident Racing
21	Ho-Pin Tung	CHN	Trident Racing
22	Andreas Zuber	AUS	Piquet Sports
23	Pastor Maldonado	ESP	Piquet Sports
24	Michael Herck	MC	DPR
25	Diego Nunes	BRA	DPR
26	Paolo Nocera	ITA	BCN Competicion
27	Milos Pavlovic	YU	BCN Competicion

With everyone starting from a clean sheet with the GP2/08, the ability of drivers to work well with their engineers could be a deciding factor in this year's GP2 title fight

### NEW GP2/08 ADDS TECHNICAL INTRIGUE

Paul Jackson, boss of reigning GP2 Series team champions iSport International, says this year's chase for the title promises to be more open than ever, as the teams are all starting from a clean sheet of paper with the new GP2/08 car.

Although all 13 teams that will compete in the GP2 Series this year have tested the GP2/08 at Paul Ricard in France and Barcelona in Spain, they don't know how the car will perform at most of the 10 circuits that make up this year's calendar.

"The teams have had relatively little time to get to know the GP2/08," Jackson says. "There are lots of similarities between the old car and the new one, which means we're fairly well sorted for basic setups, but it will definitely be a case of having to dial the car in as we get to know it better."

Jackson also suggests that tyre wear will be a big factor in deciding the race results. "The car can be heavy on rear tyres, so teams will have to manage that closely to get the best out of them," he says. "The car also has a lot more aerodynamic downforce. We've yet to see how that will affect the racing."



### FRESH NEW LOOK FOR WWW.GP2SERIES.COM

The GP2 Series' official site – [www.gp2series.com](http://www.gp2series.com) – has had a re-design for 2008. You'll still have access to all the great features you've come to know and love, though, with news, results and live text commentary direct from the track, as well as driver profiles, videos, blogs and inside features.

## CAR TECH GUIDE UNDER THE SKIN OF THE GP2/08 CAR

### TYRES/WHEELS

Bridgestone F1-sized slicks, available in three dry compounds and one wet compound. OZ magnesium rims.

### ENGINE

4.0-litre Renault Mecachrome V8. 600bhp at 10,000rpm rev limit. 345 lb ft of torque at 8000rpm. Magnetti Marelli ECU, including data logging.

**0-100km/h** 2.9 sec  
**0-200km/h** 6.6 sec  
**Max. speed** 328km/h

### SUSPENSION

Adjustable two- and four-way Koni dampers, torsion bars, anti-roll bars, ride height, camber and toe.

### GEARBOX

Six-speed longitudinal sequential gearbox and F1-style paddle shift on the steering wheel. AP carbon clutch.

### CHASSIS

Dallara carbon-fibre monocoque. 688kg weight (including driver). Narrower nose, and F1-style wings, sidepods and bargeboards for optimum aerodynamics.

**Length** 4867mm  
**Width** 1805mm  
**Height** 1047mm  
**Wheelbase** 3120mm

### BRAKES

Brembo six-piston calipers, and Hitco carbon discs and pads

## AWAY FROM THE TRACK

### BRUNO SENNA, GADGET AND NUTRITION GEEK

I really enjoy technology and gadgets. I probably got it from my Dad because he was a techno geek himself. Also, my uncle, Ayrton, had a few compulsions – he had hundreds of pairs of running shoes, as well as his model airplanes and remote-control models.

Something that gives me enjoyment in life is having a good sound system at home and being able to listen to high-quality music. At the moment, I've got some PMC speakers that are really

amazing – I love the purity of sound. I used to mix music and was a DJ from 1997-2001, doing parties for my friends. My hearing began to suffer and, since it was something I needed, I decided I'd better stop!

As far as gadgets go, I know a lot about computers – most of it learning from experience, and playing about with them. I've ruined quite a few, but I've learned a lot! I also enjoy making funny movies with my cell phone. However, all my cell phones seem to die on me! I should rethink the brand. The coolest gadget I've got has to be my iPod Touch. It's great.

I also know quite a lot about nutrition. Actually, my sister is into it more than me, but I've picked up a lot. What you eat is so important for your health and fitness, especially if you train like we do.





## GP2 ASIA RACE REPORT BAHRAIN (5-6 April)



ART Grand Prix's Romain Grosjean may not have finished the Sunday sprint race in the penultimate round of the inaugural GP2 Asia season in Bahrain, but a dominant win and fastest lap from pole position in Saturday's feature event ensured that the Frenchman clinched the crown in the sprint – even if he was left sitting at the side of the track.

Grosjean had been on course for the third-place finish in the Sunday sprint that would have guaranteed him the GP2 Asia title, regardless of where his rivals finished, but was forced into the pits with brake problems. His closest rival, Barwa International Campos driver Vitaly Petrov, needed to win the Sunday sprint to take the crown, but could only manage third place, leaving Grosjean the title winner.

The other person left smiling in Bahrain was Dams driver Kamui Kobayashi, who topped his achievement of being the first Japanese driver to win a GP2 race in Malaysia by adding a win in the Bahrain sprint race. It was another fine drive from the Toyota Formula 1 tester.

### Feature race (34 laps)

1	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
2	Sebastien Buemi	(Arden)
3	Kamui Kobayashi	(Dams)
4	Bruno Senna	(iSport)
5	Adrian Valles	(Fisichella)
6	Davide Valsecchi	(Durango)
7	Diego Nunes	(DPR)
8	Karun Chandhok	(iSport)

**Fastest lap** Romain Grosjean  
**Pole position** Romain Grosjean

### Sprint race (23 laps)

1	Kamui Kobayashi	(Dams)
2	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
3	Vitaly Petrov	(Campos)
4	Hiroki Yoshimoto	(Meritus)
5	Harald Schlegelmilch	(Trident)
6	Davide Valsecchi	(Durango)
7	Ho-Pin Tung	(Trident)
8	Yelmer Buurman	(Arden)

**Fastest lap** Sebastien Buemi  
**Pole position** Karun Chandhok



Kamui Kobayashi (above) won the sprint race in Bahrain, but Romain Grosjean (below) had done enough in the feature race to win the title



## GP2 ASIA RACE REPORT DUBAI (11-12 April)



ART Grand Prix's newly crowned GP2 Asia champion Romain Grosjean signed off his championship campaign with a win in the Friday feature race at Dubai, but it was Piquet Sports' Marco Bonanomi who took the final victory of GP2 Asia's inaugural season with a classy drive in Saturday's sprint event

iSport International's Bruno Senna was on course to score a dominant victory in GP2 Asia's penultimate round, but was forced to pit a second time in the Friday feature race after only receiving one tyre during his mid-race pitstop, rather than the mandatory two. That left Grosjean ideally placed to cruise through and score his fourth win of what has been an incredible start to the 2008 GP2 season for the French rookie.

There was an end-of-school feeling in the incident-packed sprint race on Saturday. Bonanomi took advantage of problems for several of his closest rivals and a number of GP2 Asia's leading lights to take his first GP2 victory. Trust Team Arden's Sebastien Buemi clinched second place in the drivers' points after Barwa International Campos Team's Vitaly Petrov retired with fuel pressure failure.

### Drivers' points

1	Romain Grosjean	61
2	Sebastien Buemi	37
3	Vitaly Petrov	33
4	Fairuz Fauzy	24
5	Bruno Senna	23
6	Kamui Kobayashi	22
7	Adrian Valles	19
8	Davide Valsecchi	17

### Teams' points

1	ART Grand Prix	61
2	Trust Team Arden	49
3	Barwa Int. Campos	39
4	Dams	34
5	iSport International	30
6	Super Nova Racing	23
7	Fisichella Motor Sport	19
8	Durango	19



(From l-r) Second-place championship finisher Sebastien Buemi, race winner Marco Bonanomi and Jerome d'Ambrosio form the final GP2 Asia podium of the year

### Feature race (34 laps)

1	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
2	Sebastien Buemi	(Arden)
3	Yelmer Buurman	(Arden)
4	Vitaly Petrov	(Campos)
5	Hiroki Yoshimoto	(Meritus)
6	Marco Bonanomi	(Piquet)
7	Jerome D'Ambrosio	(Dams)
8	Milos Pavlovic	(BCN)

**Fastest lap** Romain Grosjean  
**Pole position** Romain Grosjean

### Sprint race (22 laps)

1	Marco Bonanomi	(Piquet)
2	Sebastien Buemi	(Arden)
3	Jerome d'Ambrosio	(Dams)
4	Davide Valsecchi	(Durango)
5	Yelmer Buurman	(Arden)
6	Fairuz Fauzy	(Super Nova)
7	Harald Schlegelmilch	(Trident)
8	Jason Tahinci	(BCN)

**Fastest lap** Davide Valsecchi  
**Pole position** Milos Pavlovic

## GP2 SERIES RACE PREVIEW BARCELONA, SPAIN



<b>Dates</b>	26-27 April
<b>Track length</b>	4.655km (2.892 miles)
<b>Race One</b>	39 laps (26 April 16:00pm)
<b>Race Two</b>	26 laps (27 April 10:30am)
<b>Website</b>	www.circuitcat.com



Fisichella Motorsport International's Adrian Valles loves Barcelona's sweeping curves. He reckons the city's bars aren't too bad, either...

This year, the GP2 Series kicks off in Barcelona. The Catalan city is crammed with all anyone could want in terms of cultural, architectural, culinary and shopping attractions. At the city's heart is its most famous street, La Rambla.

A lot has been done in recent years to open up Barcelona to the sea, allowing access to four kilometres of beaches. It is also becoming increasingly famous for its open-air bars and restaurants, with nearly every one sporting a terrace or patio.

Someone familiar with both the city and the circuit is Fisichella Motorsport International's Spanish star, Adrian Valles. "Having two Spanish races in this year's GP2 Series is amazing," he says. "I'm from Valencia, so I can't wait to race on the race circuit and the new street circuit."

"Barcelona is a really nice city with the port, the beaches, fantastic buildings by the likes of Gaudi, and great open-air bars and restaurants. I also love the circuit with its high-speed corners. It was even better before they replaced the last corner with a chicane, as you could take both corners almost flat-out. They were really tricky and you could win a lot of time there."

<b>Dates</b>	10-11 May
<b>Track length</b>	5.338km (3.317 miles)
<b>Race One</b>	34 laps (10 May 16:00pm)
<b>Race Two</b>	23 laps (11 May 11:30am)
<b>Website</b>	www.istanbulparkcircuit.com



## GP2 SERIES RACE PREVIEW ISTANBUL, TURKEY

### STAY

The Ciragan Palace Kempinski ([kempinski-istanbul.com](http://kempinski-istanbul.com)) is truly exceptional. Expect genuine five-star luxury on the scenic shores of the Bosphorus.

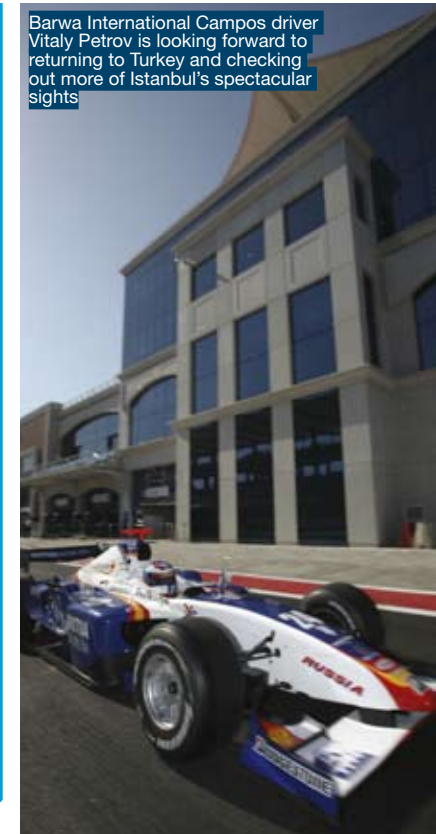
### EAT

Sunset ([sunsetgrillbar.com](http://sunsetgrillbar.com)) offers a superb mix of great views and contemporary international and Turkish cuisine. The Sultan-endorsed Haci Abdullah Restaurant ([haciabdullah.com](http://haciabdullah.com)) is a long-established favourite offering delectable examples of regional culinary delicacies.

### SEE

At 700,000 square metres, Topkapi is the largest and oldest surviving palace in the world. The Grand Bazaar – one of the largest covered markets on Earth – has more than 4000 shopping outlets, and is renowned for its excellent bargains.

Barwa International Campos driver Vitaly Petrov is looking forward to returning to Turkey and checking out more of Istanbul's spectacular sights



The GP2 Series visits Turkey earlier in the season than in recent years. Istanbul Park is a popular circuit with drivers and has seen some fantastic racing in the past – particularly eventual 2006 champion Lewis Hamilton's recovery from the back of the field to second place in his title-winning year.

Throughout its long history – from being the former capital of the eastern Roman Empire to being one of the richest cities in the world during the 14th Century – Istanbul has always been a cultural melting pot, and the skyline is dotted with mosques, synagogues, churches, palaces, castles and towers.

For Barwa International Campos Team's Vitaly Petrov, it's as close, geographically, as we get to his native Russia, and he is looking forward to visiting the city. "I love the circuit," he says. "It's quite wide, has interesting challenges and is difficult technically. I've heard a lot about Istanbul and how great it is. In the past, we've always arrived late and left soon after the race. Hopefully, I can spend more time there this year."

