

**18 FEB 08** E-ZINE

GP2 Asia Series – Dubai / Indonesia



# Eastern Promise

Exclusive chat with Romain Grosjean – the star of the GP2 Asia season-opener in Dubai

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# Starting with a bang



The new GP2 Asia series kicked off in style in Dubai with a double win for rookie Romain Grosjean. Things got even more exciting in Indonesia...

Welcome to the second issue of the GP2 Series e-zine. As you've already probably heard, it has been a great start to the 2008 season, with two fantastic weekends of GP2 Asia action in Dubai and Indonesia. There have been thrills, a few spills and more than a little history made as the latest crop of drivers bidding to follow the footsteps of champions-turned-F1-stars Nico Rosberg, Lewis Hamilton and Timo Glock look to make their mark.

## A little bit of Romain history

The GP2 Asia series got off to a flying getaway in Dubai, with emerging star Romain Grosjean causing something of a stir with his dominant double win. Never before in GP2's history has a rookie taken pole position and scored victory in both the feature and sprint races. In fact, there have been just five race weekends in GP2's three-year history in which a driver has won both the sprint and feature race, and just two in which the driver scored pole for the

feature race as well. That puts Grosjean in some pretty exclusive company. The only thing missing from the F3 Euroseries champion's near-perfect weekend was a fastest lap in Friday's feature race, but – as you can read in our exclusive interview opposite – he's not too concerned by that.

## Wet and wild in Indonesia

Things were slightly more varied in Indonesia, where atrocious wet weather threw open the form guide and provided another two new winners in the shape of Trust Team Arden's Sebastien Buemi and Super Nova's Fairuz Fauzy. The latter now goes to his home race in Malaysia looking to score victory again. You can read Fauzy's thoughts on racing on home soil on p7 and get all the behind-the-scenes news from the first two races on p5, while on p4 you can read how reigning GP2 champion Timo Glock is feeling as he prepares for his full-time F1 debut with Toyota in Melbourne, Australia. Enjoy!

15  
different points  
scorers in the first  
four GP2  
Asia races



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## FAST NEWS

### GP2 ASIA'S FAST STARTER



## Romain Grosjean Q&A

ART GRAND PRIX DRIVER; DUBAI DOUBLE WINNER

**Q At the season-opening GP2 Asia race in Dubai, you made history by becoming the first rookie in GP2's history to score pole and a double race win. Going into the weekend, what did you think your chances were of winning one race, let alone two?**

**A** When you're in a new category. You never know how it will be the first time, but we had a positive four days of testing before the weekend. We were quick every day, so we were expecting something good going into qualifying. It was great to get pole, but there were lots of new things to cope with for the first race – the clutch at the start, and the pitstops. I knew, though, that if I had a good first lap and could get through the pitstop, then I'd be in a good position. I had a bit of rear tyre wear in the feature race, but we were able to solve it for the sprint race.

**Q Going into the weekend, there was surprise rain and cold weather. Did that affect your plans?**

**A** Everybody was expecting high temperatures and we had hard tyres, so a lot of teams were struggling getting heat into them. I think we had an advantage because we found something at the beginning of testing that made the tyres work well for us.

**Q Obviously, the Saturday feature race win was a great way to start the year, but no-one expects to win the sprint from eighth on the grid...**

**A** Absolutely. It's pretty hard to overtake in Dubai. I thought a podium was possible. The problems for

Luca Filippi and Adrian Valles mean two less cars to pass. After the safety car, I had a really good restart and started to think I could do something good. I had a great feeling with the car, but, for sure, it was really unexpected. Everything was perfect, but it's not always like this, so I just enjoyed the moment. We need to keep working as a team to keep pushing our good base. We have to remain on form for the next few races, and there are still a lot of new things to think about for the future.

**Q We hear not everything went right for you...**

**A** Yes, on the last day of practice, I crashed coming into the pits! It's a new thing for me, having to come in fast, pushing really hard and then braking at the last minute for the 60kph speed limit. I clipped the wall, but pitstops were new for me, and they're very tense, so it's good to learn and to have got it out of the way in the first race.

**Q You were recently announced as Renault's F1 test driver. How did that come about?**

**A** It all came together in December, just before the F3 Euroseries prize-giving. It's a great thing, but it's something I still don't realise one hundred percent. There's still a lot of work to do to make it come really true. My first chance to test the F1 car will be when we come back from the GP2 Asia race in Indonesia. It will be my first time testing an F1 car, so it's a very big thing for me. I'm really looking forward to it.

### FAST FACTS Romain Grosjean

**Age:** 21

**Team:** ART Grand Prix

**Lives:** Geneva, Switzerland

**2008** GP2 and GP2 Asia with ART; Renault F1 test driver

**2007** F3 Euroseries champion (6 wins; 12 podiums; 4 poles)

**2005** French Formula Renault champion (10 wins; 13 podiums; 10 poles)

**Born in Switzerland, but races under a French licence**

**Actually started out racing BMX bikes, rather than karts**



### GOOD MONTH



**ART GRAND PRIX**  
Back on top of the drivers' and teams' standings thanks to Romain Grosjean's double win in Dubai. Could this be payback for losing out in the title chase to iSport International in '07?



**ISPORT INTERNATIONAL**  
Not a bad start for the reigning champs, with solid results for Bruno Senna and Karun Chandhok. But, when you've just won the title, second best is harder to swallow. You can be sure they'll be fighting back in Malaysia.



**FISCHELLA MOTOR SPORT**  
A great start to 2008. Second place for Adrian Valles in the Indonesia feature race was a real boost to the outfit's points tally, and it now lies an impressive fourth.



**LUCA FILIPPI**  
You've got to feel for the Italian. In a winning position with new team Qi-Meritus Mahara in only their third race, then disqualified for a simple tyre mix up. Still, rules is rules...



**DAMS**  
Although Piquet Sports is similarly pointless, and Trident Racing has just one point, this has to be a frustrating start to 2008 for last year's fifth place finishers.

### BAD MONTH

## FAST NEWS

READY FOR THE BIG TIME

# Timo Glock

GP2 CHAMPION; TOYOTA F1 DRIVER



**Former GP2 Series champions Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton stepped straight into F1 after taking their titles. 2007 title winner Timo Glock has made it a hat-trick. The German is just days away from his full-time F1 debut with Toyota. As you'd imagine, he's done as much talking as driving in recent months, with journalists eager to hear from F1's new boy. Here's what he said:**

**On GP2's impact on his career:** Champ Car was important, but GP2 had the biggest effect. I've raced against Lewis Hamilton and Nelson Piquet Jr, and we've seen how well they've performed in Formula 1. And, as you race in front of the F1 teams every weekend, it's a great platform.

**On stepping back into F1 full-time:** It was a very special moment. I've worked hard to get the opportunity and it feels great to achieve it. Now, the pressure is proving I belong in F1, and I'm confident I can do that.

**On joining Toyota for 2008:** It's a big motivation to drive for one of F1's top teams, and it's great for my career. There's huge potential in Toyota. They're still new compared to other teams, but they're determined to succeed. We work well together. I'm confident we'll make progress.

**His expectations for his first race:** I can't wait. It will be a very proud and exciting moment. Being on the F1 grid will be very different, because I'm racing against 21 of the best drivers in the world. But my job is the same – to get the best result. I want the most successful year possible. My goal will be to regularly challenge for points and I believe we can do it.

**On getting back into the F1 groove:** I've been lucky enough to race in a few series over the course of my career, and my experience has made me stronger as a driver. F1 cars are very aggressive aerodynamically, and when you lose the car, it's quite hard to control because it reacts so quickly. But even though I haven't raced in F1 since 2004, I've tested regularly. It won't take long to adapt.

**On the rule banning traction control:** I'm used to it from GP2, so it's not a big problem. The quick guys out there will always be the quick ones. Maybe we'll see some mistakes, but that's what makes it interesting.

**On racing at new circuits:** I know most of the European tracks from GP2. A couple of the circuits are new to me, but I learn quickly and computer games are useful, so it shouldn't really be a problem.



## Solid GP2 Asia start for Qi-Meritus Mahara

New GP2 Asia team Qi-Meritus Mahara got its time in the series off to a mixed start in the first two races in Dubai and Indonesia.

Both the teams' drivers - Luca Filippi and Hiroki Yoshimoto finished in the points in the opening feature race in Dubai, with Yoshimoto adding another couple of points for good measure in the Saturday sprint race.

Filippi briefly took victory in the feature race in Indonesia, but was disqualified for a tyre mix-up. Neither driver was in a position to score points in the sprint, but the team still holds seventh place in the teams' standings.

"We reported the error to the clerk of the course right away," said team boss Peter Thompson. "We're pretty devastated, but we can't change what happened. We're a new team and these things happen, but we're pleased with our performance in general."

## GP2 ASIA BLOG

"What is it about GP2 Asia and rain? Every time we've landed in a new country this year, it seems to be raining. But while the torrential weather that hit Dubai was of the freak variety, the rain in Indonesia was more expected. This time of year, there can be as much as 300mm of rain a month in the country, and it certainly felt like the GP2 circus was getting its fair share."

For the latest GP2 blog, as well as news, photos, videos and post-race audio, head to [www.gp2asia.com](http://www.gp2asia.com)

## 2008's OTHER F1 GRADUATES

Timo Glock isn't the only ex-GP2 star treading new F1 ground in 2008. 2006 GP2 runner-up Nelsinho Piquet steps up to a race role with Renault after one year as test driver; 2007 GP2 ace Kazuki Nakajima will race for Williams after testing for them in 2007 and racing in the Brazilian GP.

**Nelsinho Piquet**  
Renault F1 driver



"Being in F1 is hard to put into words. People don't see that behind every young driver there are years of hard work, dedication and focus. I've dreamed of F1 since I was small, and I've finally made it. I can't wait for the season to begin. From the start of my career, I've focused on achieving the best possible results and that's how I'll approach F1 as well."

**Kazuki Nakajima**  
Williams F1 driver



"To be confirmed as a race driver for Williams is a dream come true. It's a good chance for both the team and me. I was racing in GP2 last year without traction control, so it's definitely not a disadvantage and hopefully will be an advantage. I just want to do my best and learn everything I need. I want to show steady progress, and I think the results will follow."

## FAST NEWS



Packing for GP2 Asia's long-haul flights has become much easier following the introduction of Samsonite Black Label as the sponsor of the 2008 series. All the cars will carry the company's logos as it looks to showcase its brand in key Asian markets.



The GP2 Asia series was officially unveiled to the teams, drivers, sponsors and media with a luxury cocktail lunch at the Dubai International Circuit.

## Buemi's luck runs out

Surprise Indonesia feature event winner Sebastien Buemi was left with the prospect of an embarrassing trip home after betting his Trust Team Arden truckie – Chris Hill – that he could win a foot race around the Sentul circuit.

In an effort to prove just how fit modern racing drivers are, Sebastien confidently boasted that he'd do two laps, while Chris could get away with just one. Buemi set a blinding pace on his first lap at 12 minutes, but then dropped off significantly on his second lap, coming in a full six minutes behind Chris's 22-minute one-lap effort.

The penalty for Buemi was to wear his mechanic's now very sweaty travel kit and shoes (three sizes too big) on the 14-hour return flight to London. Chris, on the other hand, was left in a slightly more pleasant (and fragrant) mood. His penalty would have been to wear his sodden pitstop suit for the trip, putting on his helmet for every take-off and landing. Given the flight connections, there would have been four of them...



## AWAY FROM THE TRACK

# Karun Chandhok

TV MOTORSPORT PUNDIT

I've commented in the past for ESPN Star for Formula 1, and a few other series. I've been blessed with the gift of the gab and I really enjoy talking about racing. I'm quite analytical, so when I watch F1, I always bring up the timing, so I can really understand what's going on. There's so much to learn that will help me in F1.

In India, a lot of viewers just know of Michael Schumacher, they don't understand strategies, fuel loads and pitstops, so it's great for me to be able to explain what drivers are doing and why.

I've had lots of comments from Indian fans saying it helped them understand the racing, and that's really satisfying. There may be a second career for me there someday! There was one embarrassing moment, though, when I said that a particular car was handling like a pig. The manufacturer was a sponsor of the show, and I had the producer screaming in my ear to shut up!



## GP2 ASIA RACE REPORTS DUBAI / INDONESIA

### GP2 DUBAI (Jan 25-26)

Reigning Formula 3 Euroseries champion Romain Grosjean started his GP2 career in the best possible way by taking a pole and a double win in the first two races of the new GP2 Asia series in Dubai.

The French ART Grand Prix driver dominated Friday's feature race from iSport International's Bruno Senna, then held off Super Nova's Fairuz Fauzy and iSport's Karun Chandhok in Saturday's sprint. As a result, he's established a new record as GP2's first rookie double winner.

"It was amazing to get pole for the feature race and a double win on my first GP2 weekend," Grosjean said. "I really didn't think I could achieve such a result. I wasn't expecting to win the sprint from eighth, but I did hope for a podium. When I passed Yoshimoto at the restart, I realised I could go for it. If I'd set fastest lap in the feature race, it would have been perfect, but I'm more than happy."



#### Feature race (42 laps)

1	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
2	Bruno Senna	(iSport)
3	Andy Soucek	(DPR)
4	Adrian Valles	(FMS)
5	Luca Filippi	(Qi-Meritus)
6	Hiroki Yoshimoto	(Qi-Meritus)
7	Karun Chandhok	(Arden)
8	Fairuz Fauzy	(iSport)

**Fastest lap** Bruno Senna  
**Pole position** Romain Grosjean

#### Sprint race (28 laps)

1	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
2	Fairuz Fauzy	(Super Nova)
3	Karun Chandhok	(iSport)
4	Hiroki Yoshimoto	(Qi-Meritus)
5	Alberto Valerio	(Durango)
6	Davide Valsecchi	(Durango)
7	Andy Soucek	(DPR)
8	Jerome d'Ambrosio	(DAMS)

**Fastest lap** Romain Grosjean  
**Pole position** Fairuz Fauzy



A superb double win for rookie Romain Grosjean gave ART Grand Prix's French driver a crucial early lead in the inaugural GP2 Asia series.



Super Nova's Fairuz Fauzy became the second rookie winner of the 2008 GP2 Asia Season in Indonesia, but iSport's Bruno Senna (left) put himself right back into the title mix.

#### Feature race (46 laps)

1	Sebastien Buemi	(Arden)
2	Adrian Valles	(Fisichella)
3	Ben Hanley	(Campos)
4	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
5	Vitaly Petrov	(Campos)
6	Milos Pavlovic	(BCN)
7	Bruno Senna	(iSport)
8	Fairuz Fauzy	(Super Nova)

**Fastest lap** Bruno Senna  
**Pole position** Vitaly Petrov

#### Sprint race (31 laps)

1	Fairuz Fauzy	(Super Nova)
2	Bruno Senna	(iSport)
3	Vitaly Petrov	(Campos)
4	Romain Grosjean	(ART)
5	Adrian Valles	(Fisichella)
6	Ho-Ping Tung	(Trident)
7	Sebastien Buemi	(Arden)
8	Marco Bonanomi	(Piquet)

**Fastest lap** Fairuz Fauzy  
**Pole position** Fairuz Fauzy

### GP2 INDONESIA (Feb 16-17)

There was drama aplenty in the second round of the GP2 Asia series in Sentul, Indonesia. Qi-Meritus Mahara's Luca Filippi won Saturday's feature race after iSport International's Bruno Senna received a drive-through penalty for a safety car infringement. The Italian was excluded from the race for a tyre mix-up, though, handing victory to Arden's Sebastien Buemi.

Sunday's sprint race was held in atrocious wet conditions that caused several drivers to spin off and have accidents even when behind the safety car. Super Nova's Fairuz Fauzy powered his way through the spray, however, to pip Senna and become GP2 Asia's third new winner.

A pair of fourth-place finishes ensured that ART Grand Prix and their first-round double winner, Romain Grosjean, kept their leads in the drivers' and team's points, but strong finishes for Senna have ensured that the Brazilian and his iSport team remain firmly in the title mix.



#### Drivers' points

1	Romain Grosjean	27
2	Bruno Senna	17
3	Adrian Valles	15
4	Fairuz Fauzy	14
5	Sebastien Buemi	10
6	Vitaly Petrov	10
7	Karun Chandhok	6
8	Andy Soucek	6

#### Teams' points

1	ART Grand Prix	27
2	iSport International	23
3	Campos Grand Prix	16
4	Fisichella Motor Sport	15
5	Super Nova Racing	14
6	Trust Team Arden	10
7	Qi-Meritus Mahara	10
8	DPR	6

## GP2 ASIA RACE PREVIEW MALAYSIA



Sepang's iconic grandstands will be the backdrop for both the second round of the Formula 1 World Championship and the third round of the GP2 Asia Series at this year's Malaysian Grand Prix.

### GP2 MALAYSIA

In late March, the GP2 Asia series heads back to the southern end of the Asia Pacific rim and its first race supporting Formula 1. The Malaysian Grand Prix round of GP2 Asia takes place at the Sepang International Circuit on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur.

As one of the more mature, modern capitals in South East Asia, 'KL' has grown organically over the last 150 years. As a result, it has a great mix of the old and the new, with a rich blend of Malay, Chinese, and Indian cultures, all influenced by the European style that came when the country was a colony of the Portugese, Dutch and British. The 425-metre high Petronas Twin Towers physically dwarf the low-level districts such as Chinatown and Little India, but what these areas lack in sheer scale and modernity, they more than make up for in real colour and flavour.

"Malaysia is a great country to visit," says Super Nova Racing driver Fairuz Fauzy, who comes from Kuala Lumpur. "It's very multi-national, so there's a lot of variety to the culture and cuisine. The weather is always good and it's a great place to explore. Kuala Lumpur has really matured as a city. It's great for cheap shopping – especially electronics – there's food and drink 24/7, and the city never sleeps."

For Fauzy, this weekend will be particularly special. As GP2 Asia will be supporting the F1 race, Fauzy will have a real chance to capitalise on his Indonesian win and the home support for Asian drivers that is one of the hallmarks of GP2 Asia as it aims to promote motor racing in the Far East regions.

"Of course, to race in front of your home crowd is an absolute dream – especially as it's an F1 weekend," Fauzy says. "I'm sure that it will be a fantastic feeling. I'm just aiming to do well, and finishing at the front will be a bonus."



#### Malaysia

**Dates** Feb 16-17  
**Track length** 5.542km (3.442 miles)  
**Race One** laps tbc (Feb 16 15:40pm)  
**Race Two:** laps tbc (Feb 17 11:30am)  
**Website** www.malaysiangp.com.my

#### Stay

"Most of the hotels in Kuala Lumpur are really good," Fairuz Fauzy says. "Three-star here is the equivalent of five-star in Europe. It's great value." At the Pangkor Laut ([pangkorlautresort.com](http://pangkorlautresort.com)), you can watch fantastic sunsets in luxury, while keeping a healthy wallet.

#### Eat

Fauzy says the SS2 and Star Hill districts are great places to eat – the former for its fantastic seafood, the latter for its high-class dining. Precious Old China ([oldchina.com.my](http://oldchina.com.my)) and Restaurant Lafite at the fancy Shangri-La hotel ([shangri-la.com](http://shangri-la.com)) come highly recommended.

#### Drink

"A lot of famous people go to the Luna bar ([pacific-regency.com](http://pacific-regency.com))," says Fauzy. He also recommends the Sky Bar high up in the Traders' Hotel ([shangri-la.com](http://shangri-la.com)).

#### See

If you've got a chance after the race, you've got to visit the Langkawi Islands. "There's lots of duty free shopping, and some great beaches," says Fauzy. "There are so many little islands, you need to explore them one by one." If you're visiting, we recommend the Four Seasons resort ([fourseasons.com](http://fourseasons.com)).





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