

The best seat in town

FORGET SECLUDED COVES AND DESERTED BEACHES. FOR THOSE WHO LIVE LIFE IN THE FAST LANE, THE ONE TRUE PURPOSE OF A SUPERYACHT IS TO GET YOU CLOSER TO THE ACTION AT THE MONACO GRAND PRIX. REPORT BY **DAVID TREMAYNE.**

Need to know

Demand for charters during the Monaco Grand Prix is always extremely high and berths in the harbour are limited, therefore it is advisable to discuss your requirements as early as possible with your Nigel Burgess charter broker. With a wealth of experience in co-ordinating corporate and private charters for the Monaco Grand Prix and with offices right in the heart of Monte Carlo, overlooking the race track and harbour, Nigel Burgess are well placed to provide guidance and assistance with all your yachting needs in the Principality.



Monaco is the jewel in Formula One's crown. There is the Mediterranean and the harbour with its stunning superyachts. There are the Maritime Alps. Packed between them, in an area smaller than New York's Central Park, are opulent hotels, casinos, villas, swimming pools, the best couturiers, top jewellers, and the romantic palace on the hill. Hollywood's beautiful people drift into town from the Cannes Film Festival just along the Corniche. And then, right in the middle of all that, there is a racetrack.

The Monaco Grand Prix was inaugurated in April 1929 by Anthony Noghes, founder of the Auto Club de Monaco. That first race fell to Englishman William Grover Williams in a Bugatti 35B and it transformed this quiet watering hole on the Côte d'Azur, home to the Grimaldi family for 600 years. Wealthy socialites could not just sniff the petrol fumes and wince at the shriek of tortured rubber, but almost reach out and touch the fabric of the sport. More than three-quarters of a century later, no other event can match its visceral appeal.

MONTE CARLO! THE VERY NAME EVOKES IMAGES OF ELITE HEDONISM AND SOPHISTICATED PASSIONS. HIGH SPEED AGAINST A HIGH SOCIETY BACKDROP

On the face of it, a ludicrously tight street track is no place to hold a Grand Prix. There are few run-off areas and small mistakes are punished severely. But in that very paradox lies the intense appeal, the opportunity to make a statement. Monaco is a fabulous challenge, a place where a driver of true brilliance can make up for deficiencies in his machinery. When it rains, which is rare, true artists find a stunning canvas.

Graham Hill won there five times; in 2006 Michael Schumacher will try to beat the late Ayrton Senna's record tally of six visits to the Royal Box. More often than not the German star has triumphed in blood red cars bearing the distinctive yellow and black shield of Ferrari. Enzo Ferrari's automotive works of art have won nine Monaco Grand Prix since 1955, building the legend and mystique of the marque and generating countless sales of the company's roadgoing masterpieces.

EXPERIENCE A UNIQUE, STATEMENT-MAKING KINSHIP MADE STRONGER STILL IF YOU OWN ONE OF FERRARI'S ICONIC ROADCARS

But the Monaco Grand Prix is not just about the racing. Corporate business is done on a grand scale aboard the yachts that throng the harbour, against a backdrop of tension and excitement. Monaco is the perfect place for teams to showcase motorsport as the unique marketing medium that it is, and for sponsors to put across their own message to clients and customers, and to make their own statement about brand image, success and affluence. This is where next year's deals are done.

While the drivers demand grip, balance and strength from their machinery, you can substitute wealth, connections and the right viewing location for those determined to enjoy the spectacle to the maximum. The best grandstand seat is all very well, but the ultimate ticket is to spectate from the top deck of one of those magnificent superyachts.



Amongst others, the exceptional 201.7ft (61.50m) motor yacht SOLEMAR accommodates 12 guests and is available for select private charters during the Monaco Grand Prix. From Euros 375,000 per week.



Ferrari 612 Scaglietti

Your stomach churns, your spine tingles and the ground vibrates as the cars deafen you with their unworlly passage. The sheer speed through the panorama of Tabac corner and the Swimming Pool directly ahead of you is literally shocking in its potential violence. Here you can peer down into the cockpits as the cars flash by, glimpse arms twirling as gloved hands fight the kick-back through the steering wheel. The sheer anger of their passage is a visual and aural assault. The air is filled with the stench of burnt fuel and the heat of overworked carbon brakes. And there you are, on your own glamorous stage right in the very midst of it, in a position as privileged as Schumacher's Ferrari cockpit.

On the streets of the Principality you can truly appreciate the defiance of physics as the drivers cajole their cars into changing direction at breathtaking speeds, shaving the walls, dancing from bump to bump as their feet barely lift from the throttle. It is this potent juxtaposition: street course, with its mental connotations of roadcars and everyday motoring, the feral speed, and the backdrop of the harbour with its glorious superyachts, that lies intertwined at the heart of Monaco's unchallenged charisma.