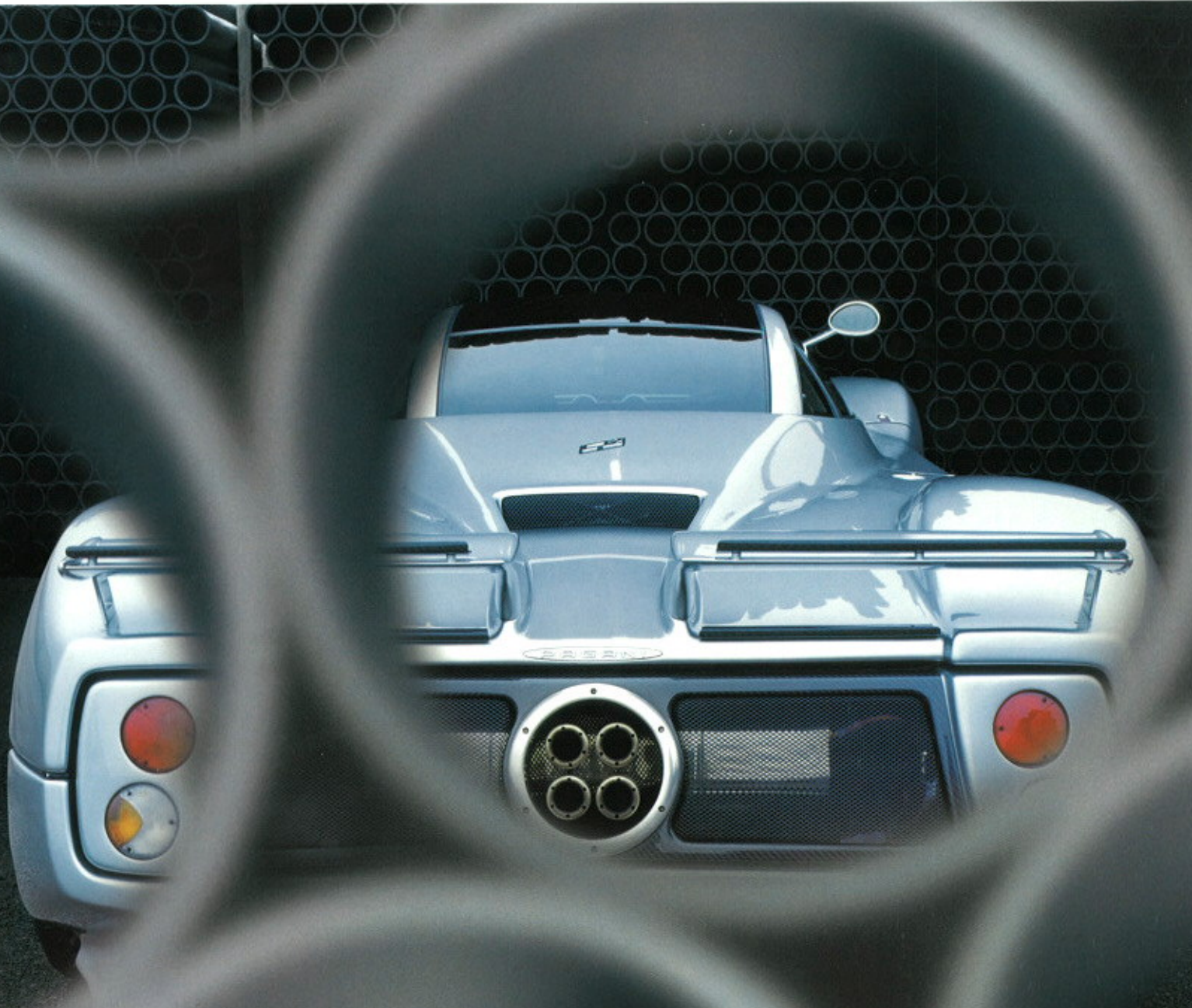


PILOT ISSUE  
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LAMBORGHINI MURCIELAGO  
LAMBORGHINI DIABLO, COUNTACH & MIURA  
BUGATTI EB110 v JAGUAR XJ220  
INVICTA  
MERCEDES SL55 AMG v BMW Z8  
DODGE VIPER GTS  
NOBLE M12  
PAGANI ZONDA C12 S

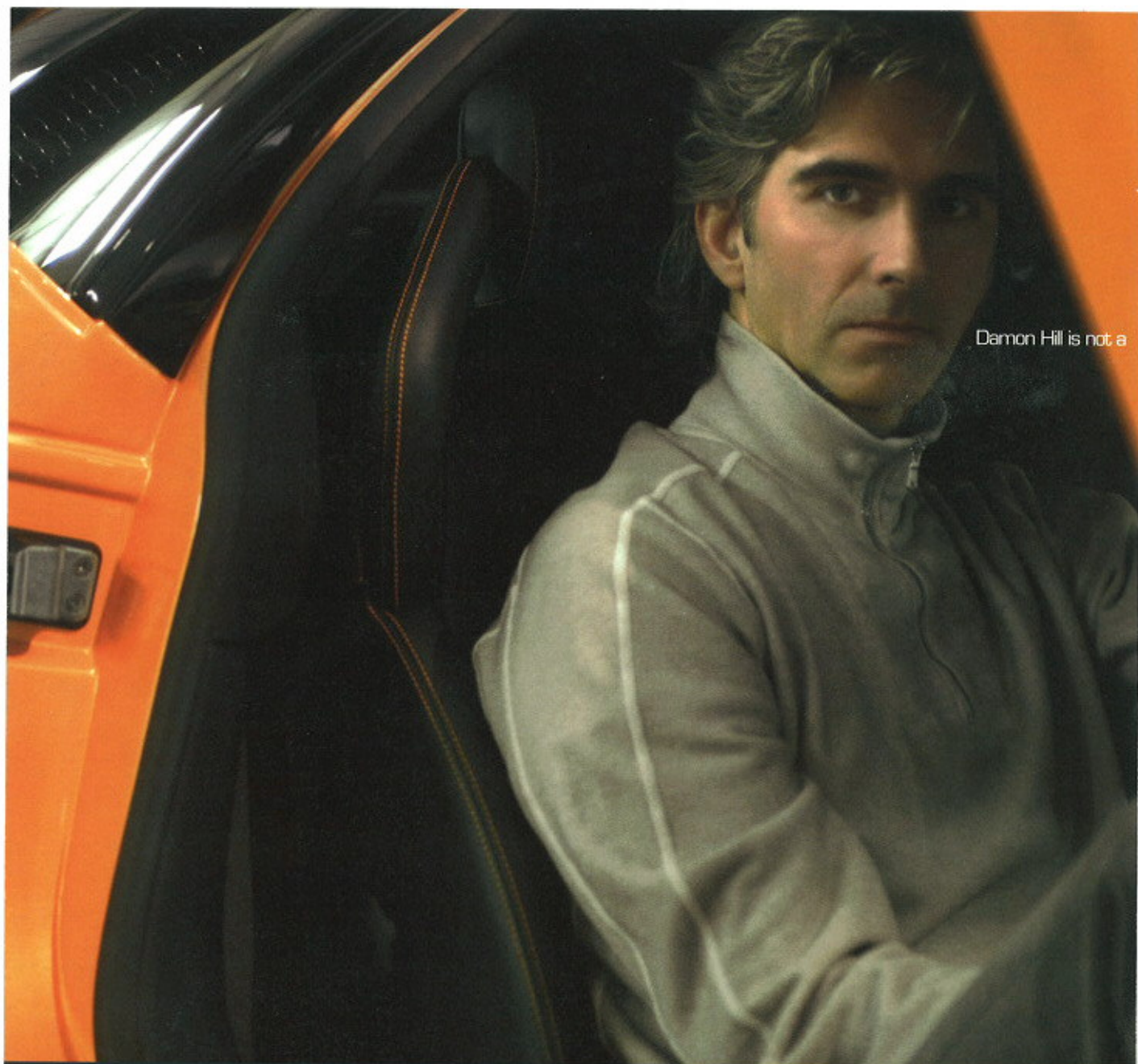
PLUS:  
ARYTON SENNA  
DAMON HILL IS STILL P1  
CHIC MAGNET IN MONACO  
THOMAS ERDOS  
EXCESS BAGGAGE  
THE HEMPEL  
SUPERCAR DRIVERS CLUB  
VOYEUR - FOR THOSE THAT LIKE TO WATCH  
JACK HEUER GIVES US SOME TIME  
INSPIRED MOTOR WEAR

# zero<sup>1</sup>



pipe dream

PAGANI ZONDA C12S



Damon Hill is not a



man for quick decisions. Thoughtful and often introspective, only one question played on his mind before he retired and the answer was one that he dreaded to contemplate. When he took his decision to leave Formula One in 1999 after six races of a new season, it was not a sign of panic nor an admission of defeat, simply a realisation that it was time to stop. He had just turned 39, the chances of winning a second world championship were remote and the unseen drudgery behind the facade of glamour that surrounds Formula One had become too much for him. The adrenalin that had powered him through the high-octane sport was also on the wane:

"I had to wean myself off it. It's impossible to keep that up for the rest of your life. It's very much an addictive chemical," he acknowledges thoughtfully. "You just get to a point when you've had enough and that's when you stop being a racing driver. That's why you stop doing those things. You've had your fill of it. It's a biological decision whether you like it or not, you suddenly find that you are not throwing yourself into stressful situations quite so willingly. I got out at the right time. Another year and I don't think I would have been more competitive, I don't think I could have won another race. I'd a seven-year career and they say things happen in sevens so I packed it in. I had got quite a lot out of it. It was a mission accomplished."

It was also undoubtedly a decision he took for the sake of his family – and one he first considered when he crossed the finishing line to become world champion. Even then, just moments after fulfilling his lifetime's ambition, Hill pledged to quit the track in favour of family life after years of jetting around the globe's premier racing circuits.

These days Hill is still steeped in motors but they are in his company P1, an exclusive supercar club for members that want all the benefits of driving supercars, but without the hassle of actually owning one.

Based in Surney, P1 is close to the luxury home near Godalming where Hill has settled after a lengthy stint in Ireland, with his wife Georgie and their four children Oliver, 14, who suffers from Down's Syndrome, Joshua, 12, Tabitha, 7, and 5 year-old Rosie, with whom he tried to forge a relationship that perhaps he himself missed, having lost his father in an air crash when he was just 14.

"My major interest is my children now and their upbringing. I would prefer to be with them than racing other guys round in circles. I missed being with them, simple as that.

"One of the great aspects to having a family is actually being with them and spending time with them and doing stuff that they will remember and you will get some fulfillment from. But it wasn't easy when I was driving. If you are doing the job properly your mind is always somewhere else, focusing on the next event."

In those days, he frequently used private jets to minimize his time flying between race meetings. "Time-saving became crucially important. You have to leave the day before if you fly commercial but you don't if you have your own plane or you are chartering one. You can afford it and it makes your life more bearable. It was a matter of efficiency rather than a luxury."



Over his 17-year Formula 1 career he won 22 out of his 111 Grands Prix. Through, sometimes fighting depression as his fortunes have wavered. He also had to keep the ever-present fear of the day. "You deny that you might die. You play a trick with your mind, just ignore it. But it was a day-to-day reality. In any job that requires a great deal of concentration, it is important to control your emotions, not be frightened. If you let fear take over, you cannot perform. The danger sports are fascinating. If you work in the City you can get a million quid in a phone call. People enjoy being stimulated. As you get thrown in the air and you are frightened but you like it. It's in all of us. But some more than others," he adds with a

determination and drive is evident when on meeting him at his HQ in Leatherhead. He is sharp and energetic and even when he is presently chatting casually, gives the impression he is thinking of a hundred different things as he tweaks repeatedly with the zip on his racing top. His greying hair which he has spawned a few jokes when he is out to hang out, and long, after quitting F1, has been tamed but it still looks as if it would be better suited to a retired rock star. Considering that music is another passion of Hill's it is appropriate. But he likes to keep a link with his motoring past - his son is called Damon Hill and the Con Rods...

"I've been playing guitar since I was 11. We do occasional corporate gigs for charity." Fired up when discussing his company, P1, Hill's eyes gleam but his passion for F1 appears to have dimmed as he says that unless the sport itself remembers how to entertain, it's away. "I don't miss watching it, which amazes me. There are a lot of other sports which I think are more exciting things to watch. There is no satisfaction watching the exhibition of driving when the heart is not in your mouth."

Hill says that teams have sacrificed the real characters of F1, the excitement of racing them in the cause of corporate correctness. He is disappointed outside after the collapse of Bernie Ecclestone's Sky pay-

per-view channel on which he commentated last season, but he does not seem to be too bothered about his absence.

"I have steered away from the temptation of running an F1 team," he said. "The sport is owned by multi-national car companies and it is virtually impossible now for the independent team owner to succeed without that backing. The sport has suffered, however, as F1 is putting the cart before the horse. It should be about entertainment but they seem to have forgotten that."

"It's at a fork in the road. It either goes down the road of being run by big corporations and being a wing of the motor industry or, it decides no, it's going to retain its independence and be managed as a sport run by the FIA and allows individuals to run privately-owned teams. I feel that's the best way because the other way is bland commercialism and that's why the sport has lost a lot of its appeal. It's failing to capture the imagination of the fans and inspire them to give up their Sunday to watch a race."

He feels it is regretful that Eddie Irvine has retired: "People either love him or hate him but I think those characters are very important in an entertainment industry, which is exactly what Formula 1 is."

Despite his current wealth, Hill knows what it is to start from scratch. His father was uninsured and left the family penniless after his premature death in 1975. After leaving school in Hertfordshire with three A-levels, he worked as a despatch rider and van driver around London's streets before his mum Bette booked him into a school for racing drivers in France when he was 23. It was then that he became driven by the desire to become the world's Number One - a dream he would finally fulfil just 13 years later after drives in Formula Ford and Formula 3000 before eventually racing with the big boys in Formula 1.

He was under a spotlight of such intensity that it has driven him at times to despair. He entered Formula 1 in 1992 with so much expectation of the son of a former double world champion and his first season, partnering Alain Prost at Williams, and he yielded an encouraging hat-trick of victories.



Then it all changed. Ayrton Senna, his new team-mate for 1994, was killed in the third race and Hill not only had to lead the Williams team, but had to carry it through immense emotional trauma. When he speaks of Senna today, his death clearly affected him. "To me, he was the last of the greats in the sport. From that point on we had a new genre. There was another agenda set by Michael Schumacher. It was a different way forward."

Just seven months later, he missed out on the world championship in a controversial deciding final race to Schumacher, a tribute to his determination. Perhaps the strain told the following year, when Schumacher tore through the title race, mocking Hill along the way. Hill admitted later that he almost gave up then but his response to Schumacher was mature and dignified and that of a true sportsman and the public loved him for it.

He was back in 1996 though, with eight wins on his way to the world championship after some more terrific and tortuous confrontations with arch-rival Schumacher.

Even then, his victory was tainted by accusations that he had won only because he had the best car and because Schumacher had moved to Ferrari, a team that was being rebuilt. Williams then twisted the knife by dismissing him to make room for Frentzen, leaving Hill seeking an employer. He ended up defending his crown with the Arrows team scoring only seven points all season, but ended his career with Jordan and won the Belgian Grand Prix.

He still speaks cautiously of his old rival: "Michael Schumacher now is in a position where he really has an entire team at his disposal, which is quite incredible really. Fair enough, he has got the talent to warrant that investment, but it's very difficult to move that. For him to be challenged, someone else will have to have that kind of an organisation behind him. I thought he would quit the sport last year because he seemed extremely unhappy with the state of affairs but he's turned things around and when Michael's winning - he's happy."

But Hill too is clearly happy. "Happiness is having a balance in your life. I feel I've achieved that now and P1 is part of that philosophy. P1 is an alternative to the materialistic world, which sounds a dichotomy, but actually the members get to enjoy without consuming, and that's why I think it's working. We've got all the cars in the garage, you come and use them but you don't have to have the responsibility. You can experience it but don't have to be saddled with the expense... it's an example of how we should change our consuming habits.

"I think my dad's example to me was that life's a gas and you try and pack in as much as you can. I think people can be unbalanced in the way they live and become too materialistic. It is too easy to work damn hard all your life and never ask: 'What is the point? How much more luxury do we need?' Now I do the school run and I couldn't be more content. I have moved on from wanting to be a racing driver. My daughter Rosie doesn't quite understand what being the World Champion is, but she says to me: 'That means you are the best daddy in the world doesn't it?' That means a lot." ■

**P1** International offers some of the most exclusive supercars available today, such as the Lamborghini Murcielago, Aston Martin Vanquish and Ferrari 550 WSR to name but a few. Their range of benefits is constantly growing too, with trouble free access to private jets, helicopters, fully crewed motor yachts, villas and an annual membership of Sir Terence Conran's Bluebird Club on the Kings Road in London. With the opportunity of taking part in members track days with Damon and Perry McCarthy, the annual cost of membership seems quite a bargain.

P1 membership is limited to just 250 members and is by invitation only, but for more information call 01372 374400 or visit their website on [www.p1international.com](http://www.p1international.com).