

# Press Kit

2016, May 25th



## Renault, more than 115 years of sporting passion

Renault has long understood the value of motorsport to its brand.

Renault's first major motorsport victory came in the 1902 Paris-Vienna race at the hands of Marcel Renault. Three Type K lightweight cars were entered alongside four smaller voiturettes to do battle against the likes of Count Zborowski's powerful Mercedes and Henry Farman's Panhard. The event took place on steep, twisting roads, including a tough Alpine crossing. Marcel Renault's victory was at an average speed of 62.5km/h and from that point on, Renault would be a very serious contender in motorsport at all levels.

In 1906 Renault entered the first-ever Grand Prix, held over two days on public roads outside Le Mans. Renault participated with its Type AK, a lightweight chassis fitted with a 12.9-litre four-cylinder engine. In spite of searing temperatures, a track that almost melted and more than 12 hours of racing, Hungarian Ferenc Szisz won the race for Renault. Victory contributed to an increase in sales for the French manufacturer in the years following the race.

# Summary

## 01

### The jazz Age and Land Speed Records

The Nerva Series

04

Shooting Stars in the 1950s

04

## 02

### The start of the Gordini partnership

05

## 03

### Le Mans success and F1 debut

06

## 04

### Rallying to victory

07

**Contact média :**

dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

Sites : [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)

Follow us on Twitter : @Renault\_live

# 05

F1 success beckons

08

# 06

An F1 return

09

# 07

Away from F1

10

# 08

The start of a new adventure

11

# 01

## The Jazz Age and Land Speed Records

In the 1920s and 30s, Renault focused on rallying and the Land Speed record. In 1925 Renault won the Monte-Carlo Rally. Then in 1926 the 9.0 litre Renault 40CV Type NM des records was developed for speed trials, complete with a single seat, streamlined coupe bodywork and exposed wheels. It went on to achieve a 24-hour average of 107.9mph – significant speeds for a production-based car of the day.

### The Nerva Series

In the 30s Renault developed the Nerva Series and continued with numerous speed record attempts on the roads of Europe and Africa. Powered by Renault's second 8-cylinder in-line unit and inspired by aviation engineering developments, the Nervasport finished second in the 1932 Monte-Carlo Rally, just two tenths of a second behind the winner. Victory came in the 1935 Monte-Carlo Rally, the 1935 Liège- Rome-Liège race and second place, behind Bugatti, was achieved in the Morocco Rally too.

But the car turned in its most spectacular performance at the speed ring in Montlhéry. In April 1934, a specially prepared Nervasport won several endurance records in all categories. It covered more than 8,000km in 48 hours, an average of over 100mph with a top speed of close to 125mph. The highly dynamic single-seater body would influence the design of future Renault vehicles.

### Shooting Stars in the 1950s

Renault recaptured the pioneering spirit of its early days in the 1950s with further attempts on the Land Speed record. After two years of wind-tunnel testing, in September 1956 Renault took the striking blue Étoile Filante (Shooting Star) to the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah, USA. The outstanding vehicle featured a tubular, polyester-clad body and two large aircraft-like fins. It was propelled by an innovative turbine engine developing 270 hp at 28,000rpm and was equipped with the Transfluide transmission. In a nod to the aeronautics sector, it ran on kerosene and was practically vibration-free thanks to the rotation speed of the turbines. On its first run on solid ground, its developer Jean Hébert set a new land speed record, peaking at 308.85km/h.

Renault followed this remarkable speed achievement with further rallying success. It entered the petite and innovative rear-engined Dauphine in numerous events, including the Mille Miglia. It took the first four places in the 1956 event and won the Tour de Corse the same year. Two years later a Dauphine won the epic Monte-Carlo Rally.

# 02

## The start of the Gordini

In the early 60s a sportier, high-performance version of the Dauphine was produced by Amédée Gordini, who had also created Grand Prix cars under his own name. The Renault-Gordini partnership proved to be highly successful, with the classic R8 Gordini, R12 and R17 appearing in subsequent years. The R8 Gordini in particular excelled in rallies, hill-climb and racetrack meetings and proved so immensely popular that the Renault 8 Gordini Cup, a programme widely considered to be the forerunner of brand-specific championships, was created in 1966. The Renault 12 Gordini engine also powered the first Formula Renault cars, with the first Formula Renault French championship held in 1971. Many eminent drivers and champions have since cut their teeth in the formula, including Jacques Laffite; Jean Ragnotti, Alain Prost, Sebastian Vettel, Kimi Raikkonen and Lewis Hamilton.

Gordini's facilities in Paris proved to be too small for the ambitious activities, so a new building outside the city was sought. The ideal location was found at Viry-Châtillon. The Gordini facility was inaugurated on 6 February 1969, and it was to be the launch pad for significant and lasting motor sporting success over the following decades.

The initial focus was on a new 2-litre V6 engine, which was officially launched in January 1973. The engine soon proved to be competitive in the prestigious European 2-litre sportscar series. That was followed by a move into the FIA World Sportscar Championship with a turbocharged version of the engine.

**Renault Sport was founded in 1976, and that year saw the birth of a parallel single-seater programme with the V6 engine in European F2.**



# 03

## Le Mans success and F1 debut

In sportscars the turbocharged Renaults proved to be incredibly fast, securing a string of poles and fastest laps. Everything came together in 1978 when Didier Pironi and Jean-Pierre Jaussaud scored a historic victory in an Alpine-Renault A442B powered by Renault's turbocharged V6 engine. Another Renault came home fourth. With Le Mans success finally secured, Renault could now focus on its other goal – Formula 1.

**The option to run a turbocharged engine had been in the rules for many years, but nobody had dared to pursue it until Renault. It had quietly begun track testing with a 1.5-litre version of the turbo engine in 1976, and a short programme of races was scheduled for the following year.**

The V6 turbocharged RS01 made its debut in the 1977 British GP in the hands of Jean-Pierre Jabouille. Nicknamed the 'Yellow Teapot,' the car retired from its first race, but not before it had made a big impression. Four further outings at the end of the year provided more valuable experience. The education process continued through 1978 until Jabouille earned the first points for Renault – and for any turbo engine – with fourth place in the US GP. A move to a twin-turbo set-up for the 1979 Monaco GP was one of the big breakthroughs. The team had finally begun to conquer the critical problem of turbo lag, and Jabouille duly scored the marque's historical first win on home ground in Dijon, having started from pole.



**Contact média :**

Dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

Sites : [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)

Suivez-nous sur Twitter : @Renault\_live

# 04

## Rallying to victory

In parallel, Renault remained committed to rallying. It won the manufacturer's title in the 1973 World Rally Championship, before Guy Fréquelin won the 1977 French Rally Championship with the Alpine A310 Group 5. The Renault 5 Alpine garnered further fame with Jean Ragnotti, who finished second in the 1978 Monte-Carlo Rally. Ragnotti then piloted the Renault 5 Turbo to victory in the 1981 Monte-Carlo Rally and the 1985 Tour de Corse.

Renault also ventured into rallye raids with the Paris-Dakar Rally and a privately-entered Renault 20 driven by the Marreau brothers won the 1982 edition through the deserts of Africa.

In parallel, Renault's F1 involvement began to pay dividends as it finished second in the 1983 World Championship with Alain Prost. The Frenchman had taken four wins to champion Piquet's three, but missed the title by just two points. The same year Renault became an engine supplier for the first time, joining forces with Lotus. Supply deals were also extended to the Ligier and Tyrrell teams in subsequent seasons. In Portugal 1985 Ayrton Senna scored his first-ever GP victory with Renault power, and the Brazilian proved to be one of the stars of the season. The works outfit was closed at the end of 1985 with focus instead directed at supplying engines to other teams. Indeed in 1986 the Senna/Lotus/Renault combination proved to be the fastest on the grid, as the Brazilian took eight poles.



**Contact média :**

Dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

Sites : [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)

Suivez-nous sur Twitter : @Renault\_live

# 05

## F1 success beckons

Renault officially returned to Formula 1 in the late eighties, but this time as an engine partner to the Williams team. In its first year of competition the new partnership won two Grands Prix, and two further wins followed in 1990. Nigel Mansell – who had used Renault power at Lotus – joined the team.

**It was the start of an incredible era. By the end of 1991 the combination was the one to beat, and in 1992 Mansell proved so dominant that he secured Renault's first World Championship by August.**

Former works Renault driver Alain Prost joined Williams in 1993, and he too won the title before retiring. Further championships followed for Damon Hill in 1996 and for Jacques Villeneuve in 1997. Williams-Renault also won the Constructors' title in 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996 and 1997.

In 1995 Renault expanded its involvement with a new collaboration with the Benetton team. Michael Schumacher won the championship in 1995, while Benetton won the Constructors' title – ensuring that with its two partners Renault scored six straight title successes between 1992 and 1997. Between 1995 and 1997 Renault engines won 74% of Grands Prix.

Renault officially departed Formula 1 at the end of 1997. Williams, Benetton and later the new BAR team used Renault-based engines under the Supertec, Mecachrome and Playlife names, and work continued in a small development project at Viry.

Renault simultaneously continued its rally involvement throughout the nineties and the Maxi Mégane was driven to victory in the Tour de Corse in 1997.

**Contact média :**

Dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

**Sites :** [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)

**Suivez-nous sur Twitter :** @Renault\_live



# 06

## An F1 return

Again, Renault's official absence from F1 was to be a short one. In early 2001 it was announced that the company had bought the Benetton team, and was to return in a full works capacity. The Renault name returned as Benetton's engine supplier that season, and then in 2002 the team was reborn as Renault F1 Team, with the chassis department still based at Enstone, UK, while working closely with the engine division in Viry.

In 2003 Fernando Alonso gave the new team its first pole in Malaysia, and then the young Spaniard followed up with his and the team's first win in Hungary. The following year Jarno Trulli gave Renault victory in the most prestigious race of the year in Monaco.

**In 2005 Alonso was the man to beat as he won the Drivers' title and Renault took the Constructors' version with eight wins between Alonso and team-mate Giancarlo Fisichella.**

Despite the huge change from V10 to V8 technology for 2006, the Renault F1 Team was able to sustain its momentum. A further eight wins over the season saw Renault fighting with Ferrari for both titles, but Renault's innovation again proved victorious as it again captured both the Drivers' and Constructors' titles.

Supplying other teams had long been a Renault policy, and in 2007 a new partnership was formed with Red Bull Racing. The dark blue cars soon moved up the grid, and in 2010 Vettel emerged triumphant as the youngest champion in the history of the sport, while Red Bull-Renault earned the Constructors' championship.

As Renault refocused its activities around engine supply, Vettel proved unstoppable in the World Championship, breaking all the records as he secured consecutive titles in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Alongside Red Bull Racing, Renault supplied Lotus F1 Team, Caterham F1 Team and Williams F1 Team. Throughout the era, the V8 engine developed by 250 engineers at Viry-Châtillon dominated, taking over 40% of the available wins and a record number of pole positions.

**Contact média :**

Dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

**Sites : [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)**

**Suivez-nous sur Twitter : @Renault\_live**

# 07

## Away from F1

Renault Sport Technologies continued to develop its range of single-make championships with Formula Renault 2000 and the Clio Cup. And the Clio Super 1600 enjoyed strong success on the rally circuit, winning several international titles between 2003 and 2005.

The 2005 season brought the creation of the World Series by Renault, following a merger between Eurocup Formula Renault V6 and the World Series by Nissan. Free to the public World Series by Renault meetings combined top-class competition with on-track F1 shows and family entertainment for 11 years. The series was also a springboard for most of the stars in the current F1 field.

**Contact média :**

Dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

**Sites :** [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)

**Suivez-nous sur Twitter :** @Renault\_live

# 08

## The start of a new adventure

In 2014, Formula 1 welcomed a radical new wave of technology with the introduction of avant-garde powertrain technology. The new Renault F1 power unit revisited a previous engine generation's turbocharged architecture but combined it with powerful electric motors and an array of advanced energy-recovering devices that cut fuel consumption by 40% year on year while delivering comparable levels of performance and acceleration.

Renault continued to supply Red Bull Racing, sister team Scuderia Toro Rosso as well as Lotus F1 Team, but the era proved hard fought. A rethink of the corporate strategy was required, and at the end of 2015 Renault announced it would return to team ownership.

**From 2016, the Renault name will once again race in F1, this time under the Renault Sport Formula One Team banner.**

The aim is not only to pay homage to the success of the past, but to re-energise multiple platforms within Renault. It is clear that the rich and long heritage of Renault will serve as inspiration and motivation for the teams of the present day.



**Contact média :**  
Dominique-william.jacson@renault.com / Tel : +33 6 14 35 27 46  
Standard Presse : +33 1 76 84 63 36

**Sites :** [www.media.renault.com](http://www.media.renault.com) - [www.group.renault.com](http://www.group.renault.com)  
**Suivez-nous sur Twitter :** @Renault\_live