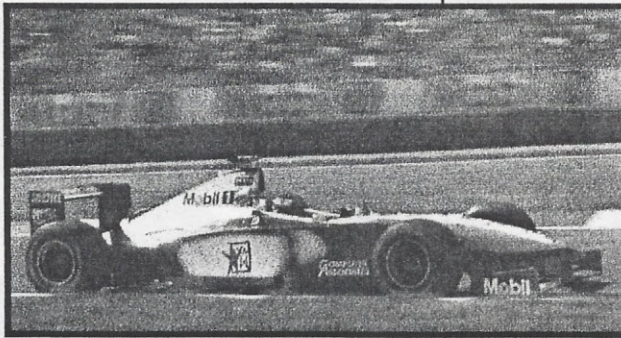


(Continued from page 1)

Only a few people had been given the opportunity to take a ride in it, so I was quite honored and excited. After my seat fitting, which took about an hour, I had a couple of hours to look around the pit area and watch the F1 practice session, Porsche Super Cup, and F3000 race. There's nothing like the sound of these things to get a car enthusiasts blood boiling and ears ringing. At noon, (on Saturday) as part of the mid day exhibition event, I was to go for my run. My driver was Martin Brundle, who retired from F1 only a couple of years ago, and who I've always been a fan of. So driving with him was a thrill in itself. During our pre race dis-

ussion, I assured him that I wanted him to go for it...just to pretend I wasn't there. I was strapped into the car, which now fit like a glove after having the foam seat molded for my body. The drivers seat was then placed between my legs and bolted in, along with a carbon fiber/honeycomb structure faced with 75mm foam padding that's placed over my head to separate me and the driver. It's like being strapped to the car.... like being part of the car, rather than being a passenger in the car. No movement, very little forward visibility, and no quick escape for sure. Getting in or out takes a good five minutes. Definitely not something for the claustrophobic. In my 3 layer nomex race suit, full fire retardant underwear, balaclava, socks, gloves, boots, and helmet, I really looked and felt the part. And it was really warm. Not as hot as my Evans at Barbers Point, but hot.

The plan was for four laps of the 6.8



kilometer track; one warm up, two hot, and a warm down. Our racing tires in their heat blankets were put onto the car, the blankets taken off, the engine fired up, and off we went. Now I drive a pretty fast car and have a bit of open wheel experience driving Formula Fords. My Evans Series One is basically a street legal race car that I drive at the track as often as possible, and it does zero to sixty in about four and a half seconds. So I thought that I was at least reasonably ready for the experience of an F1 car. Not! At least not being the passenger in one. Being the passenger in any car is a bit nerve racking, but this was like being shot out of a rocket with someone else lighting the fuse. Warm up to Martin Brundle obviously means warm up the tires, not the engine, because he seemed to take off as fast as gravity and friction would allow. By turn one (only a couple of hundred meters down the straight

from where we started) I was sure that we were going to hit the ripple strip and land in the sand trap at 100 miles per hour. From there it was off into the woods on the fastest track on the f1 circuit. A long straight with a couple of bends, a corner, and a long straight back to the "stadium" part of the track with it's five tight bends that leads back to the start finish straight. The first lap was spent trying to get used to the g-forces and attempting to figure out where the corners were, turn in and braking points etc. Frontal vision is zero, as you look straight into the separator and drivers helmet. So I had to bend my head from side to side in order to see where we were going. By the second lap, I had an idea of where we were going, so it really started to get fun.... and fast! Acceleration, cornering, and especially braking went from amazing to brutal once the tires warmed up. On lap 2 and 3 we did just over ten seconds off the race lap

(Continued on page 3)