

IN THE LEAD-UP TO THE
FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE AIRLINES
SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX THIS
MONTH, SUPERCARS ARE
TRANSPORTED TO THE EVENT
FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

THE OPERATION, WHICH
INVOLVES PRECISION
PLANNING, IS A
**RACE TO THE
STARTING LINE**

STORY Ian De Cotta

It's a global circus that attracts half a billion television viewers worldwide for each race. And this year, the Formula 1 (F1) world championship is held in 21 destinations around the globe. A successful Grand Prix is dependent on the timely arrival of cars and equipment at each venue, and moving them is serious business. Not surprisingly, the F1 operation runs with clockwork precision.

The numbers are staggering. A manifest of more than 500 tonnes of cargo reads like a village on the move. Its value is anything upwards of US\$250 million. Everything from ovens and refrigerators to tables and chairs are among the more mundane items.

What is worth far more are the 22 cars. Not to mention the top-of-the-line IT and electronics equipment, 440 sets of tyres, 27,500 litres of fuel, 2,200 litres of motor oil and 990 litres of coolant. A host of other articles, ranging in the millions of dollars, are also shipped out. Television cameras, generators, gearboxes, spare wings, nose cones, tyre blankets, intricate parts to rebuild cars, high-tech tools and false floors for team garages are among the items that complete the list.

The bulk, including motorhomes, is transported overland for eight races in Europe on the 2016 F1 calendar. For the remaining 13 races known as flyaways, the items are shipped by air and sea. ➔



THE FAST TRACK TO SINGAPORE

Kicking off the last seven races outside Europe is the FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE AIRLINES SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX (www.singaporegp.sg; September 16 to 18). The journey to the Marina Bay Street Circuit begins at the Port of Felixstowe in the UK a month before the race.

But planning the complex logistics for Formula 1's first night race takes four months. In May, all 11 teams and their travel departments start monitoring a destination's ground conditions.

They keep tabs, for instance, on whether there are existing road works that may upset freight and travel plans. This is crucial for vital car parts, which arrive at the eleventh hour as urgent hand luggage from the airport.

Once a logistics plan is agreed upon, work on moving race cargo to the flyaway venues gets under way. General items, such as electrical cables and

catering equipment, are transported by sea. The rest is airfreighted. For the Singapore Grand Prix, at least six 747s are deployed to fly cars and equipment to Changi Airport.

Gerrard O'Reilly, Red Bull Racing's logistics manager, explains on the team's homepage how the intricate logistics operation for races outside Europe is executed. "We have one set of airfreight that weighs 32 tonnes and goes to all the flyaway races," he says. "Additionally, we have five sets of sea-freight that travel the world. A sea-freight set is three shipping containers' worth, and all five sets are identical – we basically buy five of everything. One set was despatched to each of the first flyaway races."

"At the end of the year, we'll have seven more flyaways. The Singapore Grand Prix kit will go on to Brazil, and the Japanese Grand Prix kit will go to Abu Dhabi, Russia, Austin and Brazil each get their own kits."



For updates on the 2016 FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE AIRLINES SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX, visit www.silverkris.com





“FOR THE SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX, AT LEAST SIX 747S ARE DEPLOYED TO FLY CARS AND EQUIPMENT TO CHANGI AIRPORT.”



PHOTO FORMULA 1 / GETTY IMAGES

THE NEED FOR SPEED

Between races, there is usually a minimum two-week break. But this season, 12 events on six separate occasions are held back to back, or within seven days of each other. As the setting up of garages, hospitality homes and technical-support facilities is vital to a successful Grand Prix, unforeseen events can ruin the best-laid F1 plans.

German logistics company DHL, which organises and executes the move for all teams for most races, has a risk-management tool to monitor transport situations. It also operates quality centres, which have a total view of situations happening around the world.

Pier Luigi Ferrari, DHL's deputy managing director (motorsport division), says the key to a smooth operation is planning. “Our timing, our schedules do not allow us not to be prepared,” he adds.

Fortunately, DHL gets past customs without difficulty at most ports. In Singapore, a multi-agency under the F1 Traffic and Transport Sub-Committee,

which includes Singapore Customs, has allowed the temporary import of all cars for the races in Marina Bay.

Permit declarations, checkpoint clearance and other procedures are simplified for teams, with priority given to F1 shipments. A special unit attending to F1-related matters is also in place to smooth and speed up customs clearance.

The next big operation at a Grand Prix begins midway through the race on Sunday, when teams begin packing for the next venue.

In previous years, there was a two-week gap between the Singapore and Japan events. And, as it is a night race in the city-state, all crucial F1 cargo was shipped out the following day.

“It takes anywhere between six and eight hours, depending on what track we’re at,” he adds. “The kit is the same at each race. But the time it takes to do the job changes according to how long it takes us to get our trucks or airfreight containers into the paddock. The bigger the paddock, the shorter the job.” ■

BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE

Imagine watching the 2016 FORMULA 1 SINGAPORE AIRLINES SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX from a prime position at the first set of turns. At the Singapore Airlines Lounge@Turn 3 (www.sianightrace.com),

enjoy a wider seat, which is assigned to you. In air-conditioned luxury, enjoy free-flow wine, beer, soft drinks and food. For each three-day pass purchased, PPS and KrisFlyer members will also receive 12,000 KrisFlyer Miles.

