



2018 MICHELIN MotoGP™



OFFICIAL MotoGP™ CLASS TYRE



A SPECTACULAR SEASON AWAITS

INTERVIEW
PIERO
TARAMASSO



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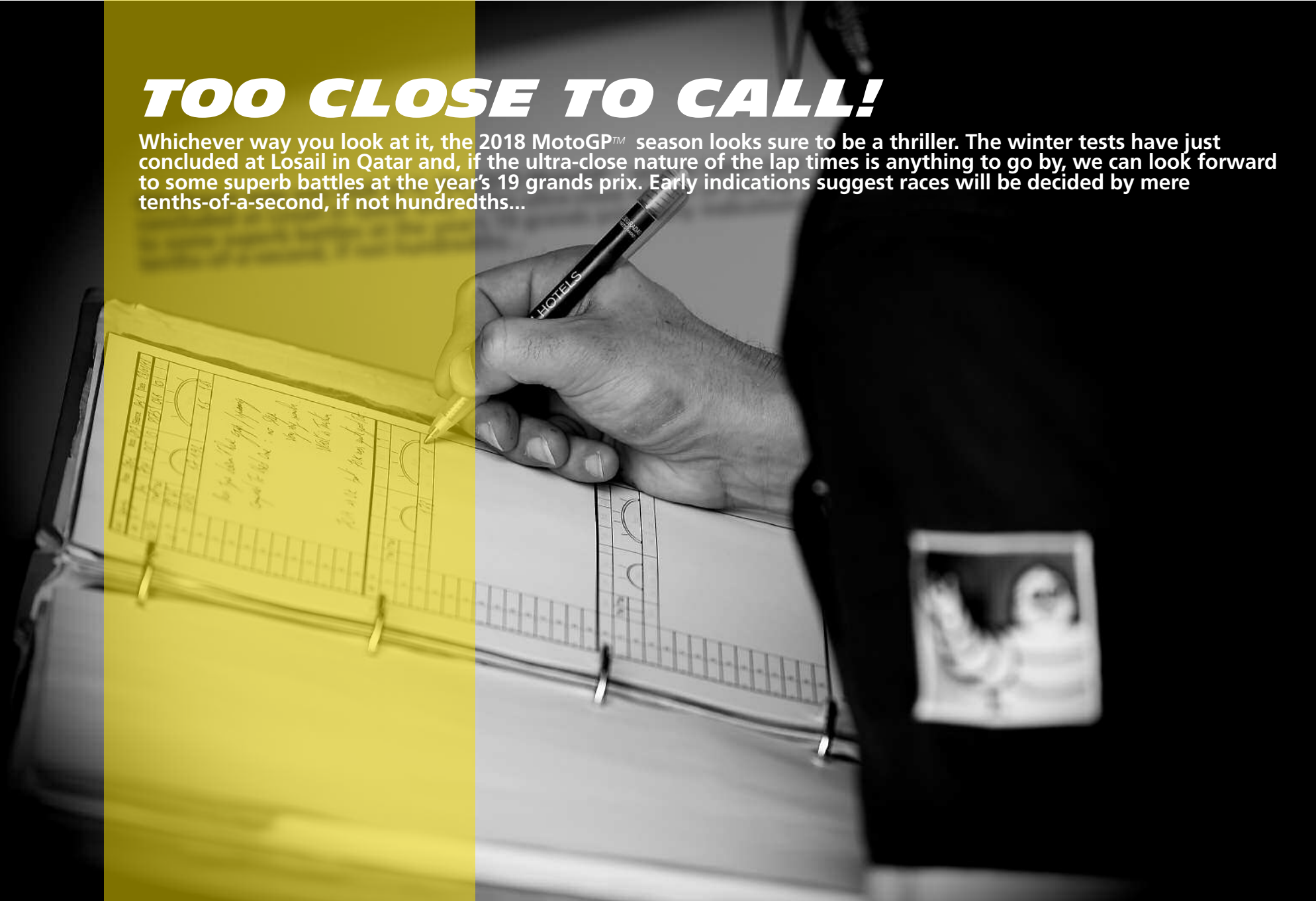
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TOO CLOSE TO CALL!

Whichever way you look at it, the 2018 MotoGP™ season looks sure to be a thriller. The winter tests have just concluded at Losail in Qatar and, if the ultra-close nature of the lap times is anything to go by, we can look forward to some superb battles at the year's 19 grands prix. Early indications suggest races will be decided by mere tenths-of-a-second, if not hundredths...

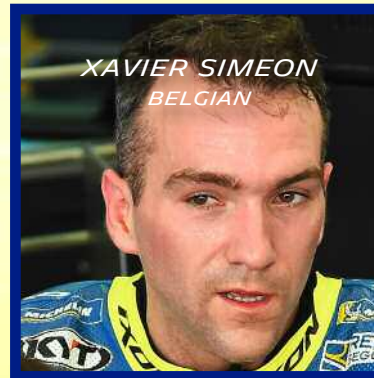


NEW REGULATIONS

In 2018, no fewer than seven of the races will be reduced in distance, to ensure that all race weekend schedules run to the same timetable to facilitate television broadcasts. The grands prix at Austin, Le Mans, Catalunya, Brno and Misano will duly be shortened by one lap, Jerez by two and Valencia three. With a 19th round having now been added to the calendar, the number of test days officially available to premier class teams has similarly been revised. All full-season riders will be free to test on the Monday immediately after the grands prix in Spain, Catalunya and the Czech Republic, but only five other private test days are permitted, two of which must be at circuits already used in the championship. MotoGP™'s new technical regulations also forbid Michelin from introducing any new tyres during the course of the season that do not feature on the list that the manufacturer must supply to the series promoter ahead of the curtain-raising Grand Prix of Qatar.



ROOKIES



STEPPING INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Morbidelli, Lüthi, Nakagami, Simeon and Syahrin – introducing the 5 riders who will fight it out for the honour of being MotoGP™'s best rookie this year. Morbidelli and Lüthi will team up at Estrella Galicia 0,0 Marc VDS, Nakagami is set to compete for LCR Honda, Simeon will replace Loris Baz at Avintia and Syahrin has hit the jackpot with a plum seat at Tech 3. The latter will take over from the unfortunate Folger who has taken the decision to put his career on hold for health reasons. 3 of the new boys will be riding Hondas, with one on a Ducati and the other a Yamaha. Each of them is aware that

repeating Zarco's outstanding achievements from last year will be a tall order indeed, and reigning Moto2 Champion Morbidelli is keeping his expectations firmly in-check. *"In Italy, everybody is hoping I can get off to the same kind of start in MotoGP™ as Zarco did,"* he explains, *"but it's important to keep in mind that what Johann accomplished last season was exceptional. Along with Marc Márquez – and perhaps Casey Stoner in 2006 – he is one of the very few riders to have truly stood out on his top-flight debut."*





PARTNERSHIP

In 2019, races featuring electric motorbikes will form part of GP weekends. The new FIM MotoE World Cup will not be a rival championship to MotoGP™, but rather will run alongside the premier class, Moto2 and Moto3 as a new support series, under the expert stewardship of its Executive Director, Nicolas Goubert. *“Whilst they enjoy the noise, speed and on-track battles, the sport’s fans are equally aware that technology is constantly changing and moving on,”* says the Frenchman. *“We need to ensure we retain that excitement and close racing, and that the bikes are still capable of achieving respectable speeds – but electric road-going motorbikes are already reaching in excess of 250kph. The key will be to maintain high cornering speeds – and the lean angles that go with them.”* Michelin has been tasked with supplying tyres for these new electric racing bikes, built by Italian manufacturer Energica. *“The tyres will be noticeably different to those already used in MotoGP™,”* reveals Piero Taramasso. *“This is due to the bikes’ lower power and significantly higher weight, allied to the fact that, initially at least, the races will only be around 10 laps long.”*

MICHELIN IN MOTO E

PIERO TARAMASSO

This year, Piero Taramasso will celebrate three decades as a member of the Michelin family. It is an anniversary that the 51-year-old Italian – now the brand's two-wheeled motorsport manager – intends to mark in style. *“Thirty years is quite an achievement,”* proudly acknowledges the man whose commendable work ethic and steely commitment to the cause have enabled him to climb right the way up the Michelin ladder. After starting out in the quality control department of the company's plant in Cuneo (Piedmont) in 1989, Piero rapidly assumed a test-rider role. *“In 1992, I moved to Clermont-Ferrand to test original equipment tyres for Italian touring cars”* he recalls.

THREE DECADES OF DEDICATION

“I spent six years at Ladoux followed by four at Michelin's testing facility in Greenville, where I continued to work as a test-rider – this time for European carmakers with a base in the United States, including the likes of Porsche, Mercedes and BMW.”

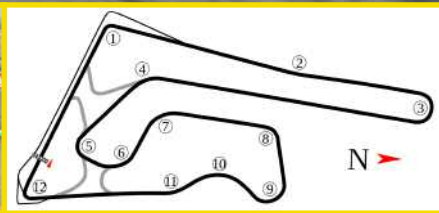


PIERO TARAMASSO



In 2001, Piero returned to Clermont-Ferrand, where he joined Michelin's motorsport division in the world of Formula 1. *"I was a technical advisor to the Toyota, BMW and Sauber teams,"* he explains. Five years later, when the French firm withdrew from F1, Piero transferred to the sales department. He was there for just a year-and-a-half before returning to the paddock in 2008 – only this time, the Italian traded four wheels for two. *"It was Michelin's final season in MotoGP™. A year later, I was working in endurance racing and national championships in Italy and Spain."* His abilities and dedication earned him promotion in 2011 to the head of Michelin's Off-Road division. The following year, he was similarly entrusted with managing the brand's circuit racing activities. As Nicolas Goubert's right-hand man, Piero relentlessly added new strings to his bow and, in his 30th year with the brand in 2018, he will spearhead Michelin's two-wheeled motorsport programme.

ONE CIRCUIT, ONE CHALLENGE



BURIRAM



Buriram joins the MotoGP™ schedule in 2018 to make it 19 different circuits on the calendar. In February, riders and technicians had their first opportunity to discover the Thai track. As a rule, Michelin takes around 1,000 tyres to 3 day tests but, on this occasion, the company sent 2,000 tyres from its French headquarters. *“It was important to be prepared for even the smallest of surprises,”* reasons Piero Taramasso. *“That is why we sent a wider variety of specifications than usual.”* The allocation for the race weekend in October is still to be finalised, but Michelin’s technicians did their homework when it came to determining which tyres to use at the test. *“When we work on tyres for a new circuit, we begin by analysing the track surface,”* explains Piero. *“We then try to understand the impact this will have on the tyre’s performance in terms of*

its temperature and wear rate. We also look at the configuration of the circuit to calculate speeds and simulate the stresses on the tyres. In this case, we were additionally able to take advantage of external data, since we supply tyres to cars in the GT500 class of the Asia-based Super GT championship.” By the end of the 3 days, the majority of riders were satisfied – even Rossi, who had previously visited Buriram 2 years ago in a promotional capacity and had scarcely hidden his dislike for the circuit layout. *“Although it is not particularly demanding, it does remind me a little of the track in Argentina,”* remarked the Italian, *“and it is reasonably entertaining to ride.”* If the ultra-close lap times from the test are any gauge, the inaugural Thailand GP looks set to keep fans right on the edge of their seats, too...



ONE RIDER, ONE TECHNICIAN



MARQUEZ



ISACCO

Patrick Isacco retired on the eve of the 2018 MotoGP™ campaign following 35 years of good and loyal service to Michelin Motorsport. The Frenchman reveals that he will take with him a lasting memory of his final two seasons spent alongside Marc Márquez. *“He is an exceptionally talented rider who gives his all in every situation and has a real ‘can-do’ attitude,”* states the technician. *“Even if he tends to use stiffer tyre compounds than the majority of his rivals, Marc is always prepared to try out alternative solutions. Analytically, he is extremely switched-on and very open to new ideas. Unlike some other riders, he is not afraid to venture outside of his comfort zone. He is also an excellent listener who likes to hear the opinions of those he is working with – the consummate team player.”* With no fewer than four world titles to his credit from just 5 seasons in MotoGP™, Márquez has ably proven that his approach is a successful one. *“Along with Doohan and Rossi, Marc is one of three riders that left a real footprint on my career,”* Patrick concludes.

SEPANG, BURIRAM, LOSAIL

F. MORBIDELLI



T. NAKAGAMI



X. SIMEON



9 days spread across 3 circuits allowed riders and teams to prepare themselves as best they can for a new season that looks set to be as thrilling as it is fiercely-disputed.

"The overview is very positive," affirms Piero Taramasso. "We enjoyed good weather, which enabled us to assess the evolutions that we had prepared for these winter tests." The sport's technical regulations no longer allow Michelin to roll out new specifications during the season and, with all of the MotoGP™ teams requesting that the onus be placed on stability to avoid the tyres unduly impacting upon chassis settings, the French manufacturer's developers focused their work on formulating new rubber compounds. *"At Sepang, we trialed two new front compounds"* adds Piero. *"These tyres – at the medium/hard end of the spectrum – incorporate rubber compounds produced using new technologies and are designed to cope with particularly fast, demanding and abrasive circuits. The results were very promising, and we*



WINTER TESTING SUMMARY

SEPANG, BURIRAM, LOSAIL

Team Suzuki Ecstar finished 2017 in fine form and has maintained that positive momentum during pre-season testing.



will offer these specifications to riders for the opening GP of the season at Losail, Termas de Río Hondo and Austin, where the tyres are placed under considerable stress. We similarly tried out a number of solutions for the rear, which generated encouraging feedback from the riders. Judging by the closeness of lap times, we are shaping up for a thrilling season ahead.” Impressive form in both Malaysia and Thailand has installed Márquez as the early favourite to successfully defend his crown aboard his Honda. Could the six-time world champion even go so far as to replicate his astonishing achievements from 2014, when he won all the first 10 races? “The situation is very different now,” he cautions. “The level of competition is much higher now.” Indeed, both Ducati and Yamaha have every intention of making life as difficult as possible for the precociously talented Spaniard. Watch this space...

SEPANG, BURIRAM, LOSAIL

SEPANG - CUMUL DES 3 JOURS

- 1 - JORGE LORENZO (DUCATI)1'58.830
- 2 - DANI PEDROSA (HONDA)1'59.009
- 3 - CAL CRUTCHLOW (HONDA)1'59.052
- 4 - ANDREA DOVIZIOSO (DUCATI) ...1'59.169
- 5 - JACK MILLER (DUCATI)..1'59.346
- 6 - ALEX RINS (SUZUKI)1'59.348
- 7 - MAVERICK VIÑALES (YAMAHA)...1'59.355
- 8 - MARC MARQUEZ (HONDA)1'59.382
- 9 - VALENTINO ROSSI (YAMAHA) ...1'59.390
- 10 - JOHANN ZARCO (YAMAHA)1'59.511

BURIRAM - CUMUL DES 3 JOURS

- 1 - DANI PEDROSA (HONDA)1'29.781
- 2 - JOHANN ZARCO (YAMAHA)1'29.867
- 3 - MARC MARQUEZ (HONDA)1'29.969
- 4 - CAL CRUTCHLOW (HONDA)1'30.064
- 5 - ALEX RINS (SUZUKI)1'30.178
- 6 - JACK MILLER (DUCATI)..1'30.185
- 7 - ANDREA DOVIZIOSO (DUCATI) ...1'30.192
- 8 - MAVERICK VIÑALES (YAMAHA) ..1'30.274
- 9 - DANILO PETRUCCI (DUCATI)1'30.367
- 10 - TAKAAKI NAKAGAMI (HONDA) ..1'30.456

LOSAIL - CUMUL DES 3 JOURS

- 1 - JOHANN ZARCO (YAMAHA)1'54.029
- 2 - VALENTINO ROSSI (YAMAHA)1'54.276
- 3 - ANDREA DOVIZIOSO (DUCATI)1'54.331
- 4 - CAL CRUTCHLOW (HONDA)1'54.457
- 5 - MAVERICK VIÑALES (YAMAHA)1'54.471
- 6 - ANDREA IANNONE (SUZUKI)1'54.586
- 7 - MARC MARQUEZ (HONDA)1'54.591
- 8 - ALEX RINS (SUZUKI)1'54.650
- 9 - DANILO PETRUCCI (DUCATI)1'54.659
- 10 - JORGE LORENZO (DUCATI)1'54.692

How to make rain in the Qatari desert!



ONE RIDER, MICHELIN TYRES



“BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS”



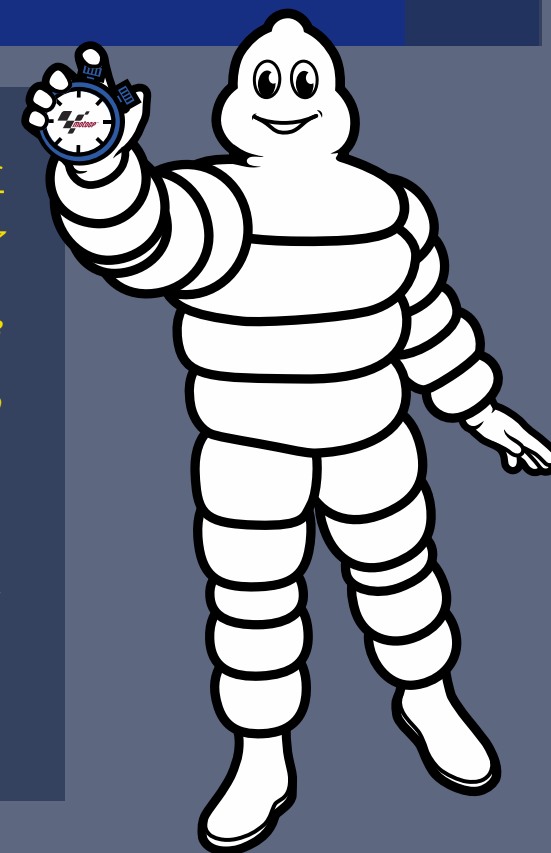
Johann Zarco recalls that he struggled at certain circuits during his time in Moto2. *“The toughest ones for me were Phillip Island and Valencia,”* reveals the Tech3 rider. *“Neither has many right-handers, and the weather is often cold when those two grands prix take place. I lacked confidence and I found it difficult to overcome that hurdle. My graduation to MotoGP™ and introduction to Michelin tyres were key to breaking down those barriers.”* In evidence of that assertion, the Frenchman fought for victory in both these races last season. *“With asymmetrical tyres, I discovered a whole new world of grip and learnt that I could attack left-hand corners just as hard as right-handers. When you are competing on two wheels, having confidence in the front tyre is vital. The slightest hesitation can result in tenths-of-a-second lost and, at such a high level, that can prove costly indeed.”* Out of all the MotoGP™ rookies over the past two years, Zarco is unquestionably the one that has best adapted to the specific characteristics of Michelin’s tyres. *“Johann has a very smooth style on the bike, which allows him to get the very best out of even the softest-compound tyres,”* explains his crew chief, Guy Coulon. *“He is capable of adjusting his riding to preserve his tyres”.*

CALENDAR - CLASSIFICATION



2017 STANDINGS

1 - MARQUEZ (HONDA).....	298
2 - DOVIZIOSO (DUCATI).....	261
3 - VIÑALES (YAMAHA).....	230
4 - PEDROSA (HONDA).....	210
5 - ROSSI (YAMAHA).....	208
6 - ZARCO (YAMAHA).....	174
7 - LORENZO (DUCATI).....	137
...	



	DATE	GRAND PRIX	CIRCUIT	
		PRE-SEASON	SEPANG, BURIRAM, LOSAIL	MAG 16
1	18/03	QATAR	LOSAIL INTERNATIONAL	
2	08/04	ARGENTINA	TERMAS DE RÍO HONDO	MAG 17
3	22/04	USA	CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS	
4	06/05	SPAIN	CIRCUITO DE JEREZ	
5	20/05	FRANCE	LE MANS	MAG 18
6	03/06	ITALY	MUGELLO	
7	17/06	CATALUNYA	BARCELONA-CATALUNYA	MAG 19
8	01/07	NETHERLANDS	TT CIRCUIT ASSEN	
9	15/07	GERMANY	SACHSENRING	
10	05/08	CZECH REPUBLIC	AUTOMOTODROM BRNO	
11	12/08	AUSTRIA	RED-BULL RING	MAG 20
12	26/08	GREAT BRITAIN	SILVERSTONE	
13	09/09	SAN MARINO	MISANO	
14	23/09	ARAGÓN	MOTORLAND ARAGÓN	MAG 21
15	07/10	THAILAND	CHANG INTERNATIONAL	
16	21/10	JAPAN	TWIN RING MOTEGI	
17	28/10	AUSTRALIA	PHILLIP ISLAND	MAG 22
18	04/11	MALAYSIA	SEPANG INTERNATIONAL	
19	18/11	VALENCIA	CIRCUITO RICARDO TORMO	MAG 23