

# NEED FOR SPEED – FROM GROUND TO SKY

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**By Natalia Langsdale**

It's not just sleek tarmacs, slick tyres and aerodynamic designs that make Formula 1 and aviation a good match. Formula 1 is one of the few sports that truly travels globally each year. Be it the trend-setters in their private jets with a lust for the ultimate in high flying living, or the commercial planes that transport people and the priceless cargo from race to race, the two sectors are actually very interlinked.



**Natalia Langsdale**

Founder of Bright Creativity, a Marketing Consulting & PR company. Natalia has successfully worked directly in both yachting and private aviation sectors, so we at Paddock magazine were truly eager to hear what she had to say about the luxury market and Formula 1.

Formula 1 has since its inception always had an element of being the ultimate dream sport. It's a sport that has the majority of its 400 million global fans daydreaming about either becoming a Formula 1 driver, working in the sector, or "simply" following it around the world.

From aspiring to living the in-crowd way, attending races on all four continents or taking in the awesomeness of such mind-blowing circuits as Abu Dhabi for looks or Spa for speed, travel is key. With the schedule of Formula 1, there's no real surprise then that the globetrotting sector is one of the most represented in Formula 1, from both a commercial partnership and sponsorship perspective too.

Such global partners as Emirates have a major presence at around three quarters of the events. In addition, Gulf Air, Singapore Airlines and Etihad Airways all title sponsor their

national races. Others to have been involved include Kingfisher Airlines, AirAsia, Qantas, and several more. Such partnerships allow fans to catch up on races and view behind-the-scenes footage of their favourite drivers and teams.

Nevertheless, it's in the private aviation sector where speed is picking up. Considering all the high net worth individuals and those involved in the sport flying private, there is some serious affiliations. As with commercial airlines, several private aircraft partnerships also exist; NetJets recently announced a partnership with Mercedes AMG Petronas, GlobeAir work with Nico Hulkenberg and Bombardier has worked with Lewis Hamilton and more recently Williams Martini Racing and Lance Stroll.

In a partnership brokered by Rush Sport & Entertainment, AsiaJet were also involved with Sauber F1 Team throughout the Asia Pacific region.



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Obviously, the airports of each Formula 1 race are typically packed with jets when the race is on. Be it the HondaJet 777 VIPs (made from car technology) or the imposing A380, they reign the airfields they land on and as impressively as they arrive, the same way they depart once the roads used for the track reopen to the public.

It's not just in the sky that we are seeing more affiliations with the world-class sport either. On the ground there are several well-known hotel companies and chains too who have been involved. Today, Hilton Hotels (via a McLaren F1 Team partnership since 2005) are implicated, as is another Rush Sport & Entertainment client, Marriott and Starwood Hotels & Resorts. Through their loyalty programme SPG are partnered with Mercedes. New sector entrants such as Airbnb have also been active, first with Manor F1 and latterly in a campaign with Williams Martini Racing at the Silverstone GP.

Car rental companies are also having a field day with the Formula 1 sport. Europcar for one were previously involved with Ferrari and Kayak.co.uk, the travel booking site, currently sponsor Formula 1 coverage on the UK's Channel 4 network. Many smaller travel agency operations also specialise in Formula 1 travel and experiences, offering either tailor-made or more accessible packages. One beautiful car event that takes place yearly is for example "The Run To" bespoke car experience that gets VIPs to drive down from Bordeaux through the best wine regions all the way down to Monte-Carlo ahead of the iconic Monaco Grand Prix. Living such a road trip exhilaration in a classic car together with former race driving legends accumulates in a heightened frenzy once the roar of those engines and the smell of burning rubber meets the senses.

The good news is that the Formula 1 calendar is probably set to boom to 25 (or more) races in the coming



years. This implies potential for more “destination city” events, making the commercial interest from domestic airlines, hotel groups or travel booking aggregators continue to grow. However, it’s quite obvious from growing membership numbers of private air travel companies that their clubs are striking a chord with travellers well beyond the traditional ultra-rich demographic.

So if you are not quite there yet with owning your very own plane but you want to avoid flying like the rest, then fret not, there are plenty of affordable ways of flying without sacrificing perks. Easy-to-reach airports, quiet terminals, no lines or long waits, reliable departure times and generally a much more peaceful flight are just some of the niceties that private flying offers.

Companies such as Surf Air, ClipperJet or the likes of Blackjet allow travellers a new kind of “business class” with empty seats and membership card set ups. Air travel is not only be-

coming more affordable, but equally affordable does not now imply cheap and nasty. The market for flying private has just shifted a few gears and is catching up to be at speed with the likes of the speedometers of the racing cars it follows the world for.

At the end of the day, if you are going all out to pay to see the best sport in the world, you might as well be living the dream and doing it in style, literally all the way where the sky has no limit.

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#### **EIGHT INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT PRIVATE AVIATION (THANKS TO KUBICKAVIATION.COM):**

1. Private planes are much more versatile in that they can land at thousands more airports than commercial flights. For example, they are able to land at more than 5,500 airports in the USA, compared to commercial airlines’ paltry 550.

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2. The USA makes up almost half of the world market for private charters. Europe represents 20.8%, Asia 11.8%, South America 11.6%, and the Middle East 6.1%.

3. Travelers pay an average rate of \$4,800 per hour for a large aircraft and \$2,900 per hour for a mid-sized aircraft.

4. The largest event for aircraft charters is the Super Bowl. During that weekend, the local airports can expect to see around 600 flights solely from private charters. Other popular events include the Masters Golf Tournament and Art Basel Miami Beach.

5. Saudi Arabian Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Al Saud owns the most expen-

sive private aircraft in the world, with a cost of \$500 million. It includes a two-car garage, a stable for horses and camels, and a rotating prayer room that always faces Mecca.

6. Bill Lear is known as the father of charter aircraft, as he flew the first universally known private jet back in 1963. When his company was acquired four years later, Lear's stock was worth over \$27 million.

7. There are predictions that over 15,000 private aircrafts will be sold within the next 10 years.

8. The average baggage allotment is 6.4 cubic metres, compared to only 0.08 in a commercial airline.