

# An interview with Natalie Pinkham

Natalie Pinkham has been part of the Sky Sports F1 reporting team since 2011. She lives in West London with her husband Owain and two children, Wilf and Willow. *Interview: Nat Barnes*

**What is your role within the Sky Sports F1 reporting team?**

I've had some time out over the past couple of years having my two children, so I've been concentrating on doing features in the UK and Europe and doing studio work with the F1 Report every Wednesday.

**In some ways, F1 cars are the ultimate prestige vehicles. What do you think lies behind the enduring appeal of the sport?**

It's the layers of Formula One which I love. People think it's an individual sport, but there's 600 people at a factory all pulling in the same direction. It's the ultimate example of teamwork.

The other part of it that I love is seeing prestige vehicle technology applied in everyday life. The Williams team helped the neonatal unit at University Hospital in Wales to improve their resuscitation techniques for newborn babies using their pit stop practices.

Also, an electronic control unit built by McLaren and used in all the F1 cars is also used in Birmingham Children's Hospital to measure a child's heart rate, oxygen levels and blood pressure far more accurately than the usual system.

**You're spent a lot of time with F1 drivers. Which experiences really stand out?**

We've done so many things over the years. I did some ice driving in 2013 with [Ferrari driver] Kimi Räikkönen as my co-driver and crashed the car! I was really worried but he just got out laughing his head off!

I enjoy seeing the drivers when they're out of their usual context. We also went dune buggy racing with Lewis Hamilton and did a jet ski race with him and Nico Rosberg, which was hilarious. You soon get to find out which drivers have that slightly mad streak!

**How has the audience for F1 changed during the time you've been reporting on it?**

We have to keep up with younger audiences, and with social media we need to cater for those who don't want to sit through the whole broadcast.

I'm also passionate about bringing more women into the sport, both inside it and watching. It's important to show that it's a viable environment for women. There are increasingly more female mechanics and engineers – and also team bosses with Claire Williams and Monisha Kaltenborn.

**You're an ambassador for Jaguar. Do you have a favourite?**

I used to have an F-Type convertible, but when the children arrived I quickly realised that my days of sports cars were over, so I've now got an F-Pace instead, which is more practical. It represented a big change in my life, but actually the F-Pace feels like a bigger version of the F-Type, so I love it.

The car industry is constantly evolving, particularly from a tech perspective. Where do you see the future of prestige vehicles?

I think that prestige vehicles and the whole car market feel generally more accessible now. High-end cars used to be for the very rich and famous, but now you see them everywhere.

The trickledown effect and the interest in technology and its application into road cars is really important. We've got a duty as broadcasters to make that link to viewers.

We need Formula One to be relevant to our everyday cars, so that audiences appreciate them more and can make that association when watching.

**Given the drive towards increasingly automated vehicles requiring less contact from the driver, does prestige motoring still have a future?**

Yes, absolutely. The romantic appeal of getting behind the wheel of a prestige car is enduring. Automated cars have a place and are an exciting prospect, but there is still a fair amount of scepticism and resistance to them. We are considered to be a decade away from fully embracing them in everyday life. Automated and prestige cars are certainly not mutually exclusive.

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