

FORMULA ONE OPPORTUNITY FOR NARAIN KARTHIKEYAN

Campagnano Di Roma, Italy, December 12, 2003

SOLID PERFORMANCE FROM KARTHIKEYAN AT VALLELUNGA



India's top motor racing driver, **Narain Karthikeyan**, gained additional experience of Formula One today, when he drove for European Minardi Cosworth on the final day of an important three-day test for the team at the demanding Vallelunga circuit, near Rome. Ultimately, cold weather, a substantial fuel load and a damp, slippery track surface – **Karthikeyan** was the first driver on track Friday morning – meant his lap times were not representative of what could be accomplished in dry conditions. Nonetheless, the 26-year-old, from Chennai, successfully completed an engine evaluation programme for the team's technical partner, Cosworth Racing, and provided excellent "feedback" to his engineers.

"It was great to be back in a Formula One car," commented **Karthikeyan** after climbing from the cockpit of his European Minardi Cosworth PS03. *"I'd particularly like to thank Paul Stoddart and the team for giving me this opportunity, and I hope today's test will now encourage some of India's major corporations to get behind me and support my efforts to secure a Formula One seat in 2004."*

Speaking from Australia following the test, European Minardi Team Principal, Paul Stoddart, said, *"Today's exercise was all about having a look at Narain and seeing what he could do in a European Minardi. He did a solid job while he was in the car this morning and we have been pleased to have him join the team for this important test. There is clearly growing commercial potential in India as far as Formula One is concerned, and it will be interesting to explore the ways in which those opportunities might prove beneficial to both Narain and European Minardi in the future. In Narain India has an extremely committed and talented driver who is ready to make to step into Formula One."*



Aside from providing valuable data for the team's technical staff, this week's Vallelunga test is a further example of European Minardi's ongoing, and highly successful policy of seeking out the best young talents on the motor racing scene and introducing them to Formula One in a controlled and responsible way. It is an approach that has paid off handsomely, with drivers such as Fernando Alonso, Mark Webber, Giancarlo Fisichella, Jarno Trulli and Justin Wilson all having made their Grand Prix debuts with the Faenza team.

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