

World Celebrities Head For Europe's Top Sports Event

The Principality of Monaco always attracts the world's biggest celebrities with its natural beauty and refined elegance. When the excitement of Formula One racing hits the principality's streets at the end of May, top models as well as Hollywood stars and starlets come out in full force to enjoy the most glamorous race of the year - the Monaco Grand Prix.

Actors, directors and top models converge at Formula One racing events year round to bask in the glitz of the world's most expensive sport. The rich and famous seem to love the high speed thrills and excitement that surrounds the races, especially when the action is set in scenic European towns.

Hollywood and the Grand Prix have long gone hand in hand, since actors and directors often visit the race in conjunction with a visit to the Cannes Film Festival.

The film festival, which runs at the same time of year just north of the race along the Mediterranean coast of France, is an event that is never missed by Tinseltown's A-list. For stars that also love to watch racing, a visit to Cannes usually serves as a prelude to the Grand Prix. For instance, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon and George Clooney showed up at the 2004 race while promoting their film *Ocean's 12* at Cannes.

The Grand Prix and Fashion Unite event has recently become a fixture on the race calendar. The 2007 event brought together supermodels and socialites to raise funds for the Tereza Maxova Foundation, which benefits orphanages in the Czech Republic. The event featured designs by Isabell Kristensen, famous for her red carpet creations. Actress Bai Ling attended the event, as did German model Lena Gehrke and Czech beauty Petra Nemcova.

Famous Hollywood directors Luc Besson and George Lucas are Formula One regulars. The 2007 Grand Prix also brought Jude Law to Monaco to enjoy the action of this year's racing season.

Besson typically attends most Formula One events with his friend Jean Todt, director of the Ferrari team. Last year in Monaco, he played tour guide to French actor Jean Reno. The two worked together on films like *Le Grand Bleu*, *Nikita* and *Leon*.

Quentin Tarantino recently attended the European Grand Prix at the Nurburgring. When asked for his thoughts on the Grand Prix, Tarantino said, 'I like all this pageantry that happens beforehand. The guys are trying to get ready to do a race, but then they have all this carnival just before their do-or-die time.'

Monaco has luxury hotels galore with the Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo rated as one of the best in the world, and in the world of hotels the country has an astonishing 90 per cent of her bedrooms classed as luxury - celebrities have no trouble in choosing [Monaco hotels](#) !

While the Grand Prix hasn't had a serious accident in most recent years, the Monaco event certainly does get some of its allure from the danger of racing on narrow streets with tight turns and changing elevations.

The race is held each year on the Circuit de Monaco, which consists of the city streets of Monte Carlo and La Condamine and includes the famous harbour. It takes six weeks to build the circuit and three weeks after the event to take it down again.

Only two drivers in the history of the race have ever crashed into the harbour, with the most famous of the two being Alberto Ascari in 1955. Ascari survived the crash into the water after missing a chicane. The other driver, Paul Hawkins of Australia, ended up in the water in 1965. Hawkins crashed his Lotus and flew over the wall, after which he swam away from the accident to safety.

The race was founded in 1929 by Anthony Noghes, with the permission of Prince Louis II and sponsorship from the Automobile Club de Monaco. It has become one of the most important races in the world, alongside the Indianapolis 500 and the 24 hour Le Mans. The three races are collectively known as the Triple Crown.

The history and drama of the race is intriguing, as is the opulence of its fans. The rich and famous are treated like royals among the gorgeous cars in majestic Monaco at the end of May, tempting many top models as well as Hollywood's brightest stars and starlets to take a trip to see the Grand Prix, and this year's Monaco Grand Prix, scheduled for the weekend of May 24 and 25, will no doubt again see a real collection of the rich and famous.

About the Author

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