



FIA Formula E Championship

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

## FIA FORMULA E CHAMPIONSHIP SANTA POD RACEWAY CUSTOM SHOW EMIRATES

**IN THE MIDST** of only its second season, the FIA Formula E Championship is the world's first fully electric racing series. While the majority of suppliers in the FIA Formula E Championship are based in Europe, the door remains open for US-based racing companies to conduct business in this progressive venture.

"There are many opportunities and avenues for suppliers from all countries to enter the series," said Sam Mallinson, press officer for the FIA Formula E Championship. "From large car and battery manufacturers to specialized technical suppliers, the FIA Formula E Championship and its teams are always open to using and actively looking for top-of-the-range, innovative products."

Organizers seek to present a vision for the future of the racing industry while also serving as a framework for research and development around the electric vehicle, accelerating general interest in these cars and promoting sustainability.

This second season of Formula E began in October 2015, in Beijing, China, where the series became an "open championship," which meant teams and manufacturers were allowed to develop their own cars. "This will begin with the devel-

**A recurring column on overseas events, series, venues, business opportunities and more.**

opment of new powertrain solutions—incorporating the e-motor, inverter and transmission—with future regulation changes allowing for battery development," Mallinson told us.

In addition to Beijing, by the time this issue goes to print the Formula E series will have visited Malaysia, Uruguay, Argentina, and Mexico—with an April 2 event scheduled for Long Beach, California. Upcoming events this season will be held in France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom.

FIA does follow a strict approval process for all new manufacturers that want to enter Formula E, Mallinson said. "The applicant is required to submit a formal request to the FIA by the end of October, the year prior to the season they wish to enter the championship," he said. "The FIA takes into consideration the credibility and relevance of the project, and makes a decision based on the information provided and further data gathering.

"We are also fortunate enough to have

two US-based Formula E teams in Dragon Racing and Andretti Formula E," he added. "Dragon Racing has recently been granted manufacturer status for season three, with Andretti Technologies also looking to produce their own powertrain."

The original Formula E car used in the inaugural season, the Spark-Renault SRT\_01E, was designed and built by a consortium of leading motorsports companies. Spark Racing Technology (France), McLaren Applied Technology (UK), Michelin (France), Williams Advanced Technology (UK) and Dallara (Italy) all played a key role in getting Formula E on track for its first race—the Beijing ePrix—in September 2014.

The inaugural season ended in London in June 2015, with the series having raced in 10 major international cities—for a total of 11 races—pitting 10 teams, each with two drivers, head to head.

For more information about the FIA Formula E Championship, visit [www.fia-formulae.com](http://www.fia-formulae.com).

## By Nick Gagala

### Santa Pod Raceway

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016, United Kingdom-based Santa Pod Raceway is perhaps the best-known drag strip outside the US. It attracts top European drivers and race teams, as well as US-based motorsports companies that market to a relatively untapped overseas customer base.

In addition to hosting over 35 different events throughout the year, including marquee shows such as the FIA European Drag Racing Championships

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(EDRC), Santa Pod Raceway offers several sponsorship and marketing opportunities for American companies looking to expand their brand reach into the European drag racing market.

According to Santa Pod's representatives, individual events regularly attract between 5000 to 30,000 spectators. Advertising, marketing and sponsorship packages start from £500 (about \$725).

Elmendorf, Texas-based VP Racing Fuels has been Santa Pod Raceway's official fuel supplier for six-plus years, "and we look forward to continuing it for years to come," said Steve Scheidker.

The sponsorship makes VP fuel available exclusively on site at the track, with all fuel sales executed and managed directly by track personnel. The sponsorship includes a variety of signage within the venue, among other elements.

"Santa Pod is an iconic track and a great partner that has helped raise VP's profile in the UK and European markets, enhanced VP's credibility beyond drag racing, and helped increase sales," Scheidker told us.

While VP enjoys widespread brand recognition throughout the US, Scheidker said there's room for improvement in Europe. So track partnerships there take on extra significance. "The logistics of distribution and the cost associated with exporting present challenges, but nothing we haven't been able to overcome," he said.

"We're encouraged by the state of the drag racing market and see it growing in the UK and Europe," he added. "VP is doing its part through its affiliation with sanctioning bodies like the EDRC and FIA. We've activated contingency award programs, and VP is the exclusive spec fuel for FIA Pro Stock and Pro Mod."

Scheidker further cited strong interest in amateur drag racing in the UK and Europe, in particular through the EDRC's efforts, as well as contingency programs and other sponsorships implemented by VP and others in the American racing industry. Additional US-based sponsors of the



Santa Pod Raceway

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Among the sponsorship and marketing options at Santa Pod Raceway are event sponsorship; championship and class sponsorship; TV packages; track signage and venue branding; trade stands; official program advertising; Nitro FM radio advertising; ticket incentives; and promotional/sampling opportunities.

For more information about Santa Pod Raceway, visit [www.santapod.co.uk](http://www.santapod.co.uk).

### Custom Show Emirates

The Middle East is an emerging hotbed for motorsports, and one relatively new trade event is working to help US-based suppliers capitalize on business opportunities there, both present and future.

Billed as the biggest custom car and bike show in the Middle East, the 2nd annual Custom Show Emirates was scheduled for March 31 through April 2 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Center (ADNEC) in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

As a strategic partner of the US-based SEMA Show, Custom Show Emirates serves as a platform for connecting suppliers and retailers of tuning and aftermarket products directly with buyers and end users.

This year, SEMA's section at Custom Show Emirates includes more than 40 US exhibitors, with the majority involved in the racing and performance sectors, according to Linda Spencer, SEMA's Senior Director of International and Government Affairs.

Spencer touted the Middle East region's high concentration of formal motorsports facilities and its outlook for the future. "Our organization is optimistic about the business opportunities that are represented in the short and long term. This [year's Custom Show Emirates] will mark the fifth time SEMA member companies have traveled to the Middle East to meet with pre-vetted trade buyers from throughout the region," she told us in February.

At last year's inaugural Custom Show Emirates, over 12,000 attendees viewed automotive and motorcycle innovations from 100 local exhibitors and 57 international suppliers across 140,000 square feet of exhibition space.



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### Custom Show Emirates

The show's dedicated SEMA Pavilion featured specialty sections including a SEMA Garage and 20 project vehicles. SEMA also held a live 3D scanning of handpicked vehicles that are unavailable for sale in the US. Once these vehicles were measured to scale, custom kits and parts were tailor-made for them.

In addition to the SEMA Garage, highlights of this year's Custom Show Emirates include the latest in auto customization products and services, international pavilions, and new activities like 4x4 drifting, saloon drifting, stunt driving, Battle of the Engines, motorsports hall, performance zone, dyno zone, and much more.

At press time, SEMA's exhibitor list for the 2016 Custom Show Emirates consisted of: Baja Designs, Bestop Inc., BOLT Locks By STRATTEC, Borla Performance Industries Inc., COMP Performance Group, Dee Zee Inc., Driven Racing Oil, Dynocom Industries Inc., Edelbrock LLC, Fat Cat Motorsports Inc., Flex-A-Lite, Gale Banks Engineering, Hellwig Products, Injen Technology, JE Pistons/Innovate Motorsports, Keystone Automotive Operations Inc., Kooks Custom Headers Inc., McLeod Racing LLC, Mustang Dynamometer, Nitro Gear & Axle, One Crowd Investment, Oracle Lighting, Petty's Garage, Pittman Outdoors, Putco, Roadwire, Royal Purple, Seibon International Inc., SLP Performance, SuperATV, Warrior Products, WELD Racing LLC, and Wiseco.

For additional information on Custom Show Emirates, visit the website at [www.customshowemirates.com](http://www.customshowemirates.com). **PRI**

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