



Safety First: A Day In The Life Of Bernd Mayländer

Since 2000 the FIA has entrusted the enviable task of driving the Formula 1 safety car to Bernd Mayländer, a former successful touring-car racer. The German has led more laps in the sport than any other driver.

The long-term partnership between Formula 1 and Mercedes-Benz continues with the German manufacturer once again the Official Course Car supplier, a position they've held since 1996.

The Safety Car for the 2018 season is Mercedes-Benz's 577-horsepower AMG GT R machine.

Speaking at the exclusive Mercedes-Benz Star Lounge during the 2018 Australian Grand Prix, Mayländer discusses one of the highest pressure jobs in Formula 1.

On driving the GT

This season we are driving the GT R – we switched from the GT S, so it's even quicker and more powerful. It's a big step. When we did our first test with the Safety Car configuration we are about a second quicker per kilometre. If you think about that like a real race car, that is a lot. The GT R feels more comfortable because it's a lighter car, and it's much quicker.

You drive nearly at the maximum on the Safety Car, we are not hitting the kerbs like in a race or qualifying lap because it doesn't look comfortable in TV for a Safety Car. We go at 98%, with 2% to be safe. On the main straight [in Melbourne] we are going at 245 or something like this, it's not so important the speed, it's even more important to brake as late as possible. The speed in the corners in the GT R is much quicker, you are really pushing hard, but the Formula 1 car is 10 seconds per lap quicker, it is of course a very different car.

What do love about this sport?

You always talk before the race about what might happen, and it's always different to what you think. The development is never stopping, new engine and battery systems, it never ends and that is somehow great, we see the same fights on the track and the same political fights, it's always great.

Do you get nervous?

I get nervous before every race, I have done 341 now, it's always the same procedure but this year [in Melbourne] we are at a different start time so you need to make sure you are at the right hour. When the light switches from red and goes off, everything can happen, you have to be focused and still my adrenalin goes up, so that's why I am still here after 19 years. I am really looking forward but I am nervous, I have a lot of emotion in the sport and that's what we really need.

Photo Credit: Mercedes-Benz Australia

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