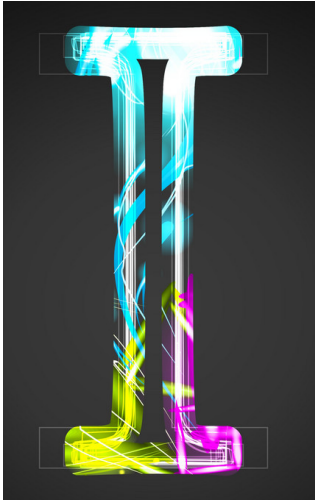




**THE
RACER**
by Jonny Wilson

JOHNNY WILSON – *The Racer*

HIS WINNING SMILE SAYS IT ALL!



*n this month's edition of *The Racer*, we reflect on what it takes to be a Formula 1 champion and how the fundamental qualities needed for success in the fast-lane, are helping to keep **Johnny Wilson** happy and healthy now he's no longer behind the wheel...*

At the modest age of 62, Johnny Wilson's Formula 1 days may be behind him, but his love of cars persists. And his **COMMITMENT** to living a happy life is evident the first time you meet him.

Born in Devon, Johnny lived in Ilfracombe as a boy, attending Abbey Road school. But even then, his independent spirit and need to be his own man was evident. *“I didn't like school much. Too bossy.”*

ADAPTABILITY - being able to modify your behaviour in the face of changing circumstances, is crucial to the life of a racing driver and arguably to success in life generally. Johnny comes across as someone who is definitely able to take life as it comes. Though he also knows his own mind and what he likes and does not. Aside from cars, Johnny has a passion for just about all vehicles with engines. His choice of magazines and books reflects this, with ones on tractors and lorries as well as cars in his collection. It is strange though that when asked, he is not keen on noisy engines any more. Preferring the purr of a new Mini to the blare of a fire-engine. Though police cars and ambulances are on his *favourites* list. But dodgems (unlike the ghost train) are surprisingly 'out' at the fair.

“They bang and I wouldn't want to crash,” he says, with a smile.

Racing driving is very much a team sport and Johnny is practiced in **BEING A TEAM PLAYER** when it comes to everyday life. Nowadays he's swapped the race-track for the skittle alley. Again, a team effort. *“Sometimes we win,”* he says, though it's apparent from his smile, that just taking part is fun enough.

As well as a winning smile, Johnny Wilson has a big heart and according to his friends, is always first to offer help. It appears that nothing is too much trouble for him, whether it's taking the recycling out, helping in the kitchen or wiping the dishes after a meal. Remembering his time living on a farm, recycling food waste is fondly referred to by him as,

'for the pigs'.

“It's all closed down now. I used to enjoy feeding the pigs with scraps of food.”

Johnny may have swapped his chamois leather for a duster and polish and the shiny bodywork of his Formula 1 Fiat bonnet and dashboard for his TV and DVDs, but his **FOCUS** on being smart, both on and off the track now has him shopping for clothes or that signature hair-cut of his. *“I go with Tara or Susan from Lawrence House. Or on the bus with my sister. We sit by the window, down the bottom. We look at the boats...”*

Although life is much slower than on the track, he still like to keep busy. *“I'm the oldest of 9 children (5 sisters and 3 brothers), and an Uncle too!”* he grins. Maybe because of that and his *Formula 1 family*, Johnny is comfortable in a group setting and encouraging of others. He regularly attends drama, where he exercises both his mind and body with movement, improvisation, singing and games. His **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL AGILITY** is further exercised with more dance at *Gateway*.

Getting out and about just meeting people is important to him too. Aside from shopping, as a local celebrity he's often asked to put in an appearance. Being the friendly soul he is, he always obliges. He recalls visiting *The Lifeboat Station at Ilfracombe* and the *Fire-Station in Barnstaple* where he met some of the fire-fighters and looked over the engines. No doubt he had them all smiling when he let them in on his secret about not liking the noise of fire-engines!

RECOVERY – whether it's watching Mr. Bean on the TV, *“...he's funny!”* or Superman on a DVD, *“If I was a hero, I'd be Superman,”* Johnny knows how to relax and take time out for himself. As noted before, he loves to go shopping and much like Nigel Mansell before him, Johnny collects cars. In Johnny's case, it's the model variety.

“My favourite car is the new Mini. I'd have a green one if I had one.”

Though his love of cars is not limited to the Mini.

“I like police cars too. And ambulances.”

When you're behind the wheel travelling at upwards of 200 miles an hour, taking hair-pin bends, experiencing G force greater than the launch of the Space Shuttle, or going from 0 – 60 mph in less than 2 seconds, **ENDURANCE, STAMINA** and a certain **FEARLESSNESS** is needed! It could be said that learning to take life one day at a time, even in the relatively slow lane, requires much of the same.

A winning smile undoubtedly goes a long way too!