

# Last Stop

A PERFECT FINISH AS THE TOUR WRAPS UP IN MONZA...  
AND A SURPRISE MEETING WITH A WORLD CHAMPION

By Ali Hussain Mushaima

IT'S BEEN CLOSE TO THREE MONTHS SINCE WE SET out from the Formula One circuit in Bahrain, but our tour is finally nearing the end. What better place to finish than at the F1 Grand Prix race in Monza? So from Slovenia, we drove back to Italy, taking in the festival atmosphere that surrounds the event in Monza. We feel completely a part of it, our Mitsubishi emblazoned with the Bahrain Grand Prix logo invites onlookers to come and talk, and find out more about the country.

Ferrari ace Michael Schumacher arrived in Monza having just sealed his seventh championship title in Belgium, and despite suffering a spin, he showed his class by storming back to finish second behind teammate Rubens Barichello. It is a thrill to watch perhaps the greatest driver of all time.

After the race, Petra and I headed over to a restaurant for a meal. As we were finishing up, we noticed a very familiar face striding into the restaurant. It was Schumacher, with his wife Corrina and manager Willi Weber. I went up to Schumacher, congratulated him on winning the 2004 championship, and then introduced myself, not knowing just how the champion would react. I shouldn't have worried – Schumacher was very gracious. He spoke of how happy he was to have visited Bahrain, and how nice the people were.



**MEETING A CHAMPION:** Seven-time F-1 champion Michael Schumacher poses for a picture with Ali.

Schumacher had of course won the race in Bahrain, and in a departure from tradition, was showered with rose water rather than champagne. "It was the first time I smelled nice after a race," he laughed.

With the Monza race, our Friendship Tour was now officially over. I said goodbye to Petra and drove to Venice from where I arranged to ship Mahbooba the Mitsubishi back to Bahrain via Greece. I'd like to have driven all the way back to Bahrain, but the last three months and the death of my father during my tour had taken their toll on me.

I spent three peaceful days in Greece, just to unwind, before I headed back home to Bahrain.



**PAGE OPPOSITE:**

The Greek flag is silhouetted against the setting sun as Mahbooba sails back to Bahrain via Greece.



