

# The “key” of Hispania Racing: Q & A Vitantonio Liuzzi

*After a difficult season, Hispania Racing wants to step up and clearly show why they have not been, nor will the latest team in Formula One. The first step was to create a car that maximizes its resources. The second, to sign a experienced driver. Vitantonio Liuzzi is no longer that young flamboyant winner of the F3000. Now he's a "veteran" fighter in the second half of the grid. “Tonio” has grown up alongside his former teams (Toro Rosso and Force India). Now he's the natural leader in Hispania and a right decision from every point.*

**by Félix Iturbide**

*Interview for Félix Iturbide's “El Lince del Paddock” website. March 2011.  
(Pictures: Javier -SLP Media- & Hispania Racing)*



**After his move to Hispania Racing and the presentation of the F111, what are your feelings before the start of the 2011 season?**

*"The truth is that I'm very positive, everything is going well. We can start with the new car and we hope to do well and grow up as a team, that's the most important thing. The F111 is a clear step forward compared to last year's car. Even though we have much work ahead, running in the track and see how they respond initially. But I must also say that we are all optimistic."*

**Do you feel that you start a new stage in your career not only driving for a new team but also as the leading driver?**

*"The truth is that I don't see myself as the leader. The most important thing is to provide the best of my experience and speed to help grow up the team. Narain will help too. Perhaps because I have more years in Formula 1, I can give more precise information to the engineers. For me it is a challenge because I'm in a young team and I will have to face the championship with a different mindset. We have to learn as much as possible about the new car to take a big step forward in 2012 and maybe that's the reason why the team has relied on me so I can bring my experience and speed and thus grow faster. "*

**After your test with the F110, what can you tell us about the F111, based on the knowledge you have received from the engineers?**

*"The impression is optimal because they have worked in the right direction to have a good start of the season. We have a Williams' gearbox; that gives us a lot of security, a Cosworth engine and an aerodynamicist like Geoff Willis who does not need introduction. Certainly, it's a huge step forward compared to 2010 car. "*



Hispania Racing CEO & drivers with Circuit and RFEA Authorities. F111 roll out (Circuit of Montmeló, Spain)

**The test you conducted with Hispania was fundamental in your decision to sign for the Spanish team?**

*"It was very important because I discovered a group of people who wanted to make things right, and not only just stay in F1, and for me that's the most important thing. We all want to fight for important targets in the future. "*

**Your impressions of Hispania Racing before has been very different before and after the test in Barcelona, once you meet the team?**

*"When you're out, one can hear so many rumours, so it's difficult to judge because you never know what's the truth until you know these people. The situation of the team was very difficult last year; they arrived in the last minute and suffered some critical moments with inexperienced drivers ... many things at once, so it's logical if you don't have great results. Anyway, they still proved to have a very reliable car and this it's a good starting point. Do not forget that Hispania ended the championship ahead of Virgin so I think they had a good debut."*

**Some experienced driver told me that it's better to be a top team's third driver than drive for a new team. You have been driving in Formula One for 5 years, what's your opinion about it?**

*"I think F1 has changed dramatically in recent years. An important example is Nick Heidfeld. He was Mercedes reserve driver but then he didn't resist much time in that role. Be third driver means you can't drive a F1 car, traveling throughout the season and wait for a test at the end of the year. It may be interesting only if you have some future perspective. I've been a*



*reserve driver in the past and I have in my heart the desire to fight, to go ahead and that's my bet with Hispania Racing, helping the team to grow up, as I did in Force India and Toro Rosso, so I think I've taken right decision."*

**How do you feel physically? Is it a handicap to miss all the preseason testing?**

*"At a technical level yes, but physically I'm 100%. I have never let my physical preparation. With Hispania I've drove more than 80 laps without any problems, so I feel ready. Not having driven the entire preseason may represent a problem in the first races, but I'm willing to take that responsibility and work twice if necessary."*

**Given the proven reliability of Hispania last year's car, do you think there is a chance you can score some point in the first races, which tend to be a little bit "crazy"?**

*"If Australia runs like last year, scoring is difficult because we have not even tested the car and would be a dream, but I think we'll be much faster if ..."*

*... the F111 shows the same reliably. But still it will not be easy. That's our goal but honestly, it will be necessary to get really crazy races like Melbourne and Korea in 2010."*

**Although it is difficult to set a target right now, what would make yourself feel pleased at the end of the season?**

*"If we can be tenth in the constructors' championship would be a great success. It will be important to stay ahead of Marussia Virgin and try to reach the other teams."*

**After five years involved in Formula One, how d'you see your evolution as a driver?**

*"I feel myself a more mature driver. I've always been fast from the beginning but now I'm more complete, more careful not to make mistakes, consistent and I improved a lot mentally and psychologically so I can keep stress for a whole season much easier. In Formula 1 it's very difficult to maintain a high level of concentration throughout the season and right now I have the maturity to do so."*

**In Formula One, mental training is perhaps as important or more than the physical side?**

*"For sure. One should not underrate the mental aspect because F1 is very stressful. You can work and improve your physical, but the mental part is not so easy to put it in the right direction."*

**(Thanks so much to Alba Saiz - press officer - and "Tonio" Liuzzi for their kindness)**