

For further press information please contact

Tony Lewis / Ahmad Huzayen

Total Communications

Tel: + 971 4 336 9909 Fax: + 971 4 336 9905

Email: [tony@totalcompr.ae](mailto:tony@totalcompr.ae) / [ahmad@totalcompr.ae](mailto:ahmad@totalcompr.ae)

## SHAABAN SET TO MAKE ARAB BREAKTHROUGH IN MACAU GRAND PRIX



*First Arab driver to tackle legendary Macau circuit relishing biggest test of his racing career*

Dubai, UAE, 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2008: Basil Shaaban is relishing the biggest test of his career this weekend when he becomes the first Arab driver to line up in the famous Macau Grand Prix.

Shaaban sees the four-day racing extravaganza, which begins tomorrow (Thursday), as another key step in his bid to become the Arab world's first Formula One driver.

He is hoping for three trouble-free days of testing and qualifying in his Shell Dallara Mercedes to set himself up for a strong challenge in the Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix, the highlight of the big international race festival, on Sunday afternoon.

“The Macau Formula 3 Grand Prix is going to be the biggest challenge of my career so far, as it’s raced on one of the most demanding circuits in the world, and I’ve never been there before,” said the Lebanese driver, who was raised in Abu Dhabi.

“This is the next step of my development towards my ultimate goal, and I have a great feeling of relaxed excitement. Macau isn’t just any street circuit. It contains the widest range of driving possibilities, and is the world’s longest at 6.2km.

“Macau has the longest full-throttle section of any F3 race along the main straight, where the cars reach over 270 kph, the fastest an F3 car will ever go in competition. On the other side of the circuit there is the ultra-slow Melco hairpin where there are permanent yellow flags, since it isn’t possible for more than one car to drive through the corner at a time.”

He added: “In between these two extremes is an amazing roller-coaster ride of 25 corners with multiple elevation, camber changes and bumps, lined with stone walls or the distinctive yellow-black metal barriers. They guide us through some of the tightest track widths found anywhere in the world, as narrow as seven metres in places.”

“Macau poses an awesome driving challenge. The circuit requires 100% concentration and accuracy. With it being so narrow and bumpy, a small mistake taking you fractionally off the racing line can put you straight into a barrier.”

Macau is particularly challenging for rookies, but Shaaban has spent sufficient time on his computer’s simulator familiarising himself with the circuit.

“When I first watched some onboard footage from Macau, I couldn’t anticipate most of the corners coming next, such is the non-stop and intricate nature of the circuit’s layout,” he said. “It took me about twenty laps on my simulator to form a mental picture of the entire circuit.



*Basil Shaaban – first Arab driver to tackle the legendary Macau circuit.*

“Mentally, Macau will provide me with a fantastic test of confidence, composure, accuracy and concentration. I’m in this sport to find the highest potential within myself, and Macau will hopefully do me very good in pushing me that much closer to my capability.

“The world’s best-ever F1 drivers, including Ayrton Senna, Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton, have gone to Macau to prove themselves. It will be a great honor when I become the first Arab to ever compete on this legendary circuit. I’m going to relish the opportunity.”

Shaaban is full of enthusiasm after completing his second season in the F3 Euro Series and will be testing with several teams before finalising his plans for a third campaign in the world’s toughest Formula 3 championship next year. He aims to be ready to test and help develop a Formula One car by the time Abu Dhabi makes its debut in the World Championship next November.

Ends