



PIRELLI RETURNS TO MUGELLO FOR FIRST IN-SEASON TEST SINCE 2008

Milan, April 30, 2012 – Pirelli returns to one of the most significant venues in its Formula One history this week for a three-day test at Mugello in Italy from May 1-3: the first time that in-season testing has been seen in Formula One since September 2008 (excluding last year's Abu Dhabi young driver test).

For Pirelli though, Mugello has a much more recent significance, as it was where the company's prototype Formula One tyres first took to the track in August 2010, less than two months after the Italian firm's three-year agreement as exclusive Formula One tyre supplier was confirmed by world motorsport's governing body, the FIA.

On that occasion, Nick Heidfeld was at the wheel with Toyota's TF109 test car. Now, all but one of the Formula One teams will visit the central Italian track for three days of testing, a large part of which will be aimed at further understanding how the 2012 Pirelli P Zero tyres behave. In particular, they are likely to focus at optimising car balance with all the different compounds, as well as looking at different aerodynamic upgrades and how they interact with the tyres. Many of the teams will also be running their third drivers for the first time this year at the Mugello test.

Pirelli will bring all four slick compounds to Mugello – supersoft, soft, medium and hard – but the teams will only be able to use the tyres that are left to them out of their testing allocation of 100 sets of tyres per car per year. It is down to them to decide which compounds they would like to use within that allocation. The Cinturato intermediate and wet weather tyres will also be available at Mugello in case of rain.

Mugello, close to Florence, has never hosted a Formula One race but is well known for sportscar, touring car and motorbike races. The 5.245-kilometre track has 15 corners and an extremely long straight, which will allow the cars to reach top speeds in excess of 335kph. The first part of the circuit features plenty of direction and elevation changes, with the final part of the lap containing longer and faster corners that will be particularly useful when it comes to analysing tyre behaviour and performance.

All the cars use the tyres in different ways, which is why the tyres do not always behave in the same way on all the cars. Generally speaking, the supersoft tyre is the easiest to warm-up, operating at around 95 degrees centigrade. The soft tyre, which is still biased towards performance, works at 105 degrees. The medium tyre has improved consistency while maintaining high levels of grip and operates at 115 degrees. Finally, the hard tyre works at about 125 degrees, with less ultimate grip but plenty of performance stability. All these figures are approximate – and there is a wide temperature window during which they are working at their best – but they give an idea of the key differences between the compounds, which has been an important element of unlocking car performance this year.

Pirelli's motorsport director Paul Hembery commented: "The Mugello test will be very important when it comes to understanding the way in which the tyres work, and I'm sure

that the teams will take away plenty of information that will allow their knowledge of the tyres to evolve as the season continues, which was exactly the case last year. As much as a battle between the drivers, it's a technological battle between the engineers as well, which is one of the many fascinating aspects of this sport. As well as accumulating more data, this test is also a valuable opportunity for some of the third drivers to get time in a Formula One car on the current tyres, which would be very difficult under normal circumstances. With the closest start to the championship that we have seen for a very long time, the competition has never been tighter – and the teams will be keen to take every advantage that they can from the next three days before the European season starts. For us, it's nice to be going back to a track close to home, where the story of our latest Formula One campaign all began..."

Follow us on Twitter @ Pirelli_Media or Facebook on www.facebook.com/Pirelli

For further information please contact:

Alexandra Schieren +33 607 03 69 03 alexandra.schieren@pirelli.com

Anthony Peacock +44 7765 896 930 anthony@mediatica.co.uk

**

Francescopaolo Tarallo +39 334 684 4307 francescopaolo.tarallo@pirelli.com
(Head of Product and Motorsport Communications)

Pirelli Tyre Press Office
Ph. +39 02 6442 4270 – pressoffice@pirelli.com – www.pirelli.com

