

Franco and Formula Fun Hits the Road

Inspired by Formula One motor racing, Marina Nicholas is launching a new property called Franco and Formula Fun.

The concept originated when Nicholas helped her son follow the Grand Prix races as they moved around the world. She quickly moved to set up an online picture book

and a limited amount of children's play product, including play mats that are sold at the Grand Prix events.

Nicholas says: "I thought it would be great if we could bring the Grand Prix races to life for my son, so I created characters based on the different cars and used maps to talk about the different countries

and cultures where the races took place. I realized I had a unique concept around super hero cars in a fantastical world."

Eight months on and Nicholas has put together a formidable team from the sports and entertainment business to develop

the property into animation, publishing and licensed product.

Jim Bamber, the cartoonist from the U.K.'s *Auto Sports* magazine, and Murray Walker, the veteran U.K. Formula One broadcast commentator, have been joined by Lazytown director and editor Sigvaldi Karason, who also produces and directs the Franco and Formula Fun television

series, and writer and lyricist Mark Valentini, who also has worked on "LazyTown," "Rugrats," "Totally Spies," "My Friends Tigger and Pooh," "Barney," *Back to the Future* and projects for Disney, Nickelodeon Films, Dreamworks, Twentieth Century Fox, Showtime and NBC.

Keith Pashley of the Keith Pashley Project is licensing and merchandise consultant. He says: "We're literally at day one of a serious proposition, which has some big players already involved. Some 600 million people around the world watch motor sport every year, so there is huge potential."

Nicholas says: "Franco and Formula Fun will help parents to share their passion for motor sport with their children."

The television series trailer is set to launch at MipJr in October. Franco and Formula Fun also is showing at Brand Licensing Europe on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 2009, at Olympia in London.

