

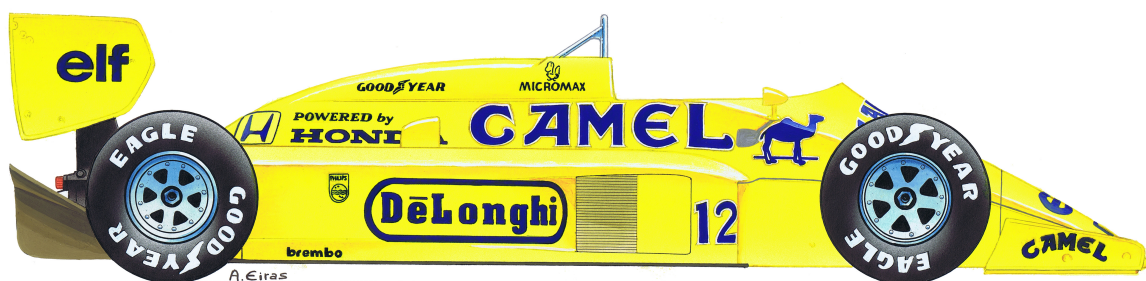


*Ayrton Senna in 1988 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

### 1- Ayrton Senna

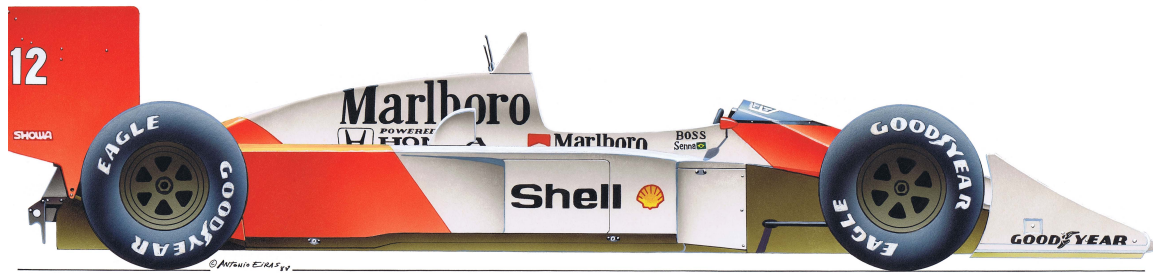
Ayrton Senna has been, probably, the best driver ever.

I saw him a few times in the Estoril Circuit, as indeed evidenced by the many photographs that I took of him where he always plays the main role.



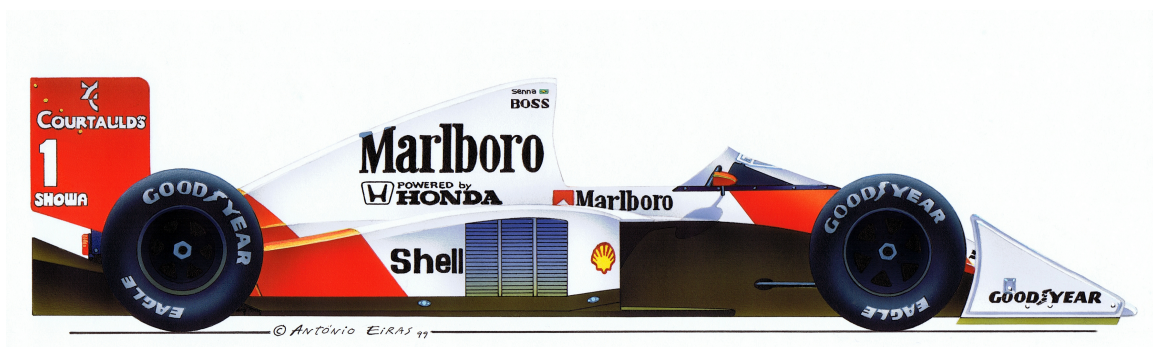
*Lotus 99T-Honda, the car of Monaco and Detroit victories, in 1987 (ecoline, gouache and acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

I have some memories where he appears, like the one when I observed him, just over one meter away, in the Estoril racetrack, in that rainy afternoon of the 20<sup>th</sup> of April of 1985. His scattered attitude was the telltale sign of the enormous concentration that he had to have to succeed, in the practice session that ended a few minutes earlier, the first of the 65 pole positions of his career.



*McLaren MP4/4-Honda, the car of the first World Championship title, in 1988 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

Neither will I forget, the next day, the one of his first victory in a Grand Prix, where I watched the majority of the race on the outside end of the curve to access the inside straight line of the circuit. Under a steady rain, sometimes intense, my gaze followed, as if hypnotized, the JPS Lotus-number 12, which seemed to glide on rails, not deviating one millimeter the trajectory imposed by Ayrton, unlike the random behavior of all other cars, without exception. Only at the end of the race I realized that I was completely soaked.



*McLaren MP4/5-Honda, the car of the fratricide duel with Alain Prost, in 1989 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

The virtuosity of the Brazilian champion in wet conditions was not, however, an innate gift. His first race in the rain, even in karts, was chaotic, having finished last. Not

conformed, and how he lived near a kart track, he began to train whenever it rained. The result of this extraordinary obstinacy doesn't finish, even today, to surprise us.

One of his last victories came also under a heavy rain, in the GP Europe 1993, raced in Donington circuit, in England. This was, undoubtedly, one of the most revealing of his enormous talent and tastier to Senna, who at the wheel of an inferior car beat his eternal rival, the Frenchman Alain Prost.



*McLaren MP4/5B-Honda, the car of the second World Championship title, in 1990 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

I also recall the G.P. of Brazil of 1991, when, after an epic struggle against Nigel Mansell, who was driving a Williams-Renault, technically superior to his McLaren-Honda, he finished the race with the gearbox stuck in 6th gear, securing his first home win with an almost superhuman effort, exhausted to the point that it was necessary to help him leave the cockpit of his car.

As he himself said, every time he thought he had reached his limits, he discovered within himself, a new energy that made him go beyond.



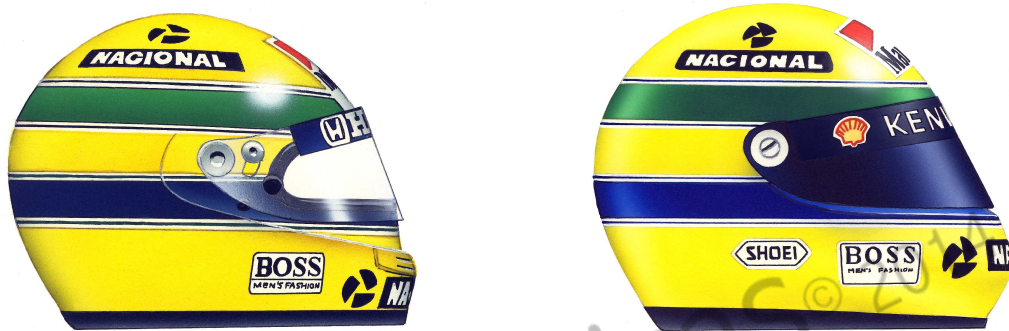
*McLaren MP4/6-Honda, the car of the third World Championship title, in 1991 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*



## Pilots – Ayrton Senna

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In its passage through Formula 1, Ayrton left an indelible mark. Since its debut until his disappearance, he kept an attitude of combativeness, audacity and skill. The real dimension of the champion, however, is only complete with its unusual spirituality, in the revelation of his relationship with God and with the generosity that was characteristic of him, as happened in the victory that he offered to his friend and teammate Gerhard Berger in GP Japan 1991, raced at the Suzuka circuit, when, after the abandonment of the rival Nigel Mansell, he secured his third title of World Champion.



*Ayrton Senna's helmets, of the Years of Glory in McLaren (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

With his death, Formula 1 changed, becoming more secure, perhaps less spectacular, but since that fateful day May 1, 1994, no further driver died at the wheel of a car in this category.

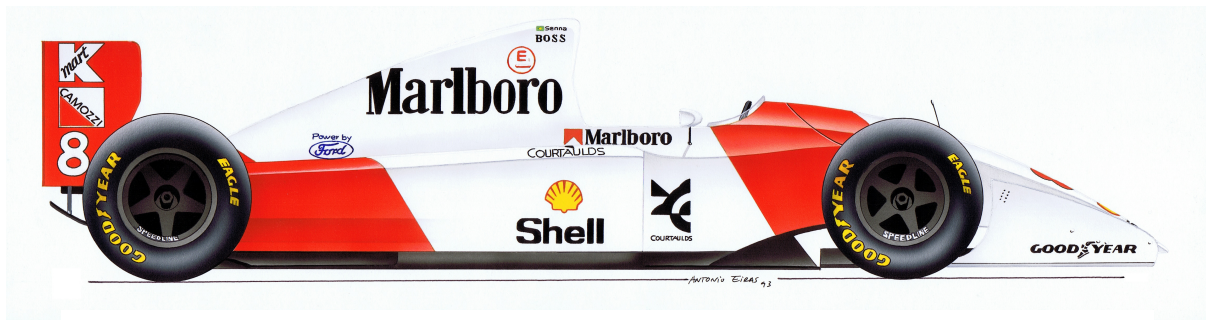


*McLaren MP4/7A-Honda, the car of the last season with Honda, in 1992 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

Something ironic accompanied the Brazilian driver at the beginning and end of his career in Grand Prix racing. Indeed, the teams that helped him taking the first steps in



the sport were directly and indirectly involved in his death. Thus, the first test of Ayrton in a Formula 1, took place in late 1983 at the wheel of a Williams and, a few months later, he was hired by Toleman, the Team that he represented and in which he made its debut, in the following year.



*McLaren MP4/8-Ford, the car of the last victories, in 1993 (acrylic paint with aerograph on paper).*

Ten years later, it would be at the wheel of a Williams, that he would find death in the GP of San Marino, in the Imola circuit, when, pressed by rival Benetton (formerly Toleman) to obtain results, that were due, the Frank Williams team risked too much.

According to experts, the accident was due to the breakdown of a too fragile steering rod.

Some months later, the Benetton team was punished, for the irregular situation, which was probably happening since the beginning of the season.

Throughout his career, Senna drove for only two other teams, having found, in 1985 a Team Lotus in late life, two years after the death of its founder, Colin Chapman, but which allow him to fight for the victories that made him conquer, among many others, the Japanese from Honda, which led in 1988 to McLaren, a team on the rise and where he won his three titles in the category and a unique place in the history of motor sport.

For sure, Ayrton Senna has been the best driver that I ever saw racing.



*The first victory, in the Portuguese G.P., in the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1985 (oil on canvas).*