



ALPHA



Thought Piece

The World's Best Driving Tracks

— *designed to make your heart race*

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If you're into cars in a big way, no doubt you've toyed with the idea of a Track Day Experience. But where to go?

We've compiled a short list of ten of the world's best racing circuits that offer track experience days. There were hundreds to choose from, and racing fans might be quaking at the omission of several key tracks (sorry, [Spa Francorchamps](#)), but they just wouldn't all fit. So, in alphabetical order (by country).

AUSTRIA: Red Bull Ring (formerly Osterreichring)



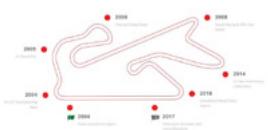
The chequered history of Austria's most famous racing circuit is a thrill-ride in itself. It has been reshaped, rebuilt and renamed numerous times over the course of the last 50 years. Cradled amongst the Styrian Hills in central Austria, the circuit's high point was during the 1970s and 1980s when it was home to the Formula One Grand Prix. A series of terrible crashes changed all that and F1 was forced to find a new home for the Austrian Grand Prix. After a few decades of fluctuating fortunes and increasingly stringent safety improvements, the circuit is gradually reclaiming its place in racing enthusiasts' hearts. There's now ample opportunity to try out the many chicanes and hairpin bends, in a range of racing cars, rally cars or even your own car.

CHINA: Zhuhai International Circuit



The centre of China's racing scene, the Zhuhai International Circuit was built and opened in the late 90s. Close to Hong Kong, it's perfect for a little detour for holiday makers, business travellers and racing enthusiasts alike. Depending on what you're looking for, you can simply take a spin on the track in your own car, go as part of a corporate event day and ride in a small Formula Renault car. Or, if you're feeling incredibly flush, you can speed a full day learning and driving the dream as a Formula One racer for a price of HK\$20,000; language choice offered is limited to English, French, Portuguese, Cantonese or Mandarin.

DUBAI: Dubai Autodrome



The Dubai Autodrome sits in a stretch of desert just outside Dubai and opened in 2004. Being such a new track, it has some of the latest security and safety technology built into the circuit. When it was first opened, the circuit had a lonely, abandoned feel, and was slow to attract visitors despite much positive driver-experience feedback. During the last 10 years, though, city developments have sprung up, giving the track a much more welcoming feel. There is a broad range of luxury racing experiences for enthusiasts to try, from the Audi R8 V10 to McLaren and Lotus driving experiences.

FRANCE: Circuit de la Sarthe (Le Mans)



Dating back to the 1920s, the Circuit de la Sarthe at Le Mans is the stuff of racing legend. So much so, there's a 1970s movie about it, Le Mans, starring Steve McQueen. During its almost 100-year history, there have been many changes made to the track, not least for safety reasons. These days, the La Mans circuit has three courses: the 24hr course, the shorter Bugatti course and the specially designed Maison Blanche course which is for track day and school driving. One of the key track experiences is offered by Porsche, which has its own driving school on the complex. Choose your model, choose your skill level, then off you go.

GERMANY: Nürburgring



The 'origins' story of the Nürburgring track is full of murky political manoeuvrings of pre-First World War Europe; so much so, it's worthy of a dissertation. When the course was finally built in the late 1920s, it was first used for motorbike racing, even though it had been purpose-built for cars. Niki Lauda had his devastating crash at Nürburgring in 1976, and it was famously described by Jackie Stewart as "the Green Hell". Even the mention of Nürburgring sends racing fans pulses racing. Why? The main course, the Nordschliefe, is a hair-raising route full of hairpin bends, set in the beauty and splendour of the Eifel Forests west of Frankfurt. But don't let that put you off. Try it out for yourself in a Formula One car, a Jaguar F-Type or, as long as you're over eight years old, an electric Go-Kart. What fun!

RUSSIA: Moscow Raceway



A very young track, the Moscow Raceway was completed in 2012. Though it's yet to build up a history, tragedy struck during the Raceway's first year when rider Andrew Antonelli lost control in bad weather during the World Superbike Championships of 2013. The track boasts 18 circuit variations, including the Grand Prix course as well as several shorter 'sprint' courses. On offer are a number of track day experiences, limited to Porsches. Clothing requirements for each experience are carefully listed.

SPAIN: Guadix



The Circuito Mike G. Guadix, which lies in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, is primarily used as a test track for many racing teams. Lewis Hamilton had his first ever go in a Formula One car on the course, and it's a welcoming location for all drivers who want to experience F1 conditions in either their own car or a hired specialist car. The atmosphere on track experience days is relaxed and friendly: track days work with an open pit lane, meaning drivers can go out as often as they like, as long as they like, and car-sharing between drivers is welcomed.

UK: Silverstone



The home of British Racing, Silverstone was born out of RAF Silverstone, just north of Oxford, a pilot-training base during the Second World War. The site was first used for motor racing in 1947, when a group of locals snuck onto the disused runways to have an impromptu 'runaround'. The word caught on, and the base was repurposed, holding the first ever Grand Prix in 1948. One of the world's fastest circuits, Silverstone is a great place to experience track days and you'll find that the course bends over backwards (just about) to give the customer whatever they want. Drive Ferraris and Aston Martins, go stunt driving, have a rally experience or try some skid control. It's all here.

USA: Las Vegas Motor Speedway



The USA currently has 158 official racing track circuits, so it was hard to choose one circuit from such a bounty. But, if you really want some sensational bang for your buck, then Viva Las Vegas, we say. The choice of luxury sports cars to drive is breathtaking: Lamborghini, Ferrari, Lotus, Maserati, the list goes on. And like everything else in that part of the Nevada Desert, the track experience packages are designed to give you that big Las Vegas-style thrill at whatever price you can afford. From the tables to the tracks and back again – what goes on in Vegas should probably stay in Vegas.

VIRTUAL: iRacing



Not in the mood to travel? Set new speed limits from the comfort of your own home with iRacing, which is “the world’s premier motorsports racing simulation”, according to their website. Aside from most of the top US tracks, you can also experience Italy’s Monza Circuit, Brazil’s Interlagos, Belgium’s Spa Francorchamps (amongst others), some of which don’t even offer track experience days. Once you’ve chosen your circuit, choose your car – warning, there are over 80 to choose from. Finally, having made all your decisions, you can speed round every chicane, hairpin bend and blind curve, confident that you won’t ever have an accident (unless you knock your cup of coffee over in excitement).

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