

GRAZIA  
EXCLUSIVE



## 5 Motorsport's María WILL LIVE ON

María de Villota, a pioneer for women in motorsport, died last week of injuries she suffered last year

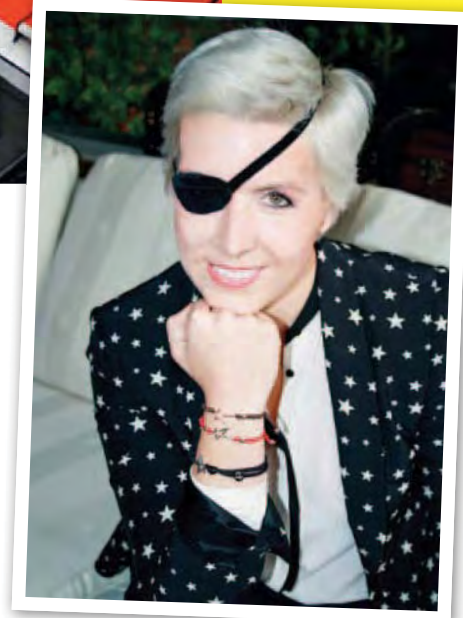
**AS THE MOST RECENT WOMAN** to have an official seat in Formula One as a test driver for the Marussia team, 33-year-old Spaniard María de Villota was one of the grande dames of motorsport. Last week she was found dead in her hotel room in Seville as a consequence of neurological injuries she suffered after a horrific accident, which took place in England in July last year. In it, she lost her right eye and fractured her skull. *Grazia* spoke to the driver just a few weeks ago.

She told us of the accident: "I am very lucky to be alive. This is the first thing that I don't want to forget. I think that the best of my life is still waiting to come. We will see if it is as a driver or playing another role in motorsport." The daughter of former FI racer Emilio de Villota, María

was an inspirational figure for aspiring female drivers. "Now what I feel is that I have to help others in supporting them to make their dreams come true. Time will tell me if I am physically ready to race professionally again.

"Now I 'see more'. Before I was only focused on getting into F1. Now I see that there are more important things in life than simply being a part of F1."

It was this sentiment that led her to get involved in backing the development of women in motorsport. She said: "With the helmet on we are all drivers, no matter your sex. I call on women to fight for their dreams in motorsport. Women need to work harder – that is true – but we have other advantages such as weight. As we are not as strong as men, we have to train



harder on our strength – neck and triceps are very important. I wish to help others to conquer their dreams and fight against the exclusion of women in motorsport."

May her legacy continue. ■