

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Shell's premier performance fuel is now Ferrari-formulated. SHANNON TEOH fills you in.

BACK in 2000, premium unleaded fuel was going for RM1.10/litre whilst the newly introduced V-Power retailed at RM1.25/litre. Of course, all that pales in comparison to today's prices of RM1.92 and RM2.15 respectively.

But if you were going to pay nearly 14 per cent more for your vroom back then, today's markup of 12 per cent shouldn't be too bitter a pill to swallow. Certainly, your vehicle of choice will find it a tasty beverage.

Malaysia is such an important market for V-Power that we are the first to launch V-Power racing in Asia — a good indicator of our motoring culture. Three hundred of its 700 stations provide the fuel, with some sites selling nearly 40 per cent of its fuel out of the V-Power pumps.

Shell says that nationwide, a tenth of its sales are from V-Power, and a good portion of this is made up of motorcyclists who don't feel the pinch in

fuel prices that much.

But Shell admits that as prices shot through the roof, more consumers have dropped the performance-oriented V-Power for mass market fuels, and so the need to revitalise this fuel with added value and not just with some marketing gimmickry of adding the term "Racing" to the product name.

"To be honest, as prices went up, people moved away from V-Power but we are confident that we will surpass the 10 per cent mark with the new fuel," declared Mohzani Abdul Wahab, Shell Malaysia's managing director.

The reason? Well, new technology of course. Eric Holthusen, the company's fuels technology manager, was on hand to explain how a new additive, Friction Modifier Technology (FMT), improves output by reducing energy wastage to friction between moving parts by removing and preventing deposit build-up.

"FMT has been developed from Shell's research labs and participation in F1 with our long-term partner, Ferrari," said Holthusen. And that's worth 250,000 litres of V-Power for the F1 team each season.

Shell is playing the Ferrari card pretty fiercely on this one, claiming the fuel is 99 per cent identical to the one used by Schuey. The tagline is in fact, *Ferrari fuel for the road*.

But what's the bottomline? Well, of course, Shell says it depends on the car and the driving conditions but Holthusen says that in one particular test (just one), a standard Ford Focus experienced 2.7 per cent better acceleration.

Is that worth the 23 sen/litre to you? Well, I can't answer that for you, you'll just have to try it for yourself at one of 300 Shell stations out of the 700 it operates that are offering the fuel.

An engine extracts between 20-40 per cent of energy from its fuel and Holthusen believes FMT can give you more.

