

# Malcolm Wilson's team aims high with new design

Richard Rodgers

Malcolm Wilson has said M-Sport's new Ford Fiesta R2000 will be a winner from the outset when it breaks the next season.

The existence of a Ford-based R2000 project was exclusively revealed by *MN* six months ago. The car, which is the Cumbria team's first S2000 design, is due to begin testing in August and will be available for customer use from the start of 2010.

It could also strengthen the chances of Ford making a long-term commitment to the World Rally Championship: M-Sport is unshakingly the design and development of the Fiesta itself, which would reduce the Blue Oval's financial outlay if it chose the car as the basis of its future WRC effort (see sidebar).

Last autumn, Ford's European motorsport chief Mark Deans told *MN* that the new

**Loriaux: Fiesta design chief**



Sales of M-Sport's Fiesta ST have totalled 240 cars

Fiesta was under consideration for use as Ford's next generation World Rally Car.

Despite Wilson's proclamations of instant success, M-Sport will be on the back foot compared to rival constructors, some of who will have four years experience of building S2000 cars. But Wilson, who has described the Fiesta as "the sexiest car you've ever seen", insists his design team, led by technical director Christian Loriaux, can negate any lack of recent knowledge.

"Our mindset is to build a winning car," said Wilson. "We've got very current experience of winning at the highest level. We've competed previously against the manufacturers who are out there and beaten them. Our car will be built to the new technical rules and I'm confident our expertise will produce a world class car."

Since last October M-Sport has carried out a feasibility study to examine whether the car would be competitive and has subsequently completed the conceptual design process. A number of design simulations have been conducted on the chassis and transmission. "It's going to be a tight timescale [to ready the car for 2010] but we've got 25 shells that we're starting to work on," said Wilson. "People are being dedicated to this project under Christian's leadership."

Although the Fiesta is an all-new design, technical information garnered from structural rigidity assessments carried out on the R2-specification Fiesta has been made available to the design team responsible for the S2000 model. The R2 machine has already been tested on asphalt and gravel.

Lessons from the current Focus WRC, which has notched up 20 wins at WRC level since it was

Rally Car but on the other hand there are lots of features we can put into the new car."

Wilson stopped short of highlighting any particular areas where he believed the car could excel but he did confirm the car would be based on a three-door shell. Several uniform component suppliers will be appointed.

"You can't take any big steps anymore when designing cars, so the small performance gains will be in the detail," Wilson continued.

M-Sport has recruited Anthony Brinkman to design the Fiesta, while Jocelyn Leitra has been appointed transmission engineer. Existing M-Sport drivers will handle testing.

launched in late 2005, will also be incorporated into the Fiesta.

"It's a clean sheet of paper design but there's no question there are things we've learned from the Focus," said Wilson. "There are a lot more restrictions technically than what there is with a World

## Team boss hopes to sell 50 customer Fiestas per season

Malcolm Wilson believes M-Sport's decision to press ahead with the design and build of the Fiesta S2000 using its own finances could ease monetary concerns Ford might have about continuing in the WRC.

The manufacturer has yet to commit to the series beyond the end of 2009, but M-Sport's decision to develop the new machine would mean there

"There's a big market we haven't been able to tap into for many years [because WR Cars have been outlawed from competing] in the Middle East, Asia Pacific and European championships," he said. "We can break into the Intercontinental Rally Challenge, something we've not been able to do until now. I'm confident there's a market of 50 cars per year."



Wilson: pressing on with Fiesta