

MOTORCYCLING AROUND MONTEREY

*Honoring Malcolm, Appreciating
History At The Quail*

It had been a few years since I made it out to the Quail Motorcycle Gathering in Carmel, Calif. Just as my last trip to The Quail in 2016 was to present the AMA Board of Director's highest award, the AMA Dud Perkins Lifetime Achievement Award, to AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer Craig Vetter, I made the trip this year to present the 2019 award to AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Legend Malcolm Smith.

As you may know, back in January Malcolm was struck by a golf cart at a charity event in which he was taking part, and it was wonderful to see him at The Quail, well on his way to recovery.

Malcolm Smith was a pioneer in off-road motorcycling. His eight gold medals in the International Six Days Trial (now known as the International Six Days Enduro), made him the most successful American rider in the history of Six Days competition to that point. He is also well known for his exploits in the famous Baja 1000 in Mexico.

There is likely no individual on the planet who has inspired more people to throw a leg over a motorcycle than Malcolm Smith. His starring role alongside fellow Hall of Famers Steve McQueen and Mert Lawwill in the motorcycle documentary, "On Any Sunday," launched Malcolm to prominence in the 1970s and is credited by many motorcyclists with getting them interested in motorcycling.

Malcolm is also well known as a motorcycle industry ambassador. Not only did he found the accessory business that bears his name, Malcolm Smith Racing Products, but he has also been a motorcycle dealer for many years. When

the U.S. government banned the sale of youth model dirt bikes and ATVs in 2009, Malcolm sold machines in defiance of the federal law and his protest ultimately helped get the portion of the law that applied to dirt bikes and ATVs repealed.

The word "icon" is often overused but there is no doubt the word is aptly used to describe Malcolm Smith as a motorcycling icon. Congratulations, Malcolm, for being named the 2019 AMA Dud Perkins Lifetime Achievement Award recipient!

The Quail Motorcycle Gathering was everything it was the last time I attended, and more. This year marked the 11th annual edition of The Quail.

Among this year's featured classes were 50 Years of the Honda CB750, the 100th Anniversary of the Brough Superior, Off Road Wonders of the '90s

and the Spirit of the Scrambler

Presented by Ducati. An additional highlight was a tribute to Female Ride Day with a Female Fireside Chat with AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer Cristine Sommer-Simmons and two-time AMA National Champion, 11-year old road racer Kayla Yaakov.

During my stay in California, I was fortunate enough to have a loaner Kawasaki Z900RS that AMA Sales Manager Steve Gotoski lined up for me. The first morning after my arrival, I went exploring on the Z900RS. From the Quail Lodge, I headed up Carmel Valley Road which eventually turned into some really fun twisties, and I pretty much had the road to myself. I went about 30 or 35 miles and turned around. When I was almost back to my starting point, I noticed a sign out of the corner of my eye that said, "Moto Talbott Museum." The sign caught my attention because a fellow passenger on the plane to Monterey recommended a visit there.

Moto Talbott Museum is owned by Robb Talbott who is perhaps best known as the founder of the world-

famous Talbott Vineyards. According to the museum's website, it features more than 170 iconic motorcycles from 16 countries, and is located on one of Northern California's most beautiful motorcycle roads. I can attest to the accuracy of this description and if you ever find yourself in Carmel Valley, California, this museum is a must-visit.

After returning from my visit to the museum, I hooked up with AMA Government Relations Western States Representative Nick Haris, who had just ridden in from his home north of Sacramento. Nick and I rode down Highway 1 along the Pacific Ocean to Big Sur. What an amazing ride that is! It is both scenic and twisty. At times it is so scenic, I had to remind myself to pay attention to the highway rather than the views.

On the way back, Nick wanted to show me the entrance to Pebble Beach where motorcycles are prohibited and we couldn't enter. At that time, it was just about rush hour and we got to take advantage of one of the few freedoms enjoyed by California motorcyclists not allowed in most of the rest of the country: lane splitting. It is easy to see how critical lane splitting is to California motorcyclists, as we were able to move through traffic in about 15 minutes rather than sit in traffic for what could have amounted to close to an hour.

I am pretty sure Steve had lined the Z900RS up for himself but made it available to me when he found out I was coming. I hope he got some seat time before returning the bike to Kawasaki, because it was a blast to ride. Thanks Steve and thanks Kawasaki!

While I am thanking people, I want to thank The Quail event founder, Gordon McCall, and his staff for their hospitality and for putting on such a great event. I also want to especially thank Malcolm Smith for all he has done for motorcycling. On behalf of every member of the AMA, I want to congratulate him on a lifetime of achievement.

Rob Dingman, an AMA Charter Life Member, is president and CEO of the AMA.



By Rob Dingman