

HISTORIC GATHERING

Honoring Great Motorcycles—And Motorcyclists—At The Quail

For the past eight years, the Quail Lodge & Golf Club in Carmel, Calif., has hosted The Quail Motorcycle Gathering. The event celebrates the past, present and future of motorcycling and showcases pre-1916 motorcycles, BMW classics, American and Japanese motorcycles, British, Italian and other European motorcycles used in both on-road and off-road competition, custom/modified bikes, scooters, choppers and even some extraordinary bicycles.

Although I had heard great things about this event, I had not had the occasion to attend until this year. It was a great experience all around, and the AMA participated on several levels.

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of AMA Superbike, the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame was invited to display a bike from its permanent collection, a 1983 Kawasaki GPz 750 ridden by Hall of Famer Wayne Rainey to victory in the 1983 AMA Superbike Championship.

Rainey's bike is one of the most significant in the history of the AMA Superbike Championship. It represents not just the ascendance of one of the world's greatest racers of all time, but a milestone achievement for what was, at the time, a technologically inferior motorcycle.

Additionally, the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Heritage Award was a new award that recognized a motorcycle that best represents the contributions that AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famers have made to the growth of motorcycling in America. The winner was chosen by AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famers in attendance, including Mike Corbin, Dave Ekins, Brad Lackey, Mert Lawwill, Reg Pridmore, Gavin Trippe and Craig Vetter.

Although Rainey's GPz was technically ineligible for the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Heritage Award because it is owned by the Hall of Fame, the Hall of Famers in attendance unanimously decided to ignore that criterion and give it the honor anyway. They felt that the bike's connection to Rainey's championship career, as well as how it represents his work with the current home of AMA Superbike, MotoAmerica, warranted that call.

In addition, the Rainey GPz also won the 40th Anniversary of Superbike Award—an award it was eligible for—by virtue of its importance to the history of the championship.

The AMA also had a booth at The



By Rob Dingman

Quail. In addition to promoting membership and selling raffle tickets for a 1947 Indian Chief and a custom 1975 BMW R75/6 "GS" built by Analog Motorcycles, the AMA booth was graced by the presence of Hall of Famer Dave Ekins and his 1963 CL72 Honda scrambler, similar to one he raced in Baja in 1962.

AMA staff also participated in the Why We Ride to The Quail ride, helping lead a large group of riders from southern California to the event. The ride was organized by 2014 AMA Motorcyclists of the Year and producers of the "Why We Ride" movie, Bryan Carroll and James Walker. Although I flew out to California, I was lucky enough to be able to do a short AMA-sanctioned ride with the group from the hotel to The Quail.

The highlight of the weekend, for me, was presenting the AMA's highest award, the 2016 Dud Perkins Lifetime Achievement Award, to AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer Craig Vetter. I was joined on stage at The Quail to present the award by Vetter's fellow Hall of Famer Mert Lawwill, who had been sponsored by Dud Perkins and could explain what a great honor it is to receive the award named for Perkins.

The annual award acknowledges the highest level of service to the AMA in any area of activity, and its recipients are individuals whose contributions are nationally recognized. Craig Vetter is well known for his many contributions to motorcycle design and has distinguished himself with a lifetime of service to the

AMA and the American Motorcycle Heritage Foundation. He was inducted into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame in 1999.

Craig is very deserving of the Dud Perkins Lifetime Achievement Award. When the AMA Board considered the 2016 award, there was broad agreement and Craig Vetter was their unanimous decision.

The first time I met Craig was at AMA Vintage Motorcycle Days, during my first year as AMA president and CEO in 2007. Craig was late for a seminar he was giving and needed a ride. When he began looking around to see who might have a golf cart to give him a ride, I volunteered.

Making polite small-talk on the way to the seminar location, Craig asked me how I rated a golf cart at the event. When I told him that I was the president and CEO of the AMA, he looked at me in disbelief, thinking that I was pulling his leg. We still get a good laugh about it.

Many people may not be aware that, a little less than a year ago, Craig was struck by a deer while riding his streamlined motorcycle. He has been recuperating from the injuries, including a head injury.

The Quail was his first time in public in 10 months. When he learned that I would be coming to present the award, he recruited me to drive him around The Quail in a golf cart, saying that I had already been his driver back east, and I needed to try it out west. I was happy to do it, and I am far happier that he is recovering. Congratulations to Craig Vetter for a lifetime of achievement in motorcycling!

Rob Dingman is AMA president and CEO.



The AMA's Rob Dingman presents Craig Vetter (middle) with the 2016 AMA Dud Perkins Award. On the right is Hall of Famer Mert Lawwill.