

100 YEARS OF THE AMA

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PHOTOS: AMA ARCHIVE

**S**till crawling from the wreckage of the 2008 Great Recession, the U.S. along with the rest of the world found itself struggling to make ends meet and sense of it all. Social media attempted to help, as its tentacles spread in lockstep with the reach of the smartphone: In 2011, Pew Research says 35 percent of Americans owned smartphones; by 2020 that figure was 80 percent, and today it's 97 percent.

Motorcycle sales plummeted during the Recession, and while there was money to be made from high-end models such as H-D's CVOs, exciting new BMWs, top-line Ducatis and the resurrection of Indian by Polaris, the teens were, for the most part, a time of downsized expectations.

Where the 600 sportbike had once been the entry drug for many, the Great Recession ushered in smaller, more affordable bikes like KTM's 390 singles, Honda CBR300s, Kawasaki Z400s — and new global players like Royal Enfield.

Along with BMW and Ducati, OEs such as Triumph, KTM and others were churning out great new models. Was Japanese moto-domination coming to an end after decades?

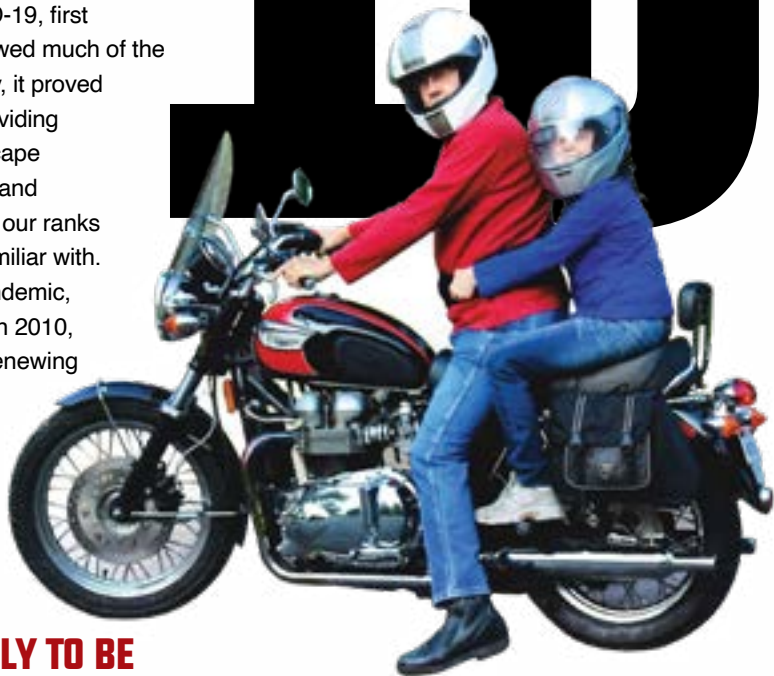
And then came COVID-19, first identified in December of 2019. The pandemic slowed much of the world to a crawl and killed thousands, but ironically, it proved a boon to motorcycling during the early 2020s, providing an exciting and legal outlet for those looking to escape the onerous (and mostly unnecessary) lockdowns and mandates. Bike sales new and used boomed, and our ranks expanded as folks discovered the joys we're all familiar with.

The AMA was as busy as ever pre-and post-pandemic, redesigning its Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum in 2010, fighting the "Lead Law" successfully a year later, renewing its sanctioning collaboration with AMA Supercross and Feld Motorsports in 2019, right-sizing its operations, reinvigorating this magazine in 2021, celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2024, and much more. Onward and upward!

**MOTORCYCLING CLIMBED BACK FROM THE GREAT RECESSION, ONLY TO BE ROCKED BY A WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC 11 YEARS LATER... WHICH PROVED TO BE BOTH A BLESSING AND CURSE**



THE



**DUAL-CLUTCH TRANSMISSION (DCT)**

Honda's VFR1200F sport-tourer was the first motorcycle to use one, and Honda is still the only OEM to offer DCT on a few of its bikes. Nothing new in the high-end automotive world, DCT brought a whole new level of convenience to motorcycling.



2010

**2010 BMW S1000RR**  
Bavaria builds a better boxer...actually, a new 175-hp inline four that blew its competitors into the *edelweiss*, with optional electronics that included traction control, ABS and selectable-on-the-fly engine mapping.



**KIDS JUST WANT TO RIDE ACT**  
After years of battling the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act — also known as the "Lead Law" — the Kids Just Want to Ride Act was passed in 2011 to secure young motorcyclists' right to ride.

...AND BEYOND

**MUSEUM MAKEOVER**

The AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum's main floor gallery opened in 2010 with eight featured areas — which covered the different induction categories — to celebrate the Hall of Fame inductees: Ambassadors and Industry, Design and Engineering, Dirt-Track, Leadership and Rights, Motocross and Supercross, Off-Road, Road Racing, and Specialty Competition. AMA President and CEO Rob Dingman said in the September 2010 issue of *American Motorcyclist* that the change took the Hall of Fame to "a new level," and that it was done to shine "a spotlight on the incredible men and women who have shaped the history of motorcycling." *Exactly* right.





**LIFE MEMBER PLUS**

In an attempt to recognize “the organization’s most loyal members with the option to add benefits at significant savings,” the AMA announced a new membership category — AMA Life Member *Plus*. For an additional cost, the new category added the extra benefits to the already-established AMA Life Member status, including a monthly subscription to *American Motorcyclist* magazine and an AMA Life Member Plus membership card. “AMA Life Members are the lifeblood of the American Motorcyclist Association,” said AMA Director of Marketing and Communications Joy Burgess recently. “Life Member Plus provides an optional program packed with special benefits to our most valued members as they continue supporting the mission of the organization.”



**THE LAST AMERICAN TO WIN A MOTOGP**  
AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer Ben Spies, in his first and last MotoGP start, won the Assen TT on a Yamaha.

**ZERO MOTORCYCLES**  
Zero produced its first production electric motorcycle, the Zero S, in Scotts Valley, Calif., using an Agni-Lynch motor and a LiFePO4 Molicel battery.



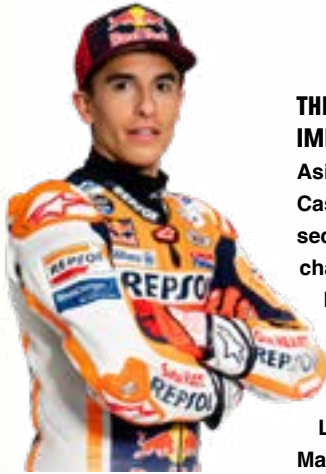
**VILLOPOTO AND KAWASAKI**  
Ryan Villopoto won four straight AMA Supercross championships to go with his five Pro MX titles, and was inducted into the AMA HOF in 2021.

2011



SPRINGFIELD MILE, SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

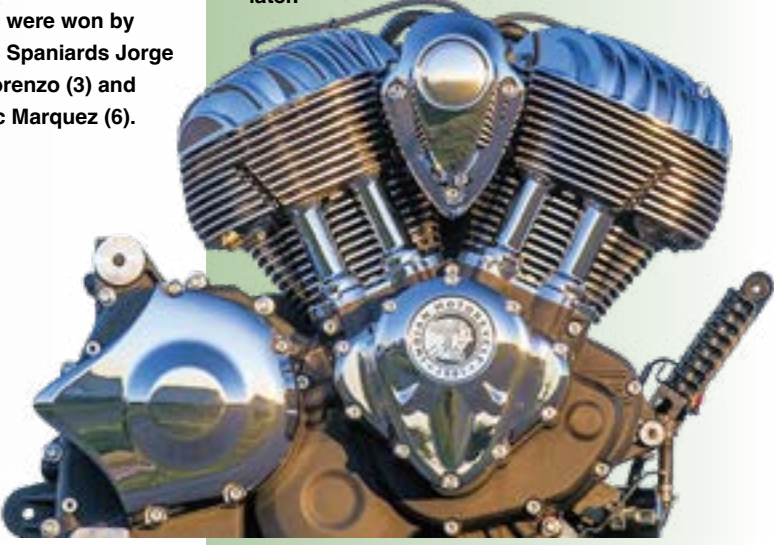
**2012 MV AGUSTA 675 F3 TRIPLES!**  
Harley-Davidson selling MV Agusta back to itself for \$1 in 2009, with zero debt for probably the first time ever, allowed it to re-enter the market with sexy new 675cc Triples.



**THE SPANISH IMPOSITION**  
Aside from Casey Stoner’s second MotoGP championship (for Honda) in 2011, the other nine were won by Spaniards Jorge Lorenzo (3) and Marc Marquez (6).



**POLARIS BUYS INDIAN**  
The builders of Victory Motorcycles and all kinds of other motorized toys, acquired the Indian brand in April 2011. Its new Thunder Stroke 111 V-twin was introduced a few years later.





**ERIK BUELL...**

...climbs back into the ring with the Erik Buell Racing 1190RS, a Rotax-based 1190cc V-Twin claiming 175 hp, 97 ft-lb., and weighing in at 389 pounds. The new Buell was *Cycle World* magazine's Best Superbike that year, and had some success in AMA Superbike, the Isle of Man, and won a pair of European Superbike championships. Tragically but predictably, the slats of EB's financial cradle were again kicked out from under him, this time by Hero of India, and EBR ceased operations in 2015.



**2012 BMW K1600GT AND K1600GTL**

On some sort of very un-Teutonic tear, BMW dropped brand-new sport-touring and touring bikes powered by a new 1,649cc DOHC inline-six that sounded like an F1 car as it ripped up toward its 160-hp, 8,500-rpm redline – packing all the latest high-tech accouterments all the way. BMW was serious when it said earlier it was done building bikes for the pipe-and-slippers crowd.



**2012 HONDA NC700X**

It took a while for it to sink in that Honda might be done pushing the performance envelope, but the 'New Concept' NC700X almost made up for it. With a locking helmet-sized storage area where the fuel usually goes, an optional DCT transmission, standard ergonomics and 60+ mpg, the nominally adventure-bike NC made the midlife crisis much more bearable. Especially for \$6,999.



**TOUCH-SCREEN DISPLAY**

Harley-Davidson's latest tech lets you control your FL's song selection and GPS by voice, buttons, touch-screen or joystick...

2012

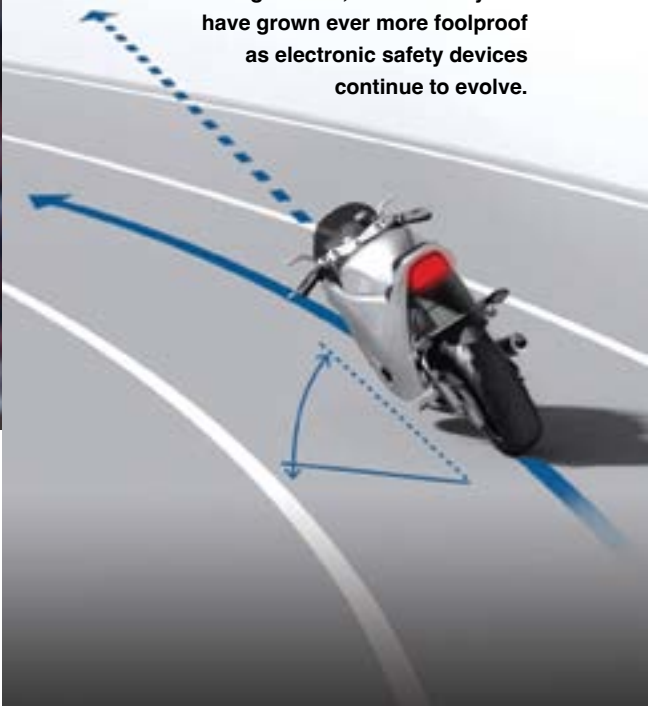


**DUNGEY AND KTM WIN 450 PRO MX TITLE**

Before then KTM had been close, but with help from the great AMA HOFer Roger DeCoster and others, the Austrians were now battling the Japanese toe-to-toe.

**LEAN-SENSITIVE ABS**

Bosch's new Motorcycle Stability Control (MSC) system appeared on that year's new KTM 1190 Adventure, and thanks to an aircraft-derived Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU) it was able to measure your bike's lean angle and calibrate ABS to suit. Purists poopoo'd it, but in the ensuing decade, new motorcycles have grown ever more foolproof as electronic safety devices continue to evolve.



2014



**RYAN DUNGEY...**

...bagged three straight AMA Supercross championships on KTM (to go with his 2010 championship on Suzuki) from 2015 to 2017. Dungey (5) was inducted into the AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame in 2023.

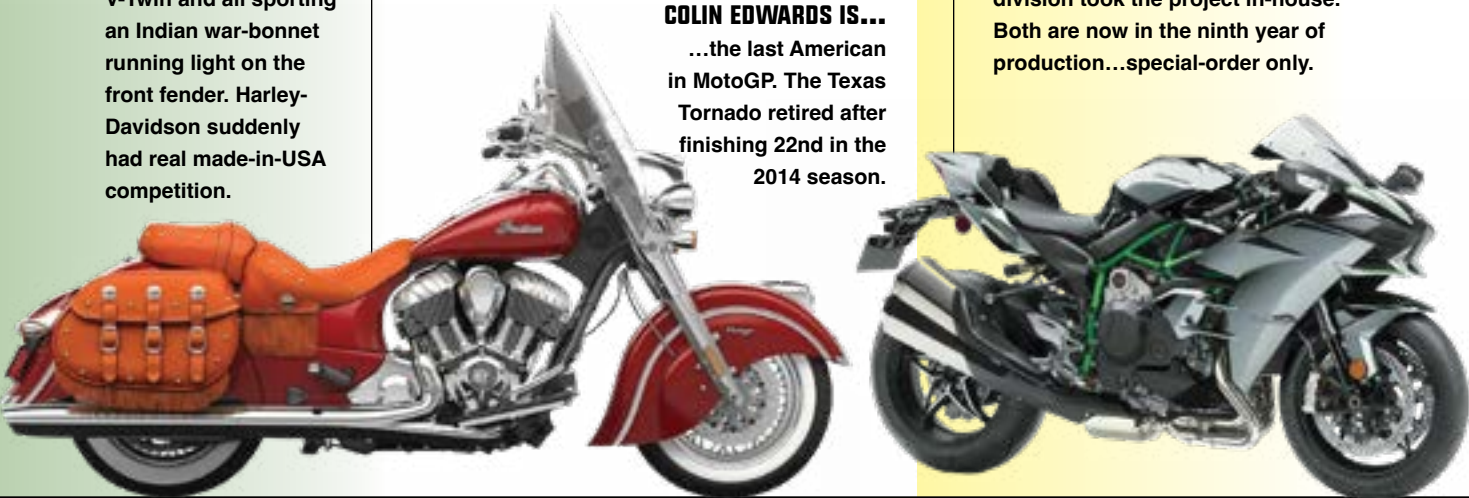


**THREE NEW INDIAN CHIEFS...**  
...were introduced at Sturgis in August, and hit dealers a month later: the bare-bones Classic, the chromier Vintage, and the flagship Chieftain — all with a new Thunder Stroke 111 cu. in. V-Twin and all sporting an Indian war-bonnet running light on the front fender. Harley-Davidson suddenly had real made-in-USA competition.



**COLIN EDWARDS IS...**  
...the last American in MotoGP. The Texas Tornado retired after finishing 22nd in the 2014 season.

**2015 KAWASAKI H2R/H2**  
Building a 300-hp track-only supercharged literbike wouldn't seem to make much sense, except Kawasaki also built a 200-hp one (conservative estimate) that was street legal, followed up later by an SX/SE sport-tourer that really was sublime. When Eaton said an air-cooled supercharger couldn't be done, Kawi's aerospace division took the project in-house. Both are now in the ninth year of production...special-order only.



2016

**2016 AMA VINTAGE HARE SCRAMBLES**  
AMA Motorcycle Hall of Famer Jeff Fredette drove six hours from Illinois to race the vintage hare scrambles 40-plus class on a 1974 Kawasaki 250, and took home an AMA national championship. Not a shock, right?

**2015 DUCATI MULTISTRADA 1200S COLOR TFT DISPLAY**  
It's nice to have your computer along for the ride, and almost mandatory when there's so much to control, including Touring, Sport, Urban or Enduro modes that also adjust the suspension settings. This Duc would probably defibrillate you if it sensed you needed it.



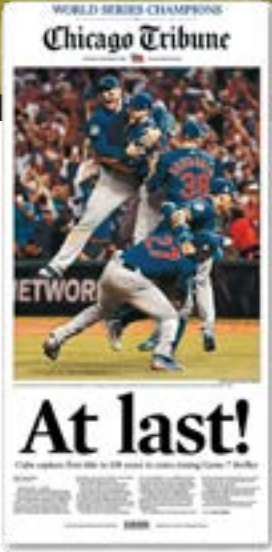
**MOTO AMERICA!**  
A new era in American Superbike racing began when new series organizer MotoAmerica was sanctioned by the AMA and FIM North America, with HOFer Wayne Rainey and others running the ship.



**2015 INDIAN SCOUT**  
Ninety-five years after the original Scout, Indian's brand-new competitor for H-D's Sportster took the modern route. An all-new liquid-cooled, 1,133cc DOHC 60-degree V-twin, completely bereft of cooling fins and pushrod tubes, was said to be good for 100 horses, and an all-new aluminum chassis kept it lightish and low while retaining the traditional look. Burt Munro would've loved it.



**ROYAL ENFIELD NORTH AMERICA...**  
...was established in Milwaukee, laying the groundwork for the return to the U.S. of the rejuvenated Indian-made classic English marque. The simple-yet-rugged Himalayan 400 was launched the next year, followed by a pair of shockingly nice 650 twins in 2017 — Interceptor and Continental GT — followed by a bunch more very nice, very affordable motorcycles.



**2016 CHICAGO CUBS**  
In another stunning upset, the Cubs ended the longest losing streak in baseball history — 108 years — by defeating the Cleveland Indians (now Guardians) in the 10th inning of Game 7.



## 2016 HONDA RC213 VS

We exaggerated earlier; Honda didn't give up building exciting street bikes. The 213VS "MotoGP racer for the street" was the first and only street machine it ever (hand-)built straight out of the HRC factory in Kumamoto, Japan. But they only built about 250 of them, and the price was \$184,000. The 12,000-Euro race kit, which American Honda did not import, supposedly allowed the uncorkage of all 212 horses the RC was capable of (the U.S. model was rated at 101 hp) if you could find one. Crazy? Not too: RC #96, still in its crate, sold for \$265k in late 2022.



2017

## NICKY HAYDEN: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

America's last MotoGP champ (2006) died from injuries sustained in a bicycle-training accident near Rimini, Italy, while riding for Ten Kate World Superbike. Inducted into the AMA Hall of Fame in 2018, N.H. was just 35 years old.



## HARLEY-DAVIDSON MILWAUKEE-EIGHT

Eight, as in H-D's eight-valve board-track racers of decades ago. The all-new standard 107 cubic-inch engine with its precision oil-cooled heads went in Street and Road Glides; the Twin-Cooled version, with liquid-cooled heads and discrete radiators, went in the FL touring bikes. In 2018, H-D revamped an entire new line of eight Softails, all powered by the M8.



2018

debut season, and the domination didn't stop: Jared Mees won five championships and Briar Bauman won two titles over the next seven years. Nobody without one really stood a chance against the FTR. Too successful for its own good, really, as AFT changed its rules for 2025 to allow production-based engines only.



## 2017 INDIAN FTR750

What better way to get brand recognition for your American-made motorcycles than to go flat-track racing? Indian offered its new purpose-built flat track motorcycle to the public for \$50,000 a pop, and the FTR immediately owned AFT Twins. No other bike had ever won the top three spots in the championship in its



2020

## VICTORY MOTORCYCLES...

...was shuttered by Polaris after 18 years of production; the Indian brand's historical resonance seemed better-suited for the hearts of American motorcyclists



## VALENTINO ROSSI'S LAST HURRAH

After nine world championships in 125, 250 and 500cc/MotoGP, the almost-GOAT Italian's last win came at the Dutch GP at TT Circuit Assen in 2017.

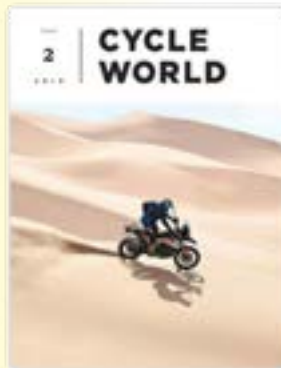
## CALIFORNIA SPLITTING

Although it did not prohibit the practice in prior years, California became the first state to formalize lane splitting when it signed A.B. 51 into law in 2016. While California offers the most freedom to riders of any state, several states have since legalized lane *filtering* — the practice of riding a motorcycle through stopped traffic to get to the front of the line. As of publication, the six states that have passed legislation in favor of lane filtering are California, Utah, Montana, Arizona, Colorado and Minnesota.



## CYCLE WORLD MAGAZINE

What had long billed itself as the World's Biggest Motorcycle Magazine went from being a monthly, to a "captivating, quarterly, coffee table-sized journal focusing on the art of the motorcycle." Two years later, the quarterly also went belly-up, rendering *CW* online-only, and marking the end of the big-magazine era — *American Motorcyclist* notwithstanding. Maybe we can get Peter Egan to write his memoirs for *AM*?



2019



## A YAMAHA YZF-R1 DID NOT WIN...

...the AMA Superbike Championship. Josh Hayes won four, Josh Herrin bagged one, and Cameron Beaubier also won four Superbike titles on blue bikes. Toni Elias crashed the party on a Yoshimura Suzuki in 2017.

## KTM TRANSFER-PORT INJECTION

Ten years in the making, TPI was the first successful attempt to build a fuel-injected two-stroke that was emissions compliant — in most places, anyway. A new computer with five sensors on the 300 and 250 XC and XC-W managed not just fuel injection but also oil injection, which, as the name implies, was via the transfer ports. Reviews were highly favorable; TPI was a major leap forward for motorcycles that were already fan favorites.



## 2018 DUCATI V4 PANIGALE

After decades of being known for boomer V-Twins, Ducati built an 1,103cc *Stradale* V-Four said to be good for 214 hp and 91 lb-ft of torque, and used it as a stressed member in a monocoque frame design instead of the classic steel trellis.





2021

2022

### WOMEN ON THE RISE

A Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) study found that women made up 19 percent of motorcycle owners, compared with less than 10 percent a decade earlier: That ratio was even higher among younger generations.

### HARLEY-DAVIDSON GOES...

...completely off script, announcing it would build an ADV bike called the Panamerica, an electric bike called LiveWire, and an all-new Streetfighter. They also combined the Softail and Dyna lines into eight new Softails redesigned from the ground up.



### IMMACULATE IN ITALY

En route to their third International Six Days Enduro title, the U.S. Women's World Trophy Team had one member perform at a level never before seen in the event's 111-year history. U.S. rider Brandy Richards completed the 2021 event in Italy with a flawless performance, becoming the first man or woman to win every test in her class across the entirety of the event. Richards — the 2021 AMA Motorcyclist of the Year — won first overall individually, finishing nearly 10 minutes faster than the next competitor.



### AMA STAFF RETURNS TO OFFICE

After state restrictions and safety measures forced AMA staff out of its Pickerington, Ohio, headquarters, employees returned fully to the office on June 1, 2021. The fully in-person work model came on the heels of a hybrid model that was shaped as state mandates evolved. "The AMA could not have continued to pursue our mission to protect and promote the motorcycle lifestyle throughout the pandemic without the operational support of our staff," said AMA President and CEO Rob Dingman. "We're well positioned to grow in both members and activity, and we would not be where we are without all of our hard-working, dedicated staff. We appreciate our staff's flexibility and innovation in difficult times, and we're thrilled to have team members back in the office." The AMA Motorcycle Hall of Fame Museum reopened its doors a year prior on July 22, 2020, and at the time of the AMA office full reopening, was nearly back up to its pre-pandemic visitor volume.



### 2018 GOLD WING

Actually, *this* was the coolest sportbike Honda built all decade: The all-new, sixth-generation Gold Wing was 90 pounds lighter, outfitted with a double-wishbone front suspension, and available with a seven-speed Dual Clutch Transmission. The 1,833cc boxer Six was even more torqueful and smooth, while keeping the weight low and more forward, and the whole package leaned more sport than tour than it had since the OG 'Wing of 1975.



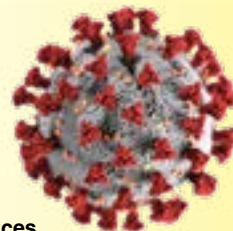
### 2019 KTM 790 ADVENTURE

The best evidence that bigger isn't alway better (especially in an adventure bike) might be the two new ones KTM introduced in 2019 – Adventure 790 and 790R. Both were powered by the 799cc DOHC 270-crank parallel twin KTM introduced earlier in the 790 Duke streetbike, and both nimble middleweights made us think a downsized ADV future might not be a bad thing at all.



### COVID-19 PANDEMIC

On March 13, 2020, the AMA sent out a release "strongly encouraging" AMA-chartered clubs to follow government guidelines, and asked AMA members to follow the best practices issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In the May 2020 edition of *American Motorcyclist*, AMA President and CEO Rob Dingman addressed the challenges the AMA was facing with the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges included omission of 501(c)(4) non-profits — such as



the AMA — from payroll relief plans, leading to unavoidable layoffs of staff. A reduced work schedule was implemented for remaining staff. The column ended with a plea to members to support the AMA: "There is no way to know what it will look like on the other side of this crisis, but I can assure you the threats to motorcycling will be greater than ever," Dingman wrote. "The best way to help is to renew—or extend—your membership today!"

2023

### CENTURY STRONG!

The AMA turned 100 years old in 2024, and celebrated with a bigger-and-better Vintage Motorcycle Days, government proclamations, bike nights, HOF Days, and much more.

2024

### SUPERCROSS SUPER RENEWAL

The AMA agreed to a new deal with Feld Motorsports Inc. in 2019 to continue sanctioning AMA Supercross through 2034. In 2021, Feld notified the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme that it would not renew its international sanctioning agreement. (The AMA and FIM had worked in a dual-sanctioning capacity since 2003.) "The bottom line is this: The future is bright for AMA Supercross," AMA President and CEO Rob Dingman said in the September 2021 issue of *American Motorcyclist*. "Feld Motorsports is a terrific promoter, and the relationship between Feld and the AMA is stronger than ever."

YAMAHA NIKEN GT