



# A LIFE SHOOTING MOTOGP

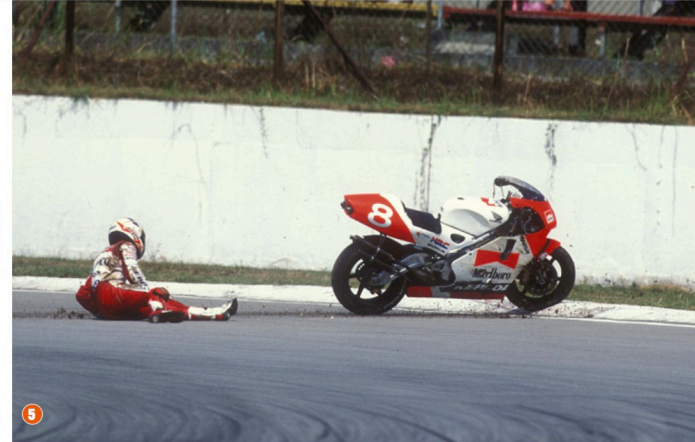
MotoGP's most famous images didn't happen by luck. Veteran shooter and co-founder of Gold & Goose David Goldman reveals the hustle, timing and instinct behind a 40-year career

ononer David Goldman never set out to be a MotoGP photographer. In fact, he admits that his career – now spanning four decades and countless iconic images – began almost entirely by accident. “I blagged my way in,” he says with a grin. “(At one stage) I literally went to a print shop, had some letterhead made up for a fake magazine, called myself editor and gave myself a press pass.” Back then, in the early 1980s, such stunts were easier to pull off.

Earlier Goldman was a 17-year-old who had only discovered motorcycles by default – because in the UK you could ride a moped at 16, a full year before you were allowed to drive a car. What started as nothing more than a bid for freedom quickly became a passion. Within a year, he had a 250cc bike and was riding to the Isle of Man TT. Soon, weekends were spent at endurance races like the Bol d'Or and



WORDS NIGEL PATERSON + PHOTOGRAPHY GOLD & GOOSE



## RIVAL SHOOTER PATRICK GOSLING EVENTUALLY BECAME HIS BUSINESS PARTNER UNDER THE NOW ICONIC GOLD & GOOSE BANNER

Le Mans 24-hour, soaking up the atmosphere with his friends.

The photography, at first, was almost incidental. "We went for the fun of it," Goldman says. "There was free access, free food, free drink. Photography came second to having a good time."

That changed in 1982 when *Bike* magazine, then the UK's biggest-selling motorcycle magazine, was desperate for images from a 24-hour race. Their regular photographers were away and writer Julian Ryder spotted Goldman with his camera.

"If it wasn't for him, I probably wouldn't have started," Goldman says. "I had no illusions about my photography. He asked if I could submit some pictures. Most of them were rubbish, but a few were sharp and creative enough to be used on double page spreads and even on the front cover."

"That was my first taste of seeing my pictures in print, and it hooked me."

### Finding a career

For the next few years, Goldman dabbled. He travelled to races on his bike or in his Ford Cortina estate (what the Brits call a station wagon), sleeping in the back, selling pictures on spec. But by 1985 he was beginning to see the outlines of a career. *Bike* commissioned him to cover Silverstone, where Scottish rider Ian McConnachie won the 80cc race.

"I was only there to shoot him. It rained, I couldn't be bothered to cover the 500s. Freddie Spencer won the double championship that year and I didn't take a single photo of him!" he laughs.

The real turning point came in 1990 when UK *Motorcycle News* approached Goldman to replace

long-time staffer John 'Selwyn' Noble. "That gave me my first regular income from racing photography," Goldman says. "That's when I thought: 'Take this seriously.'"

Now he began approaching each weekend with discipline. He had fast reactions (essential for capturing the decisive moment), mastered manual focus and built a reputation for reliability.

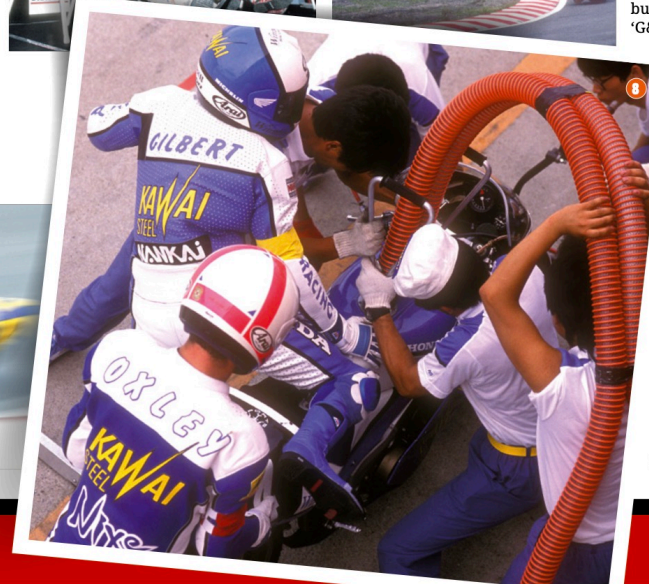
One rival, shooter Patrick Gosling, eventually became his business partner under the now iconic Gold & Goose banner.

"Patrick and I liked each other," Goldman explains. "We'd hang out, share hire cars and hotel rooms, but we were direct rivals, fighting for the same clients. I had *MCN*, he didn't, so when he first suggested a partnership I thought, 'No thanks, I'm getting more work than you'."

"But a couple of years later he was getting more published, and I thought: 'Why not?'"

It proved a lucrative decision and the pair

1. In the right place at the right time, David Goldman nailed the shot of the century when Wayne Gardner high-sided at the Czech GP in 1990 (previous page). Here Gardner is helped away afterwards
2. Deliberately blurred vision was a trendy trick for a few years
3. Mick Doohan prepares to launch at the 1992 Malaysia GP
4. Mick Doohan, Wayne Rainey and John Kocinski at Eastern Creek
5. One click caught this crash
6. Belgium's popular, long-lost Spa-Francorchamps circuit
7. Wet start to the 1987 French GP
8. Patrick Gosling accompanied *AMCN's* now *MotoGP* feature writer Mat Oxley when he raced at the Suzuka 8 Hour in 1989



worked together for a decade – including landing some great contracts. "The 'fag money' (cigarette sponsorship) was great. That was big money, and it really escalated things," Goldman says, referring not to just his ability to earn a living – by this time he had a wife, a young child and a mortgage – but also the professionalism and budgets of GP racing.

After 10 years as a team, Gosling moved to Formula 1. Goldman kept the Gold & Goose business name (these days often shortened to 'G&G') and hired Gareth Harford; they have now worked together for two decades.

### The film days

The work in those days – the 80s and 90s – was gruelling. Everything was shot on transparency (slide) film, manual focus, no duplicates. Clients got the originals. Often Goldman would have to race to the airport after a GP to get film back to the UK in time for Monday deadlines. "We even hired helicopters a few times to get from the circuit to the airport to catch the last flight of the day back to London," he recalls.

Processing was its own gamble. Local labs weren't always reliable. "MCN had a cheap E6 (film) processor in their Kettering (UK) office – terrible quality. Maybe a 50 per cent chance they'd ruin your film. Ironically, one of my most famous shots, Wayne Gardner's huge highside, was on a roll I'd handed them. If I'd known, I'd never have risked it. Luckily it came out perfect and made the cover."



Those years demanded not just skill but nerve. To nail a sharp shot of a 300km/h bike with a manual lens required almost superhuman timing. “You needed sharp eyesight, quick reactions and technical ability,” Goldman says. “Now autofocus does most of the work. Digital makes it easy for anyone. But what still separates the best photographers is instinct – knowing where to be, when to shoot, how to frame it. Some people have that eye, some don’t.”

### Changing times

As MotoGP evolved, so did the demands on photographers. Sponsorship shifted from tobacco to energy drinks. Magazines declined, replaced by digital outlets and social media. Today, Goldman sees a landscape where young photographers often work for riders directly, supplying images for free in exchange for Instagram coverage.

“It’s a different world,” he says. “I don’t even have an Instagram account – probably the only photographer in the paddock who doesn’t.”

He’s equally pragmatic about the international nature of the business. “From very early on it was global. No one can survive on one country’s outlets, not even in Spain or Italy. People bought from us because we were good at what we did.”

And even after 40 years, he still feels the pull. “I’m glad I’ve got the same passion for it now as when I started,” he says. “The travelling was tough when you were away so much from your wife and young child, but now I am a single man again with a daughter in her 30s, the allure of constantly travelling around the world is great fun.”



## IT TOOK NOT JUST SKILL BUT NERVE TO NAIL A SHARP SHOT OF A 300KM/H BIKE WITH A MANUAL CAMERA LENS



1. Jack Miller at Phillip Island in 2025 – a shooting location Goldman believes may never be topped

2. Candid shot of early Superbike hero Fred Merkel shows the connection between fan and rider

3. Kocinski wheelies high at the 1990 Spanish GP

4. & 5. Goldman has most recently chronicled the career of Marc Marquez, seen here in animated conversation with his crew before heading out for another session

6. No million-dollar motorhome in sight as rising star Bubba Shobert grabs a nag at Donington in 1988

7. A young Wayne Rainey makes his first appearance in Europe

8. Gold & Goose images helped bring the Gardner legend to AMCN’s readers in the 1980s

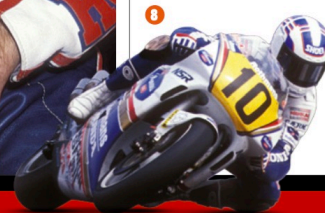
### Tough times in Brazil

“The Rio De Janeiro motorcycle Grand Prix of 1997 was quite memorable. There was always a tense atmosphere in the paddock as there was a history of personnel being mugged while out in the evenings and many things stolen from within the paddock.

“In those days we were shooting with film cameras but had digital scanners to convert the film image to a digital file and then send them to our clients via our laptops and dial-up modem. A local contact at the track knew of somewhere we could get our film processed after the race on the Sunday evening. Three of us, with all our equipment, followed a car to a processing lab.

“The journey took us to a favela – Brazilian shanty towns that tourists are always told to avoid due to very high crime rates – where the guy took the film from us and told us to wait two hours in our car until the processed film would be returned before disappearing.

“So we sat in our rental car with £100,000 worth of cameras, lenses and computers in the boot getting more and more nervous about how dangerous the situation was and how badly this could end. But after the two hours elapsed the contact came back to us with our film all processed and led the way back to our hotel. Then, after selecting and scanning the images, I couldn’t connect to the local Brazilian dial-up number so I had to use the number I had for back in the UK, a very slow process... the next morning on check-out I was provided with a phone bill for £2000.”





### Tracks and fences

Ask Goldman about circuits and his enthusiasm is clear. "Phillip Island is the best," he says without hesitation. "The setting is incredible. Mugello with its Tuscan hills, Spielberg with the mountains – undulating tracks always look better. Flat tracks are hard to make interesting."

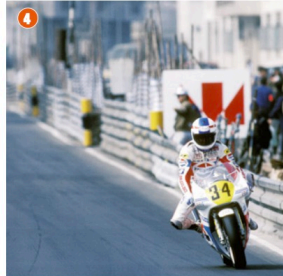
What frustrates him most are the wire safety fences that protect the spectators. "I fully agree with the need for them but at many tracks there is a gap between the fence and the armco barriers and air fence where we could stand if allowed to. Otherwise shooting through the fence is almost impossible and so greatly restricts the opportunities for photography."

### The GOAT debate

No conversation about MotoGP today is complete without the 'greatest of all time' debate, especially with Marc Marquez having bagged another championship in 2025.

"He's certainly one of them," Goldman says. "It annoys me that so many people who don't know much about racing don't realise how great he is. The Rossi versus Marquez stuff was just tabloid noise perpetuated by social media keyboard warriors. You don't have to pick sides – you can admire them both."

Given Marquez's comeback from injury and his ability to switch brands successfully, Goldman believes he belongs in the all-time conversation. "Pedro Acosta himself said Marquez has made one of the greatest comebacks in all of sport's history."



### Advice for the next generation

For aspiring photographers hoping to follow his path, Goldman is both encouraging and realistic. "Everyone thinks they can do it – and in some ways they can. I blagged my way into it and lasted 40 years. But the reality today is very different."

When Goldman started, the money came from cigarette sponsorship, newspapers, books and magazines. The energy drink companies only spend a fraction of what the tobacco companies did, and there are hardly any magazines still publishing so most aspiring photographers have to find a team who is willing to give them a contract. There will always be demand for photos and stories, but the question is: how do you make a living? Having a few hundred views on social media doesn't pay the bills.

"Photographers new to motorsport come along and sometimes offer absurdly low fees, hoping to build a client base. In my experience, it doesn't work. Once you set a low price, clients expect it forever."

The lesson, he says, is that photography is still a career – but it requires more than passion. "You need the eye, you need the skill, but you also need a business head," he says.

### Still passionate

After 40 years, Goldman could be forgiven for winding down. Instead, he remains one of the sport's most dedicated chroniclers, a constant presence in a paddock that has changed beyond recognition since the days of blagged passes and beer-soaked endurance races.

"Looking back, I've been lucky," he says. "I found something I loved, and I've never really stopped loving it. That's what's kept me going. Forty years on, I still get a buzz at every race I go to."

**"LOOKING BACK, I'VE BEEN LUCKY. I FOUND SOMETHING I LOVED, AND I'VE NEVER REALLY STOPPED LOVING IT"**



1. Kel Carruthers, a key figure in Yamaha's success in the 1980s, with Scot Niall Mackenzie
2. Feel the tension: Joey Dunlop and long-time team chief Davey Wood at the 1991 Isle of Man TT
3. Kevin Schwantz fronted the 1991 USA GP with this 'Gulf War' design on his Arai helmet
4. Gosling caught Schwantz racing his GP500 at Macau in 1988 in a sensational debut win
5. The birth of kneesliders
6. Alex Barros brushes past the haybales in 1990
7. Iconic and often-used image of Kevin Magee at the first Phillip Island GP in 1989
8. Beautiful portrait of Honda kingmaker Erv Kanemoto at the 1991 Japanese GP



## WHOLE SHOT

Imagine Marc Marquez and teammate Pecco Bagnaia doing this today. It's 1986, the last year of GP push starts, and teammates Freddie Spencer (1985 world 250-500cc champion) and Wayne Gardner line up for the Spanish GP season opener. Gardner would go on to take his first GP win that day while Spencer faded with the start of a chronic illness. Gardner continued his run of form, finishing second in the German 500GP later that month (inset). He finished the season runner-up with two more wins and several more podiums. Next year he won the title.

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