

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

MIGUEL RAMOS

ANAHEIM, Calif. — My name is Miguel Ramos and I work in one of the most exciting sports in the world — motorcycle racing and specifically MotoGP.

One could argue that I actually work in the autographed collectibles industry, lucky for me though they go hand in hand. Growing up in Australia, one of my heroes was Australia's very own five-time world champion, Mick Doohan. I have followed Doohan and MotoGP racing since the mid-1990s and loved watching him race against the world's best. The late 1980s and early '90s were dominated by Americans, but during that time it was the Australian who was the one to beat.

I founded Autographed Collectables in 1996 and Doohan was one of the first major signings I completed. It was not a bad signing to help put a company on the international map for autographed motorcycle racing memorabilia.

In 1999, Autographed Collectables attended the Australian GP at Phillip Island and displayed our range of memorabilia to the general public for the first time. Our Mick Doohan memorabilia was a huge hit and I formed many great relationships with customers that still stand today.

I have seen many of my customers' children grow from babies, to little kids, to teenagers over the last 14 years.

Fast forward to 2013 and I look back on it all, feeling privileged to have worked alongside the greats of the sport since my first signing with Doohan back in 1999.

Following Doohan's career-ending crash during the 1999 Spanish Grand Prix, I met him in San Francisco. He had been operated on by one of the great surgeons, Dr. Ting, and was recuperating locally. He hobbled in on crutches and it was clear by the Llizarov apparatus that it would be a challenging recu-

peration and definitely one that wouldn't heal 100 percent.

This is the price these guys pay when they put their lives on the line every time they throw a leg over a motorcycle and push themselves to the limit to win races and championships.

When Ralph Sheheen asked me to write a column for *SPEED SPORT Magazine*, I felt confident that I had some exciting and exclusive stories to share, as well as relevant and informative information about the autographed memorabilia industry, which unfortunately is unregulated.

I hope to be able to cover them all in future issues as well as give away a prize or two along the way.

This industry allows me to follow the sport I love, meet some incredible people along the way and collect some great pieces of memorabilia. I have to mention that one of the coolest pieces I own, I only obtained in October of this year. It is the champagne bottle that Marc Marquez hoisted on the podium in Malaysia.

I don't know why I haven't thought about collecting them in the past, but this one certainly takes a place of pride on my office desk.

I am writing this during my annual visit to my brother's home in Adelaide, Australia, for the Australian Grand Prix. When I am not traveling around the world working, or having fun as my customers like to say, I live in Southern California and work from my office in Anaheim.

It's been a very exciting year of racing across all classes in the World Superbike series as well as MotoGP. I enjoyed watching Marquez break many records in MotoGP this season en route to winning the championship in his rookie year.

You can follow me on Twitter at @memorabiliaman or like us on Facebook @AutographedCollectables.



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