Build

VALENTINO ROSSI'S YZR M1

5

'THE DOCTOR', MOTORCYCLE RACING LEGEND

SCALE 1:4



DeAgostini COLLECTIBLES

YAMAHA

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH VR46

Build
VALENTINO ROSSI'S M1
'THE DOCTOR', MOTORCYCLE RACING LEGEND

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADAPTATION

UK Published by De Agostini UK Ltd
c/o Royds Withy King, 69 Carter Lane,
London EC4V 5EQ.

USA Published by De Agostini Publishing USA, Inc.
299 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10171.

DE Published by De Agostini Publishing S.p.A.
Via G. da Verrazano 15, 28100 Novara, Italy

Printed in Italy

ISSN: 2755-1849

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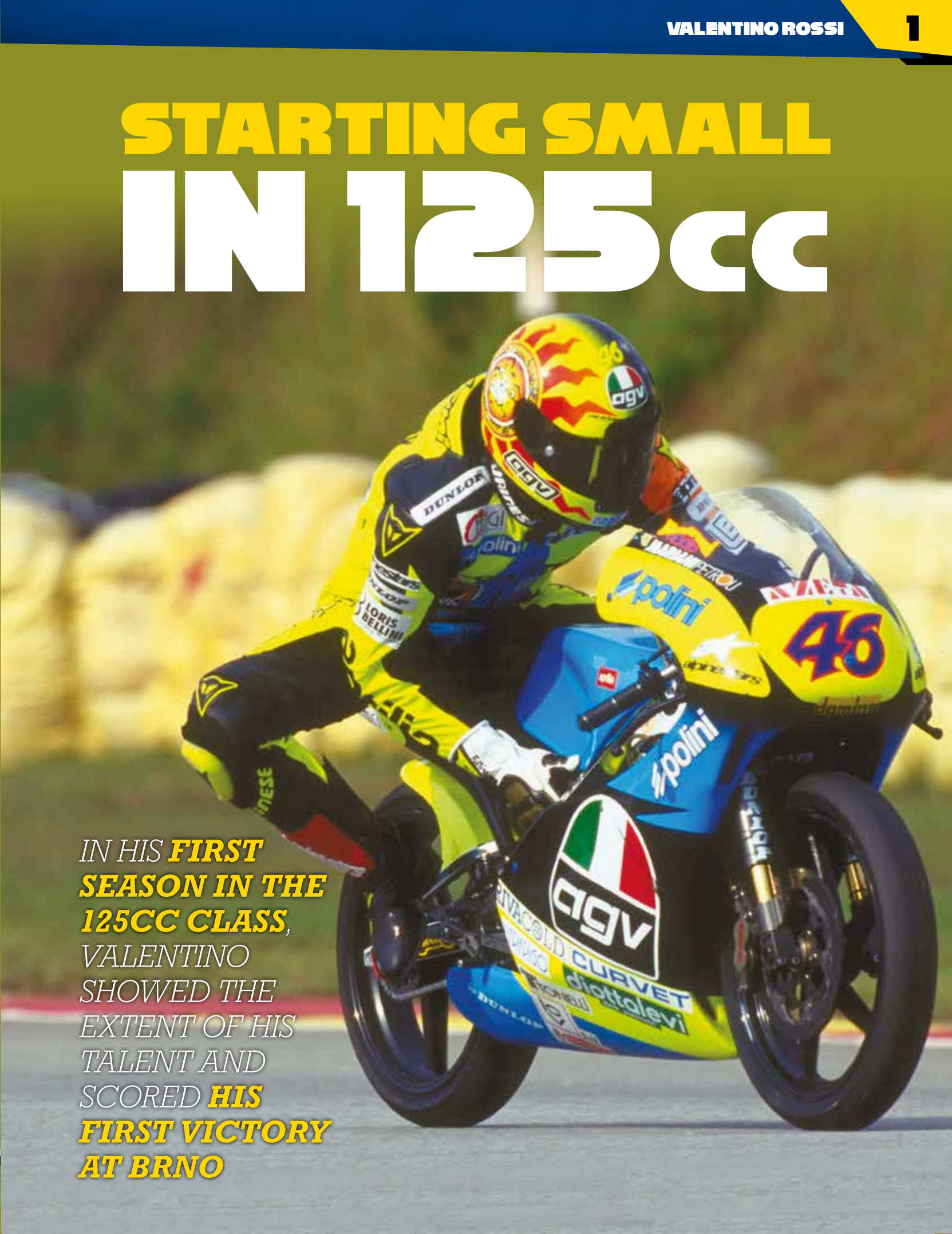
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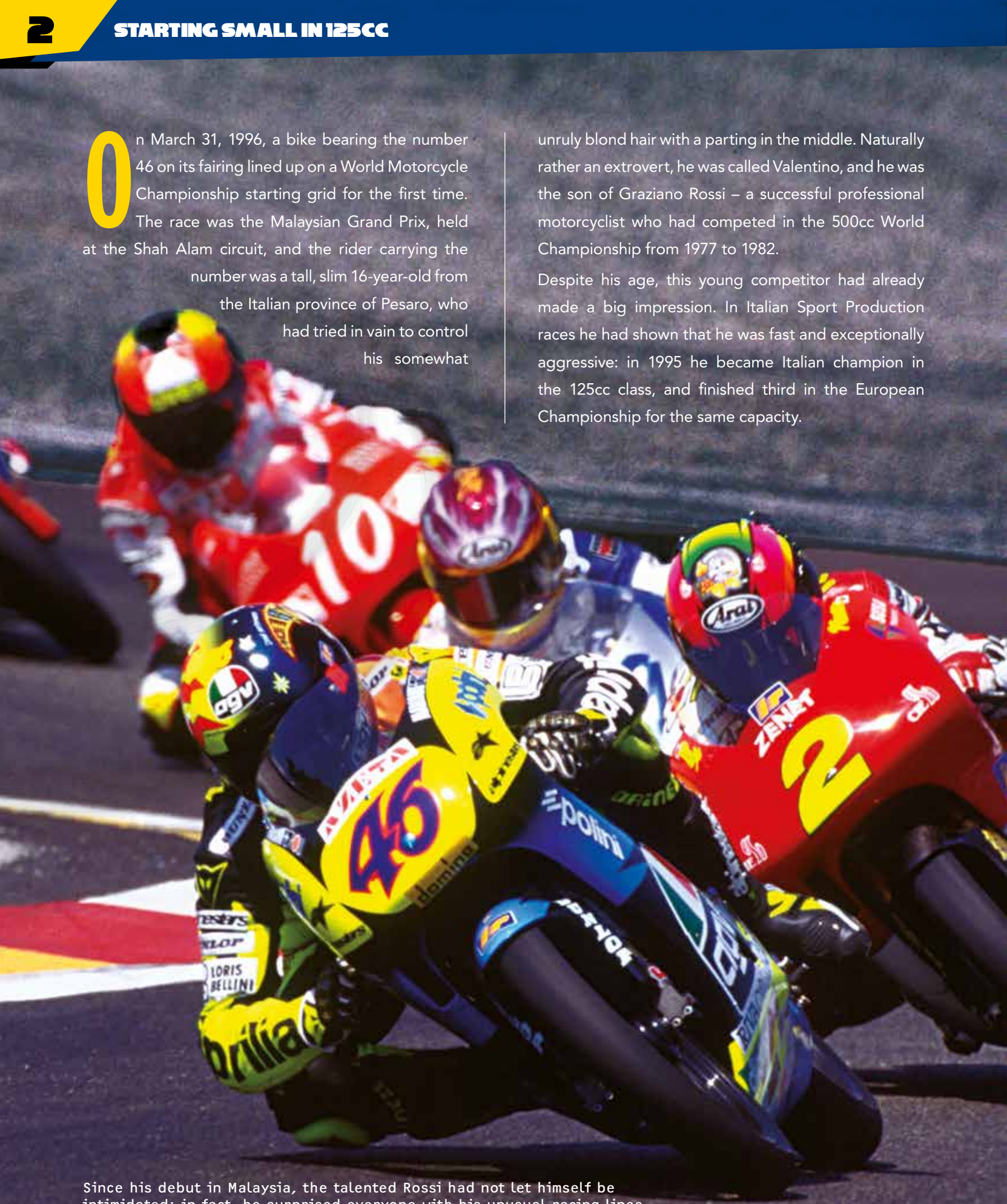
STARTING SMALL IN 125cc



*IN HIS **FIRST SEASON IN THE 125CC CLASS**, VALENTINO SHOWED THE EXTENT OF HIS TALENT AND SCORED **HIS FIRST VICTORY AT BRNO***

On March 31, 1996, a bike bearing the number 46 on its fairing lined up on a World Motorcycle Championship starting grid for the first time. The race was the Malaysian Grand Prix, held at the Shah Alam circuit, and the rider carrying the number was a tall, slim 16-year-old from the Italian province of Pesaro, who had tried in vain to control his somewhat unruly blond hair with a parting in the middle. Naturally rather an extrovert, he was called Valentino, and he was the son of Graziano Rossi – a successful professional motorcyclist who had competed in the 500cc World Championship from 1977 to 1982.

Despite his age, this young competitor had already made a big impression. In Italian Sport Production races he had shown that he was fast and exceptionally aggressive: in 1995 he became Italian champion in the 125cc class, and finished third in the European Championship for the same capacity.



Since his debut in Malaysia, the talented Rossi had not let himself be intimidated: in fact, he surprised everyone with his unusual racing lines punctuated by some surprising attacks. Relaxed and generous, Valentino finished his first season in 125 with some good placings and a nice victory in Brno.

Entering the 1996 World Championship he found a quality mount in the form of the official AGV Aprilia. His teammate Stefano Perugini was already considered an experienced rider after three seasons with Aprilia. His direct rivals were Japanese riders Masaki Tokudome, Tomomi Manako, and Haruchika Aoki (the reigning champion), plus Spaniards Emilio Alzamora and Jorge Martínez (nicknamed 'Aspar'), the most senior rider. From the start in Malaysia, Rossi showed that he was not intimidated by the more experienced riders.

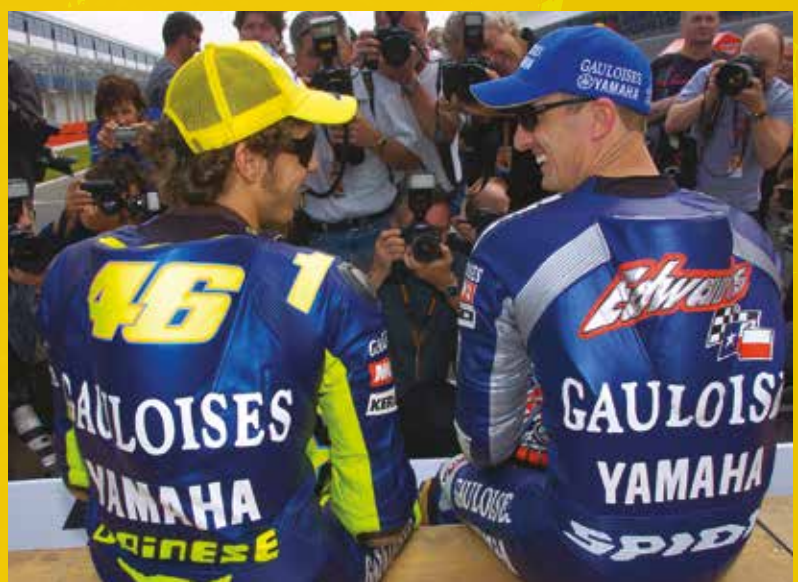
TEAMMATES: COLIN EDWARDS

It is often said that a rider's first opponent is his teammate, and because motorcycle racers are generally individualists by nature, it is true that the first confrontations often occur with the person who shares the same pits and technical equipment. Some riders develop relationships based on mutual respect, and at times may become friends. But the truth is that, given the rivalry that exists on the track – even between members of the same team – it is difficult not to continue being competitive when the racing leathers come off. Perfectionism, hunger for victory, and natural leadership instinct often prevented Valentino Rossi from building camaraderie with his teammates. But there are always exceptions that prove the rule and, for 'The Doctor', the exception was Colin Edwards, a Texan born in 1974. With Colin, the situation was different: with him there was never any rivalry, but rather a mutual cooperation and esteem that eventually led to a true friendship.

Edwards and Rossi first crossed paths in 2003, when the 'Texas Tornado' (as the American was nicknamed) made his MotoGP debut, and in 2005, the two became teammates. Having won the Superbike World Championship twice, Colin came to Yamaha with a wealth of experience of production machines, but only two years in MotoGP. Curiously, he could have made his Grand Prix debut in the 1998 World Championship, riding a Yamaha 500, but talks with the Red Bull Yamaha WCM team were not successful. After this episode, Edwards became one of the leading contenders in the Superbike World Championship during exactly the period when this type of racing was experiencing a period of great popular success.

The camaraderie between the two teammates proved to be fruitful: in 2005 Valentino won the title and Colin finished fourth in the championship. While 2006 was not such good news for the two friends, their partnership continued in 2007, when the Texan finished ninth overall with two pole positions, a second and a third place. In 2008, Edwards continued riding the Yamaha M1, but moved to the satellite Tech 3 team, for which he raced for four consecutive years, always achieving good results, his best being a fifth place in the 2009 World Championship.

The friendship between Colin and Valentino continued through the years when they were rivals in separate teams, and away from the racetrack they often met at Rossi's 'ranch' in Tavullia, or the private training facility built by Edwards in Texas. Their stories would also be linked by drama, as both riders were involuntarily involved in the tragic accident at the Sepang circuit on October 23, 2011, which cost the life of Marco Simoncelli (another great friend of Valentino). But that is another story.



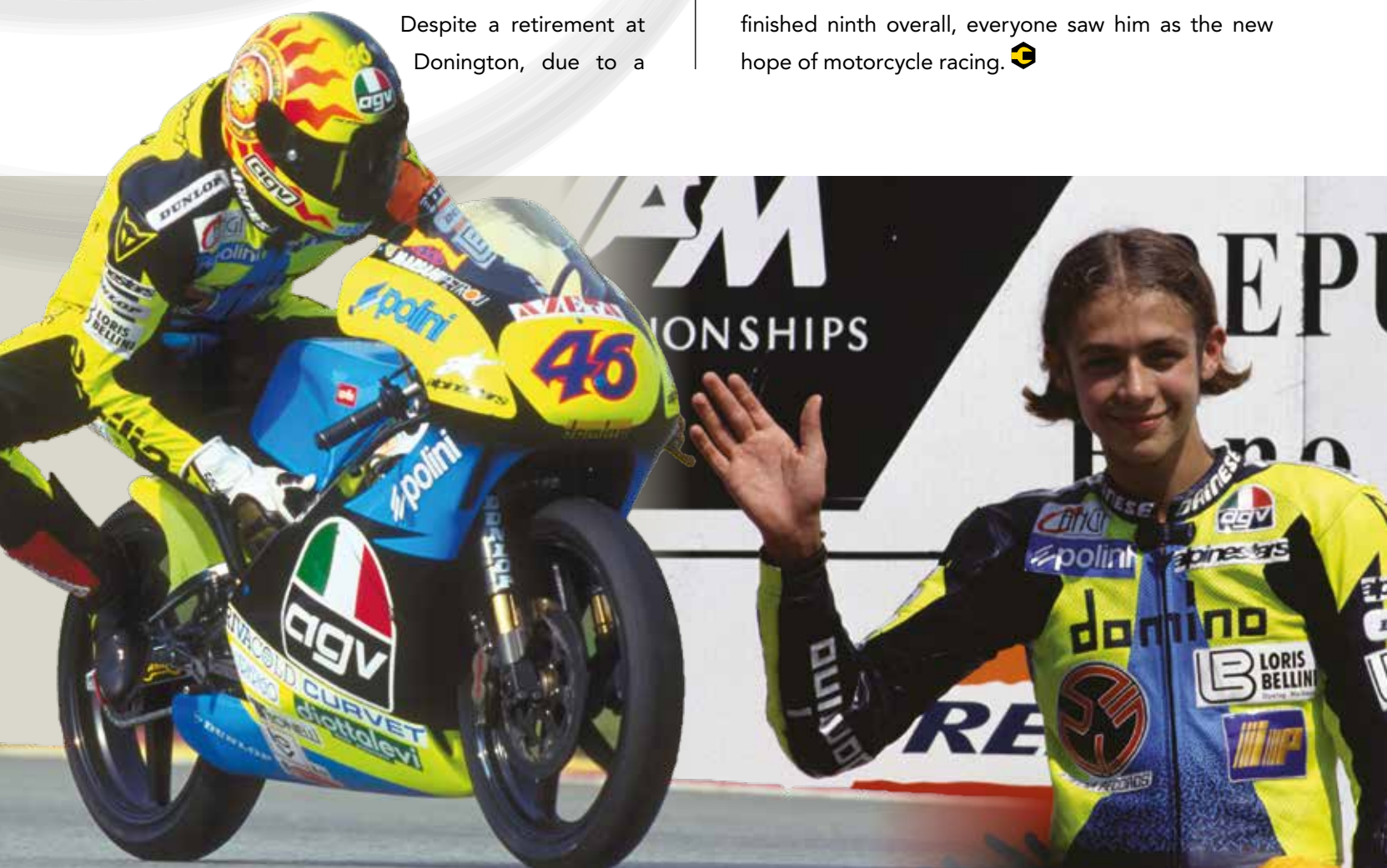
Valentino Rossi and Colin Edwards established a good working relationship, which soon developed into a real friendship that still exists today.

He made a few mistakes, but his riding was original, with unusual racing lines, and late braking that went beyond the accepted limits. He finished his first race in a very respectable sixth place, 7.379 sec behind the winner, his teammate Perugini. At the following meetings in Indonesia and Japan, Valentino had to settle for 11th, but at Jerez he finished fourth, and repeated this result at Mugello, just 1.635 sec behind the winner, and only just losing third to Sakata following a breakaway.

The pressure was on the young talent straight away, but it was clear that the podium – if not victory – was within his grasp, and that it was important to take it steady in his debut year. However, so much attention and interest began to unsettle Rossi, and as a result, or perhaps because he became over-enthusiastic, he crashed back-to-back at Le Mans and Assen. Later, in Germany, the young Rossi showed that he was still one of the best, and finished in fifth place. Caught up in a leading group, he appeared unpredictable both to his fans and rivals, who saw him come out of nowhere. Despite a retirement at Donington, due to a faulty spark plug while fighting for the podium, third place eventually came in Austria. A victory seemed imminent, and it came on August 18, 1996, at Brno where Valentino won his first Grand Prix.

He dominated the whole weekend from free practice onwards, and in the first few laps of the race he caused panic by avoiding a critical situation with Martínez and Perugini, and then attacked Tokudome, whom he passed, before projecting himself towards his first historic victory – not without having previously defeated Martínez in a challenge that demonstrated all his talent. Such was his excitement that he almost hit the pit wall on the finishing straight.

At Imola, Rossi came fifth but set the fastest lap, while at both Montmeló and Brazil he was knocked down after colliding with other riders in the first lap melee. His first world championship season ended in Australia with a much lower place than expected, as he could only finish 14th. The 125cc title went to Haruchika Aoki (his second in a row) and, although Valentino Rossi only finished ninth overall, everyone saw him as the new hope of motorcycle racing.



5. STEP BY STEP

THE FIRST FORK LEG



Parts supplied

A. Left fork leg
B. Left front brake caliper
C. Left front fender bracket



Note: The appearance of the parts illustrated on these pages may differ slightly from the parts supplied with this magazine. The photo of the bike shown here is of the prototype model.

SCANDINAVIAN HIGH-TECH FOR YAMAHA'S SUSPENSION

Yamaha chose Öhlins inverted forks and rear shock for the YZR-M1. Founded in Sweden in 1976, Öhlins specializes in suspension systems for cars, motorbikes and bicycles. The company is also well known as a supplier to many motorsport teams, as it has helped to win numerous prestige events, including Formula 1 and MotoGP, as well as endurance racing such as the 24 Hours of Le Mans – not to mention championships in the lower divisions.







01

STEP 01 The parts with this issue are the first components for the front suspension, consisting of a complete inverted telescopic fork leg. You also have the left front brake caliper and let front fender bracket. As you are not ready to fit these new components yet, you should store them carefully in a safe place for use in future sessions.



02

STEP 02 Before putting the parts away, you can try a small test to familiarize yourself with the operation of the fork. If you push the lower tube into the upper tube with your finger, you will notice some resistance, and when you release it, it will return to its original position so your model Yamaha YZR-M1 perfectly reproduces the front suspension operation of the real bike.

THE 2016 SEASON RACE BY RACE: THE FRENCH GP

The fifth event of the 2016 World Motorcycle Championship was held at Le Mans on May 8, 2016. It was the 59th time that the French GP had counted towards the title, and was race number 247 since the introduction of the MotoGP class. The day was sunny, track temperature was 22°C (72°F), and pole position on the grid was occupied by Jorge Lorenzo's Yamaha M1, with Valentino Rossi starting seventh. The Italian had not shone in qualifying, and this race was going to be difficult. At the green light, Lorenzo got off to a good start, with Rossi trailing the Yamahas of Bradley Smith and Pol Espargaró. However, just as his teammate was making a solo breakaway, Valentino joined the fray after a magnificent recovery (one of many in his career) in which he improved his position until he was hot on Lorenzo's heels, and finally finished on the second step of the podium. In the meantime, the race had seen so many incidents and crashes that only 13 of the 21 starters took the checkered flag. Lorenzo ended up moving into the lead in the championship, while Rossi remained third, 12 points behind.



At the 2016 Le Mans race, the factory Yamaha M1s were unbeatable, with Lorenzo making a solo breakaway, and Valentino Rossi pulling off one of his most memorable feats, starting seventh and finishing second.


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ISSN 2755-1849

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