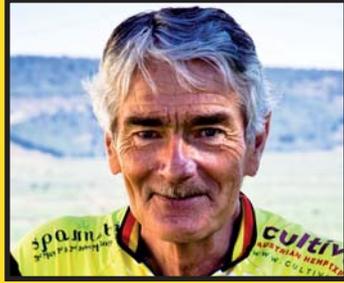


MEDICAL CANNABIS TEAM BIKE TOUR



Madrid to Valencia 2013





MEDICAL CANNABIS BIKE TOUR

By Che Capri

Two things Holland is famous for around the world – top quality cannabis and bicycles. One thing it's not famous for however, is its mountains.

So, when Luc Krol from Paradise Seeds joined forces with Matej Munih from Slovenia's Snail Rolling papers to launch a **Medical Cannabis Bike Tour from Madrid to the GrowMed Expo in Valencia**, it was inevitable that an adventure lay ahead.

A good cause was at the root of this tour – to raise money to fund independent research into the use of cannabis in the treatment and cure of cancer patients.

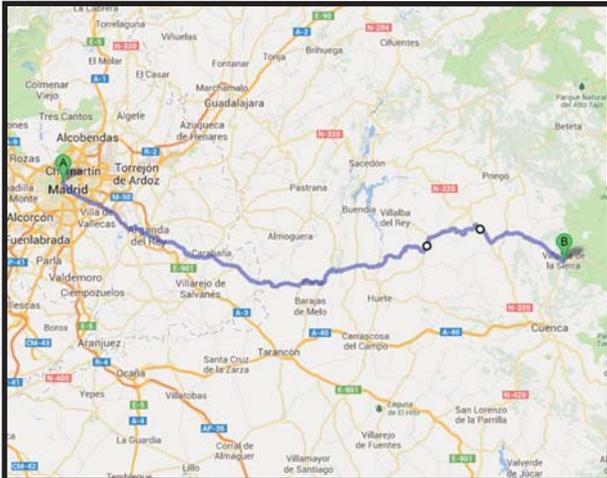
Our intrepid band of cycling adventurers made their rendezvous in the mountains north of Madrid; a European force gathered from Holland, Slovenia, Spain, Austria, and England. The riders ranging in age from 1917-1969,

and amongst the group are smokers and non-smokers, the fit... and the not so fit.

As well as the Paradise Seeds and Snail crews, there are representatives from the Happy Smile and Dizzy Duck coffee shops and The Slovenian Cannabis Social Club, Cultiva Expo organiser, Harry the Bush Doctor, and an English academic studying the use of cannabis to enhance the pleasure of sport.

In other words, not your usual bicycle tour... With the good vibes flowing there was much talk of fitness concerns (blamed on the effects of bad winter weather on training. Ahem!). Enjoying an after dinner smoke on the terrace there was a reminder that we ain't in Amsterdam no more as the Guardia Civil cruise by... and drive away again. 'Amigos,' says the landlord. 'No hay problema!'

Welcome to Spain!



Day 1

Budia - Villalba de la Sierra

Metres above sea level: 984-1084m

Kilometres cycled: 122 km

Blue skies and that lesser spotted bright object in the sky (for the northern Europeans!) greet the start of the first day.

Behind the scenes, there were three support vehicles – The Paradise Wagon up front, The Happy Smile taxi running the line, and the Broom Van driving up the rear. Their essential duties included dispensing water, bananas, nuts and the occasional nugget of Madrid White Widow cannabis.

The Austrians and Slovenians know what's coming – hailing from mountainous lands – but for the Dutch, this is an all new experience. Paradise Luc confided that most of his training was done in a spinning class at the local gym!

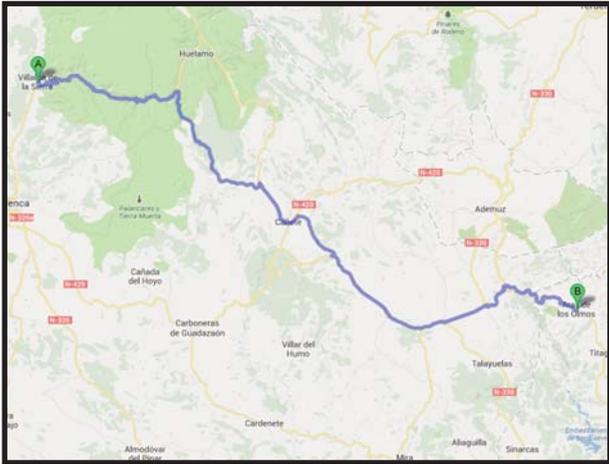
A carb-heavy Day 1 lunch was to come. The catering looked very professional until the riders realised that the support crew was SURPRISE cooking pasta for 20 people on a gas stove made for a family camping trip.

Some time later... back in the saddle and experiencing the local wildlife – a family of wild boar charged across the road, bees took offence to the yellow jerseys and the locals wondered just what the hell these crazy foreigners were doing riding during the hottest part of the day (and what was that fragrant smell following them?).

Day 1 completed, it was time to warm down and get an early night...But did you really think that was going to happen with a van full of Slovenian beer and a slab of Morocco's finest to sample?







Day 2

Villalba de la Sierra - Aras de los Olmos

Metres above sea level: 723 – 1615m

Kilometres cycled: 136 km

The perfect start to the day gave no hint of the drama to come. It was a long climb up a pine tree covered mountain before a swift descent towards a beautiful lake in the valley below.

This bunch were really starting to look like the real deal, that is, until they hit the dirt road from hell. Here, the bike tour took its first casualties and a handful of punctures. The only person smiling was the Slovenian Rastaman on his mountain bike.

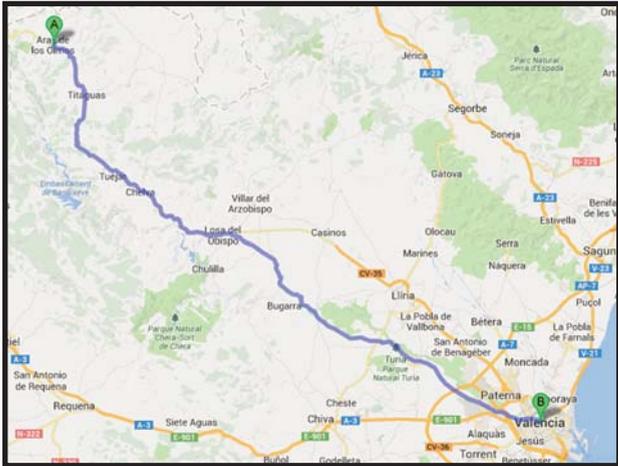
Lunch is just a brief interlude on this second day of hardcore cycling. The afternoon brought a steep climb through forested mountains, with sheer drops into the gorge below. Luc and Matej, tour organisers, cross the finish line first, with the pack following close behind.

Arriving at Day 2 night's stop, a sleepy one horse town on top of a mountain, it time for a peaceful evening... But no chance! The Paradise Wagon was dispatched to Valencia, to the hospital carrying the esteemed president of the Slovenian Cannabis social club, for a check up.

Meanwhile, back at the hostel, the manager thought he could get away with serving soggy calamari and crappy meatballs to the hungry cyclists. The result was fireworks and the arrival of the local Guardia Civil (these ones were not so friendly).







Day 3

Aras de los Olmos - Valencia

Metres above sea level: 38-1086m

Kilometres cycled: 127 km

Fearing drug crazed cyclists in yellow jerseys were about to go on the rampage through the village, the Guardia Civil made a breakfast visit as well. Thankfully, they soon got bored (coffee and doughnuts were waiting back at the police station after all).

The Bike Tour was cheered off by a crowd of school kids. Honoured by the crowd, their enthusiasm knew no bounds – to the point where they raced past their turn. Suspecting the effects of sport enhancing drugs, the support team eventually said that we couldn't all have turned into Wiggo overnight. They had lost them.

Deep in the mountains, technology failed. We had no i-pad, no phone signal, and a very confused GPS. Luckily there was a beaten up old road map in the glove compartment and a navigator old enough to remember how to read a map...

Lost, thirsty and in need of herbal refuelling, the pack suddenly spotted a mirage shimmering up a mountain road – it was the Happy Smile taxi coming to show them the way (to lunch).

The final installment of this ride began with an epic descent from the mountains to the plains, with cyclists clocking speeds of 45 mph on the way down. How professional the tour looked as it cruised into Valencia, a swathe of racing yellow cruising through the rush hour traffic.

And so, the finish line at the Feria de Valencia was where a hero's welcome was to be awaiting.... Only we arrived to find the gate locked. It was the wrong entrance (what did you expect? – it is the Medical Cannabis Bike Tour after all).





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- **Three days**
- **239 miles**
- **€50,000 raised...**



...and the reputation of sporting cannabis users enhanced.

It was mission accomplished and already there has been enquiries coming in from those wanting to ride in next year's tour. Hang on to your helmets, **the Medical Cannabis Bike Tour is here to stay!**

