

Flamingo's Roads

29 September-8 October 2022

I saw the future of tourism on bike in Sardinia: it's called "Flamingo's Roads"!

This is the sentence uttered by Tonino Scarpitti in Olbia, at the end of his ride of over a thousand kilometers made in ten stages in the complete circumnavigation of Sardinia ... and Tonino knows what he is saying, having organized 27 editions of the "**GiroSardegna**", the race stages that made the streets of the island famous throughout the world!

But saying about him was justified: it was enough to look at the faces of the other participants in this first edition of the event to understand that the enthusiasm was shared by all.

But what are "Flamingo's Roads"?

The "**Roads of the Flamingos**" are those that run along the sea of Sardinia and from which all its spectacular beauties can be admired: they are extraordinary and UNIQUE routes in the world for the beauty of the beaches and seascapes and for the particularity of the areas crossed.

These are roads with very little traffic and normally reserved for globetrotting cyclists who, alone or in pairs, with bicycles loaded with luggage, cover them in 15/20 days and who instead "our heroes" cycled at the end of September in a new way ... and , let's face it all, in a comfortable way!

A hundred kilometers a day in a well-defined route, to be interpreted in a completely individual way (*taking the time to visit the "attractions" indicated on www.flamingosroads.it and written in the Road Book given to the participants*) and having at the end day dinner and overnight stay in an excellent hotel where he already found the luggage that had been transported by a minibus that also performed the task of "broom wagon"!

An easy and comfortable cycle-tourism, finally within everyone's reach, which could also be done with an assisted bike or MTB.

Who were the participants?

It was the first experience of the event and it hadn't been advertised in the slightest because it wanted to be a "general rehearsal" to be experienced in a small group to explore its feasibility and see the possible corrections to be made in view of the wider opening in the following years!

About fifty "explorers" (*Randonneurs* and/or *Cyclo-Tourists*) gathered in Olbia who somehow managed to find out about the initiative, which presented itself as an absolute unknown.

It is true that Sardinia, in itself, is a guarantee of beauty, good roads and the right weather for cycling ... but after all, only one map was known showing the 1,000 km to pedal, without foreseeing intermediate stops (the *randonneurs*) or in 10 stages (cyclist-tourists)!

It is also true that among the participants there was Tonino Scarpitti who was a guarantee of quality cycling and good organization ... but he presented himself in Olbia with the assisted bike and clarified: "*I'm just a participant who wants to pedal in the Terrestrial Paradise*"!

The super-experts Luca Bonechi and Fabio Bardelli with their staff would have taken care of the *randonneurs* and Guido Di Filippo would have taken care of the cyclists who transferred their luggage and helped them along the way in case of need.

Finally, it is true that everything had been prepared and the hotels that would have been "checkpoints" for *randonneurs* and evening stops for cycle tourists were indicated in the Road Book. But the spirit of the event was very clear: absolute freedom for both to manage the days in the way that everyone would have decided.

And so then, indeed, it was!

... and here is the short report!

All fifty cyclists had met on the evening of 28 September in the Grand Hotel President of Olbia, a four-star superior hotel which served as the headquarters of the event and where the Race Package (*personalized plaque for the bike, Road Book and a technique t-shirt*) had been delivered during a presentation briefing and then conclude the evening in a typical Sardinian restaurant with a hearty and well-cooked dinner.

Then on the morning of the 29th, having taken the indispensable usual photo in front of the hotel, we all set off together to cycle the first 100 km in the north-east of the island.

Obviously the experience was very different between those who lived it as a Randonneur and those who lived it as a Cyclo-Tourist, and that's why, only in the report, ... their paths diverged!

Randonneurs

Most of the members had chosen to win the "**1,000 km NON-Stop**" patent also because it was the one that guaranteed pre-registration for the Paris-Brest-Paris 2023, and especially they, due to bad weather, saw a different Sardinia from that of the sunny beaches of the postcards!

In all Italian regions, in fact, in the first two days of the ride, all hell was breaking loose and in practically all regions, floods and hurricanes caused deaths and considerable damage: in comparison, what happened in Sardinia was a minor matter; "only" rain, sometimes intense, in the first part and a lot of Mistral in the second part!

Only in the finale all the randonneurs were finally able to enjoy the pleasant warm sun that everyone had imagined.

The first day slipped without any particular problems: the views of Golfo Aranci, Costa Smeralda and Palau and the archipelago of La Maddalena were spectacular and the long gallop along the north coast was also pleasant.

The photographs show radiant faces and in the videos the cyclists wave radiantly as they pass ... but then the rain capes began to appear and things changed.

Meanwhile, the distances between the participants lengthened according to the different travel speeds, but Luca and Fabio had the whole situation under control thanks to the "WhatsApp Group" they had created with the cyclists: the "Group", together with the transit stamps in the various hotels, proved to be a very useful tool for managing checks and providing support along the way but, and above all, it was the tool that kept the participants together who, although pedaling alone or at most in pairs, did not never felt "alone" as they knew the position of the others and had immediate news of what was happening.

And everything went satisfactorily and without particular problems, except that the rain and the possible swelling of the two streams to be crossed on the six kilometers of dirt road suggested a prudent change of route to get around that area by taking an equally valid alternative road.

Only Daniele chose to make the route between the sand dunes: the photos of him attesting the crossing of the fords and the passage on the white roads caused a lot of regret among the others who missed the experience!

For all, there was a half-way refreshment stop in Buggerru where they had the opportunity to take a shower, refresh themselves and have a minimum of rest before tackling the second part of the route ... where they got to know the "Mistral"!

Yet things didn't go smoothly for everyone: the Austrian Peter broke the bottom bracket in Cagliari and had to reach Olbia by train while Maria Romana had to settle for the 300 km patent, but this didn't take away his good mood and the smile off your face!

Ivan and Claudia were the only ones to complete the "**4 Mori**" patents

However, within 75 hours of departure, twenty-one arrived at the "food bag" prepared by the Grand Hotel President of Olbia and won the finisseur medal and the coveted thousand kilometers patent.

This is the list of the patented ones:

ORGANIZER		DATE	DISTANCE		Cyclist Team	Departing Time	Arrival Time
FLAMINGO'S ROADS APS		30/09/22	200 Km	Sex			
SURNAME	NAME	CODE ACP	TIME				
Folli	Ivan	401099	10:50	M	Ua' Cycling	30/09/2022 08:20	30/09/2022 19:10
Lavazza	Claudia	401099	10:50	W	Ua' Cycling	30/09/2022 08:20	30/09/2022 19:10

ORGANIZER		DISTANCE		Cyclist Team	Departing Time	Arrival Time
FLAMINGO'S ROADS APS		300 KM	Sex			
SURNAME	NAME	TIME				
Bardelli	Fabio	18:10	M	Bulletta Bike	01/10/2022 07:30	02/10/2022 01:40
Bonechi	Luca	18:10	M	Bulletta Bike	01/10/2022 07:30	02/10/2022 01:40
Folli	Ivan	16:30	M	Ua' Cycling	01/10/2022 06:20	01/10/2022 22:50
Lavazza	Claudia	16:30	W	Ua' Cycling	01/10/2022 06:20	01/10/2022 22:50
Massi	M. Romana	18:10	W	Bike Roma Club	01/10/2022 07:30	02/10/2022 01:40
Panti	Marco	18:10	M	Bulletta Bike	01/10/2022 07:30	02/10/2022 01:40

ORGANIZER		DISTANCE				
FLAMINGO'S ROADS APS		400 KM	Sex	Cyclist Team	Departing Time	Arrival Time
SURNAME	NAME	TIME				
Folli	Ivan	22:05	M	Ua' Cycling	03/10/2022 08:30	04/10/2022 06:35
Fusi	Luciano	23:30	M	Ciclistica Valdarbia La Popolare	03/10/2022 06:30	04/10/2022 06:00
Lavazza	Claudia	22:05	W	Ua' Cycling	03/10/2022 08:30	04/10/2022 06:35

ORGANIZER		DISTANCE				
FLAMINGO'S ROADS APS		1000 km	Sex	Cyclist Team	Departing Time	Arrival Time
SURNAME	NAME	TIME				
Bianchini	Paolo	57:45	M	Marlia Bike E Running	29/09/2022 09:00	01/10/2022 18:45
Brau	Stefania	74:30	W	Cus Propatria	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 11:30
Cantini	Tiziano	73:20	M	Mtb Club Cecina	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 10:20
Cappelli	Mauro	74:30	M	Ciclistica Valdarbia La Popolare	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 11:30
Dominici	Tiziano	74:40	M	Ciclistica Valdarbia La Popolare	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 11:40
Fontanini	Cesare	57:45	M	Diavoli Veloci Lucca (lu)	29/09/2022 09:00	01/10/2022 18:45
Frasconi	Fabio	74:30	M	Team Leggero	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 11:30
Fresu	Domenico	73:15	M	Fancello Cicli Terranova	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 10:15
Galloni	Alessandro	61:40	M	Ravonese	29/09/2022 09:00	01/10/2022 22:40
Gaudenzi	Paolo	70:20	M	Triathlon Cremona Stradivari	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 07:20
Ghidelli	Pietro	70:45	M	San Bassano	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 07:45
Giardini	Daniele	72:45	M	Team Dieffe Bici	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 09:45
Giorgi	Antonio	73:33	M	Individuale	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 10:33
Lupparelli	Alberto	73:33	M	Ciclorapida	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 10:33
Maggiorelli	Tommaso	61:40	M	Ciampino 2r	29/09/2022 09:00	01/10/2022 22:40
Mondini	Hugo	72:45	M	Athletic Club Merano	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 09:45
Pisaturo	Fioravante	73:20	M	Extreme Team	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 10:20
Rabisoni	Rachel	72:45	W	Cus Propatria	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 09:45
Rossi	Marco Stefan	70:45	M	Team Testa	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 07:45
Tomasi	Silvano	72:45	M	G.c. Seriate	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 09:45
Venturi	Alfredo	68:20	M	Ciclo Club Pozzo	29/09/2022 09:00	02/10/2022 05:20

Cycle-Tourists

Their Roads were completely different!

The first stage ended in Santa Teresa Gallura and, although in the morning the clouds were gathering menacingly, there was no rain for them.

Then in the afternoon, a careful study of the weather forecast meant that the start of the second stage was postponed by two hours to take advantage of a "window" of good weather and this would have worked perfectly and this invention would have allowed a "clear route" without not even a drop of water...

... but the cyclists, deceived by the sun and the clear sky, lingered in long and pleasant stops at the Rocca dell'Elefante and in a bar in Castelsardo: the result was that the last 10 km to reach Porto Torres had to be done under a last drop of rain!

But then, starting from the third stage, Sardinia showed its "normal" October face: bright sun, temperatures above 25 degrees and absolutely clear skies; and this was the constant for all subsequent stages

From the third stage only pleasant things: pedaling in the bright sun; dive into the warm sea; abundant use of protective creams because the sun was still beating down hard and Valentino's relaxing massages in Arborea and Villasimius!

But what happened to the Mistral?

It blew brilliantly for a few days but for the lucky cycle-tourists, as soon as they turned the promontory of Capo Caccia, it was of considerable help because it always blew behind them throughout the descent of the west coast and on the southern coasts, for then subsiding completely in the ascent along the east coast.

But the sunny and warm days and the favorable wind weren't the only good things about the event; there were others:

-THE HOTELS: in each stage the rooms were reserved in hotels that offered certainty of quality and good hospitality, and all lived up to expectations and even exceeded them! A particular note of applause goes to the Pullman Timi Ama of Villasimius: an excellent five-star hotel in which, in addition to a super cozy bed, we enjoyed its famous buffet dinner and its absolutely out-of-the-ordinary breakfasts!

- THE DINNERS: in the hotel or in the restaurant they performed their function of refreshment for the cyclists admirably, but there is an obligation to report, in addition to the aforementioned Timi Ama buffet, also and necessarily the super binge made in Buggerru at the Stella restaurant Maris del Porto where even the Belgian Annaleen had to surrender to abundance and say "... *that's enough!*"

-THE "WHITE ROADS": the six kilometers to cycle through the sand dunes of Piscinas aroused fear among cyclists and concerns had increased for the two streams to cross after two days of rain! In fact, those six kilometers (... *and the other two added in return to reach the sea!*) will be one of the things that will remain most impressed in everyone's memories: the photos and videos taken in the two fords have gone crazy for days and days on social media and on the internet!

-THE ATTRACTIONS: in each stage about ten of all kinds were reported (*beaches of particular beauty, monuments, restaurants, etc.*) and each cyclist independently chose two/three to add to the wonders visible directly from the path of the Flamingo's Roads. Most popular, stage by stage, were:

- 1) the entrance rock to Costa Smeralda and the panorama from the Palau belvedere
- 2) Capo Testa in Santa Teresa Gallura and the Elephant Rock in Castelsardo
- 3) the beach of La Pelosa in Stintino (... *the inclusion of the Roads in the route for the years to come has been loudly requested!*)
- 4) the cathedral of Cuglieri and the vestiges of Tharros
- 5) the beaches of Torre dei Corsari and Piscinas among the sand dunes
- 6) the beach of Su Giudeu and Cala Cipolla in Chia
- 7) the archaeological area of Nora, the panorama from Monte Urpinu to Cagliari and a visit to the flamingos of the Molentargius Park
- 8) Costa Rei and the Colostrai area
- 9) the Genna Silana Pass and the panorama of Cala Gonone
- 10) the beaches of La Cinta, Lu Impostu and Punta Coda Cavallo in San Teodoro

-THE "GROUP": it doesn't always happen, but sometimes, without a precise reason and without the thing having been planned or organized, it happens that people who don't know each other get together and "feel" a Group which then always becomes more close-knit day by day.

This is exactly what happened on this occasion!!

These are the "lucky ones":

Surname	Name	Birth date	sex	giro	
BALDUCCI	FABIO	24/11/1956	M	FLY	ITALIA
BOSCHIROLI	GIOVANNI	21/06/1962	W	FLY	ITALIA
BOTTI	MARTA	25/02/1977	W	FLY	ITALIA
BRANTEGEM	ANNELEEN	03/06/1983	W	FLY	BELGIO
CALVIELLO	ENZO	04/05/1950	M	FLY	ITALIA
CONCAS	MARIA CRISTINA	18/09/1968	W	FLY	ITALIA
DI FILIPPO	LUCA		M	FLY	ITALIA
ESCLAPON	CRISTIANO	31/10/1964	M	FLY	SVIZZERA
FERRAZZI	ANDREA	19/07/1949	M	FLY	ITALIA
GALLUS	CARLO MARIO	15/11/1967	M	FLY	ITALIA
GAZZOLA	GIANPIETRO	18/08/1963	M	FLY	ITALIA
NOVALLI	RAOUL PAOLO	05/02/1964	M	FLY	ITALIA
OPORSKA	KATARZYNA	05/08/1976	W	FLY	POLONIA
REGINATO	LUCA	09/02/1965	M	FLY	ITALIA
SCARPITTI	ANTONIO	16/05/1949	M	FLY	ITALIA
SCHIAVINI	PIERO	29/12/1956	M	FLY	ITALIA
TOTTI	MAURO	31/03/1951	M	FLY	ITALIA
ZAPPELLI	ETTORE	17/09/1962	W	FLY	ITALIA

... what will become of "Flamingo's Roads"?

If Tonino Scarpitti's "vision" is true, these roads will be the future of Cycle-Tourism in Sardinia.

And the conditions are all there: in fact, the desire to take active and healthy holidays is increasing and now, thanks to the impulse that cycling is having due to the increase in women practitioners and the sale of E-bikes, the "*Flamingo's Roads*" becomes within the reach of a huge number of Italians and foreigners.

The event that took place in October 2022 made their existence explicit and this is now recorded and attested on a website: **all those who love cycling now know that a holiday is possible, they know how to do it and they know the roads to do it.**

You can go there alone or in pairs; you can go there in small and/or large groups managing things freely or you can wait for the second edition of the "*Flamingo's Roads*" which will certainly be held again at the end of September 2023 and to which ... ALL the participants who have experienced this splendid and amazing first edition!

There were even those who proposed repeating it at least twice: once in May and once at the end of September!

In any case, the road has been traced and the fruits of this experience will be seen in the years to come.

And the Regional Councilorship would do well to design special road signs that indicate the "Roads" and advertise them worldwide, because **THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD THAT CAN COME NEAR THE BEAUTY OF THE "FLAMINGO'S ROADS"!**

Cagliari November 4th 2022

ASD Flamingo's Roads
Il Presidente
Maria Cristina Concas