



Juri Zanotti and Filippo Colombo: the dynamic duo of the Sidi team

Teammates and friends, the two young athletes tell their story in a double interview.

They share a love of off-road racing and the Italian quality of Sidi shoes on their feet: they are Juri Zanotti and Filippo Colombo. The two have been friends for a long time, they train together and will also be teammates on the Absolute Absalon team for the 2022 season. During a visit to the Sidi headquarters in Maser, they both spoke about their passions and goals.

When did you start cycling and why?

F - I was eight years old. My mother inspired me, she introduced me to the sport and had the patience to support me. The great champions also set an example for me and, being Swiss, Nino Schurter is for sure one of my favourites. His sporting achievements have always moved me and I don't think I can put into words the excitement of riding with him now.

J - I ran my first race when I was eight years old. I actually got into cycling much earlier, just for fun. My sister has always been a mountain biker and my grandfather and father are big cycling fans. A rider I have always admired is Julien Absalon. I will always remember his Olympics in Beijing 2008. That's why I now consider racing for his team an extraordinary opportunity for my career and my life.

Why did you decide to dedicate yourself to MTB?

F - Personally, I think it's one of the few disciplines that combines physical performance, downhill technique and fun, as well as allowing you to ride through nature.

J - I think I chose mountain biking because it's a lot of fun, I never get bored and I'm always doing different routes. As Filippo says, the best part is just having the chance to enjoy nature.

What is your favourite route and type of terrain?

J - Natural, with a few artificial modifications like in Andorra. For me the trail is the most beautiful route, few artificial passages, soft soil, roots and undergrowth. I love technical climbs and generally prefer dry ground.

F - I also like dry and warm weather. I feel at ease on modern, fast trails like the one in Nove Mesto. I love real MTB, dynamic and technical.

What does winning mean to you?

F - It's difficult to say in two words, for me it certainly means crowning a dream and shouting at the top of my voice at the finishing line.

J - I agree, it's difficult to say! Winning for me especially means repaying all the hard work and sacrifices I've made, but it also gives me an adrenaline rush at the finish line.

What do you like to do when you're not on the bike?

J - I'm a complete sportsman. When I'm not riding, I like to spend my time watching other sports. For example, I follow basketball games, go to the stadium and I love skiing.

F - I really enjoy practicing other disciplines. I go hiking in the mountains and, since we have an ice hockey tradition, I enjoy playing a few games with my friends every now and then.



What is essential in a MTB shoe?

F - I'd say that the athlete has to be at one with the bike to ride at his or her best, and the feet are a fundamental point of support for high performance. With my Tiger 2s, for example, I have a special feeling. Their particular rigidity allows me not to lose power while pedaling and to have a connection to my bicycle.

J - For me too, stiffness is a fundamental characteristic of a shoe, not just the sole. The upper has to fit like a glove and wrap around the foot perfectly to keep it stable. The first time I put on my pair of Sidi, I knew they were exactly what I needed.

Best cycling memory?

J - It was an autumn day, it was me, Filippo, our trainer and other friends, we did a very long ride, totally enjoying that magical atmosphere. At that moment I felt lucky to be able to practice this sport. Many athletes only stop at the beauty of the competition, but I like to think about everything that revolves around it, including the 'slower' days like that afternoon: being with friends and sharing a passion, that's the best part.

F - You've made me all emotional. I'll copy you and say that it was that day for me too. I share this spirit, cycling isn't just about hard work and competition, it's a real way of life.