



Paolo Bettini on the road again

The champion from Livorno will explore Greece on his bike to celebrate two important anniversaries.

Today, Tuesday 9 July, at the Greek Embassy in Rome, Paolo Bettini unveiled his new project to celebrate his 50th birthday and the 20th anniversary of his Olympic gold medal.

*"It's an important day for me because, here at the Greek Embassy, what Elena (Greek Honorary Consul in Livorno) - and I conceived a few months ago in the context of cultural exchange between two countries through sport has come to fruition," said **Paolo Bettini**. "I had already decided that for my birthday this year I would treat myself to a trip somewhere in the world. After meeting Elena, the destination was immediately clear. What better place than Greece to celebrate two important anniversaries".*

A solo trip from Thessaloniki to Athens, circumnavigating the Peloponnese. The idea came from a meeting with Elena Konstantos who thought of the only possible way to celebrate her half-century: to return to Athens, where she reached the pinnacle of her extraordinary career.

Paolo will tackle 12 stages totalling 988 km and some 10,600 metres of altitude difference. All this to follow a sort of Ariadne's thread traced by the wheels of his bicycle through the symbolic places of Greece. From Mount Olympus - home of the gods to Sparta - famous for its legendary warriors, passing through Olympia - home of the Olympic Games, and finally arriving in Athens - capital of Greece and the place where, in 2004, Paolo Bettini entered the cycling legend by winning Olympic gold.

Paolo's sponsors have created unique pieces to accompany him on this journey: Sportful has provided the clothing, Lazer the helmet, SIDI the shoes and Shimano the 3T bike, which, as **Carlo Donadoni**, 3T's Marketing Manager, explains, has a completely unique livery: *"We created this bike especially for Paolo's project. It is inspired by the Games, but not so much by modern games as by ancient ones, as a tribute to the places where Paolo will ride. It is an Extrema Italia, a gravel bike, a discipline that has become increasingly popular in the last ten years because it combines the speed of a racing model with the comfort needed to spend many hours, or in this case days, in the saddle. All of this is emphasised by the generous wheels, which provide even more comfort".*

Gianpiero Peron, UTurn Investment, confirms and adds: *We are very happy to have Paolo as our ambassador because he represents excellence in sport and, I would say, also in human terms. With his generosity and simplicity he allows us to have a completely transparent exchange on what the world of cycling is all about. I think this experience will be very important for him and I think it will help to further enhance the perception of Paolo as a man and his ability to empathise with people. I am also very grateful to the Embassy for the support and the opportunity they are giving us, which is very important to increase the visibility of our brand.*

"If I am an Olympic champion, it is because someone invented the Games so many years ago. Returning to the place where they were born, but this time as a cyclist, touching sites and places of historical and cultural importance, allows me to retrace my first 50 years in Greece. I must thank Ambassador Elena Sourani and Consul Elena Konstantos for this incredible opportunity and for welcoming us to their Embassy this morning," concluded Paolo Bettini, as he prepared to embark on his journey, which will begin in Katerini on 26 August and end in Athens on 6 September.