



Maurizio Fondriest unveils his Gravel Burn equipment at IBF

The world champion is preparing to write a new chapter, combining innovation, adventure, and personal memories.

Surrounded by cycling enthusiasts, innovation and passion, he officially presented the equipment he will use for the next Gravel Burn event, one of the most adventurous on the global gravel calendar.

This special occasion also coincides with an important milestone in his personal life: his sixtieth-birthday. To celebrate this moment, which lies between memory and future, he has decided to fly to South Africa in October he has decided to fly to South Africa in October to take on the inaugural Nedbank Gravel Burn, a seven-day, 800km solo rider gravel stage race running from Knysna to Shamwari Game Reserve, 26 October – 1 November 2025. A 7-day, 800km solo rider gravel stage race consists of long days in the saddle, nights in a tent, kilometres of unknown trails and dirt roads, tough climbs and technical descents. This unique race takes participants from asphalt to a wide variety of gravel terrain – 85% of the route runs on unpaved roads, ranging from fast, flowing champagne gravel to more demanding sections that test bike handling and endurance. While not the most technical trails, the diversity of surfaces requires adaptability, skill, and smart equipment choices – which is why he'll be riding the maximum tire width his frame allows: 45C. The event attracts a global field of riders, all drawn to the raw beauty of South Africa's Karoo landscapes, the sense of personal adventure, and the challenge of covering long distances under their own power. With a \$150,000 prize purse, it's a high-stakes race – but for him, the real prize lies in the experience: long days in the saddle, nights under the stars in a tent, and kilometres of unknown roads, carved through nature, solitude, and shared passion.

To mark this occasion, the former world champion unveiled two significant items: the new 'Ardenne' bike by Fondriest Bici and a commemorative jersey created in collaboration with the Q36.5 brand.

The Fondriest Ardenne combines the competitive spirit of cycling with the freedom and adventure of gravel riding. Designed to tackle any terrain, from asphalt to the most technical trails, it is the ideal companion for those seeking high performance over long distances without compromising on speed, control or responsiveness.

The name 'Ardenne' is highly symbolic: it evokes the wild terrain that is perfect for gravel riding, the legendary Ardennes triptych – where Fondriest won the Flèche Wallonne in 1993 – and the new gravel stage races that take place in the region.

The high-performance carbon frame is designed to combine lightness, stiffness and comfort. The modern geometry and the special shape of the seat tube, which absorbs vibrations, as well as the hub integrated into the down tube for storing tools, demonstrate meticulous attention to detail. The Ardenne can accommodate generous tyres of up to 700x45c and is equipped with upgradeable components, making it ready for both light bikepacking and the most demanding gravel competitions.

The bike will be fitted with FSA Vision components. The integrated Metron 5D ACR EVO handlebar, historically the lightest on the market, is perfect for covering long distances thanks to its forward angle of up to 10 degrees. This allows the arms and wrists



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to be positioned more naturally. At the same time, superior aerodynamics are guaranteed by a 40 mm reduction in stack height. The Vision SC 48 i25 wheels, which will travel the fascinating dirt trails of South Africa, are an exclusive new product that will be officially presented to the public on 19 September.

Alongside the bike, Maurizio presented the Q36.5 collaboration jersey: a technical garment that conveys identity. Called the Gregarius Clima, this high-performance jersey is made with an innovative, ultra-thin 3D fabric that optimises ventilation and thermoregulation, even in the hottest conditions. The honeycomb mesh on the back increases breathability, and the aerodynamic sleeves and mesh pockets complete the lightweight, functional design created for cycling enthusiasts.

But beyond the technical aspects, there is meaning. The graphics, dominated by the rainbow stripes, recall the World Champion jersey, but feature a unique addition: a sewn-on route retracing the most important moments of Maurizio's career. It's like a map of memories, to be worn kilometre after kilometre. On the back is an essential detail: the symbol of sixty years, not as a finish line, but as a milestone in an ongoing journey. The jersey also features the partners who, in addition to the technical ones, will accompany Maurizio on this adventure: Trentino Marketing, Alpecin and Banca Mediolanum. Like the bike, the jersey thus becomes the story of a life in the saddle: a manifesto of style, history and determination.

Through this dual presentation, Maurizio Fondriest reinforces his message that a passion for cycling knows no age limits and that every new challenge is an opportunity for self-discovery. Gravel Burn will be more than just a race; it will be a personal ritual and a journey between the past and the future, between what has been experienced and what still can be.