



Maurizio Fondriest Media Relations

Maurizio and Carlotta Fondriest complete the Nedbank Gravel Burn 2025: an extraordinary adventure in the heart of the Great Karoo.

A week of rain, dust, and endless landscapes.

From the mud of the first stages to the sunshine of the final finish line, **Maurizio and Carlotta Fondriest**, together with Carlotta's fiancé Giovanni Stefania, successfully completed the **Nedbank Gravel Burn 2025**, one of the toughest and most fascinating gravel races on the international calendar.

Father and daughter spent seven days immersed in the heart of the **Great Karoo**, the South African semi-desert where nature sets the rules and every kilometer is a conquest. An adventure that became a true family story—of resilience and shared passion.

The Karoo is a land of extremes, alternating between mountains and endless plains, dust and mud, freezing cold and relentless sun. The Nedbank Gravel Burn crosses isolated villages, barren plains, and wind-sculpted valleys along a route that changes its face every day.

*"It's not just a race: it's a journey through nature in its purest form," says **Maurizio Fondriest**. "Everything is extreme. The rain on the first day greeted us with mud and cold, but also with contagious energy. Despite the tough conditions, you could feel the spirit of true cycling—the kind that tests you and brings you back to your roots."*

The opening stages were marked by almost epic weather: heavy rain, flooded roads, and kilometers of dirt made treacherous by thick mud. Then, as the days passed, the Karoo showed its double face—freezing nights followed by scorching afternoons and a constant wind.

"One morning we woke up with ice on the tents," explains Fondriest. "Our hands were numb, but when the sun rose, it felt like a different world. It's this constant contrast that makes you feel alive. Each stage is a small journey within yourself."

In this harsh environment, **Carlotta Fondriest** stood out for her consistency, mental strength, and adaptability.

Stage after stage, she built her performance, ultimately taking **victory in her age category**—a result of great sporting and symbolic value.

"Carlotta was fantastic," comments Maurizio. "She raced intelligently and calmly, even in the toughest moments. She's grown so much as both a person and an athlete. Seeing her face the Karoo with this spirit is my greatest success. The podium matters, but what she'll carry from this experience is worth even more."

Beyond the physical effort and competition, what truly made the Nedbank Gravel Burn unique was the atmosphere at the camp each evening. Mechanics, volunteers, organizers, and riders gathered around the fire, sharing stories, food, and laughter.

*"This week reminded me what cycling really means," reflects Maurizio. "It's not just about watts and results—it's about people, emotions, and moments you'll remember forever. We really have to applaud **Kevin Vermaak** and his whole team: from flawless organization to the volunteers who helped us every day, right down to the DJ who brought smiles back to everyone each evening. What they've created here is truly extraordinary."*

For Maurizio and Carlotta, the finish line was not just the end of a race—it was the closing of a shared journey, a return to the roots of sport and the beauty of simplicity.

*"In the end, what matters isn't your placing, but what you take with you," concludes Maurizio. "We faced everything—rain, cold, wind, and fatigue—but always together. It was a privilege to live this adventure with my daughter, in the heart of Africa. It's a week we'll never forget, and I'm grateful to have had by my side the partners with whom I've built a strong and personal bond over the years. I want to sincerely thank my long-time partners: **Alpecin, Trentino, Fondriest Bici, Q36.5, Banca Mediolanum, FSA and Vision**. They accompanied me through every kilometer of this brutal, wild, and extraordinary land. We wrote a beautiful story, and I'm proud to have done it with them."*

The curtain falls on the **Nedbank Gravel Burn 2025**, but for **Maurizio and Carlotta Fondriest**, the emotions are far from over.

The moments lived in the heart of the Great Karoo will soon become a documentary, blending footage from the race with stories from the 1988 World Champion's career—a journey through dust, wind, and the hearts of two cyclists united by a timeless passion.