

EVENTS/CAUSES

Maserati races uphill to provide memories for cycling enthusiasts

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Tour de Yorkshire - Maserati and David Millar - Scarborough, Yorkshire, England. Picture by Simon Wilkinson/SWPix.com

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Italian automaker Maserati is offering cyclists the chance to be king for a day.

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Maserati Cycling will return as the title sponsor of the Tour de Yorkshire Ride and offer all participants a "King of the Mountains" climb photograph. As Maserati fights for recognition in the growing cycling market, events that help generate ties between consumer and brand will foster sentiment among cycling influencers and other especially desirable consumers.

"In everything we do, we try to bring something new and exciting to the table for cyclists," said Anna Angelini, press and public relations manager at **Maserati** UK. "The 'King of the Mountains' stage is another opportunity for those taking part to experience what it is like to compete in a pro race.

"The pro riders will tackle the very same picturesque Cte de Harwood Dale climb later that day," she said. "As such the complimentary 'King of the Mountains' photograph that every rider will receive serves as a memento of the whole experience of the day. It will remind them of the exhilaration of taking part in the event and hopefully an appreciation of the unique experience of the day."

King of the mountains

The Tour de Yorkshire Ride, for which Maserati serves as the title sponsor for the second year, consists of routes of about 25, 53 and 74 miles, each of which takes place on the same day as and along many of the same roads as the final stage of the Tour de Yorkshire Pro race. Participants, limited to 6,000, will begin on Cleveland Way, Scarborough, UK and finish along the seafront on Royal Albert Drive.

"The Tour de Yorkshire Ride represents the perfect sportive for Maserati to partner with as it is one of the leading sportive events in the UK," Ms. Angelini said. "There is no other sportive ride that compares to the Tour de Yorkshire Ride in the UK it truly captures the imagination of the UK cycling population.

"Everything is meticulously planned as if it were a professional race," she said. "The organizers, ASO in conjunction with Human Race, utilize their experience in putting on the Tour de France brilliantly to ensure a seamless and unforgettable day for all involved."



David Millar for Maserati

To add a competitive edge to the event, Maserati cycling ambassador David Millar has challenged the riders to beat his time on the Cte de Harwood Dale climb, where the professional competitors will also be timed.

Cte de Harwood Dale in the North Yorkshire Moors has an average gradient of 7.4 percent and a maximum of 16 percent. Mr. Millar completed the climb of about 0.81 miles in three minutes and 57 seconds.

To memorialize the moment, Maserati will offer complimentary "King of the Mountains" photography to all participants. Each will be photographed as they cross the line and have their image edited alongside Mr. Millar's.



David Millar on Cte de Harwood Dale

Providing riders with a memento of the experience is a subtle way for Maserati to promote its brand. A positive memory will become indistinguishable from Maserati's contribution to it.

To help promote the event and prime riders for the climb, Mr. Millar and Maserati have produced a preview video. It begins with Mr. Millar describing the prime, which he describes as "particularly British" in that it is in ramps.

He continues to take viewers through the climb step-by-step, describing the steep section at the beginning, where he advises riders to take it easy. After that, when the trail begins to level off, riders should continue to pace themselves in preparation of another steep section and the upcoming difficult section, which will challenge even experienced riders.

"David Millar - 2016 Maserati Tour de Yorkshire Ride - 'King of the Mountains' preview"

Significant segments of the environmentally conscious millennial generation have taken to cycling as both a hobby and primary means of transportation, while car sales among the group have correspondingly decreased. Maserati Cycling gives the established automaker an opportunity to reach that group of consumers, and a highly experiential promotion likely aligns with the interests and tactics they respond to most.

"The rapid growth of road cycling in the UK has been particularly evident amongst Maserati customers and employees, whose passion for performance, sporting excellence and design provides a natural conduit to the sport," Ms. Angelini said. "Through Maserati Cycling, the company will aim to embrace this passion and is committed to supporting its continued growth."

Peter Denton, region manager for Maserati North Europe, added, "The sport is highly contagious. We have seen an ever-increasing number of our dealership network and their customers get bitten by the cycling bug over recent

years. For Maserati and its customers at least, it would appear that cycling is the new golf."

The ride will take place on May 1. Interested parties can register to partake [here](#).

Cycling frenzy

Other Maserati Cycling initiatives have also honed in on causes and events that will speak to youth markets.

In November, Maserati leveraged its exclusivity for a cause with help from a two-wheeled friend.

The automaker will work with Italian bicycle brand Cipollini to create a road bike to auction off for Action Medical Research Funds. The charitable engagement will help Maserati convey admirable values and maintain a desirable brand ([see story](#)).

Other automakers have taken other routes to appeal to cyclists.

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is exploring a different kind of life on the road with an immersive video experience featuring cyclist Christian Vande Velde.

"Lexus Elevate" uses 360-degree video technology to follow Mr. Vande Velde on a cycling excursion, presenting the viewer with a virtual reality experience enhanced by visual and audio effects. By focusing on the journey itself and life on the road, Lexus is reminding consumers of its expertise and encouraging them to set off on travels of their own ([see story](#)).

Although cycling may seem at first glance to be at odds with Maserati, the brand is making a conscious adjustment to its image, ensuring that connotations of exclusivity, heritage and name recognition are not opposed to attainability or divorced from today's trends and attitudes.

"There is currently a misconception of Maserati as an elitist brand, which has served to alienate it from a large proportion of the car purchasing population," Ms. Angelini said. "Of course Maserati is a heritage brand with performance, premium quality and beautiful design at its heart, but that doesn't serve to rule anyone out."

"The Maserati Cycling initiative offers Maserati the opportunity to portray to relevant and receptive consumers that the Maserati brand is an open one and that its cars are attainable," she said. "The incredibly popular Maserati Ghibli Diesel model starts at a price point of 49,160 which comes as a surprise to many."