

Tobago International Cycling Classic

1986 - 2009

“Big Event...Small Island Style”

THE BIG STORY

In 2008 the Tobago International Cycling Classic celebrated its 22nd. Anniversary. What began as a dream back in 1986 under the stewardship of the Abraham family & Friends in Tobago has blossomed not only as the number 1 Cycling race in the Caribbean but into an international, world-renowned event, that may soon gain International UCI status. The vision started simply to give the Tobago a cycling event of their own and create something different for Tobago’s sporting community to look forward to other than the more traditional sporting events like football, cricket etc. Cycling’s main focus had always been in Trinidad. It was thought that the time had come to promote this sport in Tobago.

This vision has expanded over the years and since 1993 with the involvement of the Trinbago Wheelers, it has become much more than a local event, boasting over 100 international and regional competitors hailing from countries, as far as Australia, New Zealand, Europe, The United States of America, Canada, South and central America and the Caribbean, burning up miles and miles of the Tobago roadways. Many foreign media houses, journalists, Sponsors, Coaches and high ranking cycling officials have accompanied the international cyclist as they come over for this event, resulting in the race being given coverage in some of the most prestigious newspapers, magazines and top sporting websites worldwide, making it a truly world class event.

Tobago is the Caribbean's best kept secret. The last to enter the 'tourist trade', it has been able to keep much of its natural treasures well guarded.

As we embark on our 3rd decade in the race, we would like to move the boundaries further a-field, and bring this event to an even wider audience, thereby stepping up our contribution to the efforts made by the THA, the TDC and The Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago to establish Tobago as the premium sport tourism destination it ultimately has the potential to become.

For the past 23 years some of our more adventurous cyclists and their families have enjoyed what the world has only just waken up to, is an island where nature abounds with large, virgin rain forest, its famous dive and deep sea fishing spots where the largest Brain coral and other abundant life rest safely under the waves. Over the years they have tried our game fishing, enjoyed sailing and gone on trips aboard the unique glass bottom boats that offer adults and children alike, a wide array of coral formations, and a kaleidoscope of parrot fish, angels, sea whips, deadman's fingers and the wonders of the Coral Gardens and the Nylon Pool.

This best kept secret has been whispered by our cyclists across international borders far and wide to their families, friends & acquaintances, who now find that Tobago has a great deal more to offer. As sportsmen and women they are nature lovers and find that they may even participate in horse back riding on the beach, hikes and mountain trails through the most beautiful foliage and wildlife in the region and one of the oldest wild life reserves anywhere in the world.

The all-nighters among them have enjoyed the late night-spots. 'Come as you are, have a few beers, ole talk and meet the Tobago crew' and party into the night. For the more sophisticated palette, there are numerous choices of restaurants to enjoy the catch of the day, exotic Caribbean dishes, spiced up with the touch of the 'sweet Caribbean hand'.

It is clear to see why the Tobago International Cycling Classic has become one of the most sort after competitions as both the cyclist and their families can find something that fascinates them. With the launch of the inter- island Ferries a few years ago more and more Trinidadian have made the trip with their cars and vans packed with goodies to experience a top class event and enjoy a total vacation.

At the Tobago International Cycling Classic you get more than a premium cycle event, they get Tobago!

France boasts of the Tour de France.

Hawaii is famous for the Iron Man Triathlon

The Caribbean is legendary for the Tobago International Cycling Classic.

WHO ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY COME?

In the past 10 years we have seen an increase of international competitors & their support group arrives on the Tobago shores eager to take on the best of the Caribbean. These athlete all vie for the coveted prize- King of the Road. The race that is now recognized as the toughest

in the region has attracted top bikers from as far as France, Belgium, Austria, Holland, England, New Zealand, USA, Canada, Italy, Cuba, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Venezuela, The Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Barbados, St Lucia, Grenada, French Guiana, Suriname and Guyana. ***This challenging race offers them all a chance to compete for the top honors but it also gives them a chance to train for their up coming professional circuits as they peddle along its steep climbs, incredible descents and wild coastal and forest roads.***

THE COMPETITION

Nothing breeds competition but competition itself.

This is evidenced over the years as better and better cyclists arrive for the main event, The Division 1. This division pits the pros against the best and bravest of the Regional & local bikers. It's hard, its tiring, its aggressive, its rigorous and it's the most difficult race of its kind in the region. And they LOVE IT. They all come to get the better of its demanding terrain and test themselves.

Over the years the Tobago International Cycling Classic has seen the overall improvement of both the local and Caribbean riders, some for the first time coming into contact with the best of the world. They too test themselves and raise their own standards every year. We have seen more and more regional riders try out the Division 1 Race. In the initial years the goal of most of the regional riders was just to finish the five (5) stages of the race, but with time, competition and great personal effort spearheaded by the Caribbean's most celebrated and Tobago's very own Emile Abraham, they have managed to secure top 10 placings regularly. A very credible achievement on such a big stage. What better results can you ask for? Our riders' standards are improving as we continue to pit ourselves against the world.

That's what top class competition breeds.

LET THE FESTIVITIES BEGIN

All work and no play make Jack a dull boy. Each day after all the hard road work there is always time to play. We have teamed up with many of Tobago's special interest groups, who take the teams out to the Buccoo reef, sailing, scuba diving and many other outdoor activities. Apart from our usual tours each person can do their own thing and find their own adventure in Tobago if they wish. ***The afternoons belong to them to enjoy.***

The Buccoo Tour

Each year the athletes, our international guests, sponsors, officials and friends look forward to spending time and taking their families out to the famous Buccoo Reef and the Nylon Pool. They are invited to explore one of the many famous sites that Tobago has become internationally renowned for. ***A nice time for all.***

The Saturday Lay Day

A special prize functions for Division 2 winners followed by party time with Michael Baker, DJ & Steel band music. Its time to relax, eat, drink, dance and make merry. Here the cyclists, their families rub shoulders with their supporters, the local and international press, the sponsors, dignitaries, and Tobago special interest groups and enjoys the hospitality of their host. ***A good time is had by all.***

The Interaction.

Apart from the intermingling between the competitors in an informal atmosphere, we have paid particular attention to Tobago's providers of entertainment. E.g. Charter boats such as sailing, fishing, diving, glass bottom boats and many others so that each cyclist and their family can participate in what Tobago has to offer. ***Totally entertained during their stay with us.***

OBJECTIVES & VISION

- To develop the Tobago International Cycling Classic into a supreme sporting event surpassing the highest international standards
- To increase our contribution to the development of Tobago as an international sports tourism destination of the highest caliber .
- To maximize our sponsors' ROI
- To attract better coverage of the world's best sporting media houses .

OUR WINNING FORMULA

- An excellent network of leading international Media Houses. Journalists, Sporting Associations & cycling organizations
- 100% Support from the local media.
- 22 years of experience in staging a world class event of this type.
- Tobago – where we have the extraordinary mix of a world class Event on a world class tropical paradise destination
- A team of committed professionals forming the organizing committee

LET'S MAKE IT HAPPEN

The Tobago International Cycling Classic is undoubtedly the largest and most prestigious road cycling event in the Region. It embodies the winning combination of a number 1 rated cycling event together with the breath-taking destination of Tobago. Our local food and culture, the friendly people and beautiful beaches, continue to lure participants back to Tobago each year.

The execution of the event is unsurpassed and every year we continue to improve. Our competitors are our top priority therefore we take every precaution to ensure their comfort and safety while in Tobago. For our local cyclists, the event provides a forum where they can interact with and compete

against some of the best pros. It also helps them gain international exposure and develop new contacts in pursuit of international contracts.

Why do we do it? We do it because we have an ideal venue and we see its endless possibilities. A lot of passion and pure determination goes into this event each year. It has evolved from a 2-stage local event into an international 5-stage event managed by a team of trained professionals who ensure the event is run according to international standards.

None of this would have been possible had it not been for the consistent support of our sponsors over the years.

The Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company, the Tobago House of Assembly, and the Sports Company of Trinidad and Tobago have shared our vision and have wholeheartedly given their support over the last 5 years.. We have also been able to secure consistent support from corporate T&T & well wishers who enjoy the sport and wish to see more resources devoted to its development. We say a special thanks to Caribbean Airlines; Johnston Apartments; National Lotteries Board; Crown Point Beach Hotel; Heineken T'dad Ltd; Caribbean Bottlers; Angostura Ltd; Procure Ltd; Digi-Data Systems; British Airways; Peter Gremli; Michael Baker & Everyone who have volunteered their time & effort to success of this Event. We would like to thank them all for their continued support.

Media

Positive word of mouth. Nothing beats it.

Over the years we have created an excellent network and close bonds with international cycling federations, pro teams, journalists and promoters, this has helped to put us on the international sporting agenda. Media houses have sent their writers and camera men to Tobago to capture what words alone can not do justice to, with excellent results. Our race has been covered in magazines, newspapers and websites locally, regionally and through out the wider world. But we need more to take this vision to its limit.

Our short term ambition is to have the international sporting cable networks like ESPN, SKY SPORTS and FOX in Tobago providing live coverage over the 4 days or doing a feature on the experience. They all have shown an interest in covering the biggest international cycling event in the region but we simply don't have the budget to support such an expense.

OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE

Like all major sporting events, adequate sponsorship is the key and continues to be our greatest challenge .

Although many of our competitors and supporters have also been promoting the race and the island on the international cycling circuit and every year we see bigger and better teams wanting to compete, there needs to be a more comprehensive sponsorship involvement. As part of our overall creative sponsorship plan we have guaranteed each individual sponsor ample presence and media coverage. Our daily events all provide generous opportunities for a creative audio and visual presence.