



COMMÜNION TOUR

10 May 2025, Val Müstair

“Bainvegni”. An almost audible welcome in Romansch, as you drive past the Swiss National Park, one of the oldest in Europe, and the only one in Switzerland. The mystical valley of Müstair certainly has a presence to it. This is where you enter the state of “Entschleunigung” – to decelerate, slow down, observe and absorb.

The event is the open house welcoming weekend of Il Nucleus. Il Nucleus is not your typical bike shop. It is the culmination of endless hours of brainstorming, paperwork and, most importantly, a passion to bring cycling with soul to serve the community and visitors of Val Müstair.

Il Nucleus consists of Patrick Köppe – The Calm Influence, Nicole “Nicci” Tschenett – The Guiding Queen, and Simon “Semu” Weber – The Workshop Wizard. The team dynamic (and physics) between these three emanate with a positive charge at its core.

Friday evening served as the prelude to the Saturday festivities. Local community folks finishing from work and curious commuters dropped by for some hotdogs and barista-style coffee, served out of the MiaEngiadina office caravan.

After some prolonged znüni on a crisp clean Saturday morning, riders were accompanied by Switzerland’s best freestyler, Lucas “Huppi” Huppert, and guided by Arno Galmarini for a “pure alpine” riding experience.



Around 200 people came out for the day from all corners of the valley and beyond. Even for those who are not familiar with cycling, it was evident why Graubünden is considered the “Home of Trails”.

Projects like Las Ciclistas and Fairtrail, under the program of graubündenBike were showcased and celebrated, serving as tangible testimonies of what has been initiated to not only engage and empower local communities, but also establishing Graubünden as one of the top mountain biking destinations in the world.

Saturday was concluded with what can only be described as a soul ride. The group’s age ranged from 14 to 70, a Biosphere ranger, a pro athlete, a switchback queen, and everyone in between. Finishing the ride with one last espresso and a cold one. New connections created, new friendships forged. This is COMMÜNION.

Tucked away in the eastern most corner of the country Val Müstair may be off the beaten path. However, boasting both a UNESCO World Heritage Site with the Benedictine Convent of St John (famous for its Carolingian-era frescoes and monastic history), a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, the best “nusstorte” in Switzerland, and the purest alpine riding experience in the country, it’s safe to sanction this place as the best kept secret in Switzerland.

Key take-aways from the COMMÜNION event in Müstair:

- “Community” was the overarching theme of the event. This was prevalent in how many people attended and how many folks volunteered to help bring the event to life.
- One way to measure success of a cycling event is when you have people coming to the event who don’t even cycle. This is how more people get into the sport, or develop a sense of respect and appreciation for what it can bring to their region.
- Those who attended from neighboring regions were inspired and left with the question – “How can we create the same concept and sense of community in our local area?”
- There was a conscious decision to refrain from bringing a political angle to the event, even though it may have provided a perfect setting to informally discuss certain matters that concern the region. By keeping politics at bay, the event itself felt more authentic and community members were able to participate and enjoy without reservation.
- When there is soul, substance and sincerity behind an initiative, it has a contagious effect on the community, and people are naturally drawn to take part.
- Even though the success of a strong community and community event is a collaborative team effort, it often comes down to the determination, dedication, and passion of a small handful of people.



- Mobilizing an entire community could seem challenging, or even contrived if it's done with the wrong intent, by the wrong people. By empowering the right key people, a community will be more likely to engage.
- Things like good coffee and a bratwurst bbq can turn any event into a community gathering. People don't need much to feel inspired and motivated to get together on a weekend with their entire family.
- The timing of the event was slightly unfortunate, as a lot of the people representing different interest groups from Müstair and bordering regions were on vacation during this period.
- What seems to be lacking in Müstair from a point of lift infrastructure, could be its most valuable asset. You truly get a sense of a pure alpine experience in Müstair. It is evident that this needs to be preserved and celebrated more widely.
- The fact that a shuttle is needed to take people to the higher trails creates some unity, almost inadvertently. If people need to meet at a specific time and place to get shuttled together, rather than everyone having the choice to take the ski lift at their own leisure, it has an inevitable bonding effect. New connections are made and experiences shared.
- Müstair has got a diverse profile of riders from all genders, ages and interests. This again is thanks to a few passionate individuals who are leading the charge.
- Initiatives from Graubünden Bike like Las Ciclistas has a tangible impact in a community like Val Müstair, which not only creates a space for women to get into cycling, but has formed an identity on its own. This serves as a beacon and sense of belonging for women from all over Graubünden to know that they have a riding community wherever they go. There is an opportunity to strengthen this in neighboring regions like Scuol and the lower Engadin.
- Fairtrail is another initiative from Graubünden Bike which was evident and celebrated during the event. Fairtrail ambassadors, or "Fairdinands", play a critical role in bringing a sense of community and coexistence which transcends the mountain biking community and reaches the hearts and minds of all trail users and community members.
- With Nicole Tschenett being both a Fairdinand and a Ciclistas ambassador, it's easy to see why Müstair serves as an example for neighboring regions.
- Another measure of how successfully mountain biking or cycling has been adopted by a town is when you go to the local restaurant after a full day on the bikes and you are able to order a Spaghetti Mountain Bike or a Ride la Val pizza on the menu.

Grazcha fich,
Fanie Kok

