



**3RD EDITION OF THE VOLVIC VOLCANIC EXPERIENCE
MAY 30TH TO JUNE 1ST**

TRAIL RACES, FESTIVITIES AND CULTURAL VISITS... MEET THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE VVX!

Sports press release, April 2019

The Volvic Volcanic Experience – VVX – offers an athletic immersion into what is one of France’s most iconic landscapes: the Chaîne des Puys – Faille de Limagne, newly designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site! The VVX will embark all athletes, trail runners and hikers on an odyssey of the senses through the pristine natural landscapes at the heart of this unique natural site.

During the three-day event, the whole Auvergne region comes together to share their passions, achievements and even give a sneak peek into some of their local secrets and traditions. For this event, men and women from all perspectives unite, whether world-renowned athletes or lesser-known adventure seekers. Here are their stories:

THE ATHLETES

Anthony Gay (age 36) and Caroline Benoit (age 32), winners of the 2018 edition.

Anthony and Caroline are wonderful ambassadors of the Volvic Volcanic Experience! As both a couple and a family (2nd child coming soon...), they now proudly represent the event which aims at families, children and all other nature, sports and trail lovers.

Since both Caroline and Anthony are native of Auvergne, they regularly enjoy coming back together to train on the very paths and trails they knew as children, immersing themselves in fond family memories. Both have participated in practically all of the Auvergne volcano region’s races, often bringing home new victories! Although they now live in Haute-Savoie, coming back to their homeland is always a pleasure. As ambassadors for the VVX, they convey the event’s original and unique concept. In their own words, *“the event’s organizers wish to open our regional landscape and culture to others. Only very few events try to establish what the VVX does. Although, of course, the trail races are the main attraction to the weekends’ festivities, there are also over 30 parallel activities open to the public for free. The organizers strive to thereby highlight the local activities, whether cultural, festive or artisanal. Their goal is to promote the territory as a whole and I’m pleased to see that it’s a success since runners are becoming aware of the destination’s uniqueness... and all this, thanks to trail racing!”*

Caroline and Anthony both won the VVX’s 2018 edition of the 83 km format, respectively in women's and men's categories. Anthony will participate yet again this year, racing alongside other elite international runners on the 110 km course. On the other hand, Caroline won't be racing this year because she is expecting their second child, but she definitely plans on being there to cheer Anthony on.

A member of the TSL OXSITIS HG team, Anthony ranks 18th worldwide on the UTWT, thanks to an impressive 6th place on the Trans Gran Canaria race. To top it off, he also regularly organizes mountain trail training trips in Auvergne and elsewhere via his agency called Aupa (www.aupa-agence.com).



“Personally, I have a preference for long-distance races, those that run over 100 km. Crossing an entire island or mountain range, for instance, just has something magic about it. It’s a challenge that I particularly love taking up. This doesn’t keep me from also participating in shorter races, but I just really love the long, extreme formats. One of the main reasons for this is that human physiology is the main factor for success on the short distances. Whereas on long distances, the way the runner manages nights, sleep and nutrition, will play an important role... And the longer the distance, the more this is true. To win, one has to be able to manage all the different aspects of the race. This year, the VVX’s impressive list of participants is even more motivating!”, says Anthony.

Dawa Dachhiru Sherpa (Nepal)

Dawa Sherpa was born in the Himalayas, in the mountains surrounding Mount Everest, at 2700 m altitude. At the age of 6, he was sent off to join a monastery where he learned the art of Buddhism, martial arts and meditation. He then ran his first race at the age of 25 and very quickly became one of the world’s best runners, winning some of the hardest trail races out there. The ease and technicality with which he seems to accomplish long-distance races has quickly made him a standout among other world-renowned runners. He’s also known and appreciated for his amazing kindness and sportsmanship.

In his career, he has won more than 100 races including, but not limited to, the Annapurna Mandala Trail, the Tchimbé Raid, the Grand Raid du Mercantour, and the 6000 D. In 2010, he landed an impressive 5th place on the Grand Raid de la Réunion. He was also the very first winner of the UTMB® in 2003.

And because for Dawa *“trail running is first and foremost the exploration of new landscapes”*, he is signed up for the VVX’s 43 km race. *“I’m excited to discover the volcanoes of Auvergne for the first time!”*, exclaims Dawa.



THE ADVENTURERS

New in 2019 : the Great Volcanic Crossing Experience

In addition to the 4 existing race formats, the VVX will be offering a whole new challenge this year... bigger, longer, and simply crazier than the others; the Great Volcanic Crossing Experience. Otherwise known as the XGTV®, this race will cover a total of 220 km and a 7500 m elevation gain. Designated as an adventure race, it’s most importantly an ultra-endurance event which requires a good sense of direction, both on and off designated trails. Equipped only with GPX-track road books, runners will follow GR (official Grande Randonnée) trails 95 % of the time (red & white markings). The race’s route will explore the diversity and beauty of the landscapes in the Natural Regional Park of the Auvergne’s Volcanoes. Especially designed for experienced athletes and adventurers, the XGTV® can be run solo or in teams of two. To date, 17 solo runners and 4 duos are signed up to take part in this exceptional race.

Amongst these incredible adventurers, here's a selection of 4 amazing profiles!

THE DUO, La team Ding'o (« the nutty team », in English)

The team Ding'o is made up of two runners : Willy Dujarding (age 54) and Gilles Yves (age 39). This remarkable duo has set its next challenge : running the XGTV®. And who knows, they may even accomplish the extraordinary challenge of running 220 km in record time ! Amongst their triumphs are the 1st edition of the Ultra Raid 28 in 2013 and the "Traversée" (a race organized by the Salomon Running Team) in 2015, which they managed to finish in under 50 hours.

"We had been searching for our next challenge as a team for quite a while. Individual ultras are great, but the experience takes on a whole other dimension when shared as a team. We know very little of Auvergne, although it's not so far from our native Normandy! Our main goal while running this race will be to enjoy ourselves as much as possible. Our motto is "do things seriously without taking yourself too seriously". But from there on, it's impossible to say how things will go. Predicting the outcome of a 220 km race in the mountains seems a little presumptuous...", says the team.



THE ACTIVIST, Matthieu the solo runner

The adventure will be quite different for Matthieu Ollier, age 39, who is signed up as a solo runner. Both founder and president of the OFF ROAD X-Perience Solidarity Trail Association, Matthieu will be running the XGTV® for the Neurofibromatosis and Recklinghausen's Association. After 10 years of triathlon and two Ironman races (Embrun in 2010 and Vichy in 2011), Matthieu has decided to devote his time to ultra-trail running. He finished 3rd on the Grand Trail Stevenson (a three-day – three-stage race), but his most cherished adventures are the Mitic in Andorra (112 km / 9700 elevation gain) in 2017 and Pottoka (Basque Country crossing) in 2018.



"Being an Auvergne native and an adventure lover, the XGTV® is a solidarity project I'm eager to take part in. My aim is that my running will get people talking about neurofibromatosis and the association I represent. By running through the area of the local volcanoes, I'm looking to experience a solo and yet interdependent adventure!"

THE MOST INTENSE, David Riché

David, age 36, of Team Tech1Sport, is a former military and long-distance specialist. He has qualified two times for the Ultra Spartan Race World Championships.

He has signed up this year for the XGTV® because it is part of his physical training for what is an important personal project: a solo crossing of Antarctica in 2020, the last leg of a documentary on global warming that he's directing.

“The 220 km and 7500 meter elevation gain offered by the XGTV® is a rare race format in France. And it fits just perfectly into my physical prep program. I can’t wait to start... and, of course, cross the finish line!”



THE WONDER WOMAN, Claire Rimbault

At age 47, Claire is a mom of three, a PE teacher and one of the few (or only?) women to participate in the 1st edition of the XGTV®. Her impressive track record includes participations in the UTMB®, the Diagonale des Fous route in Réunion, France, and the Ultra-trail® in Madeira, Portugal, and Barcelona, Spain. She especially loves long distance runs like the one she recently completed with friends between Lioran, France and the Mediterranean Sea : a total of 342 km in 6 days!

“What I love most are the adventures that take you from point A to point B and that’s exactly what the XGTV® is. It crosses two departments and three mountain chains with no trail markings and only a GPX track. I love this because I especially enjoy orienteering. And even if 220 km is obviously quite long and I won’t have completed 100 % of my training by then, the trails on the XGTV are less technical than others and the elevation gain is reasonable... And just like on all my other races, my husband will be there to assist me!”



THE VVX IS NOW 5 RACES TO COMPETE, EXPLORE AND EXPERIENCE...

The “XGTV®” Great Volcanic Crossing Experience

220 km for solo competitors or two person teams – 7500 m elevation gain
Limited to 20 teams of 2 and 20 solo runners

The Chaîne des Puys-Faille de Limagne Trail Experience

110 km solo competitors or two or three person teams – 3500 m elevation gain
Limited to 400 participants

The Volvic Impluvium Trail Experience

43 km – 1670 m elevation gain
Limited to 600 participants

The Volcanic Trail Experience

25 km – 900 m elevation gain
Limited to 500 participants

The Lava Trail Experience

15 km – 550 m elevation gain
Limited to 500 participants



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