



Introducing the Natural Bridge Cycling Challenge

One Big Celebration on Two Wheels!

From the event organizers behind the Tour of Shenandoah and Tour of Virginia elite bicycling races, the Natural Bridge Cycling Challenge is a **Gran Fondo-style** road cycling event that will thrill participants and spectators alike. Come and join the excitement as we promote this world-class event at the local, state, and national levels!

What's a Gran Fondo?

Think of it as a marathon for cyclists.

Gran Fondos (or “big endurance” in Italian) are a European tradition. These events attract huge crowds of cyclists every weekend throughout the western European cycling strongholds of Italy, France, Spain and Belgium. Half race, and half Sunday stroll, gran fondos are timed events over challenging courses that attract all levels of cyclists – from seasoned professionals to weekend warriors. Some of the larger gran fondos, such as the Gran Fondo Pinarello and the Etape du Tour, attract over 10,000 participants and generate millions of Euros for the local economy.

As American cyclists have ridden and conquered the great “monuments” of European cycling, the Gran Fondo tradition has recently crossed the Atlantic in a big way.

The King Ridge Gran Fondo in Santa Rosa, CA highlights the format's exploding popularity here in the U.S. In 2011, this event attracted 6,500 riders from across the U.S., yielded a \$200,000 donation to the City of Santa Rosa to host the 2012 Amgen Tour of California and improve bicycling facilities in the city, and generated millions in economic benefit for the local economy.

Based on the successful model of the King Ridge Gran Fondo, the Natural Bridge Cycling Challenge will yield similar positive results for the cyclists, the local economy, the event organizers and for its corporate sponsors. In fact, we have recruited several core staff from the King Ridge Gran Fondo to help manage and promote our event here in Virginia.

In sum, the NBCC will capitalize on an exciting sports trend and build a sustainable, profitable (and fun!) event based on a proven model.

Natural Bridge Cycling Challenge

Event Description

Date: Sunday, August 27

Expected Number of Riders: 150-250

The NBCC will kick off with a pasta dinner and registration/number pick-up Saturday night August 26th at Natural Bridge hotel.

Early Sunday morning (8 AM), the riders will depart under an arch and begin their tour of Rockbridge County and the Blue Ridge Mountains in a single group.

Later on the route, riders will split and choose one of three course options with varying degrees of length and difficulty:

- **Piccolo Fondo** of 30 miles;
- **Medio Fondo** of 60 miles; or
- **Gran Fondo** of 100 miles

The courses will include many of the other scenic and historic highlights of Rockbridge County, including downtown Lexington, Vesuvius, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Buena Vista, and Natural Bridge Station.

At the end, all riders will finish under Natural Bridge for a commemorative photo and finisher's medal. Post ride food and drink will await them at the renowned Natural Bridge hotel.

Did we mention the local Virginia wines and craft brews?

Proceeds from the NBCC will benefit the Virginia Conservation Legacy Fund, preserving Virginia's natural beauty for generations to come..

The greatest beneficiary will be the local economy, with an estimated economic benefit in the tens of thousands dollars and the creation of an annual event to spotlight the ecotourism virtues of this uniquely beautiful region of the Old Dominion.

Our Audience

Our goal is to present a world-class cycling event at this iconic Virginia landmark and future state park to serve the more than 7 1/2 million people in Virginia.

The Natural Bridge Cycling Classic presents an active-tourism platform reaching well beyond the Commonwealth's borders. The spring date for the event will highlight the blooming fauna and comfortably mild temperatures typical in western Virginia. With the history of nearby Lexington, and the growing international reputation of Virginia viticulture, we expect to draw significant interest and media attention at both the national and international levels.

Naturally, our core market is cycling enthusiasts. Over 80 million people ride bikes in the United States--a number that is more than double the entire population of Canada. Cyclists are affluent: the average annual family income is over \$90,000, and cycling ranks as a top sport among highly educated professionals like doctors and lawyers. The *New York Times* has recently called cycling "the new golf."

Despite recent economic conditions, bicycle sales, participation in the sport, and bicycle race registrations are experiencing a tremendous growth phase.

We present an opportunity for Natural Bridge to target this large, vibrant market segment and align your brand with a healthy and eco-friendly activity.



Marketing Plan

The NBCC will reach this core audience using the following media:

- A dedicated website: **www.naturalbridgecycling.com**
- Ads at cycling-specific websites (i.e., cyclingnews.com, bikereg.com)
- Pre-event stories and media partnerships with cycling specialty media:
 - *Bicycling Magazine*
 - *Peloton Magazine*
 - *Bicycle Times*
 - *Spokes Magazine*
- Social networking sites and calendar submissions
- Print ads in cycling-specific publications targeting the following areas:
 - Washington DC/Baltimore
 - Philadelphia
 - NYC Metro
 - New England
- Broadcast emails to participant list share agreements with Bike Virginia and the Tour of Richmond
- Posters and brochures distributed throughout bike shops and other events in the Mid-Atlantic/Southeast

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NATURAL BRIDGE CYCLING CHALLENGE



About Us

The Natural Bridge Cycling Challenge is brought to you by SportVista, LLC, a Virginia race management company. We have organized many successful cycling events including several previous Tours of Shenandoah and Tour of Virginia Pro/Am International bicycle stage races, and the Gran Fondo Alleghany.



We are committed to health promotion, economic development and premium experiences for the communities, corporate sponsors and participants we serve.

We typically mobilize more than 200 volunteers, local and state police, fire and rescue and medical workers, and staff to keep our events rolling. Our race committee, headed by Executive Director Matthew Buttermann, has Olympic and international endurance sports and cycling event management experience. We have the best public relations and marketing team in our industry to promote our events, venues, and sponsors.

We know what it takes to launch and sustain a successful event, and we look forward to doing it with the Natural Bridge Cycling Classic!