



GOING THE DISTANCE

INTERVIEW VIRGINIA MILLEN IMAGES TIM MILLER

Elite mountain biker, Andy Fellows, talks to *Outer Edge* about why endurance racing is addictive and his new passion, the Ayup mountain bike race team.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO MOUNTAIN BIKE RACING?

My cycling apprenticeship was done in Tasmania, where I grew up on a hobby farm. I had my trusty BMX and I used to ride it all over the farm. For my 14th birthday I scored a mountain bike, it was a Malvern Star "Bronco". Good times! That lasted about six months before I upgraded it. I made friends quickly in the mountain bike world, friends that I still have 15 years later. Racing was a natural progression.

HOW DID THIS EVOLVE INTO ENDURANCE RACING?

I guess I fell into it. It wasn't something that was planned; it just played out that way. Although once I realised that I could do well it became more of a priority. Endurance racing is extremely addictive. You can improve on every race so you are always looking for the perfect race, but is it actually out there?

HOW DO YOU GET THROUGH AN ENDURANCE RACE MENTALLY?

People often ask me, "how you ride for 24 hours solo?" My answer is always, I don't know, I just do it. I just keep riding and eventually the time clicks over. There are many strategies, breaking it down into six-hour blocks, night-time/day-time, food rewards, whatever works to keep your legs going around. The biggest part is you have to believe in yourself and I know I can do it. I think that anyone reading this article can do it too, they just need the self-belief, determination and some mongrel.

AND PHYSICALLY?

Simple. Do the training, know your body and keep it fuelled. Coming into race day my body will be primed and in peak physical condition. My biggest concern is keeping it fuelled. With the help of my support crew, we calculate how much energy I need to consume to keep my legs going around.

WHAT ARE THE MOST CHALLENGING ELEMENTS OF A 24-HOUR RACE?

Getting to the race can be a hassle because travelling with bikes is getting harder and costing more. The pack and clean-up would be probably the worst. The bike race is the easiest; just get out there, forget about everything else and ride.

YOU'VE BEEN NICKNAMED "THE CHILLER", WHY?

That nickname was given to me by the boys at AMB. I think it relates to how laid back and relaxed I can be. I try not to get too stressed out!

WHERE DOES YOUR COMPETITIVE DRIVE COME FROM?

I'm not too sure. I have been competitive since I was a kid. It doesn't matter whether I'm playing table tennis or cycling. I think self-confidence and belief contributes to my competitive drive. If you make it a competition I will play.

WHERE HAS RACING TAKEN YOU?

My racing has taken me worldwide, with some epic adventures in New Zealand and Canada. But, you don't have to go too far to find a high quality race these days. Some of the best mountain bike races are right here in our backyard.

WHY HAVE YOU FORMED THE AYUP RACING TEAM?

Mountain biking has given me so much over the past 15 years and I thought it was about time to give something back. In essence the team is about developing pathways for young, aspiring riders to reach their full potential. I believe that with the right help, support and guidance, the team can produce future

champions. With the help from our sponsors and some serious determination we can achieve this.

WHAT'S COMING UP IN THE REST OF 2011 AND BEYOND?

The remainder of the year is jam-packed with fun events and a couple of overseas jaunts to race in Malaysia and the UK. I've got the Mawson Marathon in August and the Tour de Timor in September, to name just a couple. Next year is all about the team. We are building a great squad and hope to compete in as many races as we can. Thanks to everyone who has helped turn my concept of the team into a reality. Also a big thanks to my family and wife for putting up with me!

