Beat: News

Mountain biking at home

Interview with Fabio Wibmer

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USPA NEWS - Interview with Fabio Wibmer, street trial and mountain bike professional, and Mercedes-Benz Vans brand ambassador

Up until a few weeks ago, mobile working from home was a welcome alternative to the daily journey to the office for a lot of employees, as it helped them to arrange their life balance more flexibly. In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home has become the new normal for very many people. Mobile working helps to slow the spread of the virus.

However, mobile working is not a realistic alternative for many types of work. Countless people give everything day after day, for example in the health service, in supermarkets or as delivery drivers, to ensure that our world keeps functioning and to provide basic services.

And for professional athletes, for example, we don't tend to think straight away of working from home, if there is not a gym or training ground available. But by creatively using everyday objects, experimenting, and with a positive spirit, training can be transferred to the home and connected with a film production, as professional mountain biker Fabio Wibmer demonstrates in his latest video.

Fabio, as a professional mountain biker, you generally spend most of your day outdoors. How did you feel when the restrictions in Austria were announced?

As a biker, you're mainly outdoors in the countryside or - as in my case - in the city, and you use this as your playground. When lockdown came into force, it was a bit of a shock at first, but everyone was aware that the situation was serious and we had to obey the rules if we wanted to return to normal life as soon as possible. Now we can see that the restrictions made sense. All the same, for me it was important to stay positive and to use the time at home as usefully as possible. The more time you have, the more creative you can be, and I saw that as a bit of a challenge, not to let things get me down.

What was the main challenge for you personally? How did you deal with it, and have you any suggestions about what helped you?

The biggest personal challenge was actually the thought of not being able to go biking. I love putting my bike into my V-Class and driving into town or to a bike park. Of course, in this situation that wasn't possible, and it was difficult doing without that and accepting I had to do something at home. I must say I'm very glad to live in a house with a garden so I have a bit of scope to let off steam. It's a bit limited, but if you are creative you find you have lots of options.

I'm generally someone who tries to make the best of any situation and see the positive aspects. That applies to these times too. So I asked myself how I could make the best use of the circumstances and do something for myself and to entertain myself. As I'm a biker and I love biking, it was obvious I had to find a way of practising my sport at home.

Aren't you generally on your own as a mountain biker? Did you have to change your training at all?

Riding a mountain bike is an individual sport, but I like biking with other bikers or in a group. It's more fun when you can push each other a bit. I definitely had to change my training, because the surrounding area in the city or prepared trails are my playground. So first of all I had to look at what I had at home and what might lend itself to help training with a bike.

So you hit on the idea of setting up obstacles like that at home?

I'm basically someone who always tries to be creative and to look at things from a different angle. So I found it relatively easy to set up something using the things I had at home. I've already set up things in the garden a few times, and now I had lots of time to think and to be inventive with my bike. Whether it was jumping from the roof or landing on a washing machine: all of those things are the result when you have a lot of time to find new ideas.

Can other amateur mountain bikers build up a course at home, or how can they use the current time for themselves?

I think every biker has the means to set up something at home in one way or another. If you have a garden, it's better still, but just in your house or your apartment you can be creative too. Just practising a track stand - balancing with both feet in the pedal on the standing bike - can be a cool challenge for some people, and it gives them the opportunity just to sit on their bike and improve their skills.

When you're not riding around your course, how do you spend your time?

We actually spent the last four to five weeks just producing the video. Either we built up parts of the course, or we gathered ideas, or we spent the whole day filming, because some of the tricks actually needed up to 600 attempts. I really enjoyed doing this project, because the time you spend with your colleagues "" even on distance - is even more intensive, and more original ideas come of it.

At the moment, everyone's talking about resilience. Using the challenge as an opportunity and making the best of the situation, that's a sign of resilience. What helps you to accept the current situation and turn it into something positive?

Of course, the situation is difficult for everybody. All the same, this time gives a lot of people the opportunity to realise projects that wouldn't have happened otherwise. I'm sure there are lots of people who have brilliant ideas but just don't have the time to work on them. This lockdown offers an ideal opportunity. As for me, basically I had the idea of this project and often thought about it, but I never had the time to work on it.

What have you learned from the current time, and what are you most looking forward to?

You learn to value things you took for granted before, like riding in bike parks or just being able to eat out in a restaurant. For me it was good spending more time with my nearest and dearest, which I often don't have enough time for, unfortunately.

I really think the thing I'm most looking forward to is getting into my car, putting my bike in, and just going off biking somewhere.

Fabio, thanks very much indeed for the interview.

Visit Fabio's Youtube channel by clicking on the 'More Information' link below

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