

## INTERVIEW WITH MATTHIAS MENDE

Tandem cyclist in the Saxon team at the Craft Bike Trans Germany, European champion and runnerup junior mountain bike world champion 1997, organizer of the MAD EAST Challenge



### What makes Saxony so interesting as a mountain biking region?

Saxony is on a par with other mountain biking regions all over the world. It combines a wide range of trails. Not only do we have challenging low mountain ranges with a varied landscape, but also steep climbs up towards the Czech border and steep descents on the other side. The alternating types of terrain can be linked up easily. There are also plenty of local events that are more and more interconnected. If you wanted, you could take part in a challenging race every weekend from April onwards.

### What are the top races in Saxony in 2008?

The biggest and most popular race is the Erzgebirgs Bike Marathon. There's something new going on there every year. The organizers try to create a warm atmosphere that suits everyone from professional athletes to the last past the post. After that comes our MAD EAST Challenge, I would say. It is the best-known event after the EBM but has a completely different format. We were the first crossborder stage race in Germany and the first where you can race alone and not in a team.

### And how is the event coming on?

The MAD EAST Challenge is becoming more and more popular. Last year we had 550 participants. Many come from all over Germany and even from countries abroad, like Ireland, Belgium, Italy or Switzerland. That shows we're on the right track.

## SOME SAX TRACKS

### Miriquidi Trails: Stülpner Cult(o)ure

Total route: approx. 70 km. Difference in altitude: approx. 1200 m.

Terrain: technically easy on well developed trails through woods and fields as well as on asphalt



### Miriquidi Trails: Erzgebirge Bike Marathon, Seiffen

Total route: approx. 28 km per round.

Difference in altitude: approx. 800 m.

Terrain: moderate difficulty both technically and physically, 100% rideable, 60% forest trails, 25% asphalt, 15% singletrack



### Vogtland Tours: Tour around Kiel Mountain

Total route: approx. 25,8 km. Difference in altitude: 940 m.

Terrain: flat stretches, technically easy except for one steep ascent



### Trans Germany Experience

Total route: approx. 50-65 km.

Difference in altitude: 900 -1400 m each day.

Terrain: variable: mainly forest and field trails and singletracks, not much asphalt



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