

THE "DIRECT PUNCH" MOUNTAIN RUNNING BLOG

HOOOLRRUN

#MOUNTAINRUNNING

THE PARTY
MUST BE
A PARTY

WINNING GIIR DI MONT
WILL ALWAYS REMAIN
IN MY MEMORY

"LAST CHAMPIONSHIPS
IN PATAGONIA?
HONESTLY
I DID NOT ENJOY IT
TOO MUCH"

"I've lived for
ten years
in Euskadi"

EL ZINCA

MADNESS, INSTINCT, PARTIES
FUBY BOY RULES



#2 Q4-2019



On the cover

Photography: **Marco Gulberti**
Styling: **Elisa Bazzana**

Inside

Photography: **Marco Gulberti**
Photography: **Maurizio Torri**
Interview: **Alessandro Scolari**

He brought in the Show

Genius and madness, sensitivity but also competence and seriousness.

All this melts inside Ionut Zinca.

Romania in his roots, the Basque Country in his growth, orienteering in his development and then 10 years of crazy and intense racing on the mountains, a long ride in which he won, lost, rejoiced and suffered, sometimes sacrificing his own body, always inflaming the crowd and the fans with his smile.

A real born Actor, he was able to tailor on himself a new idea of professionalism and inspired many young athletes with his crazy descents.

He brought the show in off-road running, trying to run for the fans, to be spectacular, to make people around him happy and helping media to have something "alive" to write about and to posterize on pictures.

First ever to be able to give an interview and tell something different than "Yes-it-was-a-tough-race-but-I-won-it-and-I-am-very-happy".

Met Kilian on his path when the Catalan was probably at his best, tried to crash Zegama and got sick, dreamt about Giir di Mont and won it (after two surgeries).

Run for Romania at world championships, made Valetudo great, created "the Rumanian legacy" and had beers, because party is a serious part of the race...

He is the champion of the people, and the first ever real showman of this sports.

Locura Extrema, y Istinto genial . . . El Zinca !

www.hooliganrunner14.com

SKola14

EL ZINCA

2019 Winter

DOB: 20/06/1983
PLACE: PLOPENI (Romania)
COUNTRY: ROMANIA

Q. Hallo Ionut, what a long time! The Italian fans love you so much but in the last years you disappeared from the racing scene and except for Giir di Mont it's very hard to see you racing again in our country. What's going on ? Where are you living ?

EL ZINCA - Hello, it was a pretty complicated time for me. In 2016, at the European Orientation Championship I suffered an injury to my left knee. I did not give much importance, I continued to run and train, but at the World Long Distance Championship in Slovenia I had a serious injury... after that the nightmare begun for me. for one year and a half I couldn't do much, then slowly the pain disappeared and I went back to training. During this long stop I lost a lot of physical strenght, but I became mentally stronger and more patient.

I always come with pleasure to Giir di Mont, I love everything about this race. In 2018 I returned to training and I joined a new club in Rumania (where I now live permanently) and I was 100% concentrated on one goal: World Long Distance Championship in Poland.

Q. What we know from your story is that you came to Italy for racing after living a lot in Spain, you were an ambassador of Rumanian Athletes in the off road running and one of the first "professional" in this sport. What's your point of view about this ?

EL ZINCA - Yes, I've lived in Vitoria-Gasteiz (Euskadi) for 10 years. When I started racing in Italy, I was still living in Victoria, then I moved to Rumania. Yes, I think I was one of the first pro athletes who managed to survive in this sport, I was lucky to find Valetudo Team and La Sportiva(they were my engine from a financial point of view). I always wanted to help young athletes with potential, I didn't have much help at the beginning of my career (especially as an emigrant), so my greatest satisfaction was seeing them managing to achieve results and improve the results year by year.

VITORIA GASTEIZ

EUSKADI

EL ZINCA **FEATURED**

2019 Winter

Q. From a technical point of view you came to mountain and sky running from the orienteering, what did you bring from this experience ?

EL ZINCA - The best part of an orienteering when it comes to mountain running, is that his technical level is very high (compared to an asphalt / track athlete who starts mountain running). We descend without fear, we control the descent very well and we resist very well the frequent changes of direction (the orienteering in the forest helps you to develop these things a lot).



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「 We descend without Fear 」

Q. Romania is today one of the best country in off-road running, everybody knows you and Denisa Dagomir thanks to the cooperation with Mr. Pesenti from the Team Valetudo (Today Serim), tell us the story of this relation and of this "project"

EL ZINCA - I can not say much, everyone pursues his own interests. Mr. Pesenti is looking for the best results for his team and we (the athletes) are pursuing our goals. But the two things meet in one place, we want to perform.

EL ZINCA

2019 Winter



★ ★ ★ Romanian rising stars >>>

"Cristina, her performance was incredible, we were all surprised by the result obtained in Argentina. It is the fruit of work, work and again work!"



Q. Some new Romanian athletes are coming up very strongly, and looks like they come from a traditional athletics background such as the former European junior champion Gabriel Bularda, the young starlet Alexia Hecico and the fresh new long distance world champion Cristina Simion, what can you tell us about this new Romanian wave of athletes ?

EL ZINCA - I am very happy to see Romanians on the podium or getting good performances. Alexia, I know her as a kid. We are family friends and I know that her mother (coaches) does a very good job. I hope she doesn't get lost in time, she is very talented and ambitious. Gabriel Bularda, he need time, it is very difficult to move from junior to senior. Especially in Rumania.

Cristina, her performance is incredible, we were all surprised by the result obtained in Argentina. It is the fruit of work, work and again work !

EL ZINCA

2019 Winter

Q. What is the situation in Romania with everyday' life, society , life style and then athletics ? Do you feel more European now after some years of social improvements? Does the Romanian Federation believe and invest in the off-road running ?

EL ZINCA - Yes, now we no longer live in trees, we went down and made houses in the underground (joke;-), the European Union did not give us good and bad things. For the moment and unfortunately they take care of us only when we achieve some notable international results . We always hope for better, more attention from them that could help us not only when the results are obtained (for pictures and media). I hope to materialize a new project, in which I can offer more of my experience to the Romanian team.

Q. Olympic Games and Mountain/Trail Running: is it possible or not ??

EL ZINCA - YES, I started with a non-olympic sport (orienteering), it is a sport with a great history and yet we are ignored. In the case of mountain running, I think things are a little different (history is smaller) but the impact is huge. Only the financial parts are missing to balance with the impact, and the brands and people with the power of decision to really want this.



2019 Winter

EL ZINCA



EL ZINCA

2019 Winter

27/07/2013

Q. If I name you Kilian Jornet Burgada what does it recall to your mind ?

EL ZINCA - Best mountain athlete, I'm glad I had the opportunity to meet him and share very beautiful moments (he always beat me, but there must be a second place ;-)

Q. July 27th 2013, a date that means a lot for you and for many real fans of this sport: you won Giir di Mont, in the most difficult year of your career, after a serious injury..... share with us your memories of that day....

www.giirdimont.it

EL ZINCA - Yes that year I suffered a serious and quite strange accident. At an orientation training in Bulgaria, I fell and a very sharp wood came into my right foot. It followed a period of 6 weeks with 3 surgeries, and almost a month in bed.

It was my craziest recovery, after two weeks from my first run I raced at Stava Skyrace (2nd place), after 5 weeks I did European Skyrunning Championship, Dolomites Skyrce (4th place), 6 weeks after the Giir Di Mont and 7 weeks after I took a 3rd place at the World Long Distance Championship, Poland.

But the feeling of winning Giir di Mont will always remain in my memory, I could not believe that I managed to win in front of very strong mountain runners. All week I was struggling to get back in shape after Dolomites race, where the descent had left a very big mark in my muscle.

EL ZINCA

2019 Winter

Q. Zegama 2015: 20 km of pure showtime and then the crack, a huge attack and the illusion to win the Basque monster... what happened in Zegama that year ? I can still remember your interview to a Spanish journalist , you were so disappointed and told him "I respect people who are saying I was fantastic for 20 km but race ends at km 42" was this a big defeat for you?

EL ZINCA - What a race! When I left home (Rumania), I had only one thing in mind, to break Kilian record. It was hard to get but not impossible, I knew I could run 3 hours 45 minutes in a day of grace. The first part of the race was ok, as you know. Then came the ordeal, 2 months before Alexander was born. Lack of rest and some of the trainings skipped, made me suffer after Aizgorri, the battery went into damage zone and I had to activate survival mode :-).

This was a lesson, unfortunately I didn't learn a lot and I can say that now.

Q. Canazei, Dolomites (today Dolomyths): 3 times in the 2nd place, but definitely one race that created the mythos of Zinca The Crazy Descender, what did you miss to win this race ?

EL ZINCA - To be Kilian ;-)))) or not to be at start with Kilian. It's my favorite race as a descent.

Twice Kilian ruled, and once Tadei Pivk, it was in the year when Alexander was born, after Zegama I had not been able to correct the nonsense made during the last months in my trainings. So at the Dolomites, I was still trying to put the last details.

“When I left home (Rumania), I had only one thing in mind, to Break Kilian's record . . . I knew I could run 3h45' in day of grace . . but then the Ordeal came”



EL ZINCA

2019 Winter

*Last Championship in Patagonia?
Honestly I did not enjoy it so much.
I don't agree to sacrifice runners just
for the show*

Q. Last world championships in Patagonia showed to the world that is possible to have one big event and bring together classic mountain and long trails. What is your feeling about this new format ? Where is the weak point (if any) ?

EL ZINCA - honestly I didn't really enjoy it too much, I love classic mountain racing, I discovered these races pretty late but I really like them(Up&Down). With the new format it is impossible to run both at 100%, both races loose people who could do more. I understand that we need more visibility, but I don't agree with sacrificing runners just for the show.

Q. You run both competition in the WMRA Championships format including a brilliant bronze medal at 2013 long distance in Szklarska Poreba (POL), that year was the right one to win, what did go wrong?

EL ZINCA - Nothing, it was the third weekend competing. It was normal to be a lot more behind, but I was lucky I can't forget that Marco (De Gasperi n.d.r.) got injured before the start, so I was lucky.

EL ZINCA

2019 Winter

"Being a PRO in off-road running?"

The solution is more involvement of brands and clubs. I was lucky to find in my career Valetudo and LaSportiva, the help was huge!

Financial stability gives you extra relaxation"



Q. We heard strange stories about your "sick" relation with some Italian runners such as Xavier Chevrier and Luca Cagnati. Looks like when you meet to party after an international event the situation becomes very dangerous.... can you tell us something ;-) ??

EL ZINCA - What happens in Portugal, remains in Portugal... What I can say is that: the party must be a party & I'm lucky that my wife has not killed me so far.



**"the party
must be a
party"**



EL ZINCA
2019 Winter

LAST SPRINT

Short, Straight, Direct

What's for IONUT ZINCA:

2019 Winter

EL ZINCA

Q. The Best race in the world ?

EL ZINCA - Zegama

Q. The race victory you never forget ?

EL ZINCA - Giir Di Mont

Q. The toughest defeat of your career ?

EL ZINCA - My injury in 2016

Q. Best running shoes ever ?

EL ZINCA - LaSportiva Helios SR

Q. Favorite Pizza ?

EL ZINCA - 4 formaggi

Q. Favorite sport, except running ?

EL ZINCA - I don't have

Q. Favorite drink ?

EL ZINCA- You really ask me ? bira, bere, beer



IONUT ALIN ZINCA ***FUBY BOY***

