

## **MARIA BIDS FOR WORLD SOUTH POLE CYCLE TITLE**

A British woman will challenge two men to claim a world record in a race to cycle to the South Pole this Christmas.

Adventurer Maria Leijerstam, 35, is heading out to Antarctica in an attempt to become the first person in the world to cycle to the South Pole from the edge of the continent. She plans to begin on December 18 2013.

She will spend both Christmas day and New Years day cycling in temperatures as low as minus 40 degrees with the aim of reaching the South Pole by January 7 2014. This innovative polar journey could redefine the future of polar travel.

Maria is up against American, Daniel Burton and Spaniard, Juan Menendez Granados both of whom are cycling from Hercules Inlet to the South Pole on winter bikes known as Fat Bikes.

Maria's cycle is different. After two years of extensive research and later teaming up with experts from Inspired Cycle Engineering of Cornwall, they have developed an extraordinary polar cycle that has every chance of achieving this record.

"She has been truly innovative", said Emil Grimsson, CEO of Arctic Trucks.

Given the extreme strong winds that blow from the Pole, Maria has decided to cycle in a recumbent position to make herself more aerodynamic. She has also chosen three wheels over two due to the fact that there is far less stability in snow when riding at very slow speeds. She has added a pair of 4.5inch wide tyres to allow for traction and float.

Maria is not only introducing a totally new concept to winter cycling but she is travelling a route which has been virtually untested by expeditioners until very recently.

Maria will cycle up the crevasse ridden Leverett Glacier negotiating 100 mile an hour gales which will cause deep snow drifts that she will have to fight through. After this 150 km battle on the glacier she will head due south on the polar plateau for the South Pole some 650km ahead.

Maria's training programme has been intense with three hours a day of training on top of her day job which involves running Multisport Wales, an events and training company.

Maria is no stranger to unusual experiences and has even endured a whole day in an industrial freezer in Portsmouth at minus 20 degrees. This was a surprise to the factory workers who continued to stack shelves with freezer dried foods as Maria peddled away.

## White Ice Cycle – Press release November 25, 2013

As if that's not enough, she cycled across a frozen lake in eastern Siberia early in 2012 and has been on training trips to Norway and Iceland to test kit and equipment on glaciers and mountain ranges.

Other training venues have included the snow dome in Tamworth and Loughborough University where her fitness has been monitored. She has also been training at Merthyr Mawr sand dunes near her home in the Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales.

"I'm lucky to have the sand dunes so close to me as it's served a purpose in many of my expedition training programmes," said Maria.

"In 2006 I used the dunes for training for the Marathon des Sables, which is a race consisting of running six marathons in seven days across the Sahara Desert."

"Now I'm using it to test my polar cycle for cycling in Antarctica. Even though it's not snow, the characteristics of sand are very similar and I'm delighted to say I managed to cycle up one of the dunes with 90kg of weight on my cycle" said Maria. "It shows my legs are getting stronger."

Maria is well and truly prepared to take on the challenge ahead. "I have met Maria, seen the polar cycle and spent time with her on her training trip in Iceland. I am convinced she has a very good chance of making it" said Arctic Trucks Project Manager, Guðmundur Guðjónsson who had led a number of expeditions to the South Pole.

ITV will be broadcasting her story in a documentary in January 2014 but in the meantime you can watch the drama unfold live on her website [www.whiteicecycle.com](http://www.whiteicecycle.com)

Maria is offering guaranteed television coverage to a brand who wants worldwide exposure and association with the most innovative polar journey in modern history.

Enquiries to [team@whiteicecycle.com](mailto:team@whiteicecycle.com)

To arrange a time to interview Maria please send us an e-mail

All pictures attached are available in high res.

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