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Jeep ® People > Alex Bellini

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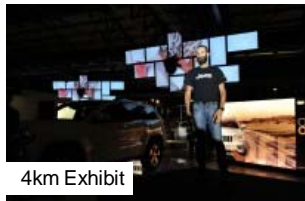
LA-NY Footrace

Video

Team

LA-NY Footrace

The ninth race across America since 1928. Together with Jeep® Wrangler Unlimited, Alex Bellini participates in the LA-NY Footrace 2011 for a Transamerican challenge. Together with Jeep® you can follow Alex's performance with updates on the stages, his thoughts and stories, videos, and pictures.



4km Exhibit

"Memories & photographs"



70th Stage

"Finally in New York City"



68th & 69th

"It's not over 'til it's over"



66th & 67th

"3000 miles!"



65th Stage

"The first night"



64th Stage

"The Pennsylvania-Maryland border"



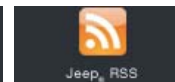
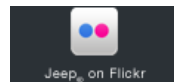
62nd & 63rd

"No longer the same"



59th, 60th, & 61st

"I'll get there!"



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57th & 58th

"Never give up"



56th Stage

"So much pain!"



55th Stage

"4k!"



54th Stage

"Finally heading East"



52nd & 53rd

"The Indiana border"



51st Stage

"Going East"



50th Stage

"Ready for the long stages"



49th Stage

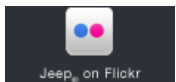
"A natural wonder"



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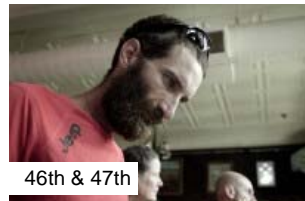
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48th Stage

"Over the Mississippi and into Illinois"



46th & 47th

"Waiting for that call..."



45th Stage

"Missouri hills and fields"



44th Stage

"Sleep, sleep, sleep!"



43rd Stage

"Regenerate mind & body"



42nd Stage

"Feeling alive"



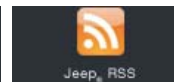
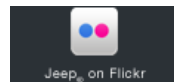
41st Stage

"Pain that's good for you"



40th Stage

"The journey has begun"



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39th Stage

"Running through the rubble"



38th Stage

"Last miles in Oklahoma"



37th Stage

"Last day in the RV"



36th Stage

"Eyes fixed on Missouri"



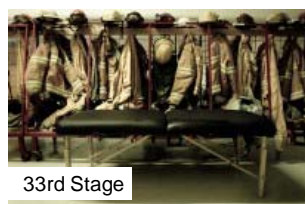
35th Stage

"Thick, dark air"



34th Stage

"Heart of the prairie"



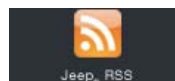
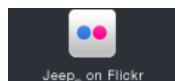
33rd Stage

"What a satisfaction!"



32nd Stage

"A rough day"



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31st Stage

"Heat, the enemy..."



30th Stage

"A good night's sleep"



29th Stage

"Hot, dry, and yellow"



28th Stage

"Incredible!"



27th Stage

"One step closer..."



26th Stage

"What a relief!"



25th Stage

"Back to the heat"



24th Stage

"Regaining balance"



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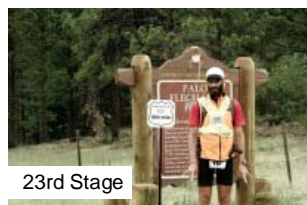
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23rd Stage

"A moment to remember"



22nd Stage

"Improving my running..."



21st Stage

"The marvelous Abiquiu!"



20th Stage

"Got to keep going!"



19th Stage

"Good vibes..."



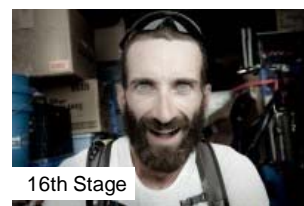
18th Stage

"Runner's instinct"



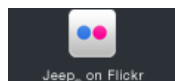
17th Stage

"Instead I run!"



16th Stage

"Ready for New Mexico!"



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15th Stage

"Above and beyond"



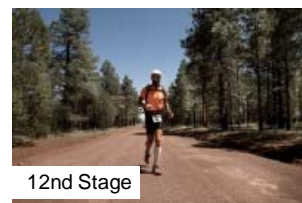
14th Stage

"Indian desert sunset"



13rd Stage

"A pleasure for the soul..."



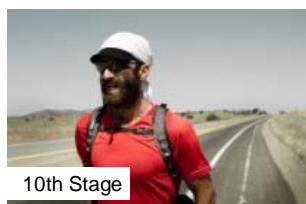
12nd Stage

"Feels like back home"



11st Stage

"A fun stage!"



10th Stage

"See you at the top!"



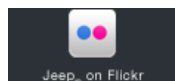
9th Stage

"Starting to have fun!"



8th Stage

"The toughest stage!"



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7th Stage

"Leaving California..."



6th Stage

"Lost in time..."



5th Stage

"I'm starting to like this place..."



4th Stage

"14 hours to Ludlow!"



3rd Stage

"Today we start running with our heads!"



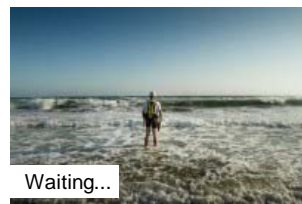
2nd Stage

"Go get him!"



1st Stage

"First step is made, tomorrow I'll leave again"



Waiting...

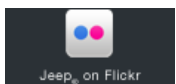
"Almost ready to go"



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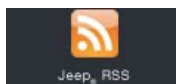
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Jeep® People > Run Across America > Waiting for the first stage

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Waiting for the first stage Almost ready to go



posted by Franziska Berg - on 2011-06-14

Los Angeles, day 1/70, h3:02 a.m.

Outside it's pitch black.

I "got up", not "woke up". And this is a considerable difference when you have done the same operation just 3 hours and a half earlier. A few hours ago this bed, was the table we ate on, it's called a "dinette", in technical slang.

I have to lay on my side. If I were to sleep on my back, I wouldn't be able to stretch out my legs. But all in all, it's comfortable. Maybe Tomorrow night I'll actually try to sleep.

The first sounds exploring the motor home's dark air are guttural and powerful, it's Max's laugh. Waking up with somebody laughing at 3:00 a.m. in the morning is surreal. Luckily I'm in California, in a motor home, and a guy just a few feet from me has to run to New York City. So everything is normal.

Alex jumps on his feet, immediately grabs the roadbook – I guess it's his first thought -, this morning. A few private words with Simone, who doesn't know me, to define the details on the itinerary of day-one. He's relaxed. He turns toward us, his serene expression is illuminated by the fluorescent lights on the breakfast table.

"I'm going to wear white today, as if I were going to a wedding".

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Waiting for the first stage Somewhere over the north of the Atlantic Ocean.



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-06-15

Heights 10,210 mt. Speed 942 km/hours. Temperature -49 C°. Distance to destination 5,610 km.

Letter to the runner.

This woman passing by my seat, along the aisle to an unexplored destination, heading to flight deck. Row H. Seats 27.

Her relative speed is 5km/h.

Slower than the medium speed you should maintain, dear Alex. 5,000 km. Los Angeles, New York.

When you wanted to meet me, just a few words: "Wake up before the dawn. Never give up. No other option to leave than New York". You burn all the oxygen between two human beings during a conversation.

I broke any rule of training to do this job: I haven't read, I haven't studied, I have no preparation to face you, to take pictures of you and describe ourselves. Blank slate, white canvas. I'll fill it up at 5km/h speed. Relentlessly.

I want to be clear-headed, invisible. A brand new formatted hard disk. The polystyrene-scent of a just opened package. In this way we'll face every meter, every step, every shutter release.

There is a great Team of extraordinary men by your side. Simone and Max firstly and all the others back to mainland. Yells of joy will fill mouths and tears from eyes will flow – I know -, hard times and exhausting tiredness.

While this flying pipe made of aluminium and rivets, grey shades and kerosene-scented, flies stiffly the same Ocean you faced with your bare hands, I focus on my first task: "to get surgeon's hands and woodcutter's heart".

See you in Los Angeles, where colors are waiting for us.

Have a safe journey.

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All Stages

Next Stage »

Leave a comment.



Post to Facebook
 Posting as Rainer Koch ([Change](#))

Facebook social plugin

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An incredibly difficult competition that will put Alex under enormous physical and mental pressure. Follow his evolution step by step, with the data revealed by Garmin Connect, and discover Alex's route as he is followed by his team on a Jeep® Wrangler.

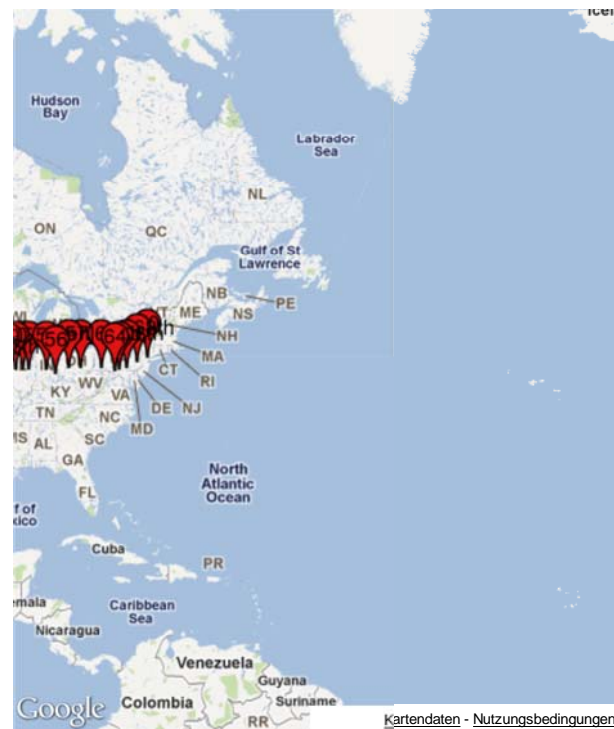
ultimo allenamento prima ...

Fr, 17 Jun 2011 5:43 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
7 km per divertirsi



Distanz: 4.35 mi	Kalorien: 518 cal
Zeit: 45:53	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 15 ft
Ø Pace 10:32 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Training
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 1st Stage

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1st Stage First step is made, tomorrow I'll leave again

 posted by [Franziska Berg](#) - on 2011-06-20




Finally! I took my first step and I felt the pressure melt away with every inch that went by. I just needed to start. To face the "monster" I had created in my head, like a mythological creature. Here it is, the first leg of the race. Everything went well. It was been a strange feeling to abandon my ocean, knowing that 5,000 kilometers of land in front of me before reaching the next ocean. I need to work on my rhythm and on my running-walking balance. I only lost 60 grams, a great sign as far as the work that I've done. The diet during the competition was great too. I will learn, I'll improve. Both my muscles and the brain will move better, as I advance toward New York. The first step is made, tomorrow I'm taking off again. Message, dinner, breathing, and sleep.

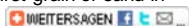
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1st Stage Norco, CA, June 19, 2011.

 posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - Reporter on 2011-06-20

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." – Lao Tze
Departure.
Los Angeles is immense and alert, under a haze of Sunday showers. Fine and gray. Our shoes are full of sand and only leave a footprint or two on the first few feet of the road. A few seconds before takeoff, the runners look like a group of tourists that have just arrived in Liverpool Street in the middle of the night. Disoriented, smiling, excited in the night under a single fluorescent light: "Huntington Beach State". A group photo, a few hugs, eyes focused, and feet aligned along on an imaginary line. Close your eyes, get set, go. Everything happens very quickly, 14 great human beings take their first step, and move away in the dark. After a few seconds we no longer see anything, just the sound of rubber on the asphalt, the rustling of limbs that split the air, then nothing, but the sound of the ocean behind us. We stop to laugh among ourselves, and for a moment we forget that Alex is running. We race toward the Jeep and jump in. It's white, and I think we will grow very fond of it in time. I zip and unzip my backpack, back and forth, several times more than necessary. Adrenaline. Alex runs, we see him right there. You can recognize him immediately, as he moves his arms in a way that's different from that of the others, his thumbs open outwards, as if to caress the leaves on the bushes, and leave a mark. I hope he's not doing it to take the same road back once he's arrived in New York. The city is either waking up or going to sleep. While the dawn guides us east, we leave huge 2-story concrete blocks behind us. Pieces of suburbs that we toss out of the car window as if they were olive pits. At a steady beat. About 9 km an hour. And then 73.5 km go by. Seventythreepointfivekilometers. Alex is doing well. He ran with intelligence, drank 9 liters of water, and ate well. Simone checked more chronographic and telemetric data than an engineer in nearby Pasadena. He tended to him, made sure he was well-hydrated, nourished. We arrive in Norco, 4 kilometers of asphalt, a double yellow line and 6 used car dealers per capita. All light's are green. There are a few small hills before us, everything turns into a menacing yellow, and tomorrow we will overcome them. We will feel the temperature rise and perhaps the first grain of sand in

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our eyes, as we go against wind. And it won't be the sand of Venice Beach.



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RAA tappa n° 1

So, 19 Jun 2011 5:29 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini

Alex risponde bene all'integrazione perdendo poco peso e sembra a...



Distanz:
46.08 mi

Kalorien:
4,544 cal

Zeit:
8:45:09

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
1,278 ft

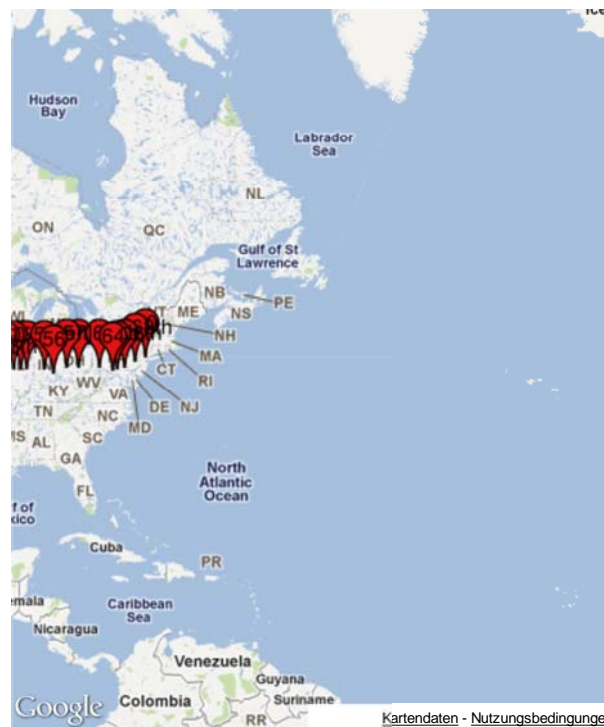
Ø Pace
11:24 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
--

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 2nd Stage

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2nd Stage

“Go get him”!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-06-21



Today was very difficult. From Norco to **Hesperia**. Two extremely steep dirt roads.

I'm learning how much hard work it takes to be a runner, and I try to manage my energy as best as possible.

If you see someone running in front of you, even if you have to keep a steady rhythm your mind tells your body: “go get him”!

And your body tries to do it... My mental training helps me to keep calm and wait, because the entire United States lies before me, a lot of land.

I arrived right after the professional runners with a perfect hydration. This makes me feel hopeful, not lose control, and keep my spirits high! See you tomorrow!

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2nd Stage

A lion's heart in the Mojave desert.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-06-21

Hesperia, CA. June 20, 2011

The sound our eyelids make when we closer eyes overpowers the sound of the trucks on the Interstate. Sand and wind blows on us.

There are few words to describe today's stage, as I sit in this parking lot at the mall. Maybe tomorrow things will go better, less dehydrated. Less dry.

A very difficult stage, that's the truth. Exhausting.

Images from the **Mojave desert**.

The mountains that appear all of the sudden amidst the morning mist.

The temperature rises more than 10 degrees centigrade every 45 minutes, reaching 37 in 9 hours.

Our blisters are killing us.

Suntan lotion.

The black, red, and white snakes that don't understand what a man is doing in the bushy desert, running in shorts.

A difference in altitude of 1,050 meters.

Our Jeep® slyly looks at every bit of dirt road that lies behind each corner and curve, and you almost have to keep it on a leash to prevent it from taking off.

The car cables that squeak like crickets.

A train tat goes by for about 4 minutes.

Alex running.

Alex running with the heart like a lion.

Almost 80 kilometers to reach a place where yellow fields extend over dozens of kilometers.

A day of struggles against exhaustion, tomorrow is the next.

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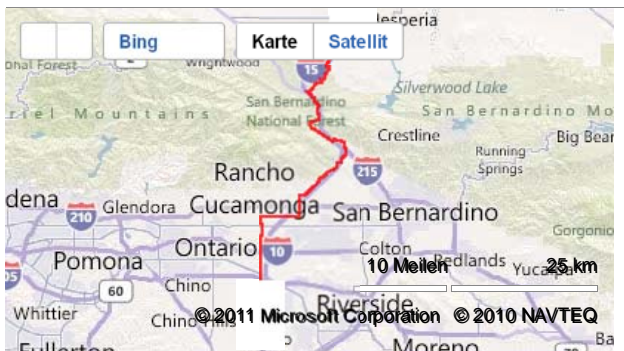
Facebook social plugin

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RAA tappa n° 2

Mo, 20 Jun 2011 5:29 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
voto ad Alex oggi 9,5! E' stato grande, un tappa davvero molto im...



Distanz:
49.73 mi

Kalorien:
4,521 cal

Zeit:
11:08:03

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
4,564 ft

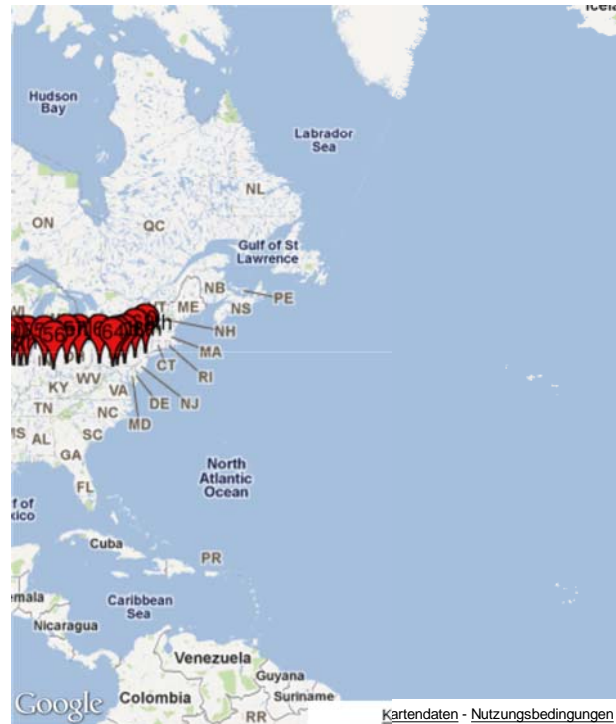
Ø Pace
13:26 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

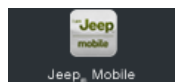
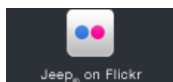
Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
--

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 3rd Stage

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3rd Stage Today we start running with our heads!



posted by [Franziska Berg](#) - on 2011-06-22



Very difficult. Scorching hot. A stage that made me become hopeful, I started off very well, I kept a steady pace. In the end I had to manage my efforts to not get hurt. I could have gotten hurt, and instead I only got a few annoying blisters. I recovered positions and I truly feel that I am growing, I run better, my barycenter is more regular and centered. Tomorrow we are going to try to change the pace and my shoes. The weather forecast says 118 degrees. The next legs of the race will be extremely difficult, and will divide the runners. As of today we have to stop running with our legs, and start running with our heads. I will enter a trance as soon as possible, one step after another, and let's keep our fingers crossed.

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3rd Stage The Big Friendly Giant



posted by [Mauro Talamonti - Reporter](#) on 2011-06-22

"The Big Friendly Giant". I read it when I was a little boy, and have distant memories of it, like glimmers of hope on the asphalt in the distance.

Today I saw a Big Friendly Giant. His name is Alex Bellini. I'm getting to know him day after day, a man that has rowed across a couple of Oceans by himself, and went for a stroll in Alaska, by himself.

He speaks barely above a whisper and says "please" if he's about to ask for something. Today he apologized for not having finished his tea.

Today he ran from Hesperia to **Barstow**, for 10 hours in extreme conditions where I saw runners with 20 years of experience cry with a temperature of 107 degrees Fahrenheit from 10:30 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Alex stops on the side of the road, takes a look around the desert, hints at a smile and asks: "How are you guys doing in the car? Hot, huh?"

Four hours of sleep again, and we're exhausted from the millions of things to do, but the difference is that we're not the ones running 80 kilometers today.

And with his giant strides, today he arrived after the big world athletes of this crazy sport. He recovers meters upon meters even though he just started running in November.

The advantage of the huge U.S. highways is that they are so wide that there's always a bit of shade. And shade means breeze. Alex lies down, his batteries run out.

Then he gets back up. Simone nurses him and opens the blisters under his feet.

Almost 20 kilometers to go. He wants to get there.

He's left behind a huge desert with hills and bushes. A few hundred houses and abandoned trailers, a little shop, and an old man that lives in a glass forest, a scorching hot black ribbon, divided by 2 yellow lines. Route 66.

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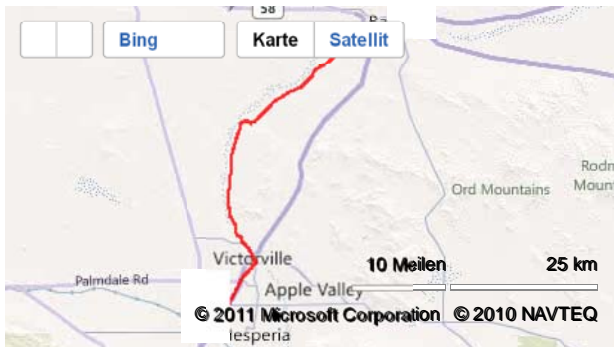
Facebook social plugin

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RAA - tappa n° 3

Di, 21 Jun 2011 5:28 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
grande crisi nel finale, gestita alla grande da tutti!



Distanz:
48.00 mi

Zeit:
10:52:13

Ø Pace
13:35 min/mi

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

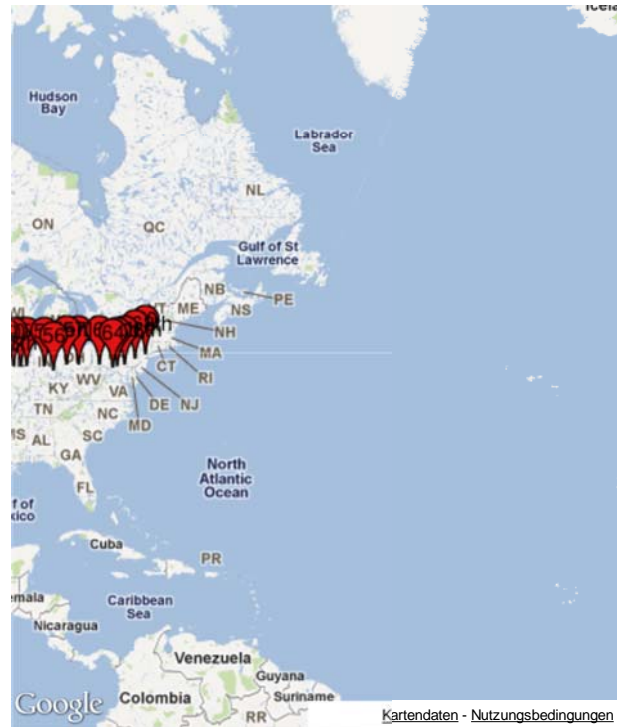
Kalorien:
3,911 cal

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
611 ft

Ereignistyp:
Race

Strecke:
--

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4th Stage 14 hours to Ludlow!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-06-25



What a feat!

It took me 14 hours to reach Ludlow.

I started off well. I tried to focus on my mental balance in order to face the miles ahead in the desert. An awful pain in my tibia, and I realized that it was going to be rough. After a few miles it got worse and I was forced to stop for a massage and drainage treatment.

To be honest, it was really rough, especially from 11:00 a.m., when the thermometer started racing toward infinite heights, until 6 p.m. with 120° Fahrenheit.

Big problems with the heat. A break toward the middle of the stage to recuperate the huge amount of energy lost and rehydrate.

I had to change strategies, clothing, and ways to cool off by using a vaporizer. I increased my pace and I was able to finish the stage, luckily! I'm exhausted, but I feel solid muscle wise, thanks to the huge support from my team!

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4th Stage The Pacific's rubber band



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-06-25



There's a constant blinding glare. I having trouble adjusting the rearview mirror and the sun behind us is like a nuclear mass that's about to combust. There are 100 miles ahead of us, as straight as a blade:

Route 66. Abandoned gas stations and tourist inns with shiny old metal trailers. It looks like the moon, but with 118° Fahrenheit.

From here to **Ludlow**, two curves, and they look like tourist attractions, havens of environmental change.

Alex still has to come to terms with nature and its difficulties. With the Ocean, who secretly tied an invisible rubber band to his ankle in Los Angeles: you're still mine, it sneered. And it won't let him escape.

But even the desert has its mirages, like the ones Alex thought he saw today, when the rodents and crows stopped to watch as he raised his legs, back up again, against the pain and the fear of heat, as he arrived exhausted, but on time and most of all, healthy.

No mercy, however, for the other 5 heroes. Out of the race, they retired, surrendered, exhausted.

The freeway is tugging on our hips, nonstop, like a heavyweight champion. A high speed VIP lane. On this winding strip of plagued skin, however, life moves at a different speed, slowly.

The men run, they don't drive. They suffer from the heat, and they don't just hit the A/C button. They hunt for snakes in order to sell the poison and they watch the few tourist that get out of their c

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breath to take a picture in front of the crooked "Café" sign, in the only human outstation since **Barstow**.

The tibial inflammation just a few hours after the departure isn't enough, the earthquake isn't enough, he asks himself if there's a number besides 118. Yo get back up and get there anyways. We have to sleep better, we have to eat more. A few more days and we'll see the fresh and dry Arizona highlands. And things will get better, for sure.




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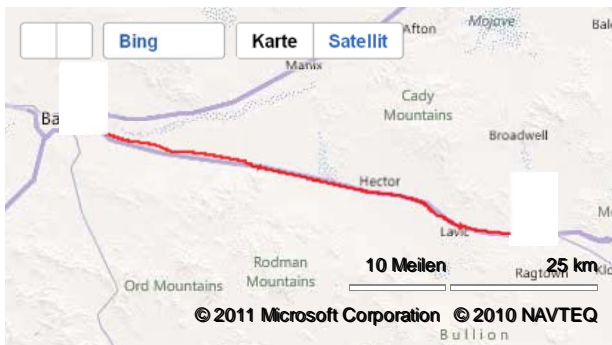
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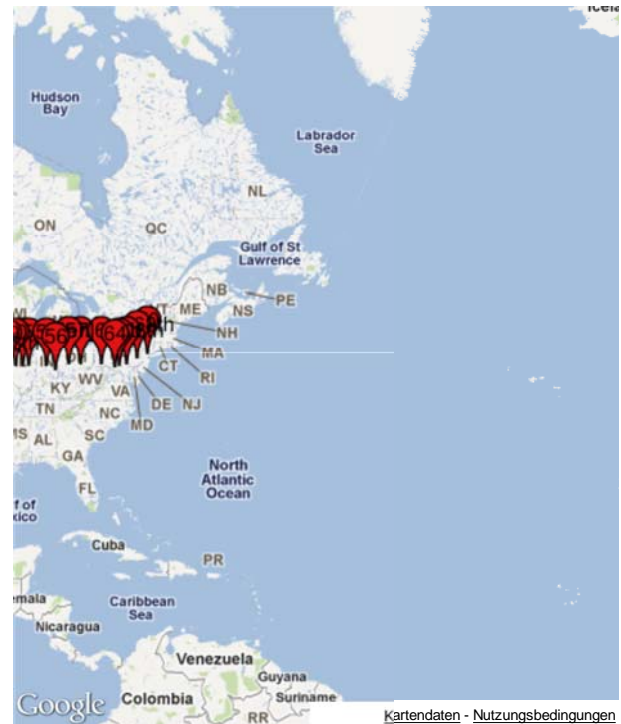
RAA - tappa n° 4

Mi, 22 Jun 2011 5:29 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
tappa caratterizzata dal grande caldo, il termometro ha raggiunto...

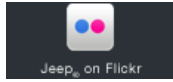


Distanz: 51.35 mi	Kalorien: 4,883 cal
Zeit: 13:53:18	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 698 ft
Ø Pace 16:14 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Uncategorized
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 5th Stage

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5th Stage I'm starting to like this place...

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-06-26



A short and dry stage. Just over 28 miles.


Trains passed by me, on my left. It seemed like a stage where we could recover some strength, but when you're dealing with 113° Fahrenheit, rest is impossible. On the other hand, we finished before we usually do, and we had enough time for 2 meal breaks, a massage, and time to catch up on some sleep.

I'm starting to like this place, even though the high's are 17 degrees over the last 5 years' seasonal average.

Everything you're looking for is right here in the desert.

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5th Stage In the middle of nowhere

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-06-26

Route 66 takes you to **Amboy** very quickly. It makes a slight turn after an infinite straight stretch of road, a grade crossing, and then stops there, in the middle of nowhere. It shakes like a wet animal and spreads on the ground about a dozen dilapidated roofs from the 60's. And as you enter a small motel you find sand on the floor.

Another day body wrestling with the sun. We try to invent empirical systems to protect our bodies. We wonder about the Tuareg and the Native Americans, as we cut off the sleeves of our brand new shirts, and sew them up with adhesive tape and gauzes.

A short, dry stage. Alex arrives on schedule, so he can catch up on some sleep. We have to sleep more, we've been short on sleep the last 6 days and haven't been able to recuperate.

The van seems like a strange time machine, in an abandoned future. But we're ok, Alex's mood is constantly improving, even though it's hard, we try to make him laugh and talk as much as possible. He needs to talk, and the next few days I will try to get some comments from him about the first week.

He's now lying on the floor, some pain from Simone's massage. He looks like a psychic, a diviner with muscles and tendons. I distract Alex, asking him about his **home town Aprica** and his summer retreats, and it seems to hurt a little less.

I'm going to go try to take some pictures again in a bit, before I burned my face in the wind. But this place is really magical, the other runners went back to the small town we left from, because there's no place to sleep here.

We like it, and even the old, rusty train that seemed to be stuck on the incandescent tracks, has started to move, slowly, and makes a sound much like that of thunder in the desert.

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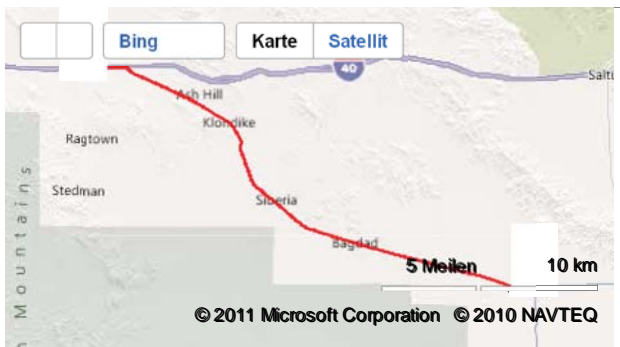
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RAA - tappa n° 5

Do, 23 Jun 2011 5:26 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:
28.58 mi

Kalorien:
2,739 cal

Zeit:
7:04:17

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
297 ft

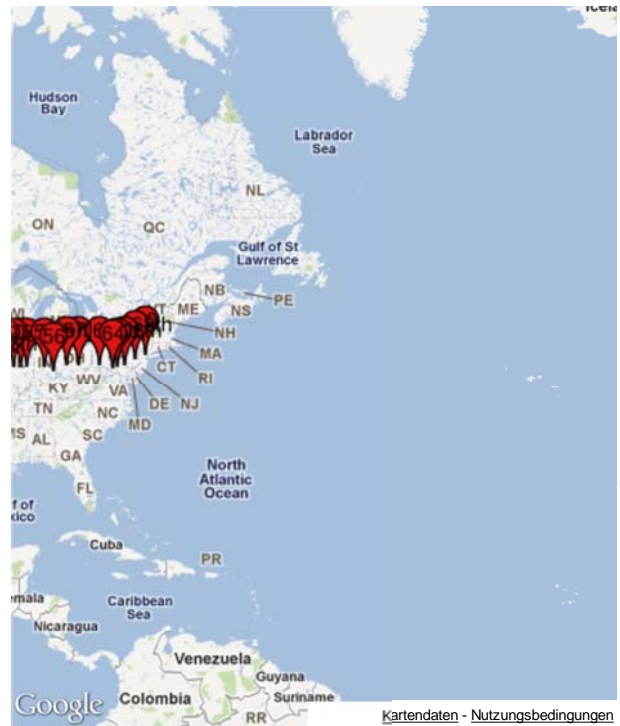
Ø Pace
14:51 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
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6th Stage Lost in time...


 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-06-26



What an incredible place, **Amboy**. Lost in time!
I hoped to get a good night's sleep, but the high temperature even sent the motorhome's systems into a tailspin. Oh well, we are hopeful and I start off very well, a great feeling, I am up at the top halfway through the race. Then I start running short on energy, too tired! A quick pit stop, everything starts up again, and we reach **Fenner!**
Tomorrow will be a crucial stage as far as acquiring the right rhythm. A good night's sleep in a cool place tonight will help us reach this important objective.
And in a few miles we'll see **Arizona**...

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6th Stage The Mojave won't cut us any slack.

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-06-26

I wake up at 11:30 p.m., in the warm scent of the early night, and the feeling is not pleasant. I mentally dissect the space around me in a vertical fashion. From the earth beneath me up to my skin I find: dust, air, a clear water tank, two longitudinal supporting beams, insulating material, faux wood, a layer of carpet, the mattress Alex lent me, a brown bed sheet, my body.

I don't know which layer my sweat has reached, but the feeling is much like that of waking up in a pool in Malibu. There must be over 104° Fahrenheit in here, the **Mojave** just won't cut us any slack.

It's the last thing we needed, we really needed to recuperate, at least during this stop.
Not even Alex and Simone sleep well, for the fourth night in a row, and when we take off, we're all a little scared.
Instead the hours go by, after the gray-blue dawn on **Route 66**'s first curve, and he runs, runs, runs. Perfect shape. Incredible, he's at third place and all light's are green.

Then in the middle of the afternoon, a few miles from the destination, his body asks for more energy, gas. Red light. Fuel. Supplies.
Alex runs well, light, we can't stand the heat anymore, and **Fenner** arrives slowly, announced by a dirt road surrounded by the empty desert, a warm wind that covers the noise of the trucks' generators that have parked for the night.

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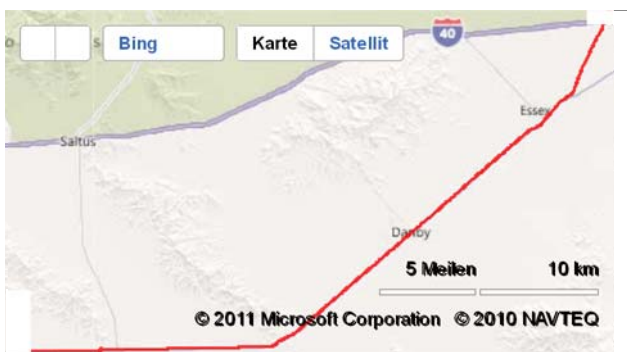
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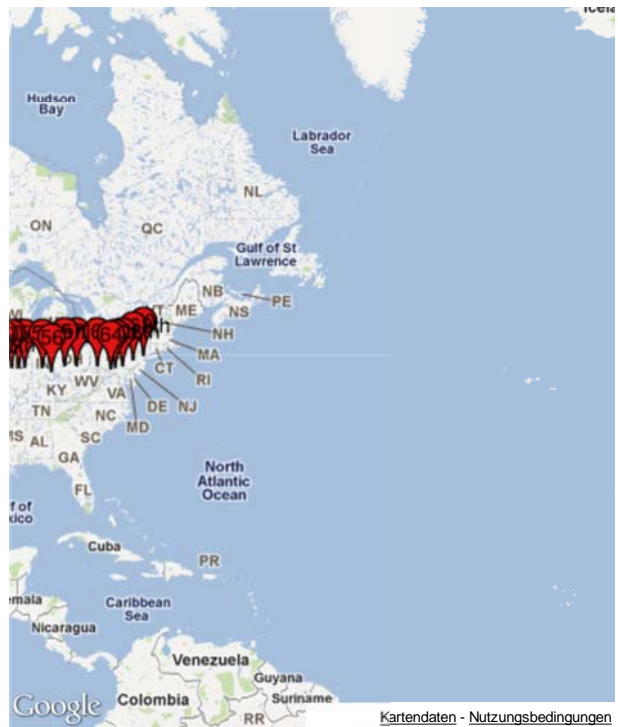
RAA - tappa n° 6

Fr, 24 Jun 2011 5:24 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 40.31 mi	Kalorien: 3,854 cal
Zeit: 10:38:01	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,776 ft
Ø Pace 15:49 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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7th Stage Leaving California...

posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-06-27

What has **California** left me with?

I'm exhausted, that's for sure. But it's also left me with beautiful landscapes, that I would have liked to enjoy more, but we had to put up with the excruciating heat. We spent 6 days traveling with impossible temperatures, with more than 15 degrees over the seasonal average.

I can't wait to lift my head up, and start looking at the road, the people, America.

Tomorrow we have to do a good job, and we will!

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7th Stage Hope in Arizona!

posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-06-27

Silence! Alex makes his way into the scene. One of the first of a long list of problems that's solved, not even the desert can stop your urge to feel well, new sensations, a great stage and we're in **Needles**, with the **Arizona** wind that brings new hope.

Tomorrow the most difficult stage to **Kingman**. Whoever makes it, already has a foot in Central Park.

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8th Stage The toughest stage!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-06-29



What a great feeling during this stage from Needles to **Kingman!**

I did very well uphill, I felt at home. Maybe I overdid it, and didn't pace myself and conserve my energy properly. I felt like the king of the world, and when they told me that I had 28 miles to go, I felt bad!

It was really tough, but they say that if you reach Kingman, you get to New York. And I'm there!

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8th Stage The Arizona basin...



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-06-29

The stage that everyone fears – from Needles to **Kingman, Arizona**. 51 miles to get to Arizona passing through the Sitgreaves Pass.

We reel off the first 18 miles with both boredom and apprehension. After just a few miles Alex needs bandages on his tibia and ankle to face the uphill climb.

We still have a good vibe from yesterday's stage, his mood keeps on improving and his physical condition can only get better. And this is when Alex needs to be strong. When everything starts happening very quickly, motorcycles racing past you on the Mother Road.

Then you start seeing mountain goats. Only there aren't any mountain goats in the **Navajo territory**. What you see instead is Alex Bellini laughing and asking you to find him a sports store to buy some walking sticks, as he climbs uphill, as if he were back **home in Valtelline valley**.

He moves quickly, passing through **Oatman, an old mining town in the Far West**. He looks like a tourist in an amusement park who's in a hurry because he's lost his child and is looking for him. He stops to take a glance at postcards and the mules that gallop freely as they raise a bit of dust.

Alex will accomplish great things in the next few days, I can feel it. Beneath us lies an extraordinary sight, the yellow Arizona basin. The bottom is yellow and forms a wave, the sun shines on a few roofs several miles away from us, the surrounding walls are red, stubby, and form perfect squares. There aren't any Native Americans, but you feel like you're 8 years old again and like you're watching "Dances With Wolves".

The rest of the stage is an infinite journey toward Kingman, Arizona, riding along the steppes through a rush of wind.

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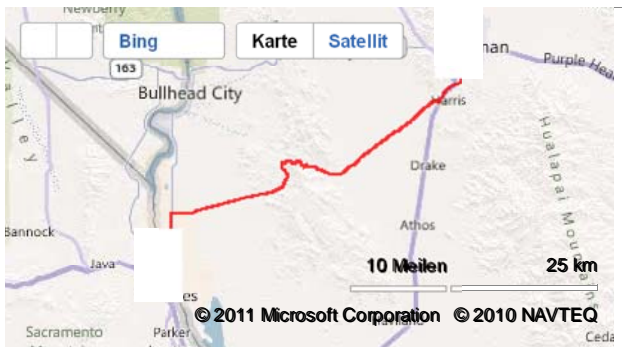
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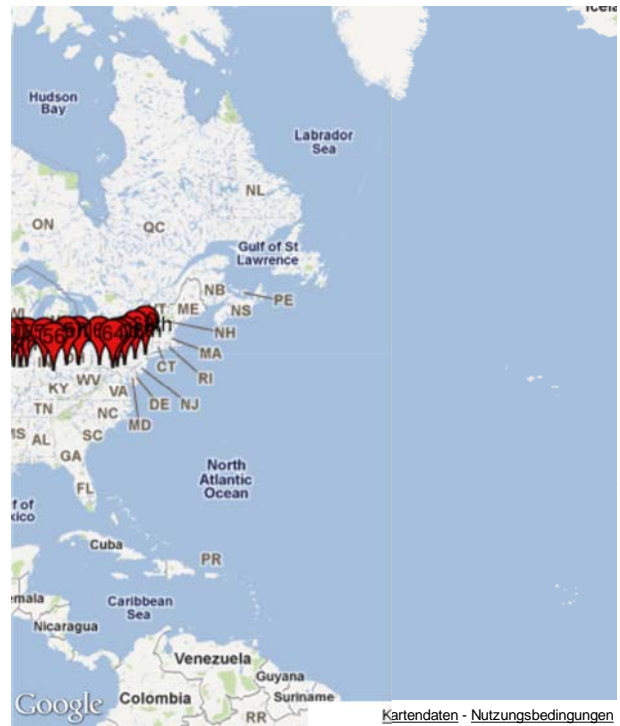
RAA - tappa n° 8

So, 26 Jun 2011 5:30 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz:	Kalorien:
51.43 mi	4,689 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
13:11:42	15,522 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
15:24 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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9th Stage Starting to have fun!


 posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-06-29



A perfect stage toward **Truxton**. We're actually starting to have fun! We found the right pace, and I was able to run even though my ankle hurts. I'm not going to let it get to my head though, we've got to keep our feet on the ground, this is only stage 9. But today I ran. I started running toward New York, finally!

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9th Stage The day of the Eagle

 posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-06-29

We wake up at 3:30 a.m. in **Kingman**. An extra half hour of sleep can really make a difference. Breakfast, pitch black, and the wind slamming against the fiberglass.

Yesterday's stage marked us all. We got to the finish line after running for nearly 15 hours. Which means no time to catch up. Shower, food, a few words, and to bed. I'm sitting here working, and obviously there's no internet out here in the middle of the **Navajo Nation**. The 4 hours of sleep I got aren't enough to even hold my XXL coffee with just one hand.

Then we close our eyes and Alex takes off again. I'll try to think straight so I can tell you about today's journey toward **Truxton**.

This is how it went more or less: more than 46 miles, a new rhythm, break-run, silence, concentration. Unfortunately, everyday another runner is forced to drop out of the race, and Alex wants to find his path. So we open our eyes and just like magic, we're in Truxton. Alex is still "cool", and he gets there running. He's turned on his mind.

I could even tell you about what happened during 43 miles, a heartbeat lasting 9 and a half hours. But it would seem childish, maybe even superstitious.

I could say that everything worked out well, the Jeep was going well, our cameras were taking great pictures full of life and light. I could even tell you that an eagle obscured the sky, flying barely 15 inches from the hood of the car, as we heard the sound of the air sliced by its feathers.

And I can say that along the way, a pick-up truck stopped by. A man with dark skin and a white beard got off just to tell us, "Take care, you guys".

He was a Native American, a Vietnam veteran, and his name was "Eagle – Man Hats – Levy".

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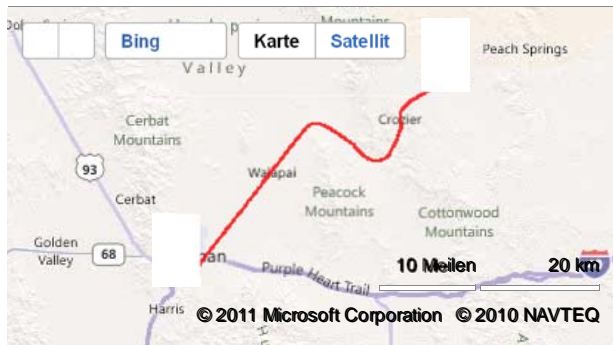
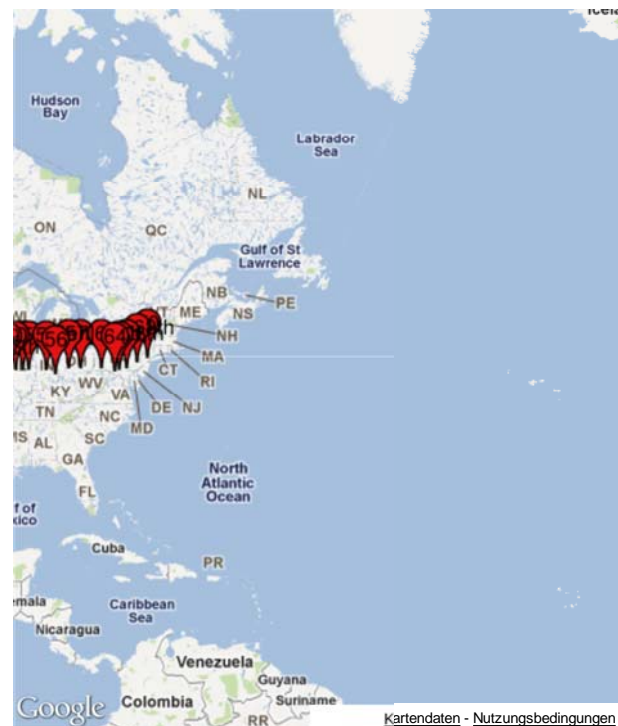
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RAA - tappa n° 9

Mo, 27 Jun 2011 4:17 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini

Oggi siamo tutti davvero contenti! La macchina ha girato perfetta...

Distanz:
42.39 miKalorien:
3,620 calZeit:
9:34:48Positiver Höhenunterschied:
1,607 ftØ Pace
13:34 min/miEreignistyp:
RaceAktivitätstyp:
RunningStrecke:
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10th Stage

See you at the top!

posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-06-30

I'm a little tired, but very happy because when you have a good feeling and it's confirmed, it's almost better than the good feeling itself.

Everything went very well again. We've arrived in **Seligman**. I still have some pain in my tibial muscle, and I'm still running with a bandage, but it should get better.

There was a constant, pestering wind, all day long. It made things a lot more difficult than I'd have liked. I want to make up for the Californian days so that I can face the next few weeks in better shape.

We're going up the mountain tomorrow... see you at the top!

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10th Stage

The restoring wind

posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-06-30

It's difficult to repeat oneself. They say that even **Paganini**, Italian violinist and composer, refused to play the same piece twice. But then again, he was a "left-handed devil, and he played the violin".

A beautiful dawn bows before us on the first climb out of Truxton, on infinite **Route 66**. Forty-six miles ahead of us without a single curve. The beauty that surrounds us in the first hour of the stage makes up for the remaining 9 hours of visual monotony.

Alex runs on a yellow sea. The foam of the waves is like dozens of grasshoppers that jump through the shrubs in an organized fashion. The black road is the trail that was left just a few hours before by the Norwegian icebreaker that went off course. We Geotag our brains: **Arizona, United States of America**. 5,250 feet above sea level. 6 a.m.

And Alex does it again. Another great day like yesterday and we're in **Seligman**. This time it's a longer stage, and he's fighting against a new enemy, that's furious and expected: a fierce wind coming from the South, that blows incessantly for eight hours. It moves you, it turns your eyes into those little dolls made of cloth where your grandmother used to put needles so she wouldn't lose them. Usually the dolls were turtles.

It's hard to stand up straight, only the brown calves in the infinite fields of the valet do not seem frightened by the situation. On the other hand, the huge trucks that are the size of a zeppelin airship are blown several feet away, you have to dodge them. And when they drive past Alex, he has to tend every muscle in his body to brace himself against the wind.

Fierce wind up until the end. He's fifth again. Behind the big athletes. He's improved. Hours and hours ahead of those that followed, and in his eyes you can still see his happiness from yesterday, the dance of the 60 foot tall sand whirlwinds, that point you in the right direction, polar stars in the desert created and destroyed by the Wind.

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RAA - tappa n°10

Di, 28 Jun 2011 5:26 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini

Anche oggi il ritmo fa ben sperare, miglioramenti giorno dopo gio...



Distanz:
46.08 mi

Kalorien:
3,675 cal

Zeit:
10:31:14

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
11,608 ft

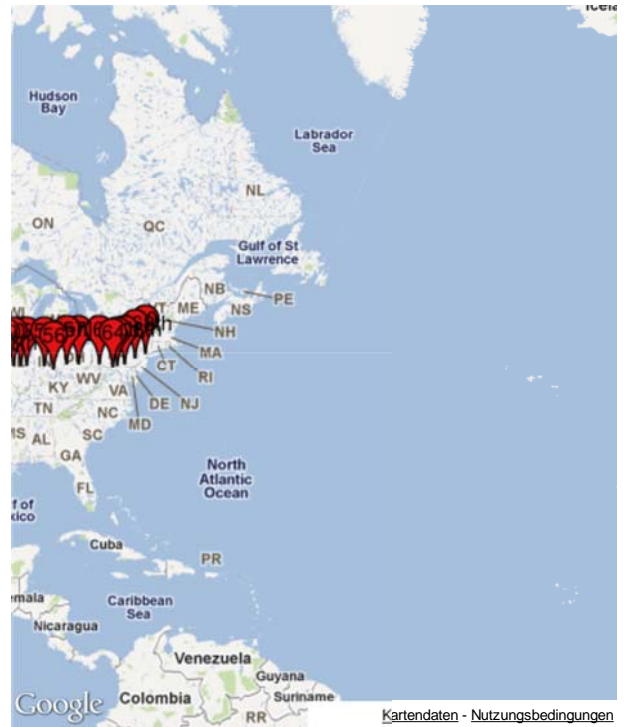
Ø Pace
13:42 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
--

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12nd Stage Feels like back home

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-01



A **challenging stage**, fast, focusing on technique. At least the beautiful scenery distracted me from the pressure and exhaustion.


It almost seemed like I was back home, doing my training off road, had I not paid attention to a few small details.

I'm satisfied with the stage. It was the fifth positive day. We're creating certainties, but we have to keep our eyes open, because it's times like these that danger is right around the corner!

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12nd Stage Scent of resin

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-01

It seems like smell is the sense that's most tied to memories.

We forget tastes, the color of our kindergarten clothes, maybe even the sound of the sea. But when we stopped at an altitude of more than 7200 feet, surrounded by pine trees under the Arizona sun, the smell of fresh resin was everywhere, woods back home. **Alps, Italy**.

A mountain stage from Ash Fork to **Williams**, Arizona. Alex asks his daughter over the phone if she likes the sea, and this kind of a question asked by him has very deep implications.

We go up to stunning places, a dirt road in the forest that would be absolutely perfect for the French Open.

We're in **Arizona** and we see our first pine trees only above 6500 feet, an altitude at which our vegetation in the Alps has already abandoned any attempt to survive, making way to low grass and rock. Alex is having fun, it's a challenging trial, a loop of short ups and downs that are making his muscles swell.

The dozens of pebbles that get caught in his running shoes are a great excuse to stop for 7 seconds and admire the surroundings. A huge bulls passes by us. He looks at us and goes back, he obviously doesn't understand what has possessed 8 people dressed in fluorescent clothing to run at 6500 feet. "They're going to New York!", I explain to him in English. But I don't get any reaction from him.

Alex's physical and mental condition is now stable, his ankle is a lot less swollen. Tomorrow we're going up to **Flagstaff** toward the **Indian reservations**. They're sending me some new rolls of film from New York, but no worries, the postal service here goes as quickly as Alex did today.

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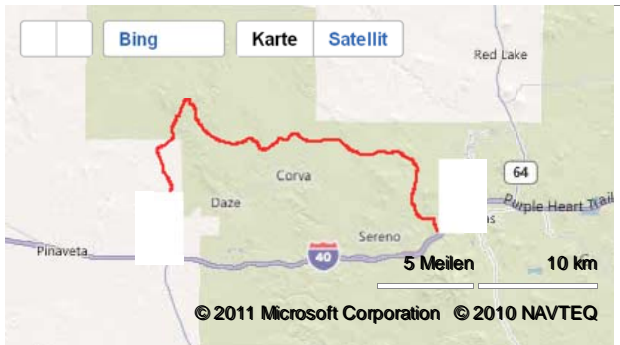
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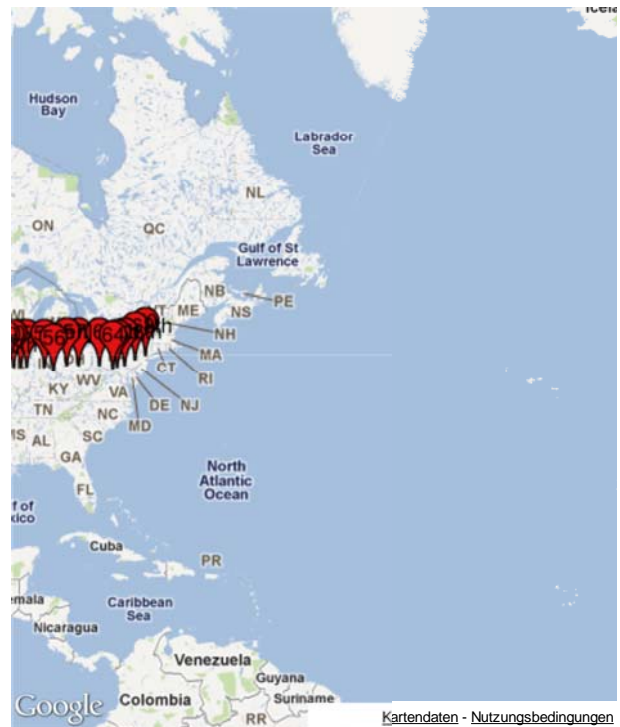
RAA - tappa n°12

Do, 30 Jun 2011 5:26 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
 Forse il più bel percorso di tutta la RAA, un trail di 30 km stup...



Distanz:	30.22 mi	Kalorien:	2,399 cal
Zeit:	6:22:12	Positiver Höhenunterschied:	2,473 ft
Ø Pace	12:39 min/mi	Ereignistyp:	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Running	Strecke:	--

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 12nd Stage

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12nd Stage Feels like back home

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-01




A **challenging stage**, fast, focusing on technique. At least the beautiful scenery distracted me from the pressure and exhaustion.

It almost seemed like I was back home, doing my training off road, had I not paid attention to a few small details.

I'm satisfied with the stage. It was the fifth positive day. We're creating certainties, but we have to keep our eyes open, because it's times like these that danger is right around the corner!

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12nd Stage Scent of resin

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-01

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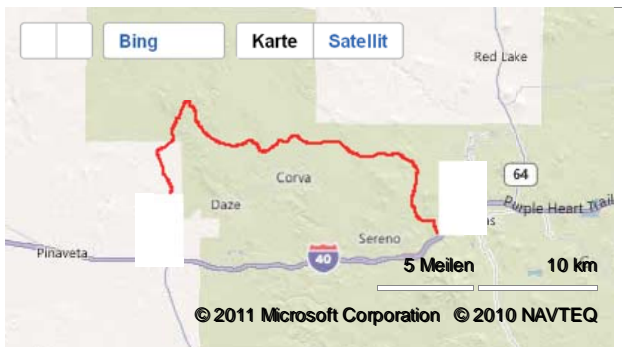
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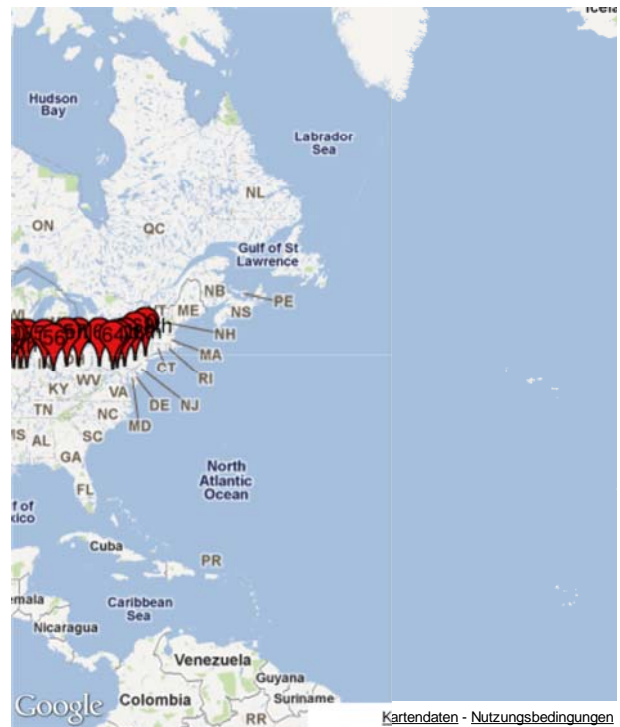
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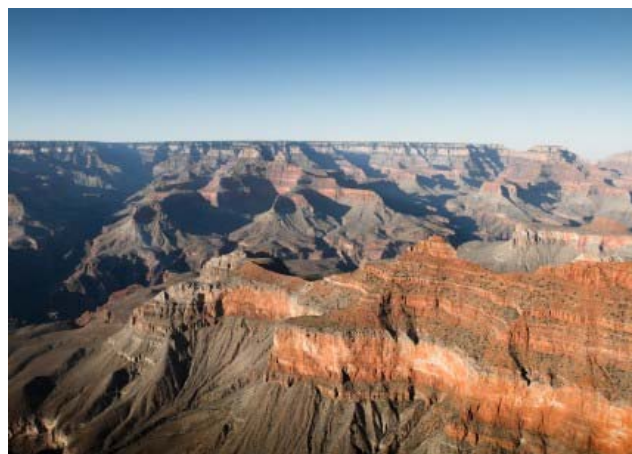
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13rd Stage

A pleasure for the soul. . .

posted by [Alex Bellini - The runner](#) on 2011-07-02

"Finally a place where I could actually live!"

A great stage, even though it was terribly exhausting. We went from Williams to **Flagstaff** Arizona, through the **Grand Canyon**. 40 miles of dirt road going downhill that were pretty tough, but I managed well. I saw some wood houses, green grass, and it made me want to stop to chat for a bit with friends, a slice of cake, and some coffee!

But we have to keep on running, and when you run in places like these, it really soothes your soul. . .

Tomorrow it's back to the desert, hoping that it's a little cooler than the last one. I'm ready!

Comment this post



13rd Stage

Another land is ours!

posted by [Mauro Talamonti - Reporter](#) on 2011-07-02

Quenching is the rapid cooling of a material after having brought it to extremely high temperatures. The process is very common for metals, but it's also used with glass.

These words come to mind as we go down the steps of our motorhome in **Williams** this morning at 5 a.m. 43 degrees await us.

Obviously nobody even dreams of complaining after the Californian hell, but in the meantime our teeth chatter as we try to recuperate a few calories from the family size steak we had last night at the **Grand Canyon**. The first evening out, 3 hours lived fast to then go to bed early, but it was breath of fresh air for our eyes and mind. We were like kids on a class trip. Today's stage was simply incredible.

We enter the forest, 37 miles. Alex takes off very well, and as he laughs, he asks if we put something in his water bottle, because he just can't keep himself from going over the average set speed.

Mirages of wooden houses, turn of the century cafes planted like refuges deep in the middle of the vegetation, trailers that almost seem to be rooted into the ground, in the green grass, like good old **Alexander Supertramp's Magic Van**.

The temperature rises quickly within minutes. Alex completes the stage with intelligence, the rough land makes him exert pressure on his joints and 58 more days of running await him.

Flagstaff lies ahead, a valley below us. Everything is hidden, as if to defend itself from the sky, from a green sea of fake pine trees.

Yet another land is ours, in the night, awaiting several more days in the desert starting tomorrow, when we enter the **Navajo Nation**. No kind of contact with the outside world, they say. "No network there".

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14th Stage Indian desert sunset



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-07-05



How exhausting!

A marvelous landscape, I was misled by the morning's fresh breeze! The stages in the dirt road, yesterday and the day before, have heavily weighed on my muscles, and think I may have drunk too little this morning. In the afternoon, my legs felt stiff and I was generally tired, and I "only" had 50 miles left to run, damn it! I managed as best I could and got at the end, however, in the Indian desert. With a beautiful sunset ...

Comment this post



14th Stage Nostalgia



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-07-05

It's a tough day, it gives you a hard slap in the face as soon as you let your guard down. For the first time, an aura of nostalgia springing out of the dawn. On the phone warm voices from the other side of the world.

A day of rapid changes around us, yet another face of this immense magical box called Arizona.

We take off from **Flagstaff**, Alex will have top put one foot in front of the other for 51 miles, each of them on a straight road that goes downhill. It takes the road below us just a few minutes to shake off the pine trees, like a horse gone mad, as it tosses itself in the vast yellow and flat desert of the Navajo Reservation, a piece of road assigned by the white man and guarded by perfect, black volcanoes, like pyramids that look out onto the Native American land.

Alex runs smoothly, but his body is frightened by the sudden changes, distracted by the absolute beauty before us, it's cold and he doesn't drink much. This insignificant details, when you talk about perfect machines operating under the limit, means problems after 37 miles. The temperature rises all of the sudden, storms of dust and liquid asphalt. Muscle pain, poor hydrations, slowing down the pace.

We descend below 6500 feet. The first buttes guide us from a distance like oracles, they look like headlights on a distant coast and we sail on a yellow sea in the storm, the waves are bales of hay. We encounter dogs, a gas station, a basketball court and the first bold cloud. The first accumulation of humidity in the last 14 days.

We follow it, and we get to a port that's an outpost, nothing in the middle of nothing: **Birdspring**. Alex arrives, a 12-hour stage, a hero that still manages to leave behind opponents who have now become travel companions.

And as I clean the Jeep®, shining with graphic clouds, on my seat I find today's USA TODAY. On the front page as if to comfort me: Piazza San Carlo, Turin.

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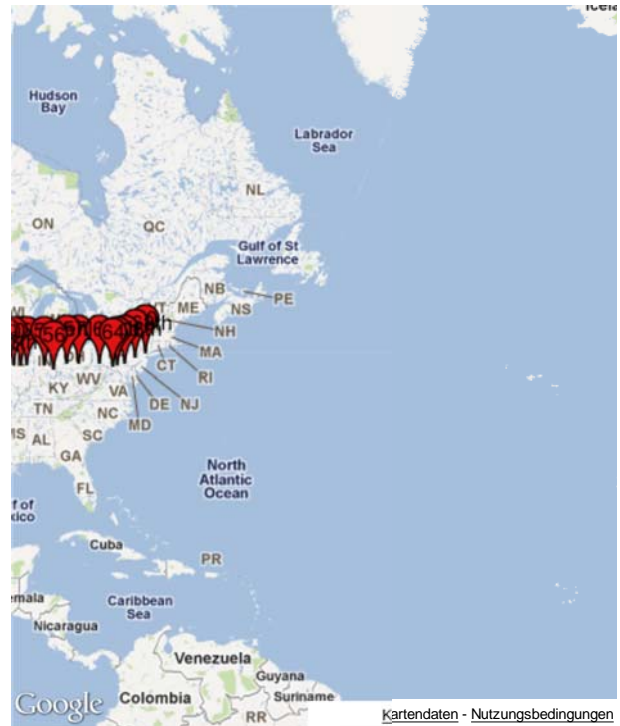
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15th Stage Above and beyond



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-07-05



I'm very satisfied with today's stage because we were able to improve on my physical condition during the race!

I took off with a terrible stomach ache, my legs weak and an Achilles' heel that was really bothering me.

With patience, rhythm, and one step after another I caught up with the other runners and went beyond!

I will try to rest well tonight so that I can enjoy the marvelous yellow, lunar landscape!

Comment this post



15th Stage ONE-THOUSAND- KILOMETERS!



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-07-05

When you enter the Najavo Nation you go by "Mountain time", while Arizona follows California's "Pacific Time". In other words, an hour ahead which also means one less hour of sleep.

Yesterday was a dusty and very difficult day, we went to bed early with the motorhome parked facing a void of sand and shrubs.

When we wake up in **Birdspring**, we witness a surreal scene as the runners take off. A line of little red flashing lights that indicate their position on the edge of the road. A pitch black Sunday in the desert, our fluorescent vests that make the sound of nylon on nylon, the only sound to be heard by the human ear.

In the distance, toward the edge of the cold, black concrete, a light begins to delineate the mystic shapes of the rock pinnacles, isolated, with organic and varied shapes. Towers, triangles, plates, spheres. One of them reminds me of the mountain without dots from Encounters of the third kind. I think I'll spend the day imitating the same shape with a fork in my mashed potatoes.

We land on the ground after about 26 miles where some of the runners, one of which Alex, go over the 1000 km limit. **ONETHOUSAND KILOMETERS** on stage 15. Around us the only supermarket for the past 50 miles, families in line at the cash registers, with features from an ancient and sacred cultures covered with enormous glasses of Coca Cola, extra large sizes, and eyes wide open with their colored credit cards on their hands. We are in **Indian Wells**, Arizona.

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16th Stage Ready for New Mexico!

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-05




Today was a difficult day as far as concentration goes! The middle part of the stage wasn't very exciting and a dirt road trial with cars going 37 miles an hour opened walls of dust that didn't allow me to enjoy the race.
But then again.. 50 miles are a lot!

But I have a good feeling tonight, I feel a lot less tired that I thought I would, and I'm ready to enter New Mexico tomorrow!

Comment this post 

16th Stage Miles of nothing...

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-05

As we take off from **Indian Wells** we still hear the sand rustling. A storm took us off guard yesterday, astonished us. I was looking at the swings in a school yard sway against a yellow cloud as thick as sandpaper sprung at 30 knots.

The first part of the Indian reservation is endowed with a majestic background of red rocks and white sand at dawn, on the only path that can be traveled upon.

Alex is in shape, he recuperates some of yesterday's fatigue as he takes off slowly, around him a rapid change of scenery. It's surprising how this area of Arizona can change after just a few miles. We go from land to sand, concrete and gravel. The desert is arid but welcoming, it lets us breathe.

A dozen miles go by and we've gone up to nearly 7900 feet, and it seems like we've gone back in time, we see pine trees again, we feel at ease in the scented woods in **Flagstaff**, but **New Mexico** lies less than 60 miles ahead of us.

Our sight is confused, it doesn't understand how in this area, that seems more mild, cool, rainy, and bursting with trees, you can find just a few tin houses, in the middle of nowhere, watched upon by isolated beasts. There's a lot of empty space. Miles and miles of nothing to run through.

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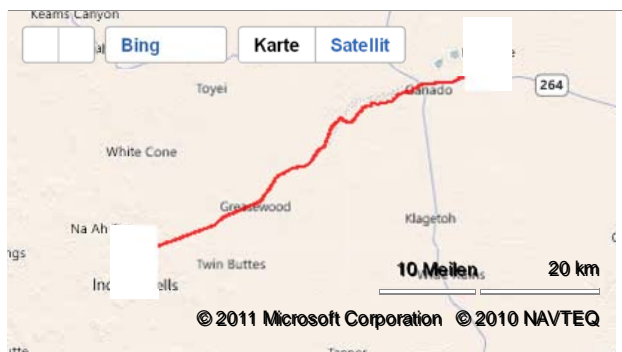
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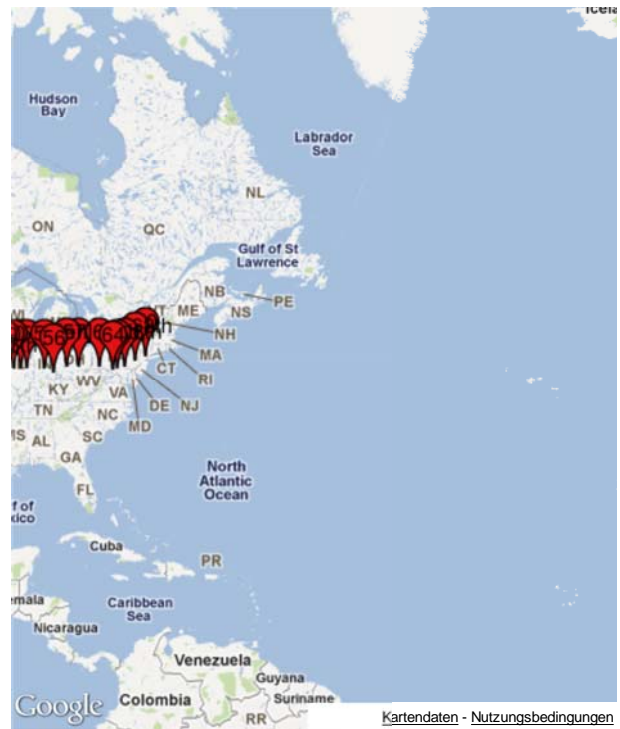
RAA - tappa n°16

Mo, 4 Jul 2011 5:38 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 48.49 mi	Kalorien: 3,734 cal
Zeit: 10:58:00	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,938 ft
Ø Pace 13:34 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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17th Stage Instead I run!



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-09



I woke up well this morning. The first part was horrible, very tiring because the road that didn't have an emergency lane, forcing me to take breaks in the grass on the side of the road, waiting for the nth huge vehicle to go by at full speed. The police calls it "very dangerous". Instead I run.

I do it for nearly 50 miles, all of which straight. We pass by **Gallup, New Mexico** without me even realizing it, I see the finish line and we've filed away another stage!

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17th Stage 50 miles of bliss!



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-09

I've always been fascinated by frontiers. The feeling of being foreigners from a white line onwards. The road signs changing color, it even seems that the light is different, stronger, maybe because the frontiers I know best appear after a tunnel.

"Welcome to New Mexico". For the second time we experience the curiosity of seeing the world around us change as we pass by a pale yellow sign, between one gas station and the next. On the other side of the road, a Chinese restaurant says "All you can eat, \$1.50".

But nothing has changed, the panorama stays the same for 30 miles, we're in the low **Navajo Nation**, scattered houses and a few cement malls. In this emotional desert Alex Bellini is running in his ideal world. Cool air, colored, fragrant, without gravity, timeless, very quick.

A perfect stage, nearly 50 miles of absolute bliss.

There's enough time to stop and look the natives in the eye. A humble and curious man running in their land, watching dusty travelers raise their thumbs for a ride on the interstate, whereas the more modern ones raise their hand as they hold on tight to a stack of dollar bills for the same reason.

We quietly listen to the head of a **Chapter House**: "You see, in the city you have buses and street cars to go visit your friends. There's 30 of us here, divided by 14 miles of desert. And we've been here for thousands of years. This place – he says as he points toward the empty hall illuminated by Christian neon crosses – is our meeting point. Like the living room in a home, where you can spend time with friends, and once a month we meet to talk about ourselves. Even though each of us has known the others since they were born."

He's missing an arm, under his charcoal shirt, I take a few pictures. He grabs a microphone and explains to the five Native American old ladies what Alex Bellini is doing. He speaks with aspirated sounds full of "th" and "hauth". It's their language. Still very much alive.

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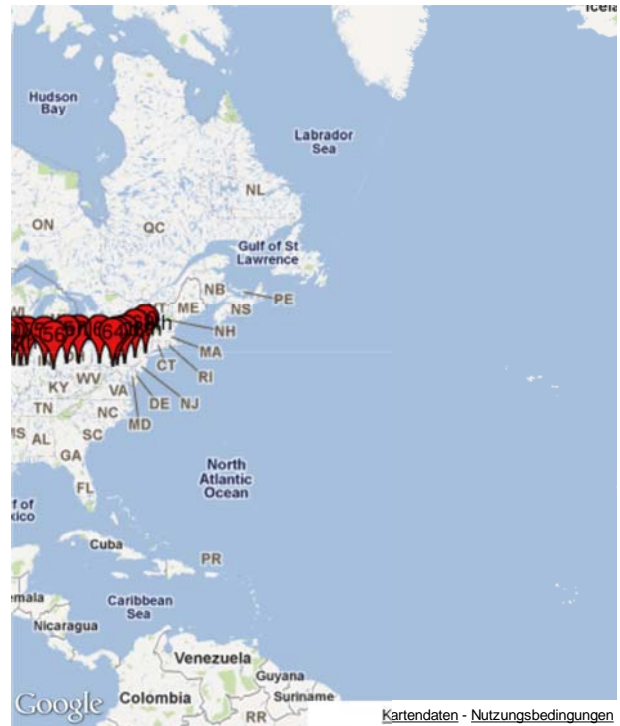
RAA - tappa n°17

Di, 5 Jul 2011 5:56 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 44.64 mi	Kalorien: 3,356 cal
Zeit: 9:50:53	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 9,783 ft
Ø Pace 13:14 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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18th Stage Runner's instinct



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-09



I had a good vibe, throughout the whole stage from **Twin Lakes** to **Crownpoint**.

I was in command of all of my faculties, aware of every part of my body, without fear or sudden surprises.

I listened to the signs my body gave me and followed my "runner's instinct"!

Comment this post



18th Stage Beautiful contrasts



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-09

They say that **New Mexico** is a land of beautiful contrasts.

Cobalt blue skies, animals' white skulls used like ornaments at a gate or entrance, art and paintings, green chili, red chili, NASA and the Roswell aliens.

It may be true, but today on the "Indian Service Road 9" all we found was silence. The road is isolated from everything, far from the major roads, straight and very sunny. We encounter some farms, a rodeo, 3 horses, 2 of which standing and the other one lying down, the police racing at 500 an hour toward nothing, slabs of red rock, and rattlesnakes.

But we also found silence. For the first time.

And as we reached an anthill, kneeling in front of a vast panorama, I heard the sound of ants' footsteps on the ground. Another contrast, such a small volume of land in an area suitable for hurricanes.

Alex travels at a different speed than mine. He's set at about 5 miles an hour. And he sees different things, things that you can only see by foot with the wind in your face. Now car window separating you from the outside world. He likes it. He runs in perfect shape and balance again. Breathing, rhythm, finish line. Tomorrow will be the same, and we'll hear the sound of the ground together.

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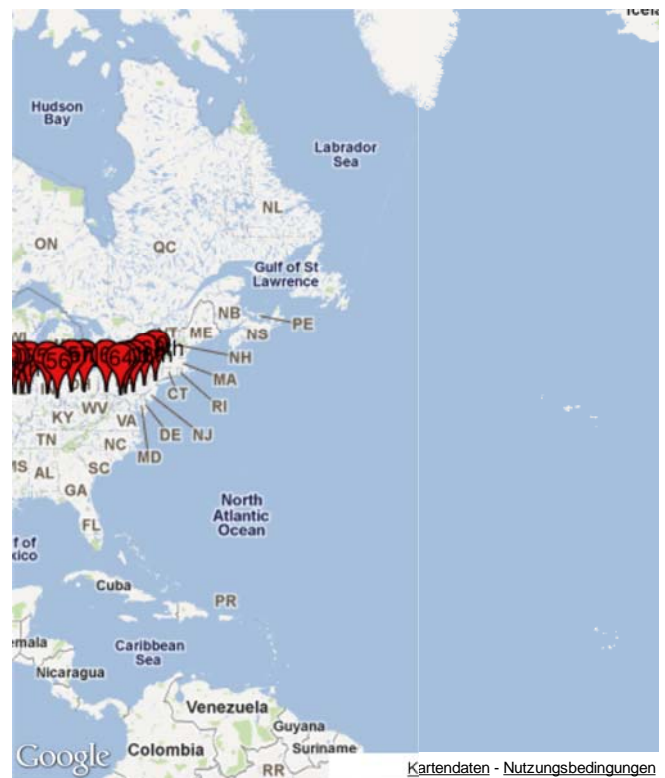
RAA - tappa n°18

Mi, 6 Jul 2011 5:26 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



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Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
8:57:27	1,942 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
12:59 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
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19th Stage Good vibes...



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-09



I had a good vibe again today, the same feeling of control over my body. I'm beginning to get to know what my strengths and my weaknesses are. I've even started making predictions on my arrival time and the length of my stages, and they're pretty accurate too!

That means less space for inconveniences, being more relaxed and not afraid of the unexpected.

That's a big gift for my mind, especially today – my wedding anniversary with Francesca. In the middle of the desert, my mind often drifted off to my family.

I had a really good feeling at the end of the stage when we reached **Pueblo Pintado**, I didn't feel very tired.

This makes me feel pretty relaxed given the next 50 days coming up. It's as if I'm slowly getting into perfect shape.

Comment this post



19th Stage An infinite cycle...



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-09

Dusty traces of a movie seen years ago. Or maybe it was a story, but it doesn't matter.

I remember the main character wakes up in the morning, slides his feet into his slippers that are perfectly aligned with the light gray carpet next to the bed, gets up, striped pajamas, brushes his teeth, goes down to the kitchen, French toast, glances at the cream colored clock on the wall with little black hands, gets dressed, ties the knot on his tie, garage, car, traffic light, office, says hi to Andy downstairs.

Then at a certain point in the day everything starts again. The character finds himself in bed again, slippers, pajamas, etc. An infinite cycle.

This is how we feel today as we leave **Crownpoint**. The road is the second half of yesterday's twin road. Nothing has changed. Probably the only things that's changed is the name of the horses grazing freely. I should stop and ask in every farm, but "private property" is a serious thing in the States.

Even Alex is like yesterday's supersonic train, he arrived exactly on time. And everyone's smiling, hoping to wake up again tomorrow and live the same experience. All over again.

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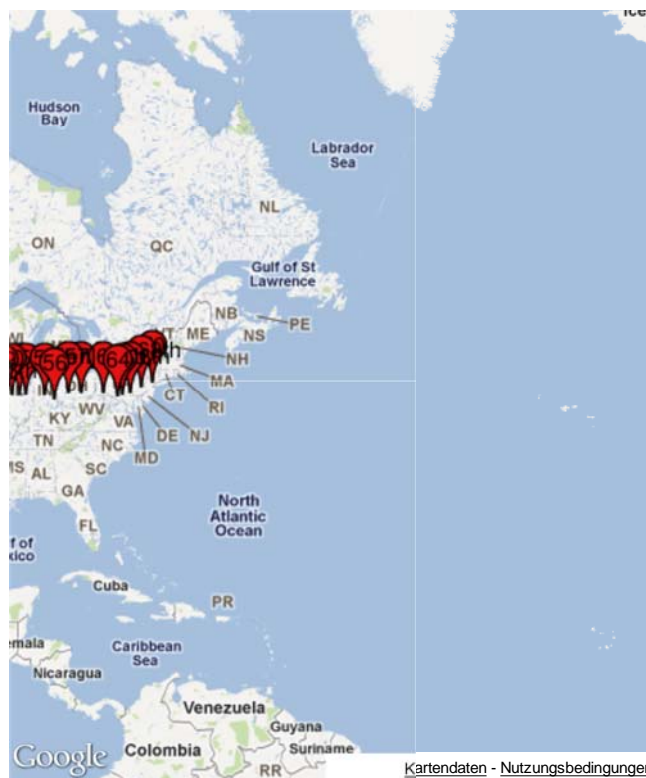
RAA - tappa n°19

Do, 7 Jul 2011 5:53 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



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Ø Pace 12:19 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 20th Stage

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20th Stage Got to keep going!



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-12



What a long stage!
54 miles nonstop in a sea of red rocks and infinite sky!
Everything went well, but at the end I was tired and I really appreciated the fact that my team drove along with me the last 6 miles!
Tomorrow we're looking at another 51 miles. Got to keep going!

Comment this post



20th Stage 54 miles on Mars



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-12

It takes 54 miles to travel across a land as red as Mars. That's a whole lot of miles, and that's why we take off at 5 a.m., half hour before the usual.

We stumble about in the dark with the **Jeep's®** headlights, Alex is beside us like a space explorer with a head flashlight serving as special equipment. An aircraft in outerspace, and we're in the cabin. They say that when it'll be light outside, it'll be red.

From **Pueblo Pintado**, a tin caravanserai, to **Cuba** you have to travel across the tail of the **Navajo** that squeezes into New Mexico. We close the circle, and go back south. I realize this because the sun rises on my left, a morning backlight that gives me goose bumps as I struggle with the camera shutter that seems to be sleeping.

It's the fourth day without reception or internet access, and Alex gets accustomed to the ancient surroundings. The **Far West**. He walks for nearly an hour, like a messenger that knows the road that's waiting for him, he looks at it straight in the eyes, slyly, he saves his energy for the second half of the day.

We encounter just about everything but a cup of black coffee: traces of an SUV that disappear, a cow carcass, a 70's gas station abandoned to the sand, shrubs, a junkyard owner that follows me as he connects my camera to his nervous and inquisitive expression. "Don't worry pal, just a picture for fun...!"

Behind us a curve in the road, like a bed sheet stretched out in the wind, walls of red rock, black squares. There so far away that I can almost see a city through the thick haze. Red buildings with black windows. Maybe the desire for for a metropolis, maybe an illusion.

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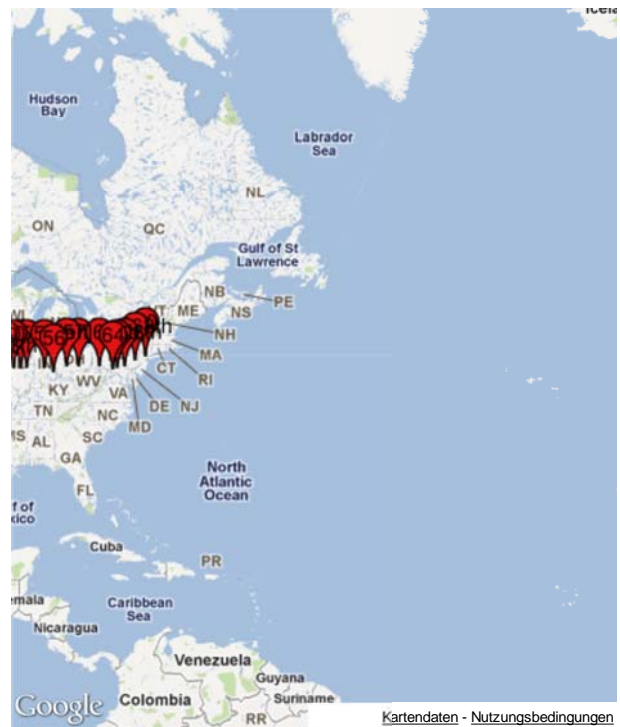
RAA - tappa n°20

Fr, 8 Jul 2011 5:03 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 54.38 mi	Kalorien: 4,331 cal
Zeit: 11:51:30	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 2,457 ft
Ø Pace 13:05 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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21st Stage

The marvelous Abiquiu!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-07-12



Today's stage is the most beautiful we've done so far as landscapes go, right after the Flagstaff stage.

There was several interesting things to see in the areas we traveled across, and this helped me mentally to put up with the stage's difficulties.

I took advantage of a light splash of rain to wear my new rain jacket. Then I had a great time going down the plateau toward the beautiful **Abiquiu Lake!**

A marvelous place that put us in a good mood after the 105 miles we traveled in the last 48 hours!

Comment this post



21st Stage

From desert to bitter cold



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-07-12

There are over 300 feet from my computer screen to the water of the **Abiquiu Lake**.

A sunset bursting with antigravitational rain leaps on the short zinc colored waves. A regenerating sight of abundant water at 7800 feet.

Another 51 miles today to get here from **Cuba**. Added up to yesterday's miles, that makes about 105 miles in two days.

Alex and the other 7 runners that are still in the race take off at night again. It's freezing cold. We've forecasted a day of strong emotions and human effort against the fatigue.

We meet two Japanese people at the neon gas station, one of them probably lives here, the other is part of one of the runner's staff. On my side of the **Jeep's®** windshield wiper, I see them bow at each other a few feet from each other. In **New Mexico**, 2 Japanese people in the dark dawn. One of them will go back to work in a few seconds, the other will climb up the large valleys that lead to Lake Abiquiu with us. We take off and start following Alex, as he runs down the first slopes. The cold air sticks to our calves like a mountain octopus. Terrible. A quick massage and we take off again.

The horizontal light flies toward us and hits us violently, and all of the sudden we're in the middle of pine trees without knowing it. Wind and red brushwood. A series of steep hills slow down the pace and Alex is struggling more than yesterday, he climbs, he runs on the plateaus that are like green carpets for horses. He runs past many runners and he arrives in perfect shape.

We eat outside the motorhome tonight, on a wooden table under a camping roof. We're happy, we smile, in the backlight behind Alex the wounds inflicted on the lake by the white and incomprehensible V8 speedboats.

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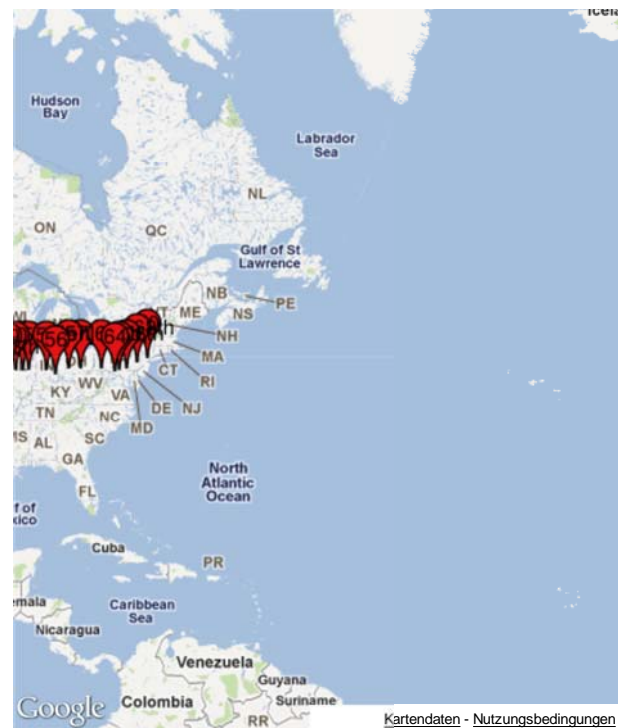
Facebook social plugin

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RAA - tappa n°21(part1)

Sa, 9 Jul 2011 4:59 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini

Distanz:
39.86 miKalorien:
2,871 calZeit:
8:58:01Positiver Höhenunterschied:
2,681 ftØ Pace
13:30 min/miEreignistyp:
RaceAktivitätstyp:
RunningStrecke:
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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 22nd Stage

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22nd Stage Improving my running...



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-12



The first part was very steep, but the last few days I feel better taking off slowly, in order to warm up, and wait for the perfect moment for breakfast.

It was pretty cold in the morning, I wore my gloves to go down to the plain.

My friends at radio 24 kept me company during a very monotonous part of the stage as they interviewed me while I walked.

Comment this post



22nd Stage Up and down the valley



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-12

We roll down the hills that protect the **Abiquiu Lake**. We inhale the trucks' exhaust fumes in the valley below, and go back up to high altitude in the evening, to **Velarde**. A group of abandoned houses in the neck of a narrow valley, where the tallest antenna I've ever seen rises up into the thin clouds.

Alex runs smoothly, he saves his energy for tomorrow's killer stage. I have to go on a quick trip to Santa Fe, capital of the state of New Mexico. 8 miles of fast food joints, malls, prefabricated house salesmen, motels, and firework kiosks that are as big as the supermarkets back home in Italy.

Downtown Santa Fe is a mix of yellow roads and adobe houses. Reminds me of a New Mexican version of one of our amusement parks back home, maybe fake or maybe real, but maybe fake. Definitely real.

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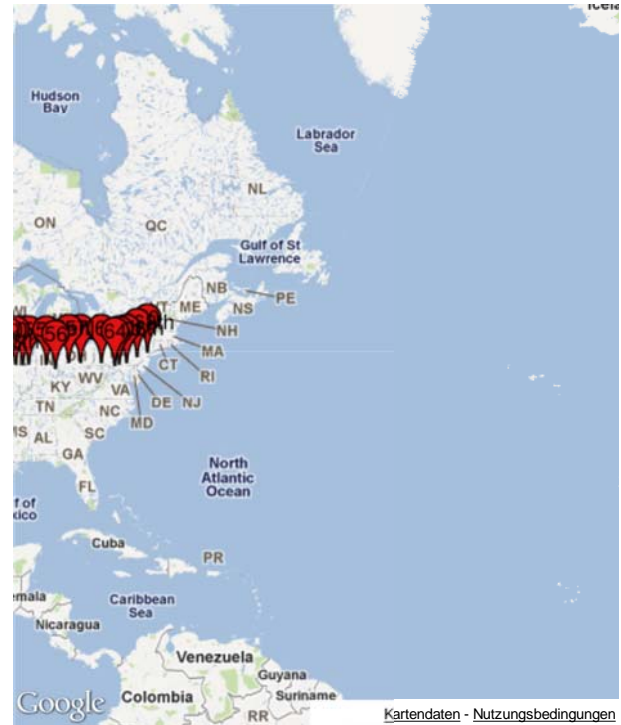
RAA - tappa n°22

So, 10 Jul 2011 5:32 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz: 38.52 mi	Kalorien: 3,070 cal
Zeit: 8:22:39	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 922 ft
Ø Pace 13:03 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 23rd Stage

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23rd Stage A moment to remember

 posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner on 2011-07-13*




Perhaps the best stage so far, for the way we dealt with it.


I experienced one of those moments that I know I'll remember my entire life. Not so much because of my performance, but because of the perfect feeling right from the first few steps uphill in Velarde. I was in the "flow". That feeling of bliss that every athlete hopes to experience, at least once.

It's days like these that you feel like you can do anything your heart desires, not even the rain and the wind can stop you. In my entire life I think I've lived no more than 5 or 6 days like this one.

I'll really need it for the upcoming stages of the race, for the more difficult stages. To come back to today's state mentally.

Comment this post 

23rd Stage Like I wish it would be

 posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter on 2011-07-13*

Right when I'm closest to the sky, on a mountain top in **New Mexico**, I read your email, in front of a fast food joint's wet window. It took you 22 days.

We're so close now, your father and I. Maybe from up here he can hear the sound of the rain as it mixes with my tears. You, on the other hand, won't be able to tell the difference between the sweet and the salty slurry from so far away. I'm taking up this space, because I'm a running man too, full of nerves that are worn out from the hard work and disenchantment, full of moods, anger, compassion.

And it's during the 51 miles uphill, toward the mountain top covered with pine trees and wooden houses, that Alex runs past me whispering: "Today everything is exactly like I wish it would always be". I stare at the green conifer wall and I widen my nostrils to breathe in more oxygen.

Maybe that's exactly how it is. Today I'm really going up, to conquer the mountaintop and plunge into the other side. If you had left the door open, maybe we would have seen each other at home, in the valley, tomorrow. Instead I'm staying up here, once again, thinking that I haven't taken the most important picture.

It's a picture where you're holding your father's hand, and as you let him go toward the infinite skies, you hold on tight to my hand.

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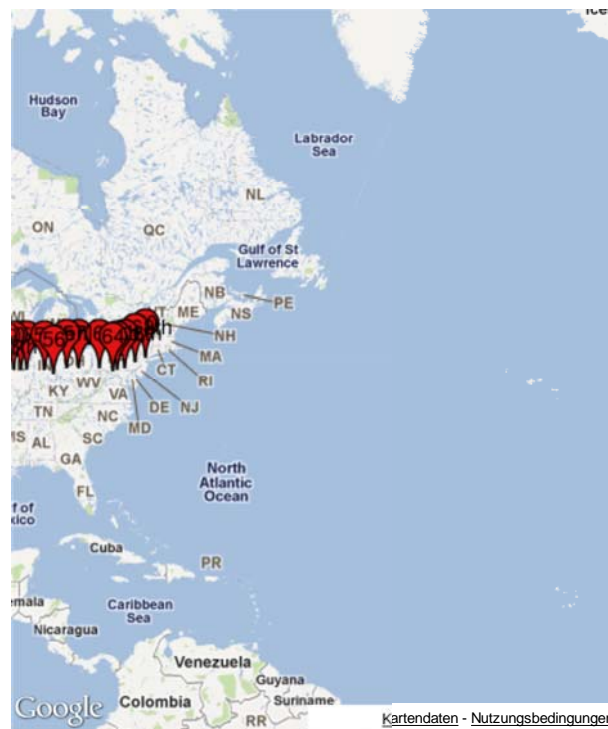
RAA - tappa n°23

Mo, 11 Jul 2011 5:30 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
 Grandiosa tappa che segna un momento importante per il nostro via...



Distanz:	Kalorien:
47.20 mi	3,911 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
10:38:55	14,600 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
13:32 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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24th Stage Regaining balance



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner on 2011-07-14](#)



The take off wasn't one of the best ones so far. Maybe I was tired from yesterday's hard work. But with a little bit of patience, toward the middle of the stage, I got over my "hangover" and I regained some balance, also thanks to the majestic landscape.

I finished the stage with a hint of excitement, since my legs seemed to working just as well as yesterday, in perfect condition and without having exerted too much effort in my legs and mind.

Comment this post



24th Stage Separating mind and body



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter on 2011-07-14](#)

The name of this place, the highest point in New Mexico at 8850 feet above sea level, seems to be due to the natives' custom of returning from a successful hunt, and shooting the last arrow on a tree. In other words, **Palo Flechado**: "The pierced tree."

The probably came by tonight too, because I woke up with an asbestos arrow stuck in my neck. I slept on the floor, with my head turned toward the cockpit, and it was a huge mistake, between my head and my feet there must have been a difference of 3 degrees.

We wander shivering in the RV without choosing sides, we look like beasts in a cage, we go in circles waiting for the water to boil. The bars open, 17 pounds of bread and jam and we take off. There's an amazing place waiting for us outside.

We travel across **Eagle Nest**, where I'd like to spend the rest of my life having breakfast in the small cafes. Waitresses with immaculate aprons, bacon and eggs and small tables set outside under the sun. An extremely steep descent among the deer, small canyons carved out by streams that open onto infinite plains, dotted by random wooden chalets that are flat and wise. Instead of outdoor garden gnomes, they have grasslands and herds of grazing cows.

As we open the door of the Jeep®, as we go to help Alex, we are literally overwhelmed by the intense smell of lavender.

He's used to it by now, he's come down from his mountain peaks. Yesterday's ecstatic stage left him with traces of confidence, but also some pain in his tendons. He finds a way to make it go away, with total concentration. We separate body and mind.

And we go down to **Cimarron**, wooden and brick houses. We treat ourselves to dinner in a restaurant on the highway, next to a laundromat, motel, and a gas station. That's all there is in the town. The wind and the deer cross the street as if they were clients sitting at a table, waiting to be served, just like us.

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RAA - tappa n°24

Di, 12 Jul 2011 5:56 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
oggi giornata di discesa! Stamattina risveglio davvero fresco, no...



Distanz:
37.31 mi

Kalorien:
2,544 cal

Zeit:
7:31:38

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
732 ft

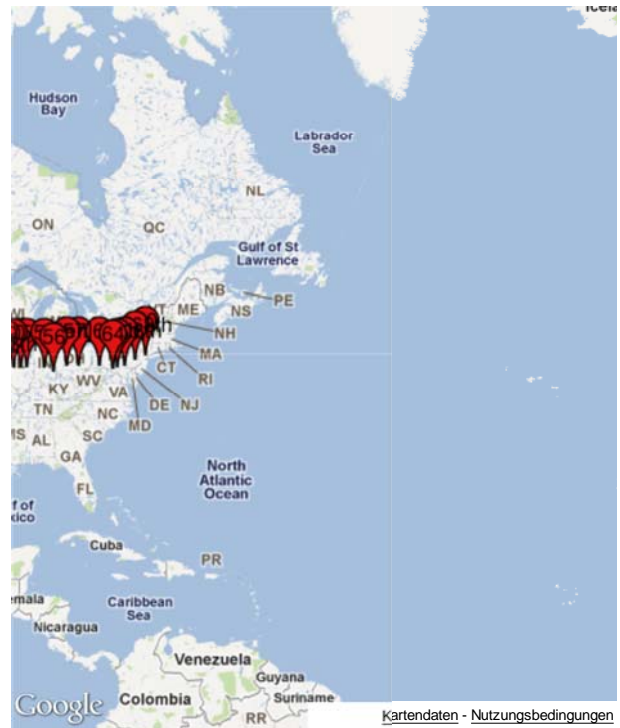
Ø Pace
12:06 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
--

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25th Stage

Back to the heat



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-07-17



The heat is back, it took us off guard and we struggled, unexpectedly. I had great vibes in my mind and in my legs from the days before and I must say that this stage caused quite a few problems!

I lost a lot of liquid and I'm attempting to rehydrate. Tomorrow will be another challenge that I'm preparing myself for.

From this moment on, the average stage will be 46 miles a day. That's a lot, but we'll make it!

Comment this post



25th Stage

The giant yellow void.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-07-17

This shed under which I take shelter is composed of four iron poles spray painted in what was supposed to be blue, a sloping roof and a roof of corrugated iron. Only the stakes driven into the dry land seem to be able to withstand what's coming from the horizon. The wind scratches everything in its path, it seems to sweep away anything taller than 3 inches..

This is our violent farewell to **New Mexico**.

The cool hills of Palo Flechado are swept away, like a soft memory, unreal. Back to the heat, the yellow desert, The most stunning sight in the empty horizon since our departure. Marvelous.

We woke up in the middle of the night in **Cimarron**, another early departure due to the extremely long stage: 51 miles.

We launch Alex like a missile on an interstellar exploration, and in the 28 minutes that stand between the first aid break, we park in front of some wooden restaurants that are still closed. We are wireless internet thieves, digital nomads searching for an oasis in which to communicate.

We reach Alex as we break every speed limit from Alaska to Hawaii, we see him appear in the horizon, he's walking. He's started to like taking off after the others in the long stages to then race ahead of the other heroes and exchange a few words, and shout with his short breath, against the wind.

There's no time to acclimatize, there's just **Springer**, built with a few hundred red bricks and wooden planks, then the last hill moves like a curtain and we see the great big yellow before us. Hundreds of miles of yellow carpet nailed to the ground with wooden utility poles. The end never arrives.

During the last 25 miles we don't even use more to communicate anymore, but signs. Almost automatically. Water bottle, protein bar, and so forth. Alex emits monosyllables. He's not with us, he's in his world, focused on his hard work and his goal.

Now it's time to drink, inform Luca back in Italy about the day's data for the forced rehydration, food intake, and sleep induction. Tomorrow another 50 miles. And he'll make it again.

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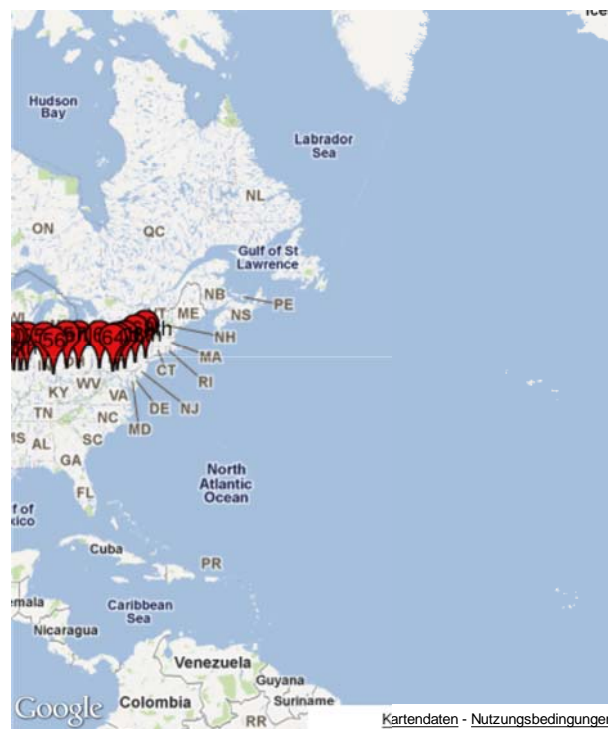
RAA - tappa n°25

Mi, 13 Jul 2011 4:53 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz: 53.84 mi	Kalorien: 4,232 cal
Zeit: 12:03:58	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,536 ft
Ø Pace 13:27 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 26th Stage

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26th Stage What a relief!

 posted by [Alex Bellini - The runner](#) on 2011-07-17




It's such a relief to run 55 miles after yesterday's tiring stage and feel at ease again. I felt at ease with my body again, I had the right rhythm, and good breathing.

It was definitely extremely long, but the most important part was the fact that we were back on track from yesterday's difficult day. Tomorrow we're entering Oklahoma, and we're all a bit curious about finding out if the voices are true: flies, heat, and cows! See you tomorrow!

Comment this post 

26th Stage Farewell to New Mexico

 posted by [Mauro Talamonti - Reporter](#) on 2011-07-17

Movements at night in the dark. Alex has to go to the bathroom 4 times, collateral effects of rehydration. But it's a good thing, because at breakfast, under the table full of sliced bread and "x" flavored jam, the scale says that he put back on all of the weight he lost yesterday. A great job on Simone's part and the entire team, Luca and Max.

It's important because Alex has to run fifty-five miles, with yesterday's fear still hanging. But everything goes smoothly, mile after mile. Alex is a little below par, he's recuperating, but today there's a completely different music.

On our left there's a big novelty, something we haven't seen in the last 48 hours: a hill. Or better yet, it's a volcano. All of yesterday's yellow is starting to slowly change to green, as if to warn us: tomorrow you'll be in **Oklahoma**, 14 days of cows and flies and fields. It will be hot again, meaning cold sweats.

We arrive in **Clayton**, the last agglomerate of houses in New Mexico, where it hasn't rained in 9 months. They've forecasted a blizzard tonight, a peculiar welcome cocktail made of water and wind. I lift my eyes, looking for black clouds to approach, I find a scrolling led sign that says "Pray for Rain".

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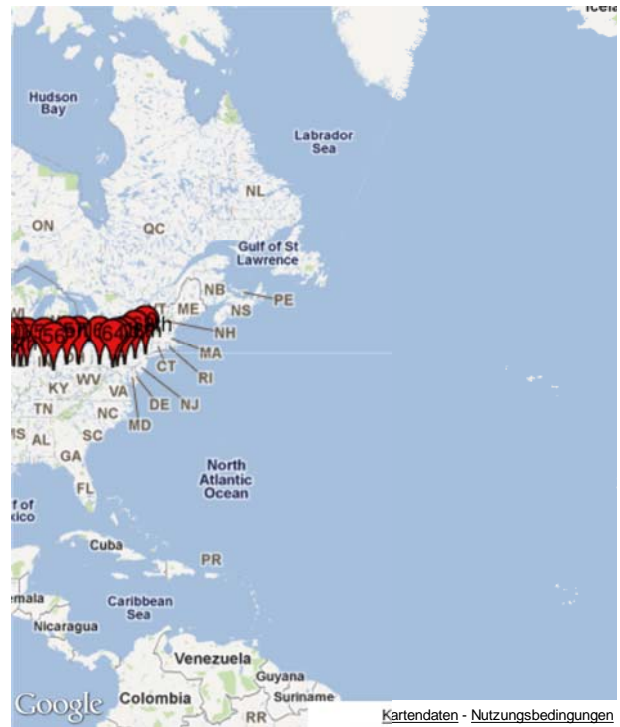
RAA - tappa n°26

Do, 14 Jul 2011 4:54 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
dopo i primi 12 km di camminata trova il ritmo e va fino alla fin...



Distanz: 55.33 mi	Kalorien: 4,038 cal
Zeit: 12:23:00	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,033 ft
Ø Pace 13:26 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 27th Stage

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27th Stage One step closer...



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-18



As I entered Oklahoma, I was excited as I always am when we go from one state to the next. One more step toward our goal.

I leave New Mexico behind, hoping to see fresh green pastures and grasslands. Instead I'm welcomed by a great big bang of heat. Mile after mile the fatigue wipes away my energy, I feel as if I were in California again.

I'm very tired when I touch the finish line, I'm hungry and my muscles hurt a lot. I made it anyway because it's all I ever wanted, with all my body and strength. I'm sure I'll get all of my energy back tomorrow.

Comment this post



27th Stage Oklahoma!



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-18

When you look at a geopolitical map you realize that certain countries are divided by straight lines, boundaries drawn from point "a" to point "b". Of course others are divided by nature, a river or a mountain range or the sea: this side is mine, the other is yours.

When we travel in the sand over the straight line between New Mexico and **Oklahoma**, we wonder what to expect, about the new and different things we'll encounter. Apparently nothing. The line on the map was really drawn by humans, sitting at a wooden table or asking farmer Bill: "Would you rather be in New Mexico or in Oklahoma"?

It's fascinating for us Europeans. For instance, when we look at a Frenchman at they seem to be aliens that live just 60 miles from our mailbox.


But maybe it's not entirely true. And after just a few steps, we start noticing a few differences. For example, the land is darker, the horizon stretches out into a line that looks like an electroencephalogram that has stopped fighting. It lays down to rest, exhausted, after over 1000 miles of madness.

Alex runs sure of himself in this new state, but he's too concentrated to stop at the granite sign "**OKLAHOMA**". Maybe he will by the time we reach Missouri or Illinois, but for now we're dealing with the heat again, the temperature rises to 110° with a really strong wind. It's tough, again. All of the Californian ghosts come out of the closet, and Alex is exhausted at the end. The last few miles are crucial, hunger, pain, heat, and fatigue. We get there anyway, just in time to understand how to deal with tomorrow's stage. The longest, 56 miles in Oklahoma.

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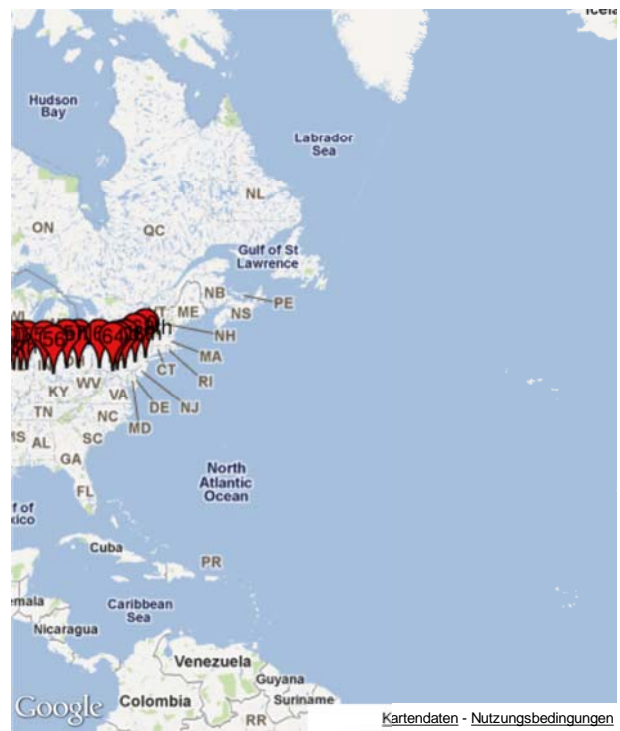
RAA - tappa n°27

Fr, 15 Jul 2011 5:24 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
tornado il caldo, oggi toccati 42°. Alex ha comunque retto bene e...



Distanz:	Kalorien:
49.25 mi	3,728 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
11:09:28	180 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
13:36 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 28th Stage

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28th Stage Incredible!

 posted by [Alex Bellini - The runner](#) on 2011-07-18




I ran 56 miles with the wind bending my ears and I'm fine!
I'm really satisfied with how I managed my energy and my food intake.
I had a slight pain in my hip, but I was able to deal with it somehow.
Compared to yesterday, I feel balanced, focused, and ready to continue!

Comment this post



28th Stage A bowl of corn meal

 posted by [Mauro Talamonti - Reporter](#) on 2011-07-18

Oklahoma is like a bowl of corn meal, we're like corpuscles, we struggle as we cross its surface and an absent-minded God has left the hairdryer turned on and pointed at the bowl.

This thought comes to mind as I hold the scorching car door with two hands, after "just" five hours since the stage has begun. Today we're going to have to go through at least 12 hours in these conditions. We're a little worried. Simone and his team work on nutritional strategies to make the day go more smoothly.

We're propelled into a dark, black sea as we take off from **Boise City**. On the horizon bright, flashing lights. They're automatic sprinklers that go for hundreds of yards. We seem adrift, but we see a coast in the distance.

Rows of green wheat, stains of life nourished by machines, in the middle of the sand. It all makes me think of the most visionary science fiction story. But here, in the land of country cows and pick-up trucks, the image isn't exactly appropriate. It must be the heat that's affecting my neuronal connections.

After what happened yesterday, worse things can happen. Instead Alex arrives. Like a real champion, who plays well in the finals. He eats up **56 miles** without losing a beat. He's fourth. Fresh, happy, and aware that he's put a huge accomplishment in his pocket, using extraordinary strategies to manage his energy and the long hours.

I try to go to bed early, but there's internet in this motel where we're parked and I have to take advantage of the time I have. Alex sleeps and he's connected his body to the battery charger. The wind settles down for one night. Let's hope it lasts a while.

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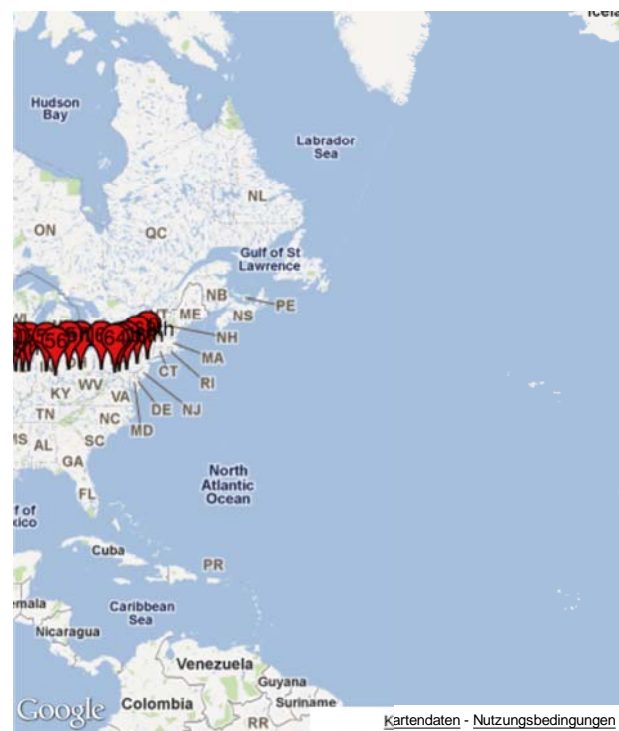
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RAA - tappa n°28

Sa, 16 Jul 2011 5:27 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini

Tappone lungo gestito al meglio da tutto il team! Migliorata ancor...

Distanz:
56.11 miZeit:
12:39:20Ø Pace
13:32 min/miAktivitätstyp:
RunningKalorien:
4,211 calPositiver Höhenunterschied:
238 ftEreignistyp:
RaceStrecke:
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29th Stage

Hot, dry, and yellow

posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-07-20

Having spent a lot of energy for the 56 mile stage that was completed yesterday with great success, we expected for today to be difficult.

Although it was it was 11 miles shorter, the feeling was of extreme fatigue, both physical and mental. And the surroundings didn't help. This teaches us that the most difficult stages aren't always the "hardest", as much as the ones you take lightly!

The heat toward the end of the race definitely affected my performance!

We still have about 10 days to cross this yellow, dry, and hot state.

Comment this post



29th Stage

The Dog, the Cat, and the Mouse.

posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-07-20

We wake up in **Guymon**, a small town roasting away in the **Oklahoma panhandle**, a corridor of land that connects the central square of the state to New Mexico.

Alex has to run 45 miles today, and it almost seems like a vacation compared to yesterday. He runs quickly, trying to beat the heat that is rising from the golden, rolling fields, under the sky, asking for water.

Alex starts feeling tired, and the stage isn't as easy as we'd imagined. We get to the end safe and sound, but Alex's body is suffering. The heat melts away the concrete's memories. There's little time for a quick recovery therapy. Massage, supplements, rest.

A few images flash before our eyes, but they all seem unreal. Like Eddie, for instance, the globetrotter that sailed around the sun, riding along on his lawnmower, showing us travelers his strange itinerant family: a dog with a cat on top of him, and the cat with a mouse perched on top. Three sworn enemies, under the sun, one on top of the other. In Oklahoma.

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 30th Stage

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30th Stage A good night's sleep



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-20



I regained my energy very well with a good night's sleep on a Tempur mattress. The heat affected our performance once again and the conditions were not helping us, but with the right rhythm, breaks, we didn't have huge problems.

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30th Stage 1080 trucks a day



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-20

A word of advice. If you travel along **Route 270** in Oklahoma and you want to take pictures on the side of the road or even worse, you're by chance running across the US by foot, I suggest you put 200 pound weights in your shoes.

Every 20 seconds a truck goes by at 60 miles an hour with no intention of slowing down. When it races past you, the wind gushes so violently that it shoves Alex over 5 feet and he has to hold his cap with both hands. This happens about 1080 times a day. It's alienating.

Fortunately, toward the last quarter of the stage we make a turn toward Balko. We will sleep in front of a school in a field of wheat. It hasn't been raining for a while, the driest summer in years, says the area's protestant pastor, as he gives us a one million dollar ticket – "Read the Bible daily".

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31st Stage Heat, the enemy...

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-23




It's incredibly hot! The state of Oklahoma is putting us to the test. I try to do my best during the first part of the day, so that I can allow myself a few moments of refuge during the breaks in the afternoon. I'm fine physically, my mind and my muscles are fine, but it's hard to stay focused for 12 hours straight in this hell.

They told us that this heat is an unusual phenomenon, that it hasn't been so hot in years, and unfortunately there are victims! It will follow us throughout the entire state. Let's hope the temperature is a bit lower in Missouri!

Comment this post 

31st Stage Sand hourglass

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-23


The first few miles of the stage are an hourglass of thick sand, the grains of sand are like unrelenting minutes that separate us from the only gas stations' opening hours.

We need to stock up on ice, Alex will drink more than 10 quarts of water today, and we absolutely need caffeine. We fill up our gigantic styrofoam cups to the brim with coffee. Four teaspoons of sugar, plastic cap. We know the coffee will cool down slowly, while the outside temperature will rise, and we're fine with it. It's the best liquid we could ever crave right now.

It reminds me of the America you see in "No Country for Old Men". Coffee for the locals too, sitting at the red diner table amidst 67 different kinds of potato chips and 1 liter bottles of Red Bull. They look behind the thick lenses. Five-o-seven in the morning.

We launch out with the Jeep® into the infinite loop of assisting Alex, every 2 and half miles until evening. He runs under 114° heat, it's still long sleeve and pant weather.

On the side of the road we constantly encounter movable and immovable goods and properties abandoned by man, like houses, tractors, and barns. Closed stores and abandoned gas stations. We pass by everything, but no longer have eyes to see, just to look. A few hay bales that seem to be about to crack and go into spontaneous combustion, and we've arrived. Alex reaches the finish line safe and sound, again.

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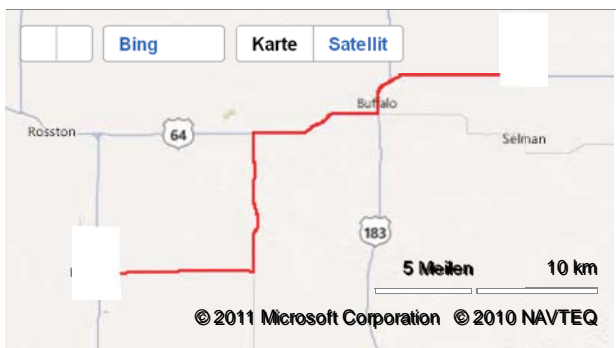
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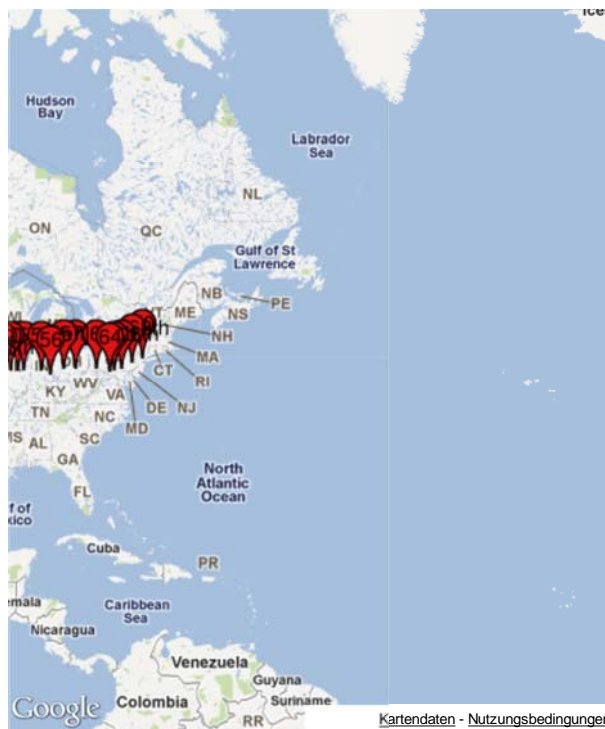
RAA - tappa n°31

Di, 19 Jul 2011 5:24 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:	Kalorien:
32.18 mi	2,334 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
7:31:38	697 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
14:02 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 32nd Stage

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32nd Stage A rough day

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-23




I started off well, I kept on going, hoping to run a lot of miles before the heat set in, an incredible heat that today alone killed 13 people in the state.

Then I started having a crisis that I had trouble dealing with in the beginning. As I walked and started running again with my rhythm I slowly regained my mind-body equilibrium up until the finish line, 13 hours after takeoff. And tomorrow will be even longer. We're hoping for easier roads where you don't need to jump behind the guardrail to protect yourself from the trucks every 30 seconds.

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32nd Stage Thirty-second dawn

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-23

We move slowly on the blue highway that runs straight out of **Buffalo**. Our swollen eyes look for light on the horizon, towards the east, thirty-second dawn.

All of the sudden our eyes are drawn to a dark stain on our right, lost in the fields behind the car windows. It's a black square, hundreds of feet long on each side, floating on Oklahoma's yellow plate. Only when we shut our nostrils to defend ourselves from the sudden, awful smell that's assailing us do we understand what's happening. Buffalo, bison, and cow breeding. As wide as most soccer fields, with 110°.

We also realize what the hundreds of big, metal, shiny trucks are transporting. Animal meat. What's still waiting for us is a vast, rough sea. Sinuous yellow waves to climb and descend, that follow us one after the other for 47 miles.

We see Alex coming around the curve, running with a snake in his hands. He found it on the ground, it's green, very thin, and doesn't move. A traveling companion for a few feet.

And then the heat suddenly hits us. It's aggressive and has no mercy. Alex is having a crisis all of the sudden, his head pounding, and the persistent trucks with no respect. 110° weather and we're 25 miles from **Alva**. We keep on falling asleep on the scorching hot car seats, we're low on sugar like the rain. But the real rain, from the sky, never arrives.

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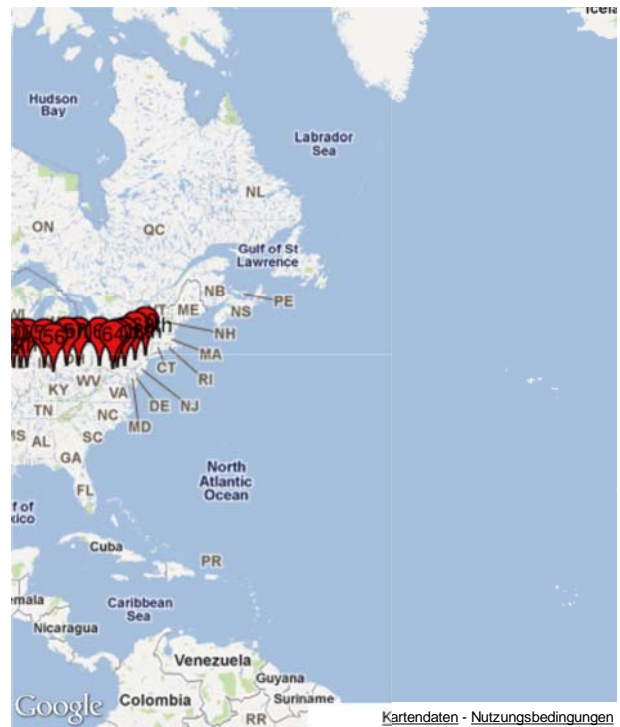
RAA - tappa n°32

Mi, 20 Jul 2011 5:33 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:	Kalorien:
47.69 mi	3,486 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
12:53:33	1,939 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
16:14 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 33rd Stage

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33rd Stage What a satisfaction!



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-07-26



Great vibes today in the first part of the stage.

I didn't even feel the heat, not even at 11 o'clock in the morning, when it's usually unbearable.

It's exactly for this reason that I was even more careful, trying to save up energy, drinking little, and moving forward as I focused on my rhythm.

Toward the end I lost a lot of strength, fatigue due to the extreme heat combined with the high humidity, but I made it to the end of the stage with a great sense of satisfaction!

Massage time in a room at the Fire Department, amid suits and trucks was hilarious, and I still thank them for kindness!

Comment this post



33rd Stage Eternal flames



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-07-26

Luca meets up with us from Italy. He's an important member of the team, and in addition to his "technical" role in dealing with nutrition, he will give us a big hand on the logistics, as Max did the first few days, trying to increase the hours of sleep, thereby helping us with our everyday tasks.

With a lucky game of **Oklahoma** back roads, we encounter a Wal Mart open 24/7 and we roam around like vampires in the empty aisles, as we search for fresh, colored food. Pineapples, mangos, strawberries, and banana bread. I grab a professional Frisbee by accident. It's not edible, but it's still colored. And we'll really need it, I swear.

We park the 200 horsepower Jeep® and run over to Alex to assist him. We're traveling in a quiet and sunny countryside today. It seems like an easy stage, but when the first truck races beside us at 60 miles an hour we remember that we're still small, insignificant insects, part of the local protected wildlife on the side of the road.

We reach our destination without huge difficulties, Alex's concentration slightly decreases toward the end of the stage, under an increasingly oppressive heat. As if to definitively put out the eternal flames that follow us a fire department welcomes us, in the town of **Medford**.

A massage amidst the Fire Brigade suits is the last and very surreal image we have before facing the last red-hot enemy of the day. Our beds.

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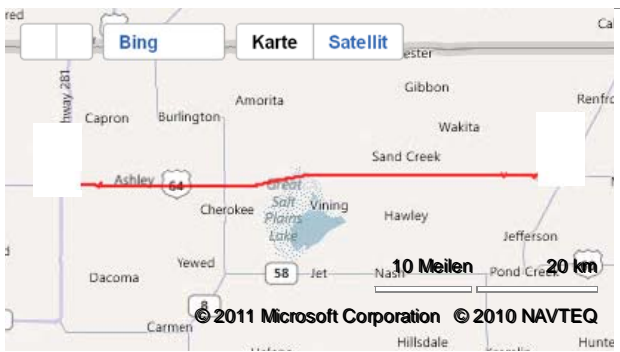
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RAA - tappa n°33

Do, 21 Jul 2011 5:02 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:
52.69 mi

Kalorien:
4,537 cal

Zeit:
12:31:55

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
10,131 ft

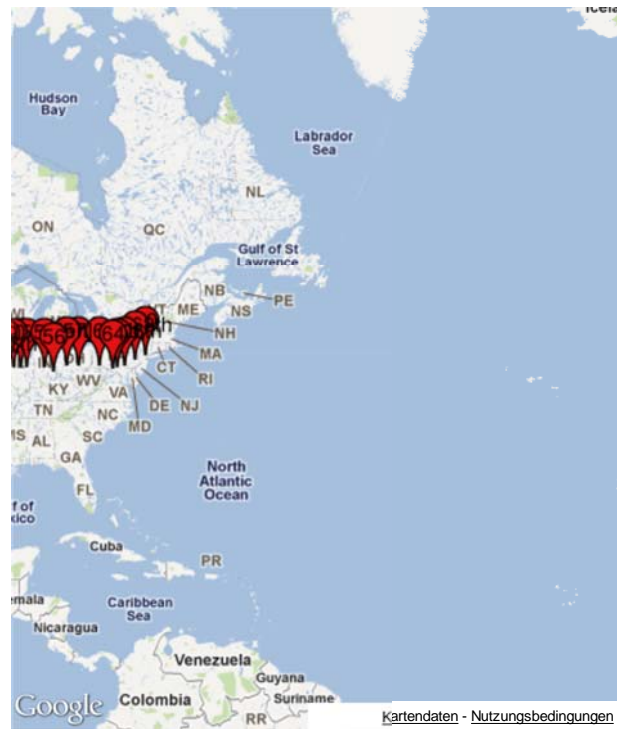
Ø Pace
14:16 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
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34th Stage Heart of the prairie



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-07-27



Tonight I slept in a fire department, and before I left, I was looking at the old pictures of firemen, hanging on the walls, local heroes, and one of them looked a lot like me. Beard. Eyes. It made me smile, a great way to start this new day in the warm heart of the grasslands.

We take off in the middle of the night, as always. It will be like this throughout all Oklahoma. I move slowly the first few miles, then I catch up, great feelings in the beginning.

But the stage is very long. By night we reach green rivers full of turtles and infinite yellow fields. I felt a little out of it toward the middle of the stage, it was getting really hot, but I got back into the game immediately with our new proven techniques and good hydration.

We're ready for tomorrow!

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34th Stage In a trance



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-07-27

Frontal assault on the monotony of the past few days.

Still 110° and over 50% humidity as we leave **Medford**. As soon as we make the slightest move we sweat, I move my fingers on the keyboard slowly, trying not to move my forearms. The computer will get wet anyways.

We load the **Jeep®** at 4 o'clock in the morning, the back seats are partially reclined. There's a festival of Chinese boxes in the trunk of the car, everything has a vital space that's less than an inch.

A list of the things in our luggage compartment:

- blue and white cooler filled with water, fruit, water bottles, ice
- 2 boxes with a transparent drawer and running diary. One for pharmacy purposes (creams, bandages, tape, pain killers, wet wipes, scissors, Vaseline, syringes, disinfectants). The other one with supplements and herbal products.
- a light brown cardboard box 18" x 18" with technical clothing (short and long-sleeved shirts, shorts, 4 pairs of shoes with different mileage marked in pen on the edge of the sole, caps, reflective vest, gloves, glasses)
- red folding chair
- transparent box with handles containing bars, almonds, different food
- professional orange Frisbee
- a few dozen articles that we seem to have lost, but are sure are exactly there.

I'm sitting in the back seat, writing or editing material with an inflatable cushion on my legs and the computer snoring and heating up like a oil tanker, connected to an inverter, in turn connected to a 12V socket. Then there's backpacks with camera equipment, tripods, monopods, shoulder straps, dust.

Simone's up front, driving.

Towels for the car seats, in order to avoid getting fourth degree burns every 37 minutes.

A few 10 feet long cables, a mini jack connector to blast the music when we listen to DubStep after 4:30 p.m. during the over 50 mile stages.

All of this combined with the autistic repetition of the same gestures, every 2 miles helps us survive. Forces us to stay awake, alert, and curious, in a trance.

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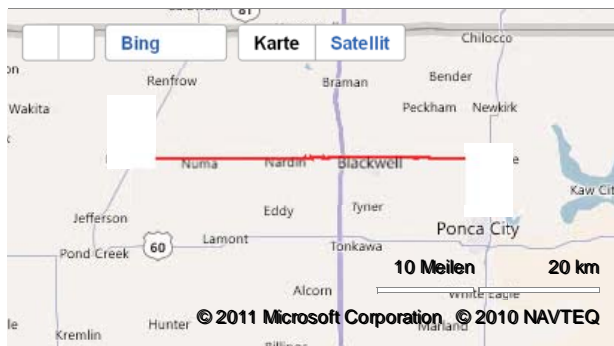
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RAA - tappa n°34

Fr, 22 Jul 2011 4:59 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini


 Distanz:
42,14 mi

 Kalorien:
3,188 cal

 Zeit:
9:56:45

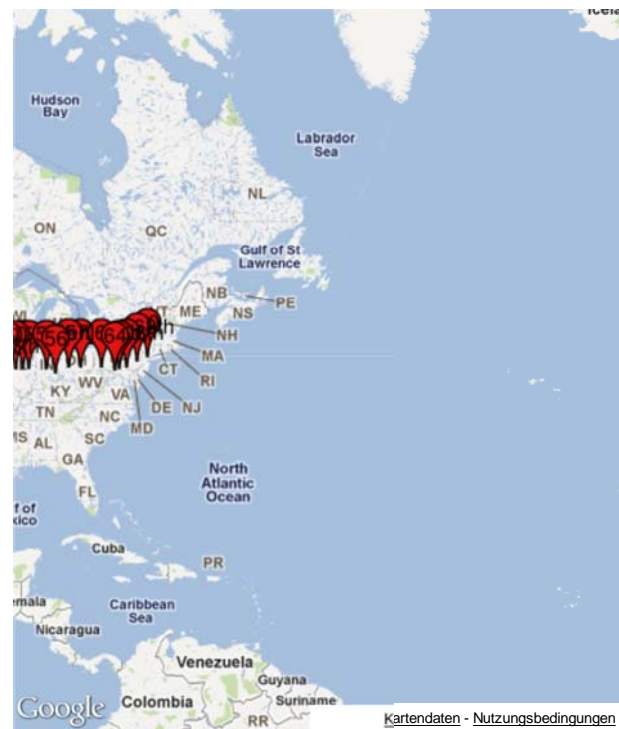
 Positiver Höhenunterschied:
664 ft

 Ø Pace
14:10 min/mi

 Ereignistyp:
Race

 Aktivitätstyp:
Running

 Strecke:
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35th Stage Thick, dark air



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-07-29



From **Ponca City** we run for about 43 miles toward Pawhuska. At takeoff there's a thick, humid, and dark air. I could hear a strange mix of sounds! ...cows, the slow humming of gas pumps, police sirens in the distance. The sounds aren't meant for me, but I run anyways.

I run slowly for the first part of the stage until my face smashes against a wall of boiling air.

The road is made of ongoing waves, you die in the pits, and you can finally breathe with the light breeze on the peaks.

We travel across **Barnsdall**, a ghost town with abandoned houses made of old, ruined bricks. The white line on the concrete looks like icing, shiny and perfect, I follow it to the finish line, across a green landscape, the one that most looks like Italy since we took off from Huntington Beach.

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35th Stage The Pawhuska Rodeo kids.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-07-29

I got a bicycle, pedaled for 4 miles in the woods, asking the most improbable people for directions, and all I understood was "pick-up".

I wasn't clear on the purpose of these vehicles, the antithesis of the basic theories of aerodynamics, with an engine capacity of 5000 cc V8, rear twin wheel, as big as the 71, that brought me to school in the black, winter mornings in **Turin**.

At the Pawhuska **rodeo**, in Oklahoma, I find myself amidst a stampede of horses, bulls, and buffalos that fly around like butterflies gone mad, hats, leather, ground, urine, and feces. Jeans on little girls with curls and freckles, checkered shirts, smelling like fresh laundry, especially for the festival. It's real. The first part of true white America. The one with cowboys, the first ones to move to this flat and hot land, making their way from the East to found the new horse and white man era, the era after the buffalos and the **Cherokee**.

We're like little kids from **Pawhuska**, we're born in Oklahoma and that's where we'll die. And tonight we're going to the rodeo, after a long, hot day at school. We'll polish our best boots, and the sound of leather will lead the way. We'll groom our horses as if they were our shiny sports car. The older kids will be there, and they'll be like magnets for our girl friends who we're still not old enough to love. They'll get there with their big **pick-up trucks**, with their licenses (that we still don't have), they'll park them in line, toward the rodeo, toward the land. They'll sit in the back, with a cooler full of beers, their taut, round hats in the dusk and the car doors opened to blend their music with that of the horse hoofs hitting the soft ground.

Pick-up trucks are meant for living, under the stars, to carry emotions, things, and men.

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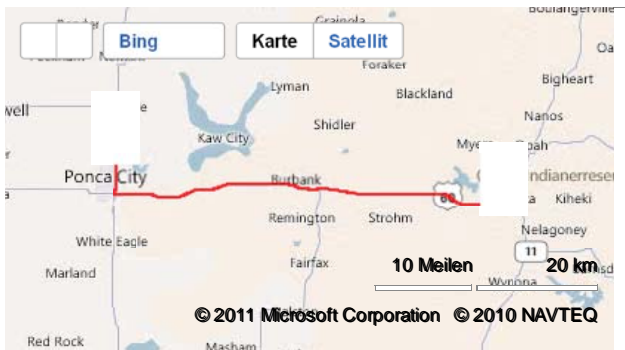
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RAA - tappa n°35

Sa, 23 Jul 2011 4:58 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:
45.44 mi

Kalorien:
3,737 cal

Zeit:
10:45:30

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
1,648 ft

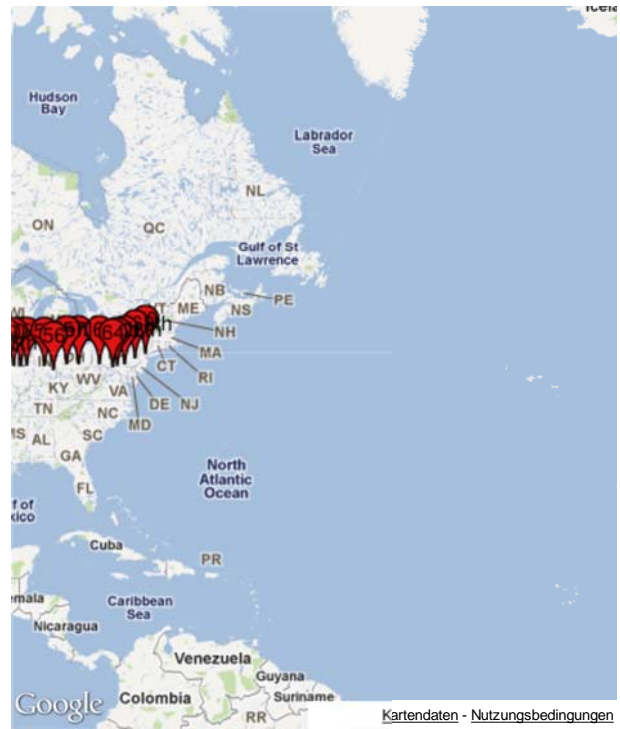
Ø Pace
14:12 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
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36th Stage Eyes fixed on Missouri



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner on 2011-07-30*



I get ready for a day of passion. Yesterday at 8 o'clock the **Pawhuska** thermometers read 110° and 40% humidity.

We take off in the middle of the night, traveling along deserted streets, with our eyes fixed on **Missouri**, but our feet still planted in the red land of the Okie's.

I start off walking for just half an hour, I'm anxious to get there in a hurry. It's our last night in the RV and I want to be prepared for tomorrow's change.

I'm starting to make a surprise video for surprise Sofia. All I can say is that the protagonists are all the animals I encounter... And I see a lot of them today, especially horses in immense gardens, so far away from a building that they look like wild animals. They look at me and it seems that they're asking themselves why I'm struggling so much. Well, guys, I only have 2 legs and it's a long way down!

Instead I feel good, I run over 40 miles with a great rhythm. We arrive, on the shore of a lake, a few words and a massage. Next time I come by here, I swear it'll be for a BBQ and a swim!

Comment this post



36th Stage Darren



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter on 2011-07-30*

From what I hear, private property in the United States is a very unique concept. They say you don't mess around with private property.

It may even be true, but since we began this journey we've covered well over a thousand miles, traveling through states, deserts, mountains, and the one thing that was never missing on the side of the Jeep® is barbed wire. No matter where you go, fields, woods, or desert, you can't step inside, not even to go for a stroll. You travel with freedom in your eyes, and in order to reach it, you find yourself hurt or scratched with your clothes ripped. Same thing goes if you happen to throw a Frisbee the wrong way.

The houses, on the other hand, use their yard, without any fences, like a shop window exhibiting the strangest objects. Bicycles, tires, Dad's Chevy, Grandpa's Cadillac, a couple pieces of furniture, some appliances, an inflatable pool.

We see one of these houses in **Ramona, Oklahoma**. A house with windows and mosquito nets, and it hides behind a wall of dishwashers, ovens, fridges, fans, cars, and chairs, as if to form a defense made of rocks a few feet from the coast.

I am suddenly assailed by Darren, the owner. He's angry, he asks me what we're doing, and why there a crazy guy dressed in tight clothes running in front of his house.

I try to explain the situation to him. He tells me that some agents went by his house a couple weeks ago to take pictures of his "pieces" in the yard and now he's in trouble "I have to get rid of everything!"

Nevertheless after a few moments I see a new light in his gray irises. And all of the sudden I'm his friend. He offers us some ice for Alex. He wants to show me everything. He repairs broken appliances, the ones the market would like for us to exchange for a new model at \$399, in 36 installments without interest.

He has about 2500 of them, scattered out on the lawn, it's his warehouse of spare parts. The Cadillacs used to ride around Dallas, and the most important German design seats from the 70's are all there. In the dust of Darren's folly, in Ramona, Oklahoma.

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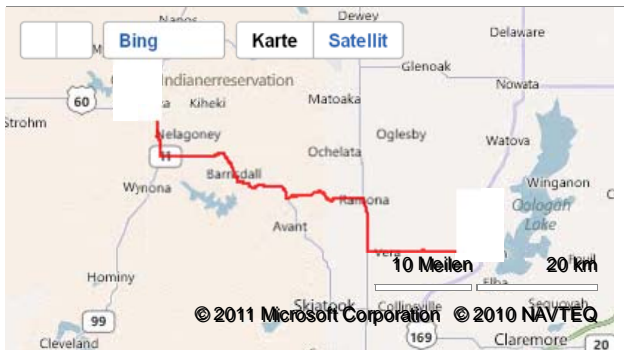
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RAA - tappa n°36

So, 24 Jul 2011 4:56 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:
50.39 mi

 Zeit:
12:13:00

 Ø Pace
14:33 min/mi

 Aktivitätstyp:
Running

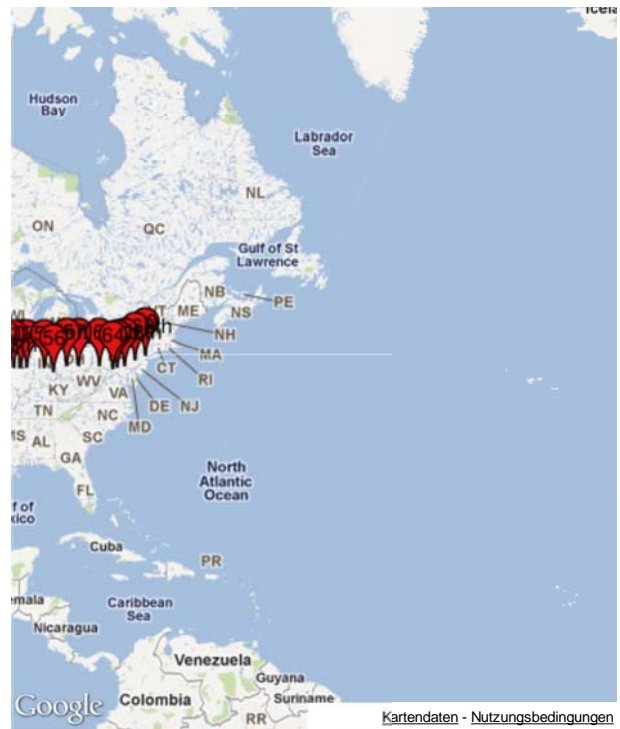
Kalorien:
4,214 cal

 Positiver Höhenunterschied:
1,951 ft

 Ereignistyp:
Race

 Strecke:
--

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 37th Stage

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37th Stage Last day in the RV



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner on 2011-07-31*



When wake up it's nice and cool outside. We leave the RV, from today we'll be sleeping in motels.

The cloudy skies and the low temperatures give the morning run a boost. That and the fact that we're really looking forward to a change. It will be difficult to have to cook our own meals and change beds every night, but it will also be a lot of fun and we're happy!

Comment this post



37th Stage Kiss the ground, Men.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter on 2011-07-31*

We find ourselves at the eve of a new adventure.

It's exciting to see us take new actions, assume new positions, and notice how our baggy eyes are still full of light as we walk in the minefield of our first hotel room.

The carpet is like an Indonesian archipelago. Thousand of remote islands that are like grocery bags with fruit, breakfast, boxes, supplements, and our suitcases. It's all a mess, but at the same time it promises a new way of living the days to come.

Today is a short stage, 37 miles, with a trial at the end, and we're meeting with an old friend that we left behind hundreds of miles ago, **Route 66**. We're going to pick it up again toward the end of Oklahoma, 4 lanes, pretty monotonous, and without a personality. But it takes us back to a month ago, she's the Mother Road, and we love her. We'll follow her down tomorrow too, up until we hit Missouri.

To get here to **Vinita**, Oklahoma, we go through roads that are sacred to runners. Kiss the ground, men, this is where **Mr Andy Payne** was born and ran. A poor kid from Oklahoma, born in a local farm and ran away to Los Angeles to seek fortune. They say that all he found was a flyer hanging on the wall, it was advertizing the **first race across the American continent**, a big prize for the winner. It was 1928. He signed up and went back home to practice, and he won. He paid for his father's farm, his debts, and he worked as a town hall clerk until old age.

No one knows if it's a myth, but as we drive under his bronze statue his eyes lower, be quiet and run.

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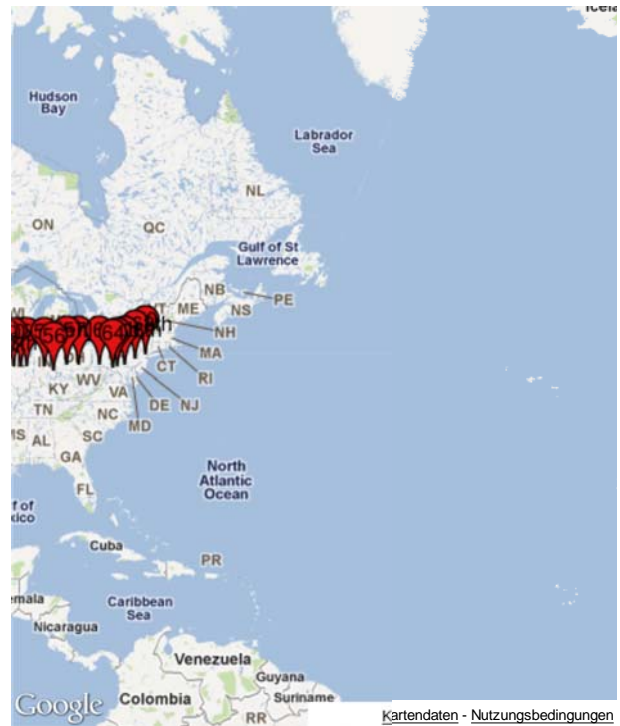
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38th Stage Last miles in Oklahoma



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-01



What a beautiful collection of vintage American cars that I saw today in **Afton**, on the secondary route that goes from **Vinita** to Miami. I'm running the last few miles in Oklahoma, and tomorrow we'll be in Missouri, where we hope to find better conditions.

All in all, physically I'm doing well, every now and then I feel a bit weak because of the fatigue and dehydration, forcing me to slow down. This beautiful and friendly state has been hard on my mind and body. Very hot, flaming. It's put me to the test, but something is happening inside of me, the fatigue is starting to take over. Maybe it will also have a meaning soon...

Comment this post



38th Stage “Don't ever try it again, Bellini.”



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-01

It's called the reptilian brain. I used it against Alex today, with no mercy.

It went more or less like this. Some days we're so tired that we literally collapse onto the seats in the Jeep®. We turn ourselves off for a few minutes, I have my Mac on my lap, Simone with his hands on the bottom of the steering wheel. All of the sudden there's a jolt, we gag and the muscles in our abdomens contract in order to find an erect position, and it's the most difficult movement you've made your entire life. You weigh 79 tons. Your hand stretches out to reach the cup holder and grabs a paper container with black, cold liquid, they say it's coffee. At least it was 10 hours ago at the gas station.

Today is one of those days, I try to hang in there, but the heat on this car seat is a knuckle on my swollen eyelids and I give in, with my head reclined and the car window on my side open. We're waiting for Alex for his assistance every 4 kilometers, as we do 22 times a day for the past 38 days.

Meet Mr. Alex Bellini. He arrives quietly, he sees me sleeping, and he throws his head in the car window a couple inches from my face, barking with all his might behind his big, dripping beard. From a profound sleep as deep as the **Mariana Trench**, it takes me less than a second. His barking turns into a shout of pain, mixed with a laugh and his hands try to pull my hands away from his beard. I cling onto him tight, and with my eyes wide open I shout louder than he does.

Don't ever do it again, Bellini, I'll rip off your beard one hair at a time if you do.

Having said this, the stage consists of us wandering around like tourists among the ruins of the **Mother Road**, red gas stations that accept cash but do not supply gas, and the several square feet of tattooed skin on “Mr Route 66 tattoo man” Ron Jones.

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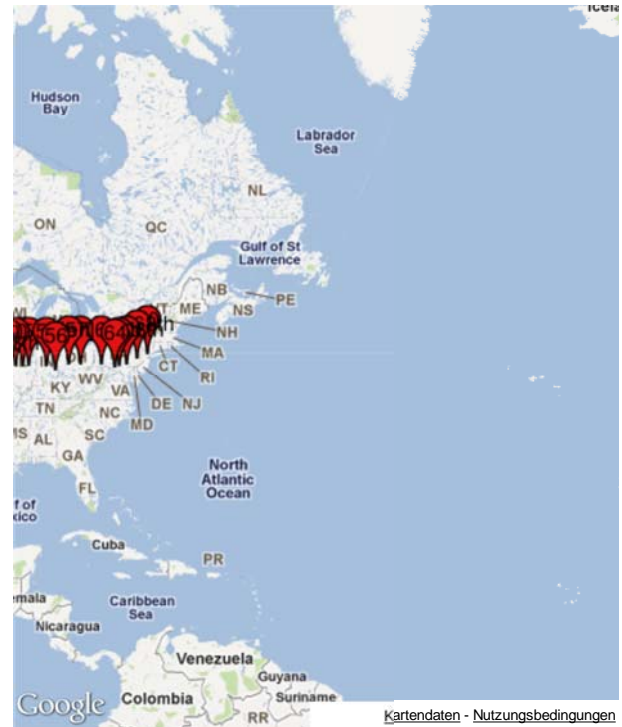
RAA - tappa n°38

Di, 26 Jul 2011 4:58 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 41.45 mi	Kalorien: 3,572 cal
Zeit: 9:55:37	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 699 ft
Ø Pace 14:22 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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39th Stage Running through the rubble



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-08-02



I was really happy to leave Oklahoma. A very beautiful state, with a climate that bent our knees backwards.

As we entered **Missouri** I was hoping for a breath of fresh air, but instead I was left breathless when we reached **Joplin**, the first city after the border, destroyed just two months ago after a tornado.

Today was a lot of hard work, with a loss of energy in the afternoon that forced me to look for shade each time I found a tree. I dedicate all of today's efforts to Joplin, to the victims of the tornado. Running through the rubble and the thick, dusty air that made its way into my lungs was a huge experience, and I'll remember it forever.

Comment this post



39th Stage The hidden strength of the people of Joplin.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-08-02

We enter **Joplin**, the first city in Missouri. I can't manage to make my lips touch, and so I leave them ajar in order to let some air into my humid lungs.

Two months ago a **tornado** killed nearly 200 people here. The victims were young people, students assembled in a prefabricated room of Joplin High School.

I saw steel trusses destroyed as if they were cans of tuna, entire brick walls torn down and all around a whole district that no longer exists. As if a bomb had exploded in every home. Bedrooms with a skyview, the furniture still there, and some clothes stuck to the bathroom's doorknob and waving in the air. Everything else was overcome by a centripetal force like that of a spacecraft, that's gone out of control, shooting objects in the distance. A child was dragged by the tornado for 160 feet until he died in the pond in front of his home, alone.


Alex runs past the school and his pace becomes uncertain, more quiet. If he could, he would stop or at least accelerate. I take pictures of the things I see. I still haven't recovered from my reportage trance, and I'm almost ashamed of the cold cynicism hidden behind my camera's viewfinder. But then all of the sudden you see a tented field, right in the school's courtyard, thousands of people working, praying, eating together, shouting in anger, but all in all, united – the best pain killer in the human market. And for the first time, I get rid of the skeptical smile on my face and I look at the stars and stripes waving in the dusty air, under which a Missouri town is trying to rebuild itself, United.

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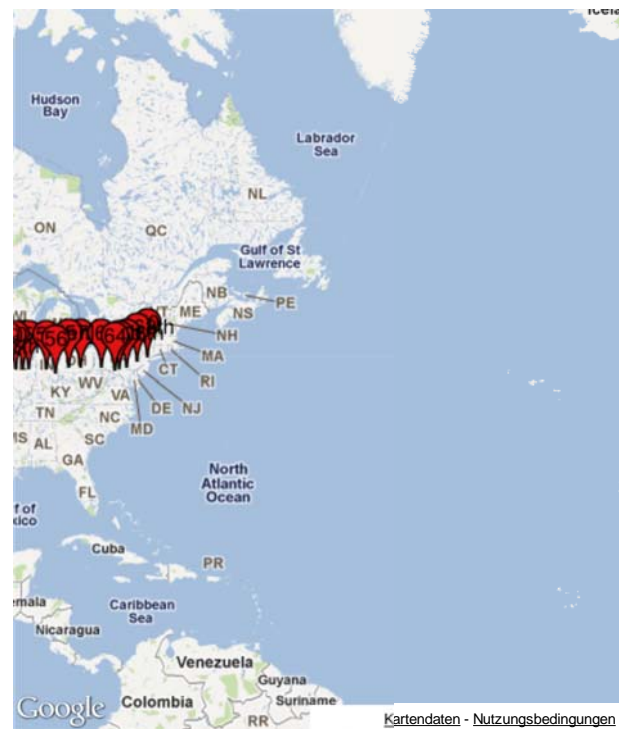
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40th Stage The journey has begun



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-08-03



If I had to pick a day to forget, this is it. The first 30 miles were a nightmare, I struggled the whole time. I didn't even have the strength to put one foot in front of the other.

And yet as always, there were unexpected consequences that made me realize things that I never imagined. I had a constant pain in my feet, and after a couple of hours I grew so used to it, that I had somewhat of a mystical experience.

I started to run on a carpet of pain, increasing my assistance breaks from every 4 to every 3 kilometers, in order to ingest proteins and carbohydrates at a higher frequency.

It hurts and I'm struggling. I could even say that I don't feel like continuing. And then I get this strong feeling that I hold on tight to with all my being: it's days like today that I realize that finally the journey has begun. And I'm happy to experience moments like these, because these are the days I'll need after New York.

Comment this post



40th Stage Shy Missouri homes



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-08-03

They tend to be shy when foreigners pass by, like Asian women from a century ago. The houses in **Missouri** are made of wood and painted with soft colors. It almost seems like they retreat from the edge of the road, hiding from the flat leaves like fans behind trees.

They are beautiful, simple, and tidy, and fill your eyes with wonder, after having seen over 1000 miles of tin shacks resting upon the first few feet of sand or wheat, just barely beyond the white line on the edge of the highway. They have English gardens and white pebble roads that slightly curve as they bring you to their doorstep.

They're the American suburbs you see in the movies. White and maybe rich.

We drive through it, between light and shade, one bump after the other, hill after hill, bringing mental and physical survival kits with us.

Yesterday I was transforming the motel's toilet seat into a field kitchen. An omelet with carrots and leftover pasta, a few tons of hard boiled eggs cooked on an electric hotplate. Today we're using them like cannonballs or bullets with which to load Alex before facing a fleet of 54 miles. One after the other.

But the enemy is ruthless, a day with endless pitfalls. Hunger, heat, exhaustion, and one mile after the other we drag ourselves to the finish line, catching glimpses of legendary **Route 66**, which by now doesn't seem as harsh as it was in California, instead sweet and movie like, where you can bet you'll meet Italians on vacation. We're dirty, badly dressed, and bearded. We realize this as we catch our reflections in their Dolce and Gabbana sunglasses, that still smell like airport, dividing them from what they're looking at.

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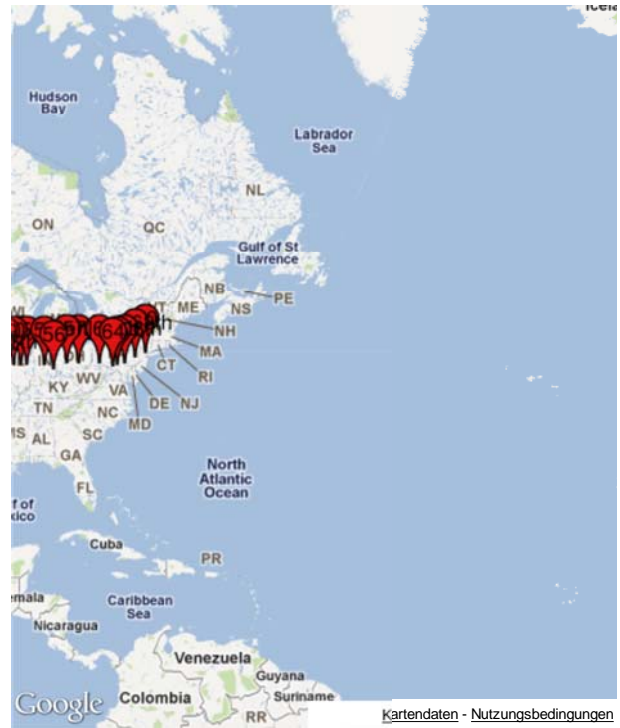
RAA - tappa n°40(part 2)

Do, 28 Jul 2011 11:18 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 28.28 mi	Kalorien: 3,022 cal
Zeit: 7:47:11	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 8,159 ft
Ø Pace 16:31 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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41st Stage

Pain that's good for you



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-04



I no longer have those confused, surprised feelings I had in the beginning.

This is the country, it's big, enormous, and we're halfway through it. The heat is old news, and it doesn't help solve the problem. The locals keep reminding me. Every time they see me, they tell me to stop, that it's too hot, and that it hasn't been this hot in 25 years.

I leave **Springfield** and I slip into an infinite series of soft hills in a forest of oak trees. Missouri is marvelous, that's all there is to it. The houses, the forests, the curves, and the ruined roads.

Yesterday, on one of these roads, they threw a flying object from the car right onto my arm. As if it weren't enough, I was going through a difficult moment, and the pain on my arm made things worse. It hurt my mind most of all.

But that's how it is. That's how I want to deal with the pain. I've found my path in the constant pain, the one that makes you grow and remember. The one that hurts, the one that's good for you.

Comment this post



41st Stage

13 minutes on a straight road



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-04

Springfield is the biggest city we're encountered since we left L.A.

We take off before sunrise, our motels lit by the light emerging from the vending machines, the smell of mattresses still in our nostrils, canned food inside other cans and boxes. We visit tens of thousands of supermarkets with a war-like hunger, we leave our offering to the American God of supermarket goods on the shelves. Bread, eggs, cereal, ice, soy milk, and flip flops so our feet don't get hurt in the parking lots.

We're tired today. Yesterday left us with our moods profoundly damaged. Alex is tense. He spent the night chasing cell phone stores, restaurants, and a shower that never seemed to arrive.

I steal the rental car and I set off at 90 miles an hour, hoping to never have to stop, to see what there is after the first few miles. I shout inside the car with the windows closed, separating me from green and wavy Missouri. Thirteen minutes letting it all out on a straight stretch of road. Just the desire to escape for a moment, to drive fast, really fast, at least fifteen times as fast as a man running.

But these are the days that will make a difference. When he encounters difficulties, Alex looks inside himself with a lantern, like an Egyptian tomb explorer, a mausoleum explorer. And he won't have any rivals there, no more boundaries.

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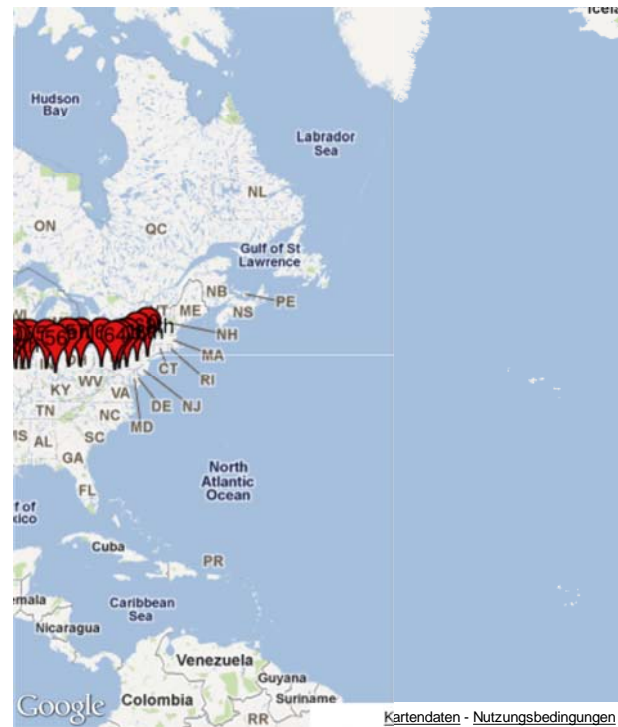
RAA - tappa n°41

Fr, 29 Jul 2011 5:00 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:	Kalorien:
44.98 mi	4,837 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
11:21:24	1,773 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
15:09 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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42nd Stage Feeling alive

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-08-05



A difficult night that didn't make me hope for the best, as I tackled the first few miles of today's stage. I was feeling tired.

The ruthless sun decides to pay us a visit today as well. It's scorching hot and humid like a wet rag on your neck. I hang in there, I'm not going to let it steal even a foot of road.


There's quite a trial ahead of us. It seems like we're in Finland, surrounded by a dense and green vegetation. Then come the roaring clouds that offer respite e water.

A little bit of fun! I run crushed by water and land, and it makes me feel alive. I laugh, while others are complaining, I like it, I'm enjoying it.

We reach the **St. Robert** quickly, a wet reassuring spot!

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42nd Stage Rejoicing in the rain


 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-08-05

There are various animal species that populate our days and nights, especially tonight. We tended after several of them in our dirty Interstate motel room.

We take off from **Philipsburg** at dawn, with more hills and lowlands waiting for us, land to climb and to admire. Poles so high they could almost carry you to the sky. The fast food and gas station signs so high they have nothing else to surpass, yet they still have to be infinite, tower over the closest competitor. We dribble by them with our Jeep® like a Super G world cup, with no snow, only land.

But the water is still hanging above our heads, piled up in big, black clouds that hover above us and protect us from the sun, then they get us wet.

All of the sudden we're rejoicing in the rain like a primitive tribe, barefoot on the rapidly cooling concrete, dirty and happy because of the regenerative power of water. May it help us breathe, and help Alex run.

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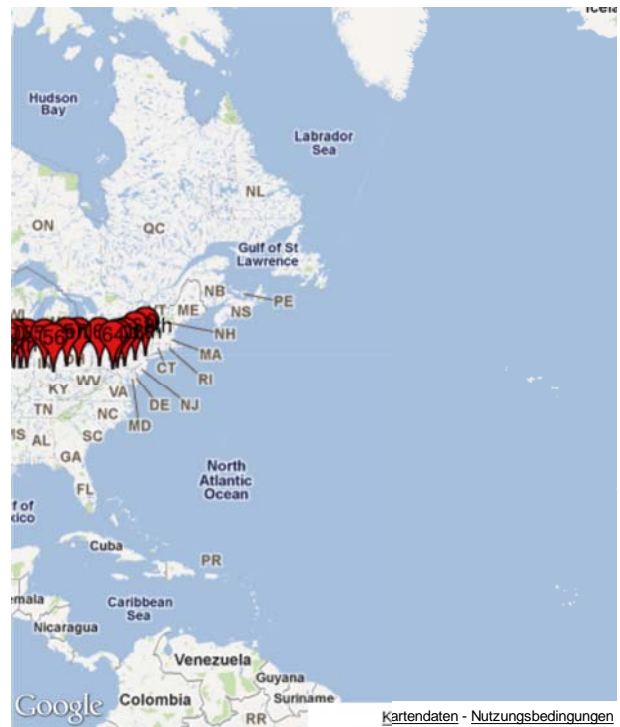
RAA - tappa n°42

Sa, 30 Jul 2011 4:59 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 52.05 mi	Kalorien: 5,558 cal
Zeit: 13:32:44	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 19,547 ft
Ø Pace 15:37 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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43rd Stage Regenerate mind & body

 posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-08-06




I'm living today as if it were a Saturday after a long, hard week. A weekend of rest awaits me. The upcoming stages are only about 28 miles each. Some time to recover. I want to charge myself like an electrical appliance. Regenerate my mind and body.

The first step, was going out to dinner last night. It was a huge event, something that never happens. It was a moment in which we could all sit around a table together and talk while we waited to be served. Grilled steak and salad, a short chat, and to bed early!

Comment this post 

43rd Stage That's Missouri for you

 posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-08-06

When we see the Jeep® sink into a sea of mist, drowning in tons of green leaves, the black road that crawls along the brushwood seems like a Cambodian highway. We're in southeastern Asia in the middle of the United States of America.

The night is so humid that when the sun rises a thick blanket of white fog envelopes us and wets us. We feel good with our Jeep®, like temple explorers in a rainforest.

Alex easily makes his way, he appears amidst the dust on the horizon like a rock star entering the stage. He eats up the miles, one after the other, hoping not to land in an ocean of heat in the afternoon.

We end up in a valley surrounded by fragrant trees. There doesn't seem to be any barbed wire in the area, and without hesitating, we go for a walk in the woods.

We encounter spiders, finishing up their last round of crochet as they work on their own death traps. Earthquake-proof and eco-friendly architecture, suspended in the air. They bend slightly, as if to sigh when Alex passes by, right before we hear the familiar sound of tires on fresh concrete.

We travel through **Newburg**, where a grade crossing manages to welcome us better than its church, an air conditioned room with wooden benches and an old lady with her oxygen tank. That's Missouri for you.

We reach **Rolla**, where we find Route 66 for the millionth time, as if it were waiting to guide us like a lighthouse: I'm here guys, whenever you need me.

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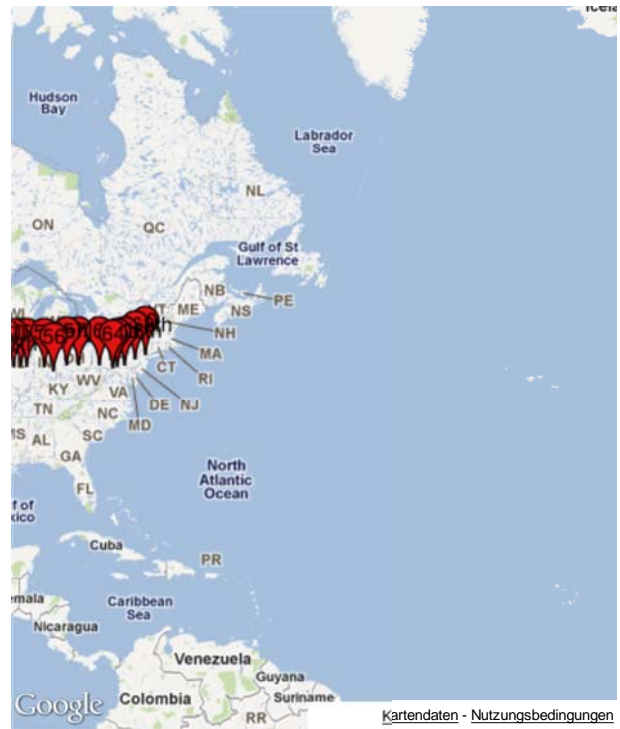
RAA - tappa n°43

So, 31 Jul 2011 5:06 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 41.47 mi	Kalorien: 4,414 cal
Zeit: 10:49:28	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 2,579 ft
Ø Pace 15:39 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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44th Stage

Sleep, sleep, sleep!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-07



It's such a good feeling to finally rest! I've been getting some good nights' sleep lately, and it's really important to catch up.

My good mood is a natural consequence. **Missouri** is like a green roller coaster and it's a lot of fun. I encounter dogs and their owners, beautiful homes shining under the rising sun, with perfectly cut lawns that offer a peaceful atmosphere.

Too bad we had a second negative experience with a passerby, a minority of course. There was a car on my side with a friendly guy driving it, and after he asked me if I was hungry, he threw a hamburger on my feet with all his strength!

Too bad I can't eat it...

Comment this post



44th Stage

Road souvenirs



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-07

By now we're afraid. When we see him coming up for his assistance check-up with that funny smile on his face under his beard, I stiffen up a bit, as if to escape. I use my camera as a shield. If I'm taking pictures of you, you can't attack me, because I'm documenting everything.

It's the third snake he delivers us proudly in 2 weeks. We can't take it anymore. Once he threw it into the car through the window. Alex picks up just about anything along the road, he doesn't miss out on anything!

Today he showed up with this sly expression, smiling as if he had done something behind our backs. I begin to scrutinize his hands, looking for signs of pending reptiles. Nothing, thank god. But that smile doesn't convince me, I assume a defensive position behind the camera. All of the sudden I see it. We see a black body full of scales, wrapped around his neck. Alex ran for 3 miles with a serpent rolled around his neck like a scarf.

An incomplete list of "objects" he found on the road and that regularly delivered to us:

- 3 medium-sized reptiles, including a "**rattlesnake**"
- 1 Oklahoma license plate dated 1978
- 1 white golf ball
- 1 tube of XL plastic coffee cups labeled "Colombian Blend"
- 1 big, yellow elastic rubber band
- 1 wooden "No hunting" sign
- 1 eagle feather
- 5 dollars in coins. The first cent was given to a Japanese runner as a fund to build a Japanese- African school.

If we don't stop him, we'll have problems at customs when we go back to Italy. Please help us.

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RAA - tappa n°44

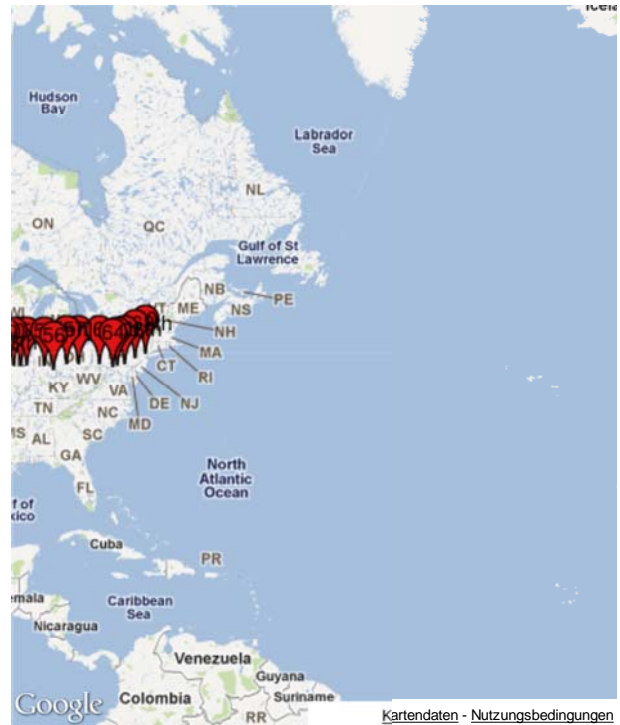
Mo, 1 Aug 2011 4:55 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz:
29.36 mi
Zeit:
7:14:55
Ø Pace
14:49 min/mi
Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Kalorien:
3,156 cal
Positiver Höhenunterschied:
1,496 ft
Ereignistyp:
Race
Strecke:
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45th Stage Missouri hills and fields



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner on 2011-08-08](#)



Taking advantage of 2 “short” stages like 2 marathons is essential. That’s why I wake up at 5 a.m. motivated, picturing myself resting in the afternoon. I try to get there as soon as possible. I travel through fields, fields, fields, hills, and fields.

I haven’t been feeling too well lately, no muscular or physiological problem, just tired in general. The weakness has forced me to decrease my average velocity. It doesn’t matter though, I’m still in the race, healthy, and in a good mood. I’ll rest and eat plenty when I prepare for the last phase, where the miles will increase and we’ll begin to see the **Big Apple** from a distance.

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45th Stage Going to work today



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter on 2011-08-08](#)

Our days are so similar that it almost seems like we’re employees in a company. Repeated automatisms, day after day, and beneath us the road that leads to New York.

A series of alarms go off at 3:30 a.m. Simone’s task is to make breakfast. Not even the sound of plastic bags a couple inches from my ears wakes me up, my ear plugs exclude me from the rest of the world.

When we wake up, Simone’s first concern is to ask Alex how he slept. Mine is to try to put one foot in front of the other on the infected motel carpet and pack my camera, rolls of film, graphic pens, and my sunglasses, which I usually forget.

We quickly cover the round fake wooden tables with edible items: Nutella, jam, bread, and milk. If we’re in a great mood, you might see some hardboiled eggs on the table. The first words that come out of my mouth usually find Alex already awake and dressed, as he searches for his race number or his cardio band, buried in these suburban labyrinths. Alex takes off and he leaves us alone for 5 miles, about 50 minutes of autonomy, in which we load the Jeep® with boxes, suitcases, and ourselves.

We take off and our only concern is to find the first available Gas Station where we can swear at the broken coffee machines in 3 different languages and dialects – Italian, Brescian, Turinese.

Our day is a constant succession of rhythms. Assistance, work, power naps on the leather car seats, assistance.

When we arrive, we split up our tasks again. Payment, keys, internet, asking if this awful weather will change. And of course they reply that it hasn’t happened in 60 years.

We once again begin our luggage procession: boxes, hot plates, cooler, luggage. There’s a 25 degree difference on the other side of the motel door. Ventilate the room before entering.

Alex has to eat something right away, so I grab the hot plates and turn the bathroom into a makeshift kitchen, shower, massage, and we crash on our queen size beds. I’m behind with my work. It’s already 7 o’clock, and I have to go to sleep in less than an hour. I stay up a bit later, close my red eyes without even realizing that the sun is rising. And everything starts again after 5 hours. And that’s the way we like it.

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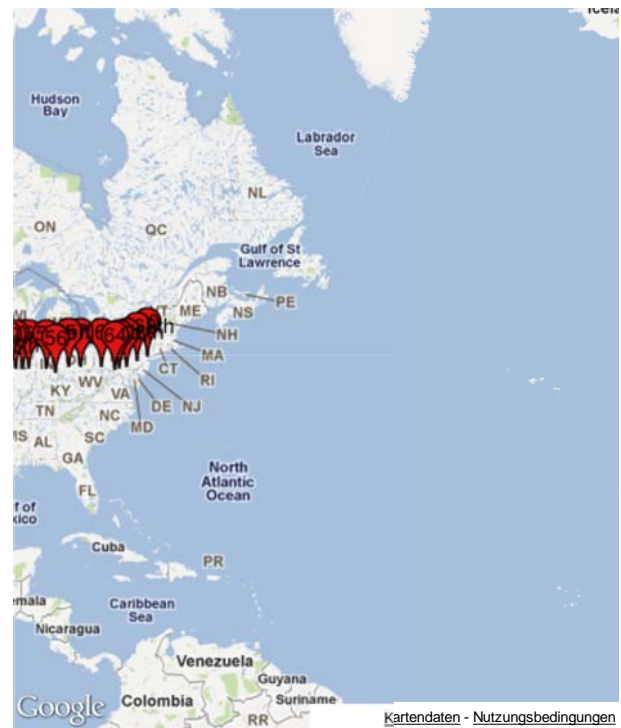
RAA - tappa n°45

Di, 2 Aug 2011 4:53 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz: 30.13 mi	Kalorien: 3,357 cal
Zeit: 7:01:12	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,095 ft
Ø Pace 13:59 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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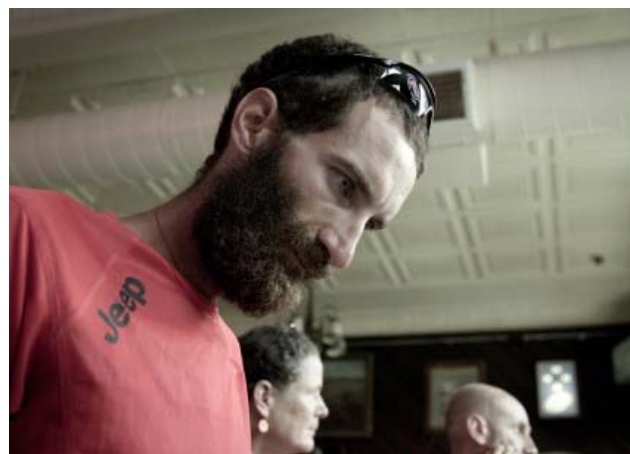
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46th & 47th

Waiting for that call...



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-09



I always run with my cell phone in my back pack, waiting for a call from Francesca who should be going into labor any day now.

Good vibes during this extremely long stage, and my legs and body dealt with the distance well. It was the second time in my life that I had to face such a long distance, yet I had such a positive attitude that it almost seemed like I had been doing it all my life.

If there's something that constantly runs through my mind, it's running the last 1000 feet to New York with Sofia, hand in hand. And this thought really helps me keep going!

Check out [Alex Bellini's performance during the last 2 stages with Garmin Connect](#):

Stage 46 <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/103911108>

Stage 47 <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/104131091>

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46th & 47th

Hermann, freedom and history



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-09

We take off from **Hermann**, Missouri. So many thoughts are crowding my head as I read this name. For example, **Paolo Benvegnù**, a great man and artist, whom I had the honor to work with this year, and who gives me a great deal of inspiration.

If you separate the name in 2 you get "Her-Man", mother inside the man, her child. "Hermann" a name of Germanic origin, the Man, the warrior. Maybe when the German founders arrived here and began building brick homes for their new lives, they didn't really think about the meaning of the name they were giving to their private colony. Regardless, this place is oozing with freedom and history.

From the car windows we catch a humid sniff of what smells like our European world. I'm yearning for a glass of wine as if it were water in the desert. We encounter vineyards, cellars, people with last names from Rhineland, bars where you can still smoke, black and stale beer brewed in a backshop. I think about how far we are, about how long till we see a road that's narrower than 20 feet.

We spend the evening relaxing our minds, refreshing our palates, and pampering ourselves. And then we have to take off again, into the sunny countryside, watered by the sky, to travel through villages that seem to have come out of a movie. The cool and dry porches with swings, and men talking to you, inviting you to sit down and listen.

We're in **Frankford**, a red and white house from 1892, full of history and hope. A house that was once bought at a very low price, taken care of for 7 years to turn it into a Bed & Breakfast. There's a room inside with a closed fireplace, a window that looks outside, where Alex passes by with his head down low, smiling and focused.

It feels like a dream, the light that enters the room isn't natural. They tell us that a ghost has been living in that room since the 1930's. I look at an old photograph, I see its silhouette and I feel like I could stay here forever, in these 65 square feet of sun and wood.

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48th Stage Over the Mississippi and into Illinois



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-08-10



Every time I cross a border I feel a bit closer to the destination, not only distance-wise. I crossed today's border, between Missouri and **Illinois**, on a dark, endless bridge, on the **Mississippi River**. I used a head lantern to see the long road ahead of me – the road that separates me from my destination and from my family.

I feel very well today. The sky wasn't very promising. The weatherman forecasted a nice welcome shower in Illinois. Sure enough I had to whip out my raincoat, because the rainstorm was so violent on my skin that it hurt.

All in all, the stage gradually improved, I'm in shape. Let's see what this new State has to offer!

Comment this post



48th Stage The majestic river



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-08-10

The American singer song-writer **Sufjan Stevens** is a genius. He had the incredible idea of making an album for every State, and the second was for **Illinois**. I don't know a thing about Illinois. Even the sound of the word confuses me: Illinois? I pop the cd in the Jeep®'s cd player, track #5, **Jacksonville**, the first city we'll encounter.

We enter Illinois in the middle of the night, and the green **Mississippi River** sign on our right isn't big enough to contain the sheer majesty of this gigantic body of dark green water. It's immense, and it flows slowly. As deep as **Mark Twain**'s soul. It's the American river. So many pages and songs have been written about it, that it's as if it has been frozen in time.

From the right bank, we see the city of **Hannibal** drift away, and with its flickering yellow lights, it almost seems like a Vietnamese village in this rainy, hot fog. We leave Missouri. Let's see if there's another distinct change in the land's morphology.

Yesterday this border town welcomed us with half-closed, see through curtains on the most beautiful wooden houses we've seen in the last 2000 miles. Like scaly fish in the river. The houses are all close together, as if those who founded the place had wanted to merge and stay close after the navigation, after the fear of crocodiles, of hunger, and the voyage...

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49th Stage

A natural wonder



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-11



Today I took off amidst a natural wonder, it felt like we were in a movie. I weaved in and out of lightening in **Pittsfield's** black dawn as I raced toward **New Berlin**.

Today was a day of positive feelings, I ran lightly and the miles didn't weigh too much on my legs. As I ran down a very pleasant stretch of road, I met some people that conveyed a great deal of serenity, in the long, green cultivations of soybeans and wheat.

This land may seem dull, flat, and humid, but it has its rhythm and uniformity, made of countryside and agriculture. It's so nice to travel through places like these. In a few days we'll leave **Illinois** and enter **Indiana**. We'll see what this green countryside will leave us with.

Comment this post



49th Stage

Second day in Illinois



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-11

We move like prey in a cornfield, dominated by the endless flashes of lightening on the horizon. We look like Navy Seals on a mission – silent as we prepare our technical equipment, interrupted only by the thunder's distant rumble, with the sky ripping open every few seconds, what a marvelous sight!

We look up and around, when Alex passes by, as if to protect him.

Someone up there poured a spoon of red wax onto one side of the sky. On the other side, the apocalypse is continuing its course with its infinite shades of gray. Alex passes through it, smiling as he picks up a little frog, just to add it to the list of "lost and found" objects.

All that fear for no reason, and the rain brushes against our skin, as we advance slowly toward a soft, pale blue. Even Alex seems to be in a calm and serene mood. He's fast, he's increasing his daily average. Tonight we will arrive early, we'll all sleep in the same place, camping in **New Berlin** in our sleeping bags places on wooden boards and headlamps.

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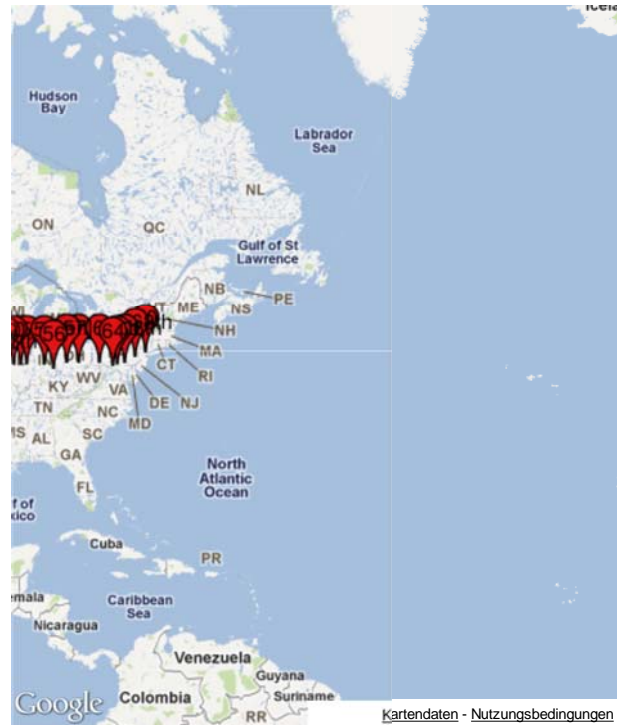
RAA - tappa n°49(2°)

Sa, 6 Aug 2011 5:19 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini



Distanz: 41.92 mi	Kalorien: 3,427 cal
Zeit: 9:59:51	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 784 ft
Ø Pace 14:19 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 50th Stage

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50th Stage Ready for the long stages

 posted by [Alex Bellini - The runner](#) on 2011-08-11




Today's stage from **New Berlin** to **Decatur** was a very long stage, 54 miles. I'd better get used to it, because from here to New York the daily average will increase drastically. We'll have a few stages of about 44 miles, but all the others will be longer. In today's stage I tried to manage my energy as best as possible in the morning. I was feeling really strong, and doing pretty well.

I ran across endless green fields of soybeans that swayed in the wind. The most difficult feeling is when you get to 35 or 45 miles, and knowing that you have just as many still ahead of you... But I arm myself with patience, and I keep on going, always!

Comment this post



50th Stage American urbanism

 posted by [Mauro Talamonti - Reporter](#) on 2011-08-11

For us Europeans, especially those of us who are used to living in big cities, it can be difficult to orient oneself in a broad, flat American city. We have trouble finding the center of town. They don't have the bull's eye sign that we're used to seeing. The one that says: *centro, centre ville, center, zentrum*. For us that sign is like an oracle of city directions, meaning food, restaurants, last stage before going to bed.

And so late last night we find ourselves going back and forth like bored couples strolling along the city's main street on a Sunday afternoon. We're looking for something to eat, a place that closes after 8 o'clock in the evening, a place where Alex can put his aching feet under a table and something to eat in his stomach.

In the distance we see red neon lights and prefabricated buildings, making us hope in human activities that have something to do with food, just a Pizza Hut and a McDonald's. They'll do. Tonight anything will do.

I look outside toward the daylight that is slowly fading in the suburb, horizontal rays on the porch swings, on the cars parked in the driveways, on the children riding their bmx's. I stand there with a pizza in my hand, and I convince myself that I'm a child who was born here, and who's happy to be here.


I live in what looks like an immense camp site, with neighbors, little street to explore on my bike, with feared rival gangs that we have to attack, as we make alliances, build hidden shelters and go back home before it gets dark. Crashing on my bed with a Star Wars duvet, the ceiling with wooden planks and posters, and my sister in her room talking on the phone with her boyfriend. A light breeze and the deafening noise of cicadas seeps through the tiny holes of the mosquito net on my wooden window.

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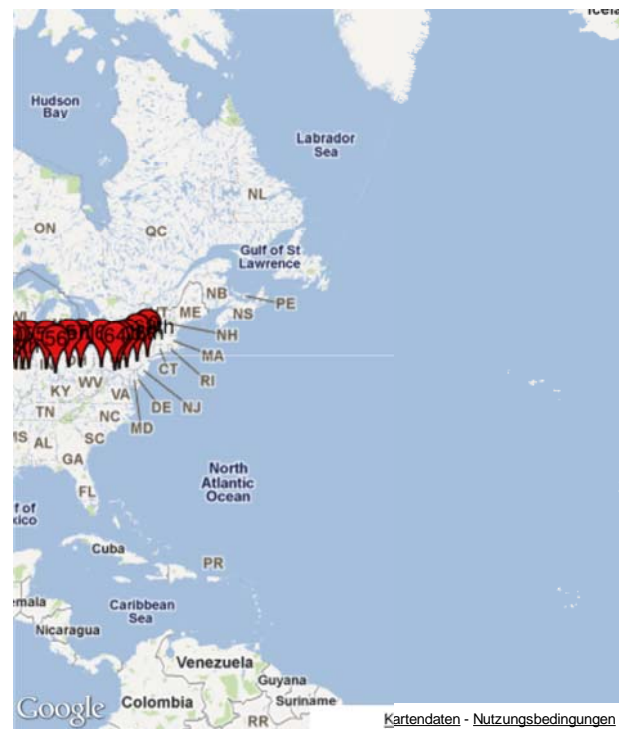
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RAA - tappa n°50

So, 7 Aug 2011 5:07 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini

Distanz:
55.17 miKalorien:
4,432 calZeit:
12:45:42Positiver Höhenunterschied:
620 ftØ Pace
13:53 min/miEreignistyp:
RaceAktivitätstyp:
RunningStrecke:
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51st Stage Going East



posted by Alex Bellini - The runner on 2011-08-13



Luckily today's stage is only 42 miles long. Yesterday's late night dinner made my life a nightmare! I'm in shape anyways, and I run smoothly and calmly in the morning as I leave **Decatur**. I have positive vibes and I'm hungry right from the start, which is always a good sign. The cloudy sky also protects me from the excessive heat that I suffered from yesterday toward the end.

I'm starting to get used to the city traffic again, traffic lights, people going to work. My eyes and shoes are filled with so many memories and miles of isolation in the west, that it's strange to dive into an urban environment again! I'd better get used to it, because I really want to see New York, more and more each day!

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51st Stage Something has changed



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-08-13

We'll encounter many cities from here to New York. It's useless to keep imagining the west's open spaces, that made us suffer so much, in exchange for an empty and beautiful space, where you can safely hide your heart under the mattress without being afraid that someone will steal it from you.

We're almost on the East side of the country and things around us are starting to change. Alex runs in the endless soy fields, that wave slightly, yet remain flat and green. The wind moves its leaves and from a distance they look like waves, algae at the bottom of the ocean, a huge animal's fur as it dozes off on the ground.

We encounter factories, and our Jeep® is confused as whether to like them, because it's made of steel, or whether it misses the red land of the desert.

We take off from Decatur to go to **Tuscola**, Illinois. And you know something has changed when you see the lights at the gas station lit, early in the morning, as the first pick-up trucks stop for gas. They're similar to the ones we've see until now, but you see them arrive from afar, with low frequencies of hip-hop music seeping through the car window. Subwoofers, hats, and many more colors than before, the first exponents of a large and varied Afro-American community. We're almost there, we're going East, and we can't wait.

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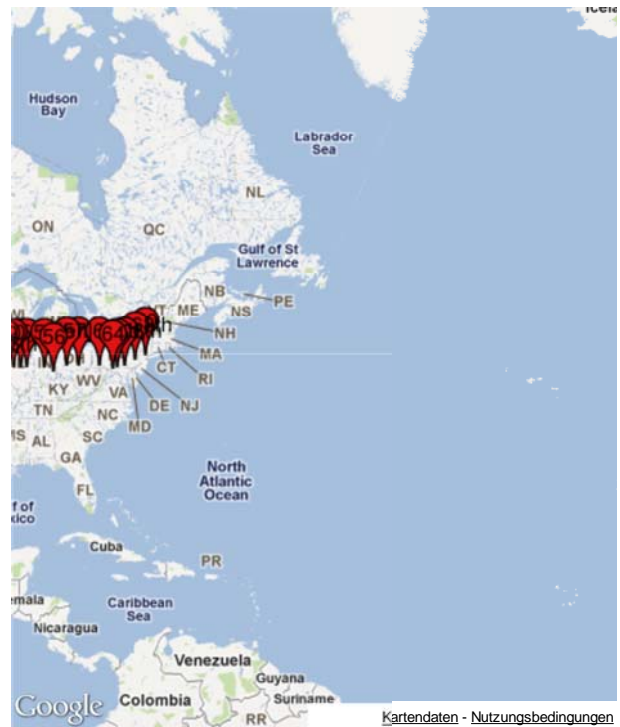
RAA - tappa n° 51

Mo, 8 Aug 2011 4:57 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
ancora una giornata buona per Alex! A partire da domani ci saranno...



Distanz: 42.07 mi	Kalorien: 2,837 cal
Zeit: 9:46:59	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,962 ft
Ø Pace 13:57 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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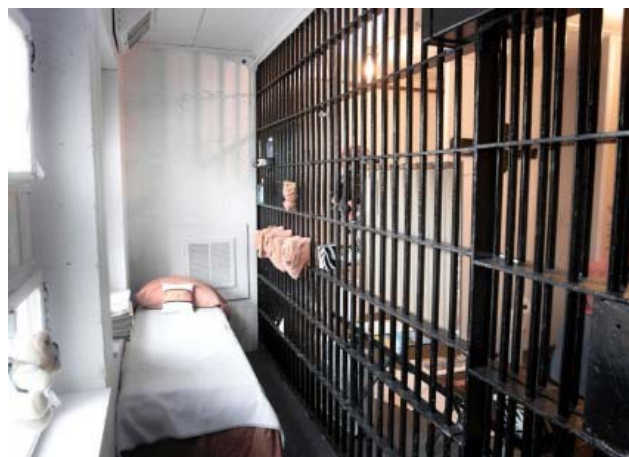
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52nd & 53rd The Indiana border



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-14



I cross another border and enter **Indiana**.

The most pleasant surprises are that the temperature and humidity have reasonably dropped, the sweet hills and forests that welcome me after flat and humid **Illinois**. My mind drifts off to **Missouri**, but I know that it won't be so hilly and this makes me happy, because further up ahead, a few days before the end of the race we'll encounter another mountain range, which we'll have to cross with our tired legs.

It's very comforting to meet kind people here. They stopped me to ask about this adventure and my past adventures, introducing their children to me and shaking my hand. During these monotonous stages, where you're eyes swell and burn because of the traffic and dust, these kinds of episodes really make your day!

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52nd & 53rd Cornfields and jails



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-14

We're lost in a cornfield. We drive on leather seats for 14 hours a day, like in those 80's video games, where the walls go by you quickly and you have to avoid them in order to not lose points. So you don't lose your 200 **Italian Lira's**. Our walls are made of wheat and are 10 feet high as they rush past our car windows. They are green and they sway in the wind. When it's really quiet in the middle of the night, we can hear its obscure and constant breath if we stick our heads out the Jeep®'s roof. The sound of linen drapes, of antique paper folding.

Indiana is a pleasant surprise. Alex runs over the border, and with every mile that goes by the temperature drops, as does the humidity. Sometimes we even see a slight fluctuation of the land.

We sleep in **Rockville**, in a turn of the century prison, its rooms separated by bars. We write our names on the walls, although we'd really like to write about each of the 70 days, and check off the ones that have gone by.

Check out [Alex Bellini's](#) performance during the last 2 stages with **Garmin Connect**:

Stage 52 <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/105285066>

Stage 53 <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/105520814>

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54th Stage Finally heading East



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-08-17



It was really fun to run through downtown **Indianapolis** this morning! The early morning runners ran with me for a while, and as I traveled through the city center, it dawned on me that I'm finally heading east, I could almost taste the city air!

When it comes to my inner journey, I'd rather lose myself in the vast landscapes of the western states, but being in the city makes me realize that we're one step closer to our destination, the **Big Apple**, New York!

As I headed out of the city, I was once again swallowed up by a monotonous countryside with way too much traffic and an airport with a deafening parade of airplanes.

The stages are really long now, and in the upcoming days the average length will continue to increase... I'm ready!

Comment this post



54th Stage The battle of Indianapolis, Indiana.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-08-17

Just like the medieval citadels, **Indianapolis** defends its steel and glass heart with a ring of poor, low-rise houses, a diameter of dozens of miles that you can cross on an 8-lane road. We manage to cross the **White River**, the siege's last stand, without using a drawbridge, but a prestressed concrete bridge, cold and gray in **Indiana's** charcoal air.

We enter the shiny downtown area, filled with cubes that reflect more cubes that are dozens of stories high, as if to surround and protect the square's ancient and elegant monuments like chess bishops.

Alex runs for the infantry, along a narrow road heading straight toward the central power.

We're bigger and can travel along roads for heavy cavalry, so we make a detour and perform an encirclement maneuver. We reunite on the outskirts of town a few miles later, victorious, with our garments of soaked particulates.

We must escape, get out of this empty encampment, with the gas stations protected by bulletproof windows, mufflers grinding on our eardrums, the traffic lights and used cars, the workers with bags under their eyes, that almost seem like our own.

We still have so much nature shining in our eyes, too much fertile land under our fingernails to stop and settle down. Only when we reach **New York** will we allow this possibility, grant a face to face duel, a final battle that will make us become men again, sedentary, clean, and normal.

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RAA - tappa n°54

Do, 11 Aug 2011 4:54 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
Giornata caratterizzata dal...sonno! Alex ha dormito talmente ben...



Distanz:
46.08 mi

Kalorien:
4,645 cal

Zeit:
10:56:30

Positiver Höhenunterschied:
821 ft

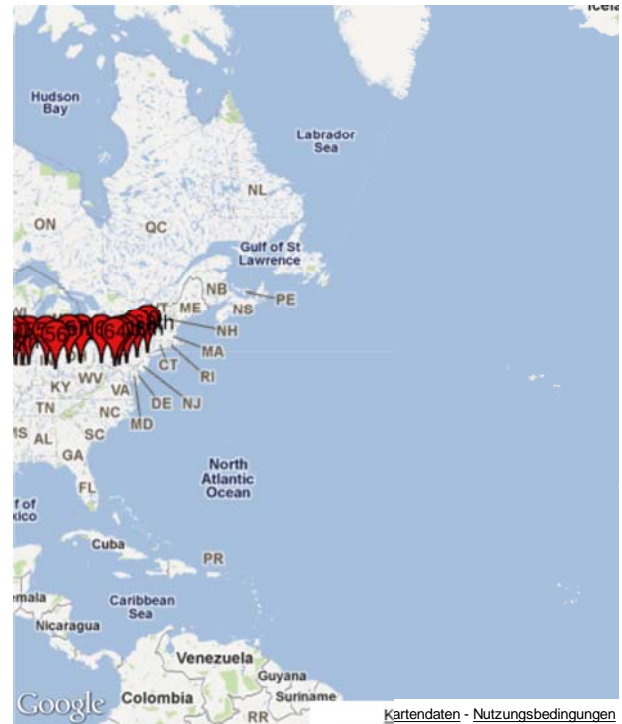
Ø Pace
14:15 min/mi

Ereignistyp:
Race

Aktivitätstyp:
Running

Strecke:
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55th Stage 4k!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-18



What a satisfaction, when you find a 4,000 km sign upon arrival, after a long day of traffic!

It almost seems impossible when you think that that huge number is the amount of kilometers I ran so far (nearly 2,500 miles!), step after step, and they're all right there, behind me.

During the last few miles I traveled across infinite stretches of land with malls and 8-lane streets where you have to protect yourself from cars, trucks, and different kinds of danger when you're running. All this, as you remember deserts, and try to stay focused as you dream about **New York!**

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55th Stage The road is sacred



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-18

If you stop on the side of the road in the U.S., count to 50. Just like the number of states. Before you're done counting someone will come up to your car window and ask you, "You guys ok?"

They see you from a distance, and they think "there's a problem". Even if they've just seen a car parked on the side of the road. It means that you might need help. Everyone stops, even grandmothers with their blue, woolly hair a few feet down from your pick-up truck with a 300 horsepower V8 engine.

All you want to say is, "No, thank you M'am, no problem, we're just a trainer and a photographer that are following this crazy guy around the country as he runs from coast to coast. Come to think of it though, we'd be glad to taste your wonderful apple pie as soon as it comes out of the oven. Would you like to trade it with a can of beans from Walmart?"

This street that Alex is running on is a mystery. You can't stop, even for a second, without someone asking you if you're all right.

On the road, you can't drink alcohol if you're not using a brown, paper bag to hide the bottle.

On the road, you can drive just about any kind of motor vehicle.

On the road, you can travel across the country.

On the road, you're 16 and you ride a motorcycle without a helmet.

On the road, everyone obeys the speed limit, but no one dreams of going half a mile under the limit.

On the road, you fall in love with the most unexpected things.

"On the road", you write a book and your name is **Jack Kerouac**.

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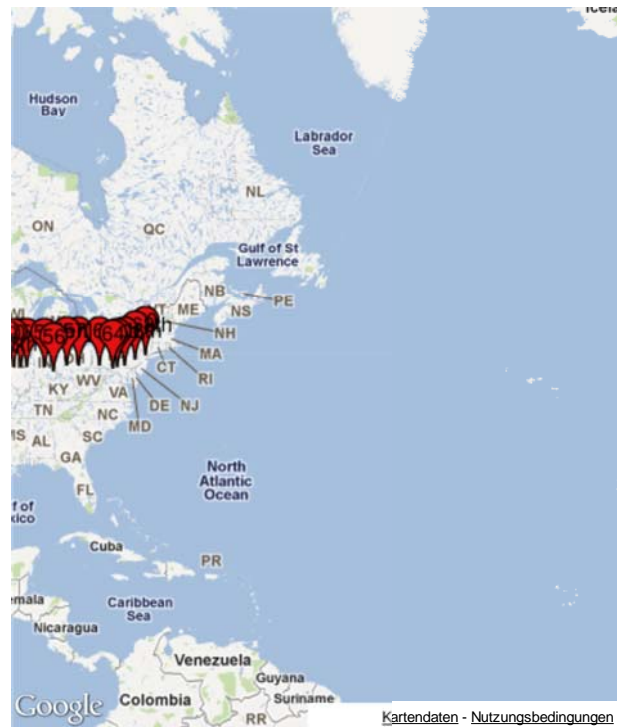
RAA - tappa n°55

Fr, 12 Aug 2011 4:55 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini



Distanz: 54.13 mi	Kalorien: 5,601 cal
Zeit: 12:21:42	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 1,249 ft
Ø Pace 13:42 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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56th Stage So much pain!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner on 2011-08-18](#)



Yesterday I felt a slight discomfort in my right tibia. I did my best to immediately contain the swelling, but by the time I got to the finish line it was already red and swollen. When I got up with morning I realized that I had a long day ahead of me.

And so what did I do? I made the day even longer!! Damn me! I made the foolish mistake of taking the wrong road and having to run an extra 5 miles, with all that pain and the risk of not arriving on time.

Like in all difficult circumstances, fate offers us a different interpretation of the situation, that is often ironic and helps us deal with it.

For example, by going the wrong way, I ran into a foot race!!! Hundreds of people took off right in front of me and all of the sudden, I found myself amidst all these runners, camouflaging myself as one of them. It was funny how after just a few feet at my speed, even the little girls with dolls in their hands outran me!

I'm really upset about my 2 mistakes, but I made it to the finish line on time anyway!

Let's hope tomorrow things go better.

Comment this post



56th Stage Suffering together



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter on 2011-08-18](#)

Alex's entire world is enclosed in about 1 inch squared. It's at the bottom of his left leg, on his tibia, on top of his ankle.

That's where you conquer miles, cast away land for love, torture enemies and win wars. As of yesterday, it became a battlefield, a table for mental strategies, everything is focused on that part of his body, red and swollen, inflamed like a new star.

Alex doesn't want any painkillers. We ask him again and he says: "No." I keep thinking to myself that he wants to suffer together with Francesca, his wife, thousands of miles away, so close to giving birth to their baby.

But pain leads to distraction, or better yet, it forces you focus on that specific point, as if you were hypnotized, a mental management of the discomfort. Searching for positive thoughts, escaping the pain, thinking about something else.

And so after just a few miles the first mistake: he leaves the gas station and gets lost. It's dark. The intersection is one of those typical little crossroads in the American plains, that all seem alike, like a labyrinth, perfectly perpendicular. 8 traffic lights, 4 white lines. No one around. He makes another mistake shortly after, for a total of 5 extra miles, on the toughest day. We arrive last in **South Vienna**, with pain and purification, with empathy and love.

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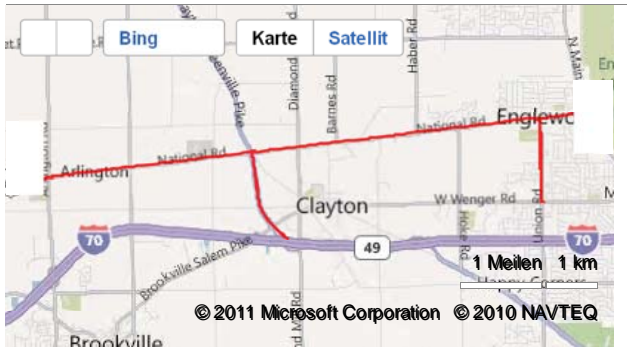
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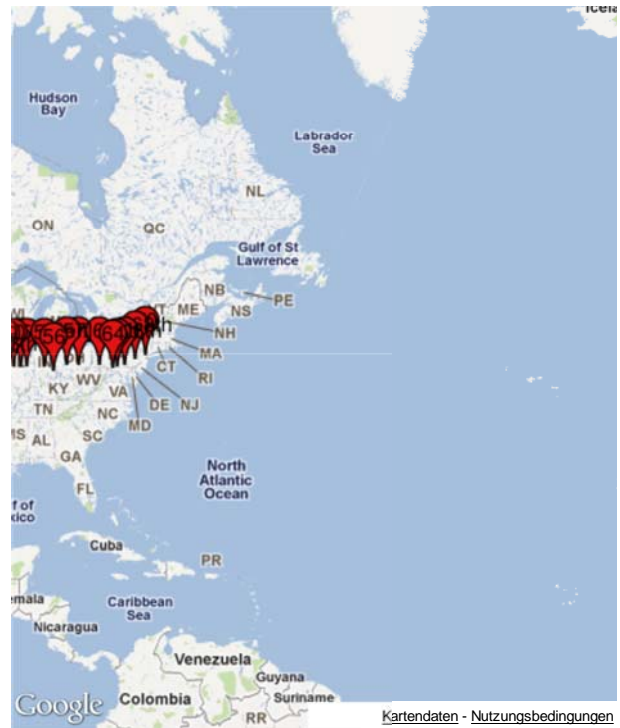
RAA - tappa n°56(parte1)

Sa, 13 Aug 2011 4:58 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
 Una giornata da dimenticare per Alex. Travolto negli ultimi km di...



Distanz:	Kalorien:
12.01 mi	1,161 cal
Zeit:	Positiver Höhenunterschied:
3:07:11	87 ft
Ø Pace	Ereignistyp:
15:35 min/mi	Race
Aktivitätstyp:	Strecke:
Running	--

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57th & 58th Never give up



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-20



The pain in my leg is still bothering me. It's not healing quickly and during these really long stages, the pain doesn't help.

I can't see colors, street names, the numbers on **Garmin**.

But I'm never going to give up, never.

Check out [Alex Bellini's performance during the last 2 stages with Garmin Connect](#).

Stage 57 <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/106566132>

Stage 58 <http://connect.garmin.com/activity/1071282614>

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57th & 58th Anonymous miles



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-20

We realize what it means to move with Alex's pain, to travel from point "a" to point "b".

We have several anonymous miles to cover, with the States that froth one on top of the other like waves, like a long line of cars smashing up, one after another.

We haven't seen a single interesting thing in days. Not a thing that has left us breathless, with a crack, or even a scratch on our hearts. **Illinois, Indiana, Ohio**. The only one who's left breathless is Alex, but for different reasons, physiological reasons. He's been running with a pain in his tibia for 3 days, an average of 50 miles a day, in this land of rolling woodlands, white houses, lawnmowers with air conditioning, private properties trespassed by our Wrangler every few miles.

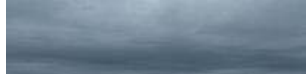
But there has to be something beyond this anonymous apathy. Something real and original. Before leaving, a friend of mine gave me a note book with a dedication: "The English language is made of sounds, the American language is made of stories, write them down here".

And so I've run out of patience, I'm dead tired, but I my tighten my fingers on the camera grip as we settle down in **Columbus** – the capital of Ohio – I knock on every door I encounter, and go into every backroom. I run into an old man, hunched over a typewriter, who tells me about his life in Ohio in the late 50's. About the incredible energy in the air, the first rebel youth movements that were sharpening the first knives and weapons of mass ideology. He shows me his store, there's a world in there.

There are 4 floors of American life, furniture and used restaurant equipment that has been abandoned, waiting for someone who doesn't want to open up the next red and white franchising, where they bring you prefabricated furniture and build it for you. It's waiting for someone who wants to start up a real diner, a restaurant that's just like the ones we have back in Italy, like in the old days, the ones that are disappearing maybe back home too.

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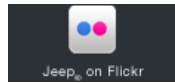


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59th, 60th, & 61st I'll get there!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-21



With less than 10 days left to our destination, you'd think we'd be tempted to let our guard down. Instead **Appalachia** is forcing us to use every last bit of energy left in our bodies. From here to the finish line, we'll have to use all of it up. The landscape reflects my mood, the ups and downs, the certainty of making it and then the fatigue all over again.

When you're exhausted it's easy to get lost, to forget the little things, to not wake up. And this is really one of those situations in which it's not over, 'til it's over, to the last foot of land! I feel so good right now, and I'll get there!

Check out [Alex Bellini's](#) performance during the last few stages with [Garmin Connect](#):

Stage 59

Stage 60

Stage 61

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59th, 60th, & 61st 9 days to go!



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-21

We are goldfish under observation. Our hotel room is an aquarium without amphora's nor trophies, without ruins to discover and examine. We are goldfish in perpetual motion, swimming around in circles for 61 days. They say that in 9 days will dive back into the ocean.

The world we've seen outside during the past 3 stages is made of illusions and disillusion. We travel across 3 States, Ohio, West Virginia, **Pennsylvania**. And all we see is hills, harsh hills, without mercy for our eyes or legs. Alex climbs them as if they were an escalator at the airport, when your flight leaves in 8 minutes. He devours them, and he fears them.

The other day, during stage 60, a spark of tension exploded between us, just like a Molotov on a summer's day. A bizarre alarm clock that didn't go off in the morning, hurrying off to takeoff, delays and distractions for how tired we were. A spark that gives way to our more human side, the precious and secret side that lights up only in solstice, like in the Maya temples, built to inspire the mortals, to aim toward the absolute.

It's a violent action, the kind of action you inflict on a gift for instance. No matter how much you've been waiting for it, you have to first destroy the wrapping to be able to enjoy it. We sort things out in a few milliseconds, the exhaustion will not tarnish our control screen. And then everything is working again, like in the best action movies, with the good guy and the bad guy chasing each other at full speed and the final battle.

Alex gets up the next day, stage 61. He doesn't smile much, but he's serene and focused. He takes off and quickly climbs up some steep hills, reaching an average of nearly 4.7 miles an hour. There's no space or time for the pain in his tibia during this new battle. 9 days left until we reach New York, the city that we've been dreaming about from the top of the hills, to then yearn for it again from the valley when all we see is a concrete wall in front of us. But our sight is clear, and we see nothing but beyond.

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62nd & 63rd

No longer the same



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner on 2011-08-22*



Motel, 8:30 p.m., time to go to sleep.

We turn the lights out and get under the covers, and right when our muscles and nerves are about to relax, we hear a burst of laughter. And right after, another burst of laughter, followed by loud voices, one on top of the other: a group of drunks drinking beers until late at night, right next door to us.

My request to lower their voices was useless, as was Mauro's 2 hours later. Not even the owner of the motel managed to get them to tone down their voices. It was 11:45 p.m., when I was so irritated and exhausted that I was finally able to get them to listen to me, and so they all went back to their room. Unfortunately not to sleep, but to take a shower, which means water running and more noise.

Long story short, I got about 3 and a half hours of sleep, and I definitely wasn't in tip-top shape at takeoff. Today was stage 62, a huge stage, 51 miles of challenging ups and downs, with climbs so steep that even the descents still seemed to be uphill. Before the torture was even over, I already labeled it as the toughest part of the race so far. And this is only the beginning because the **Appalachians** will put us to the test during the next next 3 stages.

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62nd & 63rd

Things to bring back home



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter on 2011-08-22*

An **Iron and Wine** song plays from the loudspeaker hanging from the corner of a 1953 diner. Our voice blends with his as we order bacon, eggs, and black coffee as we watch Alex run past us in the fog outside the window.

These are the mornings that I will bring back home with me. The chalkboards that say "Eggs and Bacon", long, white beards on the wooden stools, blonde waitresses, **Pennsylvania** woods. The old guys at the bar who are on a first-name basis with the waitresses, they speak a language of their own. It's definitely American English, but I don't understand it. I move the bags under my eyes up and down as if to nod.

We order something for Alex as well and we chase him up the green, steep hills. All we see is his beard moving, and the food quickly disappears, digested by a smile.

He's doing well. We slept better last night in **Frostburg**, a city that hasn't betrayed its name, offering us cold rain beyond the windows facing the dawn of day 63.

Check out Alex Bellini's performance during the last 2 stages with Garmin Connect:

Stage 62

Stage 63

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One week, just one week, from Saturday to Saturday to try to be a part of the history of this extremely difficult race across the United States. Nine weeks ago we were oblivious to everything. We couldn't imagine the heat, the humidity, the hard work, and everything else we've been through. Now we look back and everything seems so far away, such a blur, as I picture us clean-shaven, with a light pace and the presumption of being able to go beyond anything and everything. We can't even recognize ourselves.

Today we are no longer the same, that's for sure. Every journey brings change to those who undertake it, we hope the changes are positive!




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64th Stage

The Pennsylvania-Maryland border



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-23



Those who were tuned in on Radio24 around 6:30 p.m. definitely understood: the happiness and excitement of being just a few days away from New York is irrepressible, like a river flooding and overflowing its banks. I was so excited during tonight's episode that I had trouble pronouncing every word, but it's all right.

What can I say about today's stage? It consisted in running down the **Pennsylvania-Maryland** border in a hilly region with sweet rolling hills, ups and downs and the most beautiful farms I've seen so far. A calm day, without anything interesting to report. I have a hunch the next few stages will be the same; I'll be impatient, just like when you're watching a commercial break right before a highly anticipated movie.

The other day I forgot to tell you about the first, and so far only, bear Simone and Mauro saw. Since they were the only ones who saw it, some people think (including the organizer) that they must have made a

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64th Stage

Streets that sew up states



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-23

State Highway **Route 456** is a thread that embroiders a rural landscape, it connects two States, one point on one side, and another point on the other side for miles.

We cross the **Pennsylvania-Maryland** border a few times. They are made of two similar fabrics, the same material, at least here. Made of roosters singing behind the white homes, sweet hills as far as the eye can see, green grass, and fast clouds that rain down on everything. The streets almost seem to be drawn by a Superbike World Championship pilot. All you want is a lot of horsepower, a right pedal and a sunroof. That's it. Maybe just a cup holder with some good coffee.

Downward slopes, no curves. They are inclined planes like the ones on a water slide in a theme park, upright, like a cliff. Like the ascents that aim toward the sky like ski jumping ramps. Alex travels through them without complaining, light and swift, but toward the end his legs begin to struggle, swelling up with blood and veins. However, we're in good shape, even mentally, making our entire bodies suffer.

When the evening sets in, we've cooled off, having traveled through the windy hills, and we stop in **Waynesboro**, Pennsylvania. A massage and a short chat before dinner in a motel with wooden rooms, our prelude to a starlit night.

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blunder, and so we've been making fun of them a little, but we're hoping that they can tell the difference between a bear and a large dog... 😊

We're in **Waynesboro** and it's raining hard outside. One of those rainstorms that makes you think to yourself with a little bit of melancholy that "summer is almost really over".

It's almost time to go to bed, and the last hours of sunlight are making way for the street lamps' white lights that filter through the window. I can't wait to get home, and wait for winter with my little family. Good night. Alex



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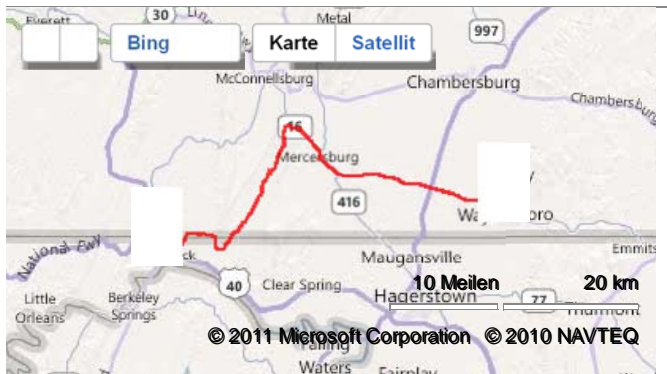
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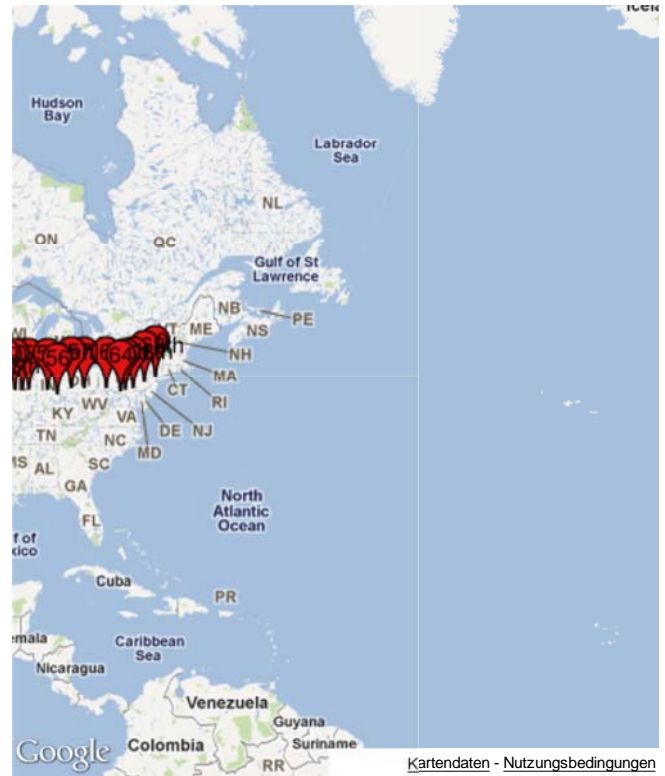
RAA - tappa n°64

So, 21 Aug 2011 5:28 hinzugefügt von raaalexbellini
 Ennesima bella giornata, ormai ci stiamo abituando a questi ritmi...



Distanz: 46.35 mi	Kalorien: 4,638 cal
Zeit: 10:39:31	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 3,271 ft
Ø Pace 13:48 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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65th Stage The first night



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner](#) on 2011-08-24



You were born with a determined mindset.

You wanted "New York" lights to be the world's cover, to get there with me, but you couldn't wait any longer. You felt that your life belonged to you already and you decided that "York", **Pennsylvania** would suffice.

I ran so hard today that the green land beneath me flowed under my feet like memories, like the sand that I stepped upon 65 days ago in Los Angeles, before I left.

I ran so hard so that I could arrive in time to wait for mom's phone call, calmly seated at a hotel table, with my hands on my aching legs and a glass of milk, like during a wake. Tonight my emotions are so strong that I can't seem to put them into words. I get ready for the first different night, after 9 months, the first night with you in the world, and tomorrow with my heart still and my muscles moving, I will look at this world that suddenly seems rich and colorful and I'll try to describe it.

Good first night, Margherita.

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65th Stage The last night



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter](#) on 2011-08-24

During my stay in **Ladakh**, I got into the habit of sleeping with earplugs. All you need is a slight noise or a tent buddy who snores, and you've lost a night of sleep. In the United States I fight against the noise of motel air conditioners, ice-cold lovers under the sheets, just a few inches from my ears, and never as in this job has every minute of sleep been this crucial.

Last night, however, a bed was already taken by Simone and Alex, and I had a strong feeling that something big was going to happen. I got my cameras ready and placed them on the nightstand, phones turned on, and I lay down waiting, with my ears open and free.

The phone rings for the first time at 11:50 p.m. Francesca is in the hospital.

Rapid neural connection and camera turned on. I look for Alex's face in the dark, as Simone gives him the phone. I hear his voice in a deep, dark corner of an American night, as it dives into Atlantic Ocean and crosses it, re-emerging somewhere along the Portuguese coast and casting itself, flying until it plunges into the telephone, pressed up against Francesca's ear, lying on a stretched under the 4000 Kelvin degree neon lights in a city hospital.

The waiting room smells like disinfectant mixed with a mother's desire for a new child, anonymous landscape prints up on the walls, and the deafening sound of nurse clogs on blue linoleum.

A few hours go by without news from the Old World. Alex travels like the wind as if to chase something, breaking a 5 mph wall. We get to the hotel. We close the door. I've had my fingers ready on the camera for the past 2 hours, for when the phone rings and it's Francesca.

Welcome to the world, Margherita.

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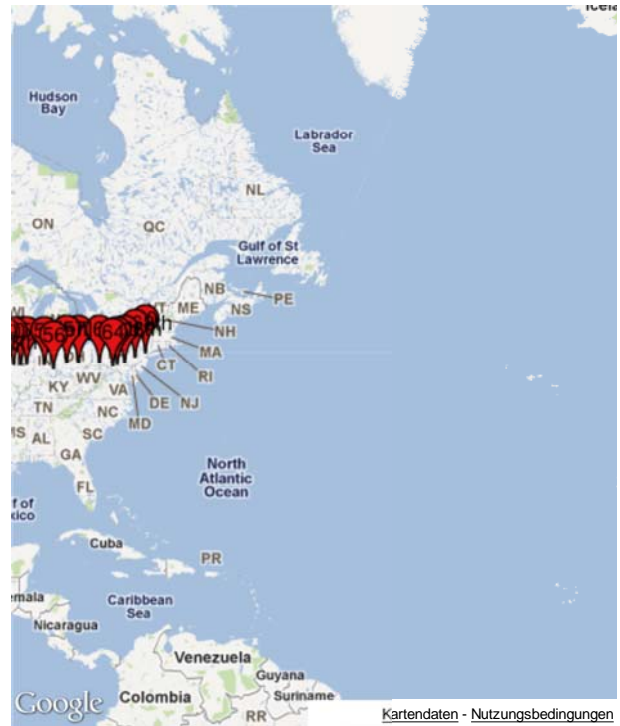
RAA - tappa n°65

Mo, 22 Aug 2011 5:27 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
Superrr!!! Bellissima giornata per Alex! Prestazione incredibile i...



Distanz: 49.05 mi	Kalorien: 5,194 cal
Zeit: 9:45:08	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 2,290 ft
Ø Pace 11:56 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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66th & 67th 3000 miles!



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-26

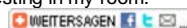


Although you have nine months, or actually ten, to get ready to have a daughter, when you receive your wife's phone call, the feeling that runs through your veins is overwhelming, like a trains passing through.

If they ask you to say something, well, you start looking up in the air, fishing for words that might make a complete and meaningful sentence. Sometimes all it takes is a night to get your ideas straight. I'm not sure if a night was enough to understand everything fully, maybe I'll have to get home, put down my luggage, and look that little girl in the eyes. Only then will I fully comprehend the immensity of what's happened.

Today we only have 27 miles to run, and that "only" mislead a lot of people. The warning "it ain't over 'til it's over" applies to today's stage more than ever. At the first crossroads, less than a miles from takeoff at 5:30 a.m., pitch black, some of the runners at the beginning of the lines slipped into the wrong street, and behind them, like bodies with no brains or a flock of sheep, the other runners followed them off track for over 6 miles. I was part of the flock of sheep, but luckily after about 400 yards on the wrong road I realized that the note on the roadbook didn't match with the road I had taken and I started having some doubts.

Brief moments of fear this afternoon while I was resting in my room.
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66th & 67th So alike, yet so different



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-26

Two days that are as straight as a blade, quick, sunny, and so different. An extremely short one, excruciating. A marathon to be ran quickly, with many runes lost along the way, a third place that boosts your mood, and an entire afternoon to sleep or work. Recover time and energy. The other one extremely long, on the other hand. 51 miles amidst trucks, constant traffic, the deafening sound of tires exploding right by you.

The 3000 mile wall torn down like a satin veil, without a sound, with your heart locked up by a shell to protect itself for the next 3 days.

Just like in a romance novel's final pages, Margherita comes to the world. A series of visual elements pass by outside of the Jeep® windows. They're so different that take us back to LA and back again. The elegant and tree-lined town of **York**, the turn of the century houses in **Lancaster**, and the rough outskirts of **Reading**, where they glare at you if they hear the sound of the flash going off.

Blacks, whites, Latinos, and the old, proud soldiers, who perhaps shot my grandfather in World War II, or could have been the ones who saved him making him a prisoner in Africa.

Tom's eyes light up as shows me his life, his pale, white skin tattooed in the 60's in a living room overflowing with pictures of his lost wife. He's an ex-soldier who survived the **Pearl Harbor** attack, an ex-hippy, an ex-Don Juan, and a former conqueror of miles. He shows me a map of the American naval disposition in the bay during the Japanese attack.

Everyone has their war to win, I think, and the reflection in the pendulum clock makes me turn toward the window that's bursting with light, as Alex runs toward the victory of peace.

Check out Alex's performance during **stage 67** on **Garmin!**

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Simone was the first to wake up, right after me: the beds and the walls all moved because of an earthquake that seems to have gone as far as New York. No damage, just an unusual wake up call, and then everyone went back to sleep. When you're tired, nothing can stop you!



Today we've reached 3000 miles! See you tomorrow




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68th & 69th It's not over 'til it's over



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - *The runner* on 2011-08-27



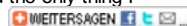
Washington, New Jersey.

May what's happening to Patrik Maladin the past few days be a lesson to us all: after 64 days running in the first few places, to the point that they had assured him second place, he's been struggling with a severe inflammation in his left leg's adductor. The inflammation is so bad that he has to run with the support of his son and wife, mile after mile.

This morning it seemed like his condition had improved, even though he was still limping noticeably, but halfway through the afternoon we heard that he was brought to the hospital for a medical check-up. As far as we know, Patrik was taken back to the point in which he had interrupted the race and I think he's gone ahead up until the end. We'll know more about it tomorrow, but the lesson that each of us should learn is that it's not over until you reach the actual finish line, and up until that moment anything can happen, including having to give up a step away from the end of it all. What really makes you angry is that it happened to the person who deserved it the least, even though at this point nobody deserves to be deprived of the joy of arriving in **New York**.

Patrik's story obviously makes another story come to mind. It's a very personal story that dates back to 3 years ago, and the only thing I

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68th & 69th Good night Irene



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - *Reporter* on 2011-08-27

"In the world I see – you are stalking elk through the damp canyon forests around the ruins of Rockefeller Center. You'll wear leather clothes that will last you the rest of your life. You'll climb the wrist-thick kudzu vines that wrap the Sears Tower. And when you look down, you'll see tiny figures pounding corn, laying strips of venison on the empty car pool lane of some abandoned superhighway."

All I can think of are these words by **Chuck Palahniuk**, as I watch TV with my mouth open, holding a can of soda, in the lobby of this aseptic hotel, our adventure's last hotel. Men with strange ties talk about an imminent Armageddon, of an abandoned New York, destroyed Hollywood-style. Yet it all seems so real and it's called Irene. It's a hurricane on a collision course with the East Coast. Evacuate the area.

But we too are real, we're just 35 miles from **Central Park**, and we're about to attack New York on its right-hand side. We take a running start, we're lethal bullets on the hard, smooth wood of a loaded crossbow. We can't even see these miles. They're a lot and slow because the stages don't count anymore. What counts is each step, right in front of the other without ever stopping.

Technical meeting, 9:00 p.m. local time: we're not going to arrive in Central Park.

The Big Apple won't offer us it's sweetest fruit, it's too dangerous, as the biblical tradition goes.

We're heading straight to **Times Square**, the modern heart, so we're not forgotten, to be fast and precise as we take off at 4:00 a.m. It will defend itself with a cascade of water on our heads, deserted streets, entire areas flooded and winds above 100 miles an hour. That's what they say.

I'm sure that it's just a special welcome gift for us, a solitary dinner, a restaurant without any other noisy guests. That's how I want to see it, now that I've shaved Alex's head like before the battle. Alex who's all charged up and ready to go get his daughter Sofia, who's already in New York since yesterday, to take her to a safe place in case of danger. Simone set the Jeep® using all of the rituals for special occasions.

And I can't miss a beat tomorrow. It will be that way. For everyone. Good night to you too, Irene, sleep tight.

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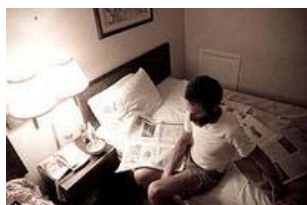
hope is that whatever happens to Patrik, he can see the bright side of things, otherwise he will have suffered for nothing.

As far as today's stage, there was bad weather all day since morning, with a bad rainstorm that sucked up all of my energy. Halfway through the morning I started asking myself how I was going to make it to the finish line, but as soon as it stopped raining, I changed my socks and shoes, chewed on some rice, and everything started going better.

Let's still talk about bad weather for a second: by now you probably know that **Hurricane Irene** that's heading toward Florida. Well, the same hurricane is going to reach New York on Sunday afternoon!! 😊 **Long Island** already has an evacuation plan.... We couldn't have hoped for a better arrival.

I just spoke to Sofia, my daughter, on the phone, and she's already in New York with her cousins and her aunt, and I'll see her on Saturday. I've been waiting for this moment for ages, since this crazy race across the United States began and the idea of running the last few hundred feet with her just fills me with emotion.

Goodbye everyone. Alex




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Jeep® People > Run Across America > 70th Stage

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70th Stage Finally in New York City



posted by [Alex Bellini](#) - [The runner on 2011-08-28](#)



Looking back on everything today, now that the city has returned to its traditional rhythm after two days, with a late August sun shining in a clean blue sky, with a clear mind and a calm heart everything seems very distant, and in a certain sense very normal. But the day I arrived in New York, after that 70 day trek everything seemed anything but normal. Up until the last minute, we didn't know whether we would be able to enter the city, which was waiting with bated breath for the much-feared Hurricane Irene. All this uncertainty had a calming effect on us, putting a damper on our emotions.

I was stuck in this bubble until the second I say that little blonde head with curls bouncing on the sidewalk and running toward a father she was used to seeing only on a computer screen, like something that is no longer real. How many times had I imagined that moment? How many times did I focus my attention on that image to find a way to put up with the pain in my legs every morning when I had to start running again? So many that I can't remember, but the feeling that suddenly hit my stomach made my head spin. With Sofia in my arms, silent and distracted by the crowd that had formed around us, I reached the finish line after **746 hours 28 minutes and 49 seconds**. A lifetime.

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70th Stage May it all pass... and begin again.



posted by [Mauro Talamonti](#) - [Reporter on 2011-08-28](#)

New York City, day 71.

As I write, it's all over.

It's Sunday morning, we're trapped like hostages, behind the windows of our last hotel room in **New York**.

Our Jeep® is parked 18 floors beneath us, on **52nd Street**. It's moored to the pier like a battle cruiser, with signs of adventure on its white hull.

Alex arrived in New York yesterday, he ran all the way from Los Angeles. That's 5,139 km, 3,193 miles. He traveled across states, deserts, mountains, difficulties, pain, fear, and moments of pure joy. He became a dad for the second time, and he ran across the Washington bridge in order to reach his daughter Sofia in Manhattan on time, before Irene hit the finish line of this endless journey. Nature once again tried to stop him, like a few miles from Sydney.

Then there's the hugs and tears, the trophies, and the buffets. 70-foot high lobbies with their enormous wet windows facing **Times Square**, the lights on **Broadway** shining in light Sofia's, as she looks into her father's eyes.

That's what's left of us as I let a tropical hurricane cleanse me. I let this city baptize and purify me, a city on alert that I've yearned for the past 70 days. I think we'll comprehend the meaning of all this in a few weeks, maybe in a few months.

Maybe Irene is testing us, as we wait for her to pass and wash away everything that's happened. But waiting can be sweet, when it's without fear. Besides, just like Alex wrote on his boat: "It's just water and wind".

And whoever out there read this daily journal from time to time can understand what it means now, to be still on this chair, look outside and wait for it all to pass. And for everything to begin again.

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Now everyone has returned, or will soon return, to their everyday life. Some will go back to selling windows, some behind a counter in a pharmacy, others sitting in front of a computer in an office. When you meet them, with their clean shaves and clean clothes, you may think their normal people. What's even more strange, is that they themselves may feel like normal people, when they're wearing their everyday clothes and doing their everyday jobs. Yet each of them proved to have an exceptional strength and personality on those long roads, and that's why we'll never be normal. We shared a lifetime that was condensed into 70 days, and this will bind us forever.

In order to finish this update, which arrived a couple days late and for which I apologize to all those who were waiting for an immediate report, I would like to share this huge sporting/human result with the team that supported me throughout the adventure: Max, Luca, Simone, Mauro, and Beppe, and I'd like to dedicate the last 3 kilometers of this race to my wife, Francesca, for always being there, her hand in mine, in good times and in bad, showing me the Way.

Best wishes to all,
Alex




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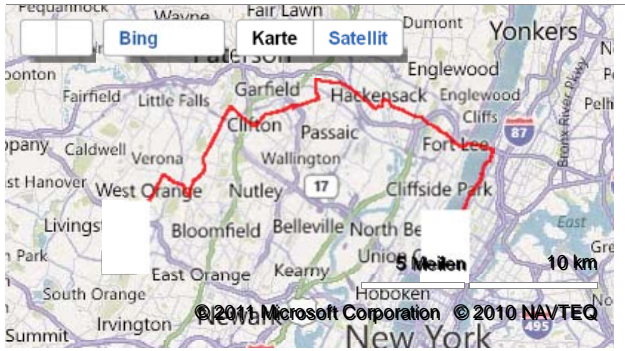
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How is Alex doing?

An incredibly difficult competition that will put Alex under enormous physical and mental pressure. Follow his evolution step by step, with the data revealed by Garmin Connect, and discover Alex's route as he is followed by his team on a Jeep® Wrangler.

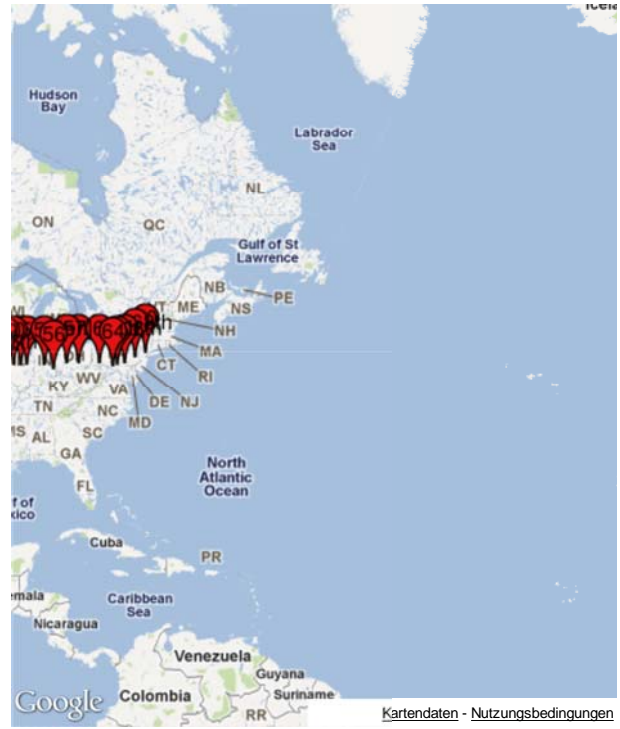
RAA - tappa n°70

Sa, 27 Aug 2011 5:54 hinzugefügt von raalexbellini
 Ci siamooooo!!!! E prima di Ireneeee!!! Grazie Alex, sei stato gran...



Distanz: 35.29 mi	Kalorien: 3,710 cal
Zeit: 6:46:38	Positiver Höhenunterschied: 2,167 ft
Ø Pace 11:31 min/mi	Ereignistyp: Race
Aktivitätstyp: Running	Strecke: --

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Jeep ® People > Run Across America > 4km Exhibit

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4km Exhibit Memories & photographs



posted by Mauro Talamonti - Reporter on 2011-09-27



On September 24th, 2011 the Mirafiori Motor Village hosted the ONOFF event to present the new Jeep® Grand Cherokee. The evening featured a touching speech by Alex Bellini, in addition to reporter Mauro Talamonti's "4 km" photographic exhibit, documenting Alex Bellini's 5000 km adventure across America in the LA-NY Footrace 2011 – a journey in which Alex stopped every 4 km for a food and water break. A few words from Mauro about the evening:

There were new Jeeps, the ones that shine under the metal halide spotlights at the **Motor Village in Turin**, on Saturday evening. There were guests, racing after trays of food, curious eyes set on the 4 steps positioned under a cone of light, the steps that Alex walked up, thin and slender as usual, to talk about his American adventure.

Just a few words, direct and touching, with screens behind him showing images of heat and fatigue, of the American dream, of him running. There were 40 photographs, a stark and silent gallery, a line of people reading the dry captions under each photo, sometimes harsh, sometimes colored.

I mingle in the crowd in silence, with my arms crossed and my shy eyes gazing at the guests' feet as they move, my ears wide open,

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trying to grasp every comment, every expression. And Alex's words, mixed with the people's silence and the sweaty images that have finally been exhibited, once again, or perhaps for the first time, touched many of the people present.

Great memories, forever, and a great feeling to be back home, less than half a mile from where I was born and raised. Where the road, even though it is no longer called **Route 66**, takes off amid a red autumn road that is right around the corner.



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LA-NY Footrace

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Video



Arriving in NY

After 70 days and 70 stages running across the United States from Los Angeles to New York, Alex takes his last steps in the LA-NY Footrace and meets with his daughter Sofia.



New Mexico – The fatigue sets in

Alex Bellini in the desert as he runs through New Mexico during stages 17 through 26 of the LANY Footrace 2011.



Arizona – The scorching desert

Alex Bellini running through the Arizona desert on stages 8 – 16 of the LA-NY Footrace 2011.



California – The state where the race began

Alex Bellini running through the desert and down legendary Route 66 in the LA-NY Footrace with his team and Jeep® by his side.

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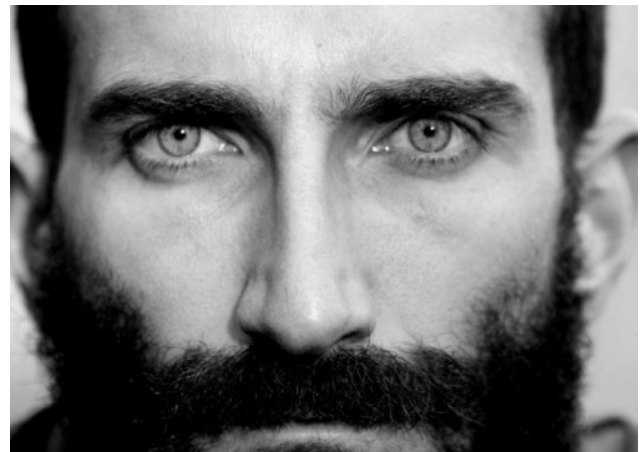
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Alex Bellini

The runner

"A desire which is anything but perhaps the desire to run. A journey for the sake of going on a new adventure within myself". To go through tests that are above and beyond what you'd imagine, physical preparation is not enough. Along the 5000 km of the LA-NY Footrace 2011, step after step, Alex will be led by the same determination that guided him in each of his adventures: the courage to listen to and follow his natural inclinations, in order to find the path toward happiness, giving way to his dreams.
www.alexbellini.it



Team



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Max Damioli

Team leader

"If there's a Man that can do it, that Man is Alex. If there's a Team that can help him make it, that's our Team". Max Damioli, team leader, brings harmony to the team, in light of one of mankind's most demanding challenges. Breathing techniques, hypnosis, nutrition, physical training, with these instruments he is ready to leave a mark.



Team



Alex Bellini



Max Damioli



Francesca Urso Bellini



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Francesca Urso Bellini

Operation chief

"To dream and to share the same dream". Francesca and Alex are two halves of the same apple, and they're getting ready to face the challenge together. They've decided to share much more than a project as they face the adventure of life together. Quiet and discrete, Francesca is and will be at Alex's side every moment, not just as a wife, but as an enthusiastic coordinator of the team's activities.



Team



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Official vehicle

“OIIIIIIIO” All you need to do is look at it straight in the eyes in order to grasp the spirit with which it will begin the adventure. An authentic challenge, in which Jeep Wrangler Unlimited will put forward all of its determination, energy, and enthusiasm to support Alex all the way down to the finish line.



Team



Alex Bellini



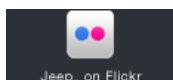
Max Damioli



Francesca Urso Bellini



Jeep® Wrangler



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Partners

Our adventures have many protagonists.

We believe in cooperation, joining forces, and sharing objectives. 70 years ago, these beliefs gave way to the birth of the 4x4, and today the same spirit inspires us when we unite with our partners in the challenges we face.



The North Face Speaker Series

The North Face shares Jeep's same values: freedom, authenticity, adventure, and passion. Together, Jeep and The North Face lead great outdoor challenges, telling stories about athletes who push themselves beyond their limits and discover unknown places. What will their next challenge be? Sign up now on The North Face Speaker Series so you don't miss the preview!

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Runner's World

Will the Runner's World readers have the courage to emulate the LA-NY Footrace adventure? In the meantime they can decide by following the news updates about Alex's challenge.

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Kodak

Enthusiasm, sacrifice, concentration, landscapes. There will be plenty of moments that Alex will want to share with his fans during the Los Angeles-New York Foot-Race. Thanks to Kodak, all he will have to do is press the "share" button on his PlaySport camcorder and EasyShare M532 compact camera.

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Garmin

The need to combine both GPS and physical performance has lead us to choose Garmin as partner for this challenge. GARMIN is the world leader in the navigation and communication industry, and is supporting Alex by providing him with a selection of its most innovative products.

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WranglerMania

Passion, sharing, being part of something that is unique... this is the philosophy behind the creation and development of **WM**'s information channels, aimed to diffuse the Jeep brand, through the first and only website dedicated to the legendary American brand. Do you share the same passion?



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