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Baselga's 3rd Masters' International REVIVAL 2008

I've competed in countless races in a gazillion tournaments of six different sports around the world, believe me... Never had I felt at ease as in Baselga, though. For starters, it's like a dreamer's winter holiday package: you can stay in a very comfy three stars hotel that would be rated four in most



countries (Hotel Olimpic), eating like a king and spoiling yourself to saunas, massages, etc. Just across the road you'd find a top notch open-air facility with lovely cared ice that you can use for free anytime any day of the week, all of this surrounded by visually stunning alpine scenery. So for an entire week your average day could go on as follows: huge breakfast, skating, lavish lunch, nap, skating, massage and/or sauna, more skating, beers with friends, lucullan dinner, more beers... At a ridiculously low final cost! The only glitch is that one has to bring over his/her own sexual slave, as there is almost no variety to pick amidst those mountains, and the lady masters' ranks are rather limited. But hey, you can't have it all in life!

As for the tournament, all details are cared for as if it was the bloody Olympics. The track would be polished, embroidered and tweaked as if a World Cup was about to take place there. The referees, officials and starters behave as professionally as if



they get handsomely paid, the results and times readily available as if this was a televised World Championship. So all in all, when it was my time to get to the starting line, I felt as if I was a Sven Kramer, albeit a better looking, slightly older version.

And the races, you ask? I guess the attending 5 spectators witnessed an impressive show, especially



when certain pairs were on the track. We all gazed in awe when Mircea Vranceanu (GER) and Ben Rückert (NED) displayed a lesson of perfect technique at impossible speeds, but even more emotion came from the battles between Flavio Rigon and Tullio Tomasi, fighting to the end for 1/100's of a second. I personally found it inspiring also to see old timers like Peter Reimann, Giorgio Torgler or Antonio Nitto skate flawlessly as if they were 20 years old. I want to be like them when I grow up!

As for my own personal performance, I cannot be happier. Thanks to the advice generously

given by all my master friends I'm starting to feel the edges, so all my PB were improved. I even had the honour of being paired in the 1k and 3k with one of my mentors: Mr Fabio Ravanelli, a master's master, the funniest of them all. Of course, he gave me a double lesson and easily kicked my butt (9 seconds in the longer distance!), but thanks to his teachings I might be able to beat him sooner than later.

In conclusion, this tournament is probably the best kept secret in the Masters' world, but as long as they'll be organizing it, I'll be showing up. I strongly recommend trying it at least once: you won't be disappointed, even if you aren't lucky enough

to be invited to Mr Torgler's house for lunch.... His wife Nicoletta is a proven chef, who blessed a group of us with a marvellous stew with polenta valsugana, varied cheeses with a wide range of mustards or balsamic vinegar (the real one!), plus two delicious cakes as dessert, all of it washed down with a rare variety of lambrusco and assorted spirits.



Or, in the worst case scenario, you might get a pre-awards ceremony snack offered by another Olympic old glory like Giancarlo Gloder, who brought in a fabulous family produced red wine (recciotto) along with his own homemade cheese and bread.

Yeah, Italians do it better, no doubt.

Further Impressions at the 3rd Masters' International Revival 2008



