

# Cold, mud, angry seagull mark man's 'lifetime trip'

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Star Reporter

An Italian cyclist braved the gravel of the Dalton Highway last week to complete a 666-kilometre trip from Fox, near Fairbanks, to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, in three days and 4½ hours.

Maurizio Belli of Trento, Italy, left Fox on July 27 and arrived at Prudhoe Bay on July 30. He was accompanied by a van and a film camera.

Belli, 32, will show the film of his journey at a mountain exploration and adventure film festival this year in his hometown.

"I'm glad I made the trip because now I know what I'm physically capable of," Belli said in an interview in Whitehorse. "It was the trip of a lifetime."

Wind, cold temperatures, dust, mud, truck traffic and a vicious seagull added to the challenge. "The seagull kept diving at me and even knocked me off my bike," Belli said.

The weather changed dramatically from hot to cold at the alpine and Arctic tundra zones, making the trip more difficult.

Belli was impressed by the vast wilderness of the North and the wildlife he saw along the way. He finds the long hours of sunlight a pleasant surprise.

Before making the journey to Alaska, Belli spent eight hours a day training on his mountain bike in the Dolomite Alps in northeastern Italy.

To build up his endurance, he checked himself into a hospital. Under medical supervision, he gradu-

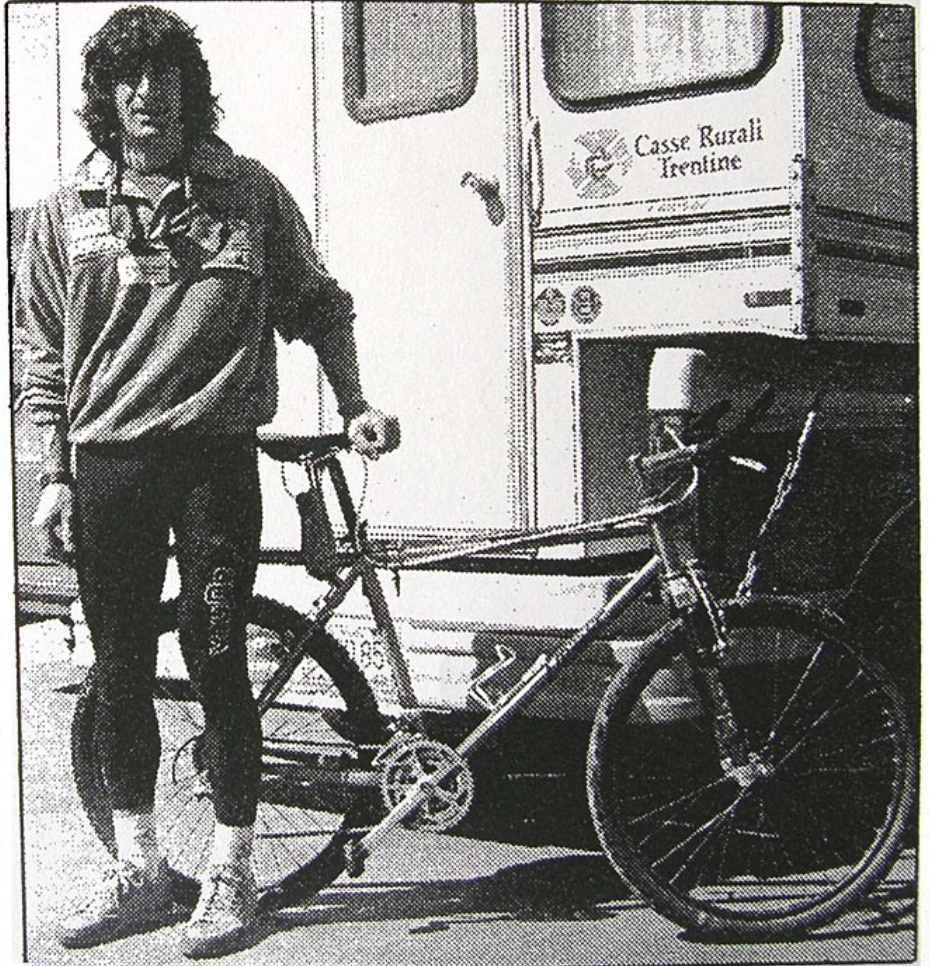


Photo by NICK ALLAN

**Maurizio Belli, seen in Whitehorse, cycled the remote Dalton Highway from the Fairbanks area to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.**

ally reduced the amount of sleep he got each night from seven hours to three hours. During the three-day trip he slept only 12 hours and 30 minutes.

Belli hopes to return next year for a one-month trip from Skagway to

Fairbanks, pending Italian corporate sponsorship.

He plans to hike the Chilkoot Trail, raft on the Tutshi River, bike to Minto, canoe to Eagle village, and bike to Fairbanks.