



## Costa Rica Ultra Trail - La Transtica Race Report 2012

**November 22nd: Opening ceremony and press conference at the "Residence de France".**

**The 35 participants** and the members of the organization of this 5<sup>th</sup> Edition are received at the "Residence de France" by the French Ambassador, Mr. Fabrice Delloye, for a press conference followed by a lunch.

The drawing lots of the numbers will be the occasion to introduce a representative of each of the 11 nations engaged on the race: South Africa, Algeria, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, the United States, France, Japan, Sweden and Singapore.

At the time of this cordial and friendly ceremony, we will sign a new partnership convention with the French Embassy, each member of the organization and each competitor will received a Tee-shirt with the logo of the French Embassy and Roiny Villegas, Costa Rica, will run this year again to defend the colours of the French Embassy, which has also sponsored its inscription within this partnership convention!

**The Organisation Team** is composed of more than 20 members coming from France and Costa Rica, including 7 French firemen, 1 emergency doctor, 2 physiotherapists, 2 professional's guides of which a first-aid worker as well as an ambulance 4x4 of the Red Cross.

**The course 2012** will drive us the 23rd of November, from the beach of Manuel Antonio, through Santa Maria de Dota, La Esperanza, the Tapanti national park, El Humo, San Pablo, the river Pacuare, to the beach of Manzanillo on the Caribbean Coast that we will reach the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2012.

**On the solidarity side**, the financial support of the associations « **Run & Trail 3S** » **Trévière Trail Club** » and « **Amicale des Sapeurs Pompiers des Cabrières** », of the restaurant « **La Potinière** » of our friend **Franck Ducerf** in Chamonix and of the **Cannet City Hall**, added to the revenues collected by the associations El Nino and CG Sport Event, from the other races they are organizing in France, will make possible the local purchase and the distribution of more than one hundred school kits, and will allow us to finance the first phase of 3 renovation projects, for the schools of La Esperanza and El Progreso de Pacayatas and for the community of El Yue as well as the purchase of an audio equipment for the cultural association of San Pablo.

In total more than **7 000 \$** will be invested locally in the continuity of our aids 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011.

On the top of that we will give to the dispensary of Londres, 2 electronic tensometers, donation from **Karine & Rudolph Geoffroy** and a monitor ECG, donation from the Hospital of Cannes.



**November 23<sup>rd</sup>: Prologue 6 km, Manuel Antonio beach.**

8h00, ready to go, 2 hours drive until Tarcoles, crocodile stop, then 2 more hours to reach Manuel Antonio on the Pacific Coast

Change of atmosphere, sea and heavy heat, meal in Gato Negro, it is warm, very warm and after the hotel checking, in the beginning of the afternoon, some will refresh in the swimming pool waiting for the prologue.

15h35, here we are for the prologue, 2 loops of 3 km on the beach of Manuel Antonio.

End afternoon, the sun plays with the clouds before sunset, the weather is still hot and a small rain is welcome to refresh the spirits.

Roiny Villegas, Team Ambassade de France (Costa Rica), winner 2009 gives the tone by taking the head upon the departure, few strides behind comes Vivien Vedrenne (France), followed at less than one minute by Wayne Rice (South Africa) and Ukai Mineo (Japan).

At the end of the first loop, the positions are unchanged, whereas behind, the first effects of the heat are felt.

On the finish line few seconds separate the 3 leaders and Roiny Villegas, Team Ambassade de France (Costa Rica) will win this prologue in 23'28, followed by Vivien Vedrenne (France) in 24'25 and Wayne Rice (South Africa) in 24'30.

Sophie Bonnot (France) will finish first woman in 28'33 in front of Veronique Gruson Coustenoble (France) in 30'07 and Kelley Koehler (USA) in 30'19.

During the evening meal, following up our aids 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, we will proceed to a donation for the dispensary of Londres, of two tensometers donated by Karine and Rudolph Geoffroy and one monitor ECG, donated by the Hospital of Cannes.



## November 24<sup>th</sup>: Stage 1: Paquita - La Selvita - Napoles

**Adventure: 19 Km, difference of level + 1375 m. / - 25 m.**

**Extreme: 38 Km, difference of level + 1770 m. / - 200 m.**

A superb first stage, 40km to run, a starting line along the pacific coast, with a first section in the heart of a green palm plantation before entering in the tropical jungle gradually. As a starter, 15 km of flat track with bridges crossings and some rivers to ford before a progressive rise that will bring our runners in full jungle.

At PC2, twentieth kilometer, a shelter reduces to its simplest expression, opened to the 4 corners on the surrounding jungle, will be used as point of supply but also as a starting line for the adventures runners.

For an introduction, it cannot be better for the adventure runners which will start with an intense stage for 20 km with a strong positive difference in level of 1300m

The main difficulty of this stage will be the heat and the humidity that reign on this part of Costa Rica.

The serious things start today, the sun is shining and an overpowering heat will very quickly make damages. In spite of the instructions given at the race briefing, some runners start too fast, thinking of unrolling on the first flat section.

Roiny Villegas imposes his rhythm from the beginning, and points at the head at CP1 (km 11, 4), 7 minutes ahead on Wayne Rice and Ukai Mineo, Sophie Bonnot is 4 minutes behind them.

At CP2 (km 19), the positions are unchanged, but Roiny doubled his advance and the climb towards the CP3 will affect many competitors as Ukai Mineo victim of cramps.

At CP3 (km 29), Roiny is pointed 45 minutes before Wayne! But nothing is done for the 3<sup>rd</sup> place between Walter Berthier (France), David Araya (Costa Rica), Sophie Bonnot (France) and Carlos Madrigal Morales (Costa Rica). Some other competitors will be in great difficulty and very close to give up.

Roiny will accentuate his effort and will win this stage in 4:23' 18, earning 57 minutes on Wayne Rice, 5:20' 27, Sophie Bonnot in 5:39' 00, 3<sup>rd</sup> of the stage and 1st woman (stage and Scratch), in front of Kelley Koehler in 6:17' 59 and Veronique Gruson Coustenoble in 6:37' 59.

On the Adventure Race, the firsts of the prologue of the day before will confirm their leadership, Vivien Vedrenne winning in 3:18' 04 in front of Reynald Balbelaere (France) in 3:22' 18 and Joachim Deroquefeuil, (France) in 3:38' 29.

This stage will have marked the bodies and Nilsson Gunnar (Sweden), Meng Poh and Steven Wong (Singapore) will give up on this stage, but they should be able to take the departure tomorrow morning on the Adventure course.

Arrived at Napoles, the bus awaits the runners for a short transfer to our camp in Santa Maria de Dota where the runners will benefit from a well deserved rest.

In Rancho Guayabal, our camp for the evening, a chimney fire and a good soup will be welcome to reinvigorate us, as well as the massages of our two physiotherapists, Laurence and Veronique, who will not be unemployed.



*Today I passed through several states, first of all the euphoria of the departure, and then the desire to give up, I was even ready to finish in a 4x4, then there was the magic meeting with Pierre who take me under his wing to bring me towards the end of this first stage and finally happiness and a big lesson of humility from this runner who forgets the stopwatch for me.*



**Christophe Volet (Extreme)**

*Today a very hard race, I exploded at km 7, this had never happened to me before, it was necessary to manage the last 31 km. I recovered from km 19, I thought of one of my friend who was missing, this gave me the strength to continue, I felt that I did not have the right to give up.*

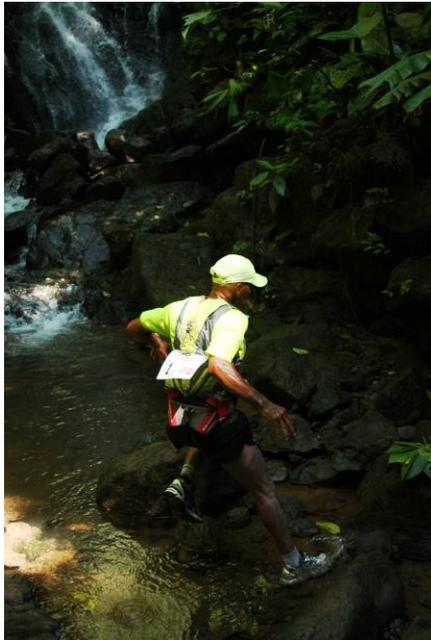


**François Blanchard (Extreme)**



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**November 25<sup>th</sup>: Stage 2: Santa Maria de Dota - Ojo de Agua**

**Adventure: 21.1 Km, difference of level + 1 280 m / - 1 120 m**

**Extreme: 38.4 Km, difference of level + 2 720 m / - 1 310 m**

The Extremes race starts at 8 a.m., from the village of Santa Maria de Dota for the stage considered to be the most difficult considering its impressive difference in level, 2.720 m positive, 1.310 m negative under a bright sun. As a starter, a first 15% upward slope ...

To follow 15 km of climb to join the CP2 starting line for the adventures runners, (21, 1 km, with a difference in level of 1 180 m positive and 1 020 m negative.

At CP1 (km 7,4), Roiny points 5 minutes before a small group of challengers led by Wayne Rice, at CP2 (km 16,2) Roiny has accentuated its advance and start the 10 km of descent with 15 minutes on Wayne Rice and 17 minutes on Mineo Ukay who seems to have totally recovered from the day before.

It is in the last climb (12 km and 1140 m of positive difference in level) which will lead the runners to 2.990 meters of altitude, that Wayne Rice will carry his attack to manage to reduce the gap with Roiny while distancing Mineo Ukay.

Roiny will win this 2<sup>nd</sup> stage in 4:53' 02 and will consolidate his first rank, in front of Wayne Rice in 5:07' 28 and Ukai Mineo in 5:27' 53.

Sophie Bonnot finishes 4<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> woman (stage and General) in 5:30' 35, before Veronique Gruson Coustenoble in 5:53' 22 and Kelley Koehler in 5:57' 23. Kelley Koehler remains 2<sup>nd</sup> on the general ranking with 15mn of advance on Veronique Gruson Coustenoble.

On the Adventure race, Reynald Balbelaere will win the stage in 2:31 taking 5' 25 to Vivien Vedrenne which yields to him the 1st place in the general ranking for 71 seconds, the stage of tomorrow promises to be hot !!! Joachim de Roquefeuil finishes 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2:45' 55 and consolidates its 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the general ranking.

The rain and the cold will be a part of the challenge on the last section but the competitors will be quickly transferred to the school of La Esperanza, our bivouac of the evening.

After a collation and a hot soup in preamble of the dinner prepared by the local community, the runners will be able to appreciate a salmon trout and a rest well deserved in the classrooms of the school



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**November 26<sup>th</sup>: Stage 3: La Esperanza - Kiri Lodge - El Humo**

**Adventure: 24.1 Km, difference of level + 585 m. / - 1830 m.**

**Extreme: 42.1 Km, difference of level + 985 m. / - 2830 m.**

After a donation for the school of Esperanza, the runners rush in the Tapanti national park, 24.1 km, with a difference in level of +585m /-1830m, for the Adventure runners and a Marathon of 42.1 km, with a difference in level of +985m /- 2830m for the Extreme runners.

On the paper, the profile seems easier, but doesn't reflect the main difficulties of this stage. At the race briefing, it is reminded that it is going to be necessary to manage de-escalation on a single track filled of trap: mud, roots, spiny vegetation, abrupt slope.

It starts by a breathtaking slope of 3 km, to reach 2 850 m of altitude, before attacking a first downward portion, to reach at km 6<sup>th</sup>, the entry of the famous single track, the decor is well changing, penetration in deep heart of the "Tapanti ", The slopes are very abrupt, it is very slippery. There are mud and lots of roots, it is necessary to pay attention before clinging to the branches because some are strewn of thorns...

To follow a suspended bridge over the river, before beginning a small ascension through this jungle... it is really hard... Then, a new descent through the plantations of coffee trees until CP 3, arrival line for the Adventure runners.

The runners of the Extreme will have to go through 2 more passes and 18 kilometers to join El Humo following a smashed track in the middle of a humid tropical forest.

The rain seems to slow down after a stormy and windy night and the single track promises to be muddy and slipping!

At CP1 (km 9, 2) end of the single track, Vivien Vedrenne is pointed 1<sup>st</sup>, before Walter Berthier followed by Sophie Bonnot and Roiny Villegas, Reynald Balbelaere is already counting a delay of 13 minutes on Vivien, the fight for the Adventure podium is engaged. On the Extreme course, Wayne is pointed 7 minutes behind Roiny.

At CP2 (km 19, 2) the positions are unchanged but the gaps widen...

At CP3 (km 24,1), finish line for the Adventure, Vivien Vedrenne arrives 1<sup>st</sup> in 2 :44 overtaking 26 minutes and the 1<sup>st</sup> rank to Reynald Balbelaere, Joachim de Roquefeuil finishes 3<sup>rd</sup> in 3h30 and confirm his 3<sup>rd</sup> rank on the general classification. On the Extreme race, Roiny Villegas is leading, chased at 3minutes by Sophie Bonnot and Walter Berthier, and 6 minutes behind by Cherif Nait (Algeria) et Ukai Mineo, Wayne Rice is distanced at 10 minutes !

Roiny will accentuate his effort in this last section and will finish this stage in 4:40' 20, 16 minutes ahead on Sophie Bonnot and Walter Berthier both finishing in 4:56' 39.

Wayne Rice finishes 6<sup>th</sup> in 5:16, and further increase his delay on Roiny but remains second on the general ranking, in front of Sophie Bonnot, 1<sup>st</sup> women, 2<sup>nd</sup> of the stage and 3<sup>rd</sup> on the scratch!

We will go to bed relatively early because on the following day, it is the night stage, the alarm clocks are programmed at 3:00 for a departure at 4:15...



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## November 27<sup>th</sup>: Stage 4: El Humo - San Pablo

**Adventure: 23.7 Km, difference of level + 790 m. / - 520 m.**

**Extreme: 41.2 Km, difference of level + 1250 m. / - 1160 m.**

3h30 the alarm clocks ring... It is necessary to speed up because the start is at 3h45, breakfast, care, packing.

Adventure and Extreme runners leave together for a neutralized section; the real starting line is at the exit of the village of Pejibaye.

The faces look tired, the night was short and the noises of the jungle sound in the immensity.

The course of the day, seem the most balanced of all the stages. The pace is good before starting a first rise, then a muddy descent followed by a little portion of road to join the CP1.

The runners are then in the middle of the fincas of sugar cane, it is the beginning of the climb towards the summit of the Cerro Atirro.

The rising of the sun on the lake of la Suiza will be magic, the first sunbeams reveal the peaks and the plume of smoke covering the summit of the Turrialba Volcano, giving an unreal atmosphere to this stage but adding an additional difficulty, the heat replacing quickly the freshness of the night.

Arrived to Pueblo Nuevo, crossing of a suspended bridge before starting a long ascension toward the village of El Silencio, a last 4 km murderous, CP3, km 23,7 and finish line for the adventures..

The Extremes will have to add a pass and the 19,1 kilometers that separate them of San Pablo.

At CP1 (Km 9) entry of the Cerro Atirro, the fight is rough, Vivien Vedrenne comes first followed at 1 minute by his challenger, Reynald Balbelaere, 1minute later Roiny arrives followed at 4 minutes by a small group composed of Walther Berthier, Sophie Bonnot, Wayne Rice , Chérif Nait et Mineo Ukai.

At CP2 (km 16) entry of the Finca Canada, Vivien and Reynald arrive together, who is going to carry his attack the first? 6 minutes later we have Chérif and Roiny, stuck meadows by Wayne, then Walther, Sophie and Mineo being slightly distanced.

Vivien Vedrenne will end up increasing slightly his advance on Reynald Balbelaere and will arrive at El Silencio, CP3 and finish line for the Adventure, 4 minutes ahead on Reynald and will win this 4<sup>th</sup> stage in 2:22'50, Joachim de Roquefeuil finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> once more.

On the Extreme race, it's Wayne who passes first the CP3, closely followed by Chérif, Roiny is at 3 minutes but his comfortable advance enables him to manage. Behind Walther slightly increase his advance on Mineo and Sophie.

Finally, at San Pablo, Roiny arrives 1<sup>st</sup>, after having caught up and passed over his challengers, obtaining his 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive victory , in 4:23' in front of Wayne Rice in 4:26' and the surprising Mineo Ukai in 4:37'.

Sophie Bonnot will lose her 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the Scratch to the profit of Walter Berthier but will remain 1<sup>st</sup> woman in front of Kelley Koehler and Veronique Gruson Coustenoble.



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## November 28<sup>th</sup>: Rafting cancelled

The strong rains of the night made Pacuare and Pejibaye rivers impracticable and the rafting was cancelled and replaced by the visit of the National park of Cahuita where the competitors will have the leisure to discover sloughs, monkeys and other animals.

## November 29<sup>th</sup>: Stage 5 Playa Negro - Manzanillo

**Adventure: 21.8 Km, difference of level + 20 m. / - 20 m.**

**Extreme: 29.1 Km, difference of level + 150 m. / - 150 m.**

8:33 the departure of the last stage is given on Playa Negro, 5 km before the village of Puerto Viejo.

A light rain will come to refresh this last stage, which is composed of a first wild beach section of black sand, followed by the crossing of Puerto Viejo along the sea side, a shaded path before joining the second section of rosy white sand beach as wild as the first section surrounded by an exuberant jungle which gives the impression to dive in the Caribbean. To follow a 2 km road section in order to bypass the rocky coastline.

At CP2, back on the last beach portion with crossing of an estuary to arrive at CP3 a last loop in the reserve of Gandoca of an astonishing beauty, where the runners will have to be armed with courage to face this last section, a muddy and slippery single track.

The finish line is in Manzanillo last village before Panama.

Roiny is strongly decided to try the grand slam and will be the first to reach the CP1 closely followed by Vivien, Reynald, Joachim and Wayne.

At CP3 (km 18, 3) Roiny has outstripped everybody, and is pointed 10 minutes ahead firmly motivated by winning his 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive stage. He will not be caught up and will win this 5<sup>th</sup> stage in 2:40', followed by Wayne Rice in 2:59' and Walter Berthier in 3:19.

On the Adventure race Vivien Vedrenne will sign for his 4<sup>th</sup> stage victory in 1:58 before Reynald Balbelaere in 2:04 and Joachim de Roquefeuil in 2:19.

Roiny Villegas (Costa Rica, Team Ambassade de France) is the winner of this 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Extreme course, covering the 196 km in 21:24', first runner to have won all the stages and to have won 2 editions (2009 and 2012)!

Wayne Rice (South Africa) finishes 2<sup>nd</sup> in 23:34' and Walter Berthier finishes 3<sup>rd</sup> (France) in 24:42".

Sophie Bonnot (France) 5<sup>th</sup> on the scratch in 25:26' finishes 1<sup>st</sup> woman, Veronique Gruson Coustenoble (France) 2<sup>nd</sup> in 29h10' and Kelley Koehler (USA) 3<sup>rd</sup> in 30h21'.

Christian Burkhardt (Germany) will finish last, on his mental, handicapped by badly injured feet, in 40h36' forcing the respect and the admiration of all...

On the Adventure Course, Vivien Vedrenne (France) is the winner of this edition 2012, covering the 120 km in 12:59', Reynald Balbelaere (France) 2<sup>nd</sup> in 13:23' and Joachim de Roquefeuil (France) 3<sup>rd</sup> in 14:19'.



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**Conclusion :**

The 21 runners engaged on this Transtica 2011 have been able to discover through the different stages, a varied course which brought them from the Pacific Coasts to the Caribbean Coasts.

They have been confronted to changing weather conditions, alternating heavy and moist heat of the plains, refreshing tropical rains, wind and icy rain of the altitude forest.

They have been involved in the solidarity aspect of La Transtica through the various donations, lots of emotional moments that we have shared together.

They were welcomed, lodged and celebrated by the local communities, moment of exchange while discovering the way of life of the various communities living in Costa Rica.

The organization 2012, strong of the knowledge acquired during the past editions, appeared to be particularly efficient, welded and reactive and made it possible for all the runners to fully live this adventure within conviviality and in full safety.

Our objective "The discovery of a country and its way of life through a sporting event with humanitarian goals" was over achieved, this time again, at the price of the enormous and effective work of each member of the organization and I say thanks to all of them

The group of the 35 runners of 11 different nations was also largely involved, each one bringing its own touch, carrying out its challenge and thus contributing to the total success of this Transtica 2012.

The cordial feedback given by the runners, during and after the race, the support of our partners or sponsors, the French Embassy in Costa Rica, Mapache, Gatorade Costa Rica, Altec Sport, Generation Trail, 6<sup>ème</sup> Sens, Incomm, brought us the daily motivation and the energy necessary to this success.

We were 58, runners and organization members, to have had the privilege to share this 5<sup>th</sup> edition exceptionally sunny and rich in moments of sharing and emotion

Pura Vida

Bernard Marchal

***The Costa Rica Ultra Trail 2013, La Transtica will take place  
from November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013  
and will be limited to 50 participants.***



## Costa Rica Ultra Trail, La Transtica 2012 in figures:

- 5<sup>th</sup> Edition.
- 12 days of trip.
- 5 stages.
- Extreme race, 30 to 40 km per day, 196 km with a total positive difference in level of 6 855 m.
- 23 finishers, 21:24 for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 40:36 for the last.
- Adventure race, 20 to 30 km per day, 116 km with a total positive difference in level of 3950 m.
- 11 finishers 12:59 for the 1<sup>st</sup>, 25:11 for the last.
- 35 trailers in total.
- 1 give up
- 11 countries represented ((South Africa, Algeria, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Costa Rica, the United States, France, Japan, Sweden and Singapore)
- 21 members of organization including 2 members of the Red Cross from Costa Rica and 7 firemen from France.
- 1 emergency doctor.
- 2 physiotherapists.
- More than 7 000\$ of school supplies, furniture and material of renovation distributed to the communities of Costa Rica.

