



PERSONAL STORY

Why Elbaman Matters to Me

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I first came to Elba because of a race. Twenty years later, the island and Elbaman have become part of the same story for me.

OPENPETITION

A Future for Elbaman

<https://www.openpetition.eu/petition/online/un-futuro-per-elbaman-sullisola-delba>



We came for a race. We returned for the island.

In 2006, I came to the Island of Elba for the first time because of Elbaman. I was travelling there for a triathlon. I did not know that this race would become the beginning of a connection with an island that would last for two decades.

At first, Elba was a race destination. There was a start line, a course, a finish line and all the preparation that comes with a long-distance triathlon. But Elbaman quickly became more than that. The race showed me an island I might otherwise never have discovered in the same way.

Marina di Campo, the sea, the climbs, the coastal roads, the villages, the atmosphere before the race and the people around it gradually became familiar. Race week was never only about competition. It was also about arriving on Elba, meeting people again, sharing nervousness before the start, seeing supporters along the course and experiencing the island together.

Over the years, Elba became a place I returned to beyond racing. It became a place connected with family, holidays and memories. That is probably one of the strongest things an event can create. You first travel somewhere because of sport, then the place itself becomes part of your life.

I came to Elba because of Elbaman. I kept returning because Elba had become much more than a race destination.

This autumn, being back on the island, I notice that something is missing.

The roads are still here. The sea is still here. Marina di Campo is still here. The places we know are still here. But there is no Elbaman race week. No familiar build-up. No athletes preparing for the same demanding day. No start morning that changes the atmosphere of the whole place.

A race can disappear from a calendar. What it created over many years does not disappear so easily.

Elbaman has connected athletes, families, friends, supporters and volunteers with the Island of Elba. Many of us came from abroad. We stayed for several days, sometimes longer. We brought partners, children and friends. We ate in local restaurants, stayed in hotels, apartments and campsites, discovered beaches and villages, and often came back in other years as well.

That is why I started the open petition for the future of Elbaman.

I am not starting it because I believe I know all the answers. I do not know every organisational, financial, logistical or administrative difficulty behind the current situation. I do not want to assign blame to the organisers, the municipalities, tourism organisations or anyone else involved.

I am starting it because I believe the community should be visible and because dialogue is worth pursuing.

The petition asks the Elbaman Team, the municipalities of the Island of Elba, tourism organisations and other stakeholders to sit together and examine whether there is a sustainable way forward. Not at any cost. Not by ignoring financial, organisational or safety realities. But by openly identifying the obstacles and asking what would be required to make another chapter possible.

I also think the athletes and supporters should not only ask others to solve the problem.

If the community can help, we should be willing to do so within our individual possibilities. For one person that may mean communication. For another it may mean contacts, professional expertise, ideas, voluntary work or practical support. Nobody signing the petition is making a financial commitment or promising a specific service. The point is simpler: there are people who care about this event and who are prepared to contribute where their contribution can be useful.

This is not only a request to keep a race alive. It is an offer to be part of the conversation about its future.

For me, Elbaman represents twenty years of memories connected to Elba. It represents sport, but also people, places and experiences that remained long after each finish line.

I hope future athletes can discover the island in the same way I did. I hope they can arrive in Marina di Campo for a race and leave with a connection that brings them back for years.

I first came to Elba in 2006 because of Elbaman.

I hope this story is not finished.

Support the open letter

If Elbaman is part of your story too, read and sign the petition and share it with athletes, families, friends and supporters.

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