



## Absa Cape Epic 2008

### **REIGNING WORLD CHAMPION SAUSER TEAMS UP WITH SOUTH AFRICAN OLYMPIC CONTENDER FOR ABSA CAPE EPIC**

#### **EXCITING AND FAST RACE PREDICTED FOR 2008 ABSA CAPE EPIC**

Christoph Sauser, the reigning World and European Mountain Bike Marathon Champion, has announced his participation in this year's Absa Cape Epic presented by adidas. The event, which is in its fifth year, will take place from 28 March to 5 April 2008.

Sauser will team up with Burry Stander, one of South Africa's most talented young mountain bikers, to ride the prologue and eight stages of the magical and untamed African mountain bike race.

The route starts in the beautiful Garden Route town of Knysna and finishes 966 kilometres and nine days later at Lourensford Wine Estate. It will lead participants from around the world up approximately 18 529m of climbing, including some of the most magnificent passes in South Africa.

Sauser, who has been racing professionally since 1993, won the 2006 Absa Cape Epic with fellow Swiss rider Silvio Bindi. It will be Stander's first Absa Cape Epic and also the first time that these two race together as a team to raise funds for the Songo.info charity.

Says Sauser: "I felt that I wanted to give something back to South Africa. My winter training base is the beautiful Boland town of Stellenbosch and the beneficiary of my participation will be the community of Kayamandi."

Twenty year-old Stander, who lives in Port Shepstone, Kwazulu-Natal, is the current African and South African cross-country mountain biking champion. He also finished sixth in the Under 23 World Championship and fifth in the Sea Otter cross-country championship in the USA last year. He took first place in round one of the SA Marathon series in Barberton this year.

Sauser approached him in January to be his partner in the Absa Cape Epic. Says Stander: "I felt it was an awesome opportunity to ride with Christoph and at the same time raise funds for the Songo.info charity." His training at this time of the year comprises mostly steady rides between 3 and 6 hours a day as well as an hour's running once a week.

Kayamandi is a prominent township on the outskirts of Stellenbosch, on the slopes of the Pappegaaiberg, where Sauser has spent many hours training. Together with the JAG Foundation, the Songo.info project aims to raise funds for a BMX track. The track will be used to create an opportunity to help kids caught in the throes of poverty.

Says Kevin Vermaak, founder and director of the Absa Cape Epic: "The Absa Cape Epic has become an institution on the global mountain biking calendar. As the largest full service, mountain bike stage race in the world and the first and only mountain bike stage race to be classified HC (hors categorie) by the UCI, the race annually hosts the world's most accomplished and legendary mountain bike riders.

"The collaboration between Sauser and Stander should make for a very exciting and fast Absa Cape Epic. Sauser has eleven World Cup wins to his name and is one of the best riders in the history of this sport. He is

very strong technically, but endurance is his strongest point. And he leaves nothing to chance – from his training to his diet. Stander, who was the National Junior Cross Country Champion for three years in a row (2003 to 2005), started riding professionally in 2006. He likes to ride big climbs and long, technical descents,” concludes Vermaak.

All eyes will be on the Western Cape as the world’s top riders vie for a position in what is billed to be the most competitive mountain bike stage race on the international racing programme for 2008. For those not participating in the full race, there is a call for entries into the one day mountain bike race, the Cape Times Vigne à Vigne. Interested riders can register online at [www.vigne-a-vigne.com](http://www.vigne-a-vigne.com) Follow the action along the route and encourage your favourite team. Visit [www.cape-epic.com](http://www.cape-epic.com) for more details and to see where the riders are online. For more info on Christoph Sauser, please visit his website at [www.sauserwind.com](http://www.sauserwind.com)

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