

## Gran Fondo 2012 Shows Off Healthy Italian Lifestyle

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Gran Fondo's race organizers double registration in the second year of the cycling event bringing over 5,000 cyclists to New York and New Jersey and are recognized for their efforts by New York Councilmen and the Italian Community.

On April 30th, the steps of city hall brightened up as they filled with vivid colors of the cyclists' custom made Giordana jerseys designed for this year's edition of the [Gran Fondo New York](#) [2]. Now in its second edition, the Gran Fondo NY brings the spirit of Italian cycling to the Big Apple on May 20th, 2012.

Founded in 2010 by avid competitive cyclists, Gran Fondo New York is on a mission to bring Italian cycling culture to the New York and New Jersey region and to raise the profile of competitive cycling in the United States. Gran Fondo New York is open to professionals as well as anyone who loves to



ride.

The first edition of the event brought together professional and amateur cyclists from nearly 70 countries including the US, Canada, Mexico, Italy, UK, Russia, Jamaica, Israel, and Poland. The Gran Fondo 2012, to be held on May 20th, has now doubled in size (more than 5,000 participants have already registered) and is not only promoting healthy living but it is also creating a growing, positive cultural and economic impact for the New York region.

The event organizer [Uli Fluhme](#) [3] stated: "It's the marathon of cycling, which takes anywhere from 5 to 10 hours to finish." Gran Fondo New York 2012 is to begin on the New York City side of the iconic [George Washington Bridge](#) [4] and wind through a 110-mile course in New York and New Jersey that extends up to [Bear Mountain State Park](#) [5] and ends at the [Port Imperial Ferry Terminal](#) [6] in Weehawken, New Jersey. There will be 4 timed climbs and four categories: overall, age groups, cycling team, and him & her. The rest of the race is not timed. There will also be a Medio Fondo, a non-competitive ride for people who want to experience Gran Fondo but are not ready for the full and intense 110-mile course.

Participants of the race are made up of CEOs, persons with visual impairments, amputees, firefighters, and even several former cycling legends. The male and female cyclist with the fastest timed climbs will be named King and Queen of the Mountain and awarded signature [Pinarello bikes](#) [7]. Other prizes include cycling gear and maintenance products worth over \$100,000.

The Press Conference, held on the eve of [Bike Month](#) [8], gathered its many supporters on the steps of the city hall including New York City [Council Member Jim Gennaro](#). [9]

Chair of the Italian-American Caucus and Environmental Protection Committee of the New York City Council, whom was joined by fellow caucus members, [Council Members Vallone](#) [10], [Garodnick](#) [11], [Gentile](#) [12], [Recchia](#) [13], and [James](#) [14]. Together they praised Gran Fondo New York and its contributions to the promotion of Italian culture and to helping New York City become a premier international cycling destination.

Council Member Gennaro stated: "As chairman of the Italian-American Caucus, I am very proud to welcome such a distinguished event to our city. The Gran Fondo is an excellent way to promote appreciation for Italian culture in an unconventional way. And as chairman of the Environmental Protection Committee, I'm very happy to honor a cycling event at the beginning of Bike Month. I am always looking for ways to reduce carbon emissions in the city, and anything that promotes cycling is a step, or a pedal, in the right direction."

Gran Fondo New York organizers [Uli and Lidia Fluhme](#) [3] received a proclamation from the Council Members and successively expressed their gratitude. "We are deeply honored for this recognition from the Italian-American caucus and would like to thank Council Member Gennaro for his dedication to environmental issues and promoting Italian culture. Bike Month is packed with activities that are designed to promote cycling and healthy lifestyles in NYC. We at Gran Fondo New York are very proud to be a part of these activities. Our goal was to bring world-class, Italian-style cycling to the



greatest city in the world and judging by the response we've received in our second year, New Yorkers and cyclists worldwide are excited to join us. Italy and America have close ties, especially in NYC, and we hope this race continues to foster that spirit of camaraderie and deepen existing relationships" - stated Lidia Fluhme.

Gran Fondo New York is also organizing the [2nd Annual New York City Bike Expo](#) [15]. This event will take place at the Penn Plaza Pavilion, located across the street from Madison Square Garden, on May 18-19 from 11am-8pm. Gran Fondo New York sponsors, including Pinarello, [Giordana](#) [16], and [Diadora](#) [17], will be on hand to showcase their latest products. The expo is a stand-alone event that is open to the public and successfully draws additional visitors to NYC.

Alongside the Councilmen, showing their support for the initiative were multiple prominent personalities of Italian organizations, including Louis Calvelli from the [Italian Cultural Foundation at Casa Belvedere](#) [18], [Joseph Mattone](#) [19] from Figli di San Gennaro, Roberto Ragone from FIERI, Joseph Scelsa from the Coalition of Italo-American Associations, and Edward Jackson of the [National Federation of Italian American Societies, Inc](#) [20]. Louis Calvelli noted: "It is wonderful to see and Italian initiative that does not have anything to do with food!"

The focus on healthy living has been on the rise in the last decade. New Yorkers are known to be very health-conscious and it is truly wonderful to see an Italian project that fits their lifestyle and draws them to participate. The Councilmen promised to help make the Gran Fondo an even bigger mark on the NYC events calendar for next year as they try to get move the start line to a centrally located spot such as Times Square.

Hats off and lots of luck to the organizers, everyone who supports this initiative, and of course to the participants!!! For those of you who love a good challenge and wish to join the race, it is not too late! Click [here](#) [2] for more information or [here](#) [21] to register.

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- [18] <http://www.casa-belvedere.org/blog/>
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