



Interview ▶ We talk to Veronica Vinués and Joel Fargas, two of the people who participated in



EL PERIÒDIC  
The 17 participants of the cycling route from Andorra to Galicia.

## Veronica Vinués and Joel Fargas

Participants of the cycling route from Andorra to Santiago de Compostela

«Making the journey was beautiful, but the best thing is the group of people who made it»

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Veronica Vinués and Joel Fargas are two of the 17 people who participated in the charity Camino de Santiago to raise funds for Dent's disease, for the Asdent Foundation. Several sponsors, including ANDBANK and Critèrium, made the group leave Andorra by bicycle on Meritxell Day and arrive in Galicia nine days later. From EL PERIÒDIC we spoke to them to find out what their experience was like, and, above all, to tell us about the great family that has formed as a result of this outing. There were 17 people, who, although some of them didn't even know each other, shared nine days

in which the thing that stands out the most is the camaraderie between them all.

**—A few weeks ago you returned from cycling the route from Andorra to Santiago de Compostela. Tell us what route you took.**

—Verónica: We went from Andorra to Huesca, from Huesca to Logroño, from Logroño to Burgos, from Burgos to León and then we entered Galicia until we reached Santiago de Compostela.

**—It's a Camino de Santiago, but from the Principality, isn't it?**

—Joel: It is the French trip, but the French way is done from Huesca and we did it from Andorra; so we adap-

ted it. This path had been taken a few years ago alone, but it was not yet completely defined.

**—How many days did it take?**

—J: It took us nine days, a total of 1,250 kilometers and 13,000 meters of elevation gain. The departure was on Meritxell Day and we arrived the following Saturday. We did nine stages. The average kilometers were between 150 and 200 per day.

—V: The port of entry to Galicia was 2,000 meters above sea level. Then we took advantage of the tenth day to be there and enjoy sightseeing. I want to emphasize the fundamental role of Manu, he was one of the key people along the way. Toni had done the route, but Manu, who has

done the camino 20 times, knew everything and recalculated the routes for us and, at the same time accompanying us by bicycle, acted as our tour guide.

**—You were a group of people, did you all go at the same pace?**

—V: We were 17 people riding bikes and Lili the physiotherapist and the driver who accompanied us the whole trip. Lili initially came to give us massages, but she helped us with everything, she acted as an assistant to all of us. She made us sandwiches, she went to buy us things and she was waiting. During the first stage we were one more since Irineu Esteve wanted to do part of the route with us.

—J: We split into three groups. At the start, everyone's level was already seen, and the division was made based on each person's state of form. Also, it was important to do it for safety, it was much better to go in small groups than a group of 17 people. Those at the back stopped more, those in the middle shot and the first ones were the ones with the most advanced level.

**—The aim of this was solidarity**

—J: It was for Dent's disease (Asdent Foundation). Nacho, who suffers from this disease, is the one who steps up to the challenge. With "Todo por Nacho", Eva, Nacho's mother, a bicycle enthusiast, is trying to raise funds. The ANDBANK challen-



ge was proposed by Eva and Pepe Cuevas to Jose Luis Marti and Josep Maria Herrerias and they decided to look for sponsors and make it possible. Criterium helped us a lot and was the place where we held our pre-departure meetings and has become our meeting point.

-V: The mother came on the day of departure and it was very emotional. That same day we passed through Sant Julià de Lòria and priest Pepe Chisvert blessed us all before leaving the country.

**-And you, why did you decide to do it?**

-V: I made it for the people who were there. Some of us knew each other from Criterium and had gone out on weekends. At a lunch they mentioned the idea of doing the Camino de Santiago and I decided to sign up.

-J: We met with this group on the weekends and every summer we went out and when the subject of Santiago came up I decided to go there. Vero and I were the last to join the group.

**- We could talk about a solidarity**



«The camaraderie is what I would highlight most about the trip. There was always someone to help the other, or even to joke around»

**challenge.**

-J: It also had a solidarity objective and that motivated us. It was no longer just an organized guided tour but had this background.

-V: It was even more emotional and gave you more strength to reach. It made it more special.

**-Was it the first time you did this route?**

-V: It was the first time and, in fact, José Luis wants to register it because this route from Andorra had never been done before.

-J: When we arrived in Santiago they gave us the stamp, but they didn't understand where we were coming from because there was no route from here.

**-So many kilometers by bike is not easy. How was it prepared?**

-V: When it was said about doing the Camino, it was about training to be able to enjoy and not suffer. In the end you suffer for the position, but it was clear that we had to prepare. There are a lot of people who were challenged on a personal level be-

cause they weren't as used to cycling as we were.

-J: We have been cycling for many years, but others who were just starting out were not sure if they would last until Santiago. We didn't quite know how to prepare because you never do 150 or 200 kilometers a day for nine days. It wasn't just the preparation but it's long days and tiring and there were times when even the noise of the bike next door bothered you, but there were funny people who encouraged and made everything more enjoyable.

**-How was the arrival in Santiago?**

-J: We stopped before we arrived so we could all enter together and the truth is that it was very emotional. The port of Cebreiro and the arrival at the cathedral square were the best things of the trip.

-V: It is a moment that I will always remember. Some even cried, we all hugged, we celebrated with champagne. People were looking at us and clapping and everything.

**-What is your assessment of the trip and the team in general?**

-V: More than positive. Not only be-

cause the road is beautiful but because of the people we went with. It was all camaraderie, good vibes, helping us all. We were a team, but we looked like one. When we started a stage we put our suitcases in the van and one day one suitcase was left outside and when we saw it we had already reached the next stage. What was done among all was to leave the clothes and all the material he needed to the person who did not have a suitcase.

-J: No one in the group was displaced, we all went to one. There was a lot of camaraderie.

**-What would you highlight about the trip?**

-V: The camaraderie, without a doubt.

-J: There was always someone to help. And the slumps when you're tired passed quickly because there was always someone to joke around.

**-If I ask if you would repeat next year, what would you say?**

-V: A resounding yes!

-J: Me too! I would do it again without hesitation! ≡

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