

Erik in action on his new Canyon bike.

Kleinhans Muesli FS



TOPEAK ERGON

A CHANGE IS AS GOOD AS A HOLIDAY

For *Erik Kleinhans* there's a big change on the bike in 2016; gone are the blacks and yellows of RECM, now you'll see him on the trail sporting the yellow and green of Topeak Ergon.

I guess that in most of these scenarios, you normally feel when the time is ripe to move on, but with the end of RECM's partnership with our racing team in South Africa, it really did not feel that way, with such a great group of people always supporting us. But often it rolls over into even better opportunities.

You would think we live in a country, small and far away from the global cycling community, until you enter one, two or ten stage races, then you realise we are the MTB stage racing hub of the world! So big in fact that one of the top teams in the world would employ a local racer for experience on the most prestigious race of them all, the Cape Epic.

It was an honour to receive the phone call from Team Topeak Ergon management to join their outfit. They are a marathon specific team, and probably the best in the world, with world champions Alban Lakata, Kristian Hynek, Jeremiah Bishop and Sally Bigham filling their roster.

It is clear that the Cape Epic is one of the main goals for the team, like it is for so many others, due to the media and the race's prestige. Their investment in an African rider to support them in their effort to claim another title, to add to the one Hynek and Robert Mennen won in 2014, shows

how important the South African race has become and that our marathon racing scene is definitely on the world map.

For the 2016 season I will team up with American rider Jeremiah Bishop, who's been a multiple national champion and is luckily not an African racing greeny, with two Cape Epics under his belt in 2008 and 2014. We will also partner up for the six-day Andalucia Bike Race in Spain in February and the TransAlp stage race in July. He is lean and mean, maybe he'll make me suffer on the long climbs, but I will try to return the favour on the flats!

The head office and main team partners are all German brands; Topeak and Ergon produce bike equipment and the team bike supplier Canyon offer top bikes through their website in Europe. Topeak though is a familiar name to all South African riders. Fortunately I'm allowed a nice South African race calendar too with some more stage races and the National Marathon Series as the focus.

It's a new year with some exciting new changes for me, and for everyone else who were part of RECM's great sponsorship, but for now, the big question is: how would the yellow and green Topeak Ergon kit fit with the Lion King's mane!?



Erik's new partner Jeremiah Bishop.



Erik Kleinhans

has joined the specialist marathon racing team of Topeak Ergon, but that doesn't mean you'll be hearing any less from the Lion King. Follow

him on Twitter: [@erikkleinhans](https://twitter.com/erikkleinhans), or visit www.topeak-ergon-racing.com.

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