



**WINDING ROAD:** Tour D'Afrique riders took on the Blue Nile Gorge in Ethiopia. The Cairo to Cape Town race is in its sixth week. Riders are scheduled to arrive in Addis Ababa today. *Picture: RACHEL DOBSON*

## Tour d'Afrique cyclists conquer the Blue Nile Gorge

### STAFF WRITER

CYCLISTS in the 12 000km Tour d'Afrique race from Cairo to Cape Town will arrive in Addis Ababa today.

They are riding through Ethiopia on the section known as The Gorge. Tomorrow is a rest day.

The riders were experiencing many changes as they travelled, spokeswoman for the tour, Theresa Brown, said.

The rolling highlands of

Ethiopia were a completely different challenge to the dry and dusty desert landscape of Sudan, she added.

The cyclists have also encountered stone-throwing children, thunderstorms and the daunting Blue Nile Gorge, which they tackled on Sunday.

Brown said the riders would spend one more weekend in Ethiopia before heading for northern Kenya, which will present different challenges

"Riding The Gorge involved

an 18km switchback descent along a gravel road, losing about 1 000m in altitude, crossing the Blue Nile River and then riding 22km uphill to an elevation of 2 500m," she said.

Shanny Hill, who is leading the Tour, said: "It sounds brutal, and it is. The road is steep in places, bumpy, rocky and seriously busy with traffic and people. But it was an awesome feeling looking at the sweeping view across The Gorge from our campsite on the other side

and seeing the road we had cycled down and up."

A time trial was won by Christopher Maund of the UK in one hour and 39 minutes.

Eva Nijisen of the Netherlands was the fastest woman and finished the trial in two hours and 11 minutes.

South African Patrick Thomas from Cape Town is 11th in the men's race. Alice Rawlinson from Johannesburg is third in the women's race.

See [www.tourdafrique.com](http://www.tourdafrique.com)