



Veerle Beernaert, married with Philippe Lagae, is a mother of four children: Louise, Marie, Liza and Maud. You can encounter her at te AZ Groeninge at Kortrijk, where she works as a medical laboratory technologist. She loves to travel, read and sport. And if it's possible she prefers to combine travelling together with reading and sporting.

Can you briefly explain how you started ultra-running?

Ten years ago I started running. Soon I noticed that short distances weren't my cup of tea. After several months I decided to enter the 20 km of Brussel. Afterwards a couple of half-marathons followed and within a year of my start-to-run I ran my first marathon. It was the marathon of Rotterdam in 2007. Most people said that you better could run a single marathon per year and the first two years I followed this advice. Nowadays I don't follow this principle.

Can you briefly tell about your Spartathlon experience?

After a couple of years, when I already ran a lot of marathons I started dreaming of something different. I entered a 50 km race, and a bit later a 6-hour and a 100 km followed. In the end I entered a 24-hour race. Soon afterwards I decided to run the Spartathlon, but it took some more years before I really entered this race. It became a real adventure, the race of my life. I finished in 34 hours and 14 minutes and 246 km later I could touch the feed of King Leonidas.

You just entered the Spartathlon. Many foreign organisers see that you appear on their entry list. Is it a well taken decision to enter foreign races or do you have kind of a bucket list of races you once wanted to run?

Because I run many marathons and ultra's, I started looking to enter at least one beautiful race in another country. I don't have a bucket list, but there are still a few races I want to try. I prefer

single day races. I doubted to enter a stage race. I always thought that I couldn't start running again at the end of the week. In the future I'm willing to try it.

You also work in a shift system. Because of this you also work during nighttime. Can ultrarunning be combined well with working at night? Does your body get used to it?

It's true that I sometimes work a full week at night. That's seven night shifts of ten hours. But apparently this makes that I can endure extremely long distance runs, obviously I don't suffer often from dips. I can easily continue overnight.

Of all the races you once ran, which one, according to you, was the most beautiful?

The Spartathlon is my number one in terms of ambiance, experience and the arrival. The race track itself doesn't deserve a 10 out of 10 because you run the most beautiful places during the night. But nothing can ever match this race. Unless I come back again and I'll find him even more beautiful.

Thank you for the interview Veerle.

Kevin Simons