

VOLUME 16 - NR. 82

THE NR. 1 MAGAZINE FOR AN ACTIVE CYCLE LIFE

GRATIS!

cyclolive magazine

80th VUELTA A ESPAÑA

Is there cycling talent in Mallorca?

Cycling from the dream city of Malaga

Europe's highest paved climb



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Cyclevive Magazine is a publication of **Bizzard BV**.
Diamantstraat 8
BE-2100 Herentals
info@bizzard.be
patrick@bizzard.be

Publisher in charge:
Patrick Van Gansen

Editorial Board:
Patrick Van Gansen, Teus
Korporaal, Rens Klaasse

Final editing:
Patrick Van Gansen

Photography:
Patrick Van Gansen, Teus
Korporaal, Gregory Van
Gansen, Rens Klaasse

Cover photo:
© Patrick Van Gansen

Lay-out:
Gekko, info@gekko.be

Advertising:
Patrick Van Gansen,
Managing Director
+32 475 864 707
patrick@cycleliveplus.be

Jennifer Shrestha
jennifer@cycleliveplus.be

Administration:
info@cycleliveplus.be
boekhouding@bizzard.be

Website:
www.cyclelivemagazine.com

Cyclevive Magazine is
published four times a year

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Forbidden to throw on public roads!

Superhuman achievements welcomed to applause

As I write this foreword, the Tour de France is in its penultimate stage.

Meanwhile, it's clear who the big winner in Paris will be once again. Tadej Pogačar is well on his way to shattering Eddy Merckx's almost unassailable palmares.

Climbing records were broken as if they were nothing, and speed records piled up. All of this was praised to the heavens by cycling enthusiasts, led by the press, of course, as the best cycling we've ever witnessed. Undoubtedly, this is true for the many cycling fans who readily believe what is sold as heroic, sympathetic, and pure. The crowd feels and thinks as the press dictates. Reading and repetition by well-known leaders pull the many followers into the dark, unlit tunnel.

Iban Mayo's record time on the Mont Ventoux was erased by 1'10". Mayo, who flew up the Mont Ventoux in 55'51" during the 'prime time' of the EPO era – in a Dauphiné climbing time trial – was never caught for doping, but Lance Armstrong and Marco Pantani were proven children of the most discussed doping era ever in sports.

Pantani's and Armstrong's times on the Ventoux?
Pantani in 1994: 57'34"
Pantani in 2000: 59'05"
Armstrong in 2002: 59'00"

The times of the current generation in 2025 at the end of 16 tough and incredibly fast stages:

Tadej Pogačar: 54'41" (with the last 1.5 km ridden with the handbrake on)
Jonas Vingegaard: 54'43"

Apparently, there aren't many reasons to doubt the purity of the current generation, according to the experts, analysts, and journalists.

The possibility of gene doping, Aicar, and other sensational, available products and known techniques are suppressed and swept under the rug. The credibility of cycling takes precedence in the hypocritical world we live in. No one dares to address it, because if you do, you're no longer part of the club!

So, let's quietly continue to enjoy 'the best cycling we've ever witnessed' and 'believe' in what is (not) said. Because what is a person otherwise

without a belief, a religion, something to hold on to, and trust in the community—we all need that, don't we?

Therefore, in any case, a heartfelt congratulation to (perhaps) the best cyclist of all time: Tadej Pogačar!

Meanwhile, the Vuelta a España is already ready to take over the torch. In this issue, we pay full attention to the Vuelta and Spain in particular. Because doping or not, we won't let it bother us when we cycle ourselves in the countless beautiful cycling regions that Spain has to offer. For example, we cycled for six weeks to every corner and through every bay of the cycling paradise Mallorca. We also take you to my dream city of Malaga and its surroundings. We dissect the Bola del Mundo and the Alto de El Angliru for our readers and also cycle on Europe's highest paved road from Granada.

But besides Spain, there are, of course, so many other beautiful cycling destinations. Like in the Netherlands, where the Vincent van Gogh Cycling Route in Drenthe or Route 66 in Alblasserwaard are worth discovering.

In between, we also went gravel biking in SalzburgerLand, mountain biking around the Weissensee, and discovered the Bregenzerwald by road bike in Austria.


More than enough reading material and inspiration to plan your next cycling holiday yourself and bring the most beautiful challenges to a successful conclusion in a pure, clean, and adventurous way!

Enjoy reading this new Cyclevive, and above all, we wish you many more great cycling tours for the rest of this summer!



Patrick Van Gansen

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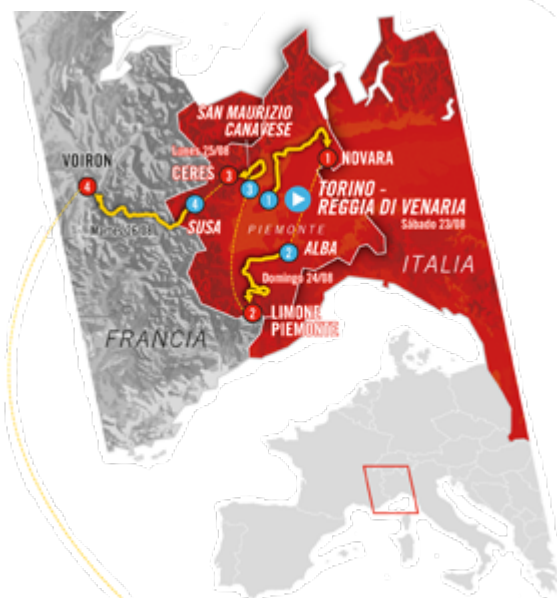
The beautiful descent to Sa Colobra in Mallorca
Photo: Jennifer Shrestha



LA VUELTA 25

PIEMONTE \ MADRID

DEL 23 DE AGOSTO AL 14 DE SEPTIEMBRE



50km

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80th VUELTA A ESPAÑA

23 August-14 September

For the sixth time, the Vuelta starts outside the Spanish borders. In 1997 and 2024, the honor will go to Lisbon. The Dutch Assen receives the Spanish round in 2009. Then it is the turn of Nîmes in 2017 and Utrecht in 2022. The Vuelta will start in Monaco in 2026, but first there will be the reception in Italy this year. The question is who will succeed Primož Roglič, the winner of

2019, 2020, 2021 and 2024, after 3151 kilometers.

If you look closely at the map, it seems that a number of places were pricked here and there, which were then connected with a line. There seems to be little system in it! Still, this is the route plan for the Vuelta a España 2025! We'll see what the riders are going to make

of it. Of course we will get acquainted with the rides. There are some opportunities to cycle in the sporty way in cycling tours in Italy, France and Spain. Of course, the tourist aspect is not lacking either. Beautiful pictures of the departure and arrival cities. Finally, the legend of a rooster and a hen. In short, take note of this mix around the upcoming Vuelta.

Routeschedule

Ride 1	23 aug.	Turijn - Novara	183 km	flat
Ride 2	24 aug.	Alba - Limone Piemonte	157 km	hills
Ride 3	25 aug.	San Maurizio Canavese - Ceres	139 km	hills
Ride 4	26 aug.	Susa - Voiron	192 km	hills
Ride 5	27 aug.	Figueres - Figueres (ploegentijdrit)	20 km	
Ride 6	28 aug.	Olot - Pol	170 km	mountains
Ride 7	29 aug.	Andorra La Vella - Cerler	187 km	mountains
Ride 8	30 aug.	Monzón Templario - Zaragoza	187 km	flat
Ride 9	31 aug. 1 sept.	Alfaro - Valdezcaray Rustdag	195 km	mountains
Ride 10	2 sept.	Sendaviva - Larra Belagua	168 km	hills
Ride 11	3 sept.	Bilbao - Bilbao	167 km	hills
Ride 12	4 sept.	Laredo - Los Corrales de Buelna	143 km	hills
Ride 13	5 sept.	Cabázon de la Sal - l'Angliru	202 km	mountains
Ride 14	6 sept.	Avilés - La Farrapona	135 km	mountains
Ride 15	7 sept. 8 sept.	Vegadeo - Monforte de Lemos Rustdag	167 km	hills
Ride 16	9 sept.	Poio - Mos. Castro de Herville	172 km	hills
Ride 17	10 sept.	O Barco de Valdeorras - El Morredero	137 km	hills
Ride 18	11 sept.	Valladolid - Valladolid (indiv. tijdrit)	26 km	
Ride 19	12 sept.	Rueda - Guijuelo	159 km	flat
Ride 20	13 sept.	Robledo de Chavela - Bola del Mundo	156 km	mountains
Ride 21	14 sept.	Alapado - Madrid	101 km	flat



Italian/French Beginning

Stage 1: Turin - Novara

For the start, we head to the Piedmont region, specifically to Venaria Reale, northwest of Turin. The Giro d'Italia also started here in 2011 and 2024, so they know the ropes! Feel free to call Venaria Reale the Versailles of Italy. The palace dates from 1675 and was then owned by Duke Emmanuel II of Savoy. It was later expanded into the luxurious residence of the House of Savoy. Since 1997, the palace has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Vuelta a España starts in this setting. What could be more beautiful for its eightieth birthday? The GC contenders can take it easy on this first day. The stage belongs to the sprinters.

Stage 2:

Alba - Limone Piemonte

After a not-too-difficult opening stage, the second stage immediately ends uphill. The finish line is at the top of a category 2 climb in the Limone ski area, at an altitude of 1381 meters. The climb is 7.6 kilometers long with an average gradient of 5.4%. Cuneo is passed halfway through the stage. Cuneo is also the starting point of the Gran Fondo Fausto Coppi. This year, the 36th edition was scheduled for June 29, 2025. If you weren't there this year and have never ridden it before, put this Gran Fondo on your wish list



Who wouldn't want to cycle in such a Coppi shirt?



for next year; it's really worth it!

Coppi, of course, needs no further introduction. There are three distances to choose from: 172 km with 4300 meters of climbing, 111 km with 2500 meters of climbing, and 101 km with 2187 meters of climbing. It's hard work, but from our own experi-

ence, we can say that the satisfaction will be great.

Stage 3: San Maurizio Canavese - Ceres

In this stage, it continues to go up and down, accumulating over 2000 meters of climbing. After 65.2 km, the Puerto Issiglio (849 m. - 2nd category) is the main obstacle. In the finish town of Ceres,

which has only 1000 inhabitants, there can be a power sprint on a 2.2 km climb with an average of 4.2%.

Stage 4: Susa - Voiron

For many of our readers, familiar names will now appear, as the Vuelta moves to France. The route profile reveals all. Before leaving Italy,

Etappe 4



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All together in the run-up to the climb



Sestriere, one of the locations of the 2006 Winter Olympics, is passed. The border between Italy and France follows on the Montgenèvre. Then come the well-known names of Briançon, Col du Lautaret (with the turn-off to the Galibier), La Grave, Bourg d'Oisans (with the turn-off to Alpe d'Huez), Grenoble, before riding to the finish in Voiron.

Want to cycle in the region yourself? For example, choose Briançon as your base. The first three options are, of course, the Col d'Izoard, the Col du Galibier, and the Col du Granon. Another option that is definitely recommended is to ride through the Vallée de la Clarée over the Col de l'Echelle to the Italian Bardonnèchia and return via Oix and the Col de Montgenèvre. The cycling possibilities here are endless. Just plan a week here!

The Briançon fortress



Koolhydraten: de sleutel tot topprestaties

Tijdens intensieve of langdurige inspanningen zijn koolhydraten dé brandstof waarop sporters draaien. De exacte behoefte verschilt per sporter en discipline, maar bij duursporters kan de opname van koolhydraten zelfs oplopen tot 150 gram per uur om hun prestatie te maximaliseren. Slimme koolhydraatinnname – via bijvoorbeeld sportdranken, energierepen of gels – zorgt ervoor dat je lichaam precies krijgt wat het nodig heeft, zonder ballast.

De juiste combinatie van koolhydraten, zoals glucose en fructose, verbetert bovendien de opname en voorkomt maag- en darmklachten. Producten zoals **Concap Isotonic**, **Concap Fruity Bars** en **Concap Energy gels** zijn ideaal om snel je energieniveau aan te vullen en optimaal te blijven presteren.

Met Concap Isotonic kun je zelfs tot 2 porties per 500ml drinken om eenvoudig extra koolhydraten binnen te krijgen. Verkrijgbaar in verfrissende smaken zoals lemon, orange en watermelon, en in handige verpakkingen van 770g, 1kg of 5kg.

Ontdek wat het beste werkt voor jouw lichaam en doelen – en til je prestaties naar een hoger niveau!



The first five stages in Spain

Stage 5: Figueres - Figueres Team Time Trial

The team time trial over only 20 km is ridden in the birthplace and final resting place of the famous surrealist painter Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) in the extreme northeastern corner of the Spanish autonomous region of Catalonia. A prediction of a possible winning team is hardly possible. So, wait and see! We did look up when the first team time trial was held. That was in the 8th Vuelta edition in 1946, and the victory then went to the Dutch team.

Stage 6: Olot - Pal. Andorra

Olot, which is a stage town for the first time, is called the city of volcanoes. There are no less than four within the city's territory. With such a background, some fireworks can be expected on this day. The stage goes to the Pal Arinsal Ski Resort. Two years ago, the finish line was also drawn here in Andorra at another location in the ski resort, and the victory went to Remco Evenepoel. The sting is clearly at the end of the stage with a category 1 climb. The last 9.7 km goes



uphill with an average of 6.4% to 1902 meters, but along the way, after 70 kilometers, the Collada de Toses (1790 m. – 1st cat.) has also been passed. In this first mountain stage, the cards will be shuffled immediately. The UCI Mountain Bike Series are also held

here every year, and in 2024, the Mountain Bike World Championships were organized here.





Zaragoza on the Ebro with El Pilar Cathedral in the background
© Zaragoza Turismo

Stage 7: Andorra La Vella - Cerler

We stay in the Pyrenees. For the second day, it's full gas with three climbs followed by an uphill finish. In total, there are 4500 meters of climbing ahead. The profile says it all! In Cerler, where the finish line is, Vuelta riders have arrived eleven times before. There are still many mountain points to be earned later, but the men going for the mountain classification will have already shown their cards.

Stage 8:

Monzón Templario - Zaragoza

It seems that the sprinters will finally get their turn again, although the stage cannot be entirely described as flat, as there are still over 1100 meters of climbing. In Spain's fourth-largest city - Zaragoza with almost 700,000 inhabitants - the

finish line has been drawn 49 times before, according to the Vuelta website. You could say there's a steady relationship between the two!

Stage 9: Alfaro - Valdezaray

Thirty kilometers before the finish,

the riders pass Santo Domingo de la Calzada, a town on the Camino with a special story attached to it. Years ago, I cycled to Santiago de Compostela with some friends and stayed overnight in Santo Domingo in a monastery with the nuns. Because dinner isn't served until



nine in the evening, there's ample time to go into town. That's how we came to the cathedral. In the church, in a cage, there's a chicken and a rooster, to which one of the most widespread and legendary tales of the Camino is attached.

In the twelfth century, three people were on pilgrimage: father, mother, and son. They also stayed overnight here. The innkeeper's daughter falls in

love with the boy, but he doesn't reciprocate. The girl wants to punish him and puts a silver cup in his luggage. The next day, the boy is accused of theft. He is sentenced to death and will be hanged. The parents immediately contact a judge and ask him to cut the ropes and release the innocent boy. The judge, who is just sitting at the table, reacts dismissively and must have said:

"Your son is no longer alive; he is as dead as this roasted rooster and hen here on the set table." To everyone's surprise, at that very moment, the rooster and hen get their feathers back and jump alive from the platter. The judge immediately orders the boy to be taken



Kippenhok, Holy Cathedral Church

down from the gallows. The trio can continue their journey to Santiago, and instead of the boy, the girl is hanged!

Since then, in memory, there is a chicken coop with a hen and a rooster high on the church wall. During our visit to the church, the rooster made itself heard loudly. Then the question arises: Would



a TV reporter or another journalist pay attention to this during the Vuelta's passage? After all, it is the story of Santo Domingo de la Calzada!

After over 3200 meters of climbing, today's finish is at 1523 meters in the Valdezcaray ski resort. The Australian Simon Clarke was the last winner here in 2012. He would also become the winner of the mountains classification.

The Second Week

Stage 10:

Sendaviva - Larra Belagua

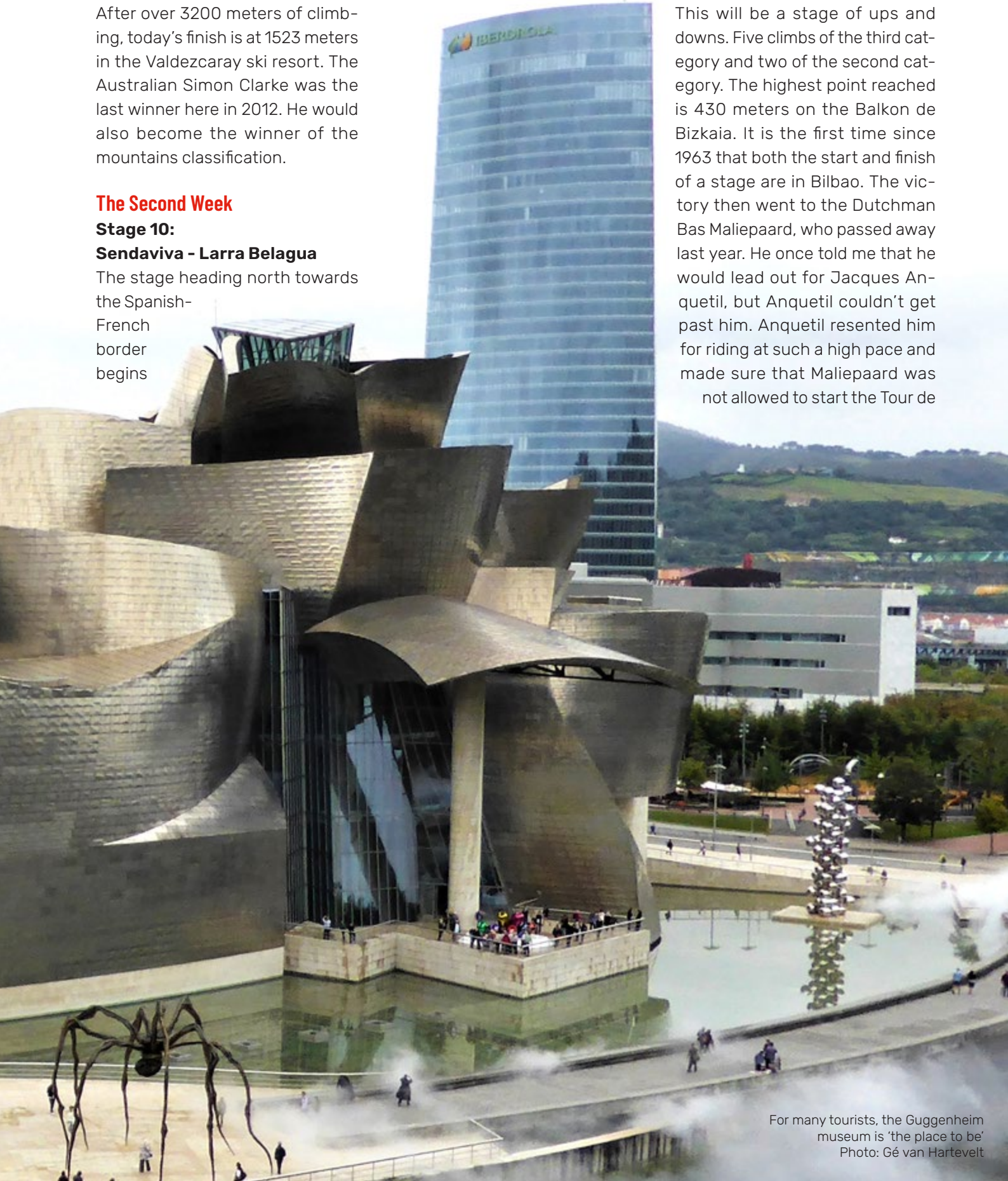
The stage heading north towards the Spanish-French border begins

at approximately 270 meters and ends uphill at 1590 meters. The riders will face 3317 meters of climbing in this stage. At 120 km, the first major obstacle of the day is the Alto de las Coronas

(951 m. - 3rd cat.). From there, it continues to climb to the finish line. In 2023, Remco Evenepoel won at Larra Belagua.

Stage 11: Bilbao - Bilbao

This will be a stage of ups and downs. Five climbs of the third category and two of the second category. The highest point reached is 430 meters on the Balkon de Bizkaia. It is the first time since 1963 that both the start and finish of a stage are in Bilbao. The victory then went to the Dutchman Bas Maliepaard, who passed away last year. He once told me that he would lead out for Jacques Anquetil, but Anquetil couldn't get past him. Anquetil resented him for riding at such a high pace and made sure that Maliepaard was not allowed to start the Tour de



For many tourists, the Guggenheim museum is 'the place to be'
Photo: Gé van Hartevelt

France a few weeks later. Old times, now such a lead-out would be a victory (blessing) for the team's sprinter/leader, but if they couldn't get past, it wouldn't be a problem at all.

Stage 12: Laredo - Los Corrales de Buelna

Laredo, with approximately 11,000 inhabitants, is located on the Basque coast and welcomes many beachgoers to its beautiful beach-

es in the summer. The Vuelta has started here twice before. Los Corrales de Buelna has been a stage town once before. The stage offers two climbs. At 43.8 km, the top of Puerto de Alisas (670 m. - 2nd cat.) is reached, and at 10.5 km, the top of Collada de Brenes (751 m. - 1st cat.). The Vuelta website also indicates that on the last Friday of August in Laredo, there is the "Battle of the Flowers," a procession with floats decorated with flowers. What's stopping you from going to see it if you're on holiday nearby?

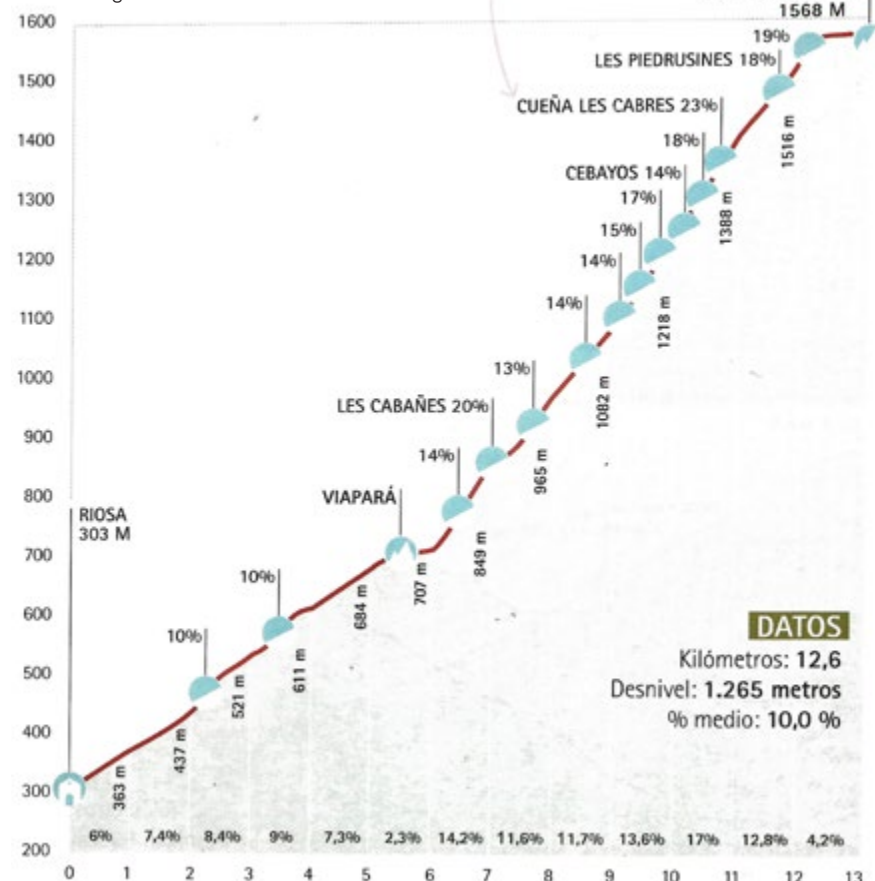


Battle of the flowers
© Ayuntamiento de Laredo

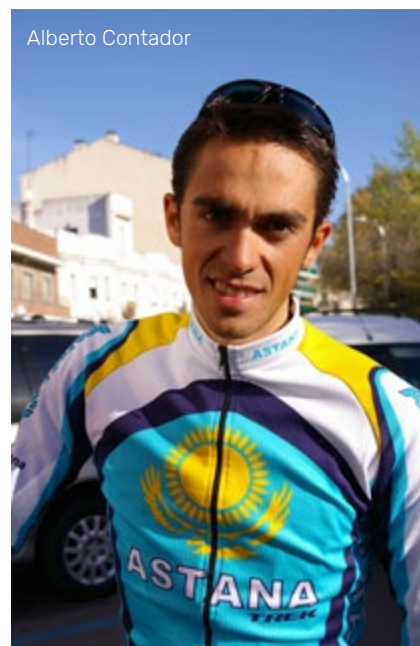
Of course, you'd also like to cycle in Spain yourself. Consult the cycling calendar with 143 Spanish cyclosporives on battistrada.com/cyclokalender/spanje/cyclos. In combination with the stage locations of this Vuelta, there is always a cyclo to be found. An example: In the vicinity of Los Corrales de Buelna lies Torrelavega, where on September 20th, the Marcha Cicloturista La Óscar Freire (world champion in 1999, 2001, 2004) is on the calendar, covering 120 km with 2500 meters of climbing.



Profile Angliru



Alberto Contador





Stage 13:

Cabázon de la Sal - l'Angliru

This will once again be the highlight of this anniversary Vuelta a España. There is only one question: who will be Primož Roglič's successor, or will he do it again himself? Then he would join the illustrious list of two-time winners Roberto Heras (2000 and 2002) and Alberto Contador (2008 and 2017). In May 2008, we coincidentally ran into Contador in a parking lot in his hometown of Pinto, near Madrid. At that moment, we didn't yet know that a few months later he would win both the Angliru and the Vuelta. Later in this issue, we will go into detail about the Angliru, so you are fully prepared if you decide to tackle this monster yourself.

Stage 14: Avilés - La Farrapona

The port city of Avilés, with over 80,000 inhabitants, has been a Vuelta starting point six times before. The start takes place at the modern Centro Cultural Internacio-



nal Oscar Niemeyer, which opened on March 20, 2011. The stage begins at sea level and ends at 1708 meters. The stage profile shows the way! It will be another tough day, and that's after the effort on the Angliru the day before.

Stage 15: Vegadeo - Monforte de Lemos

Now, the sting is not at the end of

the stage, but right at the beginning. Immediately after the start, it's climbing to pass the Puerto A Garganta (875 m. - avg. gradient 4.9% - 1st cat.) after 16.5 km. At 54.7 km, the top of Alto de Barbeitos (925 m. - avg. gradient 3.8% - 2nd cat.) awaits. After this, it continues to undulate, but the last twenty kilometers are a nice descent. Definitely a prelude to the upcoming rest day.



On the way to Madrid

Stage 16: Poio - Mos.Castro de Herville

We begin the last cluster of six

Stage 16

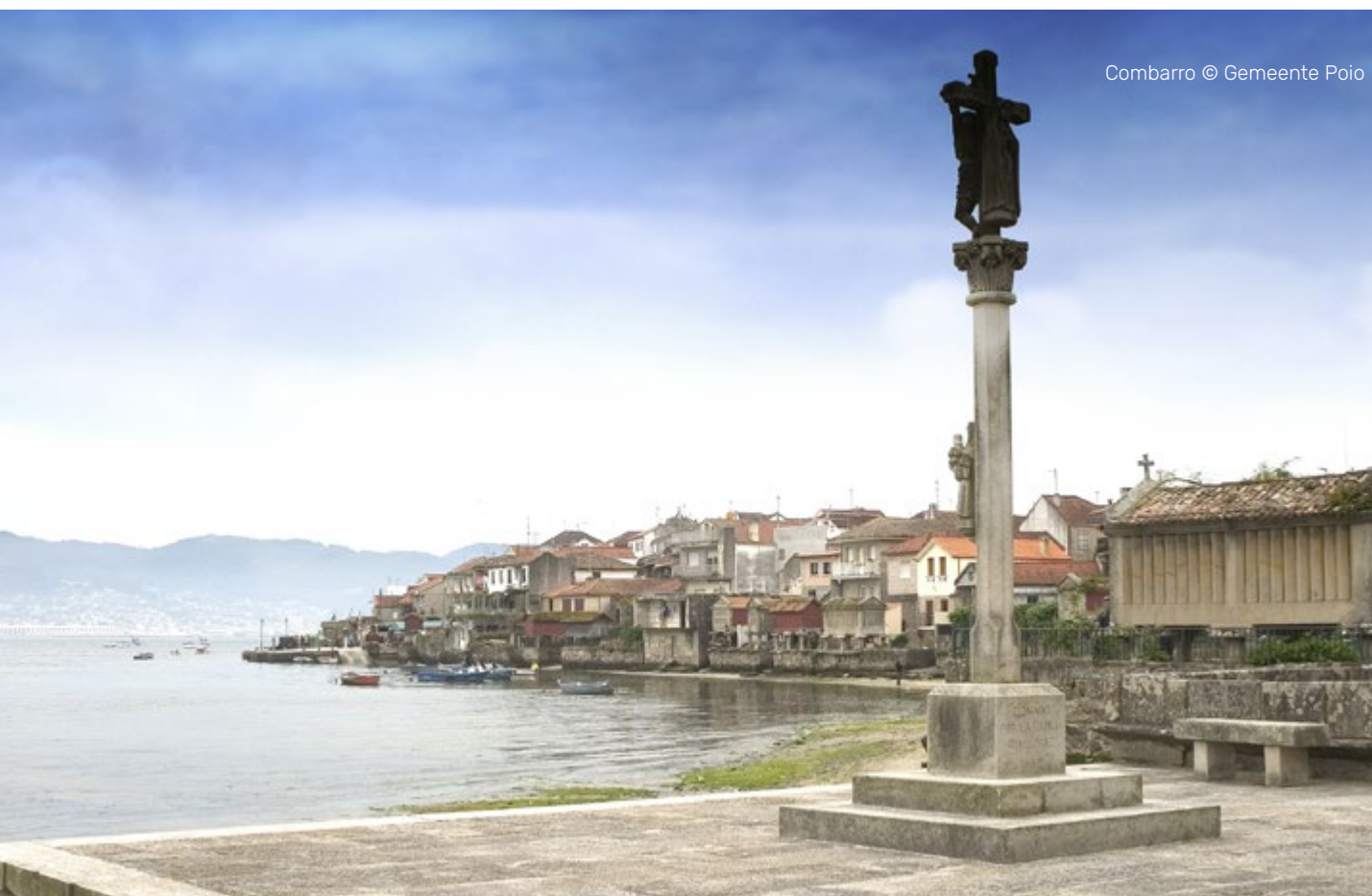
stages. The stage is located in the southernmost tip of Galicia. The starting town of Poio has over 16,000 inhabitants. The stage cov-

ers rolling terrain with 3350 meters of climbing and leads to Mos.Castro de Herville (a viewpoint over the bay of Vigo), where a final climb of 8.7 kilometers awaits with an average of 5.1%. Mos is the birthplace of Tour winner Óscar Pereiro, who was declared the 2006 Tour winner in 2007 after Floyd Landis was disqualified.



Stage 17: O Barco de Valdeorras - El Morredero

Once again, the finish line is at the summit, this time on the Alto de





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WC monument in Ponferrada
Collection Teus Korporaal



Morredero (1750 m. – 1st cat.). The organization labels this as a hilly stage. That's accurate until the last 18 km, but then it becomes an understatement, as the final climb is over 18 kilometers long and has an average gradient of 6.3%, with regular double-digit percentages. The total elevation gain for this stage, whose final climb starts in Ponferrada, will exceed 3200 meters. Who will succeed Roberto Heras and Alejandro Valverde, who won the Vuelta stage here in 1997 and 2006 respectively? Incidentally, Polish rider Michal Kwiatkowski became world champion in Ponferrada in 2014. Now, only a beautiful monument commemorates that world championship.

Stage 18: Valladolid

What is a Grand Tour without an individual time trial? It's wonderful to see how the specialists tackle such a task. In recent years, Remco Evenepoel (2022), Filippo Ganna (2023), and Stefan Küng (2024) have been the specialists. As of this writing (mid-July), it's not yet known whether these riders will



participate in the Vuelta. While preparing for this preview, we came across something fun: a tapas route through the city. It could be a great idea to cycle from tapas restaurant to tapas restaurant!

Stage 19: Rueda - Guijuelo

Southwest of Valladolid, in Rueda, a town with just over 1100 inhabitants, begins the nineteenth stage. It's not truly flat; it continues to undulate. And so, there are still over 1400 meters of elevation gain ahead. Nevertheless, there are op-



Iglesia San Pablo Valladolid. Foto Margreet Klaasse



portunities for the sprinters, as it's their turn again! The last two kilometers to the finish are a false flat uphill. The riders will pass directly through vineyards. The Spanish call it "La etapa gastronómica" (The gastronomic stage). The finishing town of Guijuelo is known for its Guijuelo or Salamanca ham. There are approximately 180 companies here dedicated to the Iberian ham and pork industry. For this reason, Guijuelo has one of the highest per capita incomes in all of Spain.

Stage 20: Robledo de Chavela - Bola del Mundo/Puerto de Navacerrada

We are getting closer to Madrid, and with 4100 meters of elevation gain, this will be the last major challenge of this eightieth Vuelta a España. Undoubtedly a very tough day. There will certainly be shifts in the general classification. It will primarily come down to the last sixty kilometers with two ascents (from two different sides) of the Puerto de Navacerrada (1853 m – 1st cat

– avg. gradient 6.9%). The second time, there's also a nice bonus with the ride continuing to the Bola del Mundo (2258 m. – beyond category – avg. gradient 7.6%). In the last three kilometers, the average gradient is 12.2%!

Stage 21: Alalpardo - Madrid

The stage to Madrid will once again be a parade. The classifications are set. It's only about the honor of the stage victory. The first stage victory by a Belgian in Madrid was in 1935 when Gustaaf Deloor won and also became the overall winner of this first Vuelta. In 1936, he also won the second Vuelta with his brother Alfons in second place. The first Dutch victory in Madrid was in 1971 for René Pijnen, who won the 5.3 km time trial. For the brothers Gustaaf and Alfons Deloor, there is a memorial monument with two bicycles in De Klinge. Just as a reminder: the last two winners in Madrid are Sebastián Molano and Stefan Küng.

Text and images (unless noted otherwise):
Teus Korpelaar



HISTORY OF THE VUELTA

List of winners Vuelta a España

YEAR	WINNER	NATIONALITY	JAAR	WINNER	NATIONALITY
1935	Gustaaf Deloor	Belgium	1986	Álvaro Pino	Spain
1936	Gustaaf Deloor	Belgium	1987	Luis Herrera	Colombia
1941	Julián Berrendero	Spain	1988	Sean Kelly	Ireland
1942	Julián Berrendero	Spain	1989	Pedro Delgado	Spain
1945	Delio Rodríguez	Spain	1990	Marco Giovannetti	Italy
1946	Dalmacio Langarica	Spain	1991	Melchor Mauri	Spain
1947	Edward Van Dijck	Belgium	1992	Tony Rominger	Switzerland
1948	Bernardo Ruiz	Spain	1993	Tony Rominger	Switzerland
1950	Emilio Rodríguez	Spain	1994	Tony Rominger	Switzerland
1955	Jean Dotto	France	1995	Laurent Jalabert	France
1956	Angelo Conterno	Italy	1996	Alex Zülle	Switzerland
1957	Jesús Loroño	Spain	1997	Alex Zülle	Switzerland
1958	Jean Stablinski	France	1998	Abraham Olano	Spain
1959	Antonio Suárez	Spain	1999	Jan Ullrich	Germany
1960	Frans De Mulder	Belgium	2000	Roberto Heras	Spain
1961	Angelino Soler	Spain	2001	Ángel Casero	Spain
1962	Rudi Altig	Germany	2002	Aitor González	Spain
1963	Jacques Anquetil	France	2003	Roberto Heras	Spain
1964	Raymond Poulidor	France	2004	Roberto Heras	Spain
1965	Rolf Wolfshohl	Germany	2005	Roberto Heras	Spain
1966	Francisco Gabica	Spain	2006	Alexandre Vinokourov	Kazakhstan
1967	Jan Janssen	The Netherlands	2007	Denis Menchov	Russia
1968	Felice Gimondi	Italy	2008	Alberto Contador	Spain
1969	Roger Pingeon	France	2009	Alejandro Valverde	Spain
1970	Luis Ocaña	Spain	2010	Vincenzo Nibali	Italy
1971	Ferdinand Bracke	Belgium	2011	Chris Froome (after sus- pension Juan José Cobo)	GB
1972	José Manuel Fuente	Spain	2012	Alberto Contador	Spain
1973	Eddy Merckx	Belgium	2013	Chris Horner	United States
1974	José Manuel Fuente	Spain	2014	Alberto Contador	Spain
1975	Agustín Tamames	Spain	2015	Fabio Aru	Italy
1976	José Pesarrodona	Spain	2016	Nairo Quintana	Colombia
1977	Freddy Maertens	Belgium	2017	Chris Froome	GB
1978	Bernard Hinault	France	2018	Simon Yates	GB
1979	Joop Zoetemelk	The Netherlands	2019	Primož Roglič	Slovenia
1980	Faustino Rupérez	Spain	2020	Primož Roglič	Slovenia
1981	Giovanni Battaglin	Italy	2021	Primož Roglič	Slovenia
1982	Marino Lejarreta	Spain	2022	Remco Evenepoel	Belgium
1983	Bernard Hinault	France	2023	Sepp Kuss	United States
1984	Éric Caritoux	France	2024	Primož Roglič	Slovenia
1985	Pedro Delgado	Spain			

The Vuelta a España

Evolved into international stage

The Vuelta a España was born in 1935, following the example of the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia. What began as a national experiment grew into a full-fledged big round and a fixture on the cycling calendar. The course had a bumpy course through the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, but from the 1950s the Vuelta came to full bloom and since 1955 it is organized every year. In 2011, the lap was included in the UCI World Tour.

Since 1995, the Vuelta has been held in late summer (August–September), whereas it was previously raced in April–early May. This shift gave the Vuelta more prestige and made the character of the Spanish tour much more international than before. Riders who achieve disappointing results in the Giro or the Tour de France can still salvage

their season in the Vuelta. A victory in the Vuelta is now generally considered as important as a victory in the Giro, which was not at all the case in the past.

The Leader's Jerseys

The fact that the Vuelta long struggled to find its identity and thus also wrestled with an image problem becomes clear when you examine the history of the leader's jersey. The color of that leader's jersey was changed (too) often, especially in the early years. In 1955, it became a yellow jersey for a longer period. In 1977, the jersey was orange for a single occasion, and in 1999, it became a golden jersey. Since 2010, the leader's jersey seems to have found its color. Since then, the general classification leader wears a red jersey, and everyone can now agree on that. Incidentally, the other leader's jerseys also changed color just as many times. For example, the leader in the mountains classification was sometimes adorned in green, orange, or red. Also since 2010, this has become a white jersey with blue polka dots, while the leader in the points classification has been clad in a green jersey since 2009.

Record Holders for Overall Wins

The Spaniard Roberto Heras (2000, 2003, 2004, 2005) and the Slovenian Primož Roglič (2019, 2020, 2021, 2024) are, with four overall victories to date, the record holders. Roglič could therefore become the sole record holder this year.

Belgians in the Vuelta: From Deloor to Evenepoel

For Belgian riders, the Vuelta is a tour with history, glory, and drama. They have left their mark since the very first edition. Belgians can be found from pioneering work with impressive solo rides and stage victories to eight general classification wins.

Gustaaf Deloor: Wins the First Two Vueltas

The Vuelta was born in 1935. Immediately, Belgian riders were at the forefront. The very first winner? Gustaaf Deloor, a miner's son from De Klinge. He not only won the general classification but also three stages. A year later, he repeated that feat in the second edition. His brother Alfons finished second then, resulting in a historic Belgian family double.

Other Belgian Winners: Van Dijck, De Mulder, and Bracke

In the post-war years, Belgian successes continued. Edward Van Dijck won the Vuelta in 1947, and Frans De Mulder joined the ranks in 1960. De Mulder won four of the 18 stages. In 1971, it was Ferdinand Bracke's turn. The Belgian, riding for the Peugeot – BP team, won the Vuelta without achieving a stage victory.

Eddy Merckx: Dominance in 1973

In 1973, Eddy Merckx set foot in the Vuelta for the first time, and as we're used to from him, he immediately left Spain as the winner. It was



Monument Frans De mulder in Machelen
Photo: Teus Korporaal

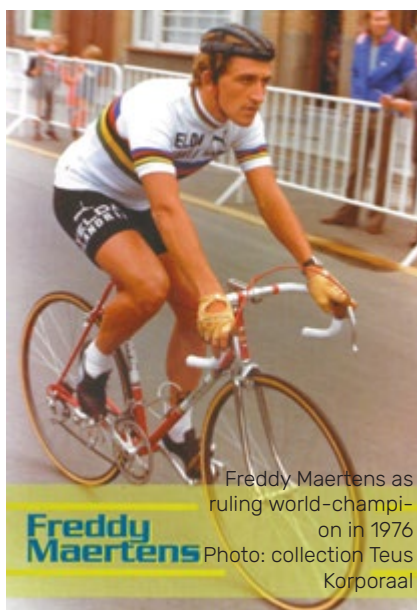
his only participation, and he took the general classification, six stage victories, the points classification, and the combination classification. His dominance was complete. Merckx thus became the third rider ever to win all three Grand Tours.

Freddy Maertens: An Unprecedented Record

In 1977, Freddy Maertens rode himself into the history books. As the reigning world and Belgian champion at the time, he won the general classification, the points classification, and a record number of 13 stages in a Vuelta of 19 stages + prologue. He led from start to finish and delivered one of the most dominant performances ever in a Grand Tour. The record of 13 stage victories in a single Grand Tour still stands today.

The 90s and 2000s: Vandembroucke and Gilbert

In 1999, Frank Vandembroucke won two stages in the Vuelta, including an impressive victory on the cobblestones of Avila, where he impressively dropped the general classification riders, including over-



Freddy Maertens as ruling world-champion in 1976
Photo: collection Teus Korpelaar

all winner Jan Ullrich. His class and talent shone through, and at that moment, he was one of the very best, if not the best rider in the peloton – even though he didn't achieve a good final classification.

Philippe Gilbert also added his name to the honors list of the Spanish tour, with a first stage victory in 2010 after a mountain stage from Marbella, with an arrival in beautiful Malaga. In 2010, he also won the flat stage to Toledo. With two stages in 2012, one stage in 2013, and an-



Legendary Frank Vandembroucke in front of action photo - Photo: Teus Korpelaar

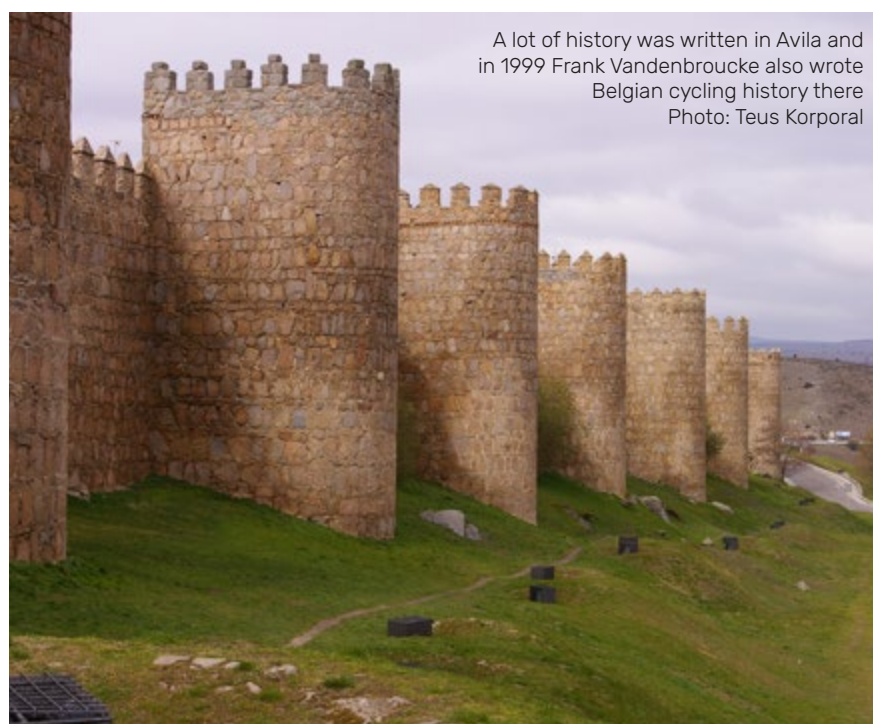
other two stages in 2019, he brings his total to seven Vuelta victories.

Remco Evenepoel: Victory in a Grand Tour for Belgium After a Long Wait

In 2022, Remco Evenepoel was the first Belgian since Freddy Maertens in 1977 to win the Vuelta again. It had even been since 1978 – Johan De Muynck's Giro victory – that a Belgian had won a Grand Tour. He dominated from the first mountain stages, won a time trial (stage 10), and the stage with an arrival on the Alto del Piornal (stage 18). He secured both the general classification and the youth classification. In 2023, he had to give up his general classification ambitions after a bad day but fought back with three stage victories and the mountains classification.

Belgian glory in numbers

- 8 Belgian overall victories: Deloor (1935, 1936), Van Dijk (1947), De Mulder (1960), Bracke (1971), Merckx (1973), Maertens (1977), Evenepoel (2022)
- Freddy Maertens: 13 stages in one Vuelta (1977)
- Eddy Merckx: 6 stages + 3 classifications in 1973
- 227 Belgian stage victories with

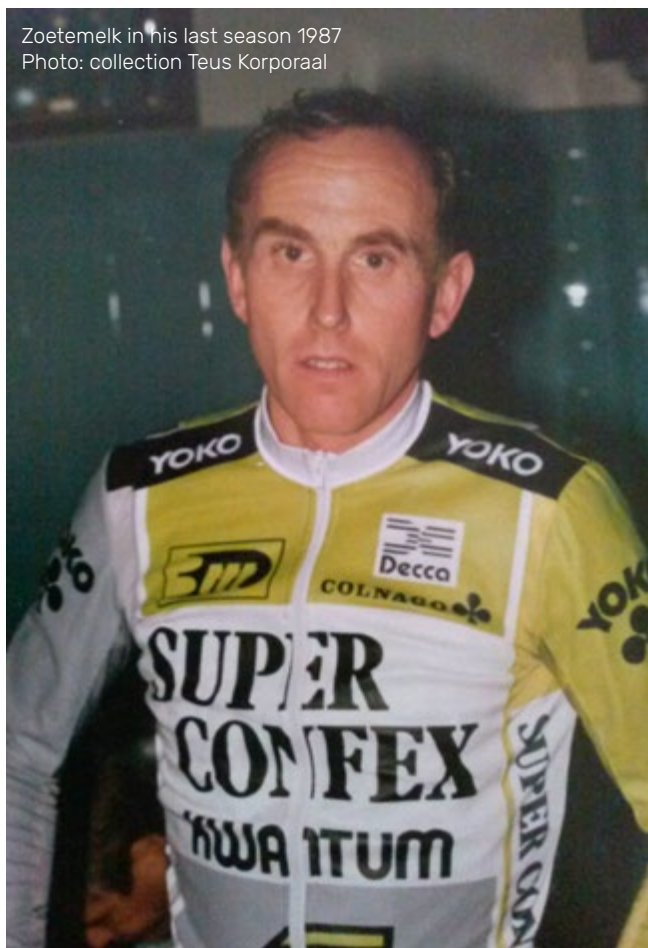


A lot of history was written in Avila and in 1999 Frank Vandembroucke also wrote Belgian cycling history there
Photo: Teus Korpelaar



Remco Evenepoel tijdens het BK tijdrijden 2025, op gouden fiets, met gouden helm in de trui van wereldkampioen
Foto: Patrick Van Gansen

Zoetemelk in his last season 1987
Photo: collection Teus Korporaal



Mathieu Hermans 1989
Photo: collection Teus Korporaal



Rik Van Looy as the biggest Belgian stage hunter (18 stages – 1958, 1959, 1964, 1965). Freddy Maertens (13), Eddy Planckaert (10), Eddy Peelman (9), and Philippe Gilbert (7) are the other major stage hunters for Belgium.

In total, Belgian riders have worn the leader's jersey 149 times. The Belgian record holder is Gustaaf Deloor, who wore the orange leader's jersey 32 times in the first two editions.

The points classification has been won 13 times by a Belgian: Rik Van Steenbergen, Rik Van Looy (2x), Arthur Decabooter, Raymond Steegmans, Guido Reybrouck, Eddy Merckx, Freddy Maertens, Ferdi Van Den Haute, Fons De Wolf, Guido Van Calster, Frank Vandenbroucke, and Greg Van Avermaet.

The mountains classification has

only been won twice by a Belgian. Thomas De Gendt was the first winner in 2018, and Remco Evenepoel secured the white jersey with blue polka dots in 2023.

Dutch Triumphs in the Vuelta

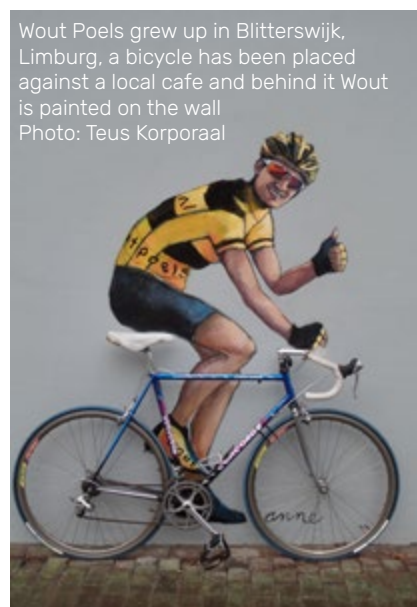
The Netherlands also had its glory days in the Vuelta a España. In total, Dutch riders have won the Vuelta twice.

- Jan Janssen made history by being the first Dutchman to win a Grand Tour in 1967. He won the Spanish stage race after an exciting battle with the Spaniard Aurelio Gonzales Puente, who ultimately finished third at 1'45". The Frenchman Jean-Pierre Ducasse, Janssen's teammate at Team Pel-forth, finished second at 1'43".
- Joop Zoetemelk won the Vuelta in 1979. The consistently regular Zoetemelk was finally able to convert his racing intelligence into an

overall victory in Spain, years before he would also win the Tour.

The tally of Dutch stage victories stands at 114. Gerben Karstens (14), Mathieu Hermans (10), Jean-Paul van Poppel (9), and Jeroen Blijlevens (5) were the great stage hunters for the Netherlands. Wout Poels

Wout Poels grew up in Blitterswijk, Limburg, a bicycle has been placed against a local cafe and behind it Wout is painted on the wall
Photo: Teus Korporaal





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was the last Dutch stage winner in 2023.

In total, Dutch riders have worn the leader's jersey 63 times. With 17 days in the leader's jersey (1970, 1971, 1972), René Pijnen is the Dutch record holder. René was allowed to cycle around in the then-yellow jersey at that time.

The points classification has been won six times by a Dutchman: Bas

Maliepaard, Jos van der Vleuten, Jan Janssen (2x winner), Bauke Mollema, and Fabio Jakobsen.

Joop Zoetemelk is the only Dutchman who got to take home the King of the Mountains jersey. In 1971, that was a green jersey.

Three from the Same Team on the Final Podium

Although the 2023 Vuelta was won by Sepp Kuss, an American, that

edition still marked a special moment for the Dutch Jumbo-Visma team. The team dominated with three riders on the final podium (Kuss, Roglič, and Vingegaard) and won all three Grand Tours that year – a unique achievement in cycling history.

Text: Patrick Van Gansen



A highlight in the history of the Vuelta with three riders from the same team on the final stage
Photos: Teus Korporaal

De Alto de El Angliru or... **THE HELL OF ASTURIA**



The Angliru is a special mountain in northwestern Spain. He is affectionately called 'El Olimpo del Ciclismo' by the Spaniards, but we like to keep it on the Hell of Asturias. Since its introduction in 1999, the Alto de El Angliru has become one of the most mythical and feared climbs in modern cycling. Located in Asturias, in the northwest of Spain, this climb is a monstrous challenge even for the best climbers in the world. The climb is 12.5 kilometers long and with an average ascent rate of 10.13%, it bridges 1,266 altitude meters. But it is mainly the last six kilometers that make it hell. There the road often rises in double digits, with peaks of up to 23.5% on the infamous part at Cueva les Cabres.

The Angliru was first climbed in 1999, when José María Jiménez was the first to conquer it. Since then, Alberto Contador, Gilberto Simoni, Wout Poels, and Hugh Carthy, among others, have found glory there, while others loathed the climb for its inhumane steepness. Riders often had to



“The first six kilometers are a soft boiled egg”

zigzag their way up, and team cars slipped on the steepest sections.

In 2020, the Briton Hugh Carthy won his first Grand Tour stage there. In 2023, Primož Roglič crowned himself on the Angliru, while teammate Sepp Kuss barely managed to hold onto his leader's jersey.

The Angliru is not just a climb. It is a symbol of the Vuelta: hard, uncompromising, and heroic. Whoever wins here inevitably inscribes their name among the legends of cycling.

The Hard Numbers to the Top

We'd like to take readers on a description to the top of the Angliru. We'll choose the easiest way to the top, because even that is more than terrible enough. For the easiest variation of the monster, you start in the village of La Vega, located about 15 kilometers south of Oviedo. Soon, the sign with the profile and distance will greet you. The climbing that will lead you over the last six kilometers, on a winding old goat path with a total of sixteen hairpins to the summit, begins gently here at 5%.

From La Vega to Punta del Vista

You'll cycle the first six kilometers of the Angliru with full conviction, eagerness, and energy from the village of La Vega to the viewpoint halfway up the climb (Punta del Vista). This first part is really manageable with an average of just under 7%. You start the first section with gradients of 5 and 6%. Slowly, however, it gets steeper, and you're presented with sections of 8 and 9%. If you didn't know better, you might even describe the Angliru here as a piece of cake, because after five kilometers you even get 500 meters of 1% as a gift, followed by a section of 3%. You cycle here through an idyllic mountain landscape that you can still fully enjoy. Accompanied by cows and horses, you have beautiful views all around you. If you want to eat or drink something, or stretch your back, now is the time, because after the 3%, the real climbing begins with sections between 10 and 12%. A good warm-up for the murderous Questa les Cabanes.

KM 6 - Questa les Cabanes - 22%

The Spanish had the great idea of giving all the steep sections on the Angliru evocative names. From the open mountain pasture halfway up the climb, the 'Questa les Cabanes' looms before you like a 22% wall. Here, the Angliru winds for

a good 500 meters, with gradients between 15% and 22% further to the summit.

If you're still full of courage after those 500 meters, you have the opportunity to 'recover' on a longer section, where you 'only' continue to climb between 10 and 14%.

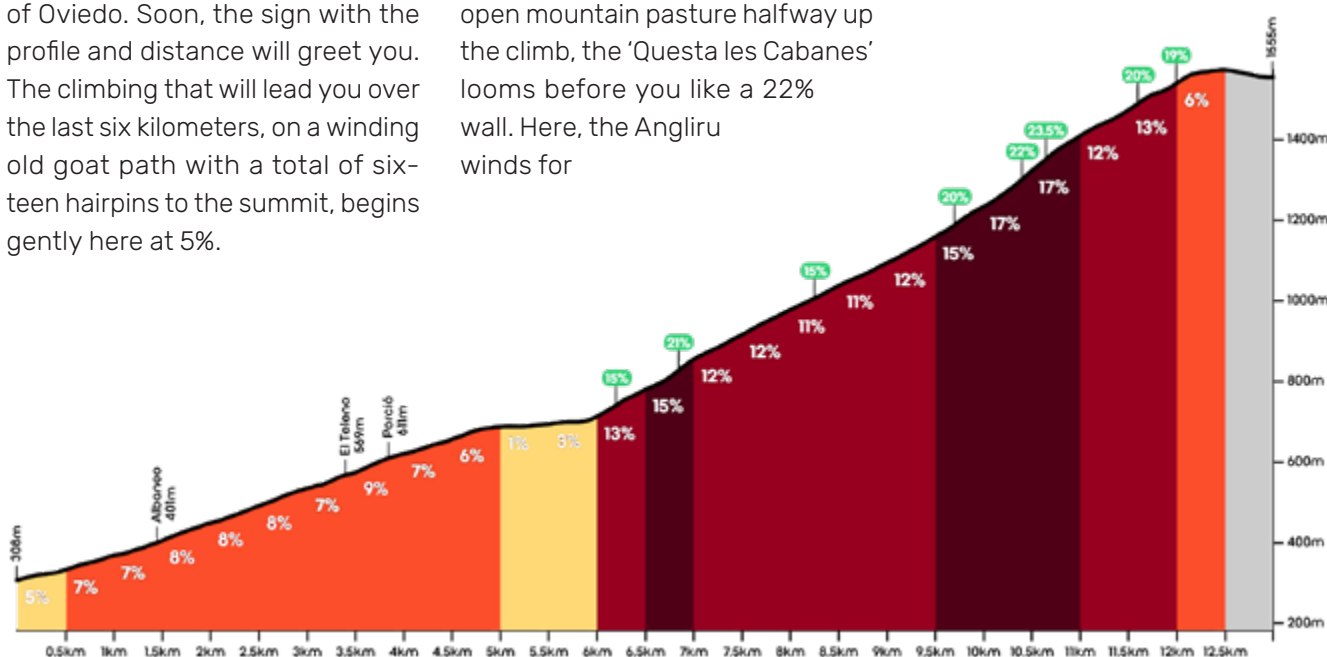
KM 9.4 - Les Picones - 15.7%

After 9.4 kilometers of climbing, you come face to face with Les Picones: two consecutive hairpin bends where the steepness hovers around 15% with a peak of 20%, and that's just a harbinger of what's to come...

KM 10 - Cuenca les Cabres - 23.5% Executioner

After Les Picones follows the most difficult part of the Angliru with a 400-meter section between 20% and 23.5%. Here, countless cries of 'madre mia' have been heard.

‘Madre mia’ has been shouted countless times here



If you have survived
this piece, it must not go
wrong

If you can still turn the pedals and stay upright until the hairpin bend, you've got the worst behind you. From the bend, the road flattens out a bit, and it's only two more kilometers to the summit. If you've endured this well, nothing can/should go wrong!

KM 11-12 El Aviru & Les Piedrusines

After the Cuenca les Cabres, a few more hairpin bends follow, of which El Aviru is still very annoying and painful with its 21.5%. After exactly 12 kilometers, you can squeeze the lemon one last time and wring out the last drops to overcome the 20% of Les Piedrusines.

Cima l'Angliru

In the last kilometer, the winding road slowly flattens out, and you even have a slight descent – which, of course, together with the first six kilometers, explains the average of ‘only’ 10.13%. The arrival is at a large barren parking lot where you’ll see the Angliru sign for that well-deserved photo moment.

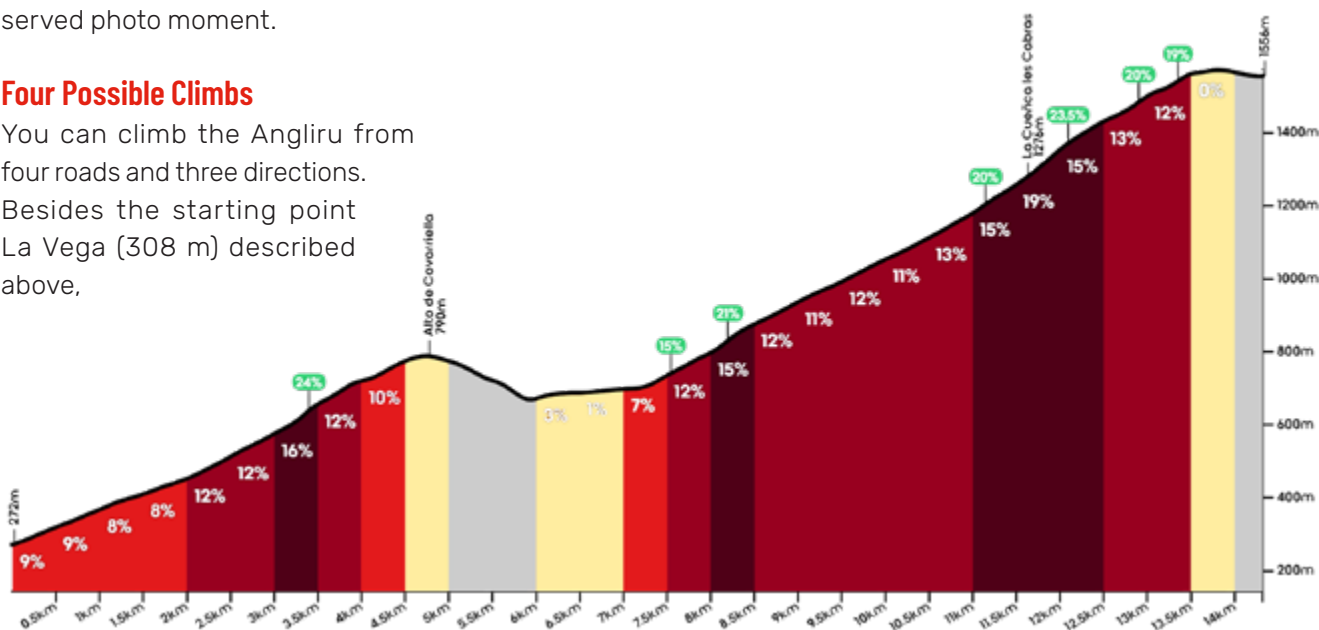
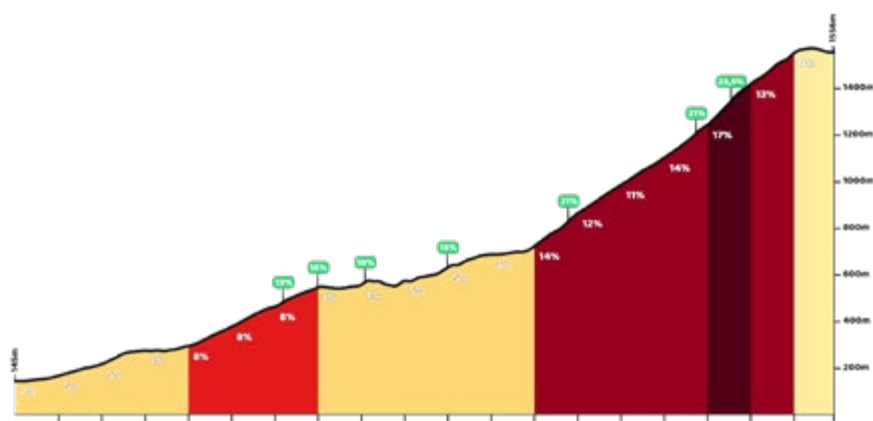
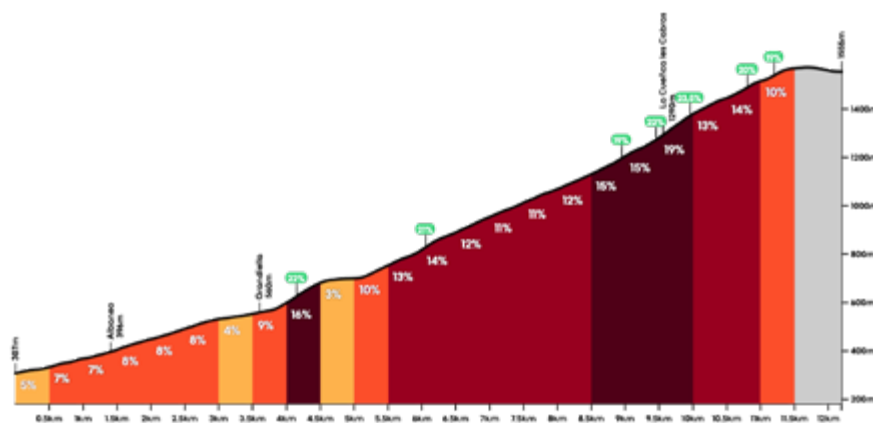
Four Possible Climbs

You can climb the Angliru from four roads and three directions. Besides the starting point La Vega (308 m) described above,

where you can choose two different routes, you can also choose to start the climb from Santa Eulalia (145 m) and from La Foz de Morcin (272 m) – via the Alto de Covarriella. The latter option is undoubtedly the toughest of the four possibilities. We wish everyone who takes on the challenge a day with golden

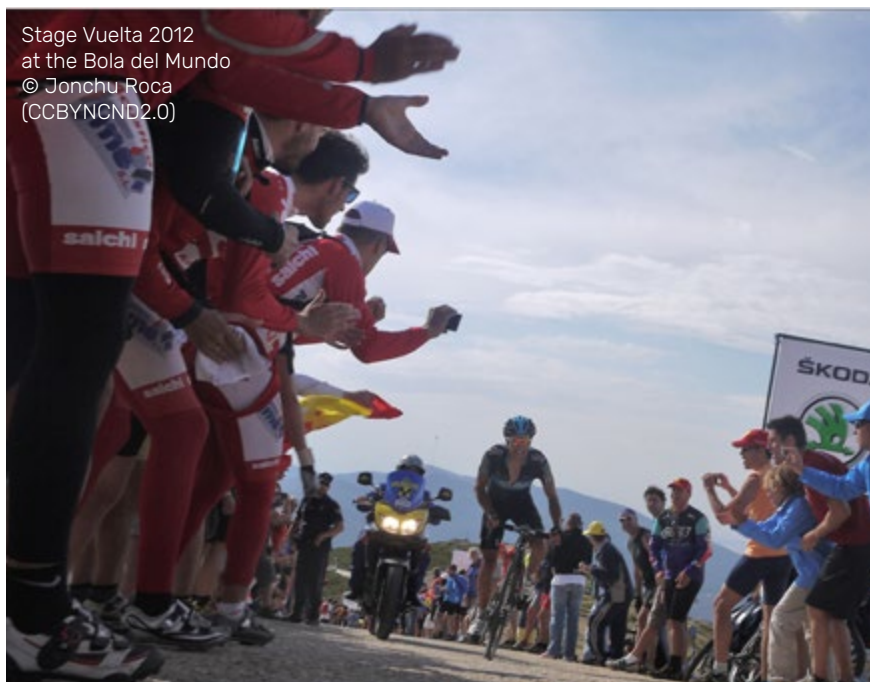
legs and a lot of character. Let the sensation of suffering wash over you!

FText: Patrick Van Gansen



a terrible killer

THE BOLA DEL MUNDO



Stage Vuelta 2012
at the Bola del Mundo
© Jonchu Roca
(CCBYNCND2.0)



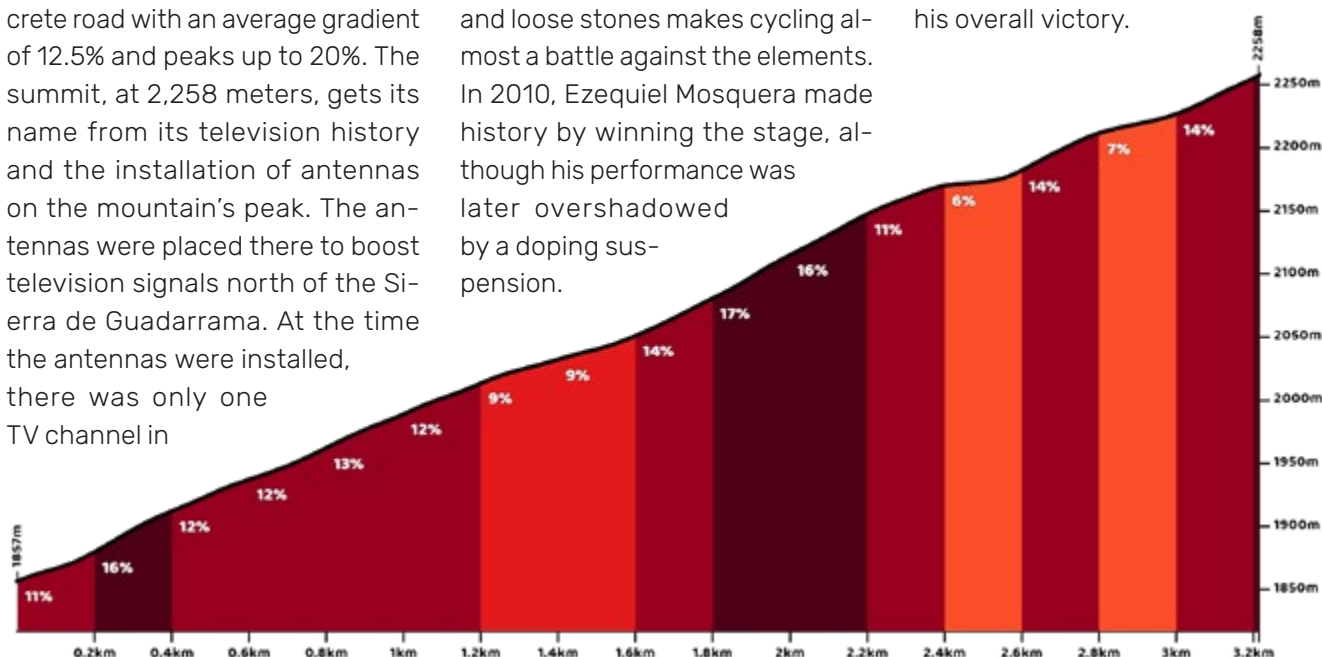
The Bola del Mundo is another typical Spanish killer with steep gradients. It's a climb that was first included in the Vuelta route in 2010. Located in the Sierra de Guadarrama, north of Madrid, the climb from Collado Villalba is 21.5 kilometers long, with the last 3.2 kilometers on a rough, grooved concrete road with an average gradient of 12.5% and peaks up to 20%. The summit, at 2,258 meters, gets its name from its television history and the installation of antennas on the mountain's peak. The antennas were placed there to boost television signals north of the Sierra de Guadarrama. At the time the antennas were installed, there was only one TV channel in

Spain, which was the state channel TVE - now La 1. The only program broadcast then was "La Bola del Mundo" (The World Globe).

What makes the climb of the Bola del Mundo so unique is not only its steepness but also its surface: the rough concrete road with grooves and loose stones makes cycling almost a battle against the elements. In 2010, Ezequiel Mosquera made history by winning the stage, although his performance was later overshadowed by a doping suspension.

Vincenzo Nibali successfully defended his leader's jersey against Mosquera's attack, won the Vuelta, and was later officially recorded as the stage winner.

The climb returned in 2012, when Denis Menchov triumphed and Alberto Contador secured his overall victory.





The atmosphere at the summit—often foggy, thin, and wild—contributes to the almost mythical reputation of this climb. The Bola del Mundo is synonymous with the climax of the Vuelta: tough, brutal, and decisive. We're curious to see what it will bring in 2025 on the Alto de las Guarramillas, as the mountain is also known.

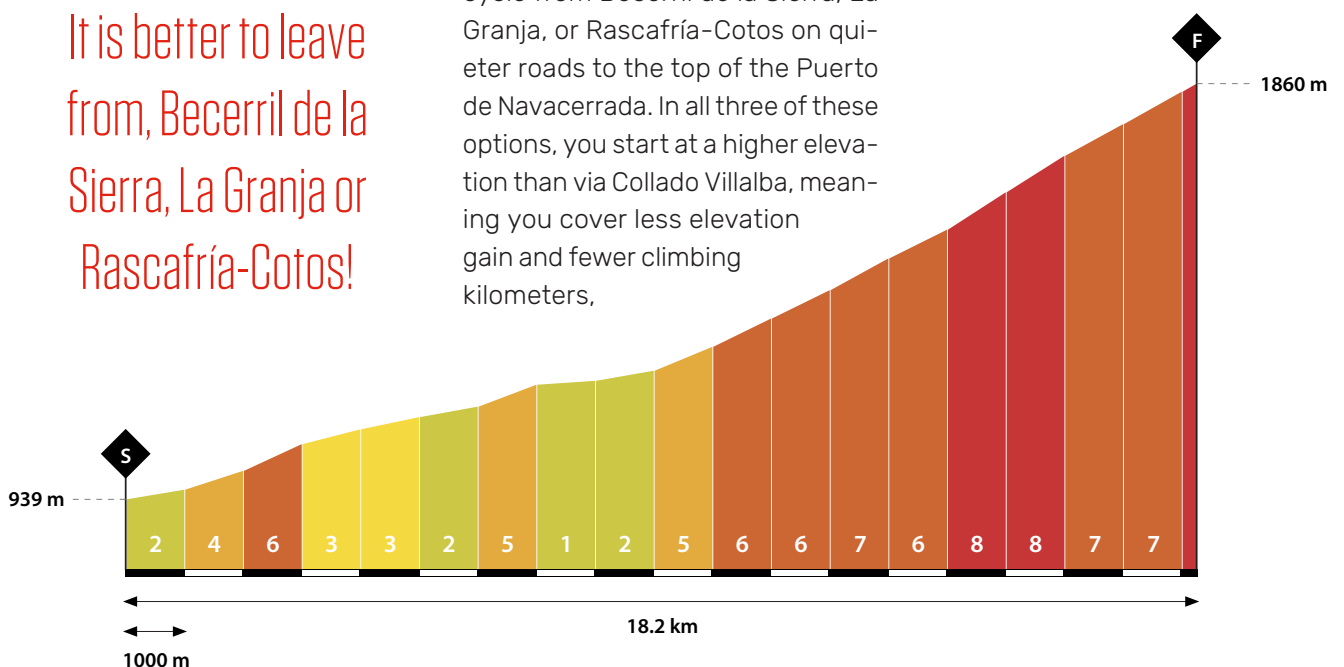
It is better to leave from, Becerril de la Sierra, La Granja or Rascafría-Cotos!

Take on the Challenge Yourself!

You can take on the super challenge to the Bola del Mundo after completing the climb of the Puerto de Navacerrada. You can cycle to the summit from four different roads. However, if you start from Collado Villalba (see profile), you have to contend with a lot of traffic until Navacerrada. It's better to cycle from Becerril de la Sierra, La Granja, or Rascafría-Cotos on quieter roads to the top of the Puerto de Navacerrada. In all three of these options, you start at a higher elevation than via Collado Villalba, meaning you cover less elevation gain and fewer climbing kilometers,

but the quieter roads compared to the busy main road more than make up for this.

Text: Patrick Van Gansen





The highest asphalted climb in Europe

In addition to some climbs that the riders have to brave in the Vuelta this year, we also fillet the highest asphalt climb in Spain and even in Europe in this issue. The last big round of the year is known for the many climbs that take three weeks. Steep slopes in particular color the course every year. Very steep, but usually not as long as in France or Italy. But,... that story does not apply to the Pico de Veleta because with almost 43 kilometers of climbing it is one of the longest climbs in Europe.

Pico de Veleta - 3,396 meters

The Pico de Veleta is located in the Sierra Nevada. At 3,300 meters, it's not only the highest paved climb in

Spain, but in all of Europe. The actual summit, however, is still over a kilometer further at 3,396 meters, but that last section is on an unpaved road. With an elevation gain of 2,772 meters, it even ranks number one in Europe. The ascent of Pico de Veleta is one of the greatest cycling challenges. The elevation gain, to give an example, is even twice that of the Tourmalet and much more than double that of Alpe d'Huez. It may lack the fame of the Col du Tourmalet, the Ventoux, or l'Alpe d'Huez, but the Veleta is much longer and tougher than those French mountains. The Pico de Veleta is located in the

Sierra Nevada, Andalusia, and the easiest version of the climb starts in the city of Granada.

There are four ways to tackle the climb. Here they are:

From Granada - Cenes de la Vega

Length: 42.7 km

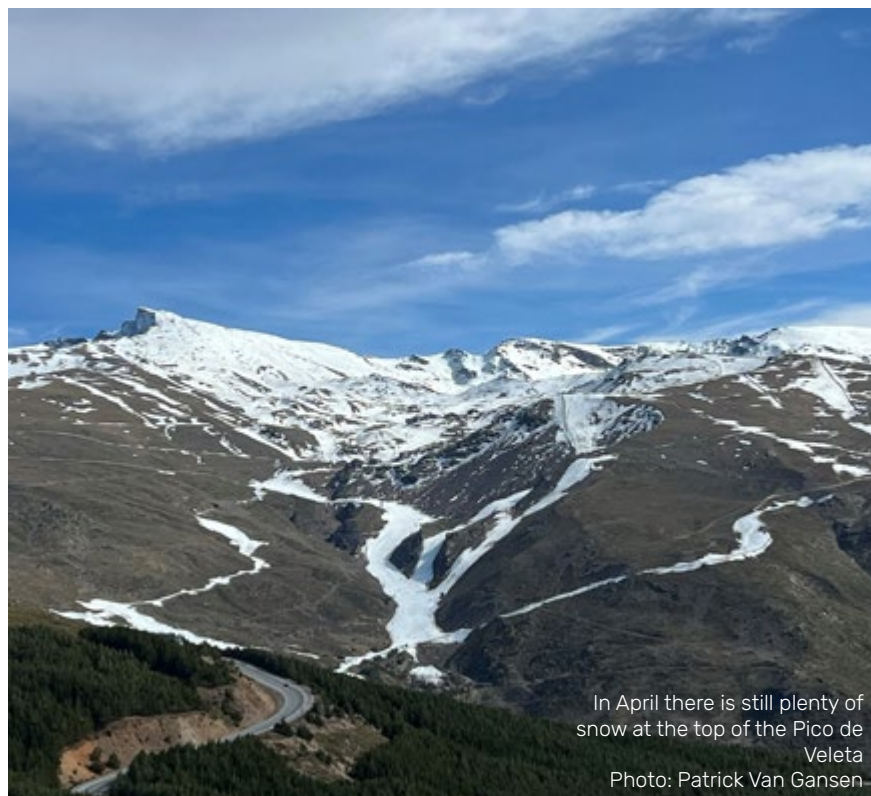
Average gradient: 6.29%

Steepest 100 meters: 13%

Elevation gain: 2687m

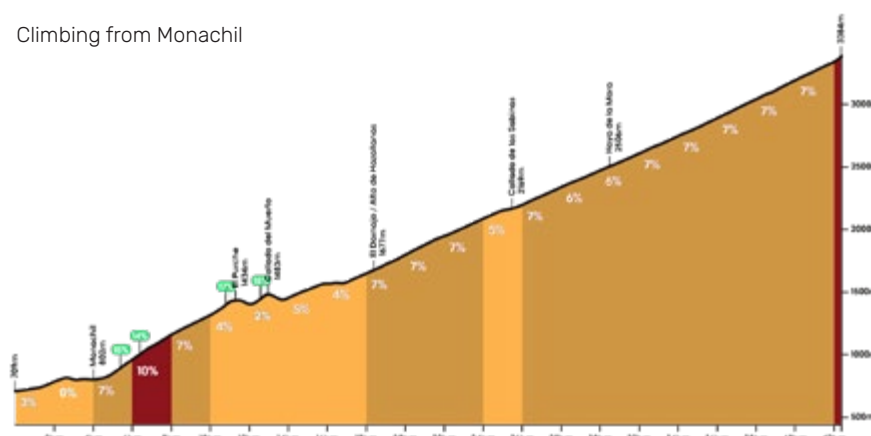
The road takes you from Granada over 42.7 kilometers from an elevation of 709 meters to the summit at 3,396 meters. With an average gradient of 6.3%, you conquer no less than 2,687 meters of elevation. The

Beautiful view of the Sierra Nevada and the Pico Veleta
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen



In April there is still plenty of snow at the top of the Pico de Veleta
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

Climbing from Monachil



The Pico de Veleta is one of the biggest challenges

main road to the top of the Veleta runs via the A395 all the way up to the ski resort at 2700 meters, after which the road narrows and is closed to traffic. The entire climb is a steady ascent, without truly difficult sections. However, the length and – what is often forgotten in many descriptions of cols – the altitude, make it a very tough undertaking. At the start of the climb,

there is sometimes a lot of traffic, which is why we don't particularly like this option. However, there are three very beautiful alternatives, all of which we highly recommend.

From Monachil

Length: 42.4 km

Average gradient: 6.5%

Steepest 100 meters: 13.4%

Elevation gain: 2772m

The first of the three alternatives starts just before the village of Monachil and runs along a narrow, low-traffic road for 14 kilometers, after which it joins the main road. It's an irregular climb with some

short descents and with gradients that go well into the double digits for several sections. The amazing views through a piece of unspoiled nature will more than compensate for the hardship.

From Pinos Genil

Length: 38.7 km

Average gradient: 6.8%

Steepest 100 meters: 11.4%

Elevation gain: 2621m

Another very beautiful option is the climb along the north side of the Embalse de Canales from Pinos Genil via Guejar Sierra. This is a very picturesque route on traffic-free

roads, with beautiful views everywhere of the Sierra Nevada mountains and the Embalse de Canales. However, similar to the route from Monachil, there are some steep sections at the beginning of the climb. Pacing yourself is key here, because don't forget you have to pass the 2,000 and even 3,000-meter mark! The road also connects to the main road but does so a few kilometers closer to the summit than the route via Monachil.

Via Haza Llanas

Length: 40.4 km

Average gradient: 6.8%

Steepest 100 meters: 15.1%

Elevation gain: 2742m

The third good option is the climb via Haza Llanas. This is the favorite route of the Vuelta a España – which finishes at the much lower Sierra Nevada Ski Resort – and is also a very pleasant route on a very quiet road. This is, in our opinion, the toughest climb of them all, with gradients of over 20% in the first part of the ascent. We rank the climb via Monachil as the second toughest.

From the A395 you can constantly see the top of the Veleta
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen



Beautiful view of the Embalse de Canales
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen



Timing to start the climb

The best periods to complete the entire climb to the summit are approximately from May 20th to mid-June and from early September to October 10th. During these two periods, the roads are quiet, there's usually no snow at the summit, and daytime temperatures are generally not scorching hot. From October to May, the road is cleared up to 2,700 m altitude, so you can still have a nice ride, but not all the

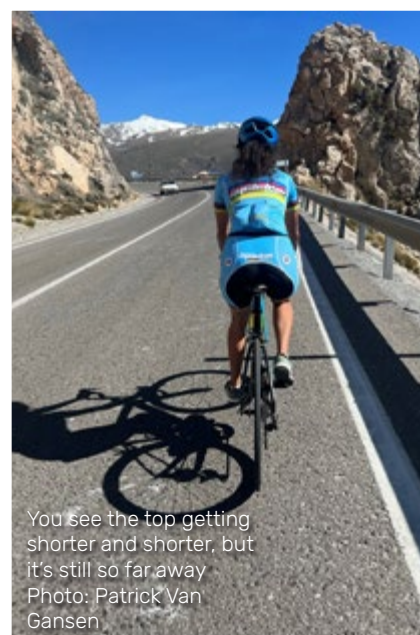


way to the top. We do not recommend climbing the Pico de Veleta in the middle of summer because it is simply too hot to tame such a beast of a climb. Make sure you bring a warm vest because at the summit it can even freeze in summer, and you'll be glad to have something warm to wear on the descent.

In any case, if you are in the Granada area, we recommend that you

definitely cycle in the Sierra Nevada National Park and climb part of the Veleta, regardless of the time of year. It is a beautiful area, and it is a particularly beautiful feeling to climb the highest paved road in Europe.

Text: Patrick Van Ganseem



You see the top getting shorter and shorter, but it's still so far away
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

CYCLING TOURISM IN MALLORCA

The cycling paradise par excellence

Cycling in Mallorca is a dream that you should experience several times in your cycling life. The island has everything you can think of as a cyclist. In the next three issues of Cyclelive Magazine, we always take you on one of the many epic tours that everyone must have ever ridden.

Cycling towards beautiful Cap de Formentor

The ride to Cap de Formentor is one you'll want to etch into your memory forever. This beautiful winding road ends at the Formentor lighthouse. Tastes differ, of course, but in our opinion, this is one of the most beautiful, if not the most beautiful, rides on Mallorca and simply a must-do to tick off your 'must-ride list'. From Port de Pollença, it's over 18 kilometers of pure enjoyment on a road that snakes up and down through a headland, taking you from one viewpoint to the next. We deliberately rode this trip towards evening, because it's much quieter than earlier in the day, and because we wanted to experience the sunset.

From Port de Pollença, you first ride along a wide boulevard towards the start of the Col de la Creueta. The first kilometers of the Col de la Creueta are already picture-perfect. You'll quickly take the first hairpin turns and immediately have a fantastic view of Pollença and across the bay between Pollença and Alcudia.

Surfing to the lighthouse

Once at the top, it's time for some great photos. Leave your bike for





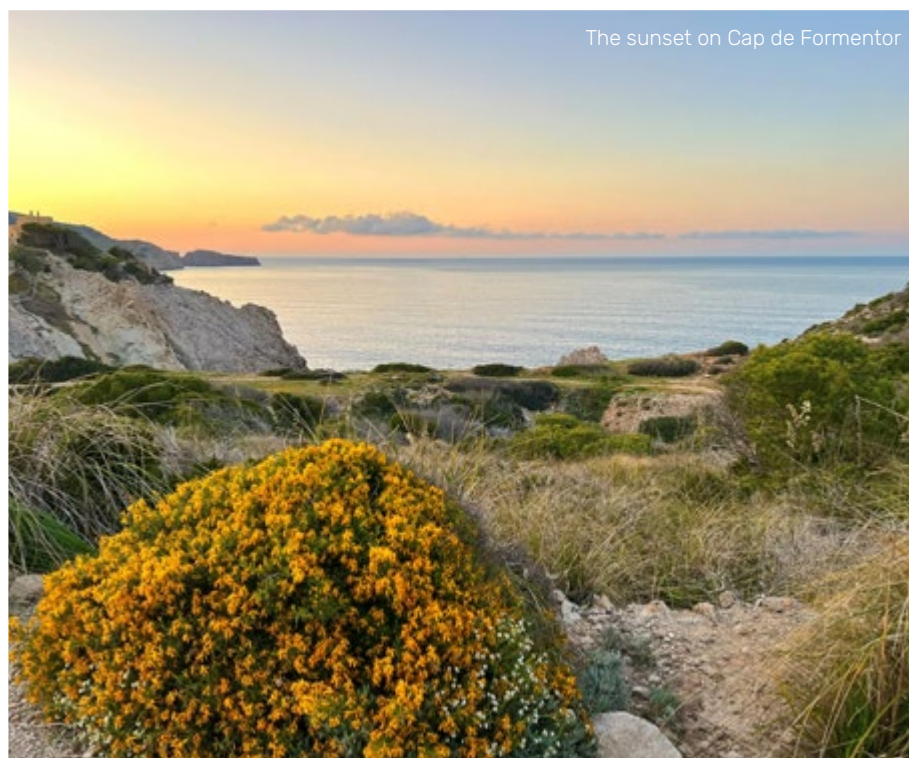
Super beautiful at the end of the headland

a moment and walk a little further to the two viewpoints. Here you can also turn right and do the last short stretch of Sa Creueta, or simply ride straight on to Cap Formentor. As you continue on the road to the lighthouse, you're immediately treated to some beautiful hairpin bends that are a joy to ride.

The descent is relatively short, followed by a somewhat longer middle section that mostly runs as a false flat uphill or downhill. In this section, you'll always encounter free-roaming goats, who are accustomed to cyclists and therefore pose no danger. Still, stay focused, because you never know when they might suddenly cross. After this section through the forest, the views start coming at you at an increasingly rapid pace. The road winds up and down the peninsula, and sometimes you have a view of the sea on your left, other times on your right. Don't make the mistake of just blazing through here. Take your time to occasionally stop and enjoy the views.



On the way back with a view of the lighthouse



The sunset on Cap de Formentor

The lighthouse

About seven kilometers before the end point – the Cap Formentor lighthouse – you'll encounter the section with a maximum gradient of 9%. The road continues to undulate up and down, and from left to right. The uphill sections are noticeably longer than the downhill ones. The last part is a steep descent, with the final 450 meters being a nasty little climb to the lighthouse. At Cap de Formentor, the road ends, as there's only the Mediterranean Sea and the


lighthouse left. Be sure to take time for a photo-shoot and a piece of cake with a coffee. It's a place to simply enjoy before starting the return journey. The advantage of such a dead-end road is that you've already seen where you still need to stop for photos on the way back.

We stop just before the climb of the Col de la Creueta – now from the other side – to admire the beautiful Playa Cala Formentor and the charming little bay with the islet.

The final stretch back

From the beach, the road goes back up, and you tackle the Col de la Creueta from the other side. It's a nice, steadily rising climb where you can maintain a good pace. The descent is very clear, and you can see almost all the bends very well, even as darkness begins to fall after sunset. So, you'll descend at a good speed – with another beautiful view of Pollença – back down.

If you ride this trip at sunrise or sunset, you'll have an amazing bonus, as it then seems as if the glow of the sunlight embraces the mountaintops in a warm hug..

 Text and images: Patrick Van Gansen



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MALLORCA AND COMPETITIVE CYCLING

Is there cycling talent in Mallorca?



Mallorca, the largest of the Balearic Islands, has been known for years as the cycling hotspot for road cyclists and touring cyclists from all over Europe. Thanks to its mild climate, varied landscape, and excellent infrastructure, the island has grown into a true cycling paradise.

Even track cycling has kept pace in terms of infrastructure and opportunities. The new Velòdrom Illes Balears, built to host the 2007 UCI Track Cycling World Championships, immediately became central to the development of track cycling on the island. Not only did the track host the World Championships in 2007, but

it also became a regular location for training camps for national teams from across Europe. Thanks to the mild climate, riders could combine their training programs with sessions on the road and on the track even in winter—something that's possible in very few places in the world.

Climbing, Descending, and Enjoying

For every cycling enthusiast, Mallorca is a playground. The island offers a surprisingly diverse landscape: from rolling hills and steep mountain passes in the Tramuntana mountain range to quiet, flat roads along the coast. Routes like the climb to Sa Calobra or Puig Major are legendary among cyclists. Cap de Formentor, with its breathtaking views, is also a must for anyone wanting to explore the island on two wheels. Thanks to

its well-maintained road network, climate, and diverse cycling options, the island is ideal for both amateurs and professional teams. Major teams like INEOS Grenadiers and Bora-Hansgrohe regularly use Mallorca as a training base during the winter months.

A True Contradiction – Few Local Cycling Stars in Mallorca

But despite all the wonderful opportunities Mallorca offers cyclists, surprisingly little local cycling tal-

ent emerges. This contradiction prompted Cyclelive to delve deeper, aiming to uncover the weaknesses of cycling in Mallorca. We joined Marga Lopez – a cyclist born in Campos, Mallorca, who has been riding for Belgian cycling teams since 2019 – in search of causes and remedies for the future of cycling in Mallorca. In early May, we visited her at home and had a lovely evening with her parents, where all topics about cycling in Mallorca were discussed.

Marga Lopez Llull at the start of the 1.2 UCI race GP Beveren
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen



“Hi Marga, with all the beauty Mallorca has to offer cyclists, you’d assume much more talent from Mallorca would emerge in the professional peloton, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, you might think so, but the mentality of the islanders towards cycling stands in the way. In Belgium, there are various races in different categories every week, but here in Mallorca, it’s almost impossible to organize a race safely. If something is organized, youth, women, and men race together in the same event. Marshals are (almost) nonexistent because there’s no ‘cycling race culture.’ People get annoyed if they have to wait because some cyclists are passing by and if traffic is held up. It’s very different from Belgium.”

“Is that why there aren’t cycling stars from Mallorca? In tennis, you have Nadal, who’s among the top three best of all time – so why not in cycling?”

“We do have cycling stars, though. Enric Mas and Mavi García are both true climbers. We also have some important track cyclists like Joan Llaneras (2x Olympic champion, 2x Olympic silver medalist, 7x world champion). Okay, they might not be the best of all time, but they have achieved some exceptional results,

On training in the flatter interior of Mallorca
Photo: Xavier Cañellas



and their names are known world-wide. But yes, it's limited. I think the main reason we don't have more and bigger names is that the races we have here aren't suitable for developing as a cyclist because you usually race against the same riders all the time. At the beginning of the season (from February to May), there are the Invierno y Mallorca, Challenge de Primavera, 3 Días de Mallorca, Pla de Mallorca races. These are longer races spread over weekends (you can race on separate days, but there's also a GC). In these races, women have to race with men because there's no separate category. That's one reason why not many women race here. After that, there are criteriums (about 40 km for juniors and elite, about 20 km for masters and U16), where women have to race with masters (from 40 years old). But in recent years, they have added an extra category just for women (from U16) to some of these local criteriums. Moreover, you live on an island here, and it's not always easy to go race elsewhere."

"And for women's races, are there always very limited numbers of starters?"

"Usually, there are between 15-20 women at the start. The level isn't too high either. It's true that there aren't many female cyclists in Mallorca who want to cycle at a high level; most do it for fun. But I think if they see cycling growing, a change in mentality will occur."

"So, you have to seek out competition on the mainland?"

"Yes, if we want to grow in the sport, we have to cycle outside Mallorca, and that really doesn't make it easy for us. You have to transport a lot of equipment and bikes off the island. For young riders, our parents have to take us, so they also need

to have vacation, otherwise it's almost impossible. It requires a lot of organization and money."

"Isn't it also a matter of a lack of a true cycling culture?"

"Absolutely agree! People here aren't interested in cycling, and many are annoyed by the large number of cycling tourists on the island. The cycling culture that prevails in Belgium is hard to find here."

"What's the biggest difference in public mentality between Belgium and Mallorca/Spain?"

"In Belgium, most people are born with a bike; they use bikes to go everywhere (work, school, shops, etc.). They're born with a cycling culture and have respect and appreciation for every rider. You also see the respect for cyclists in traffic. In Mallorca, I experience aggressiveness from car drivers almost weekly. That's also one of the disadvantages of the many cycling tourists in Mallorca. The islanders see it as an impediment to their own freedoms. They have to share the road with too many cycling tourists in some places, and those cyclists sometimes don't adhere strictly to behavioral and road codes. In Belgium, I haven't experienced any aggression in all the years I've trained and raced here. Here, there's more mutual respect on the road from both sides."

"Do you have any idea how to change people's mentality towards races in Mallorca?"

"Encourage people to participate in/watch the races so they also see it as a social event, not just a sporting one. For example, organize races at the fair itself, as is usually the case in Belgium, so it becomes a pleasant community event instead of an annoying one. And work with local media to provide more public-

ity than just for victories. By this, I mean to give more publicity to how cycling works, tips and tricks, how good it is for health, how you help the environment by cycling instead of driving, etc."

"It seems like a vicious circle. So, it's also difficult to get sponsors to organize a race?"

"Very difficult! It's a circle that's almost impossible to break. Most of the press in Mallorca pays little attention to cycling, businesses don't find it interesting, and local merchants find it annoying that the road to their shops is closed."


"You'd think there's a lot of work to be done for the cycling federation, then?"

"Yes, but they're not really responsive! Mallorca seems like a 'far-off problem,' while I believe there are certainly many opportunities if they would handle it properly."

"With all the experience you've gained in Belgium, perhaps you're the right person to address this problem after your career? Maybe claim a position with the federation after your career?"

"I've definitely thought about that, and I have many ideas to make something of it. Who knows what the future holds? But first, I want to continue focusing on my own cycling career."

"You've certainly given us a great insight into real cycling in Mallorca. A paradise for cycling, where all the ingredients are present to produce fantastic riders, but where, despite all those ingredients, the right recipe isn't being cooked to promote top-level sports. Thank you for your contribution, Marga."

 Text and images: Patrick Van Gansen

MARGA LOPEZ LLULL LIVES IN A ROLLERCOASTER

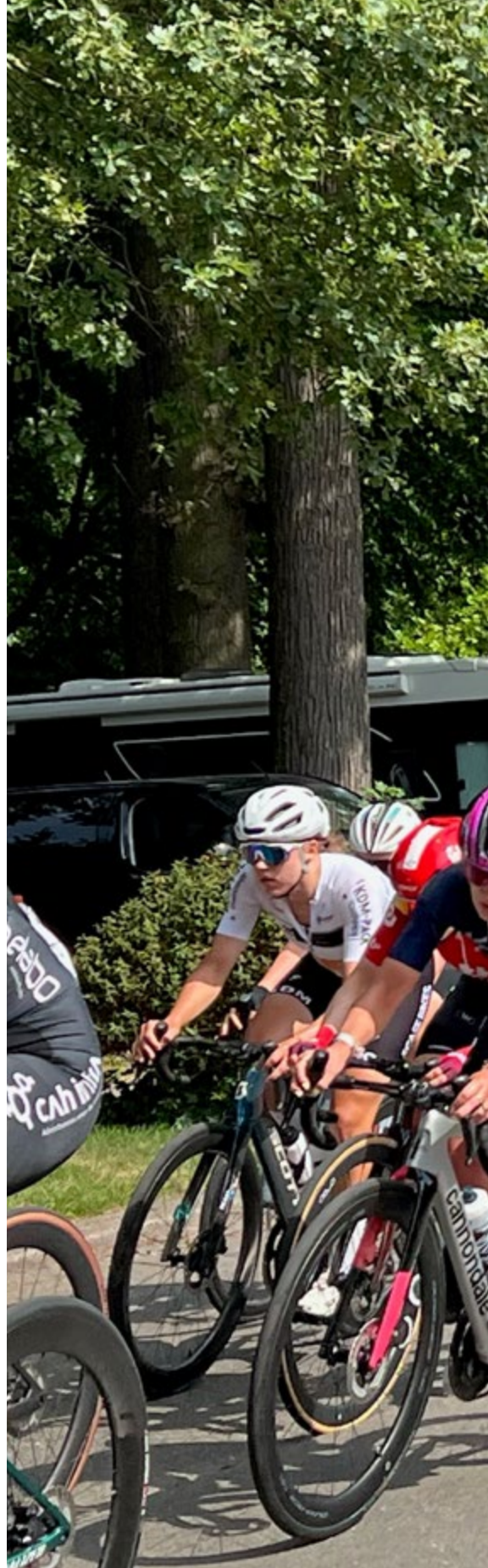
You don't just give up on a dream!

Marga Lopez Llull is a Mallorca-born cyclist who has been working on her career in Belgium since 2019. As a great talent on the slopes, she dreamed of a career as a professional cyclist. A dream that came true for a while and that still pursues them through all kinds of circumstances in and outside cycling. A racer that we at Cyclelive Magazine believe that she will still make that dream come true. Let's get to know each other.

In the previous article about Mallorca, we wrote that there isn't a true cycling culture there. So, how did you get into cycling?

"That's a real family bug I caught. My dad, uncle, brother, and cousins almost all started cycling for fun around the same time. A little later, my cousins started racing, and my brother couldn't resist that call either. That was very contagious for me as a young girl, and that's how I

Marga in action during the Grand Prix CHW Beveren.
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen



started too. My dad later opened a bike shop/bike rental - Curro Bikes in Campos. So the cycling bug really spread through the family. A bug I couldn't avoid and one that will never leave my body."



Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

So you got your first race bike at a very young age?

"Yes, in 2005, when I was seven, I was already riding my first race bike, a BH with the shifting still on the frame. A year later, in 2006, for

my first communion, I got a Specialized Allez, which was an aluminum frame and was actually my first proper race bike. The bike was already my best friend, and becoming a cyclist was my dream."

And when did you start training seriously?

"When I was eight, we went to the cycling school led by Toni Abraham. Riders from all cycling clubs could come and train with him on



Marga at the head of the peloton
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

the track in Sineu. There, I learned the basics of cycling and the skills to race on the track. From then on, I trained every week with the race bike on the track, and sometimes we could even ride a track bike there."

And then start racing?

"I was already racing on the road before I started training on the track with Toni. But soon after I had my first track training sessions, I rode my first race on the track in Palma. That went well and made me want more."

So the track quickly became your focus?

"No, not entirely. Between the ages of eight and fifteen, I combined road races with track and mountain bike races. But that was a bit too much in terms of equipment, so I had to choose. The mountain bike fell by the wayside, and from then on, I concentrated on road and track races."

And with results?

"I became national champion three times on the track (points race, scratch, and keirin) in the U16 category and achieved several more titles in later categories. I got a call from the national team and was overjoyed. However, it quickly became clear that there was no support whatsoever and that they were only interested in the team pursuit for which they selected me. That wasn't my thing at all at the time. I felt that they didn't support the athletes' development of their talents at all there and

only used the riders for their own goals.”

And how did you start your road career then?

“In Mallorca, we didn’t/don’t have many races, and certainly no races where women could/can race against each other at a high level. In 2016, I signed a contract with the Spanish UCI team Bizkaia – Durango and won the first race for the Spanish Cup. In 2017, when I was 19, I was contacted by the Italian C-Max team with many promises and good conditions. I signed a contract there, but it turned out to be a complete ghost team. There was literally nothing when the season started. No one responded to emails or calls, there was no explanation, there simply was no team. So there I was, without a team. I then mainly continued racing on the track with the national team and started sending my CV to all the UCI teams.”

But then you ended up in Belgium?

“Yes, and the heavens opened for me there! In 2019, I had a few options and chose the Belgian Health Mate – Cyclelive Team. There I learned what real cycling was. I ended up in a great team, with a good program and good guidance. I was told that it would take time to lay the foundation to transform me from a track rider into a good road cyclist. Patience, a lot of endurance training, and perseverance were preached, and that’s what I’ve been doing ever since.”

“From one team
to another without
really coming
home”

“The athletes were not really supported and
were used for their own purposes”

And then you ended up in a roller-coaster of teams?

“The team stopped due to problems at the end of the year, and I had to look for another team. However, I couldn’t find a place with a UCI team anymore and then joined the Equano Cycling Team (club team) the season after. But that team also stopped at the end of the 2020 season.”

So you stayed in Belgium because the Equano team was also a Belgian team...

“Yes, because it was clear that if you want to make it as a cyclist, Belgium is the place to be. Here, there are high-level races almost weekly. There are also many races that are flat or slightly hilly, where I, as a sprinter, can achieve results. Moreover, there are also many Belgian teams where you can ride a good program. So, in 2021, I found a place with the Lviv Team (Continental Team) that was managed from Belgium. However, that team was also disbanded at the end of the year. The atmosphere and organization in that team weren’t always optimal, but it was hard to be without a team again. In 2022, I mainly rode national races in Belgium for the S-Bikes Dolcini Team (a Belgian club team).”

And then you joined the Proximus team...

“Yes, in 2023 and 2024, I was able to work for the continental Proximus Team, where problems arose again. So, now in 2025, we are riding for the VELOPRO – Alpha Motorhomes Team, which is again a Continental Team. We are riding a good program, and I feel good here.

Let’s hope we can build some continuity now to take the next step in my career.”

Your results are also on the rise this year?

“Yes, recently I won two national races in a row and achieved some good placings in UCI races. It currently puts me at position 809 in the UCI ranking, which is my highest ever. By the end of the season, I want to be in the top 500.”

What are the most important things you’ve learned in Belgium physically?

“If you want to grow as a cyclist, Belgium is the place to be. Here, there are many national races where anyone with the right license can participate. These are called national races, but riders from all over the world are at the start. There are also always many participants, and the international field automatically raises your level. I’ve also really learned to suffer! It’s easier to give up on a long hill because as a non-climber, you know the race isn’t for you. In Belgium, there’s no chance you can give up on a hill because there are hardly any races with long hills. So, you have to hold on when it’s difficult, and that makes you better, both physically and mentally.”

And tactically?

“Pretty much all the tactical and technical skills you need, especially in flat or slightly hilly races: positioning, crosswinds, cornering, attacking, learning how to create a sprint train. Racing here is very different from Spain. A flat race doesn’t mean it’s an easy race.



People tend to think it is, but they're wrong. Every type of race has its difficulties. I'm sure we've lost a lot of good riders in Spain due to our focus on climbing. In Spain, as a non-climber, you have almost no chance of making it. Or you have to leave the country and be hard on yourself."

Speaking of perseverance! Where do you get that from after all those setbacks with so many teams?

"It's a dream that won't let go, and I'm willing to do everything for it. I've had a taste of professional cycling

with Health Mate – Cyclelive Team, and it's a dream, urge, and drive that won't let go of me to ride in a UCI team again. Children dream, but adults do too, and without dreams, you don't reach the top. Once all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place, I will make that dream come true!"

We sincerely wish you the best, Marga! You have plenty of talent, character, and perseverance. Now, just some luck on your side and a team that truly believes in you and gives you every opportunity, and everything will be alright!

Text: Patrick Van Gansen

This interview took place on April 10 in Mallorca. Meanwhile, Marga won 2 races in Belgium (NAT) and finished 6th in the GP Beveren 1.2. Her advance on the UCI list is well and well used, because in the meantime (25-07-2025) she is in 700th place on the UCI list.

Cycling from my dream city Málaga

Super cozy restaurants, tapas bars, beautiful squares, a barrel full of historical sights, the beautiful harbor, the sea that becones with more than 14 kilometers of beach, the wonderful climate, a life full of music, dance and festivities and a unique city/holiday atmosphere in the world, that is in short the description of the dream city number one of the undersigned. Let me introduce you to Málaga and its surroundings – Déjame presentare Málaga y sus alrededores...



La Manquita, the cathedral of Málaga
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

Déjame presentarte Málaga y sus alrededores

The integration of the harbor with the old city and beach life is nowhere else in the world as beautifully executed. Málaga simply has it all! No wonder I fell head over heels in love with this city in Andalusia. But did you know that the surrounding area is also bursting with hidden treasures and natural phenomena? From picturesque white villages to breathtaking natural wonders that you can cycle through right from Málaga. And after your bike ride, the vibrant and swinging city calls for you to stay out and socialize. The city offers a mix of historical attractions, such as the Alcazaba, the Roman theater, and the immense cathedral, with modern attractions like the Picasso Museum and the lively Soho district. For cyclists, Málaga is also a great base for exploring beautiful Andalusia. We'll take you on a journey through some won-

derful bike tours here that will stay with you forever if you ever ride them.

Ride 1 - Loop Puerto del León / Fuente de la Reina

We're setting out for a short ride with breathtaking views of Málaga. From the center of Málaga, we start the route on Calle Victoria and Cristo de la Epidemia, then follow the

signs for Camino Colmenar. We'll cycle on the A-7000, which will take us from just above sea level to an elevation of 930 meters. This ride and the climb of Puerto del León can be done from two sides: starting in the city center with an immediate steep ascent for a total of 16 kilometers of climbing, or a completely different version from the east through the El Palo neigh-



Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

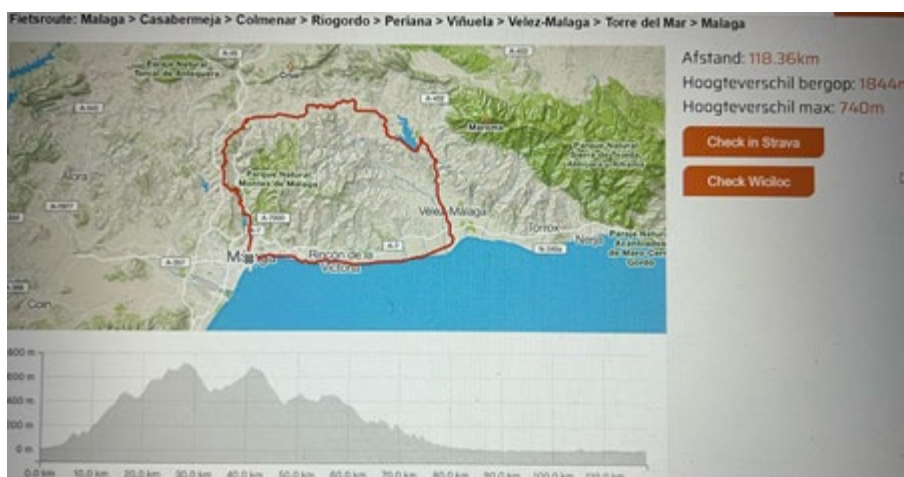
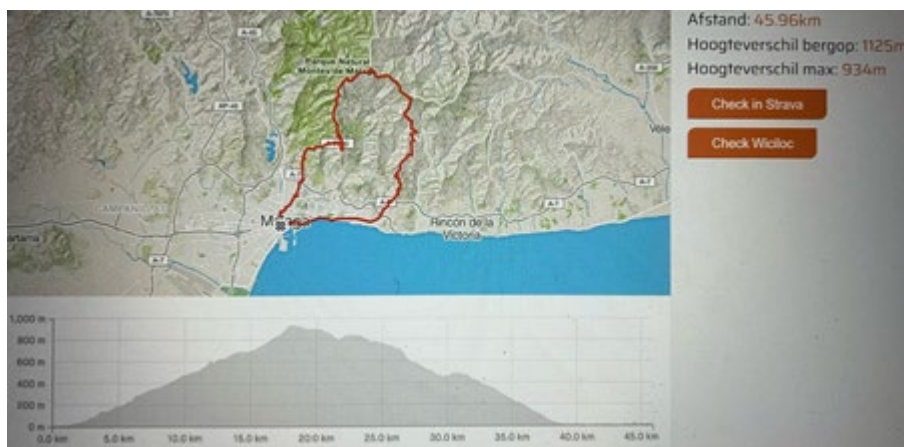
borhood and then up through the village of Olias. Both versions will give you a different perspective of the skyline and the magnificent views over Málaga, the coastline, and the Axarquía region.

So, if you start from the center of Málaga, it ascends in several stages to the top of Puerto del León. Steep sections of over 10% are interspersed with the Spanish “false flat” of 2-4%. At the top, you have an amazing view of Málaga and the coastline. We cycle a few more kilometers, then turn right onto a beautiful asphalt road that undulates for kilometers, enjoying the incredible view of the coastline 800-900 meters below. The descent is also beautiful and, in some places, technical. We’re quickly back at sea level and then head back to the center of Málaga via the boulevard.

From the east to Puerto del León, the climb is slightly longer, about 20km. After ten kilometers of gentle climbing, a winding road at 10% to Olias will prepare you for the Wall of Olias. This steep section, averaging 13.8%, is almost a kilometer long, but the magnificent view of the Santopitar peak will quickly make you forget everything. After conquering the Wall of Olias, the climb continues for another eight kilometers with percentages between -2 and 7%.

Ride 2 - Along the Embalse de la Viñuela

Another beautiful ride starting in Málaga leads you to the Axarquía, a small region in the east of Málaga province. This ride is 118 km long and covers 1844 meters of elevation gain.



Het prachtige
Embalse de la Viñuela
Foto's: Patrick Van Gansen



A beautiful picture with the emerald green Embalse de la Viñuela



We start again from Málaga and do the climb to the top of Puerto del León, but instead of turning right past the top, we follow the road through the Montes de Málaga natural park, descending to the village of Colmenar. There, on the right,

you'll have a beautiful view over Axarquía, with the broad ridge of the Santopitar de Comares mountain peak or a bit further on, Maroma. We drive through Colmenar and then turn right to Riogordo via the A-7204. It's a beautiful and very

fast 7 km descent on new asphalt, but with some treacherous turns. You rarely encounter a car here, and you can see almost the entire descent in open country, so if you misjudge, there's still enough room to correct into the opposing lane.



The beautiful descent to Riogordo
Photo: Patrick Van Gansen

So it's not surprising that I fell in love with this city

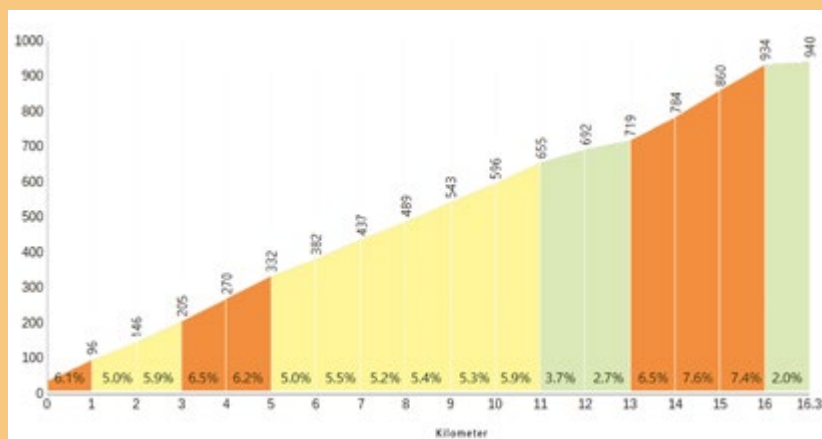
Riogordo is one of Axarquía's white villages, where we'll pause briefly and refill our water bottles. After that, we cycle further on the A-7204 towards Mondron / Periana / Viñuela, and it immediately goes significantly uphill. Five kilometers further, you'll be at the top of Puerto Sabar (590m). Then it's a lightning-fast descent towards Mondron and via Periana to Viñuela, with a view of the beautiful Maroma mountain peak. To the right, it's an even more picturesque scene, as that's where the magnificent emerald-green Embalse de la Viñuela (Viñuela Reservoir) lies. Via the same A-7204, we descend further to Vélez-Málaga and Torre del Mar on the coast. In Torre del Mar, we take the N-340, which brings us back to Málaga, 30 km further, via a completely flat road.

Text: Patrick Van Gansen

Puerto del León from Málaga

Puerto del León from Málaga is a climb in the Costa del Sol region. It is 16 kilometers long and bridges 894 altitude meters with an average rise rate of 5.6% and a maximum of 12.4%.

The Puerto del León has already climbed several times in the Tour of Spain. This is also the case in the 2015 edition during a stage won by Peter Sagan.



Conclusion about cycling around Malaga:

Málaga is one of the most beautiful bases in Europe for cycling. The interior is beautiful and calls for adventure. Don't forget to also take a day trip to the insanely beautiful Ronda or to visit, for example, the natural park El Torcal de Antequera with its unlikely rock formations. But pay attention! If you don't want to fall in love with this metropolis and its surroundings and you want to save yourself the terrible heartbreak of saying goodbye afterwards, you better not go to Málaga!

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The (en)rich(ed) history of the Criterium of Zingem



From 1942 to 1982, a cycling criterium was held annually in Zingem, East Flanders. Many cycling legends stood at the start and added a victory in this criterium to their list of honors. Forty-three years after the last edition, author Jean-Marie Schepens wrote an (interactive) book about it. With a QR code, you can also see or hear the cyclists or Zingem witnesses live. The history of the criterium is enriched by giving attention to the most important events that took place in the world and in Zingem during each edition. It's a very readable book with many photos and all the results. It tells how a small village managed to secure a prominent place on the cycling calendar with an international village race. The organization was also far ahead of its time, as they already organized a criterium for women in 1959 and 1960, and a Belgian championship for women in 1961.

The Heritage Route

Alongside the 272-page book, a heritage route was also unveiled, leading along the most important

landmarks on the 1.6 km course through the village. Many of the cobblestones and buildings from that era may have disappeared,

but the memories of the criterium are kept alive with this new route in Zingem. The best place to start the route is at the cycling cafe of Tuur Decabooter (El Toro) on Kerkplein. He won the race in 1961.

Zingem's Darkest Day

On Dorpstraat, near the former cafe "De Klok," you'll find the first plaque commemorating the tragic event of August 25, 1969, when José Samyn from Quiévrain in Walonia crashed during the criterium. A fall after colliding with a crossing spectator proved fatal for him.

Five days later, he died in UZ Ghent. As if that wasn't bad enough, Jos Mathy from Edingen, who finished eighth in the race, also died on his way home that day. In his honor, the opening race of the Walloon cycling season is named after José Samyn.

What Else to See

Further along the route, you'll find more plaques at: the former cafe Sictus and the Anno Sport bicycle shop. René Anno was the first professional cyclist in the village and was instrumental in founding the criterium. There are also plaques at the former cafe Sport, run by Omer Vermeiren—the founder of the Zingem cycling club and the criterium—and at "Den Arrivee" on Nederzwalmse Steenweg. The final plaque is on Amelotstraat at "Huize Vanceulebroeck," where the stars were cheered on by the many spectators during the traditional honorary lap.

You can order the 272-page book by sending an email to kim.dejae-ghere@skynet.be and transferring €28.00 to BE40 1030 8835 6863, stating your name, address, and "Criterium Zingem."

 Text & images: Rens Klaasse



"Café De Sportvriend" Authentic sports bars in Flanders



Flanders, at a time when the number of pubs is rapidly decreasing, is fortunately still rich in authentic sports pubs. They belong to our culture and are deep in our DNA. The authors Marko Heijl and Bart Diricx turned a trip crisscrossing Flanders along these pubs into a wonderful document of the times. They managed to find a large number of these pubs that are dedicated to active and passive sports and where you can still find the historical traces of, among other things, cycling. In some of these inns, time has stood still.

For an overview of all the cafes see www.cafedesportvriend.be. It is certainly not an exhaustive list. But maybe you can visit one before it is too late, because you never know how long they will exist. The book, which costs €29.99, can be ordered from the publisher www.lannoo.be and is also available in regular bookstores.

Text: Rens Klaasse



Het slotakkoord van Raleigh

Fifty years after the start of TI-Raleigh, this book by Joop Holthausen and Jacob Bergsma of no less than 720 pages is literally a heavyweight.

It is also the ultimate tribute to Peter Post's team that was a true heavyweight in racing at the time. From 1974 to 1983 they dominated cycling. Their approach was innovative. Riders from this team such as Joop Zoetemelk, Jan Raas, Gerrie Knetemann, Hennie Kuiper, Henk Lubberding and Johan van der Velde are part of Dutch cycling history. Over the years, a number of well-known Belgian riders such as Frank Hoste, Ludo Peeters and José De Cauwer have also ridden for this team and contributed to its many successes.

To this day, the iconic red/yellow/black jerseys and ditto colored bikes are true collector's items. And that includes 'The Final Chord of Raleigh'.

The book in a deluxe storage cassette, which is a double-thick makeover of 'The Secret of Raleigh' published in 2005, is available for €99 from the publisher at www.kickuitgevers.nl/onze-boeken/sport/het-slotakkoord-van-raleigh-in-cassette and in regular bookstores.

Text: Rens Klaasse



Vive le Tour, Vive les Femmes

For several years now, the Tour de France Femmes has had a full place in (women's) cycling. But to get to this point, a turbulent but also a fascinating history preceded it from 1955. Authors Julia Mullié and Tim de Vries wrote a first standard work about it that thoroughly explores the history up to 2024.

Of course, we remember nothing of the first five-day, and as it turned out, one-off, race in 1955. But as time goes on, famous names pop up such as Jeannie Longo, Leontien van Moorsel, Zulfya Zabirowa, Denise Burton (daughter of the legendary Beryl), Heidi Van De Vijver and, of course, Marianne Vos. The latter was an

important advocate of a Tour for women. You come across many Dutch but also Flemish riders in the book who played important roles in the various precursors to and in the current Tour de France.

With women's cycling becoming increasingly popular, this book certainly makes an important contribution to recording its history. Highly recommended for those interested in it. Because without that history, there is no present either.

The book can be ordered from the publisher for €24.99 via spectrumbooks.nl/. It is also available in regular bookstores.

Text: Rens Klaasse



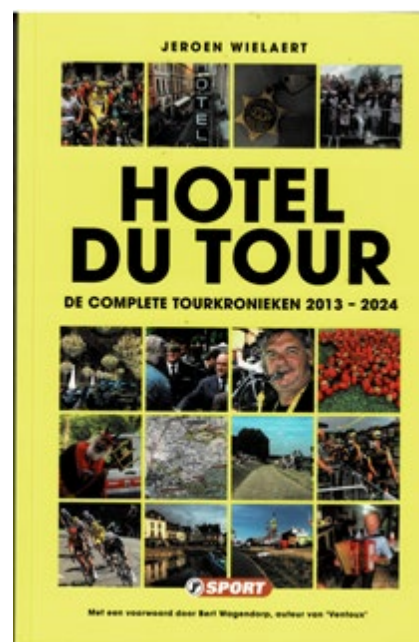
Hotel du Tour

For journalists, in addition to press rooms and terraces, their hotel room during the Tour de France is also largely their study. Between 2013 and 2024, author Jeroen Welaert wrote hundreds of chronicles about La Grande Boucle there. These are not only about the race itself but also about everything that takes place around it. A world that often remains hidden and therefore unknown to fans of cycling.

Reading back the Tour chronicles, the author felt again the pleasure he had in writing them. This thick volume also includes the book 'Tour Masqué' that he wrote about the Tour de France that still went on in corona year 2020. The book begins with the 100th edition and the unique Grand Départ on the be-

autiful island of Corsica. From 1986 to 2024, Jeroen Welaert was Tour follower for Veronica Radio, NOS, numerous newspapers and the cycling magazine De Muur, among others. For him, every summer the Tour was part of a wider range of journalistic work in the fields of art, culture, nature and the environment, politics and sports. For his numerous achievements, he received the Médaille de la Fidélité from the Tour organization in 2007. Reading this 464-page paperback is quite a tour in itself that does get you immediately into the atmosphere of the race. The book costs €24.99 and is available from the publisher via justpublishers.nl and in regular bookstores.

Text: Rens Klaasse



Route 66 in the Alblasserwaard

For many Belgians it will be known that besides Nieuwpoort (from the Battle of Nieuwpoort in 1600), there is also a Dutch town named Nieuwpoort. We have to go to the South Holland Alblasserwaard about thirty kilometers east of Rotterdam. Continuing to follow the river Lek you get there automatically. A Dutch version of the famous American Route 66 has been here for a short time. Some of our readers will have actually traveled miles. For others it may have remained just a wish. Now there is an opportunity to enjoy Route 66 closer to home, by bicycle. A beautiful day in the beautiful polder landscape is guaranteed, especially when the weather is cooperative. The route is composed of two thirty-three kilometer loops that meet halfway, or a western and an eastern loop that together are 66 kilometers long as befits a Route 66! Of course, this is a bit different from the real Route 66 in America with a distance of 3940 kilometers. But just the fact that you can drive the Route Sixty-Six in the Netherlands makes you dream, don't you think? What are we going to see?

Western loop

We begin our drive in front of Nieuwpoort's seventeenth-century town hall built atop a lock. Diagonally in front of it is the white/green sign that points you to Junction 66. Here we immediately have the coat rack from which everything is hung! Soon we pass the Stork Village on the left. In the late sixties there were almost no more stork breeding pairs in the Netherlands. Then Vogelbescherming Nederland made sure that 28 breeding pairs were moved to Groot-Ammers. This is where it started that we now

see storks in the polders again! A few kilometers further on we get to see the four water mills of Groot-Ammers. In the vernacular the first, second, third and fourth mill. Step off and walk around them. You can then clearly see the function of the mill. To the east you can see the lower polder. In front of you is the higher basin where the excess water enters the polder. From the storage basin it goes to the water board (under the bridge just before the third mill) to Kinderdijk where the water enters the river Lek through the large mill complex. This drainage system in the Alblasserwaard is centuries old. During our bike ride we will cross the water board twice. At the fourth mill we will ride straight for a while and then cross the bridge to the other side of the Lek. Riding straight ahead we come to node 14. Here on a knoll stands the so-called "High House." Look at the high front door. During former water emergencies (and there have been many) one could moor a scow in front of the front door and thus enter. A few miles further on we come to the Donk. This is a sand dune that rises 4.7 meters above NAP (New Amsterdam Level). The surrounding polders are 1.5 meters below NAP. Unique in the polder landscape. Next, we follow the Water Board for a while and then come to one of the most beautiful parts of the western route towards node 7. It is a narrow path. Some maneuvering at times. Just let it all sink in. You pass a water mill again. A place to take unique photos.

When you have turned left you automatically come to the wooden bridge over the water board. Stop here and let it all sink in. The polder landscape could not be more Dutch.



City Hall Nieuwpoort



The fourth mill near Groot-Ammers



Three words: water, mill, polder. Everything together! Along the Graafstroom, a reclamation canal dug in the thirteenth century, we go via Blekensgraaf, Molenaarsgraaf, Vuilendam, Ottoland to Goudriaan. Note the crooked houses and farms along the way. The underlying peat always keeps working.



Past tolls at Pinkeveer



Wheel of dike breach at Langerak

Eastern loop

In Goudriaan we can choose to continue or ride back to Nieuwpoort. We choose to continue and cycle in a straight line to junction 74. Here again we ride along a wider basin where the water comes from the polder and later flows into the river Giessen. We turn left and ride in a northeasterly direction. After about a kilometer we come to the so-called Pinkeveer, which is at house number 22. From 1883, when a bridge was built there, a toll had to be paid to pass the bridge. Just step back in time! Just read the sign carefully. Along the way, pay special attention to the beautiful farms and vistas across the water. A feast for the eyes to cycle here! Via Noordoos we arrive in Meerkerk, where we ride between junction 62 and 20 on the Zouwendijk. On the right we see in many places a wetland with osiers. On the left we pass some wheels. These are ponds that were created after a breach in the dike or were left over from a flood. Now an eldorado for birds. At Sluis we come to the river dike with the Lek on our right all the time. After a few hundred meters you come to Ameide with a beautiful town hall and an equally beautiful row of monumental mansions. Next to the town hall is a wooden scaffolding. A



The French street sweepers

nice quiz question: who knows what that is and what it was used for. Here is also the statue of the cherry picker, referring to the past when there were many cherry orchards here. Enjoy the river. The water is alive. Just before Langerak there is a wheel inside the dike, a reminder of an old dike breach. Another kilometer and a half and we are back in Nieuwpoort.

On Tuesday, August 13, 2024, the Tour de France Femmes will also briefly use the Route 66 west of the village of Streefkerk in the second Dordrecht-Rotterdam stage. The TV images of the beautiful polder landscape have gone worldwide. When you have cycled the Route 66 you will undoubtedly come up with positive stories yourself and make others enthusiastic. When I am waiting for

the riders, a car of the Tour de France organization stops right in front of me. Two men get out, each grab a broom from the car and sweep aside the pebbles that have landed on the road surface in a bend. Now that's service for the riders! Moments later, the ladies pass with Lucinda Brand in front on one side with yellow jersey wearer Charlotte Kool behind her and Lorena Wiebes on the other. The latter two will show an exciting sprint later in Rotterdam.

Text and images: Teus Korporaal



City Hall Ameide

Information:

Parking in Nieuwpoort:
Follow the parking signs

Route: 66-83-82-68-81-14-33-07- hereafter route indicated on road surface 30-08-31-34-13-17 01-69. In Goudriaan the western route ends and the eastern route begins: 74-72-71-63-62-20-64-65-66.

Tourist Information Point TIP:

Stadsboerderij Vredebest, Binnenhaven 24, Nieuwpoort. Opening hours see: www.stadsboerderijvredebest.nl The route brochure is also available here.

In the footsteps of Vincent van Gogh in Drenthe

Anyone somewhat familiar with the life history of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) knows that he spent a few months in the province of Drenthe in the fall of 1883. If you want to analyze all that again, we advise you to go to Drenthe yourself, take your bicycle and go on a journey of discovery. It's all made easy for you because there are three linked signposted bicycle routes of 50 kilometers each waiting for you. In support, a fantastically executed guidebook of no less than 160 pages has been published. Based on his letters to his brother Theo, he takes you along to what he sees and experiences in Drenthe. Not for nothing have the three routes where you pass by the locations where he painted and stayed been chosen as "Bicycle Route of the Year 2024". He writes to his brother: *The country is superbe, superbe, everything calls to you: painter! So real and so varied.* Of course, much has changed,

but fortunately there are still plenty of recognizable features from Vincent's time. The three routes are called Vincent's Arrival, Vincent's Day Trip and Vincent's Inspiration. We mount up and head into the Drenthe countryside.

Vincent's Arrival

After a train journey from The Hague, Van Gogh arrived in Hogeveen at 9 PM on September 11, 1883. Today, there's a Van Gogh information panel with an audio story accessible via a QR code, marking the starting point of the "Arrival Route." Vincent had to find his own way. He found lodging with a railway worker on Pesserstraat, then mostly stayed at Logement Hartsuiker. When you cycle into Hogeveen, you'll immediately spot a large portrait of our protagonist on the side wall of an apartment building, directly across from Theater De Tamboer. Follow the guide, as it points to even more notable spots in the city. Once you're out of the hustle and bustle, you'll cycle east through Noordscheschut and the old peat bogs of Hollandscheveld and Nieuwlande. You can even see how to travel the route by *trekschuit* (a tow barge)—a truly unique experience. Suggestions can be found in the guide. The return journey goes through old Drenthe, passing Nieuw Balinge (Mantingerzand) and Stuifzand on the way back to Hogeveen. After three weeks, Van Gogh felt the need to venture deeper into the peat and peat fields. *"One of these first days, I will sail down the entire Hogeveense Vaart by barge through the peatlands, straight through the southeastern corner of Drenthe."* On October 2, 1883, he de-



Mural in Hogeveen



Along the Hogeveense Vaart in Zwinderen

parted for Nieuw-Amsterdam. Midway through his journey, he passed the village of Zwinderen. Someone with such an interest in the passing landscape must have noticed a newly built farmhouse with the year 1862 (formed by wall anchors between the upper and lower windows). Over 160 years later, the facade still reflects in the Verlengde Hogeveense Vaart.

Vincent's Day Trip

When you drive into Nieuw-Amster-



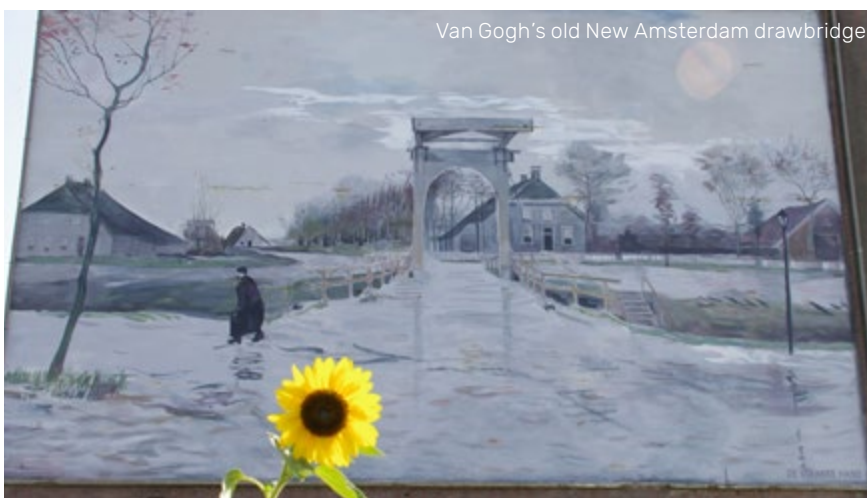
The old silo in Veenoord



Impression of Van Gogh in Veenoord



Van Gogh's old New Amsterdam drawbridge



Van Gogh House anno 2024



dam/Veenoord today, your eyes will automatically be drawn to the old silo featuring two immense Van Gogh paintings, each 250 square meters. There's still immense pride that the great painter stayed here. On the west side, you'll see the watercolor "The Drawbridge" in Nieuw-Amsterdam. In front of the silo, a field of sunflowers has been planted—it's fair to call it Van Gogh's flower. With a bit of maneuvering, we've even been able to project one of the painted flowers onto a real one. The drawbridge itself spanned the Hoogeveense Vaart in front of Hindrik Scholte's Lodge, where Van Gogh stayed until December 4, 1883. This whitewashed house is now called the "Van Gogh Huis" and serves as both the starting and ending point for the "Day Trip" and

"Inspiration Tour." There's a remarkable story behind the portrait on the station side of the silo. We don't actually know what Vincent looked like during his time in Drenthe, as there are no known photos or (self-) portraits of him from 1872 to 1886. Because of this, a competition was held for the amateur painters of "De Nachtwacht van Emmen" to offer their interpretation of how Vincent might have appeared in Drenthe. Jantje Hartman from Klazienaveen was the winner. Her work was then further developed by other artists using AI technology to make it suitable for such a large surface. The drawbridge and the Drenthe portrait of Vincent van Gogh are connected by a text from one of Vincent's letters to his brother Theo in Paris, written during his time in Drenthe.

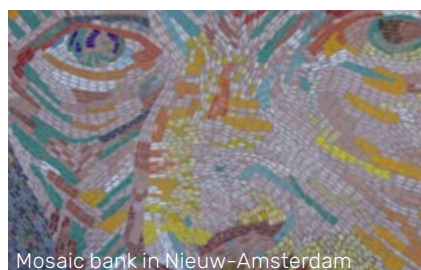
Van Gogh was very active in the southeastern corner of Drenthe. For example, one day he hitched a ride on a cart with innkeeper Scholte, who was going to the market in Assen. Leaving at 3 AM, he arrived around 6 AM in the area surrounding Zweeloo, hoping to meet other artists. However, it remained just a hope; he had to entertain himself. He wrote to his brother: *"I passed an old church with a shepherd and a flock of sheep along the hedge. In the background, one didn't see a glimpse of the sea, but only a sea of young corn, a sea of furrows instead of waves. That area around Zweeloo is at this moment entirely young corn—sometimes that endless, most tender green I know. With a sky of delicate lilac-white above it that creates an effect—I don't think*



Through view panel
with Van Gogh painting
in Zweeloo



This is what the church in Zweeloo looks like in 2024



Mosaic bank in Nieuw-Amsterdam



Mosaic bank in Nieuw-Amsterdam

it can be painted, but for me, it's the fundamental tone one must know to understand the basis of other effects. A black earth, flat—infinite—a clear sky of delicate lilac-white. That earth sprouts the young corn—with that corn, it's as if it's molded." By "green on the fields," he's referring to the winter rye that's sown here in the fall or winter. On your bike ride, be sure to stop at the little church in Zweeloo and look through the view-panel to see how Van Gogh saw the church he painted in 1883.

Vincent's Inspiration

We're now back in Nieuw-Amsterdam to start the third leg of our journey. First, take a moment to admire the two benches along the canal, adorned with colorful mosaic tiles featuring Van Gogh themes. It's truly impressive how they were created with such endless patience. This third loop takes us through the former peat extraction areas: Schoo-

nebeek, Bargerveen, and Weiteveen. Van Gogh remained lyrical about the landscape he found himself in, writing, "Drenthe is superb, but enduring it depends on many things—it depends on whether one has the money for it, it depends on whether one can withstand the solitude. The

land is so beautiful that I cannot tell you." Let this be your motivation to travel to southeast Drenthe and enjoy its tranquility. The guide, "Cycling with Van Gogh," is an indispensable companion for this journey.

Text and image: Teus Korporaal



Guide Van Gogh Cycle Route

ISBN : 978 9083352343

Editor: Katja Staring

Price: 9,95 Euro

See further:

www.vangoghdrenthe.nl

www.vangoghdrenthe.nl/fietsroutes

www.vangoghhuisdrenthe.nl

Eddy Merckx Cycling Route has been expanded



©Lander Loeckx

It couldn't have escaped anyone's notice that Eddy celebrated his 80th birthday. For Visit Vlaams-Brabant, this was the reason to extend the existing Eddy Merckx Cycling Route with an extra-long, 150 km version. The signposted route takes you to all corners of the Hageland. Cycle along the same roads where young Eddy gained his first cycling experience, through the heart of the fruit region and over the Brabant loam plateaus. Pass stately square farmhouses and the winding Gete river. There are no super steep climbs, but it's always up and down. This ride, with 1,000 meters of elevation gain, really gets into your legs.

A route fitting for "The Cannibal." You start at Café Boerenhof in Meensel-Kiezegem. The first 60 km of the renewed route follows the same path as the original, including passing Eddy Merckx's birthplace and his street art. After that, you can choose to do the long route or the short route. The new route primarily follows car-free, rolling roads; it's never truly flat. Around km 125, a few challenging climbs await in the Pellenberg area.

"Of course, Eddy gave his blessing to the route: 'I'm pleased that the route was extended to 150 km,' says Eddy Merckx. 'I rode my first races in this area, and I still think

it's a wonderful region for cycling. You'll find an ideal mix of short, punchy climbs and endless rolling roads, all combined with beautiful vistas. Perfect training, right?"

All information can be found at: visitvlaamsbrabant.be/fietsen/vind-een-fietsroute/eddy-merckx-cycling-route-150km. You can also download the GPS tracks there.



Text: Rens Klaasse

Blinkers, headlight and rear-light in your HYP-E helmet

The ABUS HYP-E is a new, super-innovative helmet thanks to its distinctive lighting concept, which includes a taillight, headlight, and turn signals. Inspired by the automotive industry, the lighting ensures all-around visibility and emphasizes the presence of cyclists on busy roads or in poor visibility conditions. The front and taillights are integrated into the HYP-E's multi-shell design, highlighting its premium look. A

handlebar-mounted remote control allows you to activate the turn signal, operate it intuitively, and clearly and timely signal a change in direction.

Comfort in all weather

Ventilation in the upper head area is controlled by a smart ventilation system: If the weather changes, you can easily close the helmet's generous ventilation openings





with the VentCover. This solution is inspired by winter sports.

More protection on e-bikes

The HYP-E also complies with the strict NTA 8776 standard—the world's first safety standard specifically developed for S-pedelec riders. Helmets meeting the NTA standard are tested at significantly higher crash speeds, offer better protection for the back of the head and temples, and can absorb higher forces. It is also the first cycling helmet to have 4 different certifications: CE, NTA 8776, CPSC, and even TÜV.

Prices and versions:

This helmet is available in 3 sizes (S-M-L) and 3 versions:

Base: helmet (with front and rear light) + turn signal remote control.

Ace: same as Base, but includes a transparent visor and ear pads.

BL.Ace: same as Ace, but includes the brake light remote control.

All accessories are also available separately:

Turn signal remote control: recommended retail price €24.95

Ear pads: €19.95

Brake light remote control: recommended retail price €34.95

Visor, available in 3 versions: trans-

parent and smoke, recommended retail price €49.95, and photochromatic €89.95

Recommended retail price for HYP-E starts from €199.95. The helmet is already available at ABUS dealers.

For more info: www.abus.com

The new SLR range from SELLE ITALIA

Het SLR-model van Selle Italia - één van de meest iconische zadels van de afgelopen 25 jaar - heeft een nieuw ontwerp gekregen. De nieuwe SLR-serie, nu in zijn vierde generatie, blijft trouw aan zijn legendarische wortels en omarmt tegelijkertijd een nieuwe ontwerpvisie. Selle Italia lanceerde de nieuwe SLR-serie ter gelegenheid van de Maratona dles Dolomites.

Launched in 1999 with a narrow, ultralight competition saddle, the SLR immediately became a benchmark for professional riders. With its sleek, minimalist design, this saddle was the essence of lightness, performance, and style in professional cycling.

Now, 26 years later, the fourth generation of the SLR has been designed, which Giuseppe Bigolin, President of Selle Italia, describes as “an evolution, not a revolution.”

Key Features of the New SLR Series

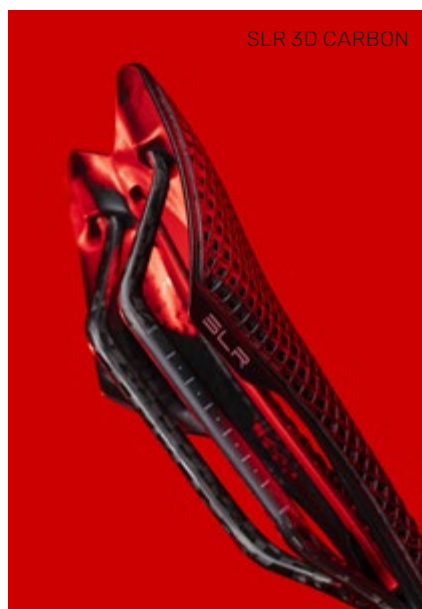
The saddles in the new SLR series all retain the shape, and thus the type of saddle, that made this model famous and instantly recognizable. One of the first new



SLR 3D CARBON

features is the change in length: 242 millimeters, 6 millimeters shorter than the previous model, and close to the UCI regulatory limit. The decision to shorten the saddle's length is complemented by a newly designed padding profile, which is now minimal and more compact at the rear, an area that idmatch Pressure Map analysis has shown to be largely unused and to have little impact on overall riding comfort. The seating point—where

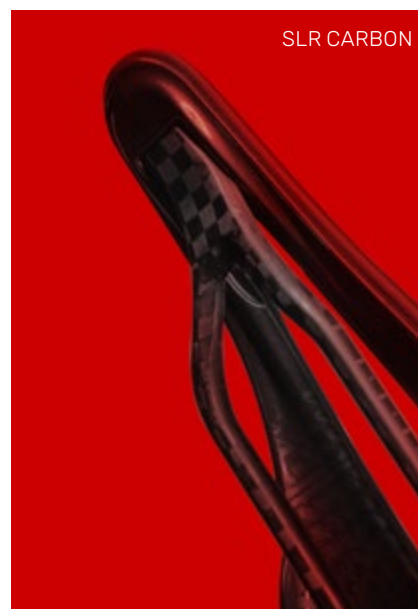
the sit bones make contact—remains unchanged, and the BRP (Biomechanical Reference Point) also stays in the same position as in previous versions, ensuring a consistent feel and a seamless transition from the older model. Another significant innovation is the lower weight: all new versions are lighter than their predecessors, saving valuable grams and improving responsiveness and overall efficiency.



SLR 3D CARBON



SLR 3D ELITE



SLR CARBON

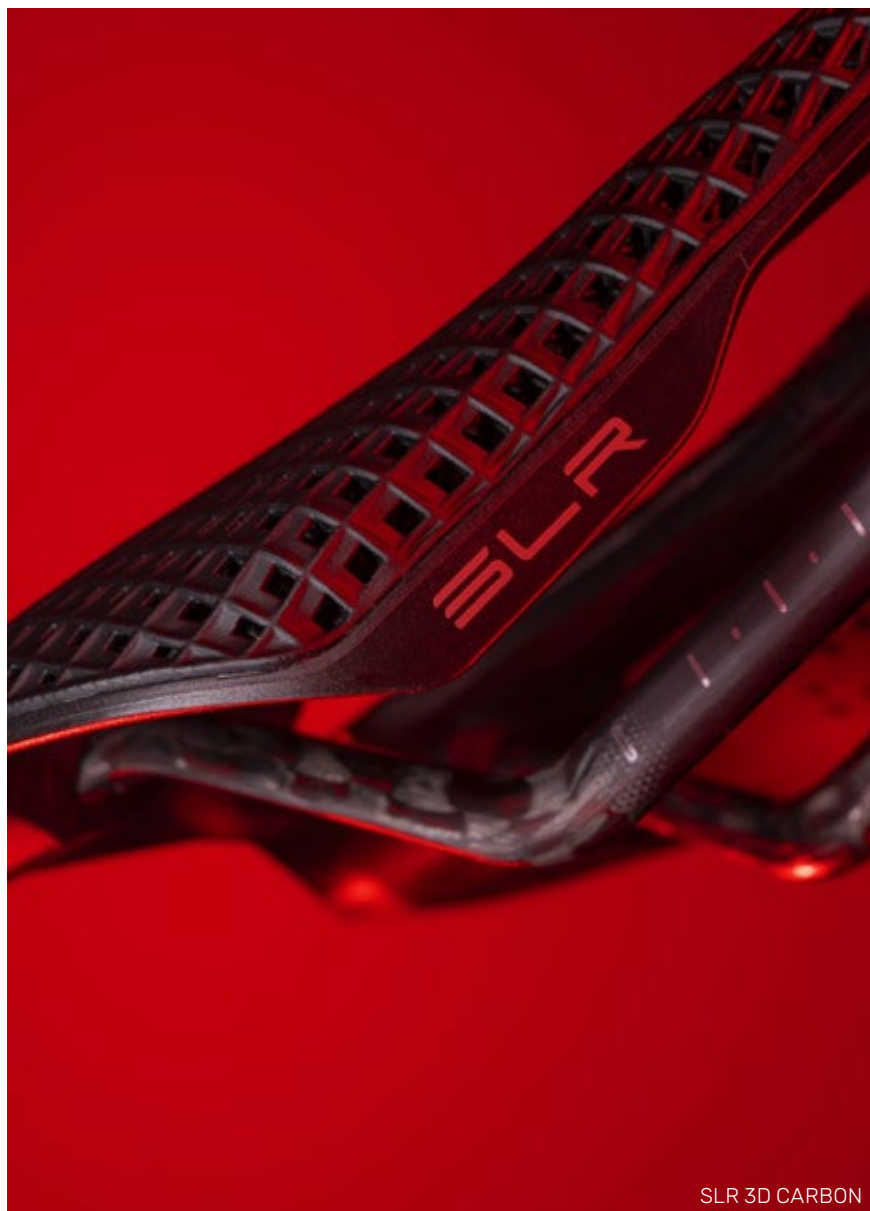
The frame has also been improved, especially in the carbon rail versions, with a more efficient layout and redesigned shapes that enhance damping without compromising structural strength. The stack between the BRP and the front attachment point of the rail in the shell has been increased by 4 millimeters for even more adjustment freedom. From an aesthetic standpoint, the new SLR features a clean, minimalist, all-black design that seamlessly blends with the new styling of modern road bikes. The model and size designations are in gray on the cover.

Initial Models

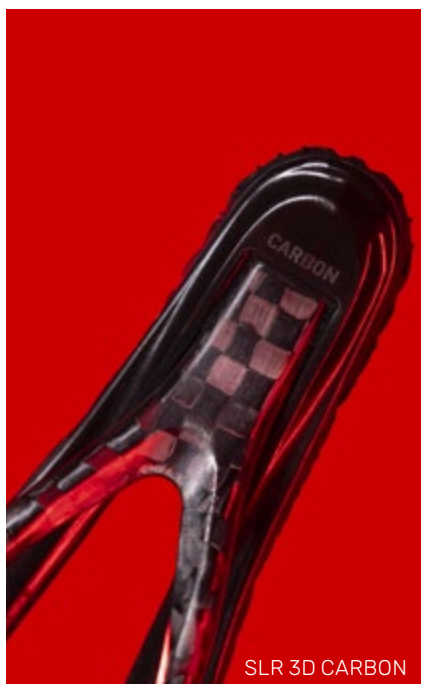
The SLR range is launching with three versions, with additional variations to be released in September to complete the range:

The SLR 3D CARBON

Weighing in at just 137 grams in the S3 size, the new SLR 3D CARBON sets a new weight standard as the lightest 3D-printed saddle on the market. This new model with a carbon frame weighs 29 grams less than the previous SLR Boost 3D



SLR 3D CARBON



SLR 3D CARBON



SLR 3D CARBON

Kit Carbonio. It retains the classic SLR shape and is made with Carbon DLS technology which creates differentiated damping zones.

SLR 3D CARBON Technical Specifications

Dimensions:

S: 242 x 130 mm

L: 242 x 145 mm

Rail: Carbon

Padding: 3D-printed

Weight:

S: 137 g

L: 143 g

Use: Road

Suggested Retail Price: €449.90

The SLR 3D ELITE

The SLR 3D Elite version features a lightweight steel tubular frame. In the S3 size, it weighs 28 grams less than the previous SLR Boost 3D T1316 model. More specifically, the model in the S3 size weighs 172 grams, while the L3 size weighs 178 grams. The cover is developed with Carbon DLS technology.

SLR 3D ELITE Technical Data:

Dimensions:

S: 242 x 130 mm

L: 242 x 145 mm

Rail: Lightweight steel tube Ø 7mm

Padding: 3D-printed

Weight:

S: 172 g

L: 178 g

Use: Road

Suggested Retail Price: €359.90

The SLR CARBON

The Carbon rail model features hand-covered padding, giving the saddle a handcrafted look. Available in three sizes (with or without a cutout), weighing only 118 grams in the S3 size, four grams less than the previous model.

SLR CARBON Technical Data

Dimensions:

S: 242 x 130 mm / L: 242 x 145 mm

Rail: Carbon

Padding: Hand-covered

Weight: S3 118 g / L3 122 g / S1 135 g / L1 139 g

Use: Road

Suggested Retail Price: €319.90

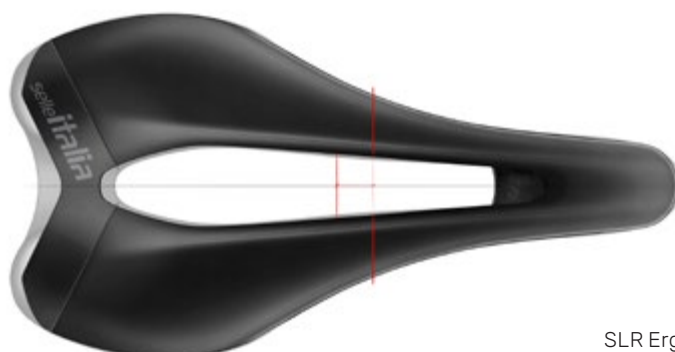
The SLR 3D and SLR CARBON saddles are available on the Selle Italia website.



SLR 3D ELITE



SLR CARBON



SLR Ergonomics



For more information or to order:
www.selleitalia.com

Concap Max Energy already gives you a nice advantage

With this powerful sports drink, featuring a delicious red fruit flavor, you'll make the start of your training or race a success right away. This drink is ideal as a pre-workout or for your first bottle during exercise. The formula naturally boosts your energy, focus, and endurance, while also helping to reduce muscle stiffness after exertion.

Perfectly tailored for blood types A, AB, and B for use before and during exercise. Blood type O? Then mix half a dose with your isotonic drink due to the caffeine content.

Usage tips:

1 dose in half a water bottle, 45 minutes before exercise.

During exercise:

1/3 to 1/4 dose mixed with your basic drink for extra endurance and lactic acid buffering.

Price: €36 per tub

Extra benefit: Athletes, clubs, and teams enjoy exclusive discounts!



Concap S-D-P helps you to top performance!

Concap is unique in the market, offering supplements tailored to blood type, which ensures better absorption and effectiveness. The Concap S-D-P – Shake, Drink & Perform – is a formula you use before exercise to support maximum energy, better endurance, and faster recovery.

Thanks to added amino acids and natural nitrates from spinach and beetroot, you get extra oxygen in your muscles for peak performance. It's suitable for both recreational and competitive athletes. For extra important training sessions or competitions, you can even use up to 1.5 servings for an even greater effect.

Flavor options:

S-D-P AB: Blackcurrant flavor

S-D-P O: Tutti frutti (cola flavor coming soon!)

Usage:

S-D-P AB: Up to 1.5 capfuls in half a glass of water, drink 45 minutes before exercise.

S-D-P O: Up to 1.5 capfuls in half a glass of water, drink 1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes before exercise.

Price: €29.50 per bottle.

Extra benefit: Special discounts for athletes, clubs, and teams.

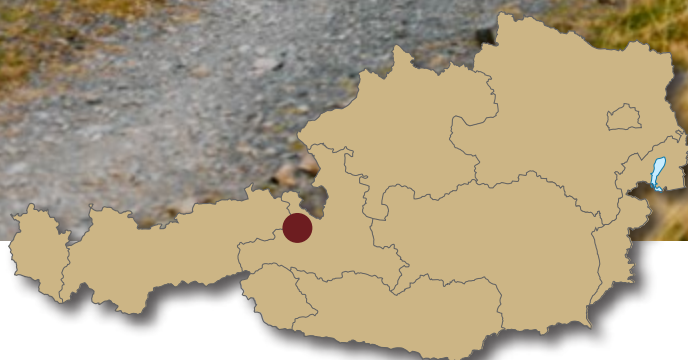


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Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn

Endless gravel fun in SalzburgerLand



Last summer, we explored the Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn region by road bike and quickly learned that this is Austria's largest cycling region. Also with the mountain bike we have gone on several occasions to gurgel with pleasure as downhillers. But that the Home of Lässig is also a real gravel region we have only now experienced in person.

The fact is that a wonderful alpine network of gravel roads and forest trails stretches through the mountains here, and that in turn thrilled us this summer. Whether it is alpine gravel, a gentle valley tour or a fast off-road variant, a casual 3-lake tour or a devilish gravel devil - on closer inspection, the region between Salzburg and Tyrol turns out to be an absolutely top-notch gravel region.

For mountain bikers, Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn is the ultimate place of pilgrimage. For here you will find the largest alpine MTB adventure playground in the country, including the Epic Bikepark Leogang. However, the seven mountains in Austria's largest cycling region not only house 105 kilometers of casual lines and single trails, but also almost countless gravel roads and forest trails.



© saalbach.com Moritz-Ablinger

The nine state-of-the-art mountain elevators take not only mountain bikers and e-bikers but also mountain-hungry gravel bikers to the peaks in no time.

Gravel is the currency of choice here!

The variety of routes ranges from relaxed forest trails and fast off-road tracks to demanding climbs in the mountains. The Steinberg

Circuit or the Beechrock 1000 offer perfect challenges for all levels. One thing is clear: gravel in Saalbach Hinterglemm is alpine gravel. The full off-road program on sometimes challenging gravel surfaces that require good riding technique. The reward: an alpine postcard landscape with WOW panoramic views. Gravel bikers benefit from the first-class cycling infrastructure of the Home of Lässig - you'll find everything from well-equipped bike rentals to biking hotels with a wealth of expertise. In short: the perfect home base for alpine gravel biking adventures.

Gravel hideaway in SalzburgerLand

Our bike home base: the Biohotel Rupertus**** in Leogang should not go unmentioned here. Because the bikehotel is definitely a real home for gravel riders. No matter how wide the cleats. Erik & Patrick are toppers to talk to when it comes to guided tours - the two certified bike guides know the region like the back of their hand and show guests the most beautiful gravel rides off the beaten track every day - from relaxing panorama tours to challenging mountain routes. Depending on your mood and level. So beginners are just as welcome here as pros. After the ride, the excellent

organic cuisine, a 22-meter pool and cozy interior provide relaxation. And without guilt, because here you can enjoy a climate-positive gravel biking vacation in a 100% organic hotel.

Devil's acquaintance tour Gravel-Devil

Then now is the time for the first introductory ride! The Devil's Gravel-Devil is only 32 kilometers long, but with about 1,000 altimeters. We can expect tough climbs, breathtaking views and a descent that will put a big grin on your face. Guaranteed fun! The gravel tour begins along the Saalach boardwalk toward the Teufelswasser (Devil's Water) - from which the tour takes its name - where a short break is worthwhile, and not just because of the refreshing spring water. Then begins the first challenging climb to the Ossmann-Alm - if you like sun terraces and Salzburg home cooking, treat yourself to a refreshment stop at the end of the valley. Then the toughest part begins: a long climb along the Hochalm reservoir to the Rosswaldhütte at 1,565 meters. At the latest on the Wieseralm, it's time to stop for refreshments! Kasnocken! Kaiserschmarrn! Or beef tartare or tenderloin. That is also available



© Yvonne Hoerl Print

here in the slightly different alpine hut. The descent finally leads down into the valley via winding farm roads.

3-Lakes Tour ... or the Extreme Scream Tour?

If you want to take it a little easier, but just as much fun, take the 3-Lake Tour: 88 km through the

Kitzbühel Alps, past Lake Zeller, Klammsee and Ritzensee – perfect Insta photo spots and swimming stops included. On the Extreme Scream Tour with 104 km and 1,400 vertical meters, the region shows its teeth – and a number of highlights such as the Pillersee, the Pass Strub castle ruins and the Screaming Fountain. Those who

want to make Leogang unsafe can do so with the short Forstho-falm tour (5.9 km), the challenging Schwarzleotal tour (26.9 km) or the impressive Fieberbrunn tour (36.8 km) – also a regular starting point on the bucket list Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn. A bucket list at least as long as the name of the region.



© Yvonne Hoerl Print

All about the gravel destination:

Österreichs größte Bike-Region
Saalbach Hinterglemm Leogang Fieberbrunn
bike.saalbach.com

Overnight gravels specialists:

Biohotel Rupertus***
rupertus.at

More gravel bike hotels and regions:

gravelbike-holidays.com
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In love with the Caribbean colors of Weissensee

You can turn off your Instagram filter around Weissensee, as the play of colors on the lake is unique, and the mountain biking opportunities all around are no slouch either. When you first stand on the shore, you'll think you've landed in the Caribbean. And when you take the Sommerbergbahn up to 1,324 meters above the lake, you'll know you don't need the Caribbean sea when you see the lake between the mountain peaks.

3 MTB routes for warming up

The region in southwest Carinthia is considered a special insider tip for mountain bike enthusiasts for good reason. For just as the lake refuses to be overly developed, so



©Regitnig Hotel und Chalets

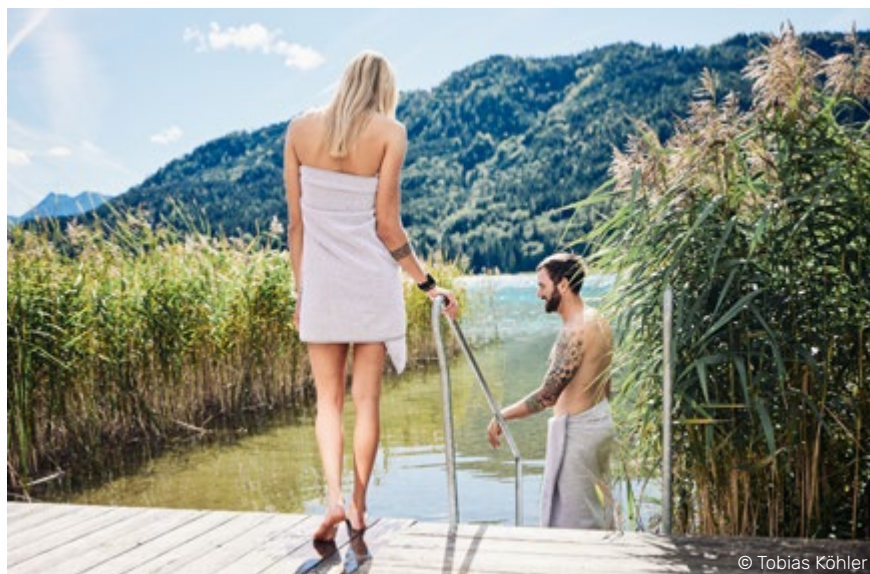




does the mountain. The downhill trails are laid out with an instinct for adventure - including the Weissensee Trail (2.7 km / 370 altimeters), which starts at the Naggler Alm - and all have a natural course. Shortly before the valley station, there's a small, finely technical trail to warm up and get into the swing of things before heading to high altitudes. If you prefer a more exotic ride on the Caribbean Weissensee with its white (st)edges, you can opt for Bike&Boat - take the Weissensee liner to the other side of the lake, enjoy that extra vacation feeling and continue your bike ride freshly rested on the other side of the lake.

Basecamp overlooking the lake

We find our cycling home base right in the center: the family-run See-Aktivhotel Regitnig****. Since 1911, the Eder family has been welcoming guests for a summer vacation right on the shore of Lake Weissensee. Today, modern chalets, cozy rooms, its own beach and



lakeside spa offer the perfect base for an active vacation. Host Michael is a certified bike guide himself and, together with local guides, shows guests his favorite tours around Lake Weissensee and in the Gailtal Alps. After the tour, a dip in the turquoise-green water awaits - or a sunny spot on the lakeside terrace. And in the evening? Regional dishes of Carinthian cuisine, served with a view of the lake to end the day.

Stay overnight at specialized cycling hotel

See-Aktivhotel Regitnig
Hotel & Chalets****,
Weissensee,
regitnig.com

More cycling hotels and regions

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Racing bike fun in the four-country corner of the Bregenzerwald



© Sebastian Stiphout
Bregenzerwald Tourismus

In western Austria, between Lake Constance and the Arlberg, a real gem awaits racing cyclists: the Bregenzerwald. The small but beautiful road cycling region in Vorarlberg is located in the four-country corner - right next to Germany, Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. Unlimited touring opportunities meet traditional villages, alpine pass roads, tasty mountain cheese and lots of pure nature. If you are looking for the combination of cycling, altimeters, tranquility and a change of scenery, you will find it here.

A cycling vacation in the Bregenzerwald often begins with a friendly "Grüß di!" and ends with a steaming plate of cheese dumplings. In between are days full of scenic

passes, gently rolling valley routes and challenging tours through Vorarlberg's mountain mosaic. The classics like the Hochtannberg Pass, the Faschinajoch, the Furkajoch or the Flexen Pass require endurance and perseverance, but they reward you with picture book alpine panoramas and fascinating views. Those who prefer to take it a little easier will find ideal routes for "easy rides" on the Lorena Pass or on the quiet side roads in the Rohrmoo Valley. It is precisely this mix of challenging stages and quiet stretches that makes the region so attractive - whether you are on the hunt for altimeters or just want to do some leisurely mileage it is all here in front of your wheels.



Three passes in one - the best of Vorarlberg

If you are ready for a special challenge, you should devour the legendary trio of three passes: the route starts in the charming village of Au and takes you over the Hochtannbergpass, on to the Flexenpass via Lech, into the Klostertal valley and finally to Bludenz. The tour combines sporting challenges with scenic highlights: more than 2,000 vertical meters, three Alpine passes and many hairpin bends. The cycling routes here lead you through beautiful gorges, and shady forests, to alpine heights with then great descents. Once you arrive in Bludenz, small cafes invite you to take a well-deserved break before the way back again surprises you with new sweeping views.



© Alex Kaiser



© Alex Kaiser

World of contrasts

The transition from the Bregenzerwald to Lake Constance is almost seamless – and that is exactly what makes the region so special. One moment you are cycling at an altitude of over 1,500 m, the next you are cycling along the largest inland water in Central Europe. It is these contrasts that characterize the Bregenzerwald. Seclusion and vastness, authenticity and modern hospitality, tradition and innovation. The region is also a pioneer in architecture: wood, glass and clean lines characterize the villages – traditionally rooted, but with an eye to the future. You can stay overnight in style at true cycling hotels such as the Gämsle Hotel in Schopper-

nau or Hotel Bären with its trendy Café Deli – both are perfect havens for sporty and active connoisseurs.

Finding peace in the natural wellness of the forest

After an intensive day in the saddle, the Bregenzerwald offers a soothing contrast program for relaxation. Nature plays the leading role here in the wellness program with various original activities. Particularly popular: the barefoot trails in Reuthe or a visit to the moor bath in Sibratsgfall – ideal for revitalizing tired legs and regaining new energy for the next stage. Those who prefer classic relaxation can visit the wellness areas with sauna and panoramic views at Hotel Bären or Gämsle.

Intense. Authentic. Surprising.

The Bregenzerwald may seem small at first glance, but its diversity, character and proximity to nature make it one of the most adventurous cycling regions in the Alps. This is not about records, but real experiences.

It's about hospitality, fun, the right amount of challenge and the good feeling of discovering something new. From relaxed valley routes to challenging, tough stages - there is something for every type of road cyclist here. And anyone who has

ever cycled through the tasty Alpine meadows, conquered the passes and enjoyed the sunset over a cheeseboard will understand: In the Bregenzerwald, it's not only the miles on the bike that count, but also those other intense moments.



More info on the region:

bregenzerwald.at



Cycling hotels in the Bregenzerwald:

Gämsle Hotel, Wirtshaus & Mehr... : gaemsle.at

Hotel Bären & Café Deli***
baerenmellau.at

For more cycling regions:
roadbike-holidays.com

Bled / Hotel & Glamping Ribno Alpine Resort**** **Europe's first 'Zero Waste Hotel'**

We found a very special hotel for our readers who want to head to cycling country Slovenia to discover the country's amazing cycling opportunities. Are you a hotel sleeper or a camping enthusiast? Do you like luxury and glamour or do you seek closeness to nature? Whatever type of vacation you go for - at the Hotel & Glamping Ribno Alpine Resort in the small village of Ribno in Upper Carniola, you can have it both ways!

Here, a stone's throw from Bled, cycling enthusiasts will find the best of both worlds: stay at the family-run 4* hotel or in the ad-



venturous wooden cottages of the glamping village. Glampers enjoy nature and all the amenities of the hotel. A Slovenian 'Secret Escape



cycling vacation' in the middle of seclusion between the Sava River and a small spruce forest.

Tire tracks instead of footprints: sustainable travel in Slovenia

Resort manager & mastermind Matja is a passionate cyclist himself – he and his guides will show you the most beautiful spots of Upper Carnia on guided bike tours. They start right at your doorstep – around Lake Bled with the unique island of Blejski Otok, in the Triglav National Park or to the Julian Alps. And after the bike ride? Cool off in the lake, the natural swimming pond or the hot tub on the terrace!

© Katarina Strgar



© Felix Saller



© Felix Saller



If you are looking for nature and want to explore the pristine outdoor playground around Bled, then the Ribno Alpine Resort is the right place for you: The cycling hotel has been committed to sustainability since 2018 and is the first (and so far the only!) zero waste hotel in Slovenia to offer vacations in harmony with nature: the commitment to environmental protection, especially in the areas of waste, drinking water and respectful handling of food, is exemplary – the resort was the first hotel in the EU to be awarded the European zero waste certificate with two stars in 2022.

Stay overnight at specialized cycling hotel

Hotel & Glamping
Ribno Alpine Resort**** Bled
hotel-ribno.si

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