

Colours of the Peloton

by Patrick Goodacre



Sample

prologue

Since the invention of the bicycle over a hundred years ago, nothing else has quite managed to create such a unique human fascination with such a simple machine. The most efficient form of transportation still seems humble in terms of current pioneering technology, yet manages to provide unparalleled joy to millions everywhere.

The bicycle has always been ridden competitively, but it was only in the early part of the 20th century that the sport began to grow as races were organised across the world and riders would race thousands of miles for the taste of glory. The Tour de France was first raced in 1903 and is still gaining popularity over a century later. Riders would cross hundreds of miles each day through rolling countryside and over mountain passes, on un-surfaced roads with heavy steel bicycles and carrying their own emergency supplies.

Although the sport has evolved since 1903, the essential principles remain very similar. Other races have also developed offering stage-race competitions, and one-day events in different countries on a wide variety of terrains.

This book looks at the visual aspect of a sport which could be considered one of the most colourful of all. It is a sport which is free to the public, involves the best athletes in the world, and is regarded by many as the most beautiful of all .



" A bicycle is a classic design...The basic concept of a body borne through space freely, with the aid of nothing but a crank, two wheels and arms and legs, remains poetically unchanged. What better way to see the world?"

Lance Armstrong



team jerseys

Ever since the post-war introduction of commercially sponsored cycling teams, riders have donned attire that has evolved along with the technology, fashion and money involved with the sport.

Like many other sports, competitors could be considered as human billboards. As the sport's popularity has increased, so too has the level of sponsorship involved. Companies decide to associate with the team that will best suit their market. This has often meant that a wide range of styles can be found within the peloton.

The companies who back teams want as much visual promotion as possible. One way of ensuring this is by creating a recognisable and distinguishable team kit.



The following section looks at team jersey designs over the last fifty years, the evolution of styles, and investigates what elements make for distinguishable, effective and classic designs.

..... 1950s

1960s 1970s 1980s 1990s 2000s

Mainly simple blocks of colour. Varying shades of blues and reds. Most contain two colours plus white as a background for the team name.

Colour

A variety of layouts and styles, although most popular is a bold background colour with a horizontal name band across the chest (eg, the Gitane design, centre-right).

Style

Serif typefaces are most popular but sans-serif can also be found in some designs. All text is positioned on chest, only a few designs repeat the name around the sleeves.

Type

Two sponsors at the most on a jersey, no company symbols, just logotypes. Some of the jerseys have striped sleeves, but apart from this there is very little graphic detailing.

Sponsors



..... 1950s 1960s 1970s 1980s **1990s** 2000s

Colour

Further development of various colour combinations. Often the eye-catching designs contain bright colours that do not compliment - (see Amore et Vita jersey).

Style

Sponsor's names are now often dwarfed by the graphics and colours of the jersey. Very few fixed elements as every design strives for distinguishability. Few simple styles compared with previous decades.

Type

Again, type is reliant on sponsor's logotype. Names are often framed in boxes or ovals on the chest. Very little co-ordination between multiple sponsors on any one design.

Sponsors

Some jerseys are full of smaller sub-sponsor logos with very little background space. Other teams focus the whole design on a main sponsor (see Asics jersey).



2000s

..... 1950s 1960s 1970s 1980s 1990s

Colour

Slightly more care taken on colour combinations and application. Mostly blocks of colour are used in various dynamic, curvy shapes (see the Rabobank design).

Style

A development in terms of integrating both the type and logos of sponsors with overall graphics and aesthetics of jersey. Some designs such as the Saeco and Lampre jerseys have kept the aesthetic simple.

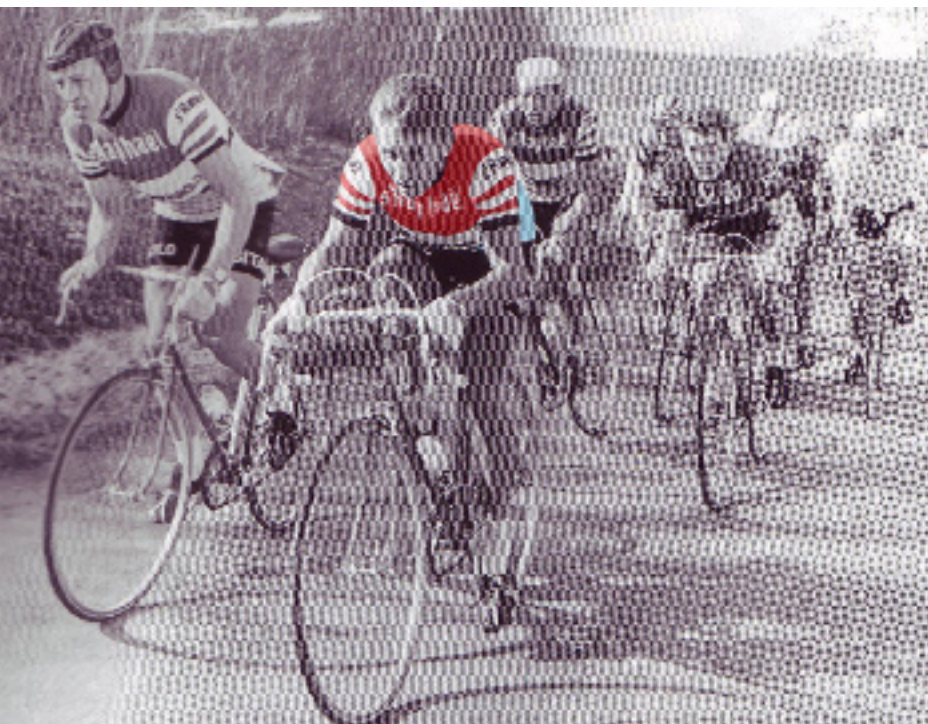
Type

Type seems to be less important than the overall visual impact of the jersey. For example, whilst the Fassa Bortolo type is not the clearest, it is incorporated into a blue swirl, perhaps representing the company better than the name on its own.

Sponsors

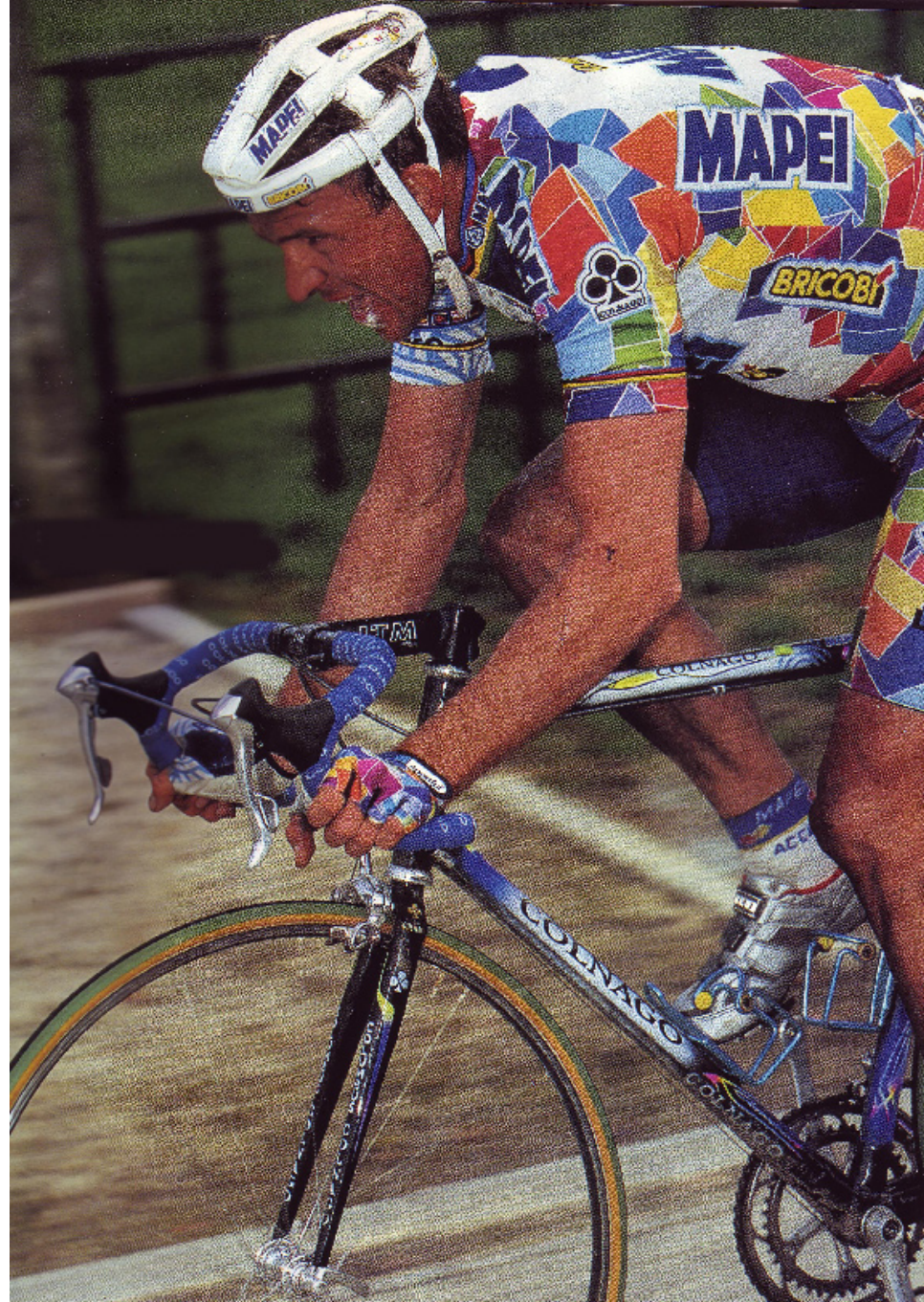
Sponsors are positioned throughout, but key positions are across the chest, on the shoulders and up the sides of the jersey underneath the sleeves.





Above: Jacques Anquetil with his team-mates racing the French *St Raphael* squad in the late 1950s in their classic tricolore team kit.

Opposite: The 'Lion of Flanders' Johan Museeuw racing in 1998 for the Italian *Mapei* squad. The 'technicolour' approach to team kit was popular in the 80s and 90s.



deconstruction

The team jersey designs of the last fifty years can be grouped into several groups. Although each kit is unique, layouts, shapes, forms and graphic detailing are often very similar in certain eras. Colours, type, and logos may vary, but often the layout of key elements are almost identical. It is interesting to look at the evolution of styles and fashions within the peloton.



At the beginning of the 1950s, most cycling jerseys followed a very similar layout of simple block colour with a contrasting band across the chest in which the sponsor's name would be clearly displayed.



In the latter half of the decade designs developed and a popular style was to introduce a third colour and move the sponsor's name higher up the chest sitting on the border between two colours.



The 1960s saw a continuation in the use of simple block colours, with often a contrasting, horizontal chest band and matching sleeves. As more sponsors entered the sport sleeves were also used as a place to display text.



The late 1960s and early 70s saw more experimentation with colour, but styles still favoured the classic use of large block colour and stripes across the chest. Graphic detailing was developed as elements such as shoulder stripes and sleeve cuffs were stylised.



During the mid-1970s it seemed that the classic chest stripe style had reached a limit and teams started wearing more unusual designs often involving sharp angles, multiple stripes and warped text.



Although some designs had pushed boundaries in terms of shape and layouts, others continued to evolve the 'classic' style, incorporating more and more graphic detailing and sponsors logos.



As the sport entered the 1980s, designs seemed to try and push boundaries even further by introducing harsh lines and curves combined with complex logos and detailing. It was soon recognised that the shoulders and sides of the jerseys were key positions for sponsors logos.



Towards the late 1980s and early 90s, fashion within cycling seemed to mirror that of the high-street, using bright, clashing colours, which were eye-catching but little more. Here we can also see the first use of gradient colour instead of block shapes used previously.



A popular style which was introduced in the 1990s used flowing blocks of colour from one corner of the jersey to another. By ruling out all symmetry, the designs could be pushed further, but was perhaps detrimental to the clarity of sponsors' logos.

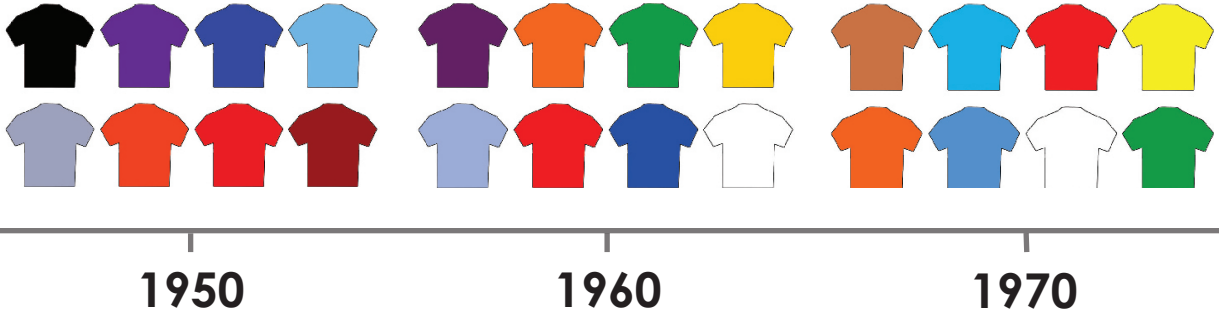


The mid 1990s saw the introduction of a style which is still very much used today, involving sweeping curves and ovals designed around the sponsors' logos. The symmetrical elements of the designs help to focus the viewer on sponsors' names.



Another style of recent years returns to quite a simple clear layout involving large white backgrounds combined with complimentary blocks of colour on sleeves and sides of the jerseys. The white background offers maximum clarity for sponsor names and logos.

evolution of colour



The selection of eight swatches above show some of the most popular colours used in team kit design within each decade. We can see above that strong, powerful colours such as red and black were popular during the 1950s and could be found within a peleton of mainly dark or pastel dark colours. The combination of red and black can be highly emotive.

"On a black background, a field of red appears hot and vibrant, with clearly defined edges."
Fraser & Banks

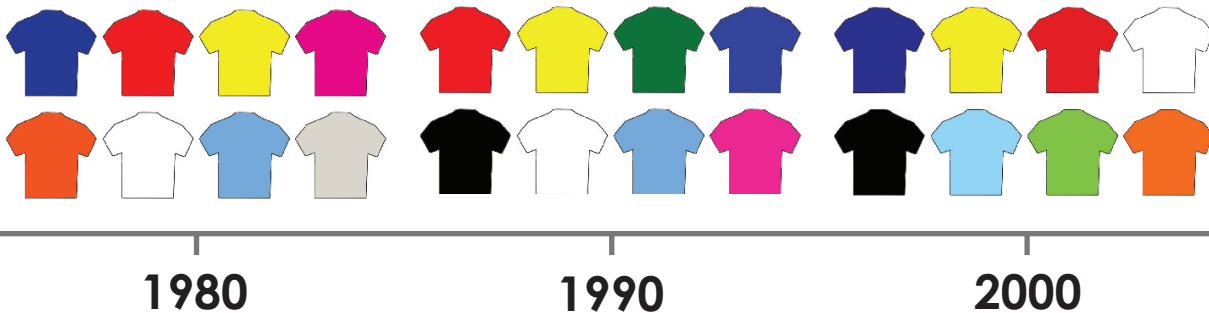
The 1960s saw an introduction of brighter colours such as greens, yellows and oranges. Soon teams had realised the value of brightly coloured, high impact graphics and combined blocks of colour together to create some very striking aesthetics.

It is perhaps also important to note the era of this development in colour use, as it paralleled the fashionable explosion of colour and vibrancy through the "swinging sixties" and into the 1970s.

Although the following decade did not see such a huge step in colour application on jerseys, we can still see an increase in the brightness of colours used, as well as the fact that more light pastel shades such as the brown and blues shown above, have been introduced.

Light blue has always been colour associated with sport.

"Light blue looks young and sporty.. but royal or navy blue has a dignified, wealthy air." H Chjiwa



Jerseys continued to incorporate ever popular colours such as the primary reds, yellows and blues in the 1980s, but further colours such as magenta were introduced to once again increase brightness and visibility.

Towards the end of the decade many designs tried to create the brightest, most garish aesthetic. This often meant compromising the clarity.

"...when you combine two or more vivid colours, the result is a cacophony - too many voices shouting at once." H Chijiwa

As sponsorship increased, the 1990s saw a continuation of vivid colour use combined with lots of various graphic logos.

It should be noted that by this time, most jerseys were not dominated by one colour but often a combination of a number of contrasting colours. As the decade drew to a close we saw an increasing use of block colours over the colour grading used in the past 15 or so years, and designs began to calm down.

Over recent years we have seen that it has been mostly recognised that designs can be just as visible and distinguishable by employing good application of colour rather than incorporating as many contrasting and clashing colours as possible.

Obviously the colour of a jersey is dominated by the corporate colours of the main sponsor, and companies have realised that they are trying to promote their brand rather than just make it visible.

colour combinations

Although the choice of predominant colour is important, perhaps more so is the secondary colour and therefore the combination of the two. Below is a table of all the main colour combinations of cycling jerseys in the last 50 years. What is perhaps immediately noticeable is how small it is, showing that there are several key combinations that have proved very popular and effective.

The most popular main colour is blue, followed closely by red. White, yellow, orange and green also prove popular. The introduction of a second colour can alter

the impact and emotions evoked from the initial colour alone. Whilst classic contrasting colours such as red and black, and vivid colours such as yellow and pink can be highly visible and of a high impact, lighter colours can also do the job just as successfully.

"...a colour scheme that uses only light colours can be effective in it's own quiet way, and may actually stand out from the brush, over confident colour schemes that surround it." H Chijiwa





evolution of a jersey

Over the next few pages, the evolution of five of the greatest cycling teams' jerseys has been shown. Often sub-sponsors come and go, fashions change or visual identity is updated. Either way, designs have to adapt and offer a solution whilst remaining distinguishable and clear.

Bianchi



St Raphael



We can see from the examples shown below that although many designs evolve in terms of the graphic layout of the jersey, colours are rarely altered. The Bianchi design has remained the same for many years even the sponsor has come and gone from the sport a number of times. Only once was a third colour introduced because of a large sub-sponsor. It is also interesting to notice the development of the Kelme design. Throughout its years as a main sponsor, the green and blue stripes were used, however when a new sponsor replaced Kelme it kept the colour scheme to maintain a certain level of recognition within the peloton (see 2005).

Carrera



Kelme





leaders jerseys



Le Tour

jaune



The Tour de France is one of the most famous and prestigious sporting events in the world. It has been held annually since 1903 only halting for two world wars. The rider who has the lowest aggregate time at any point in the race is the leader and wears the iconic *maillot jaune*. Race organiser Henri Desgrange, introduced the yellow jersey in 1919 to promote his magazine *Auto*, which pages were yellow.

vert



Within the race itself are other sub-competitions, one of which is the points race. Points are awarded to riders depending on their position at the end of each stage. Points are also available at intermediate sprints throughout stages. The points leader wears a plain green jersey, that was introduced with the competition itself in 1953. The *maillot vert* is often also called the *sprinter's jersey*.

pois rouge



This distinctive jersey was introduced in 1975 by then sponsors *Poulain Chocolates*, to award the best climbers of the Tour. However, the King of the Mountains competition had actually been introduced much earlier in 1933. Points are awarded to the first rider to reach the top of various categorised climbs throughout the race, and the rider with the most points wears the polka-dot jersey.

blanc



The fourth, and perhaps least prestigious competition of the Tour de France is the white jersey, awarding the best young rider. The rider who is placed highest overall and whose age is 25 or below is given the *maillot blanc*. It is a fairly young competition and has not always been promoted with a jersey. The use of white helps to convey a sense of youth, innocence and hope for the future.



il Giro



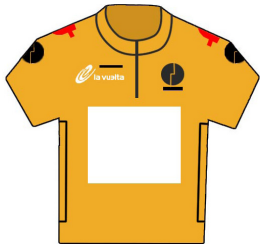
The Giro D'Italia is considered by many as a more beautiful race than the Tour De France, but carries much less of the prestige and stature of its French counterpart. The *maglia rosa* is awarded to the overall leader, and the colour of which is due to the colour of paper used by sponsor and national newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport.

In much a similar way to the Tour de France, the Giro has its own sub-competitions. In Italy the *maglia ciclamino* is awarded to the points leader of the race. The name comes from that of the Ciclamino flower whose colour is a dark purple.

The King of the Mountains competition in the Giro is lead by the rider wearing the green jersey (not to be confused with sprinters jersey of the Tour). Like most other races, points are awarded and collected at the top of all categorised climbs, whether steep suspension bridges or 30,000ft high mountain passes.

The final jersey of the Italian three week tour is the *maglia azzuro*, or the combination jersey. The jersey has been previously used for other competitions, such as the Intergiro, but has recently changed. It is awarded to the rider who is doing best in all of the other three competitions.

la Vuelta



The maglia d'oro is the Spanish equivalent of the maglia rosa and maillot jaune. The golden jersey is worn by the overall leader of the three week Vuelta a Espana.



The points competition seems to change sponsor regularly and so jersey designs come and go frequently. The most recent design incorporates yellow shapes on a light blue background and is highly visible in a mass sprint finish.



A plain red jersey is given to the King of the Mountains in the Vuelta, and is often considered a very prestigious award in this very mountainous race.



Like the other two major tours, there are four competitions within the Vuelta a Espana. The Giro awards a blue combinations jersey, but the Vuelta takes the competition more literally and combines the colours of both the leader's golden and the blue points jerseys.



Above: The yellow jersey of Lance Armstrong is highly visible whilst riding his last professional race, the final stage of the 2005 Tour de France on the Champs Elysees, protected by his Discovery Channel team-mates.

national champions





race logos

one-day races

To help promote and identify themselves, the races themselves have established logos representing the type of race, nationality, and often the terrain it covers. Over the next few pages are selected logos of races throughout the professional calendar.

Right: The graphic logos of two classic Italian one-day races - the Milan San-Remo, and the Giro di Lombardia. Both are run by the Italian cycling federation and incorporate the 'i' graphic at the centre of the design. The Milan-San Remo race is an early season race that ends along the Italian riviera into San Remo along sun-drenched coastal roads, which is represented well through the logo. The Tour of Lombardy is held in October and known as the 'race of the falling leaves', as represented by the brown letters. Again, the terrain is depicted well within the logo.



Left: Logos for the GP Plouay, Cyc classics Cup and the prestigious Tour of Flanders. All are fairly generic logos. Plouay depicts the festivities of the event, and the Flandrian logo uses a circle to reinforce the idea of a tour.

Right: Three logos of races that belong to one organiser, the ASO, who also run the Tour de France. All three races make up part of the 'spring classics' which are run in late March and April. La Fleche Wallone translates as the 'Walloon Arrow' (hence the red arrow incorporated in the logo), and is due to the route of the course. Liege-Bastogne-Liege is one of the oldest races on the calendar and is known as the 'Queen' of the classics. It covers a hilly route on a loop from Liege to Bastogne and back again. The third and final logo depicts the famous cobblestones of the Paris-Roubaix race, an event where riders travel around 250km across dead-flat cobbled roads of northern France.



Most one-day logos try to represent the terrain of the course and as much history as they can, in a specific graphic style depending on the organiser.

stage races



The Tour de France has had many different logos representing it over its long history. The current logo was introduced in the race's centenary year, 2003., celebrating the first organiser, Henri Desgrange, who used a very similar style of brush-script lettering for his logo. The latest design depicts a cyclist hidden within the type. The colours and styling of the design help to represent a festival of cycling.



The above logo for the Giro D'Italia is new for 2006, and is very similar in style to the one used by the Tour de France. Again, a cyclist figure is hidden within the lettering, which itself is a mixture of upper and lower-case in a brush-script style font. The logo uses six splashes of colour to the left of the text, representing the Italian tricolore, and the pink, ciclamini, blue and green of the leaders' jerseys.



The Vuelta a Espana uses a more conventional logo, involving clear black on white type, with a gold and red swoosh graphic which reminds the viewer of the national flag. Again, when studied carefully, the graphic shows a cyclist figure, but this time it is not involved with the text of the logo. The relatively simple colour scheme means that it can be displayed clearly on various applications such as the four leaders' jerseys.



Above: Logos for the week-long Tirreno-Adriatico race in Italy, and the Tour of Britain. The Italian logo is similar to those of the Milan-San Remo and Giro di Lombardia. The race starts on one side of the Italian boot and finishes on the opposite coast. The logo represents this well with the two shades of blue being split by a green hill or mountain. The Tour of Britain logo is successful in incorporating the Union Jack flag into the cyclist figure. Although the blue and red used could be confused with other nations, the cyclist clearly represents the British flag. The type remains clear, with 'Britain' in bold, reinforcing where the event is held.

Below: Four more logos from France, Switzerland and the Basque country. Le Dauphine race is sponsored by a French national newspaper and uses a simple but bold logo. The two Swiss logos involve cyclist figures, although one is perhaps more obvious and incorporates the flag, whilst the other uses the races initials. The Basques have chosen a simple logo which uses the complimentary colours red and green of the Basque flag.



Vuelta Ciclista



a decade of *le tour*

The graphics on this page represent the routes of the last ten Tours de France. Each year towns and cities bid to host a stage of Le Tour with the knowledge that, for a day in July, they will be at the centre of the world's most prestigious annual sporting event. Although organisers try

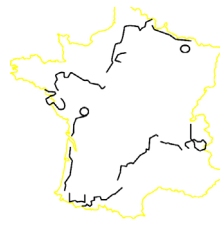
to ensure that the route passes through most of France's departments, they must also create an exciting and competitive route for the race.



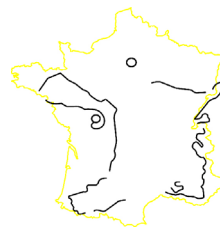
1997



1998



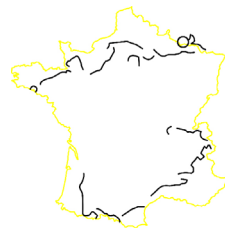
1999



2001



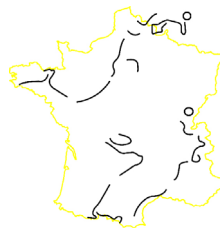
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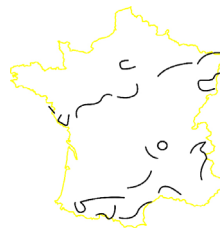
2002



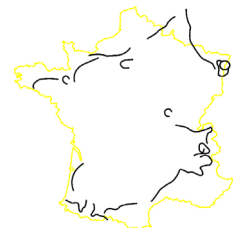
2003



2004



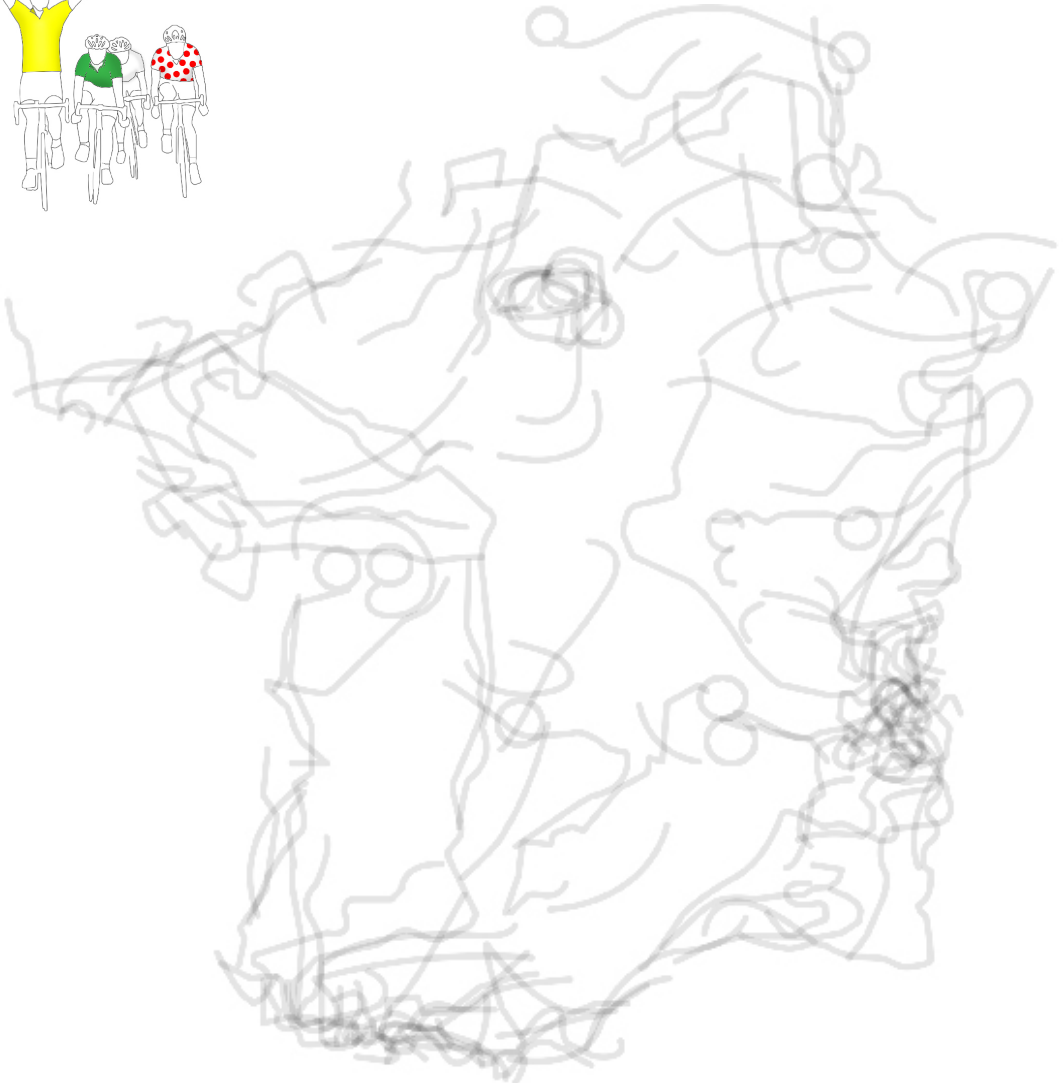
2005



2006

One can see that there is quite a variation in routes of this past decade. The graphic on the page opposite shows all of the routes compiled together. It is clear to see that three areas are used much more often than others. The Pyrenees, the Alps and Paris are all classic battlegrounds of Le Tour and are included every year.

It is perhaps a positive fact that the image clearly represents the rough shape of the country, implying that the race has indeed covered most areas of France in the last ten years.



a decade of *il giro*

In much the same way to the Tour de France, the Giro D'Italia tries to involve as much of the country as possible when organising the race route. Although variations are perhaps more difficult due to the shape of the peninsula (compared to the fairly block-shaped France or Spain), the organiser always seem to create an exciting and

competitive route from start to finish. Below are a series of graphics representing the race routes of the last ten years all of which begin in a variety of places but finish in the northern city of Milan.



1997



1998



1999



2001



2001



2002



2003



2004



2005



2006

Right: The image opposite helps to show how well the organisers of the Giro have done in terms of visiting every part of the country. As with virtually all races, it involves 'favourite' areas such as the Dolomites and the Alps, as well as the finish in Milan. We can see that the race has stayed largely on the mainland, with only a few

visits to Sicily and none in the last ten years to the island of Sardinia. Interestingly the race seems to have avoided the country's capital, Rome, and its surrounding area, in contrast to the use of Paris and Madrid in the Tour and Vuelta respectively.



a decade of *la vuelta*

Out of all three major tours, the Vuelta a Espana is perhaps the most intriguing in terms of choice of route. The organisers have tried to create a highly competitive race in recent years by reducing stage lengths and making the route very mountainous. The race always finishes in the capital, Madrid, usually after several stages in the

surrounding area (unlike the Tour where a rail or air transfer from previous stages in the Alps or central France is often used a day or two before the finale).



1997



1998



1999



2001



2001



2002



2003



2004



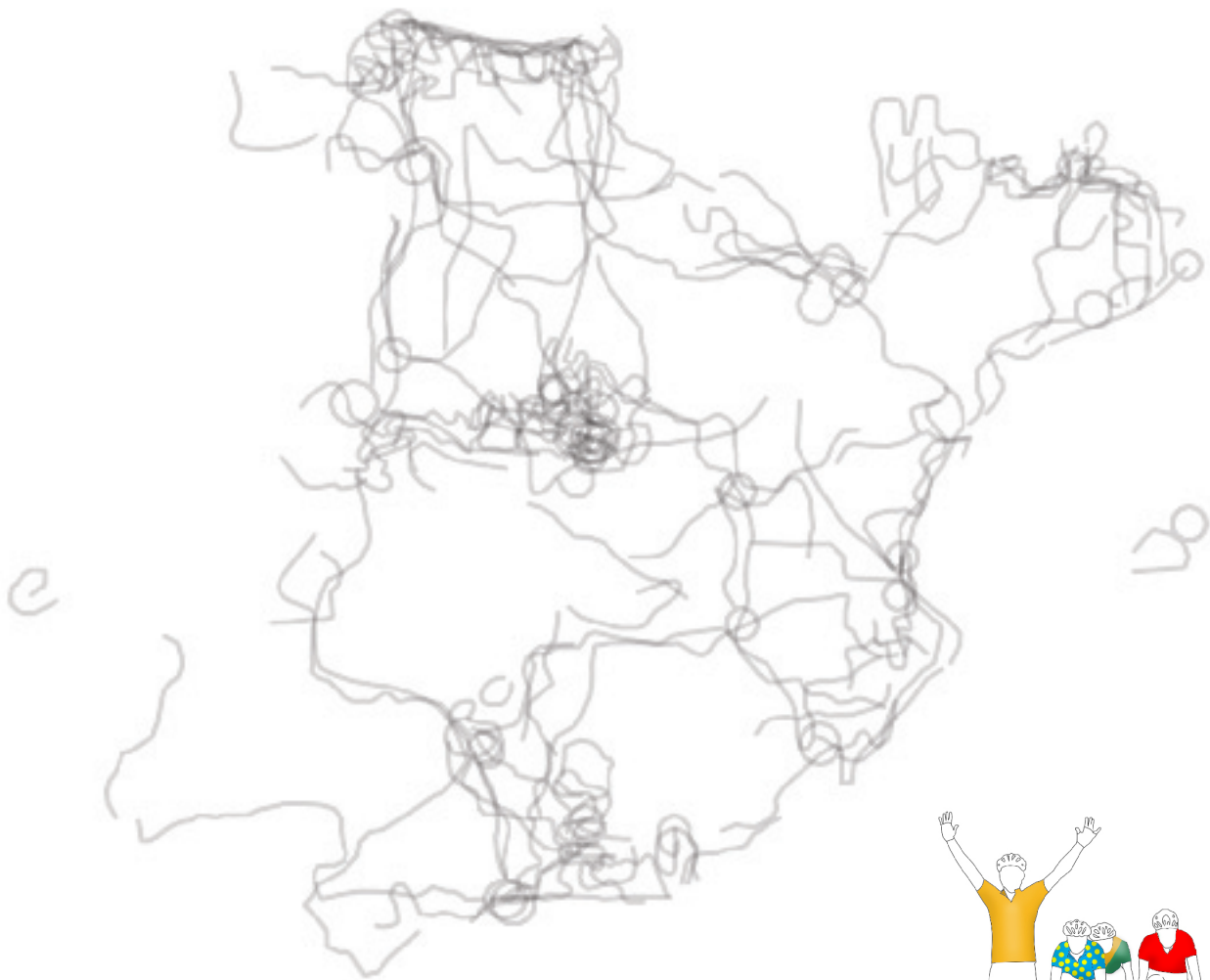
2005



2006

Right: The compilation of Vuelta stages is perhaps the least successful of the three tours in terms of representing the shape of the country. There are three definite areas that the race favours, the northern coast near Santander, the southern areas of Granada and Malaga, and of course the capital, Madrid. There are large gaps of 'unused' space, mainly due to the large desert areas that can be found within central Spain. The race does

not use the Pyrenees as much as the Tour de France, and steers well clear of the Basque country possibly due to political reasons and safety fears. In 1997 the race started over the border in Lisbon, Portugal, but apart from this excursion the race has remained largely within its borders.



classic cols

It is a well known fact within cycling that when it comes to stage races, the competition cannot be won on the flat, only lost. It is in the mountains that the favourites battle for overall victory and time gaps of minutes are achieved, which are rarely gained on flat stages.

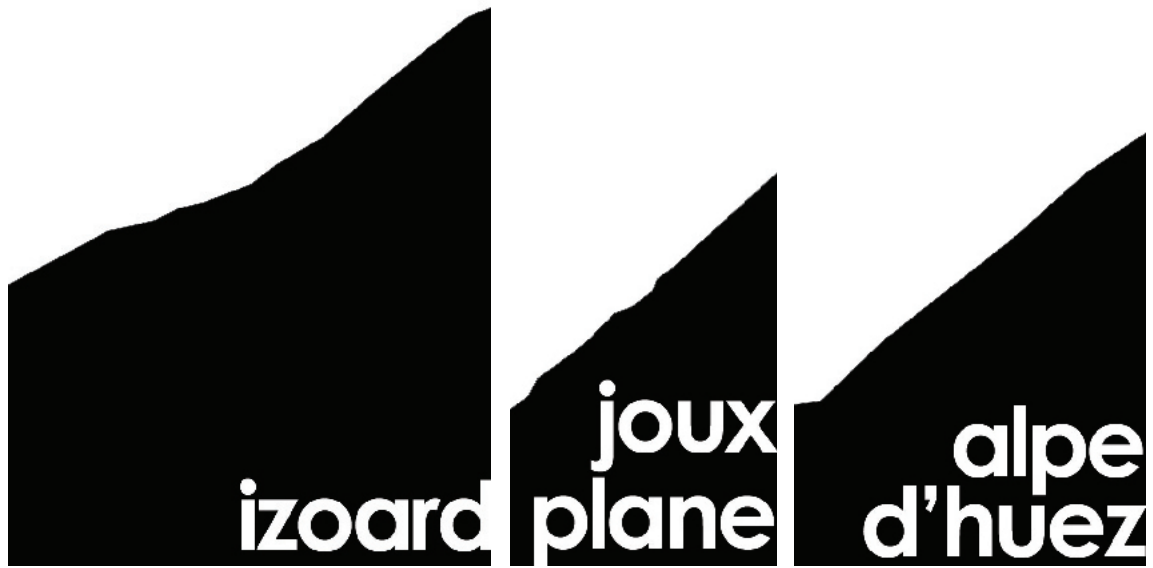
Although races are usually decided on the mountains, it is also the dramatic backdrops that they provide, which attracts audiences and fans to the sport. Riders race up mountains that reach altitudes of around 3000m on roads that weave, wind and switchback for up to 40 kilometres and gradients reaching near 20%. There is always great anticipation when race routes are announced, as to which cols are to be used. In France, names such as the Col du Tourmalet, the Alpe d'Huez, and Mont Ventoux represent such history, each evoking classic memories from throughout the many years of Le Tour. The same can be said for feared climbs such as the Passo di Gavia, and Stelvio in Italy and the Angliru in northern Spain. For many cycling fans, the mountains are the best place to cheer on their heroes, many waiting on the mountainside all-day or camping out overnight to guarantee a prime viewing position. In the 2004 Tour, officials estimated that over 1 million people were on the slopes of the Alpe d'Huez to watch racers battle the watch in a mountain time-trial.

Over the next few pages there are a series of graphics representing various classic cols across Europe, they are in scale with each other allowing for intriguing comparisons.

Right Top: Charly Gaul rides the Col d'Izoard in the Tour de France in the 1950s.

Right: The 2006 peleton in the Tour of Switzerland.





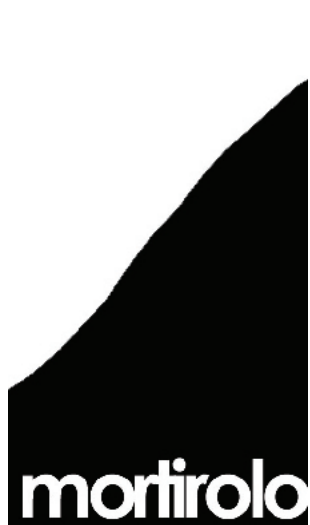
french alps





southern france,
pyrenees & spain

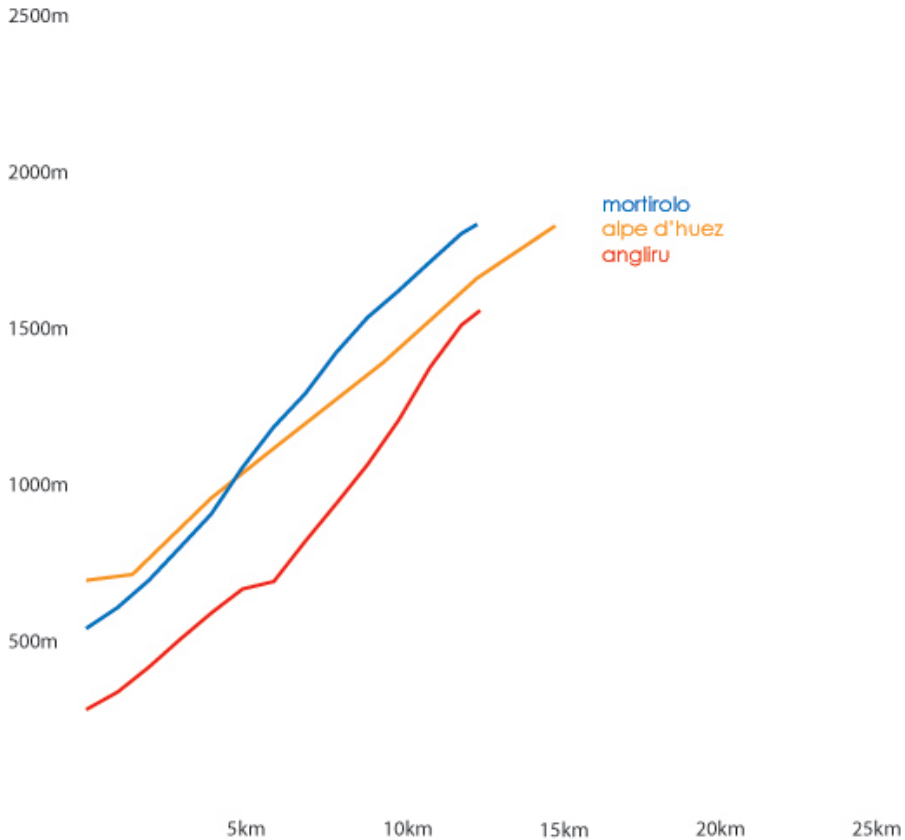


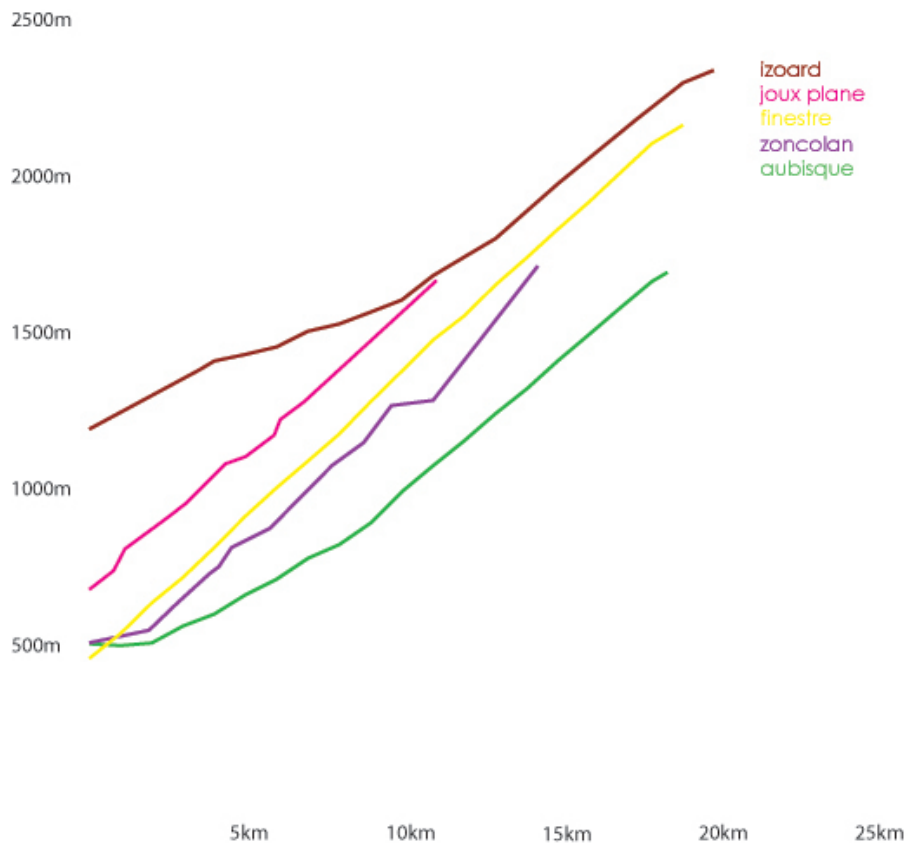


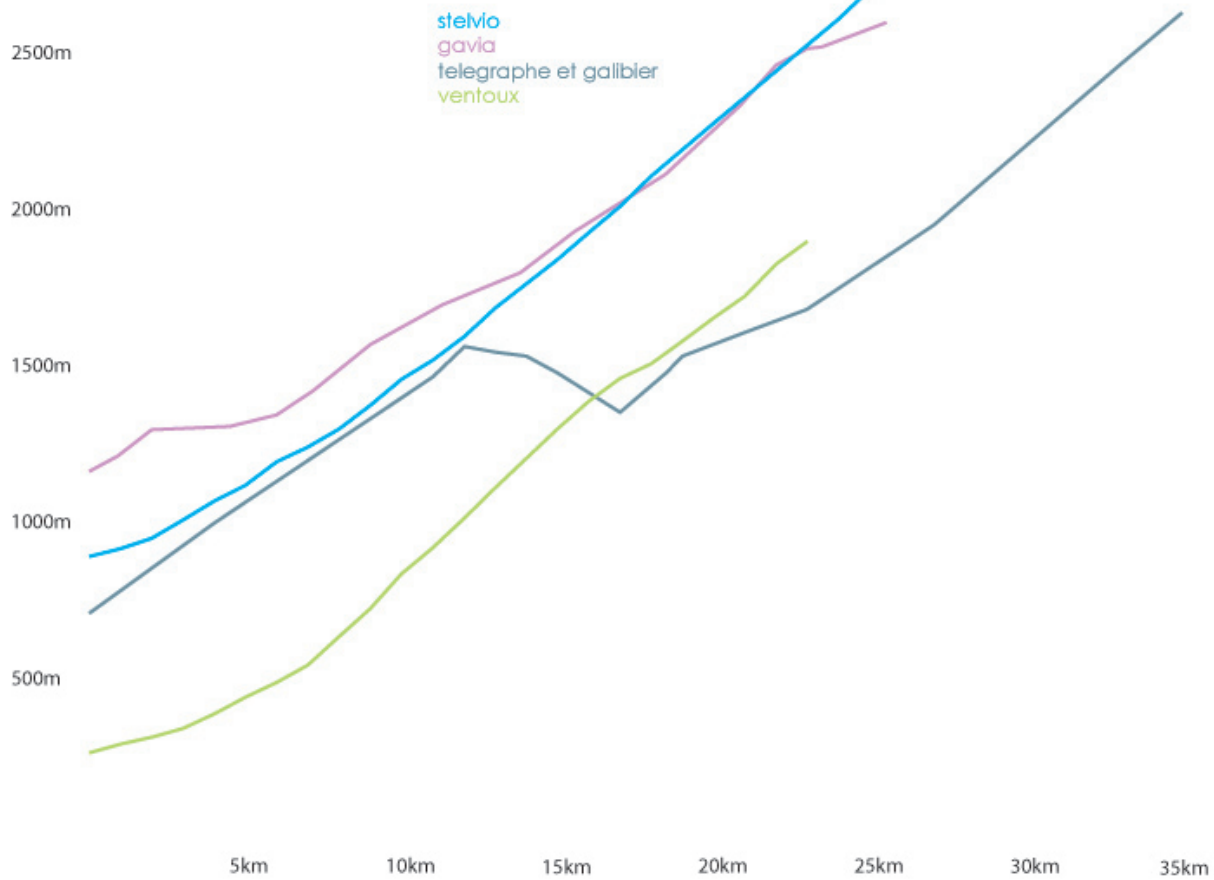
italy



To help provide more comparison between the selected *giants* of Europe, their profiles have been plotted on graphs, indicating altitude and distance. The mountains have then been grouped into three categories ranging from shorter, steeper climbs (below) to much larger climbs that usually aren't as steep (such as the Col du Galibier).







Cycling

is a sport which has suffered greatly in recent years from very bad press, especially in countries such as Britain where it is a minority sport. Even in nations such as Italy, France and Spain the sport has suffered in the media, with large questions concerning doping hanging over it. What cannot be argued with, however, is that cycling remains one of the most aesthetically beautiful sports in the world. This is due to a range of ingredients which all help to increase its attraction.

Perhaps the most obvious factor is the vast array of colour within the peloton. As explained in this book, team kit designs vary greatly, each shouting out for their share of visual recognition. Although team jerseys are perhaps the key part of the team's aesthetic, one should also consider the incorporation of matching shorts, socks, gloves, caps, helmets, bottles, sunglasses, and of course the bicycles themselves. If one multiplies this image 189 times then this helps to provide an idea of the extreme colour explosion emitted by the speeding peloton.

On the road, a large caravan of sponsors' vehicles precedes the race, each trying to advertise their product to fans on the roadside. After this helicopters can be spotted in the sky following the head of the race, which is led by police motorbikes and officials' cars. The 189 riders can actually become the smallest part of the show, as they are followed by hundreds of support cars, team cars, buses and of course the 'broom wagon' (a vehicle at the back of the race, sweeping up any riders who decide to throw in the towel). When one considers this mass convoy snaking its way through the countryside, from the coasts to the mountains, it can become quite a surreal thought and helps to show just how unique the sport is.

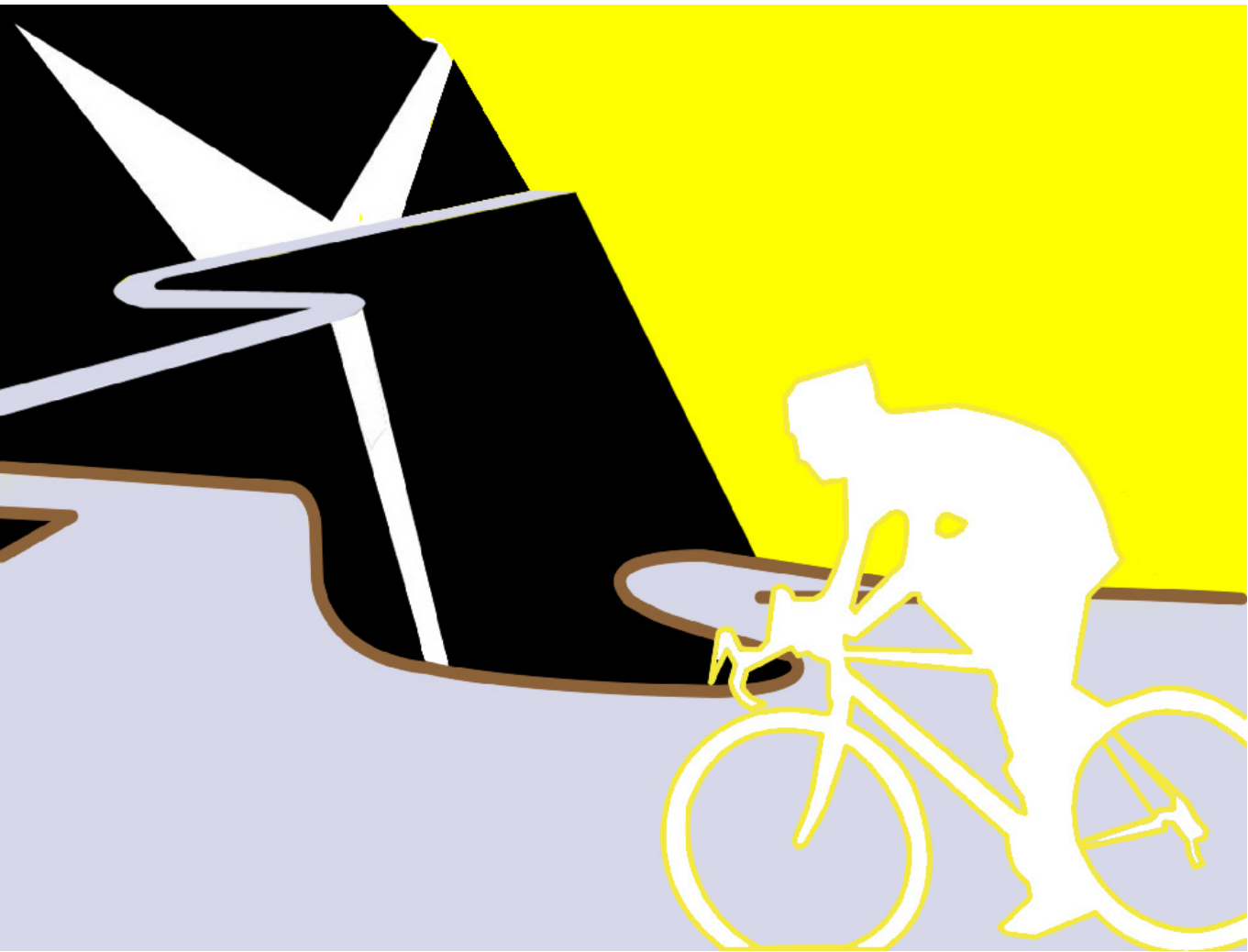
Visually, when one multiplies something a number of times, it generally has greater impact, and this can be definitely applied to the colours of the peloton. If one takes this image of endless colour and places it on a beautiful backdrop (city centres, historical monuments, coastlines, hills or mountains), and then tells fans that there are no tickets, they can just turn up by the roadside, one has a very visually appealing event (and that's without the attraction of the racing itself).

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Patrick Goodacre's notes

This book provides a sample of what is presented in the original book 'Colours of the Peloton', originating over six years ago in 2006. The original book was developed as coursework on a 'Graduate Certificate in Design for visual communication', in that year. This is hence the dating of the images and much of the information.

2006 was the year in which my strong passion for the sport, reached it's highest point. Perhaps meant literally, as I cycled up the Alpe D'Huez (amongst other climbs), and was able to take photos of my heroes in the Tour de France.

Fate then struck me down. In October 2006 I suffered a road-traffic accident, leaving me in a 6 month coma, with a 'Traumatic Brain injury'.

I am donating this sample, because I want to. I have been assured by many, of it's quality and depth of information. I originally designed the book as a 'coffee table book', so i encourage you to do with it/read it, as you see fit. I realise that it is old now, there are errors 'graphically', and by providing this sample, free-of-charge, aim to navigate any issues concerning copyrights in any images that I've used. It was born as a 'coffee-table book', let it be.



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