

# BONJOUR TOUR!

The magic and mystique of the world's  
biggest annual sporting event.



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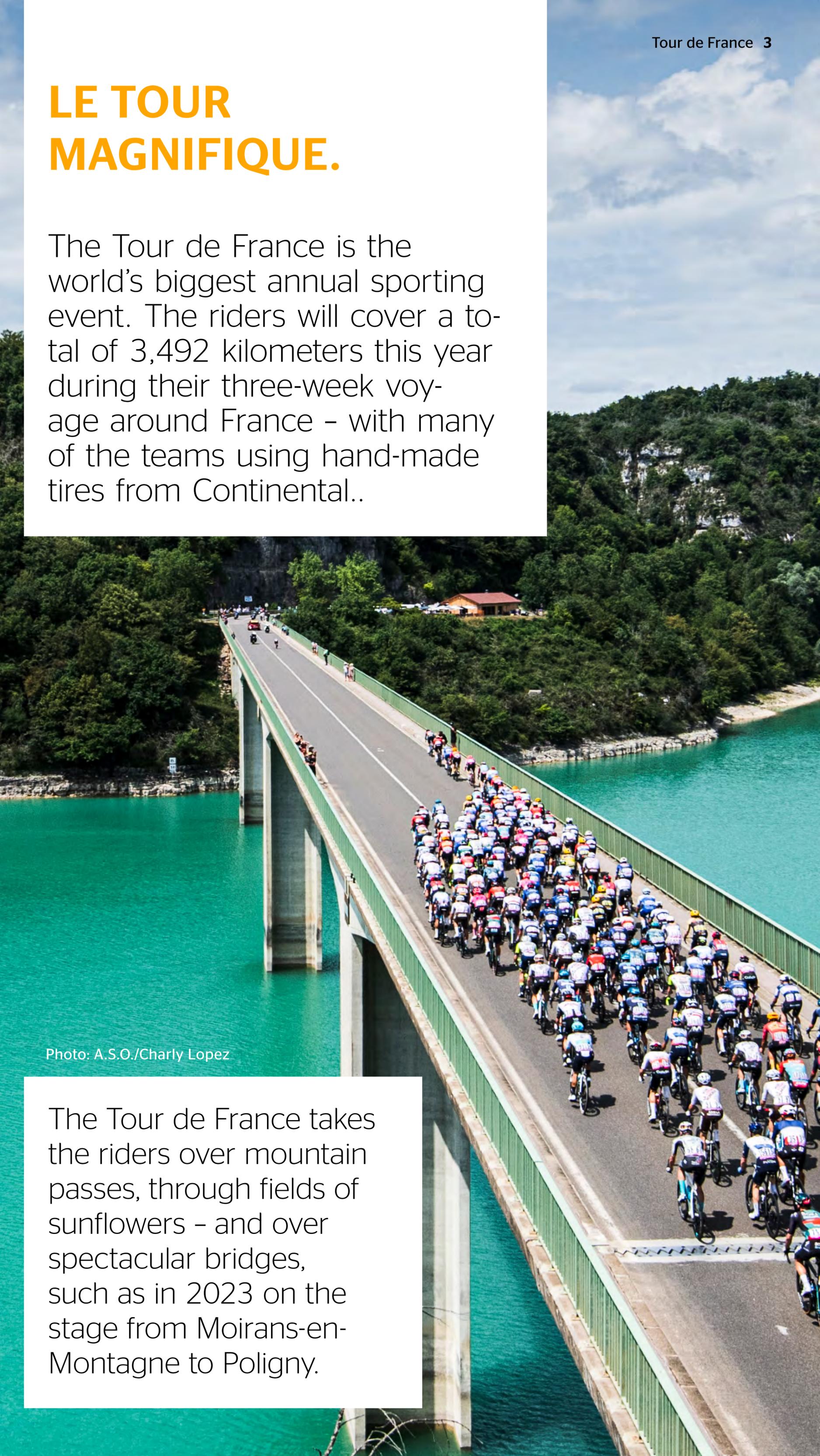
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# LE TOUR MAGNIFIQUE.

The Tour de France is the world's biggest annual sporting event. The riders will cover a total of 3,492 kilometers this year during their three-week voyage around France - with many of the teams using hand-made tires from Continental..

Photo: A.S.O./Charly Lopez

The Tour de France takes the riders over mountain passes, through fields of sunflowers - and over spectacular bridges, such as in 2023 on the stage from Moirans-en-Montagne to Poligny.



The Grand Départ – the first day of the Tour de France – often takes place outside France. In 2023, for example, the Tour got underway in the cycling-mad Basque Country region of Spain, and took in Bilbao’s Guggenheim Museum. Day 1 of this year’s Tour will unfold in Florence, Italy.

Photo: A.S.O./Charly Lopez



The magic of the Tour stems from a mixture of extraordinary sporting endeavor and deluxe sightseeing. Here, on the second day of last year's race and still in Spain, the riders power their way from Vitoria-Gasteiz to San Sebastian.



Take your pick of the favorites: Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard (right) and Tadej Pogačar from Slovenia battle for overall victory in 2023. There was little between them here on Stage 6 in the Pyrenees, but the Dane prevailed in the general classification.



Photo: A.S.O./Aurélien Vialattel



The color of summer: The Tour de France traditionally leads the riders through the sunflower fields of southern France immortalized by Vincent van Gogh. As an exclusive partner of the event, Continental is at the heart of the action – including in the convoy which passes along the route ahead of the race and hands out gifts to the fans.

Bumps in the road: The riders and their bikes have to perform at their peak, including when high speeds over cobbles are required, as here in 2023 on the stage to Belleville-en Beaujolais. This year, the peloton will be faced with 32 kilometers of loose gravel on Stage 9 around Troyes 32.



Photo: A.S.O./Charly Lopez

Highlights in the mountain air: The mountain stages take the emotions of the riders and fans to new heights. The competitors in the 2024 Tour are faced with precisely 52,230 meters of total vertical gain.





The finale, relocated: The Olympic Games will open in Paris just a few days after the end of the 2024 Tour. So for the first time in 119 years, the Tour de France will not finish in the French capital, where the field traditionally wraps things up on the Champs-Élysées. This year, the final stage of the race will be held in Nice.

**Yellow fever:** Last year, Jonas Vingegaard crossed the finish line wearing the winner's yellow jersey. Behind him in the general classification were Tadej Pogačar (left) and British rider Adam Yates (right).

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# “EVERYONE GOES CRAZY”

Continental is one of the main sponsors of the Tour de France. And Tour fever is gripping the company's employees as well. Passenger car product manager **Tobias Rahn** and **Franziska Meyer** from Group Communications are big followers of the world's most important bike race and enthusiastic competitors on two wheels themselves. Plus, their jobs have given them a ringside seat at the Grand Boucle. They met up to talk about their shared passion.





Photo: private

**29.6 and 21.7 – for fans of the Tour de France, the start and finish of the big race are the most important dates of 2024. Have you also got them ringed in your calendar?**

**Franziska Meyer:** The dates are always at the back of my mind. I've been following the Tour for many years, especially the mountain stages.

**Tobias Rahn:** I'm the same. I always check out the route profile early and highlight the mountain stages. I make a particular note of the iconic passes.

**The riders in this year's Tour de France will be racking up 52,230 meters of total vertical gain over the 21 stages.**

**Meyer:** That's impressive!

**Rahn:** And seriously tough. A few years ago I rode a few of the Tour's classic passes with a friend. We climbed and descended Mont Ventoux three times – I had nothing left after that!

**Provence's iconic mountain is also among the Tour de France's most notorious. What does it feel like to ride one of the classic Tour challenges yourself?**

**Rahn:** Quite simply: awesome. You're literally pedaling your way through history. You can see the riders' names daubed onto the road over the years.

**Meyer:** Friends of mine have also ridden some of the passes. I haven't done so myself yet, but I have climbed Alpe d'Huez virtually on a simulator.

**Are you keen to turn that virtual experience into reality?**

**Meyer:** Yes absolutely. I love exploring new places on my bike. Most recently I was in Mallorca. The countryside there is beautiful, you can enjoy some lovely temperatures and there's a pleasant breeze.



Tobias Rahn, product manager for passenger car tires at Continental, is an enthusiastic cyclist. Here he poses on the infamous “Tour de France” summit of Mont Ventoux.



Photo. privat

**How did it feel when you found out Conti would be a main sponsor of the Tour de France and you could mix business and pleasure?**

**Rahn:** Amazing. And straightaway I was given a great project to work on. Back in 2018 I was still quite new at Continental and working in passenger car tire development. Our team developed the branded tires for the organizers’ support vehicles.

**And then you got to watch them live in action on television...**

**Rahn:** The first time you see the tires close up in slow motion on TV is a great feeling. Even now, when I see a Conti tire in slow-mo on a screen, it takes me back to those days in the development team. But my top Tour highlight is actually something quite different.

**That sounds intriguing. Do tell!**

**Rahn:** I got to experience the climax of the Tour de France with Continental that year – on the Champs Élysées in Paris. We had a Conti stand right on the

finish line. The whole weekend was just incredible. Being there in person gives you an even better understanding of why people come to France from all over the world to see the Tour.

## **In 2023 you were on board with the Continental promo convoy.**

**Meyer:** At the Tour de France? No way! That's cool. How was it?

**Rahn:** Insanely good. Everything that goes on before and after each stage is at least as important for the Tour de France experience as the race itself. The people in these really small villages come out in all their finery to welcome the convoy and the riders. There are people all wearing the same crazy t-shirts, people lining the roads five deep. Sausage and drinks stands are set up specially, there's music playing. Then the convoy arrives – and everyone goes crazy.

## **For many people, this passion is what marks out the Tour de France. How long have you both been following the Tour?**

**Rahn:** Since I can remember! I always found bike riding cool. And I started watching the Tour de France on TV with my parents when I was six years old.

**Meyer:** My Dad also had it on TV all the time.

**Rahn:** I remember summer holidays as a kid when I got really upset because my parents had booked a holiday cottage that didn't have a TV. (He laughs.)

**Meyer:** Did you find a workaround?

**Rahn:** I used to hang around inconspicuously outside



Franziska Meyer is an enthusiastic racing cyclist who, in her private life, enjoys cycling, especially on picturesque coastal roads.

Photo: privat

shops or cafés so I could watch the Tour as much as possible through the windows.

**The Tour de France will start in Italy (in Florence) for the first time this year. It will be the 26th Grand Départ outside France. Where would next year's Tour get underway if you were making the decisions?**

**Meyer:** I guess because it's still fresh in my mind, I'd say Mallorca.

**Rahn:** I think starting the race in Hamburg would be really nice. It's a sport-obsessed city and the triathlon there always attracts loads of people. And with the Cycclassics event, Hamburg also has experience of hosting bike races.

**Tobias, you've also got experience of bike racing yourself. For example, you've ridden for the Continental Factory Racing Team – the Conti team that competes in various amateur races across Germany.**

**Rahn:** Yes, I've competed twice for the team – at the Tour d'Énergie in Göttingen. It's a great event, and Conti employees from around Germany – Hanover, Hamburg, Regensburg, Frankfurt, the list goes on – take part.

**Tobias, you've also done a few testing jobs for Continental, including putting the latest bike tires through their paces. What were you focusing on in particular?**

**Rahn:** I started by looking at how the tire was fitted and how it behaved in terms of grip. I noted down my impressions and then our experts took a closer look at their mileage capability in the test lab.

**How important is the gear you use for a bike tour?**

**Meyer:** Very important. When it's raining and the roads are wet, that's when the quality of your equipment really matters. And this is also where tires from Continental stand out from its competitors' products. The grip they offer is just unbeatable.

**What percentage of your performance on the bike depends on your equipment?**

**Rahn:** Most of it is about your ability, your physical strength and the training you've done. But I'd also say around 10 percent comes down to the equipment you're using.

## Do you look after your bike yourself? Do you get your hands dirty?

**Rahn:** Sure. When I was a student, I had an ancient old steel road bike from the 80s - with a neon paint job. I fixed it up at the university's bike workshop, which was good fun. And before I knew it, I'd started repairing old bikes in my shared apartment. There were always parts and accessories lying around.

**Meyer:** Changing tires, adjusting the gears - I also do it all myself.

**Rahn:** I've now turned my cellar into a bike workshop. But when the Tour is on, I'm never there. For the duration of the race, you can find me in front of the TV. (He laughs.)



Franziska Meyer, 34, is an assistant and project manager at Group Communications and has worked at Continental since 2014.

Tobias Rahn, 33, has been at Continental since 2017. In his early days at the company, he used his trainee wages to buy his first racing bike. Today, he is a product manager for passenger car tires at the Hanover-based manufacturer.

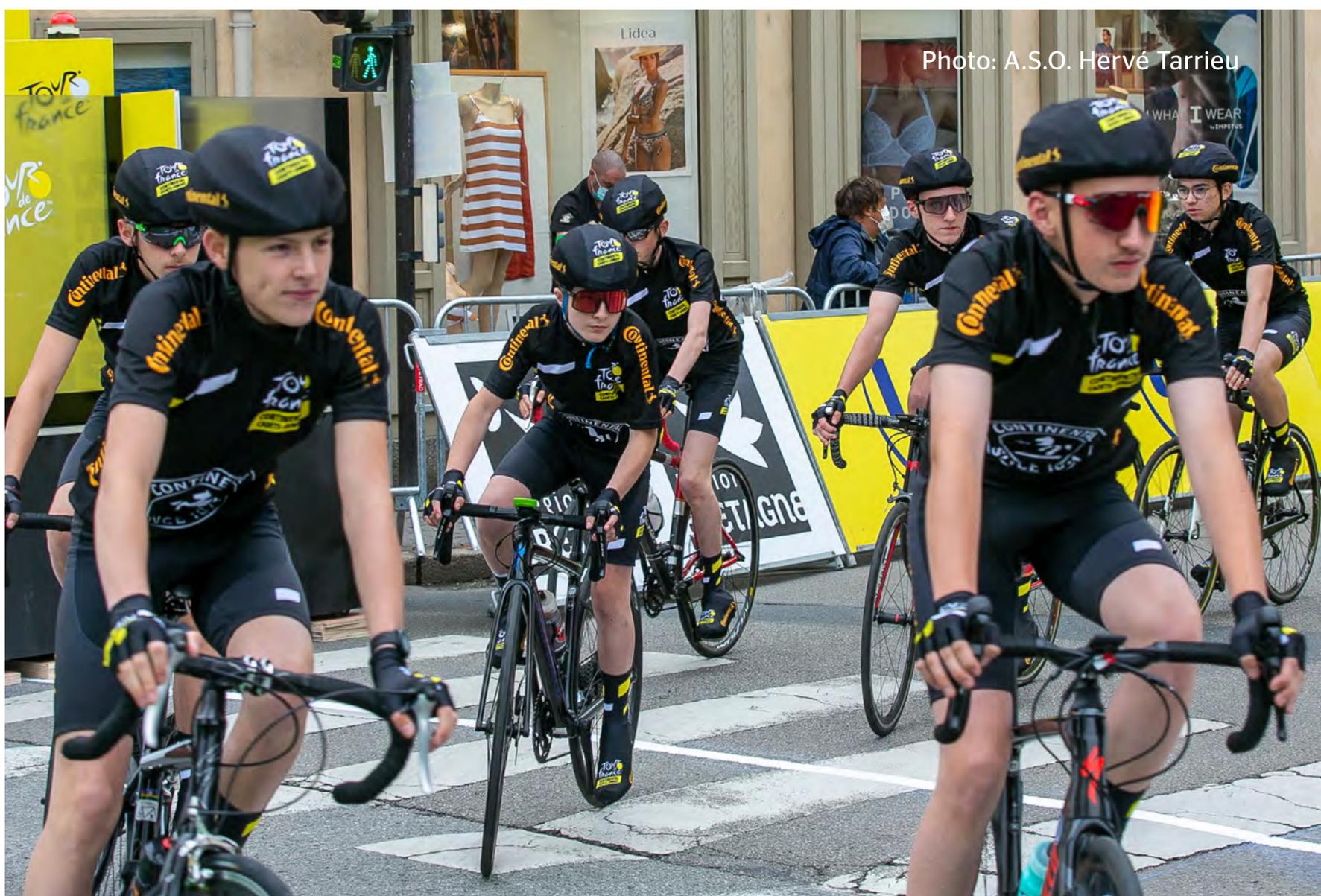
# TOUR DE FUN

Tour de France up close. At each stage of the race, eight “Young Cadets” get to share the limelight with the pro racers. It’s a dream made reality – and just possibly the start of a glittering career or two.



On the way to a professional career?  
Continental Young Cadets just before the start

Photo: A.S.O. Aurélien Vialatte



Many are the avid junior cycle racers who have dreamt of this moment: riding in the peloton at the Tour de France. Continental is making this dream come true on each of the race's 21 stages, giving a new group of eight young boys and girls on each occasion the chance to be in the thick of the action. The budding riders – known as “Les Cadets Juniors du Tour”, or “Young Cadets” for short, and all aged between 14 and 19 – get to sample Tour life out on the road. Just like the pro riders, they scale the steepest mountain passes in the Alps and Pyrenees, rumble their way over the cobblestones and immerse themselves in the mystique of the world's biggest bike race.

Up to 12 million bike racing aficionados follow the Tour de France live and in person each year; it is an event of huge importance and the Young Cadets can experience it from the inside. Indeed, the kids will cover the first and last 30 kilometers of the day's stage – just two hours before the pros follow in their tire tracks. There will have been plenty going on at the roadside already by this time, with fans also keen to experience the

Tour convoy that rolls along the course well ahead of the riders themselves. It can be a very emotional occasion for the Young Cadets, especially if they have family and friends among the spectators. The junior racers are nominated to take part by cycle clubs in the region where that particular stage is taking place – so they can enjoy home advantage!

And they will be able to soak up the atmosphere without the stress of time; unlike the pro riders, the Young Cadets are not racing against the clock. However, Continental – one of the main partners of the Tour de France – is still committed to giving the young riders as authentic an experience as possible. For example, they will be using bikes fitted with the same tires used by the pros (seven professional teams will line up for the Tour de France this year on tires from Conti). These performance tires are made by hand at Continental's bicycle tire factory in Korbach, Germany. The Young Cadets – wearing official jerseys with the Continental logo – will be accompanied on the road by a trio of official Tour vehicles, ensuring they get a true taste of the Tour.

Another thing that sets Les Cadets Juniors du Tour apart from their professional colleagues is that at the finish they all have reason to celebrate. Indeed, once they've completed the stage, all eight are invited onto the podium together – the same podium reserved for the winners of the various categories just a few hours later. The youngsters are each presented with a medal, the press jostling in front of the podium to secure the best photo and the official Tour anthem providing a soundtrack to match.

This preview of the Tour de France has been known to act as a springboard for Young Cadets into a successful career in cycle racing. France's own Arnaud Démare

- from Beauvais in the north of the country - is a prime example, having once been a Young Cadet himself. Today, he is one of the stars of the peloton. The three-time French national road race champion also has two stage wins to his name in the Tour. Sometimes dreams really do come true.

Photo: A.S.O. Hervé Tarrieu





Photo: A.S.O. Aurélien Vialatte

## It's party time in France, and Continental is invited

The Tour de France is as much a part of the host country as the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre. The biggest annual sporting event worldwide is also the most prestigious and most important bike race of all. And as a sponsor and partner of the Tour, Continental is at the heart of the action. As such, the company plays its part in turning the Grand Boucle into a festival that spans the nation. Continental is giving the Cadets Juniors du Tour a quite unique experience, will appear on hoardings lining the route at many different points and sponsors the stage winner each day of the event. It also attaches great importance to the safety of everyone involved, and all the official Tour vehicles are therefore fitted with super-sustainable UltraContact NXT tires. The driving safety training given to the drivers of the support vehicles is likewise organized by Continental, fan parks are set up featuring obstacle courses and simulators, and the Continental Brigade will offer fans at the roadside a free tire check.

A woman with brown hair tied back, wearing a brown cycling jacket and sunglasses on her head, looking off to the side. The background is a cloudy sky.

## A WINNING LOOK

Seven teams will line up for this year's Tour de France on bicycle tires from Continental. The pro racers will have a choice of one all-round tire and two special tires. **Hannah Ferle**, product manager for racing bike tires at Continental, explains what makes the Tour tires a breed apart - with the help of the all-rounder Grand Prix 5000 S TR.

## The material

“Our BlackChili tread compound is used for all Continental’s bicycle and passenger car tires – in each case optimized for the use case at hand. Think of it like a good base sauce for making a variety of other very different sauces in the kitchen. One is spicier, another fruitier. Bringing that idea back to our racing bike tires, the BlackChili compound has a perfect balance in our all-rounder tire. And for the Grand Prix 5000 AS TR it is tweaked a little to ensure the tire offers even better grip in wet conditions.”



## Puncture protection

“With racing bike tires it is particularly important to strike the optimum balance of robustness and weight minimization. That’s why we use a Vectran Breaker in the Grand Prix 5000 S TR. This layer made of polymer yarn is lighter than a comparable nylon breaker, for example, and significantly increases puncture protection. The Vectran Breaker is made from a crystal-polymer and the technology is borrowed from passenger car product development. Which goes to show: teams using Continental tires benefit from the in-house transfer of technology.”

## The design

“One of the particular characteristics of racing bike tires is that they have no tread. Our tire has a central stripe running all the way around it, which ensures a large contact area. The S TR generates its grip through its compound and the correctly chosen air pressure. Viewed from the side, however, it is the tire’s shoulder profile that attracts the spotlight: intended to bring



to mind a checkered flag, the Lazer Grip gives the riders in the Tour de France additional grip and control through corners. Indeed, the checkered flag design has become a signature feature of our tires. This year we are presenting a special edition of the Grand Prix 5000 S TR – but have no need for a flashy logo to identify it: our Lazer Grip already sets it apart from the crowd.”

## The casing

“The double-ply construction of the casing recalls the Greek letter omega, which is why we also refer to an “omega design”. Below the Vectran Breaker puncture protection layer, the casing has an open design. This Active Comfort Technology enables vibrations and movements to be absorbed.” And that leads to improved driving feel.

## The core

“For the Grand Prix 5000 S TR we work with aramid cores. These are significantly lighter than bead cores, for example. Our tires for the Tour de France are therefore also foldable. Our Tour tires also have a rubber coating and a nettle tape, which ensure the tire fitted on the rim is completely sealed. Inflated at up to five bar, our tires for the Tour are also compatible for hookless wheel rims. I.e. they also stay securely in place without small hooks in the wheel.”

## The Grand Prix family

TR stands for Tubeless Ready – in other words, for tires that can work without an inner tube. This a characteristic shared by all three tires supplied by Continental for use in the Tour de France. The Grand Prix 5000 S TR is the latest evolution of the all-rounder racing bike tire from Continental that has a long history in the Tour. Two new special-purpose tires have been added to the range for this year's race: the Grand Prix 5000 AS TR is a more robust tire that offers much higher grip levels in wet conditions, and the Grand Prix 5000 TT TR is a particularly light and fast tire designed specifically for time trials. The choice always rests with the teams.

## These are the seven teams who are putting their trust in Continental tires:



# HITTING THE HEIGHTS - ON PET BOTTLES

Continental is equipping all the support vehicles in the Tour de France with extremely safe and sustainable tires. For example, the UltraContact NXT is made using recycled plastic bottles. Thomas Wanka, who developed the tire, explains the benefits this brings.



**3,492 kilometers.** The race distance for this year's Tour de France takes in a suitably exacting route made up of seven mountain stages, four summit finishes, two individual time trials and eight flat stages. The 111th edition of the Tour will demand everything the elite racers have to give - right from the start of Stage 1 on June 29. The 14 gravel sections around Troyes in the north-east of France deserve utmost respect on their own. The decision to incorporate challenges of this kind in the route has left some riders shaking their heads. But for those who accept the Tour de France mission, there is no time to complain when pedals need to be pushed.

Also preparing for action are the drivers of the dozens of support vehicles - containing the Tour director, team managers, medics and media - that accompany the riders through the race. Many of those behind the wheel have a rally racing background, not surprisingly given the wealth of experience and high levels of concentration required. **The importance of the job at hand makes it all the more critical that the cars**



**can be piloted safely and reliably. And in the fluctuating terrain the race will encounter as it navigates France, the vehicles' tires play a key role here.**

Continental, as one of the main partners of Tour organizer Amaury Sports Organisation (A.S.O.), fits all the support vehicles with a suitable choice of tire.

**The cars - including some electric models - saunter and sprint, brake and accelerate their way through the stages on UltraContact NXT tires from Continental.** The UltraContact NXT is an extremely high-performance and sustainable member of the global manufacturer's tire portfolio.

Performance and safety will be difference-making factors over the 3,500 kilometers of the Tour de France 2024. From scorching asphalt in the south of France to the possibility of cold snaps and rainy days in the mountains, from ascents through the Pyrenees and Alps to twisting high-speed descents on tight rural roads - all of which that take the breath away - and then those sections where the black-top gives way to gravel. Throw into the mix the cheering fans at the roadside, often affording riders only narrow passage through their euphoric ranks as they push towards mountain-top finishes. **"The organizers trust our tires, as Continental is well known for prioritizing safety at all times in the development of new products,"** says Thomas Wanka, Senior Development Engineer of Continental's summer tire range for the important markets of the EMEA regions.

Thomas developed this year's Tour tire, which millions of drivers have been using in everyday conditions since last year already. "This tire stands out with its excellent qualities in terms of durability, effectiveness in the wet and - for electric vehicles - operating range," explains Wanka. "It is our most sustainable passenger car tire and consists largely of renewable,



Photo: Continental

recyclable materials.” This makes the tire, like Continental as a company, an “ideal partner” for the world’s largest annual sporting event. “The Tour de France is a great shop window for us, of course, when it comes to showcasing the performance of our product,” adds Thomas Wanka. “However, the most important thing is that all the riders reach the finish line without injury and that the drivers of the support vehicles can also rely on the highest levels of safety.”

The riders and support convoys will be spared two of the traditional Tour challenges this year: the fearsome Mont Ventoux and the fabled ascent to Alpe d’Huez. However, cycling fans will not have long to wait to enjoy a stage finish on the Alpe: it will host the conclusion of the Tour de France Femmes on August 18.

# UltraContact NXT

The UltraContact NXT from Continental is the tire maker's most sustainable production tire to date, using as much as **65 percent** renewable, **recycled and mass-balance-certified materials**. All 19 sizes earn the top EU tire label rating ("A") for rolling resistance, wet braking and exterior noise. **Renewable raw materials** account for up to **32 percent** of the UltraContact NXT. They include resins based on residual materials from the paper and wood industries. The UltraContact NXT also contains silicate from the ash of rice husks, which is a waste product of rice production. Continental also uses recycled steel in the UltraContact NXT. Between nine and 15 recycled PET bottles are used per tire to reinforce the tire casing.

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# FREEDOM!

Cycling is massively on trend: e-bikes and cargo bikes, bike-sharing schemes and cycle routes are taking cities around the world by storm. Why? Cycling is good for the environment, good for fitness and even good for brain growth. Let's take a closer look at a blossoming success story.



Bicycles are taking over the world. Around the globe – from Portland in the US North West to Copenhagen in Denmark, Amsterdam in the Netherlands and Hamburg in northern Germany, urban spaces are turning into bona fide bike cities. They feature expanding networks of dedicated cycle routes, a growing number of bike-sharing stations and populations who love to get around by bicycle. Worldwide bicycle sales reached 130 million in 2023, almost double the figure for passenger cars (68 million). 84 million bikes are being pedaled around Germany alone, a country with 83 million citizens and 49 million registered passenger cars. They include an ever increasing number of e-bikes and cargo bikes. Business is also booming for Continental in terms of its hand-made racing, mountain bike and touring bike tires, sales of which are set to continue along a significant upward curve.



Cycling may be a traditional form of transport, but it is also very much on trend. As Jens Kleinert, Head of the Institute of Psychology at German Sport University Cologne, explains to Continental: “By cycling, you are first and foremost doing something to improve your health – but you’re also helping the environment.” Bikes do not produce any CO2 and a recent study in Copenhagen shows that cycling regularly can extend life expectancy by 3.7 years. It suggests that exercise by cycling is also more effective for weight loss than some gym-based sports programs, as well as improving concentration. A study in the Netherlands even revealed that cycling may help the brain grow.

But cycling is not only healthy for people and the environment, it is sustainable in other respects as well. For example, the aid organization World Bicycle Relief (WBR) is making bikes available to young girls in countries such as Zambia and Malawi to help them better meet the challenges of everyday life. Figures show that many girls – who normally have less time for school because of the obligation to help out at home – have recorded far fewer absences from school and substantially improved grades since they’ve owned a bicycle.





Photo: PIPAT@Adobe Stock

In addition, the trend in e-bikes (i.e. bikes with an electric motor and pedal assistance) also opens up cycling as an interesting option for new groups of people. Older people who would otherwise not get back on a bike are showing enthusiasm for electric bikes and enjoying the great sense of freedom they provide. “Cycling gives us a feeling of independence, which is a basic human need. E-bikes also present a compelling proposition for people who have previously avoided cycling to work e.g. because the route is too hilly,” says Kleinert. In Germany, for instance, more people chose to buy an e-bike than a classical bicycle in 2023 – the first time that had happened. It’s a trend the auto industry is also seeking to take advantage of, with carmakers like BMW, Porsche and Jeep now selling their own e-bikes.

The bicycle industry continues to diversify. Sales of cargo bikes – i.e. bicycles with attachments specifically designed for carrying goods and also increasingly small children – are on the rise. A study funded by the EU is predicting that in the future more than half of all transport jobs in the EU will be carried out using these

kinds of bikes. And then there are the manufacturers making bikes designed for extremely high speeds – like the eRockit One e-bike, which can hit 89 km/h and requires riders to have a motorcycle license, but can also be ridden on freeways.

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## TOUR DE SPACE HOPPER

Wheelie bike, Penny Farthing, space hopper? Fans have taken to riding the stages of the Tour de France on some weird and wonderful alternatives to the conventional road racer - and even walking them on foot.



# TRACK BIKE

Fancy riding up the notorious mountain road to Alpe d'Huez on a single gear? Try doing it eight times in a row. In 2016, British cyclist Mickey Bartley embraced this crazy but intriguing challenge, powering through the 21 corners to the summit of the legendary pass on a specialist track bike. The climb of 1,100 meters per run added up to 8,800 meters of total vertical gain. So a bit like scaling the 8,848-meter Mount Everest.



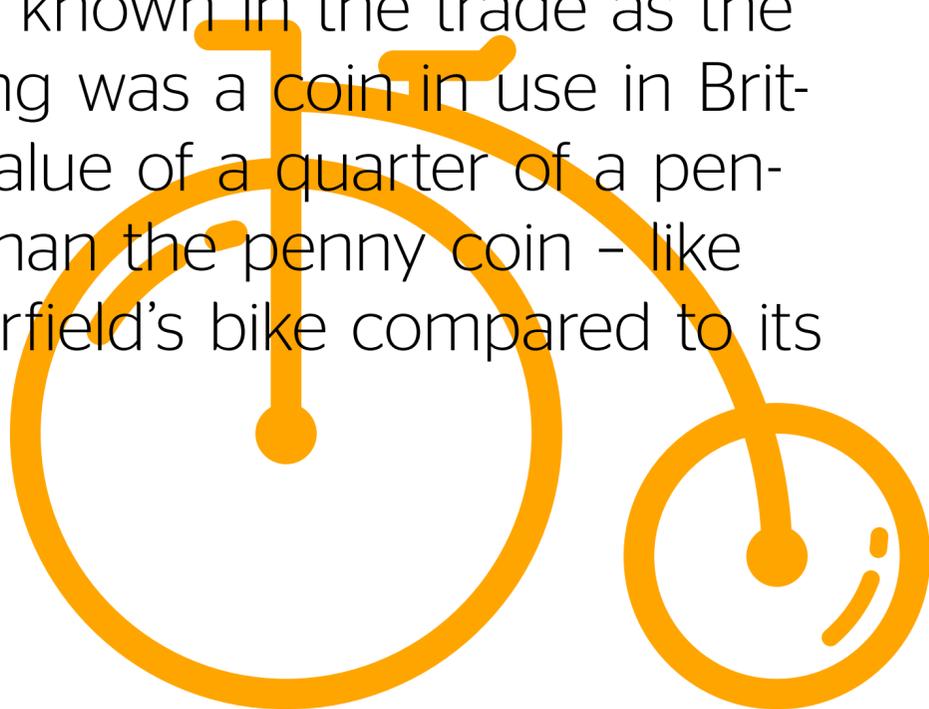
# WHEELIE BIKE

When it comes to riding the full route of the Tour de France on a kids' wheelie bike, the first challenge was surely to come up with the idea in the first place. The machine in question was a yellow Raleigh Chopper Mark III, factory-fitted with a high-backed banana saddle, small front wheel, luggage rack and – the sole upgrade – eight gears rather than the usual three. Brit Dave Sims, a personal trainer in his day job, decided to tackle the 2015 Tour de France course on board the cult 1970s two-wheeler. His unofficial solo fundraiser for a British charity saw him head out on each stage two days ahead of the pro riders on their more orthodox two-wheelers. Ultimately Sims didn't make it to Paris, tendonitis in his Achilles stopping him in his tracks after 2,600 kilometers of the 3,360 km full race distance.



## HIGH-WHEELER

When Joff Summerfield set out in 2006 to lap the world on his hand-built high-wheeler, part of the plan involved selling all his possessions. With only a rucksack surviving the cull, he racked up around 60,000 kilometers of pedal-work across four continents. But he wasn't done yet: in 2015 Summerfield took his high-wheeler for a spin around a few of the stages on that year's Tour de France ahead of the main field. Originally a popular sight in the 1870s prior to the invention of pneumatic tires and chain drives, the high-wheeler became known in the trade as the "Penny Farthing". A farthing was a coin in use in Britain at the time with the value of a quarter of a penny. It was much smaller than the penny coin - like the rear wheel of Summerfield's bike compared to its large front wheel.



## WALKING

All over the world (North Pole included) intrepid souls have run ultra-marathons requiring varying degrees of insanity. But only two people have completed a whole Tour de France course on foot. American Zoë Romano - also known for being the first female to run coast-to-coast across the USA unsupported - covered all 3,403 kilometers of the Tour route in 2013. Romano's nine weeks of endeavor required her to tick off around 60 kilometers each day. Five years later, England's Peter Thompson also notched up some 60 km per day, 68 days in a row to blitz the 3,351 kilometers of Tour de France no. 105.



## SPACE HOPPER

In 2020, Glenn Valentin from Belgium conquered the notorious Col du Tourmalet in the Pyrenees on a space hopper to raise funds for “Les Petits Princes”, a charity that makes the dreams of sick children come true. The 18.6-kilometer route included gradients of up to 18 percent. The experienced triathlete needed two hours to bounce his way up the particularly exacting final two kilometers of the pass. So how did it go? “My backside was in all sorts of pain, and my hamstrings, neck, wrists and elbows weren’t feeling great either.”



## PLATTENSPIELER

The Tour de France can also take the form of an acoustic journey – a kind of road trip in your head, especially if you have a playlist from German electronica legends Kraftwerk for company. Band members Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider-Esleben are cycling fanatics – one of the few things known about the private lives of the famously shy musicians. Back in 1983, Kraftwerk released the track “Tour de France”. And to mark the 90th edition of the Tour in 2003, they brought out the concept album Tour de France Soundtracks. While the album duly reached no. 1 in the German charts, the top step of the Tour podium in Paris remained elusive.

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Photo: A.S.O. Jonathan Biche /// TitelPhoto: A.S.O. Charley Lopez

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