MAD ABOUT THE TOUR

Director(s): François LANDESMAN

It's an annual event - for the 100th time in 2003! -, it's free and it's exciting: the Tour de France. No other sporting competition in the world that has generated and continues to generate so much passion! The fans follow the Tour, collect it, and relive it... Stories of spectators who are madly in love with the tour are legend; none is, however, as moving and strong as the true story of Jean Traclet.

Aged 68 at the time of the shooting of our film, this retired liqueur salesman has lived and breathed the Tour as long as he can think. His passion was first aroused before the war when he was still in High School and read everything there was to read about the achievements of Maes, Bartali, Lapébie and others. Each night, he religiously burnt a candle in front of the picture of his favourite champion of the moment. As soon as he was old enough to earn a living, he followed the champions - his heroes. As he had neither a driving licence nor a car, he followed them by train or on his bike, sleeping rough. In his notebooks, he wrote down the race positions and every detail. Together with his friend Jean-Guy Modin in his native Sarlat, he now spends his days re-living the tours from the old days, knowing by heart each winner, each race. Whenever a cyclist dies, famous or not, he travels across France or Belgium to attend the funeral. Jean truly has the "yellow fever"! He would have loved to be a sports journalist, but he is content to contribute to special collectors magazines, telling how he met his heroes...

He dreams of following the Tour - just once - in an official car, from the inside. He has never yet dared asking. The year of the film marked his fiftieth Tour de France. His fiftieth crusade... maybe the one he will follow in an official car ?

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