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The Monuments: The Grit and the Glory of Cycling's Greatest One-day Races

Peter Cossins

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The Tour de France may provide the most obvious fame and glory, but it is cycling's one-day tests that the professional riders really prize. Toughest, longest, and dirtiest of all are the so-called Monuments, the five legendary races that are the sport’s equivalent of golf's majors or tennis grand slams. Milan-Sanremo, the Tour of Flanders, Paris-Roubaix, Liège-Bastogne-Liège, and the Tour of Lombardy date back more than a century, and each of them is an anomaly in modern-day sport, the cycling equivalent of the Monaco Grand Prix.

Time has changed them to a degree, but they remain as brutally testing as they ever have been. They provide the sport's outstanding one-day performers--the likes of Philippe Gilbert, Fabian Cancellara, Mark Cavendish, Tom Boonen, Peter Sagan, and Thor Hushovd--with a chance to measure themselves against one another other and their predecessors in the most challenging tests in world cycling. From the bone-shattering bowler-hat cobbles of the Paris-Roubaix to the insanely steep hellingen in the Tour of Flanders, each race is as unique as the riders who push themselves through extreme exhaustion to win them and enter their epic history. In *The Monuments*, Peter Cossins tells the tumultuous history of these extraordinary races and the riders they have immortalized.

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