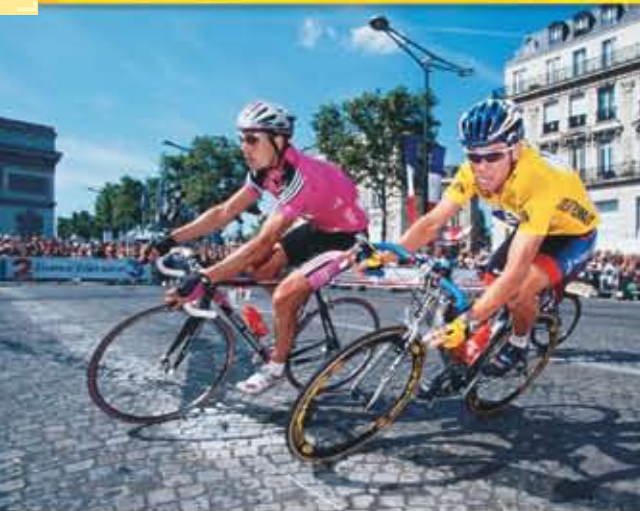


FROM CHARADE TO PARADE

LANCÉ 2001

LANCÉ 2001



Erik Zabel and Lance Armstrong (above) both had reason to celebrate on the Champs-Élysées. The American earned his third title while the consistent German sprinter claimed his sixth consecutive green jersey.

Jan Ullrich was able to match Armstrong all the way to the summit at Luz Ardiden (below) but no matter how hard he tried he just could not drop his nemesis. They crossed the line side-by-side with the German claiming third behind escapees Roberto Laiseka and Vladimir Belli. Jan held out his hand moments later; Lance understood that it was a gesture of appreciation... but it also signalled Ullrich's surrender.



AFTER A RELATIVELY TAME START IN 2001 THE US POSTAL TEAM director Johan Bruyneel crafted a cunning plan to ensure that Lance Armstrong would be as fresh as possible for the final climb of the crucial stage to Alpe d'Huez. It was a resounding success and it ensured that the American's name would grace the last of the 21 hairpin turns of the famous mountain.

There's a lot of tradition in this race. Tourists now know to look for the signposts on the switchbacks on the 13.9km stretch of road that rises from Bourg d'Oisans to Alpe d'Huez. The racers don't care for semantics. They are busy trying to cope with the brutal gradient and negotiating the crowds which always spill onto the road on this celebrated stage. In 2001, however, Lance did take a good look at the man who rode alongside him early on the incline. He was later chastised for the gesture of a solid stare at Jan Ullrich before attacking.

"It wasn't an arrogant thing," said Armstrong of what became known as *The Look*. "I did want to see his face. I wanted to see his mouth... the expression." After he took in this sight, he was gone. One moment Jan was Lance's equal, the next he was defeated.

Yes, Armstrong won the stage and he punched the air with sheer delight as he crossed the line 1'59" ahead of Ullrich. But to understand why he was so pleased with himself, we need to backtrack to the preceding mountains.

On the 2,000m high Col de la Madeleine, the first *bors* category climb of the 88th Tour, Ullrich's Telekom team was intent on leading the peloton. Five magenta jerseys were at the head of the pack and they set a rapid tempo and it was not just because they were pursuing a group of escapees. No, there was another catalyst for the tactics; Armstrong had been shelled. The American was caught off his guard during the 25km long ascent and Ullrich and company wanted to seize the moment and sap even more energy from the tired looking defending champion.

What they didn't know is that it was part of a planned act. "I knew every team car had a television," said Armstrong at the end of the 10th stage. "Whenever the cameras came close, I put on a show of suffering."

It was a performance that made this day such a memorable one. The five Telekom riders who raced to the Madeleine's summit with all their might weren't the only ones who were conned by the charade. Commentators were convinced that this was going to be a different Tour; one where Armstrong was, in fact, fallible. Had he arrived underprepared? Was he too confident? No. He was simply toying with Telekom.

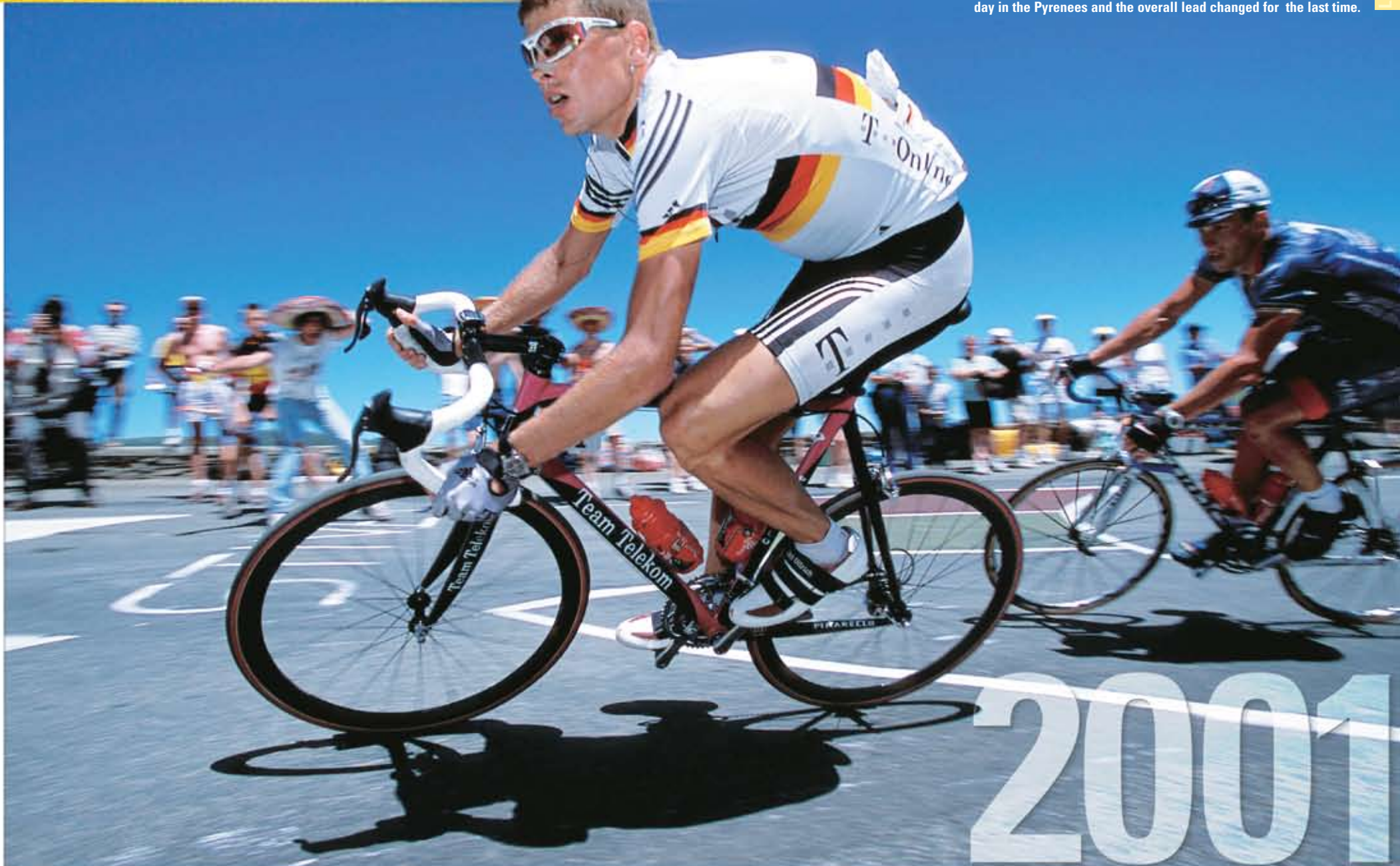
At the crucial phase of the stage Lance was not only ready to pounce, he was fresh in comparison to the men who pounded out the pace over the Madeleine and Col du Glandon.

Anyone who doubted Armstrong's abilities were reminded time and time again that he was a complete Tour rider. The day after his victory at Alpe d'Huez, he won the mountain time trial to Chamrousse by exactly a minute over Ullrich.

The yellow jersey may have been worn by opportunists like Stuart O'Grady and François Simon who were part of a long escape at the start of the second week but there was no question about who would wear the coveted prize in Paris.

In the Pyrenees the American was inspired by the sight of the monument to his former Motorola team-mate Fabio Casartelli and vowed to win that stage as well. Of course, he did. And to eliminate any doubt Lance also emphatically won the final time trial, finishing 1'39" ahead of Ullrich. What began as a charade turned into a parade that saw him on top of the podium for a third successive year.

US POSTAL TEAM: Lance Armstrong (US) 1st; Roberto Heras (Sp) 15th; Viatcheslav Ekimov (Rus) 82nd; Tyler Hamilton (US) 94th; George Hincapie (US) 71st; Steffen Kjaergaard (Nor) 101st; Victor Hugo Peña (Col) 79th; José Luis Rubiera (Sp) 38th; Christian Vandeveldel (US) DNF – stage 7



2001



2001 TOUR DE FRANCE RESULTS

- Lance Armstrong (US) 3,462km in 86h17'28" (40.070kph)
- Jan Ullrich (Ger) @ 6'44"
- Joseba Beloki (Sp) 9'05"
- Andrei Kivilev (Kaz) 9'53"
- Igor Gonz. de Galdeano (Sp) 13'28"
- François Simon (Fr) 17'22"
- Oscar Sevilla (Sp) 18'30"
- Santiago Botero (Col) 20'55"
- Marcos Serrano (Sp) 21'45"
- Michael Boogerd (Neth) 22'38"

ARMSTRONG'S STAGE WINS:

- St 10: Alpe d'Huez (2nd Ullrich)
- St 11: Chamrousse ITT (2nd Ullrich)
- St 13: St-Lary-Soulon (2nd Ullrich)
- St 18: St-Armand (2nd de Galdeano)

MOUNTAINS CLASSIFICATION

- 1. Laurent Jalabert (Fr) 258pts
- 4. Lance Armstrong (US) 195pts

SPRINT CLASSIFICATION

- 1. Erik Zabel (Ger) 321pts
- 6. Lance Armstrong (US) 134pts

Andrei Kivilev (left) was one of the 13 riders who escaped the peloton early in the stage to Pontarlier. It was a miserable day when rain fell for almost all of the 222.5km. The bunch had little interest in chasing down the opportunists who eventually finished over half an hour ahead. The Kazakh rider who won the Commonwealth Bank Cycle Classic the year before turning pro was fourth overall in 2001. Two years later, Kivilev lost his life as a result of injuries sustained in a crash during the second stage of Paris-Nice. Stuart O'Grady (with Lance, above) lost his lead in the points classification in the last sprint of the race. The final podium (right) was the same as the year before for the first time since 1979.

