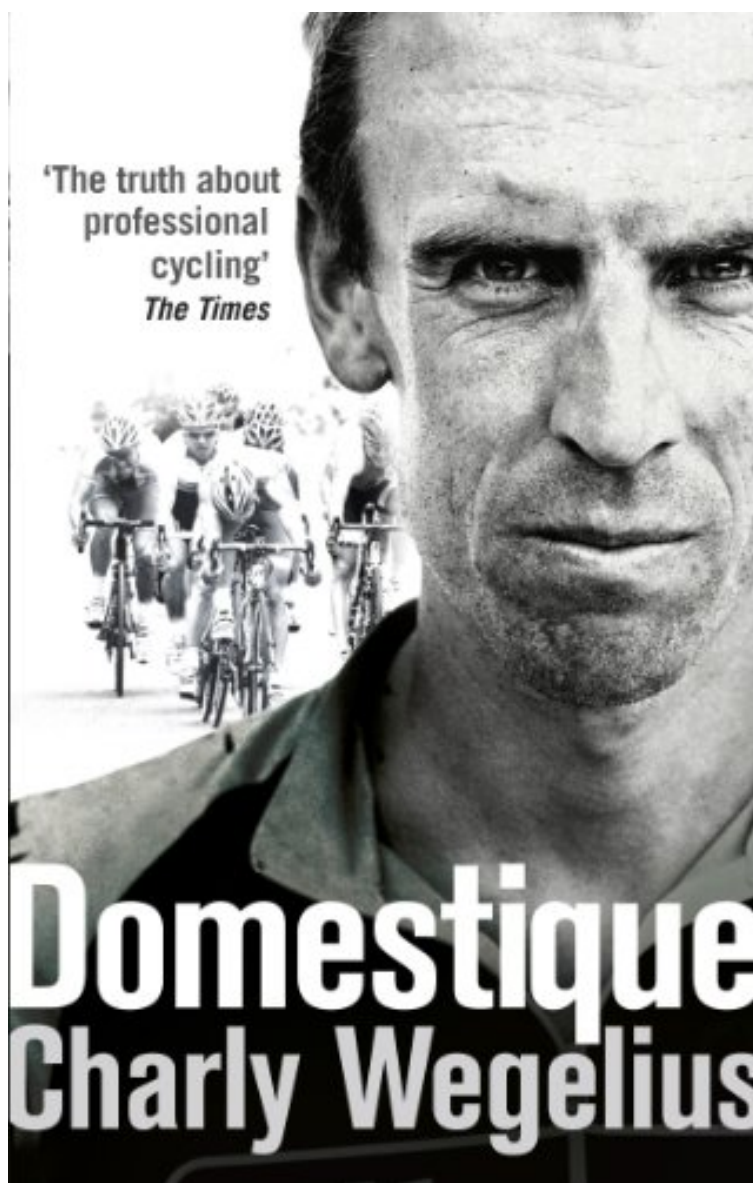


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Domestique: The Real-life Ups and Downs of a Tour Pro



Par Charly Wegelius
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realised I hated the responsibility and pressure of chasing victory. And that's when I became a domestique. I learned to take that hurt and give it everything I had to give, all for someone else's win. When the order came in to ride I pushed out with the hardest rhythm I could, dragging the group faster and faster, until my whole body screamed with pain. There were times I rode myself to a standstill, clutching the barrier metres from the line, as the lead group shot past. But that's what made me so good at my job. As my career took off, I started looking at the fans lining the route, cheering us like heroes. The passion for cycling oozed off them, but they couldn't know what it was really like. They didn't see the terrible hotels, the crazy egos or all the shit that goes with great expectations. Well, this is how it is.

Revue de presse "If justice is alive and well in the world, this will be the sports book of the year 2013... a book that is well nigh impossible to put back on the shelf at the end of each chapter." (The Washing Machine Post.net) "Interesting and revealing... the most accurate description of what being a highly-regarded domestique in the modern peloton is really like" (Cycling Weekly) "One of the hardest working domestiques in the sport" (Cycling Weekly) "Couldn't put it down the best insight into the peloton since Paul Kimmage's Rough Ride" (William Fotheringham) "A must read. Absolutely outstanding" (Paul Kimmage) Presentation de l'auteur *** Winner - SweetSpot Cycling Book of the Year ** For 11 years I was a professional cyclist, competing in the hardest and greatest races on Earth. I was in demand from the world's best teams, a well-paid elite athlete. But I never won a race. I was the hired help. When my mum dropped me off in a small French town aged 17, I was full of determination to be a professional cyclist, but I was completely green. I went from mowing the team manager's lawn to winning every amateur race I entered. Then I turned pro and realised I hated the responsibility and pressure of chasing victory. And that's when I became a domestique. I learned to take that hurt and give it everything I had to give, all for someone else's win. When the order came in to ride I pushed out with the hardest rhythm I could, dragging the group faster and faster, until my whole body screamed with pain. There were times I rode myself to a standstill, clutching the barrier metres from the line, as the lead group shot past. But that's what made me so good at my job. As my career took off, I started looking at the fans lining the route, cheering us like heroes. The passion for cycling oozed off them, but they couldn't know what it was really like. They didn't see the terrible hotels, the crazy egos or all the shit that goes with great expectations. Well, this is how it is.