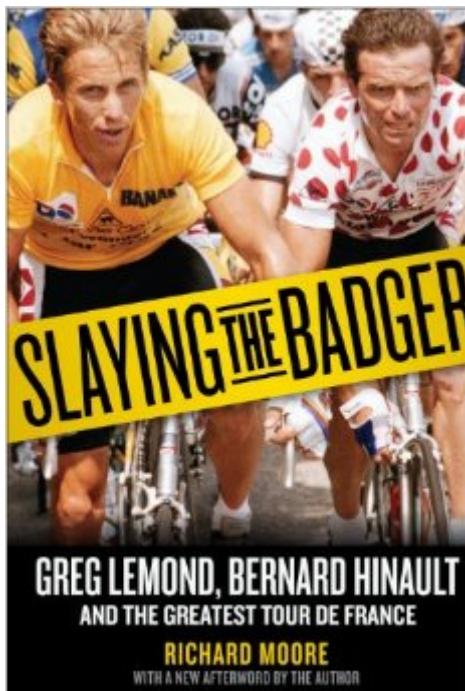


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Slaying The Badger: Greg LeMond, Bernard Hinault, And The Greatest Tour De France



Synopsis

Bernard Hinault is "Le Blaireau," the Badger. Tough as old boots, he is the old warrior of the French peloton, as revered as he is feared for his ferocious attacks. He has won 5 Tours de France, marking his name into the history books as a member of cycling's most exclusive club. Yet as the 1986 Tour de France ascends into the mountains, a boyish and friendly young American named Greg LeMond threatens the Badger--and France's entire cycling heritage. The stakes are high. Winning for Hinault means capping his long cycling career by becoming the first man to win the Tour six times. For LeMond, a win will bring America its first Tour de France victory. So why does their rivalry shock the world? LeMond and Hinault ride for the same team. Asked by a reporter why he attacked his own teammate, the Badger replies, "Because I felt like it." and "If he doesn't buckle, that means he's a champion and deserves to win the race. I did it for his own good." LeMond becomes paranoid, taking other riders' feed bags in the feed zone and blaming crashes on sabotage. Through it all, with the help of his American teammate Andy Hampsten, LeMond rides like a champion and becomes the first American to win the Tour de France. His win signals the passing of cycling's last hide-bound generation and the birth of a new breed of riders. In *Slaying the Badger*, award-winning author Richard Moore traces each story line to its source through innumerable interviews--not only with LeMond and Hinault in their own homes but also with teammates, rivals, race directors, journalists, sponsors, and promoters. Told from these many perspectives, the alliances, tirades, and broken promises divulged in *Slaying the Badger* build to the stunning climax of the 1986 Tour de France. *Slaying the Badger* is an incomparably detailed and highly revealing tale of cycling's most extraordinary rivalry.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Greg LeMond and my brother inspired me to start riding and racing. Back in the day if we wanted detailed info about races we had to wait for the next issue of Velo News or Winning magazine. Then CBS or one of the networks started covering the Tour de France on Sundays. We loved the coverage even though it only scratched the surface of the drama that is professional bicycle racing. This is a great book. A great read about really what was the pivotal point in pro cycling in the modern era. Hinault represented the "old guard" of cycling. A figure so prominent and dominating that he was in fact the "patron of the peloton". Riders were in awe of him and often outright feared him. Some loved him, some hated him. LeMond represented the American invasion into one of the holy of holy European sports. Even though Jock Boyer had been there for years he wasn't a talent like LeMond. I always admired LeMond because he respected the sport and the traditions of sport. The 1980's to me represents the end of the "honest" cycling era. Sure there were doping issues during the 60's 70's and 80's (Delgado in '88) etc... But EPO really changed the sport and has ruined cycling IMO. I digress. If you are a fan of bicycle racing and especially a fan of the Hinault, Fignon, LeMond, Roche, Kelly era of the 1980's this is a must read book. Moore goes way out of his way to write a fair and balanced book on what was, is, to many of us one of the greatest and most dramatic Tour de France races ever. Because of technology, sophisticated doping, and the money now involved in cycling racing like this no longer happens today. Cycling has become a sport of specialists and is orchestrated to the minute detail. Love him or hate him Hinault raced like few have after him.

Slaying the Badger was a disappointment to me. It reminded me of the journalism at the time in the U.S. surrounding the 1986 TDF which invariably portrayed Hinault as villain and LeMond as doe-eyed innocent. The degree to which the author went to demonizing Hinault in the first half of the book was extraordinary, extending even to some caustic observations re: Hinault's wife as compared to LeMond's (What can we say about Martine Hinault except that she's no Kathy LeMond... ne pas? Wow.) There's footage available on YouTube the year following LeMond's torpedoing of Boyer's effort in the World Championship Road Race the year before (1982) in which he basically says that Boyer needed to 'prove he was the strongest' if he expected to win... words that were used verbatim by Hinault in 1986. SEE on YouTube: 1983 World Road Cycling Championships Men's Road Race Part 1/2 (SEE: minute 8:50) Why Greg LeMond should not be held to the same standard Greg LeMond held Boyer to just 3 years earlier is a mystery to me. The parallels with LeMond's conduct as teammate in 1986 could not be more obvious. Here for the first

time we get a glimpse into Lemond's etiquette when it comes to working with teammates. Even (or especially) teammates must prove they are the strongest if they expect to win. I found it amusing that a journalist of the time felt Boyer had no chance, but Sean Kelly - who was in the peloton when Boyer attacked - felt he had a good chance. The author dismissed this fact by pointing out that Boyer had recently signed onto the same team as Kelly... the implication being that Kelly was just telling Boyer what he wanted to hear at the time. How does the author substantiate this charge? Does he ask Sean Kelly if that was the case?

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