



Kings of the Mountains: How Colombia's Cycling Heroes Changed Their Nation's History

Matt Rendell

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"Kings of the Mountains" tells the amazing and little-known story of how an impoverished, politically turbulent Latin American country produced a breed of cyclist capable of taking on the world's best - in the 2002 Tour de France the top Colombian rider Santiago Botero beat even the great Lance Armstrong to win the time trial. Matt Rendell tells of how Colombia's first cycle races during the 50s were held on dusty, unpaved roads - with consequentially ghastly accidents; of how the first top Europeans to race in Colombia found themselves utterly vanquished by its endless mountain climbs; of how the biography of Colombia's first cycling superstar was written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Then, in the 70s and 80s, its cyclists began to make their mark abroad, even in the Tour de France - especially as victors in its draining mountain stages, to become King of the Mountains - before Colombia's pathological political instability led to the rise of the cocaine cartels, and cycling became inextricably linked with the world of drug smuggling.

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