

April 11, 1999

Big news! Lance won the time trial yesterday in Circuit de la Sarthe. It was his first win of the year and his first win in a European Time Trial. I was so excited. He was pleased also. He brought me back his nameplate from the team car. I love collecting things for the family archives. He may have placed 2nd overall in the race. I say "may have" because apparently there was some confusion at the end of the race because he flatted just on the border of the distance where they allow you to take the same time as the group. Hopefully today I'll find out for sure. The main thing is that he is feeling good and things are back to normal on the bike.



He got in late last night. Tyler Hamilton, a teammate and good friend, flew back to Nice also and is staying with us until the guys leave on Tuesday for the Tour of Aragon in Spain. Today after the guys get back from their ride we plan to watch Paris-Roubaix. It's nice having our satellite connected. The other day I flipped on the TV and suddenly there was Oprah. It was strangely comforting to see the familiar icon.

We had a good rain this week, so my little garden of baby plants is thriving. I have no idea if they will produce anything edible this year, or if you have to wait until the following season. I keep dreaming of summer strawberries.

Kelly's site has been getting plenty of hits, thanks to you! Her mom told me that it does wonders to keep her spirits up. She actually went swimming this weekend, so that is a very good sign that she is feeling more like herself. The girl loves to swim.

I hope you are enjoying your weekend. It's a peaceful, sunny day in Nice. I can't help but think about the plight of the ethnic Albanian refugees. Not too long ago, they might have been spending a peaceful Sunday with their families. Let's all say a prayer for their safety and hope that this crisis is resolved quickly. It's a horrible way to be reminded to be thankful for each day and for the people you love. But we are reminded.

March 21, 1999

Today was a quiet, relaxing Sunday for me. I took Lance to the airport early this morning for his flight to Spain. Semana Catalana starts tomorrow. Then I promptly came home and crashed for 3 more hours. Amazing that I can be so tired, when the guys rode about 200 miles yesterday!

We had a great adventure in Italy. We left early Friday morning to pick up Frankie and Betsy Andreu and hit the autoroute headed towards Milan. We had to hurry because Lance and I had a lunch to attend in Milan because he was the recipient of an award (along with Bartoli and Pantani). The lunch was nice, typical Italian style. I looked at the menu thinking I had to make a selection, only to learn that it was simply a list of courses: Italian ham, focaccia bread, pasta, risotto, gnocchi, veal, potatoes, spinach, banana dessert and café. Just your average lunch, eh? It was good Milan-San Remo fuel for Lance anyway - I was full after the ham.



After the lunch we went back to the hotel and Lance went for a ride. Betsy and I left because she had made us reservations at a hotel right by the Duomo in the center of Milan. It took us an hour to get there in Friday afternoon traffic, but we eventually found our hotel and got settled in. Then we walked around the Duomo and got some good photographs. I had Boone with me, so I had to literally zip him inside my backpack so we could go inside. Luckily he was silent so I could look around the amazing structure. It was unbelievable! I can't imagine people constructing something of that magnitude today, let alone so many years ago. It was awesome. Betsy and I are both Catholic, so we lit candles and lingered in the peaceful cavern under the pale glow of the stained glass panels. When my backpack started moving, it was time to go.

Then we hung out in a café and people-watched. It's nice traveling with someone who is 8 months pregnant because you get to stop and sit, stop often in restrooms and get lots of snacks. Which is my ideal way to enjoy a day, so it worked out great. Not to mention that Betsy is fluent in Italian. That night we had a nice dinner together and planned our route to get to the start the next morning, then we both crashed.

Saturday morning we were up early to find the start, which turned out to be not far from our hotel. We saw the guys briefly and then they were off. So were we, as we followed the map to find the feed zone. We spend the middle part of the day there and got to see the guys pass by in a blur. Lance missed catching his feed bag by about a quarter of an inch, and I felt so bad for him! I can't imagine being that hungry and thirsty and knowing that the feed is just ahead, only to miss your bag and watch everybody slurping and eating around you. Of course the team car eventually gets him a replacement bag, not to worry.

The remainder of the drive to San Remo was simple. As we drove down the curving descent into the coast town of San Remo, I couldn't help but consider the dangerous finish of the race. The last big climb is called the Poggio, and it has a wicked descent immediately afterwards and the race finishes in a sprint between the first group of guys over the hill. It's dangerous work, that's for sure.

We got there with time to spare before the finish so we watched part of the race on TV and we went and bought Lance and Frankie some food for in the car on the way home. The team worked hard for George Hincapie and he ended up taking 9th place. Tchmil (I am sure I spelled that incorrectly) won the race- he is 36 years old, which is older for a pro cyclist. It was a long day for everyone in the Peloton.

Luckily San Remo is only about 20 minutes from Nice. So the guys showered at a hotel and we took off immediately afterwards. Last night Lance and I were so tired we were practically comatose. Of course he rode 200 miles on his bike and I merely drove between two cities, but hey, what can I say?

Now he's gone until next weekend when I drive up to Avignon France to watch him in the Criterium International. I really hate the quiet when he's gone, especially on Sundays because everything is closed and everyone's with their families. The house may be quiet, but at least it's much cozier now, I have to say that. It really is starting to feel like "home"...

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March 18, 1999

Nice, France

I made it here safely with no major travel problems. The pets survived the journey and we all got here - tired but happy. My first day here I spent unpacking and cleaning the house, because many of our personal items were junked down in a dusty basement during the renovations. I felt like an archaeologist, trying to uncover and piece everything back together. I was determined not to take a nap and add to the internal time clock confusion. So that evening I showered and went out to eat with Betsy Andreu. It was fun to see her again; she is now 7 months pregnant!



Day two I tackled the filthy bathrooms until it was time to pick up Becky Burnett (Kevin's fiancée) from the airport. That night we all had dinner and then went to visit the guys, who were staying at a hotel beyond the Nice airport. It was great to see Lance again - a month is too long! We didn't stay very long because the massage-eat-sleep chain does not allow for too much idle time - especially the night before a race.

That Sunday was the final stage of Paris-Nice. I met Becky, Betsy, Frankie and Jodi Merckx for lunch on the Promenade des Anglais, the coast road through Nice. The whole road was blocked off because the final laps of the race went around the Promenade. We watched part of the race on TV at the Andreu's apartment, then walked down to the barriers to watch up close when the Peloton was downtown. It was exciting as always to watch the guys go by in a blur of color and a "whoosh" of wind created by moving bodies and machines. Each of us was trying to find our own rider, which wasn't always easy. Between the time we left the TV and walked to the finish, I later learned that I missed a shining moment for the Postal team when they led Glenn Magnuson to the front. I didn't see Lance at the very end because of all the crowds. Plus I wanted to hustle to my parking garage and try to get out of the center of town before traffic made it impossible.

Lance rode home from the finish, and naturally beat me to the house. When I parked and walked up the steps to the house, I heard the stereo going and suddenly felt so excited and happy to be together again. After weeks of coming home to a quiet, empty house, it felt so good to hear the sounds of the one you love, and to see the familiar sight of his bike parked outside. We walked all around the house together. He explained the differences since the last time he was home. He admired my cleaning job. Then we got cleaned up and soon the team arrived for a dinner of bread, pizza (delivered) and a salad. Not my idea of entertaining, but decent enough considering we didn't even have counters in our kitchen at that point. It was nice for everyone to be able to hang out and relax after a long, hard race.

Monday was a big day on our household. Our granite countertops were installed in the kitchen. And we received furniture deliveries throughout the day - we even had living and dining room curtains installed. By the end of the day, the construction zone was becoming the vision that we had for our home. I would hold my breath at each item that came in the door, knowing that we had either selected it quickly or from a manufacturer's catalog. It was so wonderful when things started to fall into place, and when we could touch the furniture and it felt like quality. It was very exciting and also a big relief.

After Lance finished his Tuesday ride, we took our new scooter down the hill into town and ate lunch at a little neighborhood café. It was so fun to zip around and not have to stress about parking. As we sat there outside, I felt some of the dust blow off me, my cleaning backache started to ease - and suddenly it was just any day and I was enjoying lunch at a romantic café with my husband. We laughed and talked and lingered over cappuccino. I was reminded that it's the little things here that make life grand. I also had that strange sensation that happens now and then - when you realize the person sitting across from you, who always sits across from you, is more important to you than anything in the world. Or that if you could pick anyone to sit across from you, it would be this person. I realize that my description of this feeling is

not even close to doing it justice, but perhaps it's one of those things that is impossible to describe because you have to feel it to know it. I think so.

Today is Thursday. Our kitchen should be done today. We are waiting for them to finish the sink. As I type, a guy is here fixing a couple broken electric blinds. Lance rode 5 ½ hours yesterday, and I think plans to go long again today. His collarbone is still bothering him, which bothers me because he sleeps on his back - which means no snuggles and occasional snoring. Last night our radiators were installed, so we had a blissful night where I didn't have to change into my pajamas under the covers. Step by step, we're getting there.

Tomorrow we leave for Milan because Lance is getting an award from the Italian newspaper, La Gazzetta. Betsy and I are staying at a hotel near the Duomo and plan to watch the start outside of Milan on Saturday morning. Then we are driving to San Remo for the finish that afternoon - then we all drive back to Nice together. Lance leaves on Sunday for a week in Spain, for the Semana Catalana race, then two days (3 stages) in Northern France for the Criterium International.

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March 4, 1999

First of all, I have to redeem myself. Right away.

I know my remarks the other day really irritated some people. With good reason. I should not have made such a generalization about French people being rude. To tell you the honest truth, I was frustrated that I was here and Lance was way over there and he seemed to be having one bad incident after another. I was mostly dealing with the emotion of him having two accidents and me not being able to help him. I was venting and I am sorry for being offensive.



It seems I had a momentary lapse of memory - and consequently, judgement. I had forgotten that the French people helped us find and buy a home, helped us furnish and remodel that home, instructed me in their language and customs, and in general made a space for two strangers to live in their country. I have just as many examples of kindness and good fortune; I just was having a bad day. Sorry. It is all the little differences that make our lives a rich adventure over there, I haven't forgotten. And I haven't changed.

Ok, that said, do you forgive me? I sure hope so...

One a happier note, Lance is doing better. There have been no more accidents and no more trouble. Things are going better with the construction on the house. In fact, I think things may be under control by the time I get there. Lance said that the kitchen looks fantastic.

He has been training every day, riding with Kevin and Frankie. He has dinner with them as well. Last night Frankie's wife, Betsy, made some risotto (Lance's favorite). Lance is still staying with Kevin until the renovations are complete. Actually, he will be leaving for Paris-Nice at the end of the week, and may not actually stay in the house before he goes. I hope to have the rest of our furniture delivered the afternoon I arrive March 12th. That will give Lance something to look forward to - other than seeing us (me, Chemo and Boone). I'm missing him tremendously. I've learned that a month is about as long as I can stand being apart.

By the way, I'm going to ask our webmaster Chris to take the comment out of my last journal - I really didn't mean it.. (and it has been removed - Chris)