



King George Returns

George Hincapie comes home to South Carolina after pro cycling

by AARON H. BIBLE

For the first time in 17 years, George Hincapie is hanging out at his home in Greenville, S.C., instead of racing bikes in France during the month of July. In fact, it's the first time in 30 years he hasn't spent the summer in Europe; instead, he's spending time with his newborn baby and his wife, working hard to expand his cycling apparel line, promoting his book, coaching his development team, working on events such as the Hincapie Gran Fondo, and helping run his cyclist-focused hotel—the Hotel Domestique.

The name of the hotel is no accident—as the upscale lodge is not just intended for pack-leading cyclists, says Hincapie; it's for everyone. The retired pro, remembered not for his personal ego or amazing solo finishes, but for his

relentless support of his teammates, says folks of all walks of life are coming to stay at Hotel Domestique and appreciating the design, décor, cuisine, and environmental beauty of the newly remodeled hotel.

"I'm passionate about the design," Hincapie said. "We kept the bones of the hotel but inside is very modern, contemporary, but it fuses well. The designers did a perfect job, in my opinion. You don't have to travel far and you feel like you're really in a different place."

The hotel, opened in July of last year, is also quickly gaining a reputation for its cuisine. The property's Restaurant 17 (hey, it's better than Lance's "Juan Pelota" coffee shop in Austin), is led by Chef Adam Cooke, who was formerly chef at the luxury hotel Blackberry Farm in Walland, Tenn., for five years before coming to South

Carolina. Much like the hotel itself, Cooke has a passion for combining the old and the new, the international and the local. "I think everything is starting to fall into place," Hincapie says.

Hincapie, while not a domestique per se during his career, walked away from bike riding a professional right hand man—thus, the title of his book released in May of this year: *The Loyal Lieutenant*. The book is considered a no-holds-barred account of his record-setting two decades racing in the Tour de France and his uncanny ability to work with Lance Armstrong, leading him to seven Tour wins, while Hincapie could have easily been a top finisher himself on another team. Co-written with sports broadcaster Craig Hummer, it's a great read to understand more about the man and the sport.

But back in Greenville, S.C., it's all about the