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Cycling fan starts L'Étape du Tour on a replica of 120-year-old SLAVIA bicycle

- › Vladimír Vidim, a vintage cycling fan from Prague, faithfully recreated the SLAVIA bicycle from 1896
- › Original stage of the Tour de France, finishing with a hill climb of 2,365 meters, is considered the toughest challenge for amateur cyclists
- › The SLAVIA was the first vehicle built by ŠKODA AUTO founding fathers Laurin & Klement

Mladá Boleslav, 15 July 2019 – Can a bicycle designed over 120 years ago manage an original stage of the Tour de France with a hill finish of 2,365 metres? Vladimír Vidim, a cycling enthusiast from Prague is attempting the seemingly impossible: He has faithfully recreated a SLAVIA brand bike from 1896 and will be competing against top amateur racers on modern racing bikes at the L'Étape du Tour on 21 July. [A video and an article on ŠKODA Storyboard provide a detailed insight into the construction of the SLAVIA replica.](#) The SLAVIA was the first bike produced by Laurin & Klement, the company that later became ŠKODA AUTO.

Just as the Tour de France – which ŠKODA is supporting for the 16th time this year as the official main partner – is regarded as the queen of professional cycling races, the L'Étape du Tour is regarded as the greatest challenge for amateur road cyclists. Embarking on an original leg of the 'Tour' with steep climbs, daunting descents and an exhausting mountain-top finish is the ultimate challenge for hobby cyclists. How much more gruelling would it be to rise to the challenge on a bicycle that was designed more than 120 years ago? Weighing in at around 18 kilograms, the bike is twice as heavy as modern racing bikes – with just one gear, no freewheel and no brakes?

The bike in question is the SLAVIA – the bicycle that the mechanic Václav Laurin and the bookseller Václav Klement built in 1895 as the first product to leave their workshop in the former Kingdom of Bohemia. Because of the high demand, the founding fathers' company expanded rapidly; in 1899 they presented their first motorcycle and in 1905, Laurin & Klement's first car rolled out of the production hall. In 1925, L&K's merger with the automotive division of Škoda Works in Pilsen was the next step to becoming today's globally successful ŠKODA brand. It is against this historical background that ŠKODA supports the most important cycling races in the world, which inspired Vladimír Vidim to realise his spectacular idea; he is bringing a legend from the company's history back to life.

The qualified locksmith who currently works as a construction designer cannot imagine a life without bicycles, which is why he taught himself the art of bicycle manufacturing – from the first sketch to a fully functional bike ([video](#)). At a small workshop in Roztoky north of Prague, the 54-year-old indulges his passion. He enjoys restoring vintage bicycles and building stunning, faithful replicas.

The famous SLAVIA bicycle is one of the most demanding projects he has undertaken to date. Contrary to expectations, Vidim and his expert friends could not find an original racing bike that could serve as a model. For this reason, he used historical photographs to chart all the dimensions, angles and other design details of the first two-wheeler from Mladá Boleslav. The search for the historically correct production methods and the construction of the SLAVIA bike took around four months, and the result is worth the effort: The faithfully recreated two-wheeler looks as if it had just rolled out of Václav Laurin and Václav Klement's workshop and rides perfectly. True to the original, the SLAVIA has no



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gears or even brakes, as one would expect on modern bikes today. [The article on ŠKODA Storyboard provides a comparison between the SLAVIA bike and a state-of-the-art racing bike.](#) So it will be a real challenge. To support the Prague-native in his preparations, ŠKODA lend him the latest SUPERB.

This unparalleled cycling event has been part of the Tour de France since 1993. On 21 July, six days before the pros, ambitious amateur cyclists will tackle the 135-kilometre stage from Albertville to Val Thorens. They will have to climb a total of 4,563 meters and negotiate three merciless ascents: the Cormet de Roselend (1,968 m), the Côte de Longefoy (1,190 m) and the steep road to the finish in Val Thorens at 2,365 meters.

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Cycling fan starts L'Étape du Tour on a replica of 120-year-old SLAVIA bicycle

The SLAVIA bicycle was the first two-wheeler that ŠKODA's founding fathers Laurin & Klement manufactured in Mladá Boleslav. Vladimír Vidim's faithful reproduction brings this legend of the company's history back to life.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO



Cycling fan starts L'Étape du Tour on a replica of 120-year-old SLAVIA bicycle

A passionate cyclist, qualified locksmith and designer, Vladimír Vidim combines his passions to construct historic bicycles. With his replica of the SLAVIA, he is taking on the challenge of the Queen Stage of the Tour de France.

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Source: ŠKODA AUTO

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ŠKODA AUTO

- › was founded during the pioneering days of the automobile in 1895, making it one of the longest-established automobile companies in the world.
- › currently offers its customers nine passenger-car series: the CITIGO, FABIA, RAPID, SCALA, OCTAVIA, KAROQ, KODIAQ, as well as the KAMIQ and the SUPERB.
- › delivered more than 1.25 million vehicles to customers around the world in 2018.
- › has belonged to Volkswagen Group since 1991. The Volkswagen Group is one of the most successful vehicle manufacturers in the world. In association with the Group, ŠKODA AUTO independently develops and manufactures vehicles, as well as components such as engines and transmissions.
- › operates at three locations in the Czech Republic; manufactures in China, Russia, Slovakia, Algeria and India mainly through Group partnerships, as well as in Ukraine and Kazakhstan with local partners.
- › employs over 39,000 people globally and is active in more than 100 markets.
- › is pressing ahead with the transformation from a traditional car manufacturer to the 'Simply Clever company for the best mobility solutions' as part of the ŠKODA 2025 Strategy.

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