

Transcript from France Television's programme: Sur le Mont Ventoux pour le "défi des cinglés"

In the skies of Provence, immediately recognizable, it fascinates as much as it worries anyone who wants to tackle it.

- *Mont Ventoux is one of the greatest*

On a bike, to climb it once is already a performance. Marvin and Jean-Michel want to climb the Mont Ventoux three times, in one day, by each of the three routes that lead to the summit.

- *Cycling like we do, you have to be a bit of a masochist!*

This feat has a name: the Défi des Cinglés (the Challenges of the Crazyes).

The adventure obviously needs some preparation. When we meet Marvin Faure, the sun is not yet up, but this Englishman living in France is already preparing the day's food.

- *I've got some honey waffles from the shop, which I love, which are really good, and several cereal bars... On a day like this I'm going to spend around 4000, between 4000 and 5000 calories.*

His fellow rider is a local. Jean-Michel Hurter, 67 years old, runs a cycle shop at the foot of Mont Ventoux.

- *Nowadays I don't do too much mechanical work, the mechanics do it for me, but I have done it for years so the advantage is that I can still look after my bike.*

He knows that what lies ahead is not to be taken lightly.

- *I would say that Mont Ventoux must be respected and must be earned. You don't go and climb Mont Ventoux as you would just go for a 60 km ride with a few friends.*
- *How are you? It's going to be really hot!*
- *Zero Km! Let's go! To the left!*

Eight hours of effort await the two men. Very quickly the road gets steeper. The Mont Ventoux in sight. Marvin and Jean-Michel are as happy as kids. They are riding where the Tour de France will pass in a few days.

- *It's a great pleasure to watch the Tour de France afterwards, and to say, "ah yes, I've been there!" This is the great distinction of cycling, in fact, we have the right to go and play on the same field as the pros!*

Champions and amateurs alike will tell you that Mont Ventoux is a myth, a theatre where exploits mingle with dramas. For Marvin, the Briton, one of these stories deserves a short stop.

- *I can't help but stop here, near the stele of Tom Simpson.*

During the 1967 Tour de France, British rider Tom Simpson collapsed on the slopes of Mont Ventoux. At the end of his strength, victim of the heat and under the influence of doping, he died in the hours that followed.

After a 2h05 climb, the two men reached the summit for the first time. This was a third of their challenge. It was the beginning of a dizzying descent at over 60 km per hour towards the foot of the mountain. After a short stop, the kilometres start to fly by again.

Other cyclists we meet are impressed.

- *I think it's great! I don't do that anymore. I'm too old! If I were 30 years younger I would try it, but not now!*

And for good reason. The "Défi des Cinglés" is aptly named. It's nearly 30°, the slope is steep and Jean-Michel is feeling the strain.

- *It's getting hotter: this is the part I fear the most. Afterwards it will be better, but it's really tough now.*

These kilometres are going to be an ordeal for him. Even the encouragements don't help much. At the end of the second climb, Jean-Michel throws in the towel.

- *My legs think they've had enough for today.*

A disappointment?

- *Oh yes of course it's always a disappointment when you set a goal and you don't achieve it. I'm sorry to leave Marvin alone at the top of the second climb, but I know that Marvin won't hold it against me.*

Marvin then sets off again for the last 56 kilometres, the third and last of the challenge. Not the easiest.

- *It's the head that makes the legs work, because the legs say "what the hell are you doing here?"*

Especially when you're on your own...

- *It's much better with a friend, so I miss him, Jean Michel!*

The last ramps are endless, but after 136 km and 4,400m of climbing Marvin finishes the challenge.

- *Of course, it's fun to test your limits, to push yourself and to hurt yourself, but it's always good when it stops!*

That day, despite his efforts, Marvin did not set any records. The "Défi des Cinglés" is above all an adventure that we share with friends. Nevertheless, it's an adventure which contributes to the great story of the Mont Ventoux!