



Mont Ventoux & the Luberon
22-29 May 2022



A cyclist's paradise

Which cyclist has never heard of the iconic mountain? Everybody dreams of climbing **Mont Ventoux** at least once in their lives. There are in fact three roads to the summit (two of them join together at Châlet Reynard with 6km to go), each with their own character. During the week, you'll have the opportunity to do all three of them, perhaps on the same day if you are up for the challenge!

At peak periods, literally thousands of cyclists climb Mont Ventoux every day. Sadly, many of them only come for a short period and miss out on the extraordinary cycling paradise around the famous mountain. There are innumerable quiet roads, beautiful climbs and stunning views to be seen in the **Luberon**, just to the south, and in the **Baronnies Provençales**, to the north and east.

During your week with us we will show you sights to take your breath away, such as **Gordes**, officially one of the most beautiful villages in France, the stunning **Gorges de la Nesque**, the vast lavender fields, cherry orchards and vineyards characteristic of the region and **Brantes**, a medieval village constructed as an eagle's nest above the **Toulourenc valley**.

Join the Club des Cinglés!

The word *cinglé* is best translated as nuts, crazy, bonkers, which gives a good indication of the challenge: **climb Mont Ventoux three times in the same day, once by each of the three routes**. Like many physical challenges, however, how hard it really is depends on how fit you are. The distance is 137 km and the total climbing 4,400m. Any reasonably well-trained cyclist riding at a sensible pace should be able to achieve this.

Whether you wish to be a Cinglé or not, our goal is for you to have a fantastic time ... More than that, we hope you become friends who will come back again and again - as is already the case for many of you!

CYCLING PROGRAMME

Date	Alpine Cols programme	Ride details	Major climbs	Distance / vertical
Sun	Arrival day Set up bikes; briefing for the week		-	-
Mon	Day 1: Intro to the Luberon	South to Gordes and the Luberon	Col des Trois Termes Col de la Ligne	103km 1,700m
Tues	Day 2: Baronnies Provençales	Quiet roads to the west and the north-east.	Col de la Chaîne Col de Fontaube	89km 1,650m
Wed	Day 3: the Queen stage	Mont Ventoux once, twice or three times, via Malaucène, Bédoin and Sault.	Mont Ventoux x3	137km 4,400m
Thu	Day 4: the Gorges de la Nesque	Recovery day: the stunning Gorges de la Nesque	Gorges de la Nesque	93km 1,340m
Fri	Day 5: Tour du Ventoux	Tour du Ventoux (par Brantes)	Col des Abeilles Col de l'Homme Mort	118km 2,020m
Sat	Day 6: Dentelles de Montmirail	The col de la Chaîne, then Sault via Chalet Reynard, return via the Gorges de la Nesque	Col de la Chaîne Chalet Reynard	115km 2,260m
Sun	Departure day			

655 km | 13,400m+ | 12 major climbs
(More if you wish!)



Mont Ventoux from the north-east



Day One: Gordes via the col des Trois Termes



Distance: 103 km **Elevation:** 1,700m+
Ride time: 5-6 hours **Focus:** Climbing

We begin the week with an excursion to the Luberon and a visit to Gordes. After a short climb and a descent to Bédoin, the next 20km are an easy descent on quiet roads through vineyards and cherry orchards.

The first proper climb of the week then brings us to the col des Trois Termes and on to Gordes, which is consistently voted amongst the most beautiful villages in France. There's a stunning view-point looking south to the Luberon as we round the escarpment.

More climbing awaits after Gordes, interspersed with short descents, as we cross the col de la Ligne and then descend the valley to Méthamis by a charming traffic-free road winding through the scrub and stunted holm-oak forests.

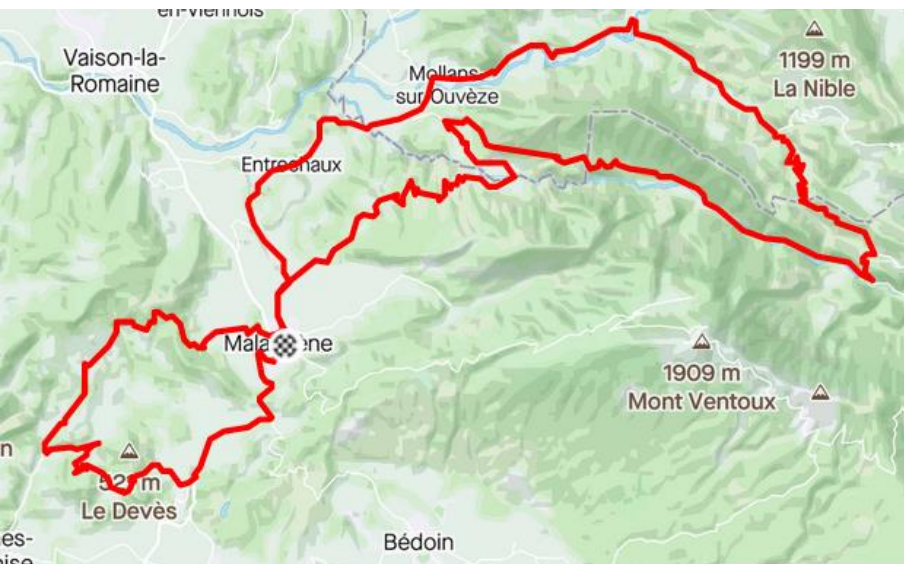
Our return to Malaucène is over the col de la Madeleine.



Gordes, one of the “most beautiful villages in France”



Day Two: The Baronnies Provençales



Distance: 89 km **Elevation:** 1,650m+
Ride time: 4-5 hours **Focus:** **Descending**

Whether you intend to compete in Sportives and GranFondos or not, descending is a crucial skill to master if you are to cycle in the mountains. The Alpine Cols coaches are all expert descenders, and over the past 8 years we have developed several effective techniques to teach the skill, including the use of video feedback.

The first part of the col de la Chaîne is perfect for descending practice. Once finished we will loop back through Malaucène and make an excursion into the Baronnies Provençales (the mountains to the north of Mont Ventoux), passing by Brantes and climbing the col de Fontaube

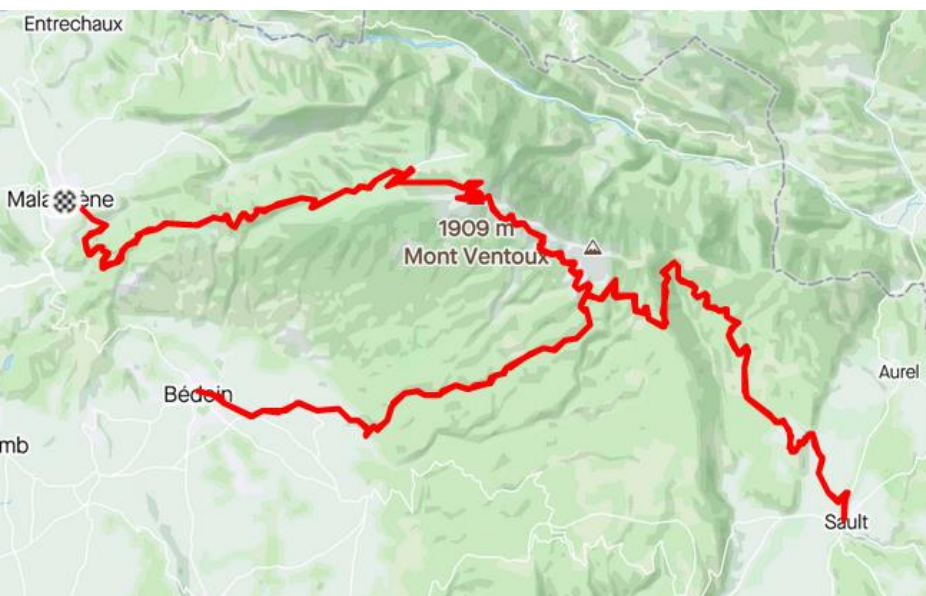
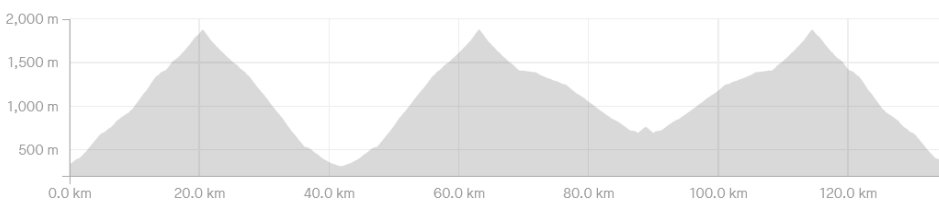
If you do not need or want to benefit from the coaching, you are of course free to ride ahead and either enjoy a longer coffee stop, or a longer ride!



Remarkable cliff formations above Lioux



Day Three: Mont Ventoux once, twice or three times!



Distance: 138 km **Elevation:** 4,400+
Ride time: 7-10 hours **Focus:** **Pacing, nutrition**

This is it, time to become a *cinglé* (or certified nutter!)

We start from Malaucène and make the first of our three ascents direct to the summit. Many people find this one the hardest: there are 3 leg-breaking kilometres in the middle at a constant 11-12%.

Sometimes if the weather is kind people like to start before dawn in order to be on top as the sun comes up: this is truly a magical moment.

A fast descent brings us to Bédoin where we enjoy a coffee stop before the second climb. Again at the summit, we descend to Sault and after another coffee and a short break we start up again for the third and final time.

The feeling when you summit again for the third time is indescribable.

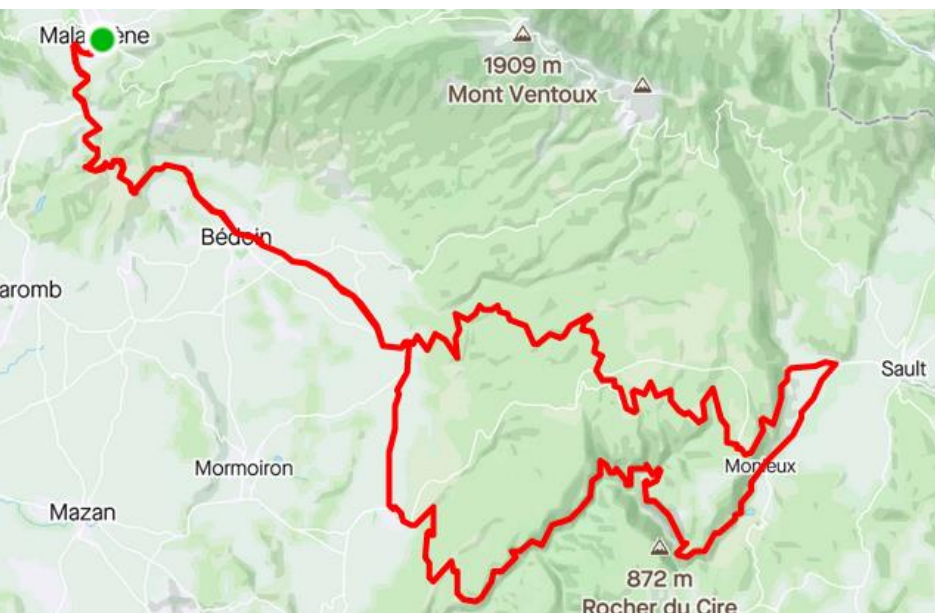
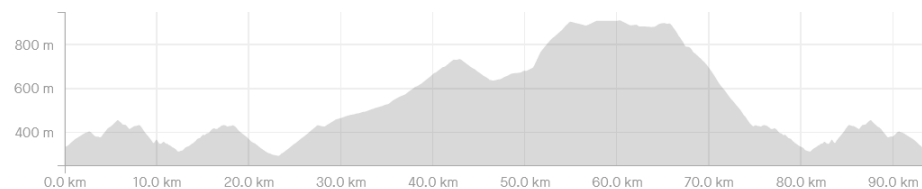
Celebrations back at the hotel!



Mont Ventoux: view north on the road from Malaucène
<https://photorunning.fr>



Day Four: Gorges de la Nesque



Distance: 93 km **Elevation:** 1,340m+
Ride time: 4-5 hours **Focus:** Recovery

This is the one ride that should be on the bucket list of every cyclist visiting Ventoux, together with the Big One itself. It is a bit of a stretch to call it a recovery ride, but it is certainly much easier than the previous day!

The Gorges de la Nesque is a site of outstanding natural beauty, where the river has carved a deep valley into the limestone rocks. The road is cut into the northern flank of the gorge and rises gently for 20km, occasionally diving through short tunnels in the bare rock. Every bend in the road opens up new vistas, and we find ourselves stopping often to take pictures.

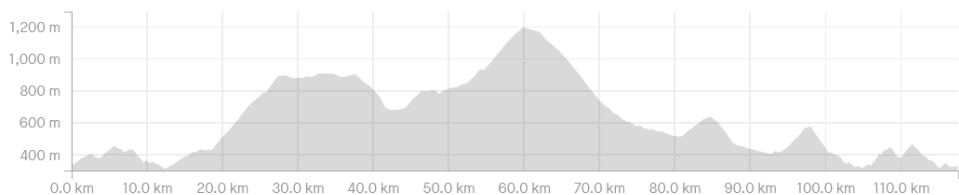
The return is via a quiet road over the col des Abeilles. There are plenty of options for those who would like to do more.



Gorges de la Nesque
<https://photorunning.fr>



Day Five: Tour du Ventoux



Distance: 118 km **Elevation:** 2,020m+
Ride time: 5-6 hours **Focus:** **Endurance**

Today's ride is a full tour around Mont Ventoux, with an option to finish via the summit for those who have the legs and the energy!

After crossing the col de la Madeleine on the way to Bédoin, we take the quiet road to Sault via the col des Abeilles, and then begin the long climb to the often wind-swept col de l'Homme Mort (it's not as bad as it sounds).

The most enjoyable – and memorable – part of the ride is the next 20km of pure joy descending the valley, with Mont Ventoux visible ahead and to the left (see photo above).

We take a detour to pass by the cliff-side village of Brantes, and complete the loop via another charming road which brings us back to Malaucène.



Brantes, with Mont Ventoux in the background



Day Six: Col de la Chaîne, then Chalet Reynard and the Gorges de la Nesque



Distance: 115 km **Elevation:** 2,260m+
Ride time: 5-6 hours **Focus:** **Endurance**



For our final day we return to the Dentelles de Montmirail and the col de la Chaîne on the way to Suzette (photo), and then return through several other tiny villages, often with long views south over the Rhône valley.

We will pass through Crillon-le-Brave, where there is a memorial to the Duke of Crillon, reputed to be Henry IV's bravest and fiercest general during the Wars of Religion.

We will then climb to Chalet Reynard for a coffee. Anyone who wants to can continue to the summit one last time, and then descend directly to Malaucène, but we propose rather to go down to Sault and then enjoy the stunning descent of the Gorges de la Nesque.



Sunset over the vineyards, near Bédoin



How fast are the rides?

You may be asking yourself, “*will I be able to keep up with these guys?*” This is a perfectly normal question: nobody wants to be left behind or to feel they are always holding the group back!

The answer is that *so long as you are comfortable riding the daily distances and especially the elevation you will experience on the camp*, you will be fine. This is not a beginners camp, but neither is it for Elite athletes, and it is certainly not a race! The average age of our guests is ~45, with many in their 50's. About 20% are women.

We use a number of techniques to support riders of different levels:

- The group of ~10 riders typically splits into two or three smaller groups by level.
- Each group is supported by a coach at all times.
- The faster riders will often ride extra distance or do more climbing.
- The faster riders may start later.

Rest assured that we have long experience of supporting mixed groups in the mountains. We treat everybody the same way, regardless of whether you are the fastest or the slowest.

Everybody climbs at their own pace, and we judge the timings so that the group comes together whenever required.

If you have any concerns about your ability to fit in, please contact Marvin at info@alpinecols.com

Your support team



Olivier Dulaurent

Olivier is a professional cycling coach from France, with an impressive palmarès in the most prestigious sportives, such as the Tour de l'Ain (winner in 2009) and the Marmotte (10th in 2010). He has been coaching full-time for over 15 years and writes regularly in the French cycling magazines.

Olivier lives near Compiègne with his wife and son.



Stéphane Jacquin

Stéphane coaches skiing in winter and cycling in summer. A talented cyclist and even more talented coach, he loves sharing his experience and skills with others. He has competed in scores of sportives such as the Etape du Tour and the Haute Route and is always well placed.

Stéphane lives in Courchevel with his wife. They have three daughters.



Marvin Faure

Marvin started cycling 20 years ago after practicing many other sports, including rugby, sailing, snow-boarding and water-skiing. Competitive by nature he has participated in dozens of mountain sportives and GranFondos, placing well in his age category. He is qualified as a coach by British Cycling.

Marvin lives near Geneva with Emmanuelle. Their two children are now at university.



Emmanuelle Faure

Emmanuelle began her sporting career as a swimmer, where she reached national level in France. She began cycling 10 years ago and has often been on the podium at alpine sportives. She won her category at the Haute Route Alps in 2017. She is qualified as a coach by British Cycling.

Emmanuelle lives near Geneva and teaches part time at the Hotel School in Lausanne.



Domaine des Tilleuls

We will stay at the delightful hotel *Domaine des Tilleuls*, in the centre of Malaucène. This is a converted 18th century building once used to produce silk, now a charming 3* hotel.

The hotel is situated in a very large private park planted with lime, oak, ash and cedar trees, a swimming pool and access to a large spa with all the equipment one could want.



PACKAGE PRICES

From **Sun 22 May** to **Sun 29 May**

- Twin-share: **€2,580**
- Single supplement: **€350**

BOOK
NOW

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN YOUR PACKAGE

- Accommodation and meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner)
- On-the-bike coaching
- On-the-road support vehicle with energy drinks and snacks
- Mechanical assistance
- Coach's Corner evening sessions on cycling performance
- Photographs (digital copies)

ADDITIONAL NIGHTS

Please contact us for your personal quote if you would like to stay additional nights in Provence.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- Travel to/from Mont Ventoux
- Bicycle hire
- Minibar or drinks at the hotel bar
- Coffee or snacks during café stops
- Massage (optional extra)



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