



**100 GREATEST  
CYCLING CLIMBS**

OF THE

**TOUR DE  
FRANCE**

A CYCLIST'S GUIDE TO RIDING THE MOUNTAINS OF LE TOUR

**SIMON WARREN**



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FOR CHAR, LUX, AND RYDER



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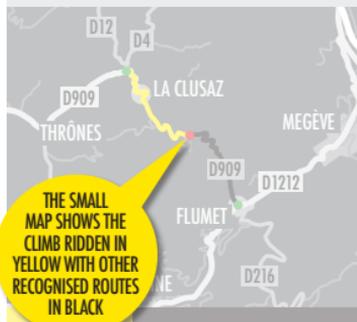
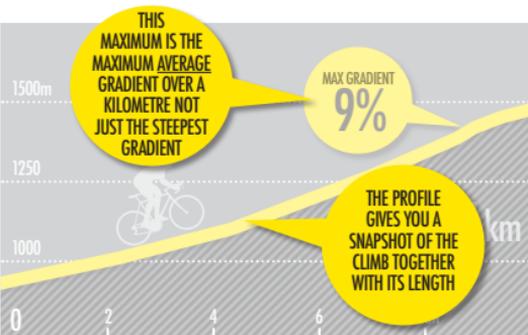
# Instructions

## FACTFILE

DIRECTIONS: Climb from the roundabout at the junction of the D4 and D909 in Saint-Jean-de-Sixt. Head east on the D909 towards La Clusaz.

THE FACT FILE TELLS YOU HOW TO FIND THE BASE OF EACH CLIMB AND LISTS ITS VITAL STATISTICS

Summit	1498m
Height	538m
Average gradient	5.3%
Tour De France category	1911/2nd



## LOCATIONS

On each page you will find two maps, one showing the area the climb sits in and another that pinpoints the exact route. Although you should be able to locate each hill using these I would always recommend you take a comprehensive map of the area or a GPS/satnav device to cross-reference.

## RATINGS

The climbs are rated within the context of the book. The rating is an amalgamation of gradient, length, the likely hostility of the riding conditions and the condition of the surface. All the climbs are tough, therefore 1/10 equals 'hard', and 10/10 equals almost impossible.



## KEY TO THE MAPS

Motorway	A43
D Road	D1006
Minor Road	SUMMIT ★ D78
Climb	ROUTE USED ALTERNATE ROUTE
Climb	START FINISH
Border	FRANCE ITALY
Town	TOWN SMALLER TOWN
Scale	10km



## **WARNING**

One last thing before we get started: while it may be 30 degrees in the valley, that doesn't mean it won't be snowing at the top. So always, **ALWAYS** take a jacket. Now, to the Mountains!

ARRIVE

# PYRE



# NEES





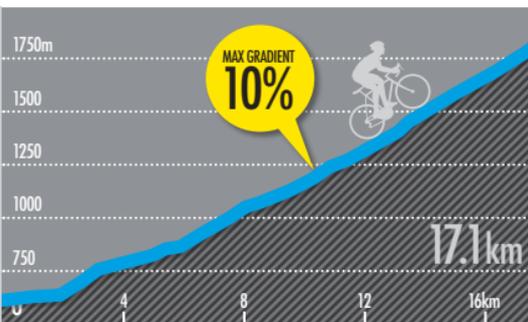
# 14 Superbagnères

I wanted to leave this page blank, as I'd prefer to erase all memory of my time on Superbagnères – it broke me, ruined me – more of which I mention in the introduction (see page 11). Hard out of Bagnères-de-Luchon there are some cruel ramps in the first 6 kilometres but these are contained within mostly gentle climbing. Reaching a junction, take the right-hand fork across a bridge and things begin to turn nasty. Up to 8%, then 9%, on and on out of the valley, predominantly straight, but always tough, wearing you down, weakening you before coming in for the kill. The next significant change in direction comes with 8 kilometres to go – sweep round to the right, and up above on a clear day you'll catch sight of the mountain's balding slopes. Hovering around the 8% mark, but touching 10% in places, it's a solid slog as overhead the omnipresent griffon vultures circle, tracking your slowing progress. Twisting back and forth, this brutal road snakes its way across the barren slopes, bend after bend, amid the dazzling scenery. Finally, the giant Grand Hotel appears over a brow, and you've almost made it to the end of this crushing, soul-destroying monster of a climb.

## FACTFILE

**DIRECTIONS:** To start, head south from Bagnères-de-Luchon on the D125, the Av. de Vénasque, away from the junction with the D618A.

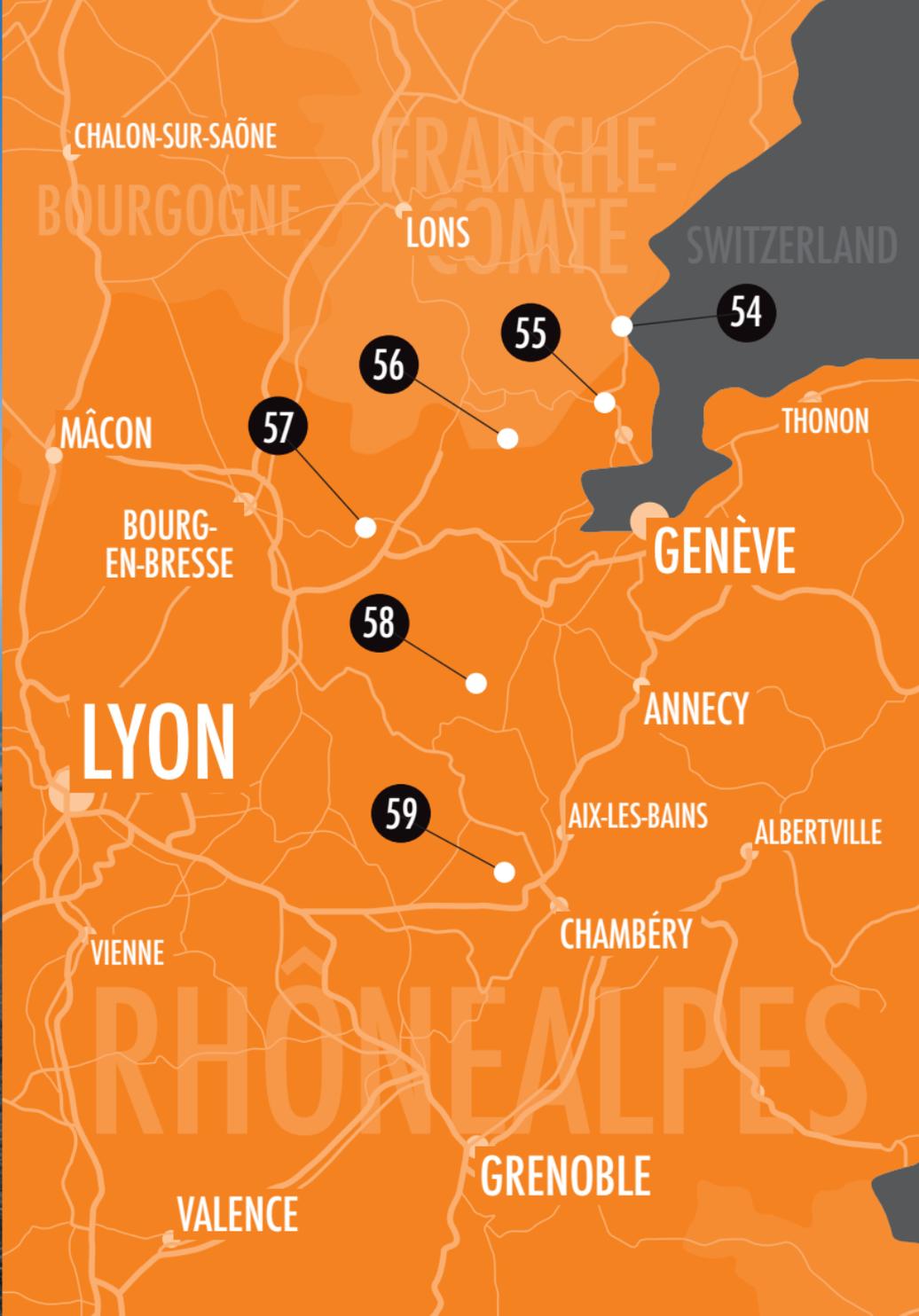
SUMMIT ALTITUDE	1800m
HEIGHT GAIN	1160m
AVERAGE GRADIENT	6.8%
TOUR DEBUT/CATEGORY	1961/HC





# JURA





CHALON-SUR-SAÔNE

BOURGOGNE

FRANCHE-COMTE

LONS

SWITZERLAND

54

55

56

57

MÂCON

THONON

BOURG-EN-BRESSE

GENÈVE

58

ANNÉCY

LYON

59

AIX-LES-BAINS

ALBERTVILLE

VIENNE

CHAMBÉRY

RHÔNE-ALPES

VALENCE

GRENoble



# 55 Col de la Faucille

If you're only going to ride one mountain in the Jura, make sure it's this one; I guarantee you will not be disappointed – it's fantastic. Heading out of the beautiful town of Gex, the early slopes are nice and gentle as you pick your way through the streets heading into the Jura National Park. No one likes to start a climb on a vicious ramp, it ruins the legs, and so an affable introduction is always welcome. Don't get overexcited though – you'd be wise to keep plenty in the tank for what lies further ahead, so spin the gears. At roughly 6 kilometres along, take the opportunity to look over your left shoulder to drink in the stunning view of the vast plain disappearing into the distance. Savour this moment because it's not long before the hard work starts; rounding an abandoned house at the apex of a left-hand hairpin, the gradient ramps up significantly. Up until now the kilometres have been flying by with relative ease, but from now on you'll feel like you're stuck in quicksand. With 10 kilometres under your belt, you reach an enormous hairpin that leads you into the last twists and turns to the top. Up ahead there's a brow – it's not the summit, but it acts as a springboard – cross it, dip down then burst out of the saddle to force a sprint to finish on the plateau.

## FACTFILE

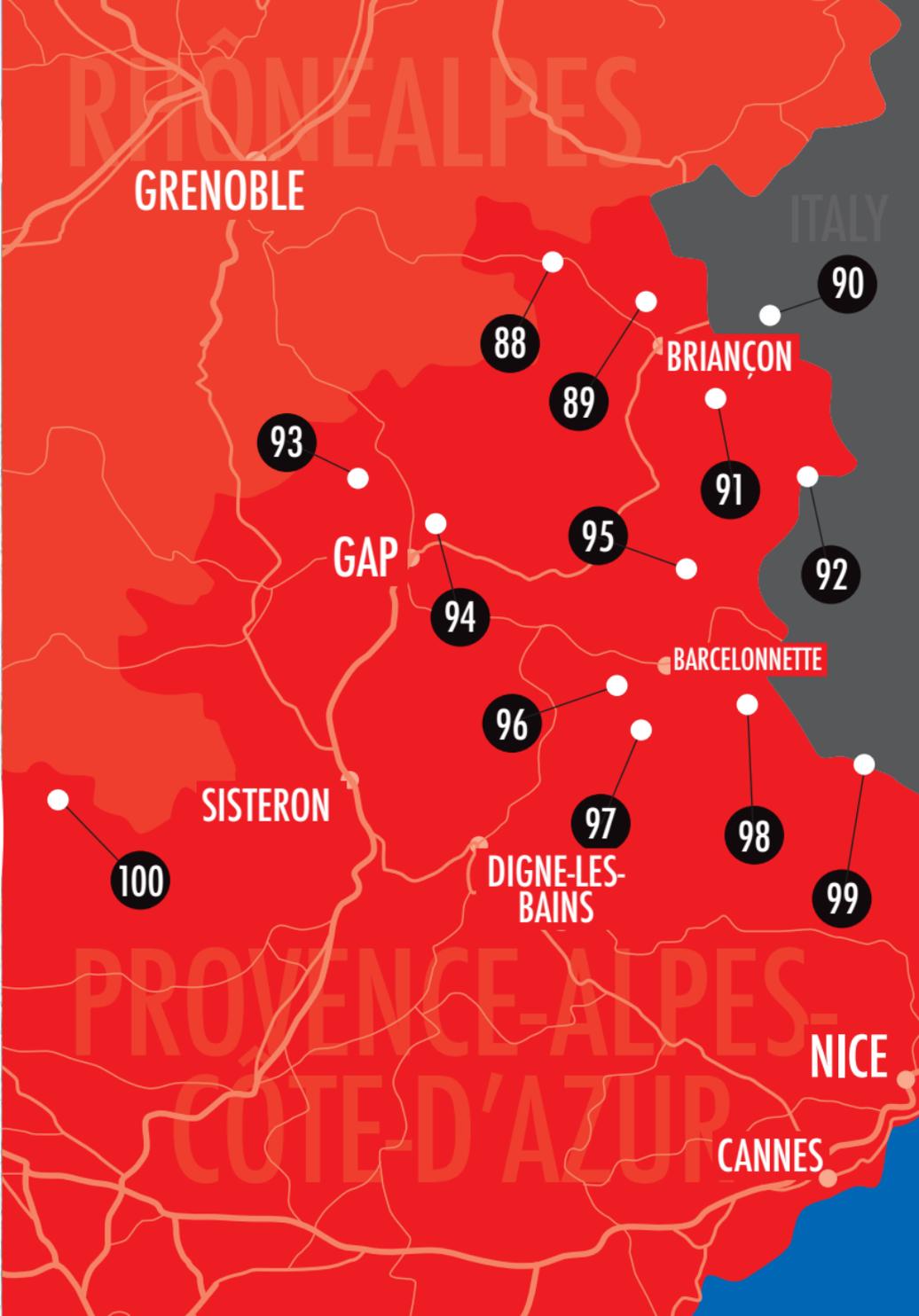
**DIRECTIONS:** The base lies at the large roundabout in the center of Gex outside the tourist office. Head north and up on the D1005, the Av. de la Poste.

SUMMIT ALTITUDE	1323m
HEIGHT GAIN	727m
AVERAGE GRADIENT	6.2%
TOUR DEBUT/CATEGORY	1911/2nd





# ALPES DU SUD



GRENOBLE

ITALY

90

88

BRIANÇON

89

93

91

GAP

95

92

94

BARCELONNETTE

96

SISTERON

97

98

100

DIGNE-LES-BAINS

99

PROVENCE-ALPES-  
CÔTE-D'AZUR

NICE

CANNES



# 97 Col d'Allos

Two climbs leave Barcelonnette heading over the last of the Southern Alps: the Col de la Cayolle and the Col d'Allos. Both have Tour history, both are 17.5 kilometres long, but, having to ride just one, I went for the latter. Once free from town and past the turning to Pra-Loup, the road immediately narrows and it's off into the wilderness. With the majority of its slopes set on a tame 5 to 6% gradient, and just a few patches of 8% and 10% mixed in to test the legs every now and again, it's not the toughest mountain you'll ride. What makes this road really special, though, is just how they managed to build it in the first place: it is a marvel of engineering. Twisting upwards, hugging the mountainside, teetering on the edge of oblivion, this tiny sliver of tarmac at times seems cut right out of the rock itself – round gullies, through knotted bends, it carves its path upwards. Not for the faint-hearted, the road feels hidden and is very quiet; it has a primeval charm, like riding through a land that time has forgotten. Higher up, however, the claustrophobia of the early slopes is replaced by open skies as you summit among the expansive rolling grassland that lies nestled beneath jagged peaks.

