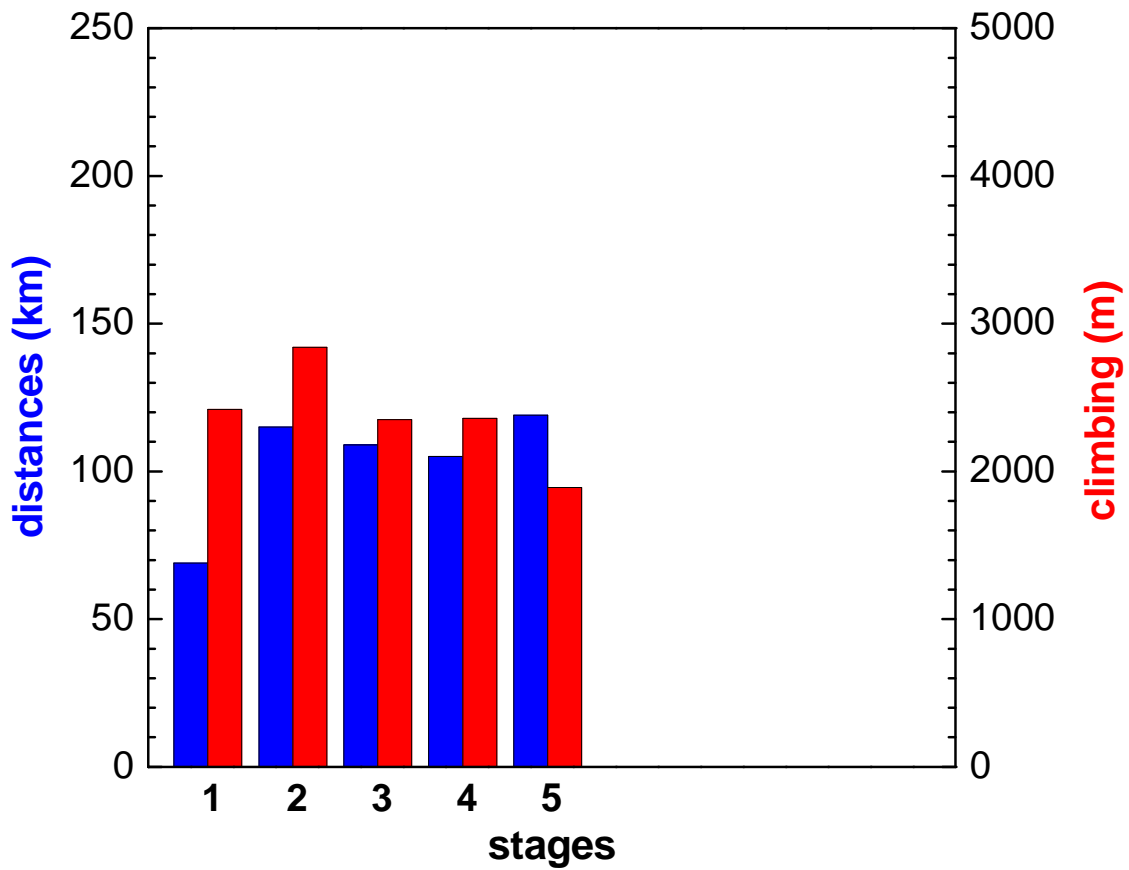


Bicycle tour 2009

5 stages, 1 - 5 July

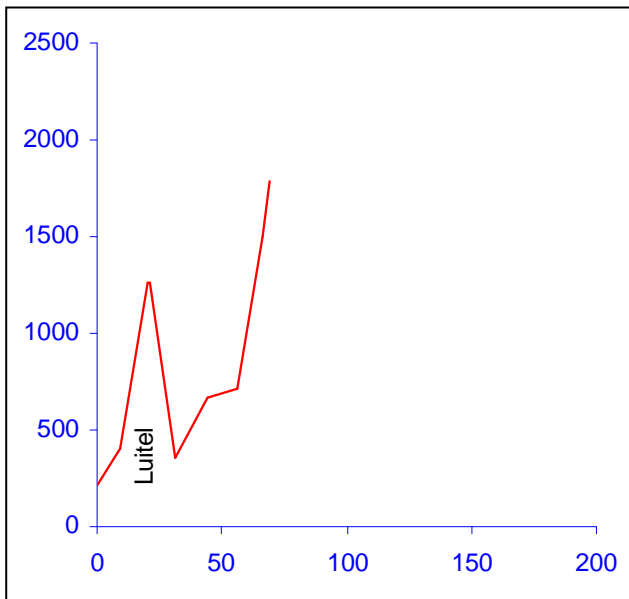
Patrick Schleppe

stage	distance (km)	climbing (m)
Grenoble - Alpe-d'Huez	69	2420
Alpe-d'Huez - Névache	115	2840
Névache - Bonneval	109	2350
Bonneval - Entrèves	105	2360
Entrèves - Martigny	119	1890
total	517	11 860





Stage 1 (1^{er} July 2009): Grenoble-Gières - L'Alpe-d'Huez



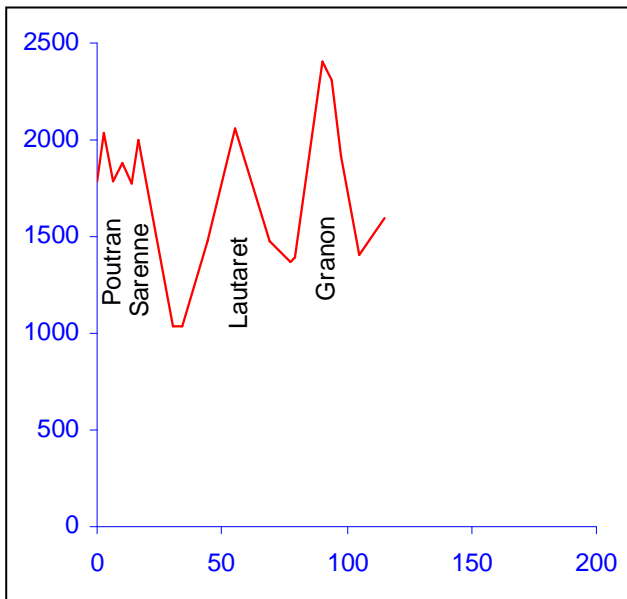
I took an early train from Zurich to Geneva and changed there to Grenoble. I got out with my bicycle at Gières, just before Grenoble. The first feeling was not really good: hot, more than 30°. This, however, was the lowest point of the whole tour i could thus hope that it would be the highest temperature. I took a road in a valley to Uriage, where i crossed the track of my tour 2006 and turned left, starting to climb to the Luitel pass. I was glad to reach soon the Prémol forest and to find some shade. At Luitel, i left the main road to Chamrousse, passed near the nice little lake and reached the pass of Luitel. The descent to Séchilienne was on a narrow and irregular road, but with almost no traffic. I feared that the main road to Bourg-d'Oisans would then be boring, but it was not so bad. First i had some tailwind, and second i was far from alone on this

road. There were indeed quite many cyclists aiming obviously at the same climb than me...

I stopped at Bourg-d'Oisans to have a drink, than started on the famous climb to the Alpe-d'Huez. Many other cyclists were on the way up, some probably training for the 'Marmotte' popular race, to take place a few days later. I did not look at my stop watch. I had two good reasons for this: first the heat, second the fact that it was the last climb of the first day, which is by experience not the easiest one. And it was indeed quite hard. With some stops on the way, i finally managed it. Towards the end, it became easier as the temperature went down. There are some big hotels at l'Alpe-d'Huez, but i chose a very small one.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Gières	0	210	
Uriage	9	410	200
Luitel	20	1260	850
Luitel	21	1260	
Séchilienne	31	360	
Livet	44	670	310
Bourg-d'Oisans	56	720	
Huez	66	1500	780
Alpe d'Huez	69	1780	280
total	69		2420

Stage 2 (2 July 2009): l'Alpe-d'Huez - Néevache



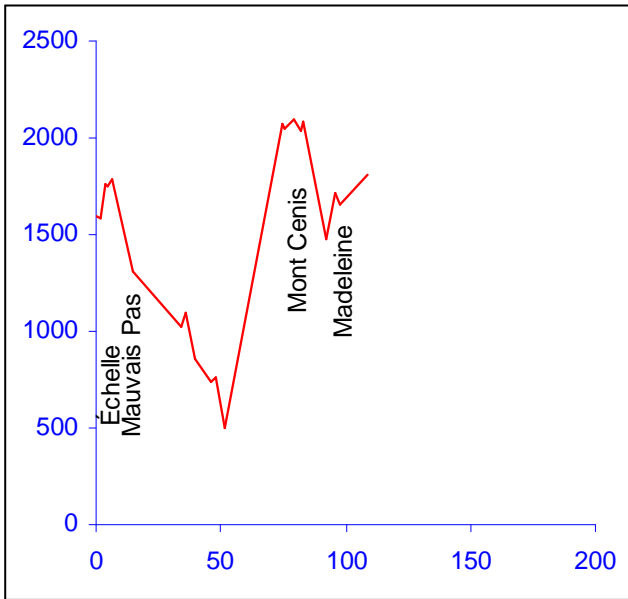
Even before breakfast, i took my bicycle and rode to the Col de Poutran, a pass above the Alpe-d'Huez that is paved only from this side, not on its north slope to Oz-d'Oisans. I rode actually a little bit higher to have a better view over this north slope. After seeing the sunrise, i was back in time for breakfast at the hotel.

I did not choose the same road to return to the valley but a small and very quite road over Col de Sarenne. The landscape was very picturesque (except for all the ski lifts) and i was alone on the way. What a difference with the day before. After the descent, i joined the main road near the dam of Chambon. I took it to the east. Except for some uncomfortable rides through tunnels, the long climb to the Lautaret pass posed no problem at all. I was at the Lautaret already during my tour 2001, but then it was 'for free'

as it was in the descent from the higher Galibier. This time, i can really pretend to have climbed the Lautaret. After a stop at the pass to have a drink and a piece of bread, i rode down, but not all the way to Briançon. At Chantemerle, i turned left and started to climb to the Granon pass. I was a long climb and the sun heated this south slope, but i felt it easier than the Alpe-d'Huez. The sight to the Écrins massif was beautiful. I stopped at the pass and had a drink at the refuge, but as i wanted to leave i had a flat tire. Bad luck! I repaired and started the descent to the other side. I hoped that it would be fine to ride, but only the first few kilometres had good gravel. Further down, it was steeper and stony. It was a very hard descent, but at least i did not have to count further flat tires. Luck! Not necessary to tell that i was very glad to find again a surfaced road. It went gently uphill towards Novalèse, where i found a very nice little auberge.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Alpe-d'Huez	0	1780	
Poutran	3	2030	250
Alpe-d'Huez	6	1780	
Altiport	10	1880	100
Le Gua	14	1770	
Sarenne	17	2000	230
Le Chambon	30	1040	
Lac de Chambon	34	1040	
La Grave	44	1480	440
Le Lautaret	55	2060	580
Le Monétier	69	1480	
La Salle	77	1370	
Chantemerle	79	1390	20
Col de Granon	90	2410	1020
pt. 2307	94	2310	
Granon	98	1920	
Val-des-Prés	105	1400	
Sallé	115	1600	200
total	115		2840

Stage 3 (3 July 2009): Névache - Bonneval-sur-Arc

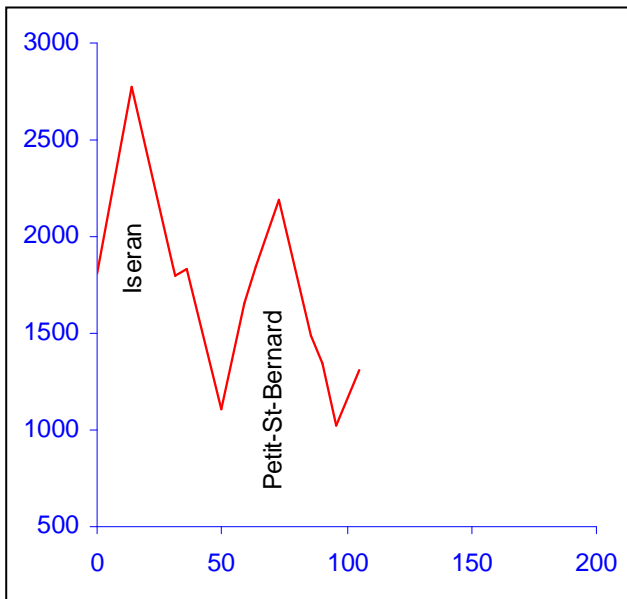


The third day, i got up quite early in order to hit the road at 8 o'clock, and not with an empty stomach. The goal was to be at ten in Susa to meet a small group of Italian cyclists. I first rode up to the Col de l'Échelle, which was no longer far. After the pass, the road goes slightly down and up again, and here is already a second pass, called Mauvais Pas. Nothing bad despite the name, on the contrary: effortless one more pass in the collection. After a few hairpin curves, i reached the Italian border where i had to show my ID, for the first time since many years that i'm cycling between alpine countries. In Bardonecchia, i took the main road down to Susa and was there on time at our meeting point. Antonio was also on time: he had done the 11-hour train ride from Lucca near Pisa the day before. Federico, then Sergio and Vincenzo arrived a bit later. At almost 11,

we were in saddle towards Mont Cenis. From now on, i would be for almost all the remaining itinerary on my own tracks, those of my tour 2001. There were just more breaks to allow everybody to follow... and to take some pictures. As we were close to the hairpin curves climbing to the dam, the last guy of our party caught up, Tita. We were now six on the way to the Mont Cenis pass, which we reached in the early afternoon. After a fast descent, we reached Lanslevillard, went up to the Madeleine Pass and continued towards Bonneval. We easily found an hotel with free rooms for us. The dinner was finally the opportunity to get acquainted with this group of cyclists of different ages and from different parts of Italy, and this in spite of my poor Italian.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Sallé	0	1600	
Roubion	2	1580	
Échelle	4	1760	180
Douane	5	1750	
Mauvais Pas	6	1780	30
Bardonecchia	15	1310	
Salbertrand	34	1020	
Deveys	36	1090	70
Exilles	40	860	
Chiomonte	46	740	
Mollare	48	760	20
Susa	52	500	
La Caisse	75	2070	1570
La Caisse	76	2050	
Fontainettes	79	2100	50
La Vachère	82	2040	
Mont Cenis	83	2080	40
Lanslevillard	92	1480	
Madeleine	96	1720	240
Bessens	98	1660	
Bonneval	109	1810	150
total	109		2350

Stage 4 (4 July 2009): Bonneval-sur-Arc - Entrèves



Because they wanted to catch a train at Pré-St-Didier in the afternoon, Sergio and Tita started in advance towards the Iseran. The remaining four of us were not in hurry. We took our time for breakfast and hit the road a bit later. In the middle of the climb, we let Antonio behind us and we continued as a group of three: Federico, Vincenzo and me. The climb to the Iseran pass in the morning light was just gorgeous. We were not very fast, but too fast: as we reached the pass, the restaurant was not yet open. We stopped anyway, to take a few pictures and just to enjoy this high pass and the view from there.

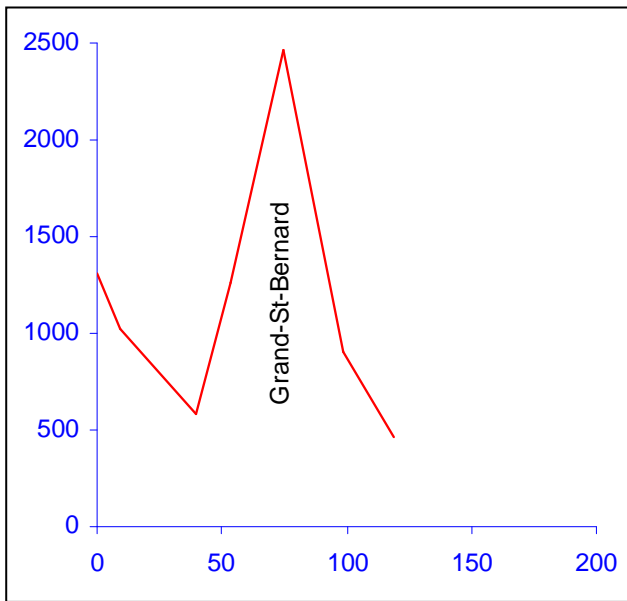
Then we enjoyed the descent to Val-d'Isère, bought something to eat, and continued down to Ste-Foy. From there we took the little road up to Montvalezan. We had a break where my companions ate what they had taken from Val-d'Isère (i did not have

much, it was already eaten and i was not hungry). After this break, we continued up to the Petit-St-Bernard. After joining the main road coming from Bourg-St-Maurice, the climb was no longer steep but still quite long. Thick clouds were gathering around the mountain tops and we were not fast enough to avoid some rain as we arrived at the pass. We could shelter and after five minutes the rain receded and let us set off again. Before La Thuile, however, we got into a serious thunderstorm with even some hail. We could shelter again, but not without getting wet feet and cold legs. Fortunately, this shower did not last long either and we could soon leave La Thuile and continue down to Pré-St-Didier. The last hairpin curves were even dry.

The goal of the day was no longer far and only the gentle climb to Entrèves was left. At Entrèves, we had again no problem to find a nice but not too expansive hotel at the foot of the Mont Blanc. We had to wait a while till Antonio also arrived. He had had a long day riding, but he did not even look tired. Later, Sergio was also there, back from Susa with his car. We went together to have dinner in a restaurant of this nice village of Entrèves.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Bonneval	0	1810	
Iseran	14	2770	960
Val d'Isère	30	1840	
La Reculaz	31	1800	
Le Chevril	36	1830	30
Ste-Foy	50	1110	
Nant Cruet	59	1650	540
La Rosière	64	1850	200
Petit-St-Bernard	73	2190	340
La Thuile	86	1490	
Elevaz	90	1350	
Pré-St-Didier	96	1020	
Entrèves	105	1310	290
total	105		2390

Stage 5 (5 July 2009): Entrèves - Martigny



The fifth day was a Sunday. After breakfast, i said goodbye to my Italian companions and went down to Aosta as they wanted to climb into the Val Veny. For me, this last day in saddle resembled very much the end of my tour 2001: over the Grand-St-Bernard, then down to Martigny to take a train. The main difference was that there were construction works on the Italian side of the pass. Further up, they were finished and the road was new. Because of the dark clouds, i feared a new thunderstorm. Fortunately, it didn't rain during this ride, except perhaps in the descent when wind gusts blew irrigation water on the road rather than on the fields. The valley of Entremont is indeed often windy and i experienced it again, having to pedal hard where there was only a slight slope down. I finally arrived at Martigny around 3 o'clock. In the train to Lausanne, there was an

entire wagon for my bicycle, but from Lausanne to Zurich there were only 5 hooks for more than 20 bicycles...

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Entrèves	0	1310	
Pré-St-Didier	9	1020	
Aoste	40	580	
Etroubles	53	1260	680
Grand-St-Bernard	75	2470	1210
Orsières	99	900	
Martigny	119	470	
total	119		1890