

France

Haute Provence

Adrian Berry

A rock climbing guidebook to the
Haute Provence area of France

All uncredited photos by Adrian Berry

Other photography as credited

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This page: *No Man's Land* (7b) - **page 285** - at Buoux.

Photo: Richard Kirby.

Cover: *Cent Patates* (7b+) - **page 39** - at Céüse.

Photo: Adrian Berry

Céüse

Sisteron

Volx

Orpierre

Bellecombe

Baume Rousse

Ilhrieux

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

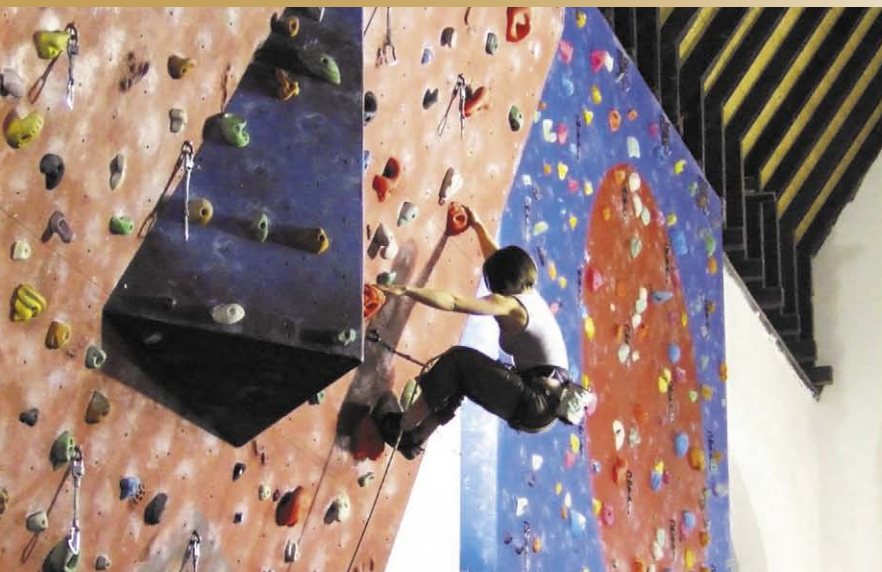
Malaurène

Combe

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Buoux



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- LEADING
- TOP ROPES
- BOULDERING
- NO MEMBERSHIP FEE
- LOYALTY CARD

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Ollie Ryall on *L'Haut de Là* (7a+) - page 95 - Bellecombe.

Guidebook Footnote

The inclusion of a climbing area in this guidebook does not mean that you have a right of access or the right to climb upon it. The descriptions of routes within this guide are recorded for historical reasons only and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy of the description. The grades set in this guide are a fair assessment of the difficulty of the climbs. Climbers who attempt a route of a particular standard should use their own judgment as to whether they are proficient enough to tackle that route. This book is not a substitute for experience and proper judgment. The authors, publisher and distributors of this book do not recognise any liability for injury or damage caused to, or by, climbers, third parties, or property arising from such persons seeking reliance on this guidebook as an assurance for their own safety.

Céüse

Sisteron

Volx

Orpierre

Bellecombe

Baume Rousse

Ubriex

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

Malaucène

Combe Obscure

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Buoux

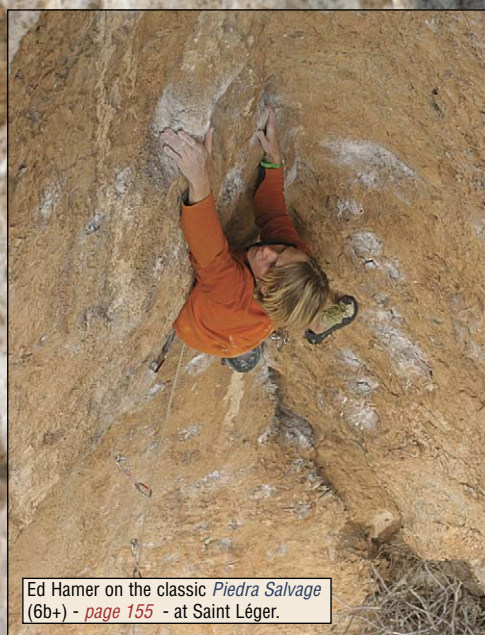
The South of France contains the best sport climbing in the world, there's no 'some of' about it. While new sport climbing areas regularly take the limelight as the latest 'must visit' destinations, seldom is the quality of routes found on the limestone crags of southern France matched. In the same way that newly publicised bouldering areas are inevitably compared to Fontainebleau, so areas in the South of France such as Céüse and Buoux are the quality benchmarks of sport climbing. It's not uncommon to hear of newly developed crags being described lavishly - "*it's as good as Céüse*", or more modestly assessed - "*brilliant, but no Buoux*". And yet while climbers fly halfway around the world to queue for routes at the latest trendy area, the spiritual home of sport climbing is surprisingly quiet. Indeed, while producing this book, one of the challenges I had was finding people to photograph.

While raising the profile of French sport climbing was one of the objectives of this book, another was to raise the profile of less well known areas that offer a similar high quality climbing. Often it is the 'hard' crags that have the highest profiles as these are the ones where the latest super-routes are established, which generates lots of interest in the magazines and online. Yet there are many brilliant crags in France where the routes are largely in the 4s, 5s and lower-end of the 6s. Such venues are often deserted while better-known hard crags frustrate lower-grade climbers who will struggle to find good routes that aren't polished warm-ups. This book will help to redress this misapprehension by highlighting several superb venues across the Haute Provence area, places like Baume Rousse, Ubriex, Saint Julien, Les Dentelles and Orpierre.

It is a terrible irony that we climbers have such a negative impact on the very environment that gives us such joy. A major driving force behind this book was the desire to publicise an area that can be reached by climbers in northern Europe without necessarily flying. Over the two years it took to produce this book, not one flight was taken to France. Also, in order to mitigate the fuel needed to drive from the UK to Provence, longer, less frequent trips were made. A typical research trip in early 2008 lasted four months and the average daily distance driven, including the drive down and back from northern England was less than 30 miles per day (48km). Additionally, this guidebook has the train symbol on the maps - showing where the nearest railway station is located. There is no doubt that taking the train is far less damaging to the environment than flying, and we hope that this book will help start a change in our behaviour for the better.

Adrian Berry, November 2009

Céüse
Sisteron
Voix
Orpierre
Belvédère
Baume Rousse
Ubriex
Saint Julien
Saint Léger
Malleville
Gombes
Les Dentelles
Vénasque
Buoux



Ed Hamer on the classic *Piedra Salvage* (6b+) - [page 155](#) - at Saint Léger.



Katie Whittaker redpointing *Carte Blanche* (8a) - [page 43](#) - at Céüse.

Céüse

Sisteron

Volx

Orpierre

Bellevue

Baume Rousse

Ilhéux

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

Malaucène

Combe

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Bouix

Access

All the areas covered by this book are well-publicised and popular, and unless indicated otherwise, you can assume there is a right of access. These rights have often been hard won and they should be respected since they can be lost in an instant by the thoughtless behaviour of one individual.

Park considerably - don't block access and be prepared to climb elsewhere if there's nowhere to park considerably.

Stick to the approach paths - avoid short cuts through someone's private land.

Keep the noise down at the crag - crags are often in areas popular with walkers who are keen to get away from all that.

Take your rubbish home with you - better still, make space for some of other people's rubbish, and remember that everything you bring to the crag is rubbish if you leave it there - even orange peel takes around two years to decompose - is it really that much of a chore to carry it home?

Local Guidebooks

Nearly all the areas covered by this guidebook are detailed in locally available publications. Local guidebooks include more routes and may well be more up-to-date, and if you particularly like an area in this book, it would be well worth tracking down the local information.

In the introduction to each section, the current 2009 local guidebook is featured so you know what it looks like. You can usually get hold of these from the tourist information office or, if there is a climbing shop in the area, then that is an obvious place to look. The web site www.topostation.com has an extensive stock and does online ordering.

It is not the policy of Rockfax to replace local guidebooks, but rather to introduce climbers to the areas covered by this book, typically climbers who may be unaware of the wealth of climbing and who are unable to acquire information via local sources. Rather than competing with local guidebooks, we expect that the increased number of visitors will lead to more sales of quality local guidebooks and a general boost to the local economy.

Feedback - Online Route Database

The database at www.rockfax.com contains a listing of every route in the book with the opportunity for you to lodge comments and vote on grades and star ratings. This information is essential to help us ensure complete and up-to-date coverage for all the climbs. We can then produce updates and make sure we get it right in subsequent editions. To make this system work we need the help of everyone who climbs in the areas covered by this book, so if you think you have found a badly graded route, or discovered a hidden gem that we have only given a single star to, let us know about it. Your general comments on all other aspects of this book are also welcome.



Céüse

Sisteron

Volx

Orpierre

Bellevue

Baume Rousse

Uriage

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

Malaucène

Combe

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Bouilladoux

Die Klettermöglichkeiten in Südfrankreich gehören zu den besten der Welt. Oft stehen neue Sportklettergebiete im Rampenlicht, die man unbedingt besuchen muss; doch nur wenige erreichen die Qualität der Routen im südfranzösischen Kalk. Dieses Buch versammelt eine Reihe von spitzenmäßigen Gebieten in der Haute Provence, von den majestätischen Wänden Ceüses bis zu den wundervoll gelöcherten Felsen von Buoux, und noch einige dazwischen. Insgesamt gibt es 2345 Routen in 14 Gebieten – genug, um viele Kletterer für viele Jahre glücklich zu machen.



Zugang

Für die meisten Routen in diesem Buch gibt es keine Zugangsbeschränkungen und sie können jederzeit beklettert werden. Häufig wurde dies mit einigen Verhandlungen zwischen den Kletterern und Landbesitzern bzw. Anliegern erreicht. Bitte folgt daher genau den beschriebenen Zustiegen in den Gebietsbeschreibungen. Beachtet bitte außerdem jegliche Schilder in Gebietsnähe, die neue Informationen beinhalten könnten.

Der Kletterführer

Dieses Buch enthält sämtliche Informationen, die Du benötigst, um die besten Felsen des Gebietes zu finden und einzuschätzen - auch wenn Englisch nicht Deine Muttersprache ist. Topos und Symbole veranschaulichen die Art der Routen in diesem Buch.

Ausrüstung

Die meisten Routen in diesem Kletterführer sind voll eingerichtete Sportkletterrouten, für die lediglich ein Satz Expreßschlingen und ein langes Seil benötigt wird. Ein 70 Meter Seil ist angebracht, um sicher abseilen zu können. Wenn Du beabsichtigst, Mehrseillängenrouten zu klettern, sind 9mm Doppelseile mit 50 Metern Länge zum Abseilen nötig.

Internet

Alle beschriebenen Aufstiege dieses Kletterführers sind in der Routendatenbank von Rockfax auf der Internetseite - www.rockfax.com - enthalten. Hier findest Du auch mehr Informationen über die einzelnen Routen, sowie Votings zu Schwierigkeitseinstufungen und Kommentare anderer Kletterer. Wenn Du Routen kletterst und nicht mit diesem Kletterführer übereinstimmst, dann besuche unsere Datenbank, um uns Deine Meinung mitzuteilen.

Rockfax

Rockfax veröffentlicht seit 1990 Kletterführer, darunter 30 Bücher zu Gebieten in Europa und vier Bücher zu Gebieten in den USA. Darüber hinaus sind auf der Rockfax-Website mehr als 50 Miniguides im PDF-Format verfügbar. In letzter Zeit haben wir eine Serie von Büchern zum Thema Training veröffentlicht. Weitere Informationen findest Du auf unserer Internetseite - www.rockfax.com

Symbole



Lohnende Kletterei.



Sehr lohnende Kletterei, eine der besten Routen an diesem Felsen.



Brillante Kletterei, eine der besten Routen im Gebiet.



Technisch anspruchsvolle Kletterei, die eine gute Balance und Technik erfordert oder komplexe und trickreiche Züge beinhaltet.



Anstrengende, kraftvolle Kletterei; Dächer, überhängender Fels oder maximalkräftige Züge.



Durchweg anstrengende Kletterei; entweder mit vielen harten Zügen oder überhängender Fels, der zu dicken Armen führt.



Kleingriffige Kletterei



Potentiell weite Stürze bzw. weite Hakenabstände



Weite Züge, morpho



Eine Route, die nicht vollständig mit Bohrhaken ausgerüstet ist - Absicherung durch Klemmkeile und Friends notwendig.



Möglicherweise lockerer Fels im Routenverlauf.

Felsymbole



Steilheit des Zugangsweges mit ungefährer Zeitangabe.



Ungefähre Zeit, zu der der Felsen in der Sonne liegt (wenn sie scheint!).



Überhängende Wände, die trockenen Fels bei Regen bieten.



Klettern an geneigtem Fels, plattig.



Klettern an senkrechtem Fels.



Klettern an stark überhängendem Fels.



Menschenleer - Zur Zeit wenig besucht und meistens ruhig. Langer Anmarsch und / oder weniger lohnende Routen.



Ruhig - Weniger beliebte Sektoren an Hauptfelsen, oder gute Felsen mit langem Zugangsweg.



Belebt - Plätze, an denen Du selten allein sein wirst, besonders an Wochenenden. Lohnende Routen und leichter Zugang.



Zum Brechen voll - Die populärsten Felspartien, an denen ständig Hochbetrieb herrscht.

Farbig markierte Routennummern

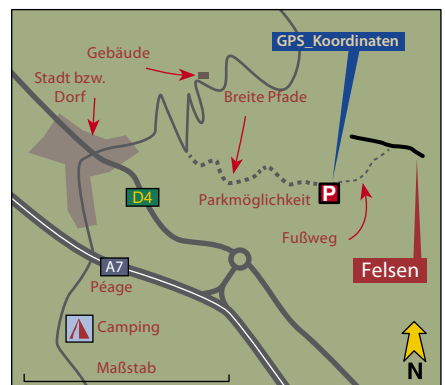
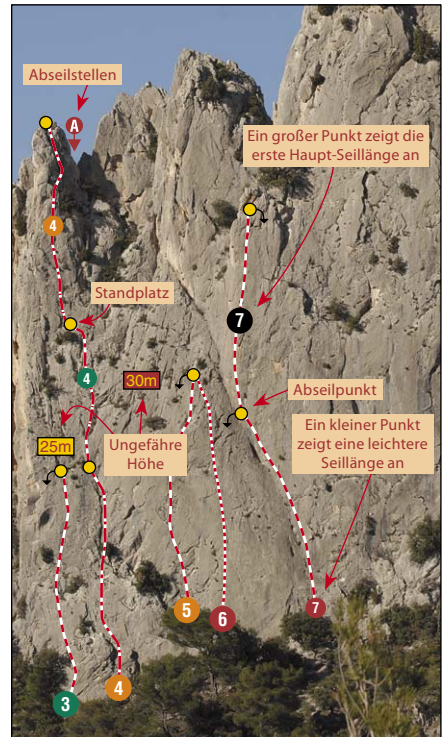
Die Seillängen sind farblich nach Schwierigkeit geordnet:

1 1 Grad V+ und darunter

2 2 Grad VI- bis VII-

3 3 Grad VII bis VIII

4 4 Grad VIII+ und darüber



Before crediting those whose efforts have been directed at making this book, credit must go to those who created the routes we describe. Creating a sport route is a lot of work, some of which is skilled, some of which is just sheer effort, and placing bolts on overhanging rock is particularly difficult. It is interesting how the experience of having developed new routes makes one far more understanding of the difficulties of the job - and more forgiving of minor mis-judgements that lead to bolts not being exactly where one may wish they were. And so to all those who have toiled, sweated, bled, cursed, wondered why they were doing it, vowed never to do it again, and created such wonderful climbs: thank you. Though there is only one name on the cover, this book is the result of the efforts of a great many more people. There are many whose names I have forgotten to add to this list, and to each of them go both my thanks and my apologies. An extra big thanks to the following for going well beyond the remit of helpfulness:

Chris Singer for spending several winter months with only myself for company deserves credit for that alone, much of the research of the climbs in and around Buis-les-Baronnies is his work, his efforts in inadvertent bolt-testing should also be appreciated by all. Steve McClure was the source of the detailed descriptions of many of the hard routes that make up his astounding tick-list. Audrey Seguy helped as a photographic subject, French language proofer, and patient partner. Simon Richardson was of great help in sourcing addition photos and in getting information on Saint Léger long before the local guidebook came out. Toby Dunn offered his detailed knowledge of Saint Léger as well as posing for some great photos. Ian Fenton contributed significantly to checking the accuracy of the information at Orpierre where he offers guiding and instruction.

A big thanks to all the following for, amongst other things: putting up with me dressing them up in bright clothes to take photos, contributing photos of their own and giving feedback on the routes they've climbed:

Darren Stevenson, Richie Betts, Wayne Smith, Al Downie, Jonathan Read, Craig Entwistle, Adam Gill, Phil Vickers, Stephen Blacket, Chris Keag, Sam Hamer, Ed Hamer, Hugh Sibring, Dave Bond, Stuart Littlefair, Erin Macri, Carrie Cojocari, Dave Simmonite and Andy Gudgeon. Lastly, for help in checking the text and sharing their wisdom, thanks to Chris Craggs, Jack Geldard, Cedric Larcher, Sherri Davy, Karsten Kurz and Sarah Burmester.

Adrian Berry, November 2009

Rockfax is grateful to the following companies who have supported this guidebook.

Guiding / Instruction

Climb France - Page 17
Buis les Baronnies, France.
Tel: +33 475 265 320
www.climbfrance.com

Services

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Tel: 0161 445 6111
www.thebmc.co.uk

Gear Shops

V12 - Page 23
The Old Baptist Chapel, Llanberis.
Tel: 01286 871534
www.v12outdoor.com

Climbing Walls

Awesome Walls - Page 2
St. Alban's Church, Liverpool.
Tel/Fax: 0151 298 2422
The Engine House, Stockport.
Tel: 0161 494 9949
www.awesomewalls.co.uk

Outdoor Gear

Berghaus - Inside front cover
Extreme Centre, Sunderland.
Tel: 0191 516 5700
www.berghaus.com

Black Diamond - Outside back cover
Tel: 0162 958 0484
www.blackdiamondequipment.com

Climbers' Web Resource

Climb Europe - Opposite
www.climb-europe.com

ClimbinFrance - Cover flap
www.climbinfrance.com



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For information on private coaching sessions in the UK, and elsewhere, visit my website at

www.positiveclimbing.com,
email me at adrian@positiveclimbing.com
or send a text to +44 794 133 1045

Adrian Berry



TRIP CHECKLIST

- ☒ Rope
- ☒ Harness
- ☒ Quickdraws
- ☒ Climbing Shoes
- ☒ Chalkbag
- ☒ Belay device
- ☐ Smooth Technique
- ☐ Cool head
- ☐ Fitness
- ☐ Onsight & redpoint tactics
- ☐ Confidence in your ability

Climb Europe

Discover the best places to go rock climbing in Europe.

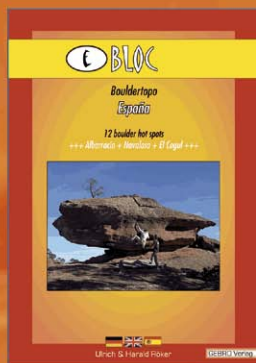
Climb Europe is the web site to help you plan your next rock climbing holiday in Europe.

Discover new climbing areas in Europe, by browsing maps, photographs & text in the comfort of your own home.

Climb Europe hold in stock a wide range of European guidebooks such as the bouldering guidebook for Spain shown opposite.

All guidebooks can be bought from our on-line shop, visit our web site at:

www.climb-europe.com



Haute Provence Logistics

Céüse
Sisteron
Volx
Opière
Bellescombe
Baune Rouse
Urieux
Saint Julien
Saint Léger
Malacène
Combe
Les Dentelles
Vénasque
Buoux



Célise

Sisteron

Volx

Orpierre

Bellevue

Baume Rousse

Ulrieux

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

Malaucène

Combe

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Bouix

Train

Eurostar operates a direct service from London to Avignon during the summer months. At other times of year, an indirect service is possible on the TGV. Luggage restrictions are far less than those imposed by budget airlines, and the journey only takes around 8 hours station to station.

Flying

There are a number of airports in the South of France served by budget airlines. Marseille and Avignon are the closest but Grenoble, Montpellier, Nîmes, Lyon and Nice are also options. Expect to pay more at popular times like weekends, the summer months and school holidays.

Driving

The French autoroutes are fast and usually uncrowded. If you've got a long drive, it makes sense to break the journey, sleeping in rest areas is acceptable, but if you're looking for a bed without spending too much, find a Formula 1 (www.hotelformule1.com) or, a bit nicer, an Ibis (www.ibishotel.com) or Etap (www.etaphotel.com).

Getting around without a car

A number of areas covered in this guide can be accessed quite easily by public transport, and if you are visiting at the right time of year, you will doubtless find other climbers with cars who you can share rides with. The municipal campsite in Apt is an easy place to get to on public transport (about one hour from Avignon) and there are always plenty of climbers driving in to Buoux each day. Some crags can be done without cars altogether - Céüse and Buis for example have campsites near to the climbing areas.

Guiding Services

There are also a number of guides operating in the areas covered, and some will pick you up at the train station or airport, put you up, take you to the crags, climb with you each day and then drop you off.

ClimbFrance - www.climbfrance.com

Satellite Navigation

The key parking spots for the crags in this book have a GPS co-ordinate box. These are in the standard DMS system which is accepted by most makes of SatNav. Bear in mind that SatNavs often get it horribly wrong and will delight in taking you through an endless chain of tiny villages when you could have been cruising along on the Autoroute. Also note that there are many places in France with the same name - key-in 'Saint Léger', and you could find yourself taking the scenic route to completely the wrong place. The best policy is to use your SatNav in conjunction with a map. The map of the facing page gives rough locations. Each chapter has a closer map which should home you in to your chosen crag but a detailed local area map will also be found useful.

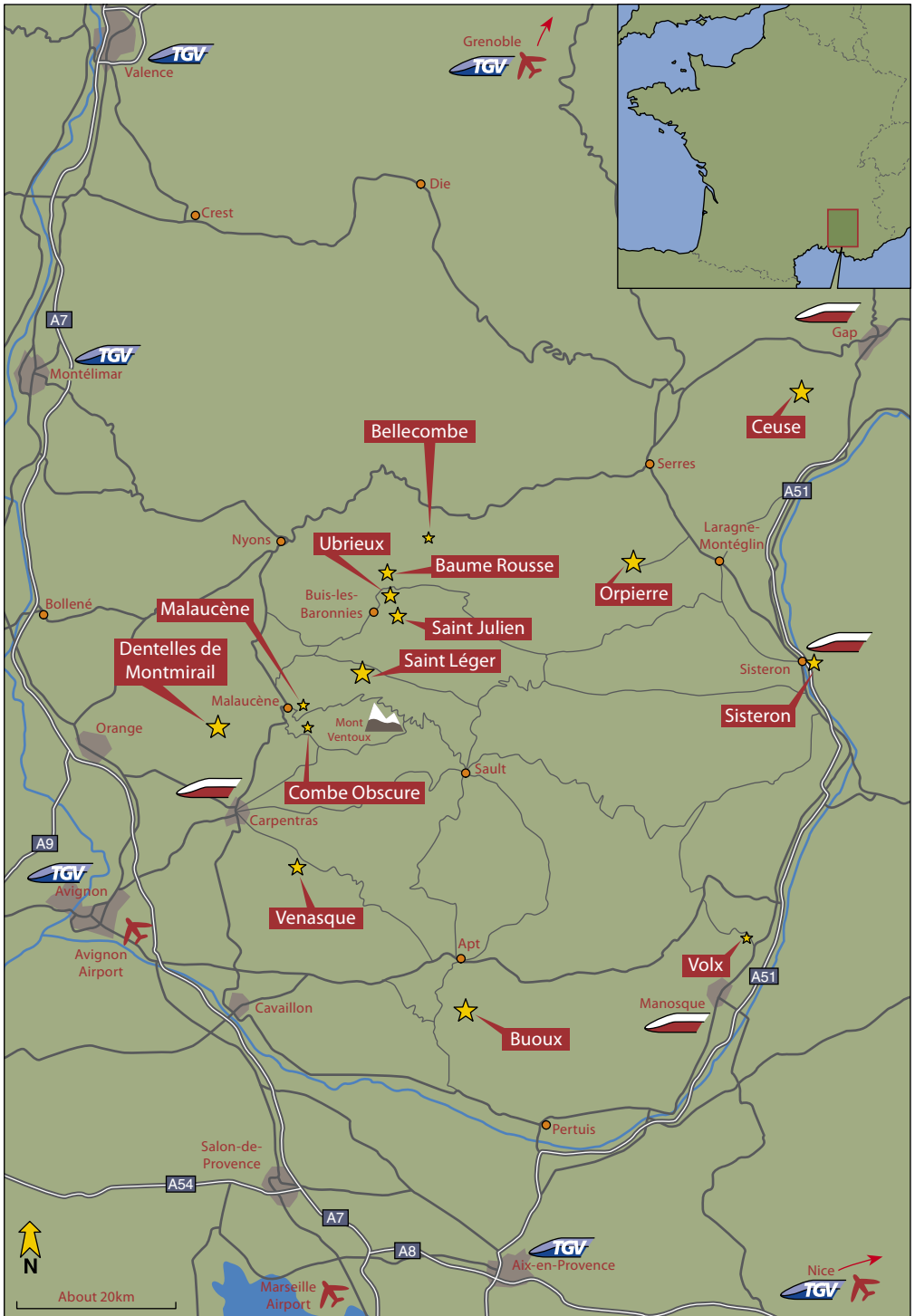
Staying

A comprehensive listing of all the places to stay in the South of France would require every page of this book to cover. Camping in the South of France is very well provided for. Driving around, you will notice that there are signs for campsites everywhere. The best campsites are listed in the introductions to the areas covered in this book. Apartments and gîtes are best found using the Internet: search the web for 'gites france' and you will access a number of listings sites that allow you to book online. Tourist information offices are found in most towns, and are happy to find you somewhere to stay, and something to keep you busy on a rest day.

Travel Insurance

UK citizens have reciprocal health care rights in France under the EHIC. Despite this it is strongly recommended that personal travel insurance is taken out to cover rescue, medical and repatriation following an accident.

BMC Travel Insurance - www.thebmc.co.uk



Ceüse

Sisteron

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Ubriex

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

Malaucène

Combe Obscure

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Buoux

While researching this book, the author spent February, March and April in Buis-les-Baronnies. In a three month period, there were less than five days of bad weather. Climbing in the sun on a winter's day in France is always delightful. If you want to climb on the south-facing crags, winter is definitely a good time for it. Spring and autumn are the best times for the lower crags when you can choose between optimum cool climbing conditions in the shade or relish the warmth of the sun. Summer may not be the best time for climbing on low-level sunny crags, but there are plenty of north-facing venues, alternatively, get up to some of the high crags. The sheer number and variety of crags in France means there's always somewhere to climb, no matter what time of year you choose to visit.

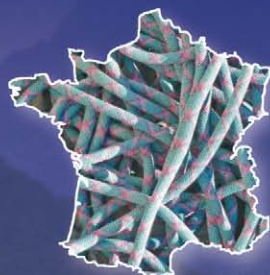
Average Temp °C	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gap (maximum)	7	8	12	15	19	23	27	27	21	17	10	8
Gap (minimum)	-3	-2	1	3	7	10	12	12	10	6	1	-1
Buis (maximum)	10	12	16	18	22	27	29	29	25	19	13	10
Buis (minimum)	2	3	6	8	11	14	18	18	13	10	7	3
Apt (maximum)	11	12	16	18	22	27	30	30	25	20	15	12
Apt (minimum)	3	4	6	9	12	15	18	18	16	12	8	5

The average rainfall for the areas covered by in book is relatively low. The high figures in September to November tend to result from storms rather than full days of rain. This may mean that there is a bit of seepage on some routes but you are very unlikely to lose too much climbing time.

Rainfall cm / month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Gap (average)	3.3	2.9	2.9	4.3	3.9	4.0	3.3	3.7	4.6	6.4	4.9	3.4
Buis (average)	3.7	2.3	2.5	4.7	4.6	2.5	2.1	2.9	6.6	6.0	5.3	3.4
Apt (average)	3.5	2.1	2.2	4.0	2.7	1.5	0.8	1.8	5.7	5.2	3.9	2.6



Looking east on the road between Buis and Orpierre in February. It was possible to climb at both locations at the time if a little chilly.



climb france

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Sport & Trad Climbing



Bouldering



Multi-pitch



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Céüse
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Uriageux
Saint Julien
Saint Léger
Maltaudène
Combe
Les Dentelles
Vénasque
Buoux



Steep rock on the magnificent Berlin Sector at Céüse

Haute Provence Climbing

Céüse

Sisteron

Volx

Orpierre

Bellevue

Baume Rousse

Uriage

Saint Julien

Saint Léger

Malaucène

Combe

Les Dentelles

Venasque

Bouilladoux

Grades

The routes in this book are graded using the usual sport grade system, or 'French Grade' as it is often known.

Many of these venues were developed in the early days of sport climbing and, as is often the case, this means that they later acquire a reputation for stiff grading, certainly in the lower and mid grades. This is definitely true of Céüse and Buoux which will be regarded as 'hard' by many climbers.

Colour-coding

The routes and pitches are colour-coded corresponding to a grade band. The idea is to give a rough comparison between trad routes and sport routes. For example, if you are happy on orange grades on trad, then you should consider routes given orange spot sport grades.

Green Spots - Everything at grade 4+ and under. Mostly these should be good for beginners and those wanting an easy life.

Orange Spots - 5 to 6a+ inclusive. General ticking routes for those with more experience.

Red Spots - 6b to 7a inclusive. Routes for the very experienced and keen climber.

Black Spots - 7a+ and above. The hard stuff!

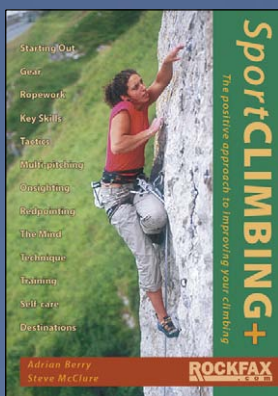
Multi-pitch Colour-codes

There are plenty of multi-pitch routes covered in this guide in particular at crags like Saint Julien, in the Dentelles and at Buoux. Often you may not want to tackle all the pitches of a route, particularly if there is a single hard pitch high up with some great easier pitches leading to it. In this guide for the first time we have given each pitch a colour-code to aid location of these different pitches. Each route has a single large number which is given to the first significant pitch. The other pitches are all given smaller dots corresponding to their colour-code grade band.

Route Grades				
Sport Grade	British Trad Grade (for well protected routes only)			UIAA USA
1	Mod Moderate			I 5.1
2		Diff Difficult		II 5.2
2+			VDiff Very Difficult	III 5.3
3				III+ 5.4
3+	Sev Severe		HVD Hard Very Difficult	IV 5.5
4		HS Hard Severe		IV+ 5.6
4+			4a VS Very Severe 4c	V 5.7
5				V+ 5.8
5+			4c HVS Hard Very Severe 5b	VI 5.9
6a	5a E1 5c			VI+ 5.10a
6a+		5b E2 6a		VI+ 5.10b
6b			5c E3 6a	VII 5.10c
6b+				VII 5.10d
6c			6a E4 6b	VII+ 5.11a
6c+				VII+ 5.11b
7a			6a E5 6c	VIII 5.11c
7a+				VIII 5.11d
7b				VIII+ 5.12a
7b+	6b E6 6c			VIII+ 5.12a
7c		6c E7 7a		IX- 5.12b
7c+			6c E8 7a	IX 5.12c
8a				IX 5.12d
8a+				IX+ 5.13a
8b			7a E9 7b	X- 5.13b
8b+				X 5.13c
8c				X 5.13d
8c+			7a E10 7b	X+ 5.14a
9a				XI 5.14b
9a+				XI 5.14c
				XI+ 5.14d
				XI+ 5.15a

Belays and Extensions

Routes are bolted so that an ascent ends when you have clipped the belay, grabbing belays is not the custom. Multi-pitch routes are graded assuming you are taking each belay. Single pitches often have additional sections added to them to offer a longer and more difficult route, these are known as extensions - Céüse in particular is a crag with a lot of extensions. Most extensions are given extra grades in the route description, and often have different names. Extensions are not second pitches, and the grade of an extension assumes you have not rested on the belay - which would make it easier than graded. Extensions are given small spots on our colour-code system even if they are harder than the main pitch.



Sport Climbing+

The Rockfax publication Sport Climbing+, by Adrian Berry and Steve McClure, makes great companion to this book and it should enable you to get even more out of your trip to the Haute Provence crags.

The book takes a practical approach, focusing on the improvements that climbers can make immediately, without embarking on a lengthy training program. It is available from


www.rockfax.com

Ropes, Route Lengths and Lowering Off

The most crucial item of gear is your rope. At the very least, you need a 60m rope, but if you're buying a new rope for a trip to France, we strongly recommend getting a 70m rope or longer. Single ropes are now available in thicknesses previously associated with half-ropes. The thinner your rope, the lighter it is to hike up to the crag, the easier it is to pull up to clip, and the softer it is to fall onto. Thicker ropes last longer and are better for working projects. For multi-pitch routes requiring an abseil descent, you may find that using a pair of half-ropes is preferable, alternatively, if you have a 100m single rope, you can make all the abseils and have the convenience of leading on a single rope.

The photo-topos have approximate heights, rounded up to the nearest 5m, indicated next to some lower-offs. These are guideline heights only and it is important to remember that crag bases are not always level and people stand in different places when belaying. Also, many climbers don't even know exactly how long their rope is having chopped worn sections off the ends in the past. **The golden rule is always tie a knot in the end of the rope to prevent dropping a climber when lowering off.**

Other Gear

Only a few routes in this guidebook require more than a single rope and a set of quickdraws - 14 quickdraws is plenty for all but the longest of pitches. For the belays on multi-pitch routes, a couple of screwgate carabiners and a sling each is a good idea. The few routes which need gear (11 of them) are denoted with the  symbol.

Make sure your belay device is suitable for your rope: too grabbing and you'll be cursing it each time you pay out rope, too slick and you may struggle to hold your partner. A belay device that you are happy to abseil on is also a good idea.

Beyond these essentials you may find tape useful for bandaging your fingers if the prickly rock starts to take its toll. For multi-pitch routes a small sack with a water bladder, a long-sleeve shirt and a sun hat are good ideas. A good pair of approach shoes are also worth packing as a number of the walk-ins are long.



Chris Slinger belaying at Saint Léger.



The Rock Climbing Specialists


































































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




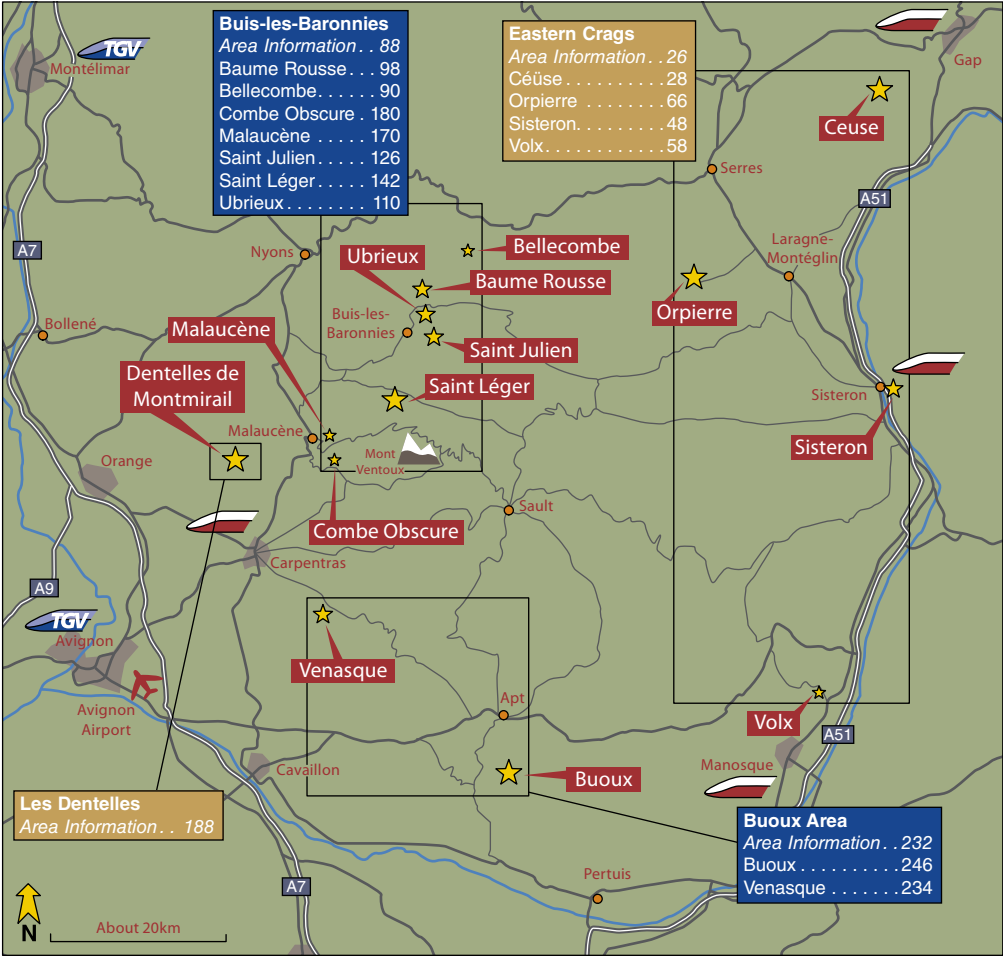
Le spécialiste de l'escalade
French or English
we're still 'The Specialists'

BLAIR FYFFE PUSHING HARD ON CORPS ENTRENGER 7B+ LA CASCADE DURING A V12 ROAD TRIP

Quality and range of routes in different grade bands: ✓✓✓ - Excellent ✓✓ - Good ✓ - Okay NO TICK - Not worth a visit

Approach	Sun	Multi-pitch	When wet	When hot	When cold	Summary	Page	
 60 to 75 min	 Morning					A crag whose situation reflects its stature - high on a mountain top, Céüse is a popular summer destination. Though famed for its world-famous super routes, there is plenty of interest in the mid-grades, just be prepared for a bit of a walk-in. Although very steep, the walls run with water during heavy rain.	28	Céüse
 2 to 4 min	 Lots of sun					A road-side urban crag with an immaculate slabby south face that gets plenty of sun and offers great rock and a series of inviting routes winding their way to the top. It can get hot here though and there is the only shelter from the sun and rain is on a small north-facing wall with a few hard routes.	48	Sisteron
 10 min	 Lots of sun					In some ways the epitome of hard sport climbing, though hardly beautiful. The climbing is good, steep and possible in all states of weather making Volx a popular destination for those avoiding rain. It is getting a bit polished now so probably worth keeping in reserve for a rainy day, and it only offers hard routes.	58	Volx
 10 to 30 min	 Sun and shade					An extensive area with something for everyone, from beautiful slabs covered with friendly single pitches, to long multi-pitch offerings on some very impressive walls. It can get hot in the summer, but it is possible to chase the shade, and there is also a single shady and ever-dry hard wall covered here.	66	Orpierre
 4 min	 From mid morning					A novel fin of rock that has enough to keep anyone entertained for a while. Although not an extensive crag, it does offer a wide variety of routes on excellent rock, often following compelling natural features and the location is superb. It will get hot in summer but is too exposed to be much of a winter sun-trap.	90	Bellecombe
 5 to 12 min	 Lots of sun					An impressive concentration of high quality routes spanning the full grade range. All but the very best climbers could easily spend a week here and still have routes to go at. Facing a variety of directions, Baume Rousse is a winter sun-trap, but there is often something in the shade in summer.	98	Baume Rousse
 0 to 20 min	 From mid morning					A treat for those looking for technical routes up sunny grey limestone, covering a range of routes from friendly first-leads through to some desperately thin wall climbs. Steep, sustained routes of all grades are also on offer at nearby Lou Passo which gets plenty of shade during summer.	110	Ubréux
 2 to 35 min	 Lots of sun					A beautiful crag with a sunny aspect, offering a wealth of multi-pitch routes on magnificent rock. Though fully bolted, Saint Julian has an adventurous feel to its climbing, and is an ideal destination for those looking for more than single pitch gymnastics. Sunny and exposed to the weather.	126	Saint Julien
 10 to 30 min	 Lots of sun					An extensive crag which caters for those seeking the epitome of modern hard sport climbing. Facing every direction, Saint Leger offers both summer shade, a glorious winter sun-trap, and everything in between. Though there's not much to go at below 7a, there's a lifetime's worth of climbing above it.	142	Saint Léger
 10 min	 Not much sun					A small area, but with excellent rock and a good variety of routes to go at, though you really need to be climbing at 6b or above to get the most of it. Malaucène can be a good summer venue until the sun arrives in mid-afternoon. It is less of a winter-sun option but late afternoons can be warm.	170	Malaucène
 15 min	 To mid afternoon					A fine pair of walls consisting of some of the nicest limestone you will ever find. The rock offers superb routes in the lower grades, though there are certainly some technical test-pieces to be found. Depending on the time of day, you can find plenty of winter sun, or a little late summer shade.	180	Combe
 2 to 25 min	 Sun and shade					An extensive area which has much for everyone. The majority of the rock faces south making it great for winter sun, although most areas are quite exposed to the wind. The north-facing Chaîne de Gogondas has routes across the grade spectrum for those after summer shade. There is one steep ever-dry wall.	188	Les Dentelles
 0 to 5 min	 Morning					Offering a very different style from that offered by a typical French sport crag, Venasque is well worth checking out. A mixture of sloper-pulling technical climbs and steep jug-pulling extravaganzas, there's morning winter sun and afternoon summer shade on offer, plus the steep sections are sheltered in the rain.	234	Venasque
 15 to 20 min	 Lots of sun					Probably the most recognisable crag in this book, Buoux is a jewel in the sport climbing crown. Though there is enough climbing below 6a to maintain interest for weeks, Buoux is at its best when you're climbing in the 7s. A bit hot in summer, and a bit cold in winter - though perfect in spring and autumn.	246	Buoux

 - Definitely worth a look
 - Could be lucky
 - Probably not worth the effort
 - Forget it!



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Mountain Rescue

Dial 112 - Ensure you have details of your location and what the incident involves. This number works on any mobile on a French network.