

# France

## Languedoc-Roussillon

A rock climbing guidebook to the Languedoc-Roussillon area of France

All uncredited photos by Adrian Berry  
Other photography as credited  
Edited by Alan James and Stephen Horne  
Printed by Latitude Printing  
Distributed by Cordee ([www.cordee.co.uk](http://www.cordee.co.uk))

Adrian Berry

Published by ROCKFAX November 2011  
© UKClimbing Ltd. 2011

[www.rockfax.com](http://www.rockfax.com)  
[www.ukclimbing.com](http://www.ukclimbing.com)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright owner. A CIP catalogue record is available from the British Library.

We only use paper made from wood fibre from sustainable forests and produced according to ISO 14001 environmental standard

**ISBN 978 1 873341 62 9**

This page: An idyllic setting at Chauvet Plage in the Ardèche for climbing, swimming or just hanging out.  
Cover: Unknown climber on *Pyromania* (7c+) - [page 109](#) - Gorge du Tarn.



# AWESOME WALLS CLIMBING CENTRES

**Stockport**

0161 494 9949

*'England's highest  
climbing wall'*



**Liverpool**

0151 298 2422

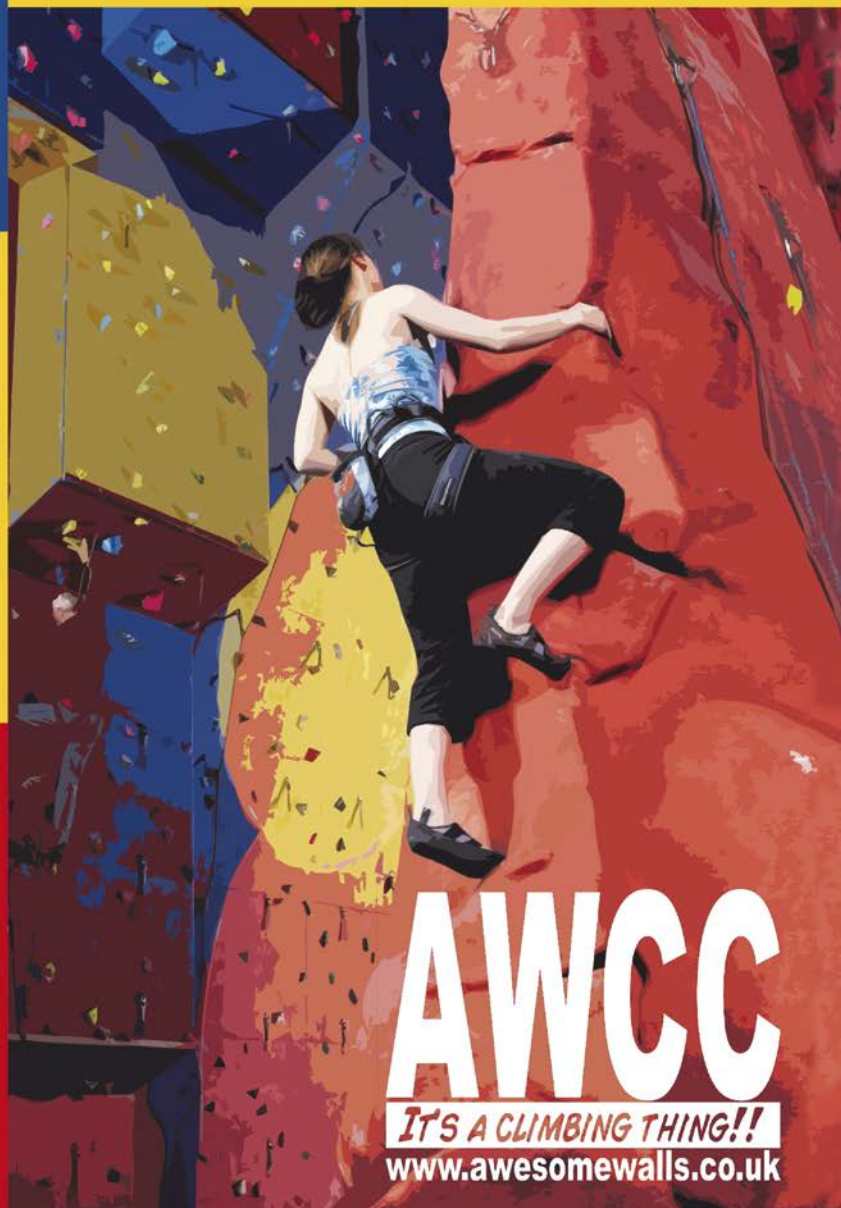
*'England's steepest  
climbing wall'*



**Stoke**

01782 341 919

*'England's largest  
bouldering centre'*



**AWCC**

*IT'S A CLIMBING THING!!*

[www.awesomewalls.co.uk](http://www.awesomewalls.co.uk)



Andy Morris climbing at Nouveau Monde, Seynes.

<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>4</b>
Einleitung . . . . .	8
Acknowledgements . . . . .	10
Advertiser Directory . . . . .	10
<b>Languedoc-Roussillon Logistics</b> . . . . .	<b>12</b>
Getting There . . . . .	14
Where to Stay . . . . .	14
Area Map . . . . .	15
When to Go . . . . .	16
<b>Languedoc-Roussillon Climbing</b> . . . . .	<b>18</b>
Grades . . . . .	20
Gear . . . . .	23
Rockfax Books . . . . .	24
Destination Planner . . . . .	26
<b>The Ardèche</b> . . . . .	<b>28</b>
Chaulet Plage . . . . .	30
Mazet Plage . . . . .	44
Actinidias . . . . .	58
Le Cirque des Gens . . . . .	68
Les Branches . . . . .	88
<b>The Tarn Area</b> . . . . .	<b>96</b>
Gorge du Tarn . . . . .	98
Gorge de la Jonte . . . . .	132
Le Boffi . . . . .	168
Cantobre . . . . .	188
<b>Thaurac Area</b> . . . . .	<b>196</b>
Thaurac . . . . .	198
Hortus . . . . .	216
Claret . . . . .	228
<b>The Gard</b> . . . . .	<b>242</b>
Seynes . . . . .	244
Russan . . . . .	274
<b>Massif des Alpilles</b> . . . . .	<b>290</b>
Mont Gaussier . . . . .	292
Mouriès . . . . .	308
Orgon . . . . .	326
<b>Route Index</b> . . . . .	<b>366</b>
<b>General Index and Map</b> . . . . .	<b>376</b>

## 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.

**AWESOME BY NAME - AWESOME BY NATURE!!!**

This is my second, and Rockfax's third guidebook to the climbing in the South of France. When I was working on my first guidebook to Haute Provence, the idea of going on a sport-climbing trip to France was surprisingly novel. I think I heard more of people jetting off around the world to sweat it out in places like Thailand or Nevada than packing the car and heading down to France. I think that this series of French guidebooks is succeeding in convincing people that they can save the airfare, the jet-lag, and the pollution and experience even better climbing somewhere that for most Europeans is rarely more than a day's drive away.

The more time I spend in France working on guidebooks, the more I am struck by the quality of what is available. For this book, I was already aware of places like the Gorge du Tarn, Seynes and Russan, but I was really in for a surprise and a treat when I dug a bit deeper and found so much more. I was awestruck by the Gorge de la Jonte, for example, somewhere only around the corner from the Tarn, and yet, for most climbers, there's so much more there to do. Another surprise was Orgon - I'd been to the Canal sector previously, and was in two minds as to whether to include it in this book, until I saw the rest of what it has to offer and realised it was a paradise for climbers looking for low to mid-grade climbs. The biggest surprise though, must have been Mont Gaussier, a place I'd never been, but one that I kept finding excuses to go back to, for just one more photo...

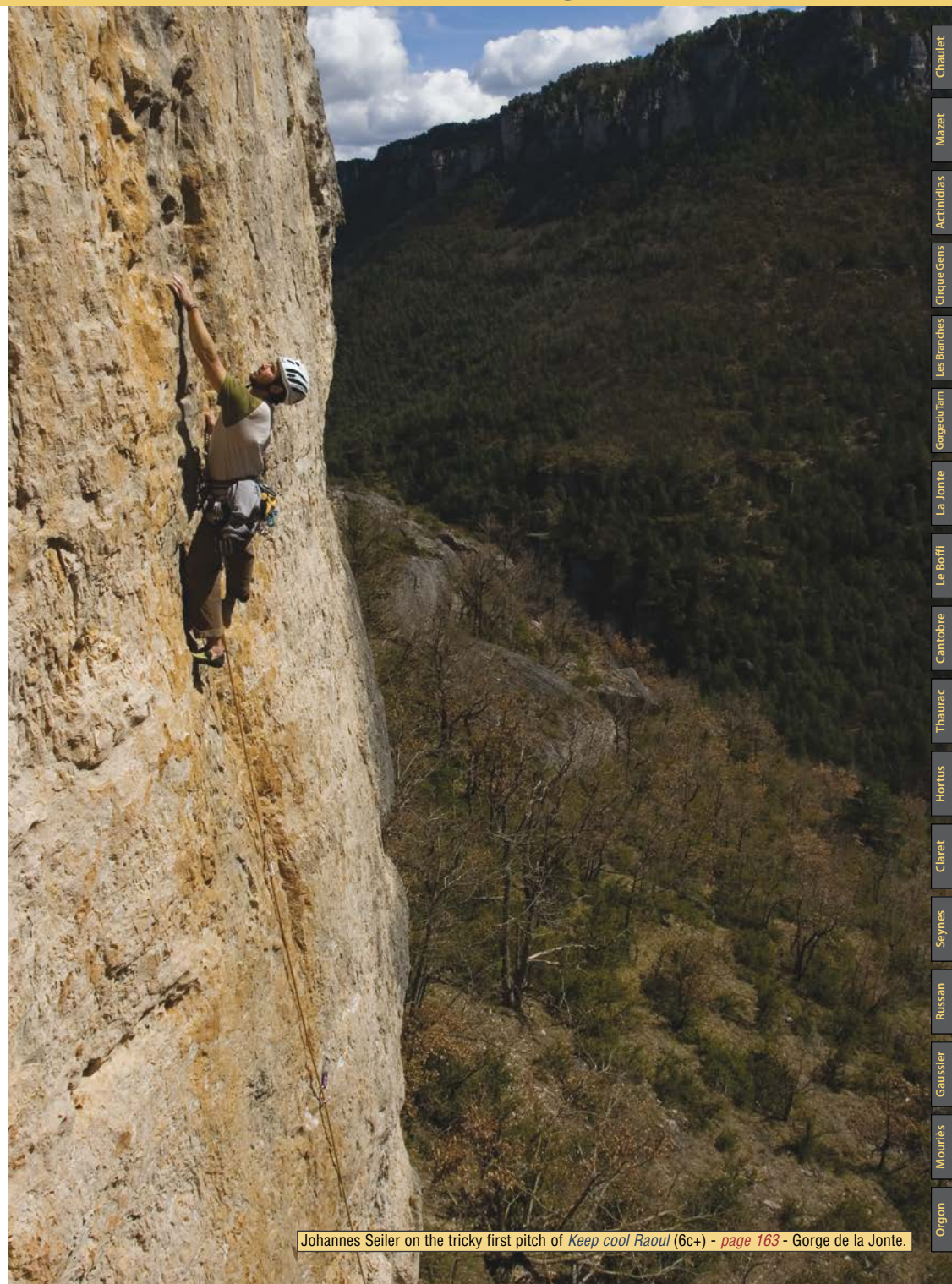
As with the other two books in the Rockfax France series, the goal is not just to promote France as a fantastic climbing destination, but also to give the wider picture on what is available there. As I mentioned already, crags like the Gorge du Tarn have been well-publicised by high-level climbers, for whom it is rightly a paradise, but for everyone else there are really much more suitable venues. La Jonte even has some brilliant trad routes!

This book also seeks 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, airports were ignored, rides shared, and slowly, habits were changed. This guidebook has the train symbol on the maps, showing where the nearest railway station is located. The TGV is a fast way of getting to the south of France without worrying about paying for excess baggage. Also look into overnight sleeper-trains, where you wake up at your destination, pick up a car and get straight on the rock! 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.

To get many of the photos you will see on these pages, I initiated 'Google-doc Climbing Trips' - where a collection of strangers can use the Internet to come together as friends, put on some colourful T-shirts and soak up the quality rock. These trips were a bit of a social experiment, but ultimately worked brilliantly. Although I will thank those who took part elsewhere for their contribution to this book, I'd also like to thank them here.

Finally, the title of this book was chosen to give an idea as to the area covered. You will find that there are many good areas in the Languedoc-Roussillon region (Vingrau for example) that didn't fit into the area we wished to cover. Conversely, quite a few of the areas covered are not in the Langedoc region - for example, the Ardèche is a part of Rhône-Alpes, and the Boffi is within the Midi-Pyrénées. Great climbing areas don't strictly follow political boundaries!

*Adrian Berry, October 2011*



Johannes Seiler on the tricky first pitch of *Keep cool Raoul* (6c+) - page 163 - Gorge de la Jonte.



Simon 'Sol' Oliver on the first of many pitches that make up *Aquo es Quicon* (6a) - page 163 - at the Gorge de la Jonte.

## 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. One notable exception to this is the Gorge du Tarn - see page 100.

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

**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 (as of 2011) local guidebook is featured so you know what it looks like. You can usually get hold of these from bookshops or the tourist information office, or, if there is a climbing shop in the area, then that is a good place to look.

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](http://www.rockfax.com) contains a listing of every route in the book, with the opportunity for you to log 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.

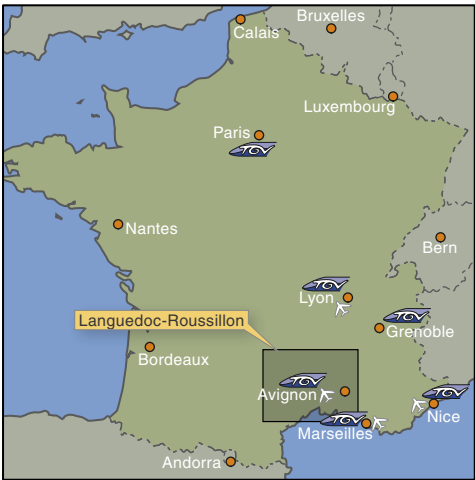


Not what we want to see - recently some popular crags in the Gorge du Tarn were closed due to fears of litigation by the landowner. Photo: Olivier Obin

Das dritte Buch der Rockfax Serie Frankreich deckt den großräumigen und ergiebigen Bereich westlich des vorhergehenden Kletterführers vom Autor zur Haute Provence ab.

Die beschriebenen Gebiete befassen sich im Wesentlichen mit dem Bereich um den Nationalpark von Cévennes. Ebenfalls enthalten sind aber auch Felsen in der näheren Umgebung der Städte Nîmes und Avignon.

Das Buch beginnt mit dem familienfreundlichen Urlaubsziel von Ardèche, das nächste Kapitel befaßt sich mit dem Gorge du Tarn sowie den Mehrseillängenabenteuern von Jonte und den verschiedenen hochqualitativen Angeboten von Le Boffi. Während wir uns südwärts bewegen, berichten wir über Thaurac, anschließend machen wir eine Pause für ein paar nette Abenteuer der "alten Schule" in Hortus. Wir bewegen uns schließlich wieder ostwärts und wenden uns den modernen Sportkletterrouten von Claret, Russan sowie Seynes zu, alle mit ihren individuellen Stilen, atemberaubenden Qualitäten und einer auf Lebenszeit ausreichenden Routenanzahl. Wir beenden unsere Tour schließlich an den gut erschlossenen Felsen rings um Avignon, eingeschlossen das legendäre Gebiet von Orgon.



Zugang

Für die meisten Routen in diesem Buch gibt es keine Zugangsbeschränkungen und sie können jederzeit beklettert werden. Häufig wurde dies durch 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](http://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](http://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 überhängendem 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.

Felssymbole

- 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:

- Grad V+ und darunter
- Grad VI- bis VII-
- Grad VII bis VIII
- 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 misjudgments 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.

Many thanks to...

Alan Rubin, John Eales, Andy Morris, Ali Baylay, Eivind Flobak, Jonathan Ayrton, Pete Bridgwood, Neil Ronketti, Sol, Tim Howell, John Venier, Alexandre Buisse, Jenny Barber, Harry Crank, Jamie Veitch, Tim Parkinson, Kenny Watson, Nikki Holbrook, Andrew Gibb, Laurent Moseley, Sam Harvie, Tom Kendall, Olivier Obin, Simon Rawlinson, Liz Collyer, Matt Heason, Sophie Heason, Juan Varela, Jo Varela, Miles Gibson, Ollie Ryall, Steve McClure, Andy Benson and Pete Benson.

An extra big thank you to photographer Piers Cunliffe ([www.pierscunliffephotography.co.uk](http://www.pierscunliffephotography.co.uk)) for coming out on both the 'google-doc' research trips, being so helpful at both ends of the camera, and generally being a star. Thanks Piers.

For help in checking the text and sharing their wisdom, thanks to Chris Craggs, Jack Geldard, Cedric Larcher, Sherri Davy, Stephen Horne and Karsten Kurz.

Finally, a very big thank you indeed to my partner Audrey, who has tolerated both my absences and my presences. Any correct translations from French to English are her doing, incorrect ones are mine.

Adrian Berry, October 2011

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

### Gear Shops

**V12 - Back cover flap**  
The Old Baptist Chapel, Llanberis.  
Tel: 01286 871534  
[www.v12outdoor.com](http://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](http://www.awesomewalls.co.uk)

**Boulders - Inside front cover**  
St Catherine's Park, Cardiff.  
Tel: 0845 52 118 50  
[www.boulders-climbing.com](http://www.boulders-climbing.com)

### Outdoor Gear

**Black Diamond - Outside back cover**  
Tel: 0162 958 0484  
[www.blackdiamondequipment.com](http://www.blackdiamondequipment.com)

### Travel

**BMC Insurance - Inside back cover**  
West Didsbury, Manchester.  
Tel: 0161 445 6111  
[www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

**Climbapedia**  
Online trip planner.  
[www.climbapedia.com](http://www.climbapedia.com)



## TRIP CHECKLIST

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

Receiving climbing coaching is the quickest way to make significant improvements in your climbing. Improvements that last a lifetime.

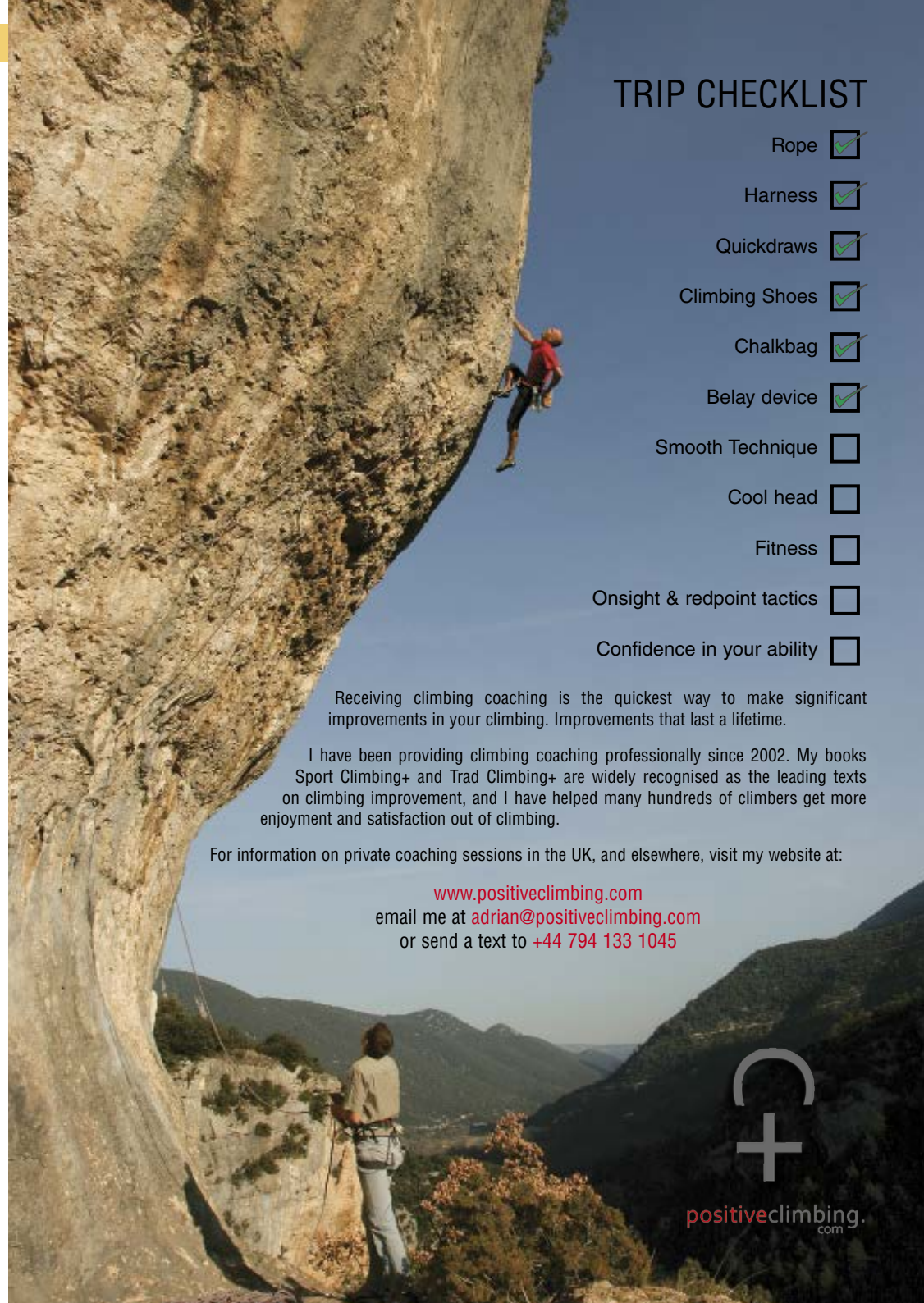
I have been providing climbing coaching professionally since 2002. My books Sport Climbing+ and Trad Climbing+ are widely recognised as the leading texts on climbing improvement, and I have helped many hundreds of climbers get more enjoyment and satisfaction out of climbing.

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

[www.positiveclimbing.com](http://www.positiveclimbing.com)  
email me at [adrian@positiveclimbing.com](mailto:adrian@positiveclimbing.com)  
or send a text to +44 794 133 1045



positiveclimbing.com



# Languedoc-Roussillon Logistics

Crags lining the Ardèche gorge - these have probably never been climbed on.

**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 more generous 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. Montpellier, Marseilles and Avignon are the closest, but Grenoble, 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](http://www.hotelformule1.com)) or, a bit nicer, an Ibis ([www.ibishotel.com](http://www.ibishotel.com)) or Etap ([www.etaphotel.com](http://www.etaphotel.com)).

**Getting Around Without a Car**

Some of areas covered in this guide can be accessed 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 obvious choice of destination if you won't be driving is Orgon, where you can turn up by train or bus and never feel you need to use a car. La Gorge de la Jonte is another convenient destination for car-free climbing, once you've got to Le Rozier.

**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 in the event of an accident (see inside back cover).

**BMC Travel Insurance** - [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk)

**Satellite Navigation**

GPS 44.39626  
4.19651

All the parking spots are indicated with a precise GPS location. This is in the form of two decimal numbers as in the box to the left. Different GPS devices accept these numbers in alternative formats; some devices are happy with two comma-separated numbers, others require a **North** and **East** value to be entered separately.

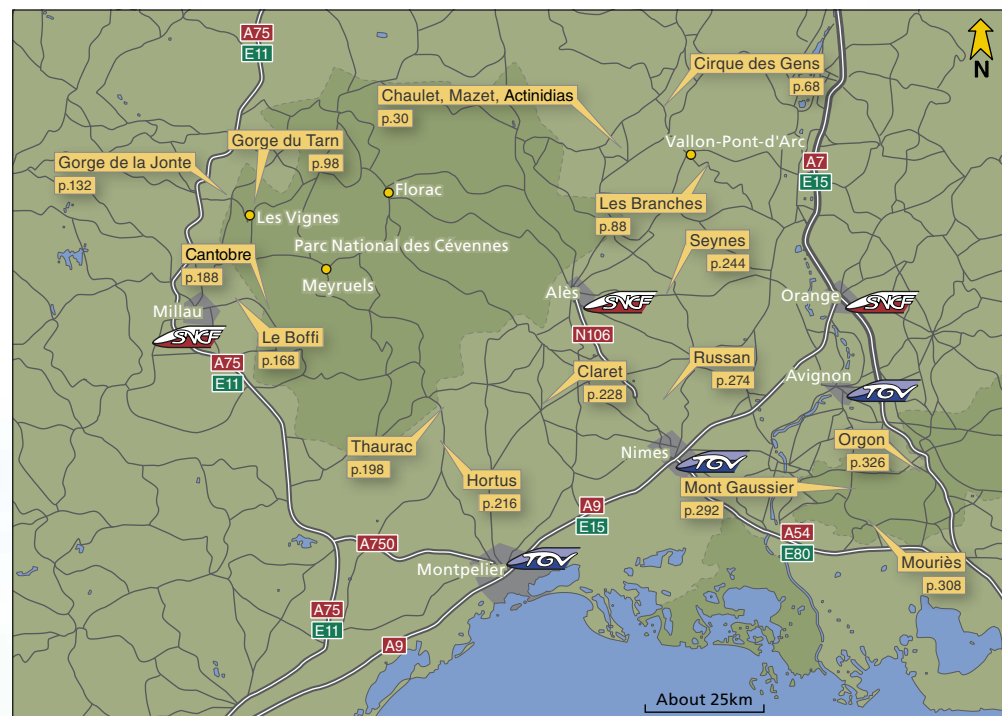
Bear in mind that SatNavs often get it horribly wrong and will delight in taking you through an endless chain of tiny villages when you could have been cruising along on the autoroute. Also note that there are many places in France with the same name - key-in 'Les Vignes', and you could find yourself taking the scenic route to completely the wrong place. The best policy is to use your SatNav in conjunction with a map, use the GPS co-ordinates in this book, and check and review the route as you approach the crag. The map on 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 map will also be found useful.

**Where to Stay**

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 although many aren't open in the winter months. 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 listing sites that allow you to book online. Tourist information offices are found in most towns, and are happy to find you somewhere to stay, as well as something to keep you busy on a rest day.

**Climbapedia** - [www.climbapedia.com](http://www.climbapedia.com)

Online trip planner with accommodation tips and advice for the whole of France.



Climbing in the sun on a winter's day in France is always delightful, during the research trips for this book, many days were spent walking-in on snowy or frosty ground to find a sunny crag that allowed us to climb in T-shirts. If you want to climb on the south-facing crags like Seynes or Cantobre, winter is definitely a good time for it. Spring and autumn are the best times for most of the crags when you can choose between optimum cool climbing conditions in the shade or relish the warmth of the sun. Summer is the time to visit the north-facing venues, or choose your venue and time of day so that you chase the shade - alternatively choose somewhere close to a river (like the crags in the Ardèche) where you can jump in the water to cool off. 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
Millau (maximum)	7	9	12	14	19	23	26	26	21	16	10	7
Millau (minimum)	1	1	3	5	9	12	14	14	11	8	3	1
Nîmes (maximum)	12	13	17	19	24	28	31	31	26	21	15	11
Nîmes (minimum)	3	3	6	8	12	16	19	19	15	11	6	3
Avignon (maximum)	11	13	17	19	24	28	31	31	25	20	14	10
Avignon (minimum)	2	2	5	8	12	15	18	18	14	10	6	2

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
Millau (average)	5.4	4.1	3.4	6.4	7.1	6.8	3.4	5.3	7.1	8.0	6.9	5.4
Nîmes (average)	7.0	3.3	2.9	5.9	5.3	4.3	2.9	3.3	10.4	9.2	8.0	5.5
Avignon (average)	5.1	3.0	3.3	6.4	5.8	4.0	2.8	3.9	11.2	8.4	8.2	5.2



John Eales breaks trail at Russan during an unexpected cold-snap in March 2010.



John Eales on *Le bloc de Damocles* (5+) - page 210 - Thaurac.

# Languedoc-Roussillon Climbing

Grades

The routes in this book are graded using the usual sport grade system, or 'French Grade' as it is often known. This gives an overall impression of the difficulty of the route. Some of the crags in this book, like Hortus, Thaurac and La Jonte, were developed years ago. Initially they were for trad climbing only and, as is often the case with older climbing areas, this means that they later acquire a reputation for stiff grading, certainly in the lower and mid grades. The best advice at these venues is to drop your expectations a bit and try something a bit below your normal standard just to ease yourself in to the style of climbing.

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. 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.

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 up to 4+

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!

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



Andy Morris climbing *Séñoritas* (6a)- page 264 - at Sector Concerto, Seynes.




Rhoslyn Frugtinet on *Abus dangereux* (6c+) - page 103 - Gorge du Tarn. Photo: Simon Rawlinson

### 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 and the easier it is to pull up to clip. 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 or a triple-rated rope which can be used both single and double. 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, 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 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 is also worth packing, as some of the crags are a bit of a walk from the parking spots.

## Other Rockfax Publications

Rockfax produce guidebooks to areas all over Europe. All the books are available from specialist outdoor retailers or direct from [www.rockfax.com](http://www.rockfax.com)

### France: Haute Provence (December 2009)

France: Haute Provence presents many of the finest sport climbing destinations in the world together in one clear and colourful book. Covering all the best areas from the magnificent walls of Céüse in the north to the impeccable climbing playground of Buoux to the south, this book has a lifetime's worth of climbing waiting on its pages.

### France: Côte d'Azur (December 2010)

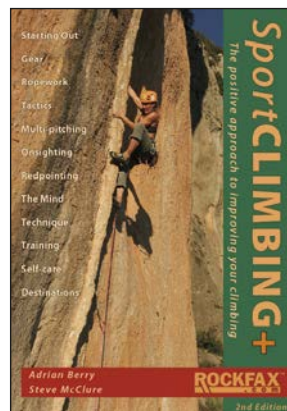
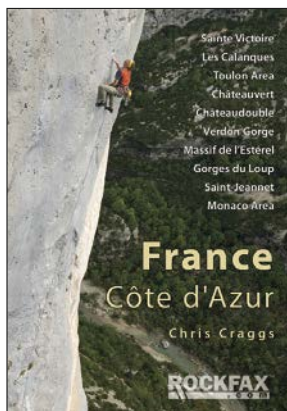
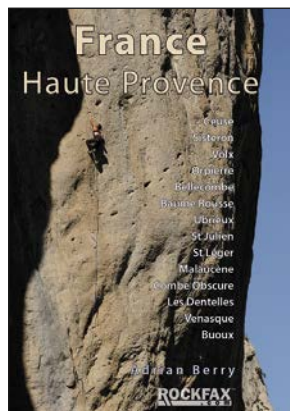
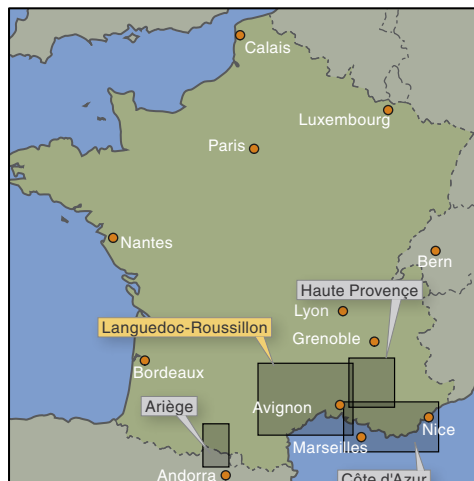
The cliffs of the South of France rocketed to popularity back in the 1980s when it was realised what great climbing was available and how good the weather was down there. Since then other areas have attracted the attention of travelling climbers. France : Côte d'Azur reassesses these famous cliffs and also includes some of the great venues around Toulon, the sunniest city in France. Plus there is the popular winter venue of Châteaufort, the less well known Esterel and Châteaudouble areas, as well as the world famous Verdon Gorge. Add in Saint Jeannet and a selection of cliffs in the Nice area and this is an essential volume for any climber.

### France : Ariège

The fourth book in the series will cover the Ariège area in the Pyrenees and is due for publication is 2012/13.

### Sport Climbing+ (2006, 2nd Edition 2011)

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. The book takes a practical approach to sport climbing, focusing on the improvements that climbers can make immediately, without embarking on a lengthy training program.



Adrian Berry on *Le tube neural* (6c+) - page 261 - at Seynes.

The Ardèche	Chalet Plage	169	5	56	58	50	15 to 19 min	Lots of sun		✗	✗	✓	A sunny spot with a great variety of grades, and a river to cool off in. It gets some shade in the morning and the campsite is just the other side of the river.	32	Chalet
	Mazet Plage	114	14	29	49	22	2 to 10 min	Afternoon		✗	✗	✓	Show up in the morning if you're looking for some shade, or the afternoon if chasing the sun - there is a river right by the crag for cooling off.	46	Mazet
	Actinidias	61	3	11	11	36	2 to 5 min	Morning		✓	✓	✗	A pretty hard-core venue, get there in the morning if you want the sun. The Camping sector is a bit different, with much easier routes - almost inside the campsite.	60	Actinidias
	Le Cirque des Gens	313	12	57	149	95	10 to 20 min	Sun and shade		✓	✓	✓	An extensive crag that allows you to follow the shade or the sun throughout the day. It can be baking hot at one end, and nice and cool at the other.	70	Cirque gens
	Les Branches	45	▫	▫	11	34	30 min	Not much sun		✓	✓	✗	A hard crag that can be sheltered from rain - but will seep eventually. Hardly any sun, so come here in the summer, paddle across the river, and enjoy the shade.	90	Les Branches
The Tarn Area	Gorge du Tarn	286	▫	26	83	177	0 to 15 min	Sun and shade		✓	✓	✗	An extensive area where you can find sun and shade if you look for it. Unfortunately the all-weather crag is now closed, but there should be something steep enough to stay dry in rain.	100	Gorge du Tarn
	Gorge de la Jonte	266	9	75	91	91	10 to 20 min	Sun and shade	Multi-pitch	✗	✓	✓	An adventurous and exposed crag. It gets a lot of sun, but there are pockets of shade - and when you are high on a route you will probably catch a breeze.	134	La Jonte
	Le Boffi	179	3	22	47	107	30 to 40 min	Sun and shade		✓	✓	✓	Offers sun and shade in equal measures, so pick when and where you're heading carefully. If the weather is desperate, there is a small cave that is always dry, and some of the steeper routes may be OK in rain.	170	Le Boffi
	Cantobre	57	▫	1	4	52	30 to 35 min	Lots of sun		✓	✗	✓	A real furnace, with lots of sun. Good in the winter, but stay well-clear of it when it's hot. Some very steep ground around here so likely to be something dry in rain.	190	Cantobre
Thuarac Area	Thaurac	158	12	70	50	26	4 to 20 min	Sun and shade	Multi-pitch	✗	✓	✓	Many cliffs, facing different directions, but nothing very steep. You should be able to find something to climb here most times of the year.	200	Thaurac
	Hortus	75	1	19	37	18	30 to 35 min	Sun and shade	Multi-pitch	✗	✓	✗	A big, adventurous crag that gets lots of sun, but is high and exposed, so not so bad once you're up. Not somewhere you want to be in any extreme of weather; it's adventurous enough already.	218	Hortus
	Claret	173	▫	15	71	87	5 to 11 min	Lots of sun		✓	✗	✓	Plenty of sun and technical climbing make this a poor choice for summer, but it can be good in the winter. Some steep ground may provide sport during wet weather.	230	Claret
The Gard	Seynes	324	36	106	92	90	6 to 12 min	Lots of sun		✓	✗	✓	A reflector oven of a crag - avoid it in the summer. During the winter, you can climb here in shorts - even thought there's snow on the ground. Probably steep enough for some rain shelter.	246	Seynes
	Russan	236	3	70	78	85	20 to 25 min	Sun and shade		✓	✗	✓	You should be able to find shade or sun here, and there are some very steep routes that will offer some protection against the rain. A good winter venue, like Seynes.	272	Russan
Massif des Alpes	Mont Gaussier	120	▫	29	49	42	0 to 22 min	Sun and shade		✓	✓	✓	Generally shady in the morning, but in an exposed position, so you can time your visit to get the sun or shade, there is probably something to do here in the rain if you find a steep project.	294	Gaussier
	Mouriès	120	5	36	46	33	5 to 20 min	Not much sun		✗	✓	✗	A good choice for avoiding the sun, and very family friendly, you should expect to have to share the crag with others on a sunny weekend. Not steep enough to shelter from rain.	310	Mouriès
	Orgon	334	25	157	80	72	0 to 20 min	Sun and shade		✓	✓	✓	A very extensive set of crags that surely offers something for everyone, whatever the weather. Head down to Canal if it's raining - you can probably find something to do.	328	Orgon