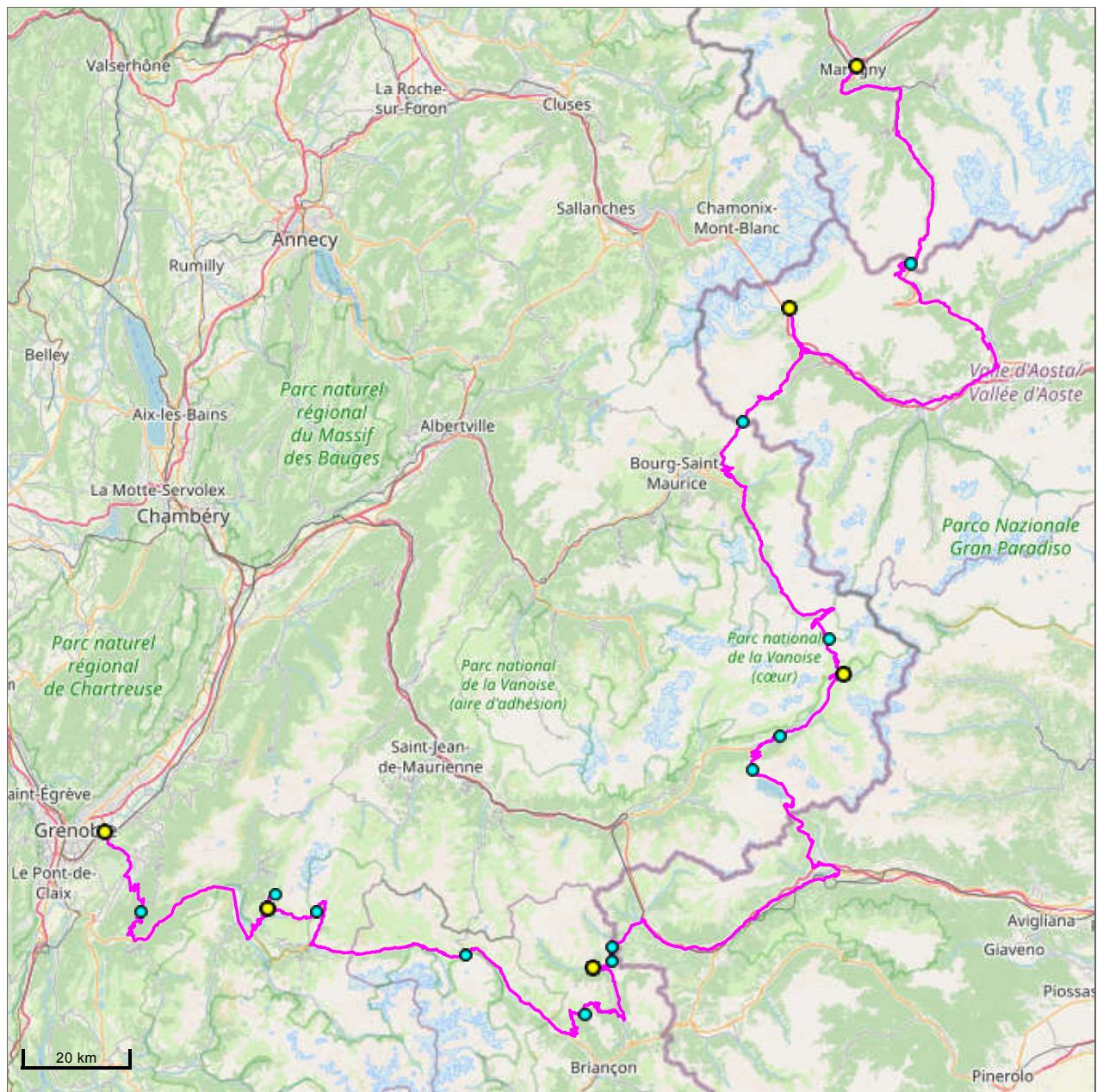
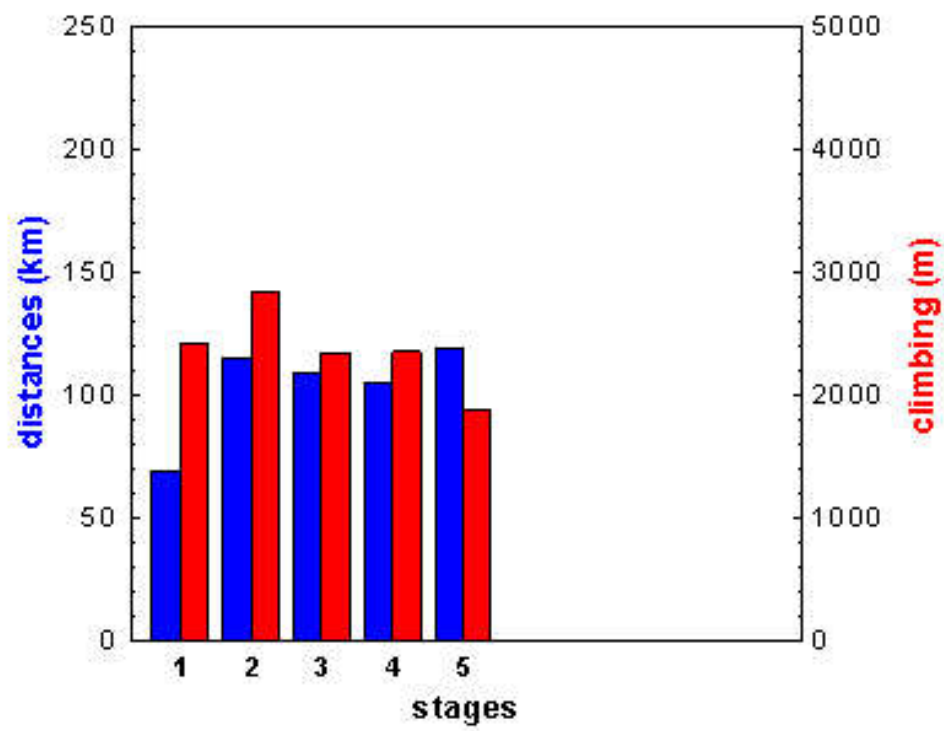


# Bicycle tour 2009, 01 - 05 July

Patrick Schleppi

stage	distance (km)	climbing (m)
Gières - Luitel - L'Alpe-d'Huez	69	2480
L'Alpe-d'Huez - Sarenne - Lautaret - Granon - Névache	115	2870
Névache - Susa - Mont-Cenis - Bonneval	109	2400
Bonneval - Iseran - Petit St-Bernard - Entrèves	100	2390
Entrèves - Grand St-Bernard - Martigny	119	1880
<b>total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>12020</b>





At the Sarenne pass



The Meije massif as seen from the Lautaret pass



From the south slope of the Iseran, view towards the Albran and Mont Cenis massifs



South side of the Grand-St-Bernard pass

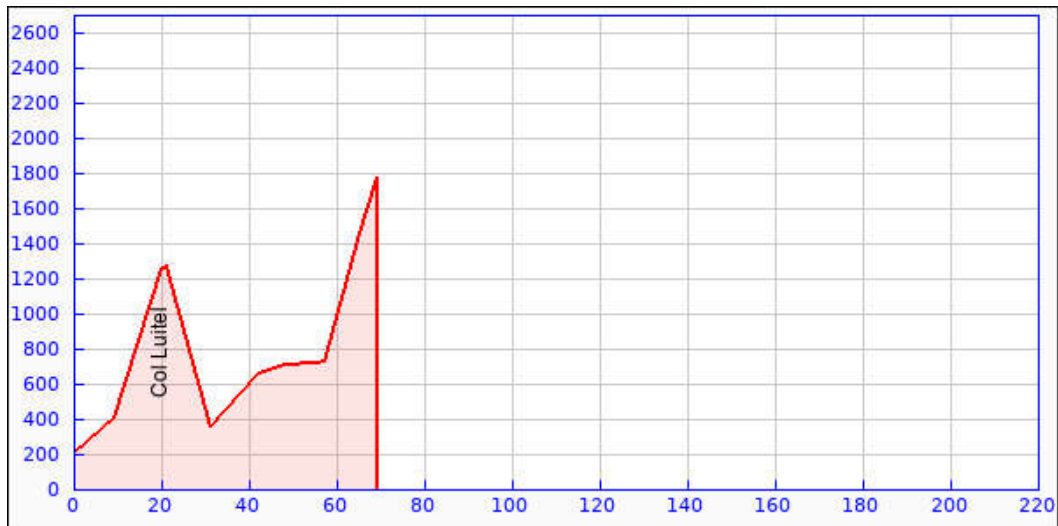


## Stage 1 (1 July 2009): Gières - Luitel - L'Alpe-d'Huez

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...

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Gières	0	210	
Uriage	9	410	200
<b>Col Luitel</b>	20	1260	850
Luitel	21	1270	10
Séchilienne	31	360	
Livet	42	660	300
Rochetaillée	48	710	50
Bourg-d'Oisans	55	720	10
La Tannerie	57	730	10
Huez	65	1460	730
Alpe-d'Huez	69	1780	320
<b>total</b>	<b>69</b>		<b>2480</b>

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.

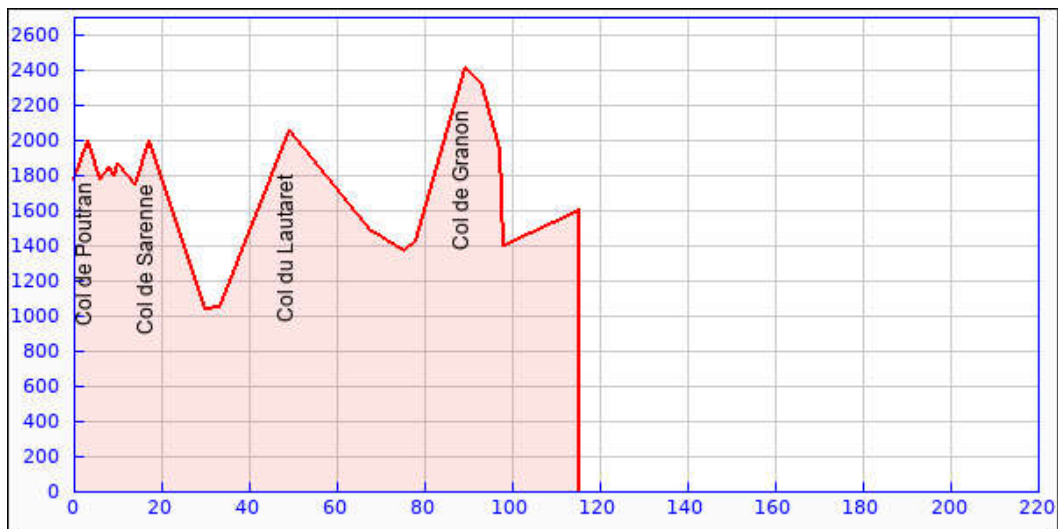


## Stage 2 (2 July 2009): L'Alpe-d'Huez - Sarenne - Lautaret - Granon - Névache

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 Névache, where i found a very nice little auberge.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Alpe d'Huez	0	1780	
<a href="#">Col de Poutran</a>	3	2000	220
Alpe d'Huez	6	1780	
Cognet (Alpe d'Huez)	8	1850	70
Les Bergers (Alpe d'Huez)	9	1800	
Altiport	10	1870	70
Gorges de Sarenne	14	1750	
<a href="#">Col de Sarenne</a>	17	2000	250
Le Chambon	30	1040	
Lac du Chambon	33	1050	10
<a href="#">Col du Lautaret</a>	49	2060	1010
Le Monétier-les-Bains	68	1480	
La Salle-des-Alpes	75	1370	
Le Villard-Laté	78	1430	60
<a href="#">Col de Granon</a>	89	2410	980
La Cuala	93	2310	
Granon	97	1950	
La Draye (Val-des-Prés)	98	1400	
Sallé (Névache)	115	1600	200
<b>total</b>	<b>115</b>		<b>2870</b>

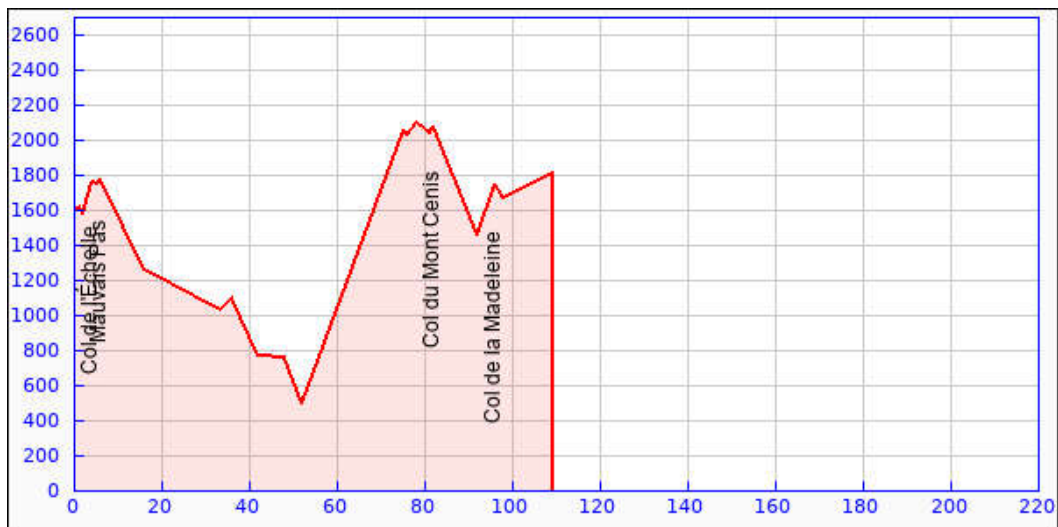


### Stage 3 (3 July 2009): Névache - Susa - Mont-Cenis - Bonneval

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 (Névache)	0	1600	
Roubion	1	1620	20
St-Hippolyte	2	1580	
<a href="#">Col de l'Échelle</a>	4	1760	180
Douane	5	1750	
<a href="#">Mauvais Pas</a>	6	1780	30
Bardonecchia	16	1260	
Salbertrand	33	1030	
Deveys	36	1100	70
Peirore (Exilles)	42	770	
Gravere	48	760	
Susa	52	500	
La Caisse	75	2060	1560
La Caisse	76	2030	
Fontainettes	78	2100	70
La Vachère	81	2040	
<a href="#">Col du Mont Cenis</a>	82	2080	40
Lanslevillard	92	1460	
<a href="#">Col de la Madeleine</a>	96	1750	290
l'Ile (Bessans)	98	1670	
Tralenta (Bonneval)	109	1810	140
<b>total</b>	<b>109</b>		<b>2400</b>



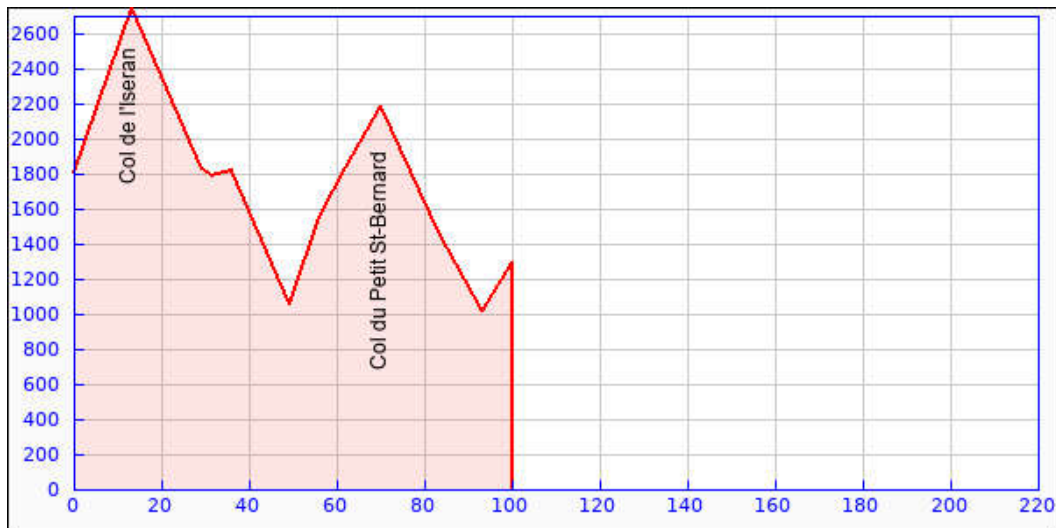
## Stage 4 (4 July 2009): Bonneval - Iseran - Petit St-Bernard - Entrèves

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)
Tralenta (Bonneval)	0	1810	
<a href="#">Col de l'Iseran</a>	13	2760	950
Val d'Isère	29	1830	
La Daille	31	1790	
Tunnel du Chevril	36	1820	30
Ste-Foy	49	1060	
Hauteville	56	1560	500
La Rosière	62	1840	280
<a href="#">Col du Petit St-Bernard</a>	70	2190	350
La Thuile	83	1470	
Pré-St-Didier	93	1020	
Entrèves	100	1300	280
<b>total</b>	<b>100</b>		<b>2390</b>



## Stage 5 (5 July 2009): Entrèves - Grand St-Bernard - 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 waggon 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	1300	
Pré-St-Didier	8	1020	
Morgex	13	920	
Aosta	40	590	
Etroubles	56	1260	670
<b>Col du Grand St-Bernard</b>	74	2470	1210
Bourg-St-Bernard	80	1930	
Bourg-St-Pierre	86	1650	
Orsières	99	910	
Martigny	119	470	
<b>total</b>	<b>119</b>		<b>1880</b>

