

# THE TRANSVERDON





# 1. COL D'ALLOS - VAL D'ALLOS

V4-

Distance **12 KM**

D+/D-

150 M / 950 M

Duration **1H15**

VTOPO/FFC

V4- / RED

Logically «The Grande Traversée VTT - The TransVerdon» starts at the watershed between the Verdon and the Ubaye valleys. The source of the Verdon is here, within the vast mountain cirque of La Sestrière, the start of its 175 km route to the Durance. The itinerary starts at the Col d'Allos, crosses La Baisse de Prenier and descends via a magnificent path to the village of Allos. A six kilometre descent through the larch trees, offering a mixture of easy turns and tight hairpin bends and wide open meadows - all of mountain-biking is here, condensed into one ride. Don't forget that this trail is also a walking route and that you share the path with other users.

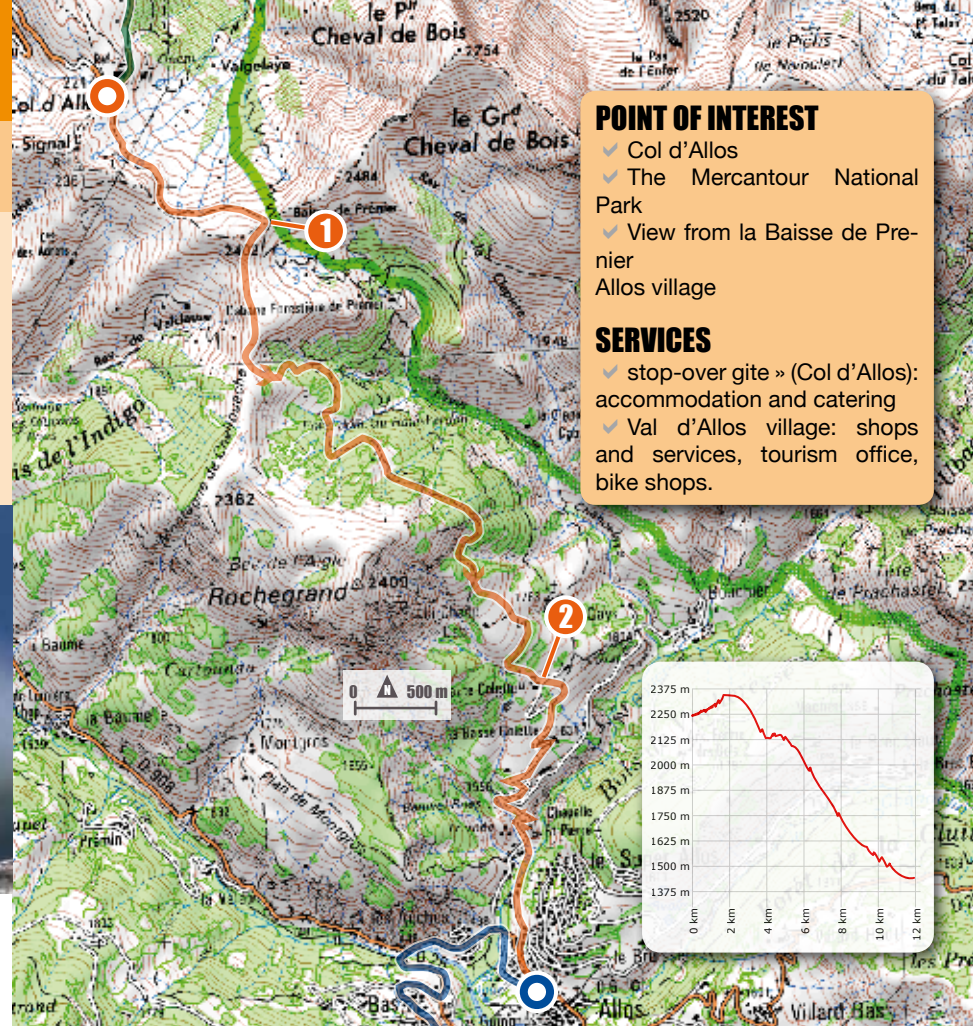
## Section

(2247 m) The starting point is at altitude, at the Col d'Allos. From the car park, head directly south, on the GR56 hiking itinerary, in the direction of Allos village. The trail starts with a 100 m climb up to La Baisse de Prenier. The path is easy technically and although there are a few stiff climbs, 90% can be done on the bike.



(1 : 1.9 km - 2339 m) From La Baisse, do not descend into the valley opposite which is the edge of the Mercantour National Park, a protected area in which MTB is forbidden. Instead take the path on the right which continues on the level towards the Cheirouche ridge, a bit of effort for the last 15 metres brings you to a fabulous ridge-top ride at 2300 metres altitude. Follow the ridge as far as the first hollow where a path descends down the left-hand slope (with a sign post for Haute Colette), after which comes the six kilometre descent through the larch trees.

(2 : 8.1 km - 1729 m) At Haute Colette, take the downhill path slightly to the left in front of the farm. After a hairpin bend it joins a track which leads to a holiday centre. Pass through carefully, following the waymarkers, cross a small bridge and turn right which leads to the village of Allos.



### POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Col d'Allos
- ✓ The Mercantour National Park
- ✓ View from la Baisse de Prenier
- Allos village

### SERVICES

- ✓ stop-over gite » (Col d'Allos): accommodation and catering
- ✓ Val d'Allos village: shops and services, tourism office, bike shops.



## 2. VAL D'ALLOS - COLMARS-LES-ALPES

V3+

Distance **12 KM**

D+/D-

**350 M / 560 M**

Duration **1H15**

VTPO/FFC **V3+ / BLUE**

Thanks to the geography of the area, the profile for the second section is also reasonable. The first climb on the road is short enough to be forgotten once the long ride along the mountainside path has started. This path leads through the high alpine meadows to the start of the beautiful descent to Colmars-les-Alpes.

### Section

(1443 m) Descend via the main street to reach the Tourist Information Centre. Take the first right to join the D908 which leads back to the Col d'Allos. After the hamlet of Les Auches, turn left to pass over the bridge and climb three kilometres on the road to reach Val d'Allos - Le Seignus (Seignus Bas then Seignus Haut) At the rear of the last car park on the left, you'll find a track which is still tarred for the first 100 metres. 300 metres further on the track forks, ignore the trail that leads off to the right and continue for a further 50 metres.

(1 : 4.1 km - 1673 m ) Take the path to the left, signed for Chaumie and Colmars, which continues on the level. After a technically challenging section followed by a short but steep climb, continue along the mountainside path slowly descending towards Chaumie.

(2 : 8.6 km - 1428 m) After descending the steps in the hamlet, continue downhill on the road towards Chaumie-Bas, taking a left turn 800 metres further on. Continue on the hillside path, which is now closer to the Verdon river, as far as Pont-Haut, 700 metres upstream of Colmars. Cross the river then turn right to enter the fortified village on the D908.



### POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ Bike Park of Val d'Allos – Le Seignus (bike washing station)
- ✓ Alpine field above the Verdon
- ✓ Colmars-les-Alpes : medieval village

### SERVICES

- ✓ Val d'Allos: shops and services, bike shops.
- ✓ Colmars-les-Alpes: shops and services, tourism office, bike shops.



### 3. COLMARS - LACS DE LIGNIN

V4-

Distance **21 KM**  
Duration **3H30**

D+/D- **1400 M / 400 M**  
VTOPO/FFC **V4- / BLACK**

*This is a real mountainous section which leads from the Verdon valley to the high altitude Lignin lakes, and the highest point on the ride - La Baisse du Déroit at 2472 m! The warm-up along the road to the Col des Champs rapidly gives way to a mountainside path which then descends into the heart of a massif dotted with high peaks. The climb which follows leads through alpine pastures and the spectacular plateau of the Lignin lakes. This section is hard but the scenery is exceptional.*

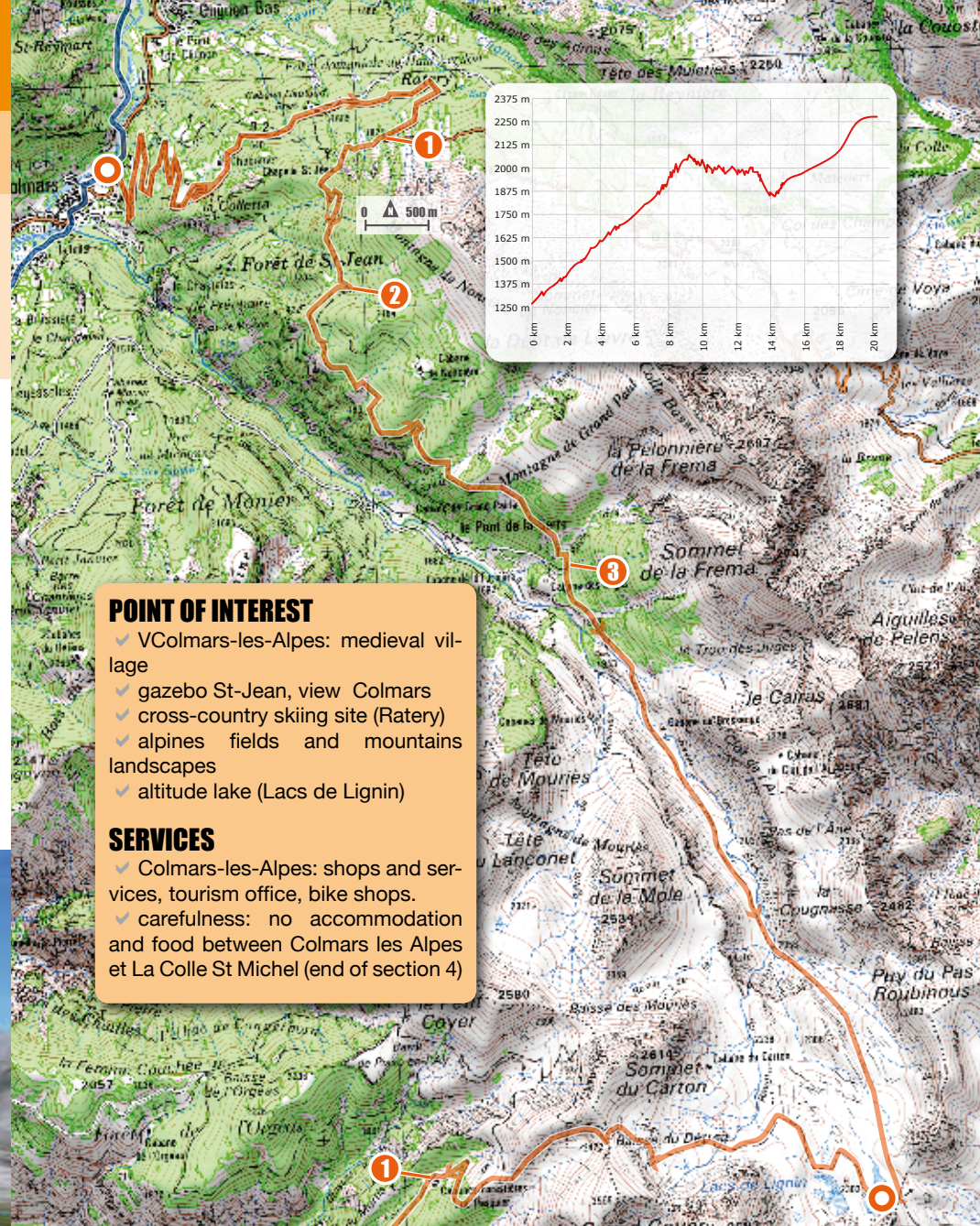
## Section

(1269 m) Take the minor road for the Col des Champs, climbing for 7 kilometres through a superb forest, as far as the left-hand hairpin bend, the route passes alongside the Rattery MTB base and cross-country skiing area for 1500 metres.

(1 : 7.1 km - 1825 m ) Leave the tarred road to take the path opposite, signed "Cabane des Juges / Cabane Noncière". Follow this path uphill (steep section, around 12% at the hairpins) as far as the fork 2 kilometres further on.

(2 : 9.3 km - 2027 m) Take the right-hand path in the direction of the Cabane des Juges. The path now stays on the level and opens out giving panoramic views, followed by a pleasant descent above the Pont de la Serre.

(3 : 14 km - 1844 m) Arriving at the track, turn left onto the uphill track which becomes a path and leads all the way to the Lignin lakes. When the Cabane de Bressenge comes into view up above, take the path which runs alongside the mountain



## POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ VColmars-les-Alpes: medieval village
- ✓ gazebo St-Jean, view Colmars
- ✓ cross-country skiing site (Rattery)
- ✓ alpine fields and mountains landscapes
- ✓ altitude lake (Lacs de Lignin)

## SERVICES

- ✓ Colmars-les-Alpes: shops and services, tourism office, bike shops.
- ✓ carefulness: no accommodation and food between Colmars les Alpes et La Colle St Michel (end of section 4)

stream (waymarked). The climb up the Bressenge valley is in an idyllic setting and is punctuated by steep climbs followed by welcome flat sections. At the rear of the plateau an ancient glacial crag and tail formation calls for a 20 minute push, before a final climb brings you to the lakes, situated at 2275 metres within a lunar mountain cirque



# 3B. COLMARS - THORAME HAUTE

V3-

Distance **14 KM**  
Duration **2H45**

D+/D- **280 M / 450 M**  
VTOPO/FFC **V3- / BLUE**

This variant allows the rider to stay in the valley and avoid the technically challenging sections of the Lignin lakes and La Baisse de Détroit whilst the snow persists or if the rider doesn't feel they have the physical capabilities or technical skills required for a climb to over 2400 m. Thanks to the fact that it closely follows the Verdon river, this section is also interesting in its own right. For those who feel inclined to do so, it is possible to cycle up the road to the Colle Saint Michel (8 km) in order to enjoy the beautiful descent back to the Verdon river.

## Section

(1269 m) Take the minor road directly below the junction for the Col des Champs, ride alongside the old walled village of Colmars, then, in front of the "La France" restaurant, follow the road and take the left turn in the direction of the car park 50 metres further on. Cross the bridge over the Lance and turn right. The minor road joins with another heading in the direction of the Pré Joly campsite. Follow the road for several hundred metres and then take a left, climbing up a rocky track in the direction of Pont de la Serre. Cross a clearing, leave the track, taking a trail heading downhill to the right. The itinerary then joins a track and heads as far as the bridge in front of Beauvezer.

(1 : 6 km - 1152 m ) Continue ahead, staying on the left bank in the direction of Villars Heyssier. Leave this minor road heading downstream to finally arrive at the pretty Ondres bridge.

(2 : 10.2 km - 1098 m) Cross the Verdon river, turn left and follow the road into Thorame-Haute village centre. Turn to the left, riding downhill on the D52 to join the TransVerdon itinerary a kilometre further on.



**Balisage :** cet itinéraire est balisé en liaison. Il suit le balisage des circuits VTT n°12 et 13.



### POINT OF INTEREST

- ✓ VColmars-les-Alpes: medieval village
- ✓ Beauvezer: Maison des Produits de Pays

### SERVICES

- ✓ Colmars-les-Alpes: shops and services, tourism office, bike shops.
- ✓ Beauvezer: accommodation, catering
- ✓ Thorame-Haute: accommodation, bakery, little shop



# 4. LAC DE LIGNIN - LA COLLE-ST-M.

V4

Distance **20 KM**  
Duration **2H30**

D+/D- **400 M / 1250 M**  
VTOPO/FFC **V4 / ROUGE**

The second part of the mountainous section of the TransVerdon itinerary. Everything about this section of the route is extraordinary and the descent from La Baisse de Déroit doesn't disappoint! Varied terrain, landscape and rhythm. After breaching the col it is a long descent, entirely on a path, to reach the picturesque hamlet of Peyresq.

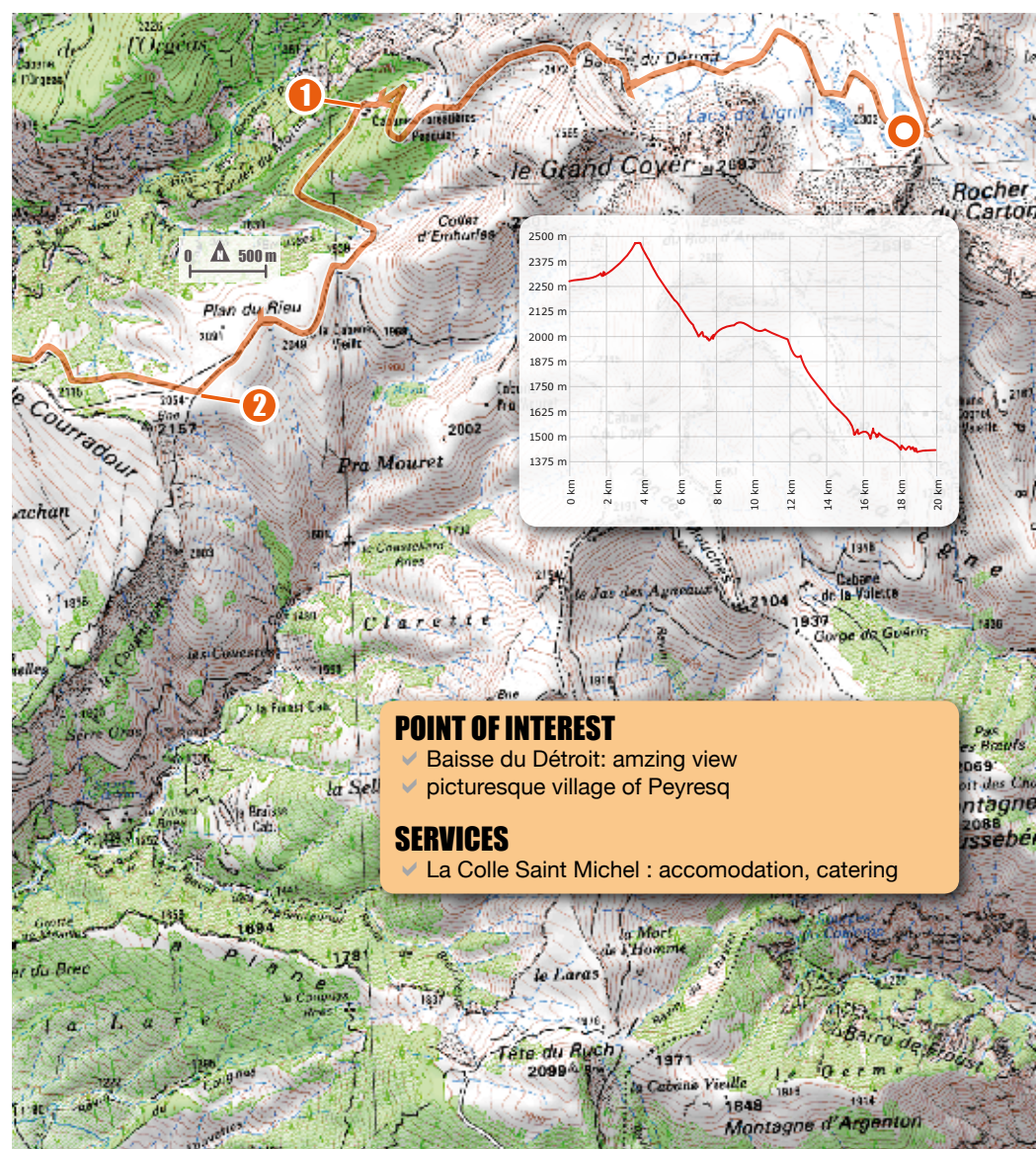
## Section

(2276 m) Firstly the path heads north for 300 metres then directly west to climb up to La Baisse de Déroit, clearly visible in the distance, perched at 2472 metres altitude. The start of the path is not easy to spot amongst the sheep trails, look out for the cairns to be certain, and after 200 metres everything becomes much clearer. From La Baisse de Déroit descend on the path, which includes a number of stony sections during the first kilometre. After a section with ravines, the path arrives at a small, grassy plateau and an intersection of paths with a signpost. Take the left-hand descent, a rolling path that quickly leads to some mountain huts (Cabanes du Pasquier) where there is water.

(1 : 6.3 km - 2092 m ) Turn left at the huts in the direction of Cabane Vieille, the footpath continues its descent. Once on the floor of the ravine (Ravin du Serre), five to ten minutes of hard work is required to climb the opposite slope, followed by a deceptively flat-looking section which climbs to Cabane Vieille. From there head directly west, climbing gently and following the waymarkers indicating the direction of Peyresq.

(2 : 9.7 km - 2054 m) The wide col, called the Plan du Rieu, makes it difficult to spot the paths. Stay high up, 10 to 20 metres below the ridge and bear left, descending slightly in order to spot the Pyramide du Courradour. At the foot of the mountain is a signpost and a clear path that leads off on the right in the direction of Peyresq. This path through the woods is great fun, but watch out for hikers who also use the path. Arrive at the col du Pré de Thorame.

(3 : 13.2 km - 1779 m) Turn left to descend to Peyresq, alternating between path and trail. The itinerary comes out on the road, close to the village. Head right to reach La Colle Saint Michel.





# 5. LA COLLE-ST-M. - THORAME-BASSE

V4

Distance **22 KM**  
Duration **2H30**

D+/D- **630 M / 910 M**  
VTOPO/FFC **V4 / ROUGE**

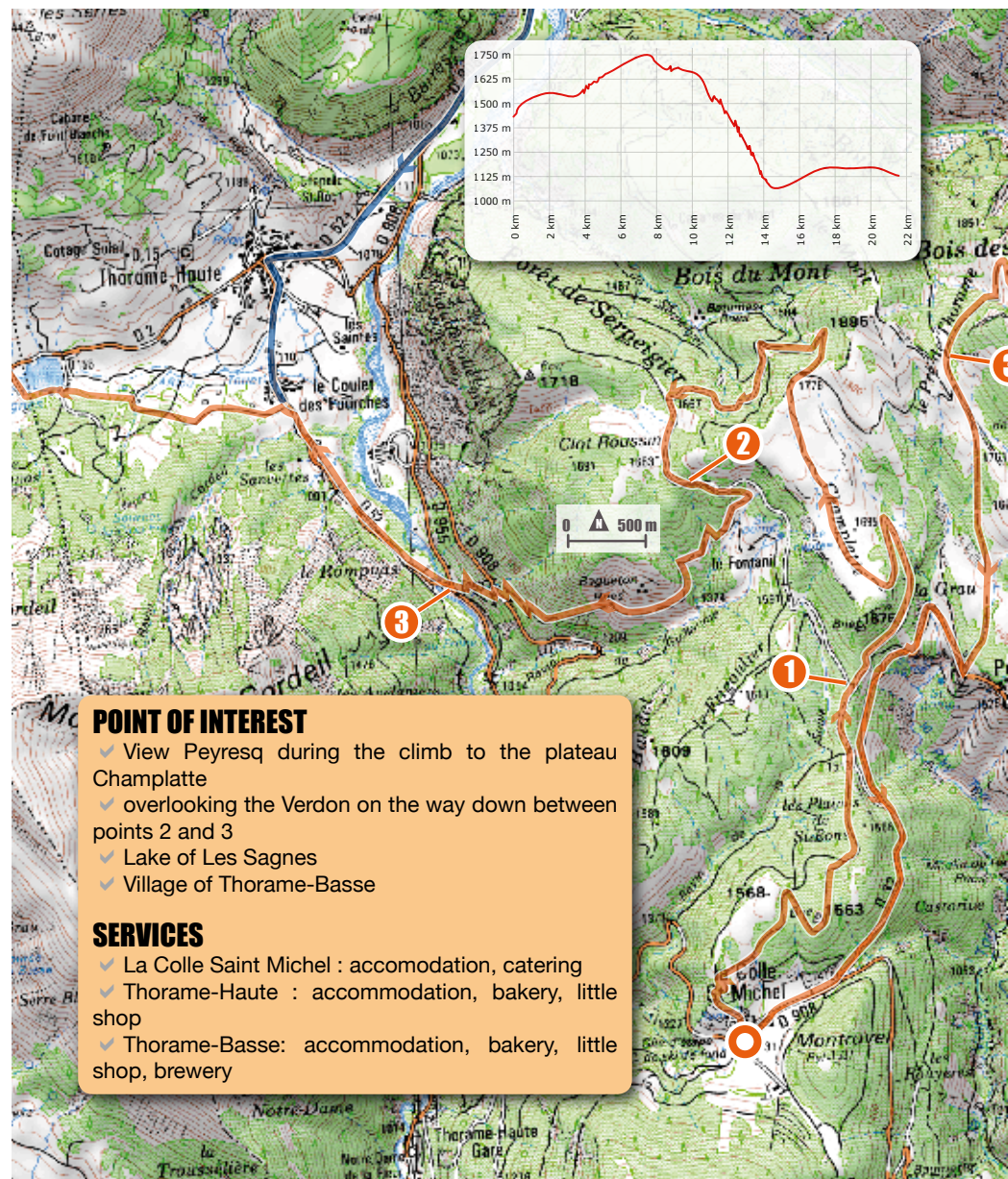
Here is another section befitting of the itinerary. From a physical point of view it offers the climb above La Colle Saint Michel crossing the Champlatte plateau and from a technical perspective you have the beautiful descent towards the Verdon river.

## Section

(1431 m) Climb up above the gîte as far as the cemetery where the steep footpath starts. Follow the path to the edge of the ridge. 1.5 kilometres further on, ignore a track on the left and head right to skirt around a small summit, following a track that is a cross country skiing route in winter. Climb slightly and head right after a straight descent to reach a clear track. Turn left and continue as far as a 3-way intersection.

(1 : 3.8 km - 1556 m) Pass through the barrier on the right, riding along a hillside trail with a great view over Peyresq. The track climbs, takes a left hairpin bend and becomes a more discrete path that climbs up to the Champlatte ridge. Descend down the other side on a path that turns into a wide track and then climb a little to reach Clot Roussin.

(2 : 10.4 km - 1642 m) Leave the track, taking a path on the right heading towards the Verdon valley. The path becomes technically



challenging and follows a drier slope (the adret) which is reminiscent of the prealps in both vegetation and terrain, described locally as being "en gravette". The path crosses the D908, the road coming from La Colle Saint Michel, and then two hairpins lower arrives at a fork in the D905.

(3 : 14.4 km - 1053 m) Follow the D52 road opposite which crosses over the Verdon river at Pont Clot and brings you to the foot of Thorame-Haute, two kilometres further on. It is here, at Le Coulet des Fourches, that the high-altitude route reconnects with the valley alternative. Turn left on to a slight climb to reach a small valley, then turn right to arrive at Les Sagnes Lake. Take the road again for one kilometre, turn right to cross Le Moustier and drop down towards Thorame-Basse.



# 6. THORAME - MONTAGNE DE MAUREL

V1

Distance **17 KM** D+/D- **870 M / 240 M**  
Duration **1H30** VTOPO/FFC **V1 / BLEU**

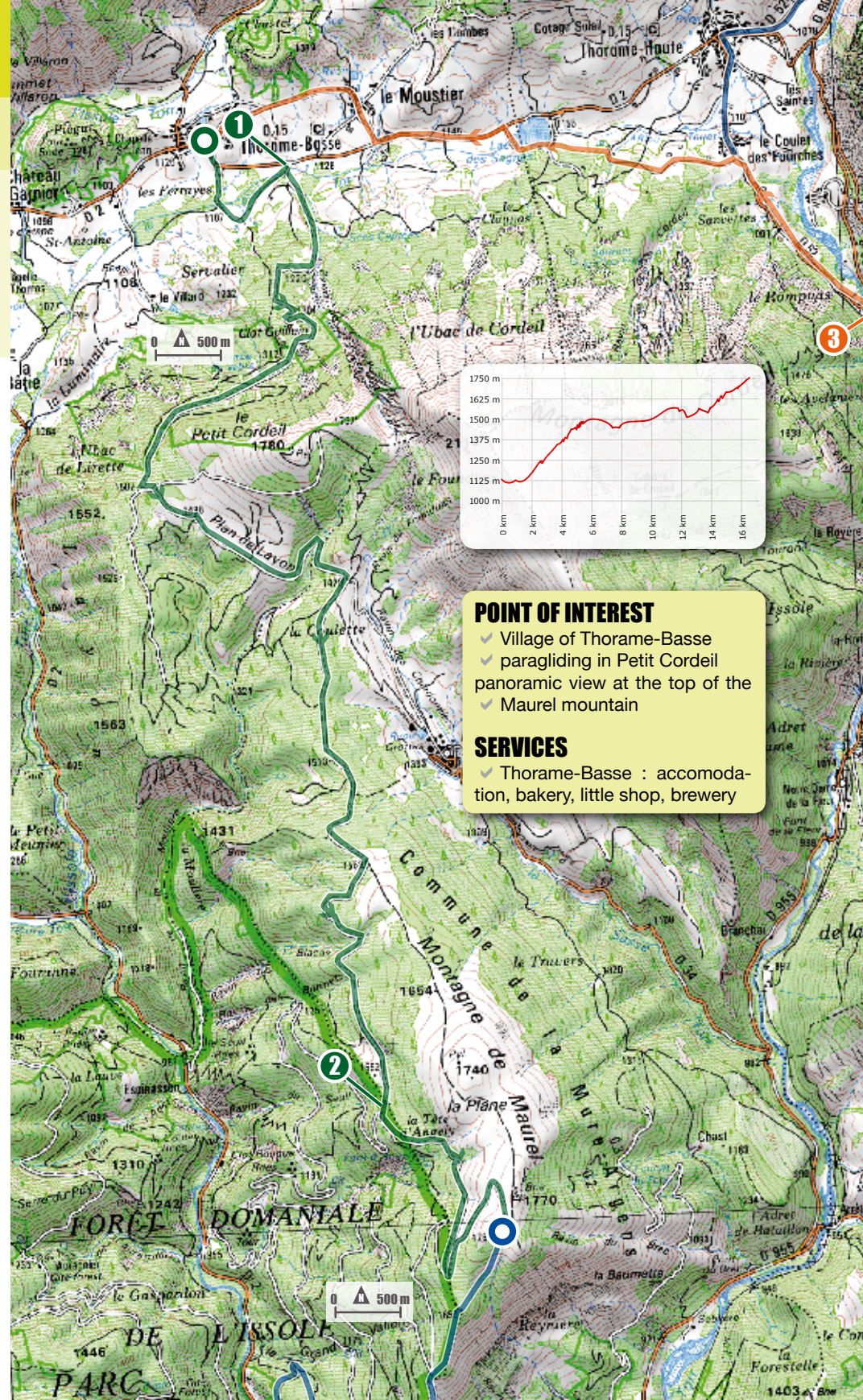
Climbing up to the Montagne de Maurel (Maurel mountain) you'll enter the Verdon régional natural park. Ride slowly and you'll perhaps have the chance to see globe flowers, martagon lilies in the spring, or a southern swallowtail, a rare butterfly which adores lavender. If you are discrete you might surprise some chamois or some grouse. This mountain is also a pastoral zone and in season you may meet some flocks of sheep. A long climb awaits, so take the time to admire and appreciate your surroundings!

## Section

(1150 m) From the brasserie, continue downhill on the road for 100 metres and take the trail that descends on the right just at the edge of the village. After the bridge turn left and follow the left-hand side of the hillock (don't climb) to reach a track in the pastures.

(1 : 1.5 km - 1123 m) At the dirt road turn right. After a five kilometre climb you arrive at a first plateau. Turn left then right. A short descent brings you to another intersection. At the EDF (French electricity company) post pass through the barrier on the right and climb following the most visible trail. The itinerary crosses a lambing zone - pay attention to any patou (white dogs protecting the flock) and be sure to close any gates. Before the summit ridge, follow the track on the right, initially on the flat and then slightly downhill.

(2 : 13.7 km - 1542 m) At the barrier (reminiscent of a standing stone or menhir), take the left-hand track uphill. At the following intersection, on a zigzag, continue on the left-hand track to the summit of Maurel.





# 7. MONTAGNE DE MAUREL - ST-ANDRÉ

V3

Distance **12 KM**  
Duration **1H00**

D+/D- **110 M / 980 M**  
VTOPO/FFC **V3 / ROUGE**

*For mountain bikers beautiful summits are often synonymous with beautiful descents. That which awaits you between Maurel mountain and Saint-André-les-Alpes will fulfil all your expectations - fast and fun.*

## Section

(1760 m) Leave the highest point above on the left (viewpoint) and climb slightly towards the southern summit on the right. Follow the ridge through the meadow before the pylon (waymarker visible on the descent) then descend more steeply to the left on a clearer path. Join a track on the left, take a hairpin bend then rejoin the path from the ridge on the left (Warning: slow down to ensure you don't miss this intersection). Next comes a fast downhill section through the woods. After a series of tight bends followed by a straight section, take two left turns. At the trail, head right in the direction of La Mure via Les Conches. Cross a track and continue on the trail opposite. After 50 metres head downhill on the right in the direction of Issole Lambruisse.

(1 : 4.4 km - 1131 m ) After a very short climb, take the right-hand path on a slightly ascending false flat. After a beautiful crossing followed by a path descent, join the road in the bottom of the valley and follow it to the left towards Saint-André-les-Alpes. Cross over Les Sept Arcades bridge and the railway line and continue straight ahead then go over the roundabout to reach the town centre.

