

Montélimar > Mont Ventoux

Saturday July 25th • Stage 20 • 167 km

Region

● Rhône-Alpes

The second region in France in terms of its size, economic importance and overall population, Rhone-Alps is also 6th in Europe. This vast area covering 43,698 km² for more than six million inhabitants revolves around four main urban centres: Lyon, Grenoble, Saint-Étienne and even Geneva, which, due to its proximity, significantly influences trade and economy in the region.

Through its size and the specificity of its eight counties, the region, accommodating the Rhone Valley with the Massif Central on one side and the Alpine range on the other, offers extreme diversity: mountainous to the east (counties of Savoie, Haute-Savoie & Isère), urban and industrial to the North and in the centre, rural and Provençal in the south (counties of Ardèche & Drôme).

Across this vast extent, despite being the home ground of many industries, the region has not forgotten its farming roots, its fruit industry and its great wines.

In terms of tourism, choice in the Rhone-Alps is also extremely varied. The region not only boasts the most famous ski resorts of France, but also offers many opportunities for “green” tourism, whether in the counties of Ain, Ardèche or Drôme.

Gastronomy, just like in its capital, Lyon, holds a place of honour throughout the region.

Website: <http://www.rhonealpes.fr/>

Counties

● Drôme

Prefecture: Valence

Sub-prefectures: Die, Nyons

Number of inhabitants: 467,000

Website: <http://www.ladrome.fr/>

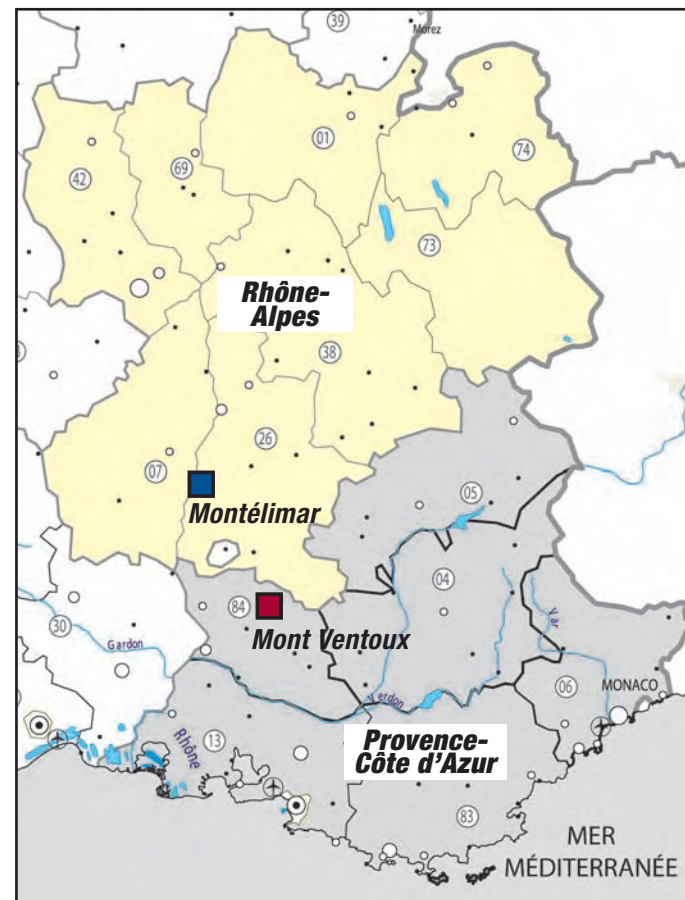
● Vaucluse

Prefecture: Avignon

Sub-prefectures: Apt, Carpentras

Number of inhabitants: 538,000

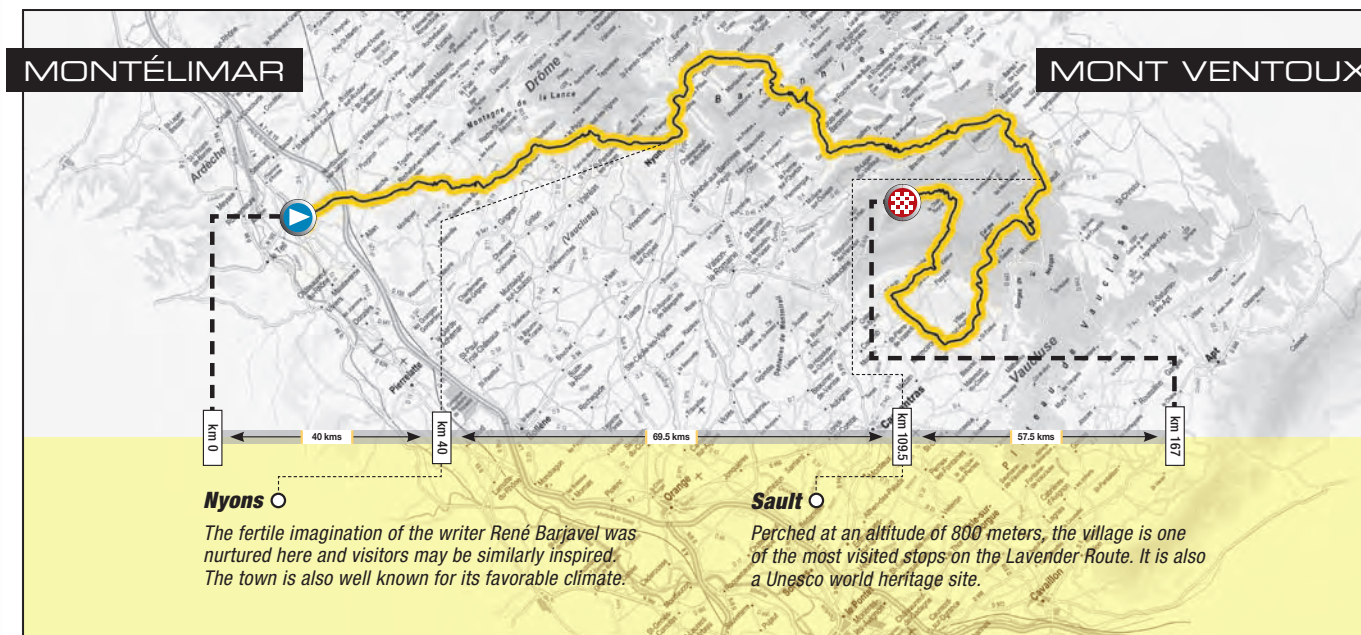
Website: <http://www.vaucluse.fr/>



2009 Stages

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

- Introduction
- **Departure town**
- Along the way
- Arrival town



Nyons

The fertile imagination of the writer René Barjavel was nurtured here and visitors may be similarly inspired. The town is also well known for its favorable climate.

Sault

Perched at an altitude of 800 meters, the village is one of the most visited stops on the Lavender Route. It is also a Unesco world heritage site.

The Tour pays a visit to...



Lionel
Duroy

Lionel Duroy, former journalist with the French daily newspaper Libération and the Evénement du jeudi magazine, is a writer. A renowned biographer, several of his novels (Trois couples en quête d'orages, Priez pour nous) have been turned into films. He owns a house in Bedoin.

"I discovered the region quite by chance. Through a friend, we rented a gîte in the Baux de Bedoin, 500 meters from where our house is now. Its architecture reminded me of the North African villas of my childhood. It became a mythical place for me. I spend every holiday and the whole summer there, so between four and five months a year. I'm also extremely fond of cycling. To such an extent that life without it would plunge me into the depths of despair. I've six bikes in total, two of which were made especially for me, including an Alex Singer. I've been cycling seriously since the age of around 17 or 18. The strongest

scenes in my books have come to me in the saddle. I carry a little tape recorder in my sock and record a dialogue or the two or three phrases that start a scene. When I'm in Paris, I go out on a 60-km ride every two days. In Bedoin I tend to do 100-km. I have my favorite circuits. I often go to Suzette, a little village at the top of a peak. I also go to Sault before climbing the Eastern side of Mont Ventoux, as far as the chalet Reynard. The North side of Mont Ventoux from Malaucène is also very enjoyable, through the Toulourenc valley. My passion for cycling is quite separate from the sport of cycling. But since seeing the Grande Boucle – Tour de France – pass within 500 m of the house, I've always had great respect for the cyclists involved. I saw Marco Pantani climb Mont Ventoux in his Pink Jersey. I was moved by him and his handsome features."

2009
Stages

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

▶ MONTÉLIMAR

Montélimar today

The Tour Signal, symbol of the restauration of Saint-Martin

Emblem of the city center's re-generation, the Tour Signal (Signal Tower) has been lighting up the evenings in Montélimar since the end of 2008. The lights were switched on to launch the Christmas festivities which were held in the entirely restored Saint Martin district. At nightfall, the Tour Signal's white neon lights spring to life, transforming it into a city "lighthouse".

From the sixty or so proposals received, Montélimar chose the project submitted by John Armleder, famous for his works in many cities throughout the world. The Swiss artist suggested erecting a cylindrical luminous tower, twelve meters high, in keeping the characteristics of the site. Designed using robust materials, the Signal tower required the technical input of companies specializing in metal construction lighting design. It has a steel structure, the outside being covered in stainless steel. The building contains no fewer than 49 layers of neon. The Tower symbolizes the restoration of the Saint-Martin district, a former prison and later barracks, transformed into an attractive living and cultural environment that is set to become the center of community life



The new St Martin district - Photo : Ville de Montélimar

- **Population:** 33,800 inhabitants, natives known as Montiliens (m), Montiliennes (f)
- **Specialities:** Inougat, olive oil, lavender, garlic
- **Economy:** cereals, vines, fruits, nougat, public works
- **Personalities:** Emile Loubet, President of the French Republic from 1899 to 1906, Michel Petrucciani, jazz musician, Marianne James, singer
- **Festivals:** Terra Potiers (potters' market), Colors of Lavender (July), voices and guitars of the world (July)
- **Labels:** "ville fleurie" or floral town (three flowers). "Ville sucrée" or "town of sweets"
- **Motto or slogan:** "Portes de Provence" or Gateway to Provence
- **Website:** www.montelimar.fr

▶ MONTÉLIMAR

Montélimar and cycling

The Tour's only finish in Montélimar, in 2006, proved decisive in the overall final placings. A group of four riders who had got away from the pack arrived 29'50" ahead of the rest of the field. Amongst them, Jens Voigt won the stage, while Oscar Pereiro won the Yellow Jersey. He later lost it again in the final against-the-clock, but won it back following the disqualification of Floyd Landis.

Montélimar was also a stage of the 2005 Paris-Nice race won by Fabian Cancellara. The Critérium du Dauphiné-Libéré cycle race has also visited the city on four occasions.



Jens Voigt, victorious in Montélimar in 2006 - Photo : A.S.O.

2009 Stages

- 1 2 3
- 4 5 6
- 7 8 9
- 10 11 12
- 13 14 15
- 16 17 18
- 19 20 21

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

- **1st century:** The Roman city developed at the foot of two ancient oppida (Gaul settlements). The Romans built the Agrippa Way.
- **11th century:** Having changed hands many times, the city fell under the control of the Adhémar family, who named the city "Monteil-Adhémar".
- **1328:** The name Montélimar first appeared.
- **1365:** Part of the city under papal authority. The pope renovated the palace built by the Adhémar family at the site of the castle.
- **1447:** The future Louis XI seized the city.
- **1549:** Diane de Poitiers, the favorite of Henry II, settled in Montélimar and had a beautiful residence built – it can still be seen today.
- **1562:** The city was conquered by the Baron des Adrets, who massacred the garrison in revenge for the protestant massacres in Orange.
- **1598:** The Edict of Nantes restored calm and prosperity to the city, which became a center of Protestantism.
- **1685:** The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes emptied Montélimar of half of its population. It was also at this time that nougat production began.
- **1899:** Emile Loubet, from Montélimar, became President of the French Republic.
- **1941:** Marx Dormoy, former Front Populaire Minister of the Interior, was assassinated in Montélimar.

2009
Stages

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

▶ MONTÉLIMAR

History: timeless nougat

Nougat is to Montélimar what mint humbugs are to Cambrai and why turn your nose up when pride is taken in such a delicious and widely-appreciated speciality? From the Latin “nux gatum”, meaning nut cake, the word first appeared in 1694, when Olivier de Serre planted almond trees in the Montélimar region. The recipe was devised in the 17th century: a mixture of sugar, honey, almonds, vanilla and egg whites, giving the delicacy its compact and generous texture.

Offered as a gift at every visit by a prince, nougat’s reputation soon spread across the country. With the construction of the Nationale 7 highway and the arrival of paid holidays in 1936, Montélimar became a gourmet destination for travelers. Inextricably linked with Montélimar, and with annual production now in excess of 3,000 tonnes, nougat is exported throughout Europe. Several traditional factories dating back to the 19th century are still to be found in the Allées Provençales.

Stoupany nougat is one of the most well-known as well as the oldest: production began at the Rucher de Provence site, located in the allées, as far back as 1787. A stone’s throw away, the



View of the city center : K. Muller

Chaudron d’Or organizes tastings at its factory with its copper cauldrons. There are also museums dedicated to nougat, including the Monde du Nougat (World of Nougat), the Arnaud Soubeyran nougat museum – the family has been making nougat since 1837 – and the Musée international des Sucreries du Palais des bonbons et du nougat. This international sweets and nougat museum is located in the “Au fil du temps” village and on display there is the world’s biggest nougat: it is 96 cm high and 1.12 m long and weighs in at 1,300 kg, including 400 kg of almonds and 160 kg of honey. More than 2,000 eggs were required to produce it.

CHATEAU DES ADHEMAR

It was built in the 11th century by the Count of Toulouse, Duke of Narbonne. In the 12th century it fell into the hands of the Adhémar family. Nothing remains of the original château. In the second half of the 12th century, the Adhémar, at the height of their power, had a palace built and it still looks over the city today. The constructions surrounding the palace were added subsequently. The seigniorial dwelling was listed as a historic monument in 1889. The Narbonne tower was built in the 14th century. This keep is the only part that remains of a château belonging to the counts of Valentinois which was demolished in 1580.

THE TOUR SIGNAL

(see previous)

THE MUSEE DE LA MINIATURE

Opened in 1995, this museum is dedicated to miniatures in all their forms: paintings, sculpture, stamps, books, dolls, etc.

sightseeing ...

2009
Stages



- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

Along the way...

DRÔME
(26)

With the mountains of Vercors and Dévoluy, the Provençal South and the dynamic hustle and bustle of the plains in Valence, Romans or Montélimar, the Drôme department is the very epitome of the entire Rhône-Alpes region. While its industrial vocation (food-processing, clothing, aeronautics) remains strong and has adapted to modern realities, the department has also maintained its high quality agricultural heritage, together with its wines (Hermitage, Clairette de Die), Nyons oil and truffles. There are many reasons for tourists to visit the area. The department is at the gateway to the sunny south and there numerous remarkable sites: the château de Grignan, the Palais du facteur Cheval – a folly built by a local postman – and the village of Mirmande. But it is possibly nature itself that is the flagship of the department, especially the Vercors mountains.

ROUSSET-LES-VIGNES - km 31
Pop. 260

This magnificent village dominates the Rhône valley and offers a superb view of Mont Ventoux. An ancient Clunisian priory, the village is made up of medieval houses and a maze of little streets leading to the 12th century feudal castle, the priory and its beautiful Renaissance façade and the Romanesque church.

The vines that lend their name to the village were planted on the sandstone hill-sides by the monks who, in the 11th century, set up the priory around which the village then developed.

NYONS - km 40
Pop. 7,000

Dubbed “Little Nice” because of its very favorable climate – as well as its corso fleuri or procession of floral floats -, Nyons is a pretty little medieval town at the heart of southern Provençal Drôme. It lies at the foot of a rocky peak, close to Mont Ventoux. Surrounded by mountains (Essailon, Garde Grosse, Saint-Jaume and Vaux), which shelter it from the wind, the Nyonsais-Baronnies capital enjoys an exceptional number of hours of sunshine throughout the year. It began building its prosperity during the period the popes had their enclave in Avignon and throughout the region. The Forts district, with its twisting al-

leyways, conceals a multitude of treasures, such as the Randonne Tower, converted into a chapel in the 19th century. But the town as a whole has many attractions, starting with the spectacular Romanesque bridge over the river Eygues, built in 1409, and its monumental arch spanning 43 meters.

The church of Saint-Vincent, first built in the 10th century, but rebuilt in the 17th century following the Wars of Religion, houses some remarkable paintings from the ancient couvent des Récollets (convent), converted into a protestant temple.

An ideal starting point for treks on foot or horseback, Nyons and the surrounding areas offer a plethora of outdoor activities including paragliding and a water park.

But the town is also a bastion of the olive tree and olive oil and there is even a museum dedicated to them. Tourists can also visit the old oil mills and the soap factory from the 18th and 19th centuries at the foot of the Romanesque bridge.

The archaeological museum and the motorcycle museum are also well worth a detour. Famous people from Nyons include the writer René Barjavel who spent his childhood there.

BUIS-LES-BARONNIES - km 72.5
Pop. 2,300

Seat of a priory from the 12th century, in the 14th century Buis-les-Baronnies became

2009 Stages



Along the way...

one of the election towns of the Dauphins du Viennois, who made it prosperous. Buis then had more than 3,500 inhabitants making it an important center. Ravaged by the plague, it was repopulated by Louis XI with German settlers who built the market place and its typically Germanic arcades.

Shattered by the Wars of Religion along with the rest of the region, Buis lost its influence for good with the Revolution, when all its powers were transferred to Nyons. The town's new vocation emerged at the beginning of the 19th century with the planting of lime trees. Today, the town is known for its cultivation of medicinal plants and herbs, lime trees, sage and lavender.

Olives and apricots are also well-established in the Baronnies region and it is here that the "Coteaux des Baronnies" wine is produced.

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town



- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

Montélimar > Mont Ventoux

Saturday July 25th • Stage 20 • 167 km

Along the way...

VAUCLUSE (84)

Vaucluse comes from the Latin Vallis Clausa, which means “closed valley”. From the summit of Mont Ventoux (1,912 m) to the crests of the Luberon, the plateau of the pays de Sault to the gorges of the Nesque, between the rivers of the pays des Sorgues and the scrublands of the Vaucluse Mountains lies an exceptional and varied landscape. The department, garden of France and aromatic plant paradise, boasts almost 1,500 plant varieties. There are 545 listed monuments and cultural sites there and three are listed as UNESCO world heritage sites. Châteaux, churches and ancient theatres in Orange and Vaison-la-Romaine, together with perched villages (Gordes, Lourmarin) are some of the many places to visit. The smallest department in Provence, Vaucluse abounds in local produce: the black Ventoux muscat grape, Nyons olives, Cavaillon melons, Carpentras strawberries, Monts de Venasque cherries as well as truffles. Not forgetting, of course, its wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas, Vacqueyras, Cairanne, Rasteau and Beaumes-de-Venise, which have conquered the world. Staying with gastronomy, Avignon, famous for its festival and papal palace, can boast nine Michelin-starred chefs. Finally, four towns have in excess of 20,000 inhabitants: Avignon, Orange, Carpentras and Cavaillon.

SAULT - km 109.5 Pop. 1,200

Located at the edge of a vast wooded and lavender-covered plateau, Sault is a charming health resort perched at an altitude of 776 meters, lying in the heart of an outstanding natural landscape. The village, which dominates a mosaic of wheat and lavender fields, lies on the Lavender Route and a fair dedicated to the plant that has made the municipality famous is held there every year, on 15 August. The landscape is so beautiful in and around Sault that the site is protected by UNESCO as a world heritage site and has been labeled by the Ministry of the Environment.

Its natural beauty and proximity to Mont Ventoux make Sault an ideal starting point for cyclists, walkers, horse riders and cavers.

It is, of course, lavender that has had the biggest influence on local specialities, especially honey used in nougat and the macaroons made in the village.

BEDOIN - km 144 Pop. 2,700

A charming Provençal village that produces delicious fruits and the excellent Co-teaux du Ventoux wine, Bedoin boasts one of the biggest municipal forests in France.

With more than 1,200 plant varieties, it occupies an area of over 6,300 hectares, i.e. one third of the total forest area on Mont Ventoux.

In terms of geography and tourism, Bedoin is dominated by Mont Ventoux, which offers its majesty and contrasting landscapes to nature lovers in every imaginable form, as well as its cycle routes.

2009
Stages

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

10 11 12

13 14 15

16 17 18

19 20 21

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

🍷 MONT VENTOUX

Ventoux today

The Ventoux lamas

At the beginning of the 1980s, Pierre-André Scherrer, a farmer in Barroux, on the slopes of Mont Ventoux, was unable to maintain his land, due to lack of personnel. He came up with the apparently ridiculous idea of using lamas. In 1984, the Paris Natural History Museum supplied him with five lamas. Pierre-André Scherrer used them for their fleeces but mainly for clearing purposes. Over the course of four years, these Andean animals had fulfilled their mission perfectly and at the same time the herd had expanded through births and acquisitions. The success of the experiment, validated by scientists



Bedoin - Photo : D.Bottani, Conseil Général du Vaucluse

and bodies responsible for maintaining forests, encouraged national and European authorities to take a closer look at this economic and ecological solution to maintaining forests.

Pierre-André Scherrer's idea gained ground and lamas were "recruited" by the Berre oil refinery, and then by the Marines for clearing missions. A quarter of a century after the initiative was first launched, the lama is now an integral part of the Ventoux landscape. In 2000, Pierre-André Scherrer's wife took over the business, which boasted a herd of more than 50 lamas in 2006.

- **Specialities:** wine, truffles
- **Economy:** tourism, agriculture, forestry
- **Nickname:** the Giant of Provence
- **Personalities:** Pétrarque, Jean Giono, Eric Caritoux
- **Labels of approval:** listed as a "biosphere reserve" by UNESCO

MONT VENTOUX

Mont Ventoux and cycling

The first cycle ascent on the Giant of Provence took place in 1902 but the first timed climb was recorded six years later; when Jacques Gabriel reached the summit via Bédoin in a time of 2 hours and 29 minutes. This was a long way short of the record, achieved in 2004 by Iban Mayo in the Dauphiné Libéré race (55 minutes and 51 seconds). Mont Ventoux has been on the Tour de France route since 1951 and it will figure again this year for the fifteenth time. While the death of Tom Simpson in 1967 and the collapse of Eddy Merckx following his victory in 1970 gave the mountain notoriety around the globe, the early Tour de France races on its slopes are often forgotten.

In 1951, Mont Ventoux inspired fear and the expected battle never materialized, especially since Louison Bobet had already lost the Tour in the Pyrenees. The following year, it was Jean Robic who took advantage of Fausto Coppi's puncture to go it alone, leaving the rest behind.

In 1955, Bobet effectively won the Tour on Mont Ventoux when he left Charly Gaul behind him on his way to victory in Avignon. During the climb, Jean Malléjac, the other French favorite, fell victim to sunstroke and had to abandon the race.



Eddy Merckx on the slopes of Mont Ventoux in 1970 - Photo : Presse Sports

2009 Stages

1 2 3

4 5 6

7 8 9

10 11 12

13 14 15

16 17 18

19 20 21

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

- **Two million years ago:** Mont Ventoux completed its formation.
- **11th century:** The mountain takes its name from Ventour, which has nothing to do with wind but means relief in Celtic.
- **1336:** The poet Petrarch claimed to be the first person since antiquity to climb Mont Ventoux. It is said though that the philosopher Jean Buridan, famous for his ass paradox, climbed it before him.
- **15th century:** Construction of the Chapel of the Holy Cross, razed and then rebuilt in 1956.
- **16th century:** Appearance of the ice pits that were to make Bédoin its fortune.
- **1700:** Discovery of votive inscriptions to a Celtic god called Ventour.
- **1711:** First climb for scientific purposes by Father Laval.
- **1858:** Reforestation of Mont Ventoux, plundered for six centuries for its wood used for burning, charcoal, etc. Appearance of the truffle oak.
- **1882:** The Mont Ventoux weather observatory was built. It was closed in 1968.
- **1902:** First cycle climb.
- **1908:** First Ventoux "marathon".
- **1920:** Mont Serein ski resort opened.
- **1951:** First stage of the Tour de France on Mont Ventoux.
- **1960:** Television transmitter erected.
- **1967:** Death of Tom Simpson on the slopes of Mont Ventoux.

2009
Stages

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21

- Introduction
- Departure town
- Along the way
- Arrival town

🍷 MONT VENTOUX

The story: first to the summit

So let's hand over to the poet Petrarch, if not the first person to have conquered Mont Ventoux, the first to have written about it. He climbed the mountain with his brother on 26 April 1336. "We left home on the appointed day and arrived at Malaucène at night. This is a place at the northern foot of the mountain. We spent a day there and began our ascent this morning, each of us accompanied by a single servant. From the start we encountered a good deal of trouble, for the mountain is



The center of Flassan - Photo : D.Bottani, Conseil Général du Vaucluse

a steep and almost inaccessible pile of rocky material." However, what the Poet says is appropriate: "Ruthless striving overcomes everything. The day was long, the air was mild; this and vigorous minds, strong and supple bodies, and all the other conditions assisted us on our way. The only obstacle was the nature of the spot. We found an aged shepherd in the folds of the mountain who tried with many words to dissuade us from the ascent. He said he had been up to the highest summit in just such youthful fervor fifty years ago and had brought home nothing but regret and pains, and his body as well as his clothes torn

by rocks and thorny underbrush. Never before and never since had the people there heard of any man who dared a similar feat. While he was shouting these words at us, our desire increased just because of his warnings; for young people's minds do not give credence to advisers. When the old man saw that he was exerting himself in vain he went with us a little way forward through the rocks and pointed with his finger to a steep path. He gave us much good advice and repeated it again and again at our backs when we were already at quite a distance."

The landscapes of Mont Ventoux are enough in themselves, but all the surrounding villages have markets where visitors can sample local produce: fruit, wines, oil.

sightseeing...