France : Côte d'Azur Chris Craggs

A rock climbing guidebook to the Côte d'Azur area of France

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Cover: Mich Kemeter on the brilliant *Debiloff profundicum* (6c) - *page 232* - in the Verdon. Photo: Alex Buisse

This page: Climbers on *Super Sirène* (6b) - *page 94* - at Calangue En Vau. Photo: Mark Glaister

This book belongs to:

onaco Area

AWESOME WALLS Climbing centres

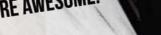
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Pilier de Soleil (6a) - page 288 on the crag called Pilier de Soleil.

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Gorges du Loup

Sainte-Jeannet

Massif de 'Ésterel

Châteauvert

Châteaudouble

Verdon Gorge

Côte d'Azur Introduction

Alan James on *Debilof Profundicum* (6c+) - *page* 232 - in the Verdon. This route is typical of many of the superb top-down pitches of the Gorge - a quick abseil to a position of breath-taking exposure, then climb back out on immaculate rock. Photo: Andy Fanshawe

Monaco

4

Introduction Côte d'Azur

For UK climbers our affair with the cliffs of the south of France started in the early 1980s when the guru of the day, Pete Livesey, published a small hard-backed book entitled French Rock-Climbs - and our eyes were opened to the possibilities. An Easter trip became a regular fixture on many climbers' calendars, giving a focus for winter training, and a way of getting a sustained quick-fix at the start of the season, which was always so weather dependant back in the UK.

The Rockfax series of books to France has introduced a new generation of climbers to a fantastic set of cliffs, a benign climate and a wonderful series of locations. The crags included both the well known venues and many lesser known spots too, through

the current five volumes; Côte d'Azur, Languedoc-Roussillon, Ariège, Haute Provence and the 2016 book Chamonix though there is more cold snow than hot rock in that one.

The crags included in the book are many and various; the gleaming white sheets of Sainte Victoire, the sunken valleys of Les Calanques, the gaping abyss of the Verdon Gorge, the rocky mountain of Saint-Jeannet, the hard sport of Châteauverte and Gorges du Loup and the jutting headland of La Turbie, all brilliant crags in their own different ways. Despite their excellence, many of these had rather slipped off climbers' radar but the first edition of this book published in 2010 brought them back to the forefront.

This 2017 book is a minor update to the 2010 edition. It has been updated to the more modern Rockfax format, had a Top 50 added and includes QR codes for parking spots. There are some updates and corrections plus a few new routes added on some of the crags.

France : Côte d'Azur offers a selection - and really it is only a small selection - of the climbing available along the Côte d'Azur and its rocky hinterland. If you have never been here, or haven't visited for the past 20 years, I hope this book will be a source of encouragement and inspire a renaissance of northern visitors to the warmest, driest and sunniest part of France; the well named Blue Coast.

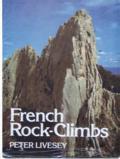
Chris Craggs, January 2017

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.



Andorra



French Rock-Climbs, the book that started it all in 1980

Marseille

Côte d'Azur Introduction

Access

All the crags covered in this book are well-publicised, have their own guidebooks and have been popular for a long time, indeed some have been climbed on for over 100 years. Unless indicated otherwise, you can assume there is a right of access, please follow the detailed instructions carefully and be aware of the possibility of changes. We would appreciate notification of any difficulties or problems that occur so we can amend future editions and keep climbers up-to-date via the Rockfax website.

Local Guidebooks

All the areas covered in this guidebook are described in other publications. Local guidebooks include more routes and other cliffs than those in this selective volume. If you enjoy an area in this book, consider tracking down the local guidebook for more detailed information.

In the introduction to each section the current local guidebook is featured so you know what it looks like. You can usually get hold of these from the tourist information office or, if there is a climbing shop in the area, then that is an obvious place to look. Local Decathlon stores often hold stock too. Most can be ordered online from **SOeScalade.com**.

It has never been the policy of Rockfax to replace local guidebooks, but rather to introduce climbers to new areas, typically climbers who may be unaware of the wealth of climbing available and who are unwilling to plan a trip away without solid information to go on. Rather than competing with local guidebooks, we hope that the increased number of visitors will lead to more sales of local guidebooks and give a boost to the local economy.



A Climbers' Code

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

Stick to the approach-paths - avoid short cuts, especially through private land.

Keep the noise down at the crag - crags are often in areas popular with walkers who are seeking out some peace and quiet.

Avoid leaving valuables in the car - car crime is not the problem it once was down here, but there is no need to tempt fate.

Take your rubbish home with you - better still, make space for rubbish left by less considerate souls. Always 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? Finger tape, food scraps, plastic water bottles, wrappers etc - if you carried it in then carry it back out!

Côte d'Azur The Rockfax App

This France : Côte d'Azur guidebook is also available on the Rockfax App which brings together all the Rockfax climbing information with UKC Logbooks and presents it in a user-friendly package for use on Apple iOS devices (Android version available in 2017).

The heart of the app is the Rockfax crag and route information which is downloaded by way of paid in-app purchases for individual crags, or bundles of crags. You can purchase each crag or area individually, or a



whole 'book'. The main data on the app is downloaded and stored on your device so you don't need any signal to be able to use it. The app uses location services on the device to display your location as a blue dot on both the system maps, and our climbing-specific maps. There is a free sample crag for each area and some of these are quite extensive, enabling you to get a really good impression of what the app is like without shelling out any monev.

The Rockfax App is a free download and incredibly useful in its own right without having to make any purchases. It contains a detailed crag map linked

to the UKClimbing crags database of over 20,000 crags and 4,000+ listings from the UKClimbing Directory of climbing walls, outdoor shops, climbing clubs, outdoor-





UKC Logbooks

Geo-located maps

specific accommodation and instructors and guides amongst others.

To find the app, search for 'Rockfax app' in Google or in the appropriate app store.

Version 2.0 (January 2017) now with UKC Logbooks

An incredibly popular method of logging your climbing is to use the UKClimbing.com logbooks system. This database lists more than 389,000 routes, over 20,700 crags worldwide and, so far, more than 31,500 users have recorded over 5 million ascents! To set up your own logbook all you need to do is register at UKClimbing.com and click on the logbook tab. Once set up you will be able to record every ascent you make, when you did it, what style you climbed it in and who you did it with. Each entry has a place for your own notes. You can also add your vote to the grade/star system linked to a database on the Rockfax site used by the guidebook writers.

The Rockfax App can be linked to your UKClimbing.com user account and logbook so that you can record your activity while at the crag and look at photos, comments and votes on any of the routes listed in this huge database. To do this you will need a 3G/4G data connection. You can also look at the UKC logbooks to see if anyone has climbed your chosen route recently to check on conditions.

Les Calanque:

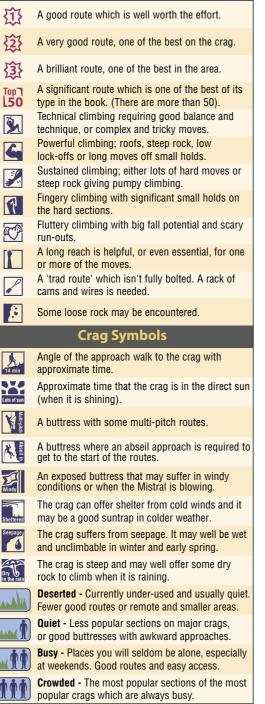
Area

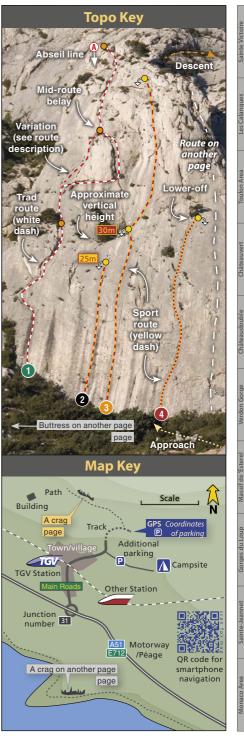
Verdon Gorge

de 'Esterel

Symbol, Map and Topo Key Côte d'Azur

Route Symbols





Côte d'Azur Acknowledgements

Before crediting those who have actually helped with this book, thanks must go to those climbers who created the routes we describe. These climbs only exist because of their hard work, thank you for your time, effort and vision.

Although there is only one name on the cover, as ever the book is a team effort. Sherri Davy has supported me from start to finish down this long road - her name should really be on the cover too. The usual suspects, Colin Binks and Dave Gregory have been happy to have their foreign holidays where I needed them to be - cheers guys. Colin in particular is always happy to pose in the most ridiculous of positions and he does a mean line in winching when needed. As ever, Alan James and Stephen (FB) Horne have been in the shadows, overseeing the project, offering support and encouraging whenever I floundered. Stephen in particular has been instrumental in creating the Rockfax App version.

Thanks to Jack Geldard, Mark Glaister, Bridget Glaister, Alex Buisse, Alan Leary, Fraser Harle, Dominic Proctor, Rob Brown, Neil Foster, Kevin Gibbs, Tudor Griffiths, Phil Murel and Roman Bayon for their photographic contributions. Thanks also to James Rodgers and friends for feedback.

A special thanks must go to Alan Carne 'our man in the Verdon', whose encyclopaedic knowledge of the area and ability to work to a tight deadline has been incredibly useful in describing the great routes at this magnificent venue. His input helped expand my original plans for minimal coverage of the big classics to a section of the book that should keep most climbers happy for years.

Mike and Elaine Owen, more ex-pat Brits who have lived on the Côte d'Azur for many years, popped up at the last minute and despite the fact I hadn't seen them for 21 years (!) proved to be a mine of information on the crags - and especially the hard routes - around the Gorges du Loup and Monaco areas. Their ability to work to a tight deadline was almost as impressive as the quality of their information - cheers guys.

Chris Craggs, January 2017

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

Alan Carne - Page 233 alanduverdon.com

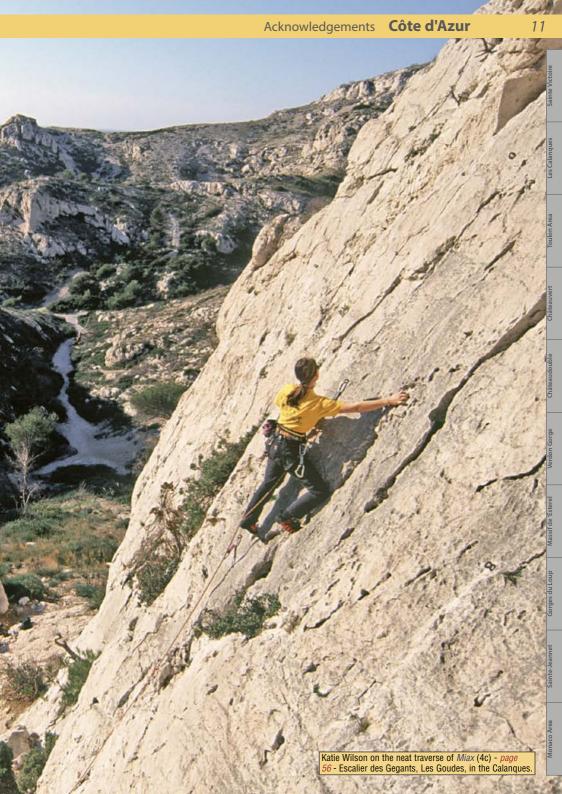
Alauzon - Inside front cover alauzon.com

Awesome Walls - Page 2 awesomewalls.co.uk

BMC Insurance - Inside back cover thebmc.co.uk

Climb Europe - Page 21 climb-europe.com

Crux - Outside back cover crux.uk.com





Côte d'Azur Logistics

Mark Glaister in the sea of rock of *Voie Heran* (6c) - *page 83* - on the Paroi des Toits at Sugiton. Photo: Bridget Glaister

Côte d'Azur Logistics Getting There and Getting Around



Driving

The French autoroutes are fast and usually uncrowded. The cost of the tolls is considerable, but the time saved avoiding all the small towns on the route nationals is priceless. If you've got a long drive, it is possible to break the journey by sleeping in one of the rest areas. If you're looking for a bed without spending too much then there are plenty of low-cost hotels by the roadside.

Flying

There are a number of airports in the South of France served by budget airlines. Nice, Toulon and Marseilles are the closest but Grenoble, Nîmes plus Genoa in Italy are also options. Expect to pay more at popular times like weekends, the summer months and school holidays. Air France and British Airways run regular services into the area.

Train 🖅 🥢

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

Getting around without a car

A little tricky, although a number of areas covered in this guide can be accessed by public transport, or by hitch-hiking. If you are visiting at the busier times of year, you may be able to hook up with other climbers with cars. The guide covers an extensive area, and to make the most of a trip, access to a car is recommended.

Verdon Gorge

Massif de 'Esterel

Gorges du Loup

Guiding Services

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

Alan Carne - alanduverdon.com

Satellite Navigation

The key parking spots for the crags in this book have a blue GPS co-ordinate box. These are in the standard DMS system which is accepted by most makes of SatNav.

To avoid confusion the best policy is to use your SatNav in conjunction with a map. 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 area map may be found useful.

Travel Insurance

At the time of writing, UK citizens still have reciprocal health care rights in France under the EHIC. This may change as the UK leaves the EU. It is strongly recommended that personal travel insurance is taken out to cover rescue cost, medical cover and repatriation to the UK in the event of an accident. theBMC.co.uk - See inside back cover

Verdon Gorge

de 'Esterel

Côte d'Azur Logistics Where to Stay and When to Go

Where to Stay

The Côte d'Azur is a popular holiday venue with the French and foreigners alike. A comprehensive listing of all the places to stay would require every page of this book.

Camping is very well provided for especially in the summer, though the area is very busy and hot then. Some campsites are listed in the introductions to the areas.

Apartments and gîtes are best found using the internet by searching for 'gites france' and you will find a number of listings sites that allow you to book online.

Tourist information offices are found in most towns, and will point you at a campsite or find you somewhere to stay, and also give ideas to keep you busy on a rest day.

When to Go

The area developed a reputation long ago for benign winter weather. Wealthy Brits discovered the micro-climate of the coastal region and were wintering down here long before the Spanish Costas became popular. While researching this book, the author spent two winters (December to Easter) living on the Côte d'Azur. On both visits there were less than a dozen wet days, which equated to 3 or 4 a month.

The Mistral can be a problem at times - a ferocious and bitter wind that blasts down the Rhône Valley for days at a time in the winter. The western cliffs are markedly more affected than the eastern ones. Pick a low-lying, sheltered, south-facing crag and you should be able to get something done.

Average Temp °C	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Marseilles (maximum)	10	12	15	18	22	26	29	28	25	20	15	11
Marseilles (minimum)	2	2	5	8	11	15	17	17	15	10	6	3
Nice (maximum)	13	13	15	17	20	24	27	27	25	21	16	14
Nice (minimum)	5	6	7	10	13	17	19	20	17	13	9	6
Verdon (maximum)	8	8	10	12	17	20	25	26	20	15	11	8
Verdon (minimum)	-1	-1	2	5	8	11	14	14	11	7	3	0

Climbing in the sun on winter's day in France is always delightful, we have climbed at Châteauvert in December wearing shorts and T-shirts, whilst the puddles by the road were frozen solid and the trees in the shade were covered in frost. Spring and autumn are the best times for the lower crags when you can choose between cool climbing in the shade or seek out the warmth of the sun. Summer is not the best time for many of the crags but seek out shady sectors, or the high crags like the Verdon, and you may not overheat too much. The number and variety of crags on the Côte d'Azur means there's always somewhere to climb, no matter what time of year you choose to visit.

The average rainfall for the areas covered by in book is relatively low. The high figures in September to December 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 unless you are the unlucky type.

Rainfall cm / month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Marseilles (average)	43	32	43	42	46	24	11	34	60	76	69	66
Nice (average)	80	75	70	60	50	35	15	30	55	100	100	75

Sainte Victoire

Sainte-Jeannet

Where to Stay and When to Go Côte d'Azur Logistics

IST.

Megan Beaumont on the top pitch, of the rather fine *Le marchand de sable* (6a+) - *page 72* - on Paroi Noire, at Morgiou, Les Calanques. Photo: Alan Leary

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Côte d'Azur Climbing



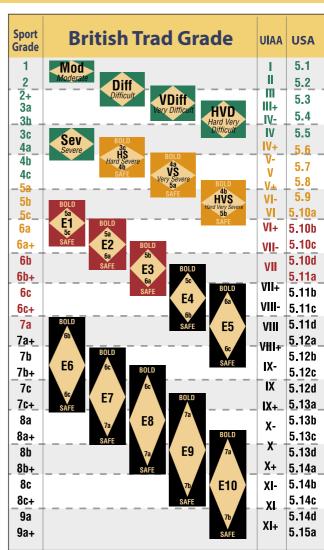
Grades

The routes in this book are graded using the usual sport grade system, or 'French Grade' as it is often known. Many of these venues were developed in the early days of sport climbing and they later acquired a reputation for stiff grading, certainly in the lower and mid-grades. It is worth remembering that this is where the system was invented so, if the truth be told, it is the other areas that are out of kilter.

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 be happy on orange grades on sport. Green Spots - Everything at grade 4c and under. These are good for beginners and those wanting an easy life. Orange Spots - 5a 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!



There are plenty of long multi-pitch routes covered in this guide in particular at crags like Saint-Jeannet and of course in the Verdon Gorge. Double ropes and a light rack of gear is a good idea on these routes, even the ones that are fully bolted. There is also a selection of two pitch routes (at Châteaudouble for example) where the pitch grades are markedly different. We have given these routes two entries so you can choose whether to do the whole thing or just part of the climb.

Sainte Victoire

Les Calanque:

Area

Chäteauver

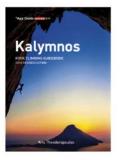
Châteaudouble

Verdon Gorge

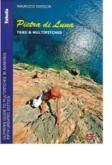


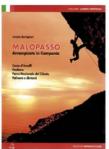
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www.climb-europe.com



France Series



Rockfax Guides - Print and App

Côte d'Azur Climbing Gear

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, you might want to consider getting a 70m. Single ropes are now available in thicknesses previously associated with half-ropes. The thinner your rope, the lighter it is to hike up to the crag, the easier it is to pull up to clip. 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.

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 be aware of longer pitches and ALWAYS tie a knot in the end of the rope to prevent dropping a climber when lowering them.

Sainte Victoire

Les Calanques

Foulon Area

Other Gear

For the sport routes in this book all that is needed is a single rope and a set of guickdraws - 15 or 16 quickdraws is plenty for all but the longest pitches. For the many multi-pitch undertakings it is well worth considering double ropes and a light rack to supplement the fixed gear. On these climbs there are usually bolt-belays in place and a selection of old and new gear on most of them, especially where the difficulties are concentrated. On the other hand the easier sections can be very run-out, placing some of your own gear can reduce the fear factor significantly.

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 some water, a long-sleeve shirt and a sun hat are good ideas. A good pair of approach shoes are also worth packing as a number of the walk-ins/walk-offs are guite long.

Belays and Extensions

Routes are bolted so that an ascent ends when you have clipped the belay, grabbing the chain is not considered to be the French way! 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 - Châteauvert for example is a crag with a lot of extensions. Most extensions are given extra grades in the route description, and sometimes have different names. Extensions are not classed as second pitches, and the grade of an extension assumes you have not rested on the belay - which would make it easier than the given grade.

2	4	Destination Planner	Routes	up to 4c	5a to 6a+	6b to 7a	7a+ and up	
Sai		Sainte Victoire	179	27	96	41	15	
Sainte Victoire		Les Goudes	107	5	35	38	29	
	Calanques	Sormiou	107	20	60	22	5	
Les Calanques	Salan	Morgiou	41	4	20	14	3	
lanques	Les (Sugiton	121	7	22	44	48	
_		Calanque d'en Vau	45	4	25	14	2	
Toulon Area	ā	Baou de Quatre Ouro	121	9	61	32	19	
rea	Toulon Area	Mount Faron Crags	184	39	90	47	8	
СҺ	onloi	Mount Coudon	161	20	71	50	20	
Châteauvert	-	Fenouillet	40	6	20	10	4	
		Châteauvert	178	13	59	51	55	
Châteaudouble		Châteaudouble	158	19	59	49	31	
ıdouble		Verdon Gorge	170	1	49	74	46	
	Verdon Gorge	Felines	24	4	14	6	-	
Verdon Gorge	on G	Le Galetas	20	9	10	1	-	
orge	Verd	Les Hauts Vernis	63	12	18	23	9	
Massi		Col d'Ayen	29	4	18	7	-	
Massif de 'Ésterel	sterel	Gorges du Blavet	33	2	12	16	3	
rel	Massif de l'Ésterel	Pic du Perthus	19	1	12	6	-	
Gorges du Loup	Mass	Pilier de Soleil	27	9	15	3	-	
du Loup		Gorges du Loup	135		6	16	113	
S		Saint-Jeannet	249	38	93	87	31	
Sainte-Jeannet	ea	La Trinité	32	10	15	6	1	
nnet	Monaco Area	La Turbie	270	36	121	65	48	
Mot	onac	Peillon	149		34	59	56	
Monaco Area	M	Gorbio	53	-	26	18	9	
		TOTALS	2715	299	1061	799	555	

ctoire Les Calanques

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le Verdor

IT de 'Esterel

annet Iviona

Approach	Sun	Shelt- ered	Dry in Rain	Seep- age	Multi- pitch	Summary	Page
15 - 25 min	Lots of sun	Windy			Multi-pitch	An impressive sheet of limestone. South-facing slabs of high quality rock. The gear is often spaced - boldness is the name of the game.	26
5 - 20 min	Allemoon	Sheltered			Multi-pitch	A good mixture of climbing on a variety of cliffs. Sunny and/or sheltered with something for most tastes.	52
2 - 5 min	Lots of sun	Sheltered				Small cliffs, close to the city, and very popular - especially at weekends. Sheltered from the worst of the Mistral. Crime is a problem hereabouts.	62
10 - 15 min	Lots of sun	Windy			Multi-pitch	Big classics on the Paroi Noire plus face routes on the Abri Cotier which are popular due to its accessibility and sheltered position.	70
🌆 30 - 40 min	Lots of sun	Sheltered	Dry in the rain		Multi-pitch	The Paroi des Toits is one of the most popular cliffs in the area. Steep with great climbing. There is some of easier-grade stuff in the area too.	76
35 - 45 min	Sun and shade	Sheltered			Kulti-pitch	The classic Calanques venue, with lots of great routes. Popular, especially in the summer and lots of the routes are polished now.	90
1 - 20 min	Lots of sun	Windy			Multi-pitch	The Toulon area's prime destination with loads of routes across the grades. Easy access is an added bonus to the cliff's attractions.	108
5 - 10 min	Afternoon	Windy				An array of cliffs that are tricky to locate. Plenty of routes to go at. Lierres is sheltered and Citerne is good for afternoon sun.	120
🚺 1 - 15 min	Lots of sun	Windy			Kulti-pitch	A good selection of cliffs along the edge of a mini-mountain. Superb positions, great rock and loads to go at across the grades.	144
5 - 8 min	Sun and shade	Sheltered				A minor venue of volcanic rock - good for something a little different. There are great beaches only 10 minutes away - another plus point!	162
🔽 2 - 5 min	Merring	Sheltered	Dry in the rain	Seepage		A major venue in a secluded and sheltered valley. Something for everyone from beginners' routes to huge stamina pitches.	168
5 - 20 min	Lots of sun	Sheltered			Multi-pitch	A rocky gorge with an interesting collection of cliffs that are home to some big pitches. The cliffs generally face south and are sheltered.	190
5 - 40 min	Lots of sun	Windy			Multi-pitch	The Main Event. One of Europe's prime climbing destinations which has a massive collection of stunning classics. High and cold in the Winter.	214
📂 15 min	Lots of sun	Windy				A small cliff above Moustiers - La Palud road. Single and two-pitch routes on generally slabby rock.	256
15 - 20 min	Alternoon	Sheltered				A couple of small, slabby and popular cliffs looking out over the upper end of the Lac de St Croix and the lower end of the Verdon Gorge.	260
18 - 25 min	Allemoon	Sheltered			Multi-pitch	A west-facing crag in a great setting. There are over 80 routes here, the easy ones are quite popular though the harder ones see little action.	262
8 min	Lots of sun	Windy				A pleasant little crag in a lovely sunny setting and with great outward views. Many of the climbs are polished - accessible and popular.	270
🔝 3 - 20 min	Merring	Sheltered			Multi-pitch	A granite gorge that is worth a visit to escape the crowds. A mixture of single and multi-pitch and the long routes get afternoon shade.	274
20 min	Sun and shade	Windy			Multi-pitch	A spectacular granite tower in a peaceful setting with a nice array of short multi-pitch climbs on interesting rock.	280
12 min	Afternoon	Sheltered				A sunny little crag composed of red granite (of variable quality). The sea-side setting is great. Pity it isn't a bit more extensive.	286
5 - 32 min	Sun and shade	Sheltered	Dry in the rain	Seepage	Multi-pitch	A towering canyon with some impressive climbing. Mostly steep and hard, or very steep and very hard. Afternoon shade and dry in the rain.	290
12 - 35 min	Alternoon	Sheltered			Multi-pitch	A conspicuous landmarks in the area, with routes ranging from 8m boulder problems to 200m walls, and most stations in between.	308
Roadside Roadside	Not much sun	Sheltered		Seepage		A disused, north-facing quarry with good climbing on rugged, fissured rock. Almost always in the shade and a decent airport day crag.	340
5 - 15 min	Lots of sun	Sheltered	Dry in the rain		Multi-pitch	An extensive crag that has been popular for years. Loads to do across the grades in an amazing setting. Plenty of polish and overcrowded.	344
20 - 30 min	Lots of sun	Sheltered	Dry in the rain	Seepage	Multi-pilot	A superb cluster of cliffs in the hills above Monaco. Routes are either on grey, vertical walls, or on impressively tilted overhangs.	368
15 - 18 min	Lots of sun	Sheltered				Fine, grey and sunny walls with plenty of long pitches and a variety of styles. Long drive up but at least the walk-in is nice and easy.	344

Les Calanques Sainte Victoire

Toulon Area

Châteauvert

Verdon Gorge Châteaudouble

Monaco Area

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30	Sainte Victoire			No star	£]}	<u>{</u> 2}	③	
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Rally Swappick eli	Se la regarde anti			e (selo		1		S.M.
on Sector Super M	imbing <i>La direct des aromates</i> (5c) - Medius at Sainte Victoire. Photo: Mar	page 41 - rk Glaister				The state		A CONTRACT
CHARLES MELLES	1 - The second of the	ALC: OF	Cela Chi Bank	1 00	Prestow.	and street	the state	Sec.

Sainte Victoire

Renowned for high-quality, sun-baked face-climbing, Sainte Victoire has long been a forcing ground for climbers in the Aix area. They pushed the standards of free-climbing up these near-blank faces to amazing levels; the occasional Brits who called in to sample the delights of the area were well impressed. When the time came to upgrade the fixed gear on the cliff, consultation with many of the first ascensionists led to the decision to rebolt the routes but to retain their original feel' This sparse bolting remains a notable feature of the area, arrive with your bold head on and consider starting at a lower level than back home. A small rack of wires might be worth considering. The cliffs are criss-crossed with a great selection of climbs, both single and multi-pitch, pretty much across the grade spectrum.

A State of the second second

Approach

Aix en Provence is on a direct TGV route from Paris, and Sainte Victoire is an easy 10 minute drive (or hitch) from here. If arriving by car, the Autoroute du Soleil (A7)/La Provençal (A8) allows access from the north and the west, whereas La Provençal (A8) also offers access from the east. From the coast the A51/52 motorways link up with the E8. These are all toll roads.

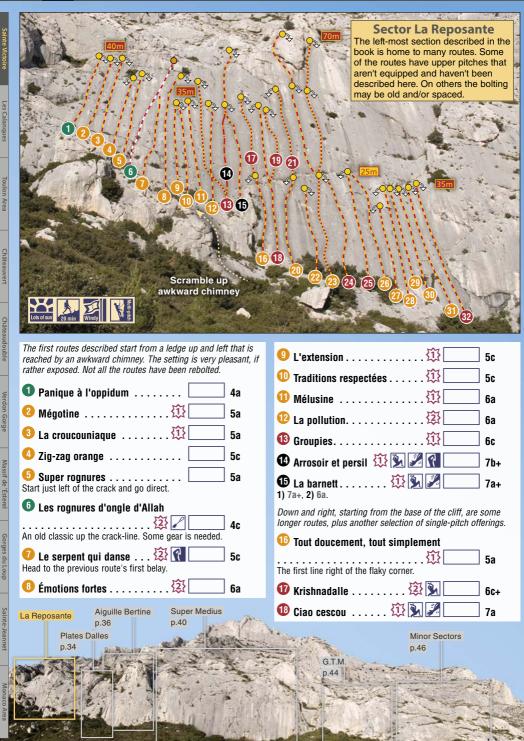
If arriving by air, the closest major airports are Marseilles and Toulon, with Nîmes and Nice a little further away. There are several parking spots below the crag - the best is Parking Deux Aiguilles which is just east of the visitor centre. From here there are several tracks that lead up to the base of the wall.

Conditions

The south facing rock at Sainte Victoire make the perfect mid-winter sun venue, with the rock tilted at just the right angle to maximise the rays. In contrast, summers here are unbearably hot. The crags dry rapidly, but there is no shelter to be had from rain or the Mistral.



Sainte Victoire Sector La Reposante 32



Massif de 'Esterel

Gorges du Loup



1) 5c, 2) 6b. At the stance, move right to access the second pitch. A third pitch isn't equipped - grade 5aa. 6b
💷 La phial 🎲 📃 5c
2 L'Innominata 1 (b) The extension to the last route.
2 Rondeurs africains
The next two climbs are popular three pitch outings crossing at the first ledge system.
 La reposante
U'extra dalle (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2)
Strange sugar
🙆 La D.J 😥 🛃 🗾 5c A right-hand line to the same lower-off.
Image: Second system Image: Second system Second system
🐵 Les gosses d'aulx 🕸 📃 5c

😃 Papy potins	5c
💷 Les gouttes d'eau 🛛 🛱 💽 🗌	5c
Starting at a lower level are two longer pitches.	
Image: State of the state	6a
🕹 Voie X 🛱 📃	6b
To the right is a series of steep slabs 90m high, split by of diagonal ramps, and capped by bulging rock. There a other bolted lines here and only a small selection of the routes are covered below. Most have names on the rock	re many Ionger
Boulon le gauche	5c
🚳 La dalle en pente 🕸 🖪 📃	6a

1) 4c, 2) 6a, 3) 5c. Start as for the previous climb, then go direct.

3 Noctambules	③ 5	ic
60 La boulon le droite \$23 1) 4a, 2) 5c, 3) 5c.	5	ic
Image: Second system S	5	ic
🚯 Huit et le demi	5	ia
🕙 Nuit couleur blues	6	ib

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Sainte Victoire



Sector Plates Dalles Sainte Victoire 19 35

Sainte Victoire

Les Calanques

Toulon Area

Châteauvert

Châteaudouble

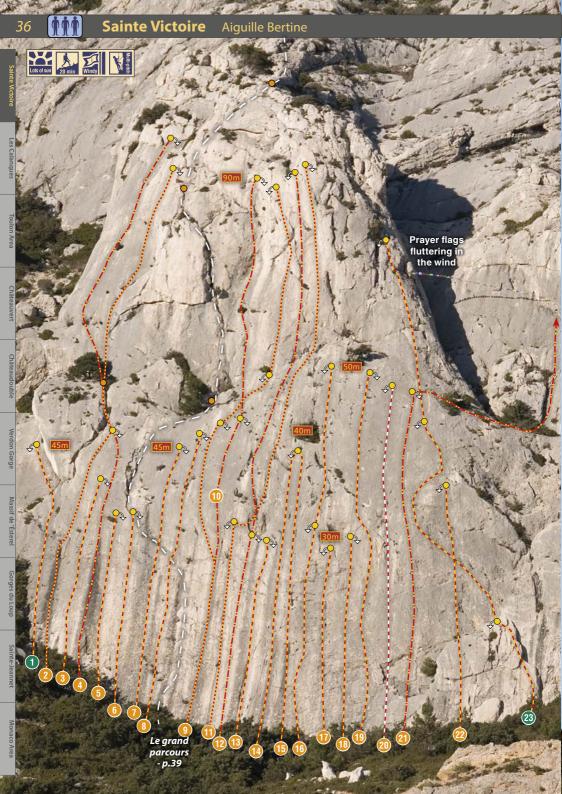
Verdon Gorge

Massif de 'Ésterel

Gorges du Loup

Sector Plates Dalles An attractive area of slabs with a good set of well-bolted routes, many in the lower grades. There are some two and three-pitch offerings here as well. Almost all of the climbs have been rebolted in the not-too-distant past and, many of them are quite polished, which often makes the starts a bit tricky. The area is sheltered from the worst of the Mistral by the bushes at the cliff base.	 Accroche cœur				
Illuminations	Image: Stream of the water stream of the stre				
Angelures	(1) Les pâtes fraiches				
3 Tranquillité assurée 🅸 🔜 4a Take plenty of clips on this one too.	Que la fête commence 6a Start up the groove that forms the left-hand side of the tower on				
4c A tiny first pitch (polished 4c) is available or just do it in one big one. The route improves with height.	the right-hand side of the slab.				
5 Onze de cœur 🛱 🚮 🛄 5c A continuation to <i>Les gemeaux jumeaux</i> up the wall above.	A very long pitch, or use the belay/lower-off on the right. The route continues in three more pitches - up to 5c - to the top of the Aiguille. The state of the fixed gear is not known.				
6 Mal et fils	10 Cadeaux merveilleux 🎊 🛄 5c				
O Sortilèges	Image: Bisounours Image: Sc To the right is the line of Salad des fruits, 5c - a top-rope problem.				
 Boux gates	Petite fleur Image: Sc Nice climbing with a tricky crux. There is a much easier second				
La Der	pitch (3+) if required. 7b				
⑩ 37° 2 le matin	Boulevard du futur				
1 Paradisiac	Wterus				
	2 Sésame 7b				





Aiguille Bertine Sainte Victoire 37

Aiguille Bertine This tower offers a fine selection of routes in the orange grades, a nice mixture of shortish multi-pitch routes and some huge single-pitch ones. Double ropes and a heap of quickdraws might help here. As is often the case here the routes are rather packed in though most have their names painted at the base. Wandering between lines is pretty easy mind!	
1 Galop d'essai 1 4c Start just right of the bushes, trend left when it steepens.	
U.L.K. Image: Start up the left-hand of the two short dark streaks.	1) 5a, 2 pitch.
Ittle last one	13 Pa
4 Deloripous des papiers 🕸 🌌 📃 5c	4 Ps A nice
1) 5a, 2) 5c. Start up the right-hand of the two short dark streaks and continue past a lower-off to a stance at a ledge with large tree. A 2nd pitch tackles the centre of the slab above and left of the tree.	🚯 Va Start ju
🚯 Acidofilus actif 🏟 🗾 5c	10 La
O Directe du grand parcours 5a Go straight to the belay at the end of the first pitch of the classic.	1) 4c. / 17 Ba A crim
7 Innominata 2 🕸 📃 5c	1 La
🚯 Fantasque greasque 🕸 🌽 📃 5c	19 La
 Mortelles randonnées	1) 5c, 2 20 La A huge
1) 5c, 2) 6a. A direct version of the previous climb; also two pitches long, but a notch harder.	gaps a 20 Le 1) 5c, 2
1 La pimprenelle et le pervers chevelu	is up th
1) 5c, 2) 4c, 3) 5c. A route tackling the right-hand side of the	🕐 Bo
tower.	23 Le 1) 4a, 2 face. Th

AIGUILLE BERTINE Secteur COMMANDOS	Sainte Victoire
	Les Calanques
ID Basket blues 6a+ 1) 5a, 2) 4c, 3) 6a+. Covers the same area with a harder top pitch. 6a+	a
🔞 Parcours sentez 🕸 📃 5c	oulon Area
O Psycho d'élite 🎉 🌌 📃 5a A nice piece of climbing.	Tou
1 Vagabondages 🕸 🖉 📃 5a Start just right of the black streak.	Châteauvert
1) 4c. An excellent 30m pitch in its own right. 2) 5a.	Chât
Image: song	Châteaudouble
🕼 La bof 🎉 🕜 🦲 5c	Châtea
1) 5c, 2) 4c. The second pitch is good at the grade.	rge
La vouivre. Image: Sc A huge pitch with spaced bolts - the odd nut might plug some gaps and help you keep calm. 5c	Verdon Gorge
Image: Section of the state of the stat	Massif de 'Ésterel
🐵 Bonjour Roger, merci Ginettee 🕃 _ 5c	Massif
23 Les masques de Pierre	Gorges du Loup
	Gorges



Sainte Victoire Le Grand Parcours

With the

Adrian Berry under the roof starting pitch 10 of *Le grand parcours* (5c) - *this page* - Sainte Victoire's most famous route. Beyond, the rock goes on for miles. Photo: Alan James

Le Grand Parcours **Sainte Victoire**

Le Grand Parcours

A Big Course indeed! Six hours up and down is a good time for an efficient team and a UK grade of about **E1 5b** would be appropriate. There is a bit of old fixed-kit in the route, though a small UK rack and a few slings will be found essential, especially on the upper crack-systems and to protect the easier middle pitches. Don't forget the water and the sunscreen.

😐 Le grand parcours 📴 🖌

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The major classic of the mountain, up the striking ridge. The lower section is fully bolted, the middle section is a bit vague and the final part need nuts/slings to supplement the old pegs. *Photo opposite.*

1) - 4) 5a. Starting at the name on the rock, four pitches lead up the Aiguille Bertine to the col at its top.

5) Easy scrambling leads up to ledges below a steeper wall.
6) to 8) Take the easiest line up cracks and slabs to reach ledges below the steeper upper section. (Trace Noire crosses here so familiarise yourself for the descent). There is no fixed gear on this section. It can be by-passed by walking around to the right.
9) 5a. Climb up cracks to a belay beneath a prominent roof.
10) - 13) Four more pitches up the superb ridge lead to big ledges beneath the long upper crack.

14) 5a. Tackle the wide crack chimney past plenty of fixed gear and a couple of awkward moves.

15) 5c. Follow the left-hand branch on the 'Y' past a tricky section to a good ledge.

16) 5a. Another steep pull up flakes gains a wider gully system then continue up and back right to a belay below a rib. There are bolts on other routes that cross this pitch which can be clipped. 17) 4a. Climb the rib to gain easy ground and the summit.

Descent - Walk along the summit ridge towards the Croix de Provence to the west.

Option 1 - Pick out a steep gully with some chains and drop down this to gain the Trace Noire.

Option 2 - Continue to a large cave/tunnel on the left - Le Tunnel du Garagãi - a short distance before the Croix. Scramble through this (steep and slippery, but easy enough) to the open slopes, then bear left down scree to pick up black paint-marks and cairns that indicate the Trace Noire. Follow this as it descends eastwards and cross the route of ascent to drop through the cliffs at the short rocky step of Le Pas de l'Elephant (look out for his footprint). DO NOT be tempted to try and descend any earlier - cliffs (and big ones at that) run below the full length of the Trace Noire.

s pitch which can be clipped. pround and the summit. ridge towards the Croix de ith some chains and drop /tunnel on the left - Le Tunnel e the Croix. Scramble through nough) to the open slopes, p black paint-marks and . Follow this as it descends scent to drop through the Pas de l'Elephant (look out ted to try and descend any) run below the full length of

Lots of sun 20 min Windy Descent path Easier walking Trace Noir alternative to central section

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Monaco /

Sainte Victoire Sector Super Medius

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Sector Super Medius Sainte Victoire

Sector Super Medius The show-piece of the crag has a set of desperate face routes and the occasional easier line squeezing between them. All the routes here feel hard for the grade. Originally many of these were protected with spaced 8mm bolts and home-made wire threads. Even with modern gear they remain tough and spooky undertakings - steel fingers and the crispest of foot-work may see you succeed! A small rack or wires may be found of use to plug the gaps between the bolts, or as a way of extricating yourself it all becomes a bit too much.	 3 Les aromats
La mouche	aromats. La grand lessive Comparison of the second
 2 La nef des fous	 Hyper medusée . 22 20 20 mate: Hyper medusée . 23 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20 20
 Bestagnasse verolique (1) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2	 A counter diagonal to the previous climit, indugit with boils that are even more spaced than is the norm round here. A superb pitch and a 'must-do' if you are up to it. Super medius \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$ \$\$
6 La sixième metatarsien . (3) (1) 6c A big pitch passing the right-hand edge of the overlap high on the wall.	short may struggle to link the distant holds. Niki chagrin d'humeur 23 2 7c A more modern variation on a theme.
La direct des aromates	Le medius Image: Construction of the second



1

Sainte Victoire

Les Calanques

Toulon Area

Châteauvert

Châteaudouble

Verdon Gorge

Massif de 'Ésterel

Gorges du Loup

Sainte Victoire Sector Super Medius

B Levitation 22 2 2 6 6 c+ Spaced bolting, the crux, just below the lower-off is memorable!	Obyouspitingliche A way of a state of a s
Ouroumaniak 🗱 🗺 💽 6c+ Protected by older bolts, and therefore not popular.	Bismila Bismila Bismila Gh+ A shorter pitch passing a shrubby ledge early on.
1 Un petit bout d'inconnu 	 La gassi touil
4 La pagode (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2) (2)	 Direct de la gassi touil 第
rack of nuts very useful!	🕹 Le spleen 🕸 🚺 🍡 🦲 6b+
🤓 Les fagots 🕸 🐨 🎜 🖉 🔙 5c	
1) 5c, 2) 5c. A worthwhile easier route, though the bolts are a bit spaced. A small selection of nuts might help calm the nerves. The first bolt is a worrying distance from the ground. <i>Photo on page 45.</i>	 Un éclair d'absurdite \$23 6a 6a, 2) 6a. Start up the rather shrubby rock to a stance their continue up cleaner rock above.
Un éclair d'éternite Compare and the set of the set	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
	🚯 Messaline 🕸 🌌 😭 🔜 6b
Image: White State Stat	🚯 Bengale 99 🕸 🖪 🕅 7a+
 L'inflation	Obtain the wide, grey streak.
wall to a tiny stance - spaced bolts. Take the left-hand line to finish.	🚯 Pet des anges 🎘 🚮 🍡 🦲 7c
Grill homard	La tamanrasset La tamanrasset Example for the classic groove-line is a must do - though despite that no-one ever does it!
🕢 Mélanges 🎉 📃 6c	Image: Constraint of the state of the s

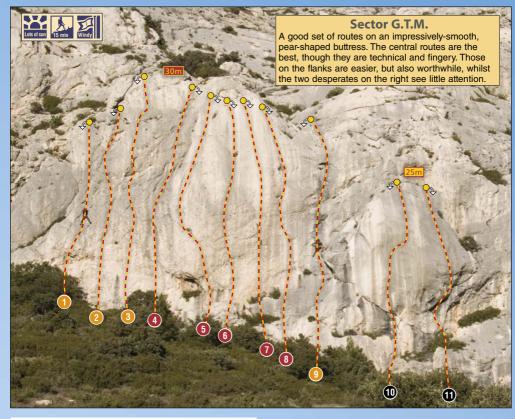
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Aiguille Bertine Super Medius La Reposante p.36 p.32 Plates Dalles Minor Sectors p.46 G.T.M





Sainte Victoire Sector G.T.M.



1 Rennaisance	. ②	5c
2 Bisous Glaces		6a
3 G.T.M.	🐉 🕵 🔜 wall.	5c
Vents de folie 🕸 🗹		6b
6 Caravan'serail		6b vr if vo

 Image: Second second

6 Les crêpes volantes 🕸 🕅 Photo on page 29.	6c
🕖 Les vêpres collantes 📖 🕸 🚺	6c+
Orépuscule Image: Compute state	6b
9 Shadow Man	5c
D La boule	8a+
O Goodiaood 🔅 🍂 🔊	7b+



44

Massif de 'Esterel

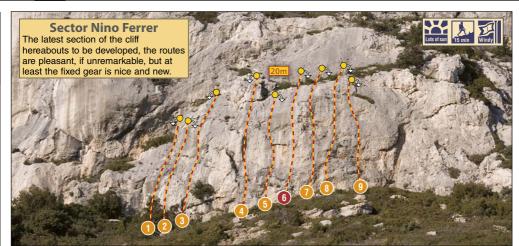
Gorges du Loup



don Gorge

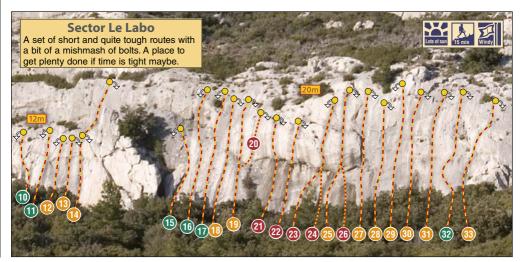
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Sally Swannick on the easier upper section of pitch 1 of *Les fagots* (5c) - *page 42* - on Sector Super Medius. Photo: Jack Geldard



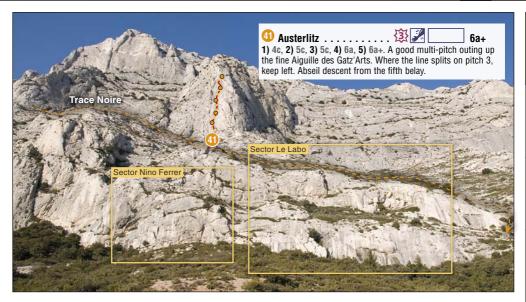
1 Le sud	5c
😢 Le blues de chien 📃 S	5c
3 Aloina de Jesus	5a
4 Joseph Joseph	5c
🙃 Les morceaux de fer 🏦 📃 5	5a
🜀 Chanson pour Nathalie î 🕅 📃 6	6b
🗘 Ouessant 🕅 🦳	6a+
6 Mirza	6a+
9 Le téléfon	6a+

1 P'tit loup 4a	
① Comme un avion	
😢 Shanghai express 5a	
13 Ricou	
Wew York Juillet 5a Two short pitches 5a and 4c. 5a	
1 L'oubliée 4c	
1 Willypiou 4c	
1 Fastoch 1 4b	
🔞 Mat sup	



Chäteauver

Minor Sectors Sainte Victoire



🕦 Ga	5c
20 ZIZITOP	6b+
Ø Agressions furtives	6c+
😢 Le rose est mis	6b+
🕫 Orabidoo	6b
🚳 Base 1	6c
	5c
🕫 Dur! Dur!	6c
🗿 Que calor 🛱 🗲 📃	5c
🐵 La bavure	5a
🐵 La parade a papa 🎲 📃	5b
💷 Les papys	5c
🗿 T'es beau, Thibaut	5c
32 Anthony 🕸 🔊 📃	4c
🔞 Loïc	5c

Up and right is a small sector with some lower-grade routes.

🚳 Solomen] 4b
🚯 Tabou] 4c

36 Totem	🗘 📃 4c
🖅 La Lino	🔃 🚺 4b
38 La S	🔃 🛄 4a
39 Crin blanc	4a
40 La petite sirène	4a

Sector Totem et Tabou A pleasant collection of slabby routes up and right from the other sectors.



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Monaco Area