

Design Cycle

A few days of cycling with friends in the design world

A few of you will have read Peter Bilak's tweet on 29 August *With all the interest in cycling, I think it's time for an annual bike competition. Com'n @houseindustries @PauloBarnesi @swisstypefaces*

It certainly piqued a few peoples interest; quite a few of us in the design world are keen cyclists. We all know the joy of escaping from the desk and the pleasure of the open road and so we started to think of how we could all join in one of the iconic locations of cycling, ride some, enjoy some fine food and drink and have some great conversations about cycling and work. It would be relatively small to begin with so not to burden anyone with organisation, and if it was a success we could perhaps plan something grander with more people, and more real design content. This is just to find out how interested people are, and what they want. Suggestions, comments, etc, are welcome.

Where?

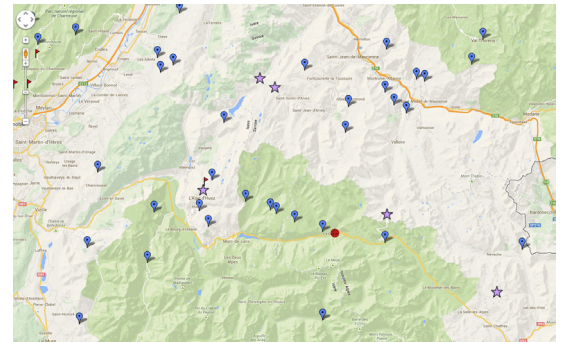
We would suggest the French Alps. From both a practical point of view (getting there, accommodation, expense) and the roads to ride (the iconic climbs such as the Galibier, Alpe D'Huez, etc) it seems to make sense.

We have made some enquires and we would suggest a small hotel in La Grave, <http://www.lagrave-lameije.com>: 'Edelweiss'***

<http://www.hotel-edelweiss.com>

This was recommended to us by Andy Hampsten, legendary ex-pro, winner of the Giro and now cycle tour operator extraordinaire, and has been used by Paul.

Its half way up the Col du Lautaret, to the east is the Galibier, and to the west Alpe D'Huez. Its relatively low key, with friendly hosts (Robin, an English bon vivant and his Dutch partner Marlon), excellent food (both breakfast and dinner) and its relatively cheap, around €85 per person if they share per night (includes dinner). They have a full workshop and are used to cyclists (they host large groups of cyclist tourists on a regular basis). It would also be possible



La Grave is marked in Red.

The climbs are from <http://www.cycling-challenge.com> an excellent website devoted to one mans love of riding up mountains

<https://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&m-sa=0&msid=103696868414170297075.000443d5c3f-930567b105&om=0&ll=45.282617,6.745605&spn=3.092045,3.295898&z=8&source=embed&dg=feature>

for people to drop in and out depending on commitments. Obviously to return there you will have to ascend in part the Col du Lautaret, but its a relatively easy climb. Or you will be descending from the Galibier.

We also want this to be inclusive, so partners, children are all welcome. The Alps of course offer other delights, outstanding scenery, mountain cycling, beautiful walks, Glaciers, cable cars, white water rafting and many other outdoor activities.

La Grave is around 2 hours from Lyon airport, 2.45 hours from Geneva Airport and 1.40 hours from Grenoble Airport (though this is seasonal). Its about 1.20 hour from Grenoble station which has a TGV service. For those who would want to hire bikes the nearby town of Bourg d'Oisans:

<http://www.cyclesetsports.com>

They begin at around €41 and double that for top of the range Pinarello with carbon wheels (not recommended for descending)

Alternatives

We have suggested the French Alps, both of course many other locations provide beautiful cycling. Provence is obvious, with both mountains (the mighty Ventoux), and more flat sections; this is also easy to reach and again offers many other delights (vine yards). If people would like to think about that we are happy to look. Here are some examples around there:

<http://www.hotel-domainedestilleuls.com>

<http://www.chateau-juvenal-provence.com>

<http://cabasse.fr/en/homepage-cabasse/>

etc, etc

We have suggested a fairly low key hotel in the Alps, but we could go and stay at Andy Rihs (owner of BMC bikes) hotel; <http://www.coquillade.fr/uk/index.php>, a mere €325 a night for a 'charming room'

Of course Europe has other great places to ride, such as the Dolomites in Italy, the Alps in Switzerland. Again feel free to suggest other places.

Many of the cycling touring companies offer bespoke packages, but these are more expensive and would require a larger number of us to sign up. We are happy to look into this as well.

When?

If you want to ride in the high Alps it has to be late May onwards, even then some of the passes are still blocked on poor years. We would suggest some days in the first week of June (Monday 1-Monday 8). Some of you will be able to take weekdays and some of you will be able to only do it on the weekend. What we would propose is that we try and make it 'loose' so people can arrive and leave when they like; if you could only manage a couple of days that's great, more and that's brilliant. At this time the roads will still be relatively empty, and the temperatures manageable. It would also be good if people could coordinate travel plans to share costs.

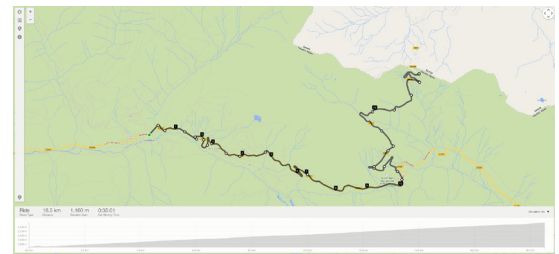
So what will the days be like?

After a hearty breakfast (it is vital you are properly fuelled) we will roll out onto the roads when we feel like it, around 10.00. Every day will probably feature some kind of climb, from fairly short to the epic and for those brave enough might feature more than one col. The rides will all be between 60-140 km, typically after one 'hard' day we will do an 'easy' day. If we have enough transport we can drive a little further afield, but in general it will be a car free experience.

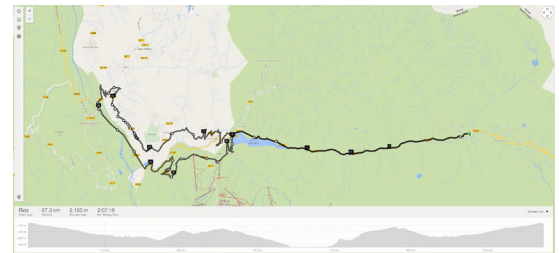
We will stop at for a leisurely lunch in a small French town. We are looking into getting a support vehicle that will offer, well support like food and drinks, extra clothing. And if people want to have an easy day doing something else, that's great.

Now all of you will be wondering how hard each day will be? Whilst on the flat it will always be good to ride together (depending on the size of the peloton), but as the roads go uphill we will ride at our own pace; it's not a race against each other, though you may want to race yourself! Perhaps people will want to have a time trial up the mighty Alpe d'Huez and see how slow we are! At the top of the mountain passes we will wait for each other to make sure all of us are ok.

In the evening we can all eat together, enjoy reminiscing about the days achievements, but also the conversation can turn to design. If we want we can organise small talks on an informal basis.



A relatively easy day; a simple climb up the col du Lautaret and then on to the top of the Col du Galibier, at over 2600 metres. From here would be a fast descent back La Grave. Note that Strava thinks Paul is a better rider than he is



A harder day; descending from La Grave to ride on the spectacular roads high above the valley and to the lower slopes of Alpe d'Huez; from here people could ascend to the top or they could return via Bourg and the southern slopes of the valley before return to La Grave.



The I am madder than you day. A circle of hell with the Col du Lautaret, Col de Galibier, Col de Telegraphe, Col de Croix de Fer before returning to La Grave. This is a variation to the famous La Marmotte sportive in reverse without Alpe d'Huez and Croix de Fer replacing the Col de Grandon. This is only for the fittest and maddest, but shows what could be done. This is as hard as any stage of the Tour.

So is this for me?

We are not going to lie and say that mountains are easy to ride, but that is the point, it's the challenge. Read a little about these mountains here:

<http://inrng.com/roads/>

If riding the Galibier excites you then this will be for you:

<http://inrng.com/2013/12/roads-ride-col-du-galibier/>

You will need to be in reasonable shape and fitness and used to riding a road bike*. As much as fitness, being used to a few hours on the saddle is necessary if you are going to make the most of it. On the other hand it isn't a race, it's about enjoyment. You will also have to understand the importance of hydration and refuelling, few things are as miserable as riding up a mountain and suffering the hunger bonk (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hitting_the_wall).

Whilst much of this is about camaraderie and looking out for each other, we should also be self-sufficient. No expectations of changing a group set in five minutes, but being able to change a flat tire is essential. Well-maintained bikes are necessary. Also you all need to be aware that whilst we watch the Tour de France with riders descending off the mountains at near to 100km/h we aren't the only road users and caution is always necessary. Learning to descend is an art, and as important as ascending.

Other essential kit are items like rain jacket, gilet for when the weather deteriorates or for descending. French law also specifies that cyclists must have lights for tunnels (a few for the descent to Bourg).

How stylish do you have to be?

Rumours abound that a very stylish jersey will be produced by one of us, or in fact all of us. Shaved legs are definitely not essential.

If this sounds of any interest let me know. You don't have to make any commitment yet, we just need to find out what people might want and how many of you would be interested.

We look forward to hearing from you

Peter Bilak, Typotheque peter@typotheque.com

Paul Barnes, Commercial Type paul@commercialtype.com

* Most of you won't be riding normally in the mountains, so technical recommendations. A compact double chainset; 34/50 is the best, only the strongest can deal with the normal 39/53, and even many of the pros now prefer a compact. A compact will allow for a higher cadence which is best and good for your knees. Riding a triple chainset; 30/39/50 is also recommended, but don't have this replace a double chainset as you will need new STI levers. At the back a cassette of 11/27 or 11/28 is recommended. You can also go for a 11/32 if you don't feel strong enough, but not all rear derailleurs and groupsets can deal with this. Lightness of bike helps, but for most riders it's the lightness of rider where the most gains can be made.