

L U X E M B O U R G

NATACHA 23



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You, cyclists who like to climb, discover in these few pages what makes the list of the national challenge in Luxembourg so rich.

GEOGRAPHY

MEDIA

TOURISM

SPORT

Luxembourg

The area of the Grand-Duchy is more or less equal to the one of a Belgian province (2,600km²), but largely greater than the one of other European 'small countries', like Andorra (468km²), Liechtenstein (160) or San-Marino (61). Enough to find 50 interesting climbs.

The country has 3 neighbours: Belgium to the west and north, France to the south and Germany to the west. The border with the latter is only made of water (Our in the northeast, the Sûre / Sauer in the centre-east and the Moselle in the southeast).



Kneiff : the highest point

The topography of Luxembourg divides the country into two regions: Oesling in the north and Gutland in the south, what is more or less equal to the administrative subdivisions we've used. In the Zone1, only 025-Beaufort, that was located in the Diekirch district until 2015, belongs to the Gutland, like the 25 climbs of the Zone2.

The Oesling covers the northern third of the territory, it's the Luxembourgian Ardennes Forest, the same range than in Belgium and in Germany (where the Ardennes are called 'Eifel'). The far north is a plateau, where are located the two highest points: 001-Kneiff (560m) and its neighbour Burplatz (559). The Oesling is crossed by two important rivers (the Sûre / Sauer and the Our, see below), the elevation gains of which are greater than 200m: for instance 276m in 013-Niklosbiërg-Groësteen-NE or 235m in 008-Parc Hosingen-NE for the Our; more or less 250m in the sides of 018-Bourscheid for the Sauer / Sûre or 236m in 016-Eschdorf-NE.



The Our Valley in Vianden



The Upper Sûre / Sauer Lake

The Guttland covers the southern 2/3, south to an oblique line Redange-Diekirch (more or less the Attert and Sauer / Sûre Valleys). The region is rather heterogeneous, but we can distinguish 5 subregions:

-In the northwest, the Valley of the Seven Castles (the Eisch Valley): 029-Kreuzebuch and 030-Keispelt);

-In the south, the industrial Red Lands (steel industry): from 037 to 041 with the iconic 039-Monument national des Mineurs (National Mining Memorial);

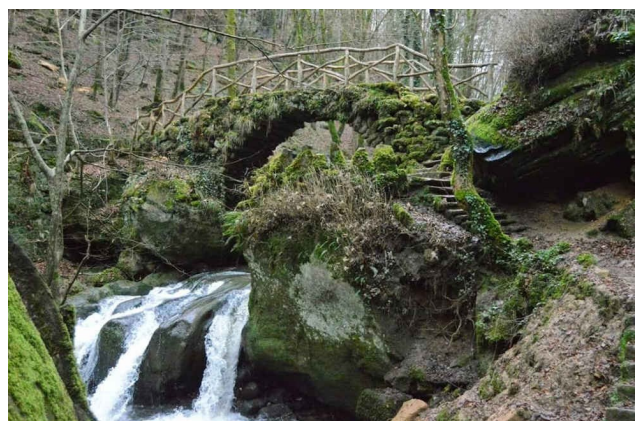
-In the centre, the Luxembourg Plateau, around the capital (033 to 036), the Valleys of Alzette (027-Beringerberg, 028-Rolléngerbiérg, 031-Stafelter and 032-Biergerkräiz) and White and Black Ernz (025-Fürtgeschaff);

-The Mullerthal (aka Luxembourg Little Switzerland), around Echternach: 042-Beaufort, 043-Berdorf and Gorges du Loup, 044-Girsterklaus, 045-Pafebiérg and 046-Altrier;

-The Moselle Valley and its vineyard-covered hills in the southeast: 047-Wormeldange, 049-Scheierbiérg and 050-Strombiérg.



Ansembourg (Valley of the 7 Castles)



The Schiessentümpel Waterfall (Mullerthal)



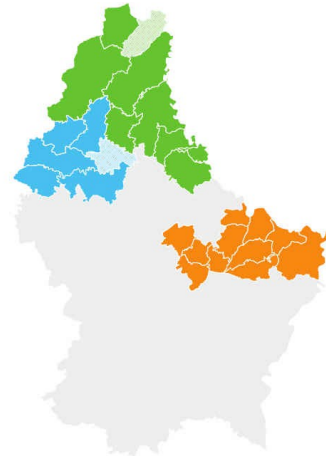
The Red Lands



Wellenstein-on-Moselle

Tourism

The old quarters and fortifications of Luxembourg City belong to the UNESCO World Heritage. We can visit them thanks to 036-Montée du Grund and Montée de Clausen.



The 3 nature parks are located in the Oesling:

-In green on the map above, the one of Our covers almost fully the north of the country. In this park, we've selected 10 climbs or so, among which Lieler, Parc Hosingen, Wahlhausen or the Niklosbiert in Vianden.

-In blue the one of Haute-Sûre (Upper Sûre / Sauer), 6 climbs in the Challenge: Knaposcheid, Bohey, Um Knupp, Boulaide, Kaundorf and Eschdorf.

-In orange, Mullerthal (the Luxembourg Little Switzerland with the 5 aforesaid climbs).

More informations on <https://www.naturpark.lu>

Heritage tourism

At the top of 048-Dalheim was erected a 6 meter high Roman eagle, near a vicus ('village within a rural area or the neighbourhood of a larger settlement'), maybe the Ricciacus one, Gallo-Roman site located on the Via Agrippa (from Mediterranean Sea to the Rhine) and built under Augustus. The theatre is rather well preserved.

Among the medieval castles, the one of Esch-sur-Sûre (016-Eschdorf-N and NE) is probably the oldest, we find trace of it in the 8th century. Bourscheid (018) is the largest. From the one on the Mont Saint-Jean (040), only ruins remain. Other castles are worth seeing: Vianden (at the foot of 013-Niklosbiert), Beaufort (042) and Burg Simmern in Septfontaines (at the foot of 2 sides of 029-Kreuzerbuch).



The Dalheim Eagle



Bourscheid Castle

Wiltz Castle (010) is more recent. The greatest part of the modern castle dates from the 17th century, on the foundations of a destroyed older edifice.

Malakoff is a hill above Sevastopol, in Crimea. After the victory of the French and British armies over the Russians on 8 September 1855, many towers were built to commemorate the event, among which the one of Luxembourg (035). Other towers in 2022, 2023?

Luxembourg was involved in the Battle of the Bulge (winter 1944-1945). The National Liberation Memorial was erected at the crossroads 'Schumann's Eck'. There we also find a memorial trail and a monument called 'Massegraf' ('Mass grave'). The crossroads is located in the continuation of the 010-Um Knupp summit.



The Malakoff Tower



The National Liberation Memorial

Religious tourism

The Benedictine Abbey of St. Maurice in Clervaux (004) is the most notorious in Luxembourg. It was built in the early 20th century in the neo roman style.

Girsterklaus Chapel (044) dates from the 14th century, it's the oldest Marian pilgrimage place of the country.

A procession takes place every year on the Mont Saint-Jean (040), not as well known as the Procession of Echternach and its specific rhythm (three steps forward and two steps backwards). If you ever ride in the Mullerthal on a Pentecost Tuesday...



The Clervaux Abbey



Girsterklaus

City Trip in Luxembourg and Europe

We've already talked about the Luxembourg Old Town (036-Montée du Grund and Montée de Clausen) and about the Malakoff Tower (035). Just above Malakoff lies the Kirchberg Plateau, which is a very important cultural and political place (Court of Justice of the European Union, Modern Art Museum (MUDAM), Philharmonie Concert Hall, National Library, ...).

On 14 June 1985 was signed the Agreement that gradually abolish the checks at the common borders between France, Germany and the Benelux. Schengen was a symbolic place, as it lies at a tripoint in the Moselle between Luxembourg, Germany and France. We can see it in the climb to 050-Strombiérg.

An Europa Monument was built at another tripoint (Luxembourg-Germany-Belgium), in the Our Valley (at the foot of 002-Lieler).

As we talk about Europe, Niederkorn (Differdange) hosts an official Col de l'Europe (037 at 418m).



Schengen, the tripoint in the Moselle and the Strombiérg



Col de l'Europe

Industrial tourism

The climb 039 is touristic in many ways. It hosts the National Mining Memorial (a 41m high tower and 19 plaques on which we can read the names of 1400 victims), as well as a cave with a statue of the Virgin Mary (Notre-Dame-des-Mineurs).

Near the foot of the southern side is situated the National Mining Museum.

Climbing the Col de l'Europe, you'll pass near the Fond-de-Gras, old mining site become an outdoor museum (Minett Park Fond-de-Gras).



National Mining Memorial's Tower



Notre-Dame-des-Mineurs

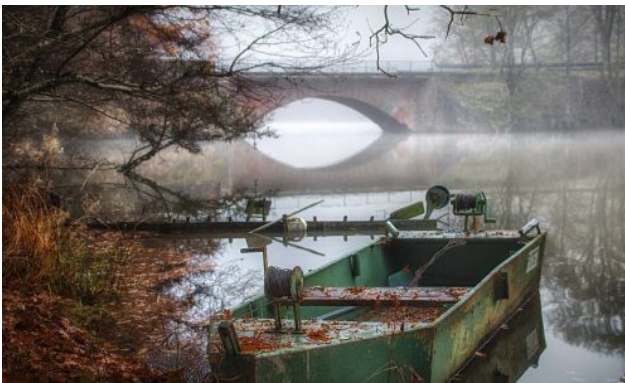
Water tourism

We highlight 4 places:

The Upper Sûre Lake

It lies upstream from Esch-sur-Sûre, at the foot of Kaundorf (015) and of the Pont Misère, from which starts Boulaide (014) and one side of Napoleonsgaard (021). The lake has an utility function, as it supplies a great part of the country with electricity, but it's also an important water sports centre.

The hydroelectric Plant in Vianden is powered by two basins. The lower is located in the Our Valley itself and the upper on the Niklosbiërg (013). The latter was so important that it appeared on 100 Luxembourg Francs banknotes.



The Pont Misère



The Vianden upper basin on Niklosbiërg

The Gorge du Loup ('Wolfsschlucht' in German) is, in the strict sense, a very narrow (10 meter width) and short (150m long) canyon, the walls of which can reach 50m. It lies near the eastern side of 043, but not in the climb itself. We'll appreciate other rock formations like the Labyrinth and Perekop. For sure one of the most visual climbs in Luxembourg.

The Moselle Valley

It starts in Schengen and finishes in Wasserbillig, where it flows to Germany. It's well known thanks to its vineyards, especially white wines, covered by a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), 'Moselle luxembourgeoise'. The most representative climb in the Challenge is 049-Scheierbiërg, two sides of which go through Wellenstein and another along the Remich Viewpoint. You'll see more of the Moselle taking part of the Schleck Grand Fondo (see Cycling Races in Luxembourg).



Gorges du Loup at the foot of Perekop



Wasserbillig, where the Sûre flows into the Moselle

Cycling races in Luxembourg

Tour de Luxembourg

Stage race (usually 4 stages and a prologue), the Tour was created in 1935. Most of the winners come from Benelux (48 wins out of 75 editions) and the local riders won a great part of them (21 victories, among which 5 for Mathias Clemens and 3 for Charly Gaul and Edy Schütz).

We've worked on a 14 edition sample from 2001 à 2021. Among the selected climbs, these are the most used in the Tour:

Bourscheid 9x

Holtz and Pabeierberg 8x

Um Knupp, Beaufort and Montée du Grund in the prologue 7x

Mur of Wormeldange 6x

Niklosberg-Groësteen and Col de l'Europe 5x

Consdorf (in Altrier), Boulaide, Kautenbach / Beim Donatus and Montée de Clausen 4x

Kaundorf, Berdorf, Knaposcheid, Eschdorf and Schifflange 3x

Girstenklaus, Munshausen, Herrenberg and Rolléngerberg 2x



Perez before Prades
at the top of the Pabeierberg (2018)



Um Knupp (Wiltz, 2011)

Among the aforesaid climbs, we can highlight some uphill finishes:

- The Grund, in Luxembourg City, has become an iconic climb;
- From 2014 to 2021, the Tour ends at the top of the Pabeierberg (in Luxembourg City as well);
- The Montée du Cimetière in Schifflange hosted the Tour 3 times (in 2014, 2016 and 2018);
- The Herrenberg-Barracks were used 2 times as uphill finish line (in 2017 and 2019);
- The riders arrived once in Eschdorf (2021).



Drücker in the Grund (prologue 2016)



Back view in Wormeldange

Flèche du Sud

This 5 stages UCI race (2.2) was created in 1949. Its centre lies in the Red Lands ('Terres Rouges' in French), especially in Esch-sur-Alzette, finish place of the race since at least 2001, but the race also usually arrives in Kayl, Rumelange, Differdange or Schiffflange.



An original leader jersey

The most used climbs in the region:

- Col de l'Europe 3x in a sample of 11 editions from 2002 to 2022,
- 'Mont Saint-Jean Pass', also called 'Scherr', 3x
- The Montée du Cimetière hosted the prologue in 2014

Other climbs weren't selected: Poteau de Kayl, Soleuvre or Dieswee in Esch-sur-Alzette (prologue 2019 and also hill climb).

But the race uses the whole Grand-Duchy territory :

Scheierbiert and Bourscheid were climbed 8 times. In 2019, the riders even climbed Bourscheid on 4 different sides during the same stage.

Boulaide 4x

Holtz and Kreuzerbuch with multiple sides 3x

Wormeldange and Kautenbach-Beim Donatus 2x



Thibau Nys in Bourscheid (2022)



E. Fontaine at the top of Dieswee (2019)

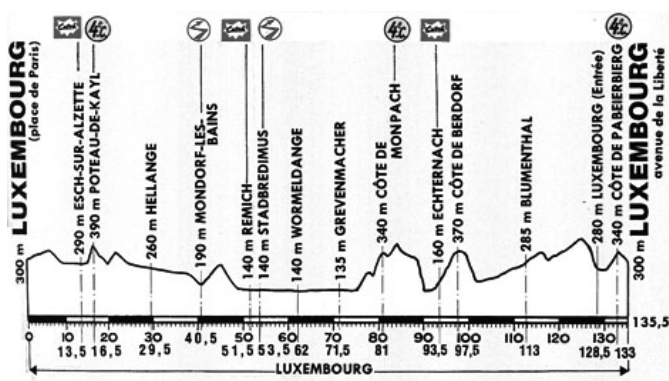
Tour de France

Luxembourg saw the Tour 7 times (1947, 1968, 1989, 1992, 2002, 2006 and 2017).

The 3rd stage of the Tour 1947 (314km from Brussels to Luxembourg) arrived on the Bel'Air Cycling Track ; the 4th linked Luxembourg and Strasbourg via Metz (223km) without any climb in the Grand-Duchy. In 1967, between Jambes and Metz, the riders climb the Pont Misère (first part of one side of Napoleonsgaard; in 1968, 'Mont Saint-Jean Pass' and Langengrund.

1989 is the big year: a prologue in Luxembourg with the Pabeierbiërg, a 1st stage with Poteau de Kayl, Mompach, Berdorf and Pabeierbiërg again, a 2nd (ITT) with Hivange and a way out of the territory towards Spa-Francorchamps with Niklosbiërg.

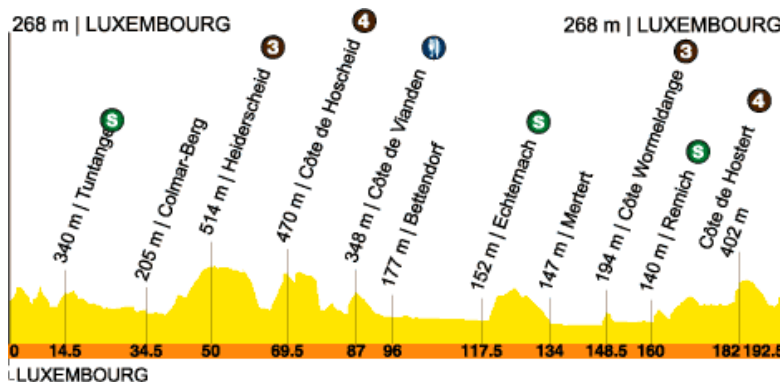
2 stages in 1992: a 65km ITT with Senningerberg and an exit towards Strasbourg with Burmerange (Schengen).



Profile of the 1st stage 1989



Top of Eschdorf (2017)



Profile of the 1st stage 2002



Wiltz (2017)

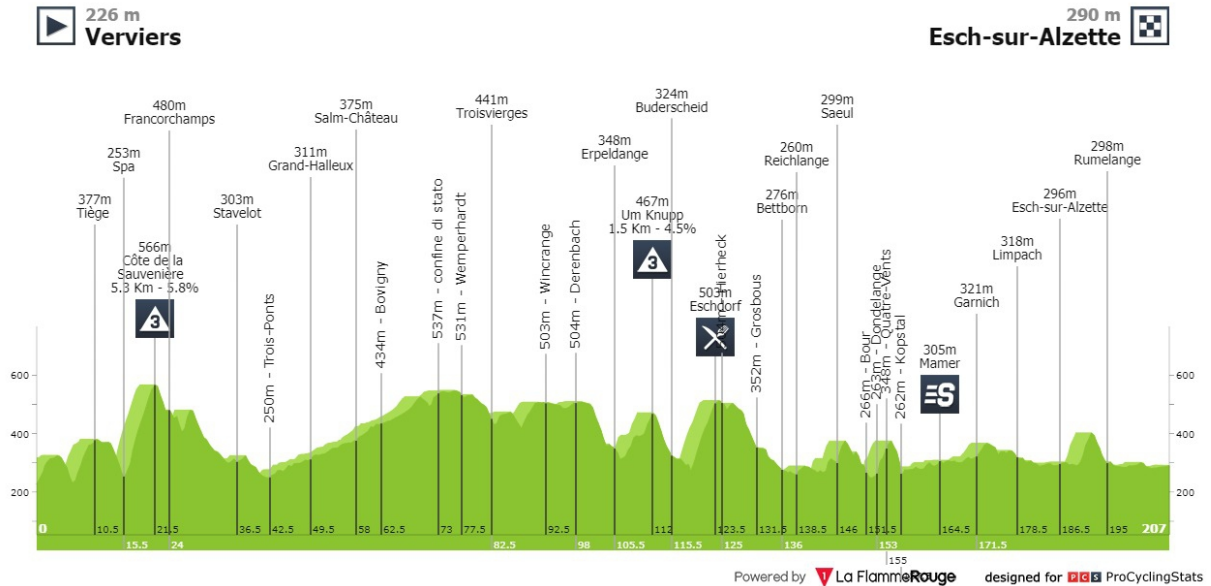
In 2002, the Tour started with a prologue (rue de Prague in Luxembourg). Then a small Tour of Luxembourg (Heiderscheid, Hoscheid, Vianden, Wormeldange and Hostert). The 2nd stage, towards Sarrebrück in Germany, had no KOM in Luxembourg.

For us, the two stages in 2006 were a blank page (no KOM).

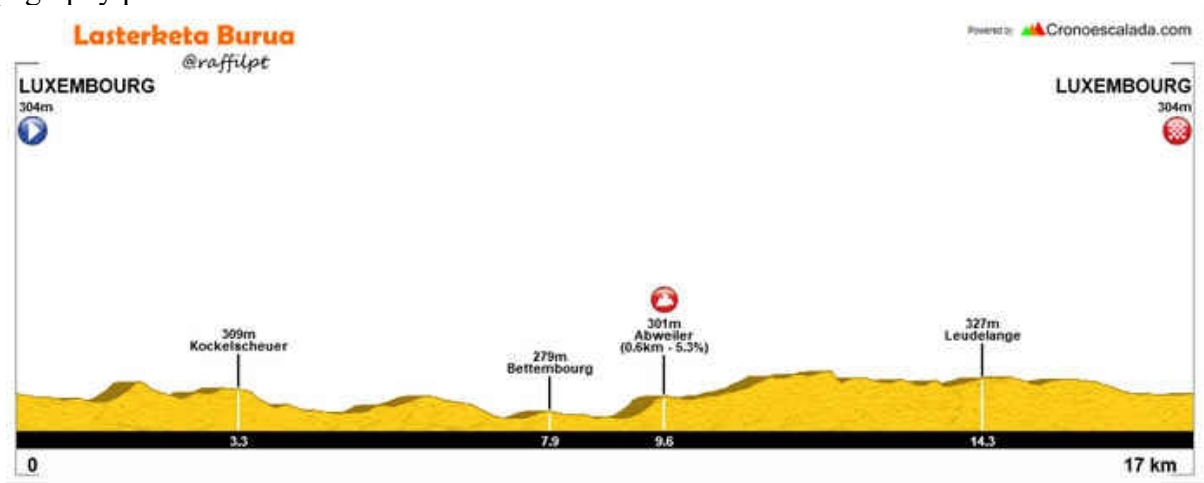
Finally, in 2017, from Verviers to Longwy, there were 2 climbs: Wiltz and Eschdorf.

Giro d'Italia

The Giro went once through Luxembourg, in 2002, for two stages. The 3rd, from Verviers to Esch-sur-Alzette, crossed the country from north to south, climbing only Um Knupp as KOM, but also Eschdorf, Saeul, Quatre-Vents and Poteau de Kayl. The 4th stage went out Esch, through the south of the country as far as Schengen, then to Strasbourg, without any KOM.



In 1952, the Road World Championships held in Luxembourg. The profile is very disappointing, the topography permitted more than that:



The **GP General Patton** exists since 1947. Nowadays it's aimed at junior riders. This two days race holds necessary in the Ardennes (in recent years the stages finished in Troivierges, Wintrange and Munshausen) and the list of winners reveals its difficulty: Evenepoel, Hirschi and Vlasov won respectively in 2018, 2015 and 2014, whereas Van der Poel and Mohorič were on the podium in 2013 and 2011.

In 2017 and 2018, the riders crossed Munshausen 6x. In the 2000s, the Niklosberg was also used, for instance in 2002, 2003 and 2005, when the finish line was in Hosingen.

Cyclosporives

Charly Gaul Gran Fondo

The acts of glory of this national hero are:

-In the Tour de France, 1 yellow jersey (1958), 10 stage wins in 10 editions and 2 Mountains classifications;

-In the Giro, 2 maglie rose (1956 and 1959), 11 stage wins in 7 editions and 1 Mountain classification (1956);

-At national level, he was 6x national champion (1956, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1962) and he won 3x the tour du Luxembourg (1956, 1959 and 1961).

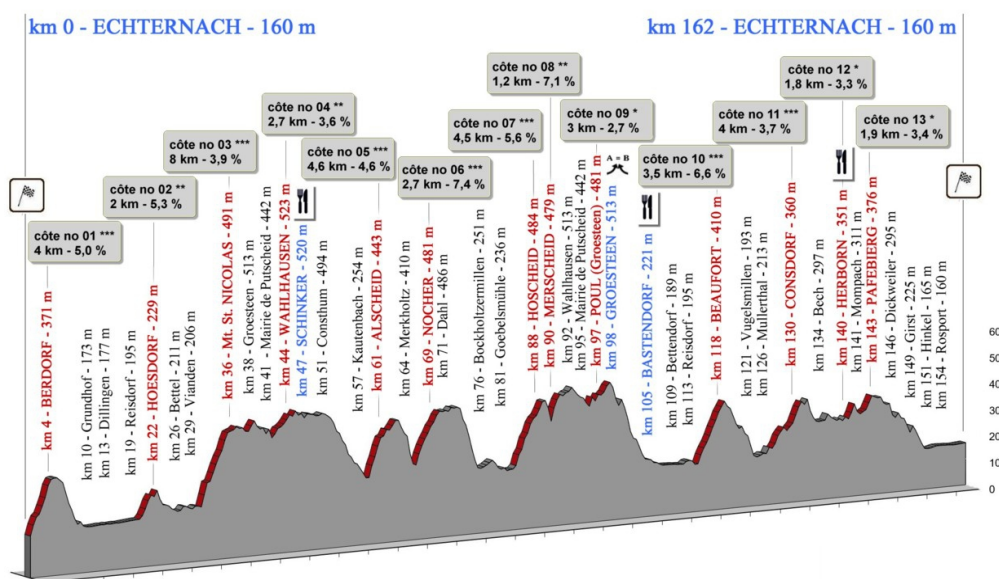


Gaul in the Mont Ventoux (1958)



Since 2008, the Gran Fondo starts and finishes in Echternach. The most used climbs since 2002 are: Consdorf (13x), Beaufort and Groësteen (10x), Wahlhausen (8x), Berdorf and Pafeberg (5x), Alscheid-Beim Donatus (4x), Boulaide (3x) and Bourscheid only 2x.

More informations on <http://www.lacharlygaul.lu/Francais/2022F/gaul22.htm>



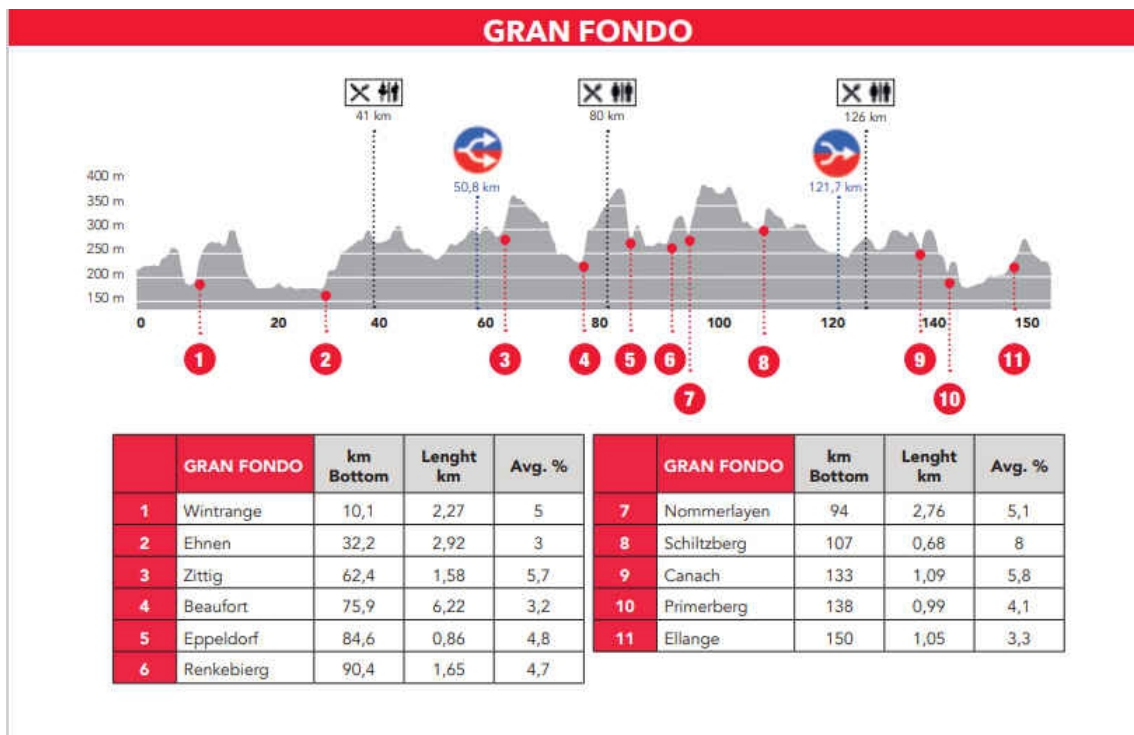
Profile 2017

Schleck Gran Fondo

Andy Schleck won the Tour de France in 2010. His brother, Fränk Schleck, initiator of the GF won a few nice races: 5x national champion, 1x the Tour du Luxembourg (2009), the Amstel Gold Race (2006), the Tour de Suisse (2010), the Dauphiné Libéré (2011), 2 stages in the Tour de France and 1 in the Vuelta.

Mondorf-les-Bains hosts the start and the finish of the race that visits the southeastern part of the Grand-Duchy (the Moselle Valley and the Luxembourg's Little Switzerland) The longest route is 150-160km long and includes a dozen climbs.

Among the 50 climbs of our list, only Beaufort is regularly climbed (4x since 2017). Other climbs, not selected by us, are often (4x) chosen: Zittig, Elvange, Eppeldorf, Nommern, Canach and Greiveldange. Special mention for the cobbles in Bourglinster.



Profile and climbs in 2022



Difficulty

10 summits exceed 500m asl :

Kneiff, the highest point, 560m,

Napoleonsgaard or Jardin Napoléon (549), Derenbach (532), Wahlhausen (525), Lieler (521), Munshausen (518), Parc Hosingen (511), Groësteen (510), Eschdorf (506) and Bourscheid (501).



Derenbach

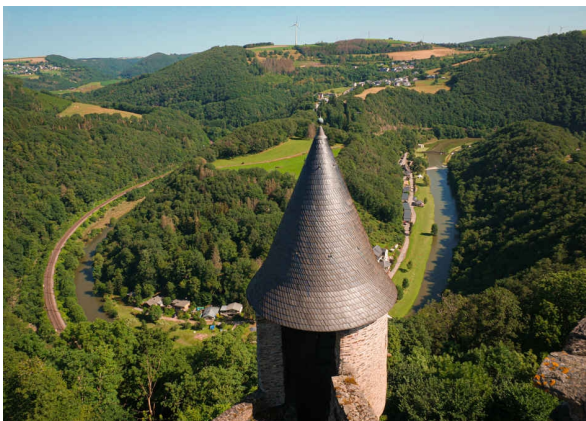


Napoleonsgaard

12 climbs have an elevation gain greater than 200m:

Niklosbiërg-Groësteen (298m),

Bourscheid (295m), Wahlhausen (276), Eschdorf (236), Parc Hosingen (235), Pafëbiërg (232), Beaufort (231), Napoleonsgaard (221), Ferme de Masseler (218), Girsterklaus (215), Beim Donatus (208) and Beringerberg (207).



Bourscheid towers above the Sauer / Sûre



Esch-sur-Sûre at the foot of Eschdorf

7 climbs have more than 200 europoints:

Niklosbiërg-Groësteen (353),

Bourscheid (277), Eschdorf (253), Girsterklaus (218), Beringerberg (214), Wahlhausen (206) and the Pafëbiërg Windfarm (205).



Girsterklaus



Beringerberg

The best 10 Bombs are greater than or equal to 27:

Pilatusbiërg 39,

National Mining Memorial 35, Herrenberg 33, Niklosbiërg 31, Montée du Cimetière 30,

Montée de la Seitert, Montée du Grund et Malakoff 28,

Goldknapp and Strombiërg 27



Pilatusbiërg



Montée du Cimetière



Herrenberg, Tour 2017 : Perez, van Avermaet, Meurisse



Montée de la Seitert

11 climbs have a distance equal to or greater than 5km:

Napoleonsgaard 10km,

Bourscheid (8,5), Altrier (8,3), Niklosbiërg-Groësteen (7,4), Beaufort (7), Pafebiërg (6,2), Berdorf (6), Kneiff (5,4), Parc Hosingen (5,4), Wahlhausen (5,3) and Beim Donatus (5).



Consdorf (in Altrier)



Beaufort-SE

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