



Day 5: Bicycle the Alsace Wine Road

Highlights: Wine Villages of Riquewihr, Ribeauvillé and the Castle of Haut-Koenigsbourg

We really are in the heart of Alsace today, with its festive villages in the midst of vineyards, Renaissance house facades, and expansive views across the Rhine River Valley, and the Haut Koenigsbourg castle. Those who want to can visit the castle, then explore any number of the sixteen villages of the local consortium on the way to our hotel in the center of Riquewihr (Bergheim is probably the best preserved). The villages have populations that range from 400 people to the 5,000 in the town of Ribeauvillé. Daily Mileage: 51-62 km (32-38 miles).

This evening's hotel:

Hotel Le Shoenenbourg
2, rue de la Piscine
68340 Riquewihr

Tel: 03 89 49 01 11

Fax: 03 89 47 95 88

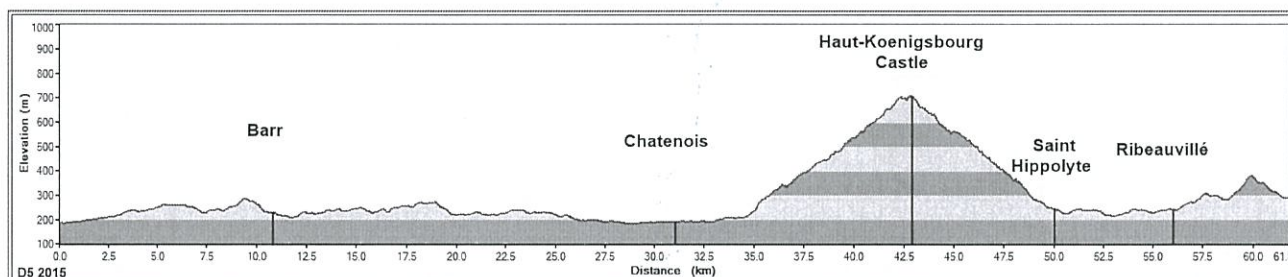
Tour leader phone numbers:

Philipp: +33 7 86 57 37 82

Loïc: +33 7 81 63 38 36

Jessica: +33 7 86 07 20 29

In an emergency call 112



Today's Ride: We follow the Alsatian wine route today and take a detour (for those who wish) up to the top of Haut Koenigsbourg castle. This is a 500 meter (1640 feet) climb; it is similar in elevation gain to the Saint Odile climb, but a bit steeper. Those who wish can skip the climb and take a shortcut which cuts out about 10 km: just follow for Saint Hyppolite in Kintzheim at the base of the climb. Aside from the climb to the castle, today's route is mostly rolling terrain with several short hills.

Lunch and Dinner: There's a café that serves light lunches at the castle and is open all day. For those who wish to picnic, there's a great spot at the bottom of the descent from the castle on the right in Saint Hippolyte. There are also places to eat in Chatenois, Bergheim, and Ribeauvillé. Dinner will be together tonight in Riquewihr.

You Might Like to Know: We're getting deeper and deeper into some of the world's most prized white wine territory today.

We cross south into the department of the Haut Rhin where most of Alsace's prized vineyards cover the hills. This southern section of Alsace sets the world standard for Gewurztraminer and Riesling. Jancis Robinson, the British wine writer, says Riesling "could claim to be the finest white grape variety in the world", thanks to its balance of fruit and acidity and its ability to age.



Gewurztraminer's name comes from the German *Gewurz*, meaning spice, and *Tramin*, the name of the village, now in Italy, where the grape likely comes from. The wines are about as intense as the drink gets, with powerful rose and lychee fruit aromas. It's probably the easiest wine to recognize from its aromas. Ask a wine expert what her favorite white is and she's likely to say, "Riesling".

As we pedal south along the wine road, we pass through or near sixteen villages of the Alsatian wine consortium. Explore one or all of the villages for their beautiful, flower-bedecked timber frame houses and squares. In Dambach-la-Ville, watch for the three town gates left from the Renaissance ramparts. Chatenois also preserves a 15th Century Gate.

The climb to Haut Koenigsbourg Castle is worth it for both the views and for the history this castle embodies. Dating to the 12th Century, it was built by the Hohenstaufen family. Later it was taken over by the Habsburgs and was rebuilt (16th Century). Destroyed in the 17th Century, it was rebuilt again in the early 20th Century by Kaiser Wilhelm II before being returned to the French after World War I.

Be sure to save a little time to explore Bergheim and Ribeauville on your way to our final destination, Riquewihr.

Bike Safety Tip: When riding into or out of towns or cities keep your distance from other cyclists and from parked cars. If possible ride a full six feet from parked cars. In this way you don't have to watch for opening car doors and you can watch other things going on around you. Drop back from your fellow cyclist 2-3 bike lengths so you have a good view of the road including potholes, broken glass or other debris. You can also see a surprise dog or cat coming onto the road.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT holding up traffic. Motorists are generally used to cyclists on the road.

French Lesson of the Day: Restaurants

I am starving! *J'ai une faim de loup!*

Could I see the menu, please? = *Pourrais-je avoir la carte, s'il vous plait?*

I would like a chocolate croissant, please = *Je voudrais un pain au chocolat, s'il vous plait.*

I would like a baguette, please. = *Je voudrais une baguette, s'il vous plait.*

Cheese plate = *Assiette de fromage* A mixed salad = *une sala composée*

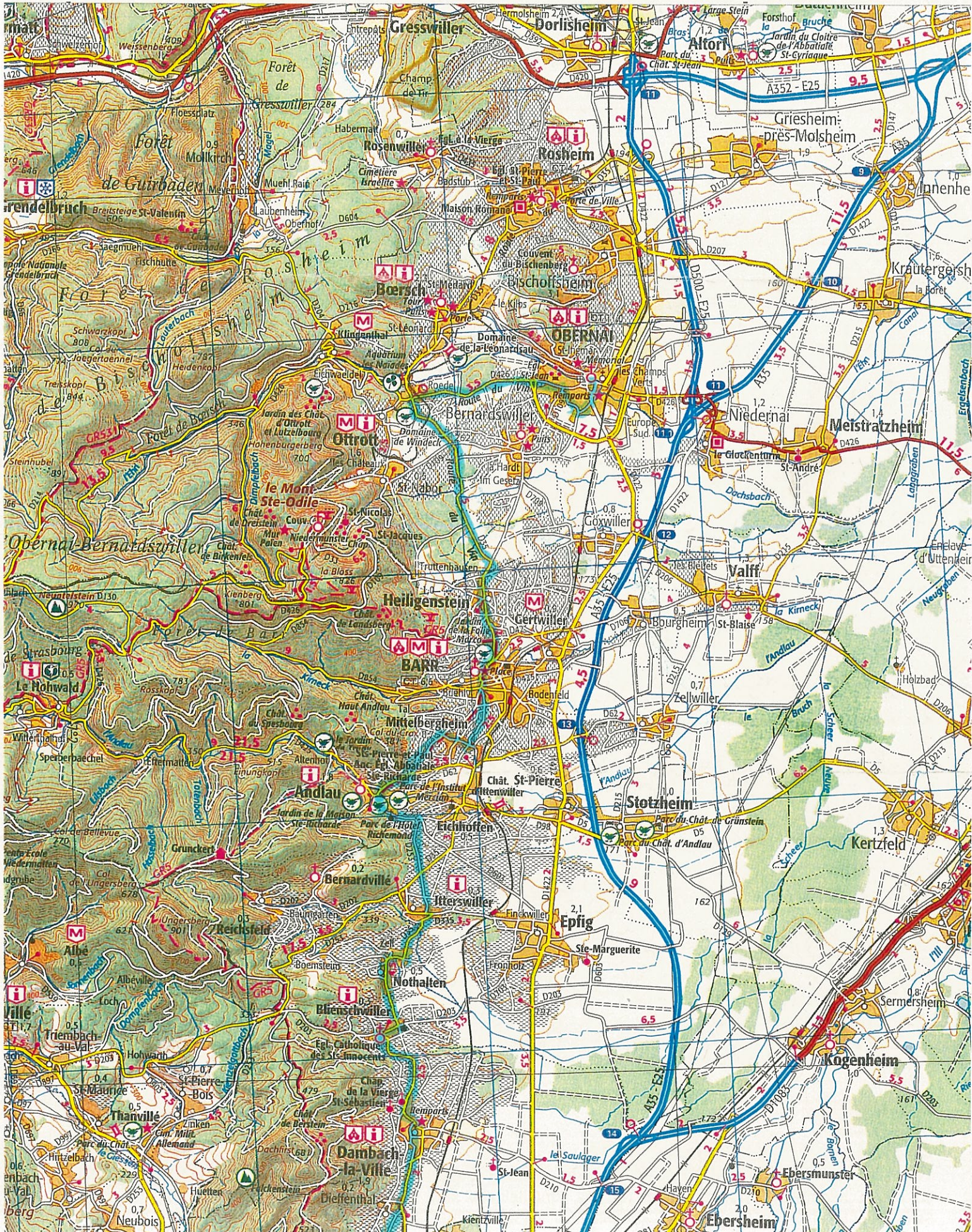
A bowl: *Un bol* A plate: *Une assiette* Olive oil: *Huile d'olive*

It's delicious! *C'est délicieux!*

Remember that in English, "entrée" refers to the main course, but in French it only indicates an appetizer. In restaurants, tipping is automatically included in the price of the meal. Any additional tipping is up to the customer, 1 Euro per person is always appreciated.

Day 5: Bicycle the Alsace Wine Road Part One

Towns for Navigation: Ottrott (4 km), Barr (11 km), Andlau (15 km), Itterswiller (19 km), Dambach-la-Ville (24 km), Scherwiller (29 km), Chatenois (31 km), Kintzheim (35 km), Haut-Koenigsbourg Castle (43 km), Saint Hippolyte (50 km), Bergheim (53 km), Ribeauvillé (56 km), Zellenberg (58 km), Riquewihr (62 km)





Cycling the Vineyards of Alsace
Scale 1:100.000

Day 5: Bicycle the Alsace Wine Road Part Two

Towns for Navigation: Ottrott (4 km), Barr (11 km), Andlau (15 km), Itterswiller (19 km), Dambach-la-Ville (24 km), Scherwiller (29 km), Chatenois (31 km), Kintzheim (34 km), Haut-Koenigsbourg Castle (43 km), Saint Hippolyte (50 km), Bergheim (53 km), Ribeauvillé (56 km), Zellenberg (58 km), Riquewihir (62 km)



Day 6: Pedal the Rhine Plain today or into the Vosges Mountains

Highlights: The festive villages of the Alsace Wine Road

We are in the same hotel again tonight so you can choose your ride again today. We'll mark a beautiful route going up into the mountains with spectacular views around Labaroche. Those wanting a more challenging ride will continue on to the Col du Linge where you can visit the memorial of this World War I battlefield, testimony to the "war of the trenches". An exhilarating downhill takes us through Orbey and back to Riquewihr. Daily Mileage: 41 km (25 miles)

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68340 Riquewihr

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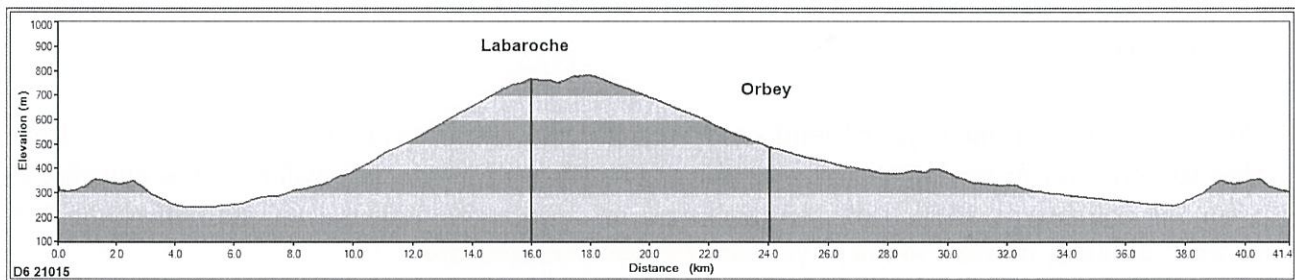
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Today's Ride: Our ride today takes us to spectacular views on mountain roads. Take care during the downhill.



Lunch and Dinner: Plan on a stop for some lunch at Orbey or in Keyserberg. It's also a great route for a picnic and in Labaroche you'll find a boulangerie to buy some picnic supplies. Dinner is on your own this evening.

You Might Like to Know: Our route climbs up just north of the famous mountain massif of the "Ballon d'Alsace." The "Ballon" is both German and French for "balloon" and refers to the rounded massif that defines the southernmost Vosges Mountains. The "ballon" is famous among cyclists as the site of the first climb in the Tour de France in 1905. The Tour is still routed over the "ballon" for historic and nostalgic purposes. Until 1938 no gears were allowed on bicycles at the Tour de France. (So you can be grateful that you have a triple crank and 27 – 30 gears today!)

For those of you interested in a longer and historical more challenging ride – you should go over the Collet du Linge. This was the tragic theatre of operation of one of the bloodiest confrontations of the World War I. It took place between July 20th and October 15th 1915, resulting 17000 deaths. It was a bloody encounter with gas and flame-throwers being used. Approximately 10,000



Frenchmen and 7,000 Germans were to be killed but after the fighting the front line positions were to remain much the same until the end of the war in November 1918. Spending the 3 years sitting in trenches only 2-3 yards apart. It is the most surreal demonstration of the pointlessness of some battles.

One of the last villages we will go through is the birthplace of a "typical" Alsatian and one of the last polymaths: Doctor Albert Schweitzer (14 January 1875 – 4 September 1965) was a German—and later French—theologian, organist, philosopher, physician, and medical missionary in Africa, also known for his interpretive life of Jesus. He was born in Keyserberg, at that time part of the German Empire. Schweitzer, a Lutheran, challenged both the secular view of Jesus as depicted by historical-critical methodology current at his time in certain academic circles, as well as the traditional Christian view.

He received the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize for his philosophy of "Reverence for Life", expressed in many ways, but most famously in founding and sustaining the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Lambaréné, now in Gabon, west central Africa (then French Equatorial Africa). As a music scholar and organist, he studied the music of German composer Johann Sebastian Bach and influenced the Organ reform movement (*Orgelbewegung*).

There is a small museum in Keyserberg located next to the house where he was born, this museum exhibits documents, photographs, personal objects and souvenirs which retraces his life.

Bike Safety Tip:

Braking: your front brake is your friend - but use it carefully and never alone! In general use both brakes together for normal stops. As you become more experienced you will find that applying 2-3 times the pressure to your front brake will stop you faster. Be careful, however, not to overuse your front brake or to use it alone or you will go over the handlebars.

French Lesson of the Day: Ordering drinks:

A draft of beer : *Une pression*

I'd like 1(2) beer(s), please = *Je voudrais une (deux) biere(s), s'il vous plait.*

I would like a glass of water, please = *Je voudrais un verre d'eau, s'il vous plait.*

Coffee:

An American-style coffee (one shot of coffee and the rest is hot water) = *un café allongé*

A coffee with milk = *un café au lait*

An espresso = *un petit café*

Day 6: Loop ride from Riquewihr

Towns for Navigation: Kintzheim (4 km), Ammerschwir (6 km), La Basse Baroche (13 km), Labaroche (16 km), Itterswiller (19 km), Orbey (24 km), Kaysersberg (35 km), Kintzheim (37 km), Riquewihr (41 km)

