

French F1 Grand Prix Ride – Circuit Paul Ricard

- ‘Back on a bike after many years away – your encouragement and simple cycling tips really boosted my confidence. Thank you so much. ‘

Moriah, Steyning,

- ‘We just loved Le Lavandou and the easy cycling along the coast towards St Tropez was such a surprise.’

Janet and Ron, Cheshire,

- ‘What a fantastic ride to Paris. It’s hard to put into words the euphoria I felt when we were cycling down the Champs-Élysées.’

Ian, West Sussex,

- ‘You were just wonderful guides on our first ever trip to Provence . . . we will definitely be back – in fact we’ve just booked!’

The Crane Family, Warwickshire,

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Highlights:

Riviera Magic
Lavender Fields
Provence Verte
Vineyard Visits
Gorges du Verdon
Trails through the Terroir

Summary

On a traverse of Provence, this great cycling tour holds a huge variety of experiences and, lets you explore a wonderful hidden landscape, from the Gorges du Verdon in Haute Provence, through the hearland of Provence Verte and on to the Mediterranean.

This tour includes some of Provence's most spectacular riding and tracks a course through the lanes and trails of its terroir, blending flowing country roads with great off-road tracks which carry you deep into the landscape.

Start your tour in Provence's hilly north and descend to the sea through a beautiful rolling landscape, as the glamour and excitement builds en route to the return of the French Grand Prix.



Tour in Brief:

- Fellow Velo Welcome Briefing
- 5 or 7 Nights Accommodation
- 5 or 7 Continental Breakfasts
- Lunches on Full Cycling Days
- Luggage Transfers
- Carefully Selected Routes
- High Quality Bikes
- Support Vehicle

Introduction

This tour includes some of Provence's most spectacular riding and tracks a course through the lanes and trails of its terroir, blending flowing country roads with great off-road tracks which carry you deep into the landscape.

Start your tour in Provence's hilly north and descend to the sea through a beautiful rolling landscape, as the glamour and excitement builds en route to the return of the French Grand Prix. You can book this tour as a 7 or 5 Day package; the 7 Day Tour includes some truly spectacular cycling through Provence's wonderful landscape and, gives you the option of a non-cycling day to add some relaxation to the tour – the 5 Day package has your Provence arrival on Day 3 of the tour programme, with the cycling starting with the Moustiers to Cotignac stage.

Day 1 Arrive in Provence (7 Day Tour)

Arrive in Provence Verte and we will help you book into your first night's accommodation with a transfer from your local arrival in the Var. Begin to soak up the local atmosphere, relax with great food and wine and, prepare for the start to your cycling tour tomorrow which begins high on the edge of Europe's largest gorge.

Day 2 Route des Cretes to Moustiers-Sainte-Marie – 32 km

On your first cycling day, a Fellow Velo transfer through Provence Verte to ride the Route des Cretes at the Gorges du Verdon, to the first of two nights in Moustiers-Sainte-Marie. An incredibly spectacular and exhilarating ride along the north edge of the gorge from a high-point at 1300m through to Moustiers.



Day 3 Moustiers (5 Day Tour Arrival)

A day of holiday choices – optional free day at Moustiers; could be a great hike or canoe day or, a hop into transport for a sensory ride through the Lavender Fields of the Valensole Plateau. Moustiers is a beautiful Haute Provence village in a wonderful setting and renowned for its ceramics.



Day 4 Moustiers to Cotignac – 53 km

Ride from Moustiers to Cotignac, crossing the Verdon Valley and riding quiet lanes and hidden trails through the Pelenc Forest to an archetypal Provencal village and, your arrival in the landscape of Cotes de Provence's vineyards.



Day 5 Cotignac to Cuers – 56 km

Ride from Cotignac to Cuers, crossing almost the whole of the Cotes de Provence landscape with planned opportunities for a vineyard visit or two along the trail (these could range from a great wine cooperative, to historic family owned Chateaux and, possibly one of the more prestigious Cru Classe Chateau of the Var).



Day 6 Cuers to the Mediterranean – 57 km

Ride from Cuers to the Med, crossing the Massif des Maures and passing by the Circuit Paul Ricard. The route will take you from Cotes de Provence into the much smaller wine appellation of Bandol; depending on the riding group's choice, we may include a Bandol vineyard visit close to the coast.



Day 7 French F1 Grand Prix – Qualifying

Your race weekend really starts to hot up today. Travel to the Circuit Paul Ricard by local public transport and take your seat or spot for F1 Qualifying and enjoy a great day on which the anticipation can only build towards the big race tomorrow.



Day 8 French F1 Grand Prix – Race Day

The return of the French Grand Prix after 10 years and, more than 25 years since it was last hosted at the Circuit Paul Ricard. With the top teams looking closer together than for a long time at the end of the 2017 F1 Season, it already looks like the 2018 season could be one of the most competitive in years. Who knows how the championship will be looking in the run up to the Paul Ricard race but, it'll be a fantastic experience.



Eat Sleep Drink

Eat

From your arrival before the cycling starts, to the day of your departure, breakfast is included at each of your accommodation venues on the tour. That means that even if you take it in a leisurely fashion, you will have enough fuel onboard to start each ride or, head out on the optional exploring days of the tour. On each of the full cycling days, lunches are included, either gathered up near the beginning of the ride or planned at a local hostelry. On your exploring days we will give you suggestions on where lunch can easily be tracked down, whatever your plan for the day. On this tour, we leave the evening meal venues with you; there are options to eat in at your accommodation and, on most evenings, you will be in a small town where there is plenty of choice from traditional Provencale, to Italian influence or the bounties of the adjacent sea.



Sleep

For groups on our Fully Guided Tour most of the accommodation will be in small or specially selected hotels; welcoming staff, lovely comfortable rooms and the promise of a great night's sleep. Chambre d'hôtes can be included in the mix on this tour, particularly for couples and smaller groups on the Self-guided option. On whichever tour you choose, the sea will be on your doorstep, either right there in front of you or just a short walk away from nearly all of your individual venues. With two nights in each of three locations on this

tour, you will have that little bit of extra time to explore and to soak up the atmosphere, particularly in the long summer evenings.



Drink

Maintaining both your energy and hydration levels while cycling is very important. On all but one cycling day of this tour, it is easy to keep yourself supplied with water and soft drinks. We will provide all the information you need to track down supplies and, will make sure that on the one ride where they are a little more sparse, that we set you off with plenty of water onboard. As we are in the south of France, it will be of no surprise that, when it comes to more profitable liquid refreshments from the land, wine is at the fore. Provence is renowned for its Rosé but it also produces some high quality red wine too. There is also a great tradition of co-operative wine producing by smaller producers often centred around small towns and villages. This tour takes you through that landscape with easy options to try before you buy.



French F1 Grand Prix Ride Dates

We offer this guided tour as either a 7 Day/Night package or a 5 Day/Night package, both leading straight into the Grand Prix Weekend with your arrival on the coast, not far from the

circuit, on the Friday evening of the Race Weekend.

French F1 7 Day Guided Tour from £1155.00/person – Starts Sunday before the Race Weekend

French F1 5 Day Guided Tour from £845.00/person – Starts Tuesday before the Race Weekend

The deposit for this tour is £350.00 or £450.00/person.

More than any of our other tours, our standard prices for this tour are best achieved when we have as much advance booking time as possible (we would still try to match the price even on last minute bookings but, accommodation is normally the largest component in a tour price and, the one which can vary the most). The later bookings are made, the higher the final price is likely to be – solely based on the accommodation market around this most popular of motor-racing events.

The tour price is based on 2 people sharing rooms but, we can also quote for single room occupancy if that is what a customer wants (there is nearly always a supplement to be paid with such a booking but we would advise on the details before you committed to your holiday). Grand Prix Tickets for the Saturday and Sunday are not included in the package price but, we can help you with advice on ticket purchase and locations for watching the race.

Most holiday accommodation in France is charged on a room basis rather than a per person price and, there is often very limited or no discount on the price for children. However, for any booking where a group is happy to share family or multi-bed rooms, we may even be able to quote a lower price per person for the tour (if you advise us that you would be happy with such an accommodation arrangement).

We do not add margins to the accommodation we book for our tours so, if we can book accommodation at a lower price, we will pass these savings on to our customers.

More Information

Travel to and from your Tour

This Tour starts in Provence Verte, which is easily accessible by train, plane and automobile. Because there are so many options we do not book this part of your trip for you, however we can guide you through the multitude of options.

For anyone joining by car we can provide a location to leave your car for the duration of your Tour. Eurostar and TGV trains offer excellent services from the UK to Saint-Raphaël and can be seen on:

www.raileurope.com

www.voyages-sncf.com

Travelling by train can be a fascinating way to travel and competes very favourably time wise with travelling by plane. The nearest main line stations to the start of this tour are Les Arcs-Draguignan if you are making your journey by train from outside of the region or, Saint-Raphaël if you are connecting from Nice Airport. (We can provide final local transfers from these stations to your starting accommodation.) Both budget and scheduled airlines fly into Nice and we can supply information for onward travel to Saint-Raphaël by train.

There also flights to Toulon, via Flybe and again, we can assist with onward travel information.

The international popularity of F1 Grand Prix events does mean that, especially around the race weekend, travel prices can be above average so, booking early is advised and, extending your trip by a couple of days may be a very worthwhile option too.

If you are bringing your own bike

- For those of you bringing your own bicycle, again we can help you with this, however it is worth considering at this point the cost of putting your bike on a plane or train against using one of our special Fellow Velo bikes.

Fancy a longer holiday

- For anyone who wants to extend their holiday with us, we can book additional hotels for you at the start or end of your Tour, just call us on 07811 285021.

- If you like a longer holiday you can combine our French F1 Tour with parts of the Hidden Provence Tour for an extended trip. You can see the character of such a ride on our Hilltop to Harbours Tour. The linking of these 2 Tours would raise the level to adventurous, however if you wish to avoid the steeper hills we can offer you a taxi/van transfer to avoid this. Please call to discuss further the options.

Families, and/or non cycling companions

- We think the French F1 Tour could be a real adventure for a motor-racing mad family. We are happy to be guided by your own confidence in your children's cycling ability and, are happy to talk through aspects of the route should you have any particular concerns (particularly about cycling on the higher traffic roads). On the 7 Day package in particular, you get to stay more than one night in 2 different locations, by fabulous beaches, and most of our selected accommodation stops have swimming pools (opening periods will vary).

- A partner, spouse or friend who doesn't share your love of cycling. On any of our Fully Guided Tours, a non-cycling person can get a lift with the support vehicle from location to location. Again this is a good one as there are days where you can choose not to cycle so you can further explore the delights of Provence together with your non-cycling companion.

Travel Pack

- Your personally tailored travel pack will be with you approx 3 weeks prior to your Tour start date. There will be oodles of information for you in this pack.

Any queries at all before you book

- We don't want to bombard you with masses of text to read, so anything at all that needs clarification please call us on

07811 285021, 01788 568371 or email us at jane@fellowvelo.com