

Guided JURA ROUTE

Riding Day 7

Fournets-Luisans

Kilometers: 60

to Malbuisson

Meters of climbing: 300

DAY 09

Last time I slept here, I was woken up by a rooster and then a parade of tractors. Well, whatever gets you out bed. I'm sure you're feeling a bit sore. The good news is that today is a relatively short, flat day.

The first part of the ride is pristine countryside, much as you've come to expect. You'll see lots of woodpiles, cows, chickens and smoke coming from chimneys. Although very near the Swiss border, many of the locals around here may have never been to Switzerland and its doubtful they've ever been to Geneva. For these folks, the "big city" is Pontarlier, and as you approach the town you'll find that the countryside opens up...wider spaces, fewer valleys.

Pontarlier isn't a bad place to spend an hour. Indeed, it probably does seem like a big city after spending the night in St. Hippolyte and last night in the countryside. The streets here are cobblestone, the shops sell fashionable items and the well-manicured lawns by the river are rather stately. This is really the last "city" that we'll be in during our riding, so if you haven't yet bought a French souvenir, now might be the time.

When you head out of town you'll come face to face with the magnificent Chateau de Joux. Built out of wood in the 11th century, it was blown down by a big bad wolf and replaced with stone in the 12th century. Like most castles, it housed and protected a string of once-important, but long-forgotten families. It was eventually transformed into an important prison that held a few famous personalities of the French revolution. It's now a museum best known for its collection of old weapons.

With the castle behind, you now have a wonderful view of the beautiful *Lac de Pointe*. It's not just any lake: France's 3rd largest ! As small as Switzerland is, they have 5 lakes bigger than this one ! Still, for France it is big lake and so a popular place. 90% of the tourists are from the local region. As beautiful as the area is, most people in Geneva have never even heard of this lake.

You'll go around the western perimeter of the lake and then up around to the town of Malbuisson. Your hotel is quite majestic by Jura standards. It's almost out of place.

According to the family, the hotel was created from a farm house in the 1920s. It was then requisitioned by the Germans during the occupation in 1939 and wasn't reopened as a hotel until 1949 when it was bought by a locally famous resistance fighter names "Chauvin". It's been in the Chauvin family ever since.

If you have always dreamt of having a lavish meal surrounded by imperial furnishings, tonight is the night ! You'll be having supper in the hotel's wonderful Louis-XVI-style restaurant. Whatever you have to eat this evening, make sure you get the cheese plate at the end of the service. It's good fun watching them haul it out and more fun choosing.

Don't worry about the calories. Tomorrow you'll more than burn them off.