 Take the side trip to see the gorges of the Loue River



Day 9:

Luisans → Malbuisson



Distance:

80 Kilometers



Climbing:

818 Meters

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

This is a short day, so consider a side trip. I've placed a green marker in the town of St. Gorgon, (25 km from Fournets). If you turn right here and take the D67 towards Ornans, you'll follow the Loue river and see some spectacular gorges. Ornans is almost 20 km away, so perhaps consider going just to Mouthier (7 kilometers) or Vuillafans (11 km). You'll still have some great views of the gorges.

If you skip the side trip, consider spending some time in Pontarlier. Indeed, it probably does seem like a big city after spending the night in St. Hippolyte and last night in the countryside, (population 17,000). The streets here are cobblestone, the shops sell fashionable items and the well-manicured lawns by the river are almost 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 is 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 from the French revolution. It's now a museum best known for its collection of old weapons.

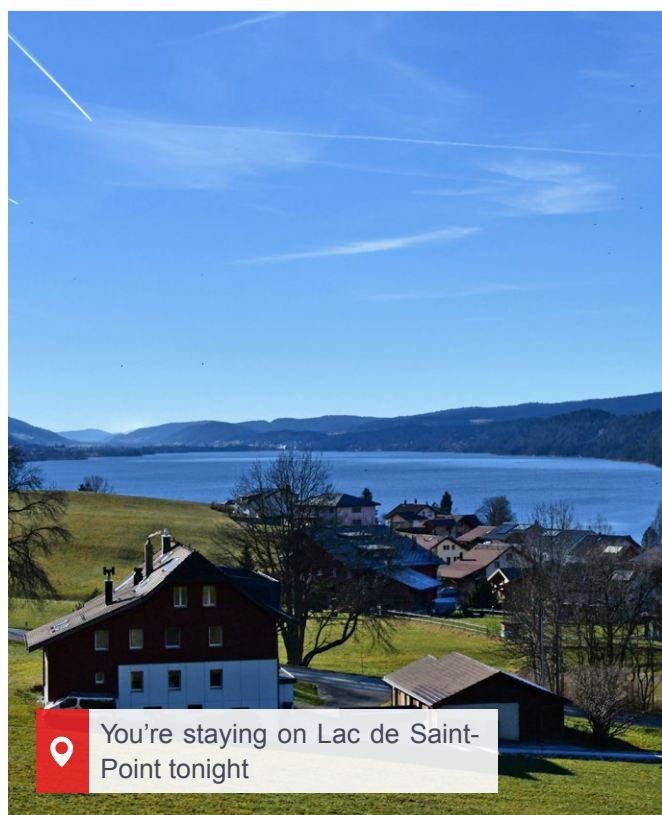
With the castle behind, you now have a wonderful view of the beautiful Lac de Saint-Point. It's not just any lake, it's France's 3rd largest lake ! As small as Switzerland is, they have at least 5 lakes bigger than this one ! Indeed, it



Heading to Pontarlier

is a popular place, but 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.



You're staying on Lac de Saint-Point tonight

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 named 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 may be the night ! 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 even more fun choosing. Don't be shy...they expect you to choose 4 or 5 different ones.

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