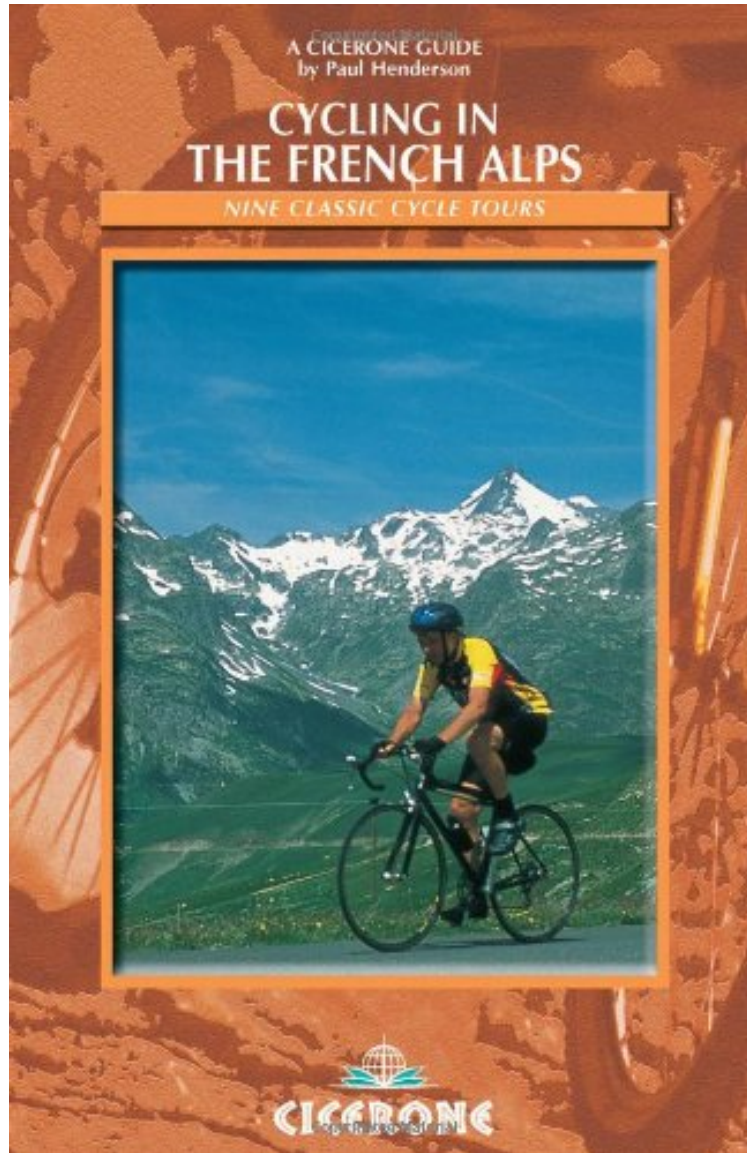


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Cycling in the French Alps (Cycling Guides Series)

Paul Henderson

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Paul Henderson : Cycling in the French Alps (Cycling Guides Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cycling in the French Alps (Cycling Guides Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Good - could be better By B Browne Useful but could be better. The first section of the grand traverse contains a long narrative for the whole trip between Geneva and Nice; the next section is a description of each day's route. This leaves you flicking between the long narrative and the each day's route section. It would be better if the long narrative section was disposed of the information contained in it was included in

the description to each days route.Great route / cycle by the way.Newer guides should somehow try to give sat nav file.4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. It was the best of sources, it was the worst of sourcesBy Dennis KetterlingI took this book along on my solo cycling trip in the French Alps, loaded with 90lbs of bike and bags. My itinerary was:Col de la RamazCol de la SavolireCol du Ran FollyCol de Joux PlaneCol de la ColombiereCol de la Forclaz (Annecy)Col du MaraisCol de la Croix FryCol des AravisCol des SaisiesCol de MrailletCormet de RoselendLa PlagneCol de la MadeleineCol du GlandonCol de la Croix de FerCol du TlgrapheCol du GalibierCol du LauteretLes Deux AlpesAlpe d'HuezCol d'IzoardCol de MontgnvreSestriere (Italy)Colle delle Finestre (Italy)Col du Mont CenisCol de l'IseranI found this book a great source for nice photos of the areas covered, and turn-by-turn directions to reach the Cols, but it had some major problems.The turn-by-turn directions are not really needed! Any map will show how to reach the areas, as the French Alps are a deceptively small geographical area.Another problem is a lack of an index for the cols. The book has a table of contents with the author's loop configuration for various tours of his devising, but you can't directly find "La Plagne" for instance. You have to look at a map of the loops, figure out which loop has the pass you're looking for, then page through the chapter until you find a reference in the description. His maps are simply awful, a sort of "connect the dots" drawing, with no geography or topography, and the scale of the distances on the maps appears distorted.There are elevation charts to give one a general idea of the undulations of his routes from day to day. If you take his planned routes, they are continuous, along the bottom of the page, over the number of days each route takes. I don't think most people on a once-in-a-lifetime trip will follow his routes exactly. You'll find yourself jumping from chapter to chapter to map your own route.Unfortunately, the descriptions of the great climbs of the Alps are prosaic and uninformative. His description of the Col de la Colombiere? "The first part of the ascent, to le Reposoir,is a mere warm-up for the serious work ahead: over the last 8km to the summit the average gradient is almost 9%!" That's it, the entire description of the climb. The Col de la Madeleine? "The climb to the Madeleine is long (25km), but the gradient is quite variable and every few kilometres there are flatter sections where your legs can relax a little." The Col du Galibier? "Whether or not you have the road to yourself, cycling over the Galibier is always a challenge: there are a few easy sections and the last kilometre is the steepest."I found the book useful for general information on the area, with nice photography, a listing of available facilities and services such as water, as well as shops, cafes, campsites, BBs, banks and bike shops (always iffy, as these things change on a continuous basis), but as for good, hard information on the daunting physical challenges of cycling in the Alps, not so good.However, it is a testament to the lack of any other comprehensive guide to cycling in the Alps, that I have to say this book is almost indispensable if you want to take a cycling trip in the area. I have to give kudos for his effort, but in many frustrating ways, the book is a huge disappointment; but buy it. There is more specific information on many websites, but you won't find anything better in conventional book form.

Cycle Touring in the French Alps presents a personal selection of the most picturesque cycling routes through the mountains of South-east France. Nine tours - seven circuits plus the 'Grand Travers' from Geneva to Nice. The 'classic' high passes of the French Alps (Galibier, Iseran, Izoard, etc) and many lesser known areas of the pre-Alps and Southern Jura. Second edition includes the classic Mont Ventoux climb.Although all of the tours are in mountain areas, the scenery - from the rolling hills of the Bugey to the dramatic limestone gorges of the Chartreuse or the snowy peaks of the Ecrins - is extremely varied. Without neglecting the 'must-see' places, the tours have been designed to take you through the secret corners and forgotten backwaters of the regions described; even amongst the most awe-inspiring mountains, it is often the more discreet facets of the countryside that reveal an area's true charm.

About the AuthorPaul Henderson is a keen mountaineer, skier and cyclist. He moved to France nine years ago, where he has explored the Alps extensively on foot, skis and by bike, and works as an English teacher and translator. Paul is author of the Cicerone 'Vanoise Ski Touring' guide, published in 2002.