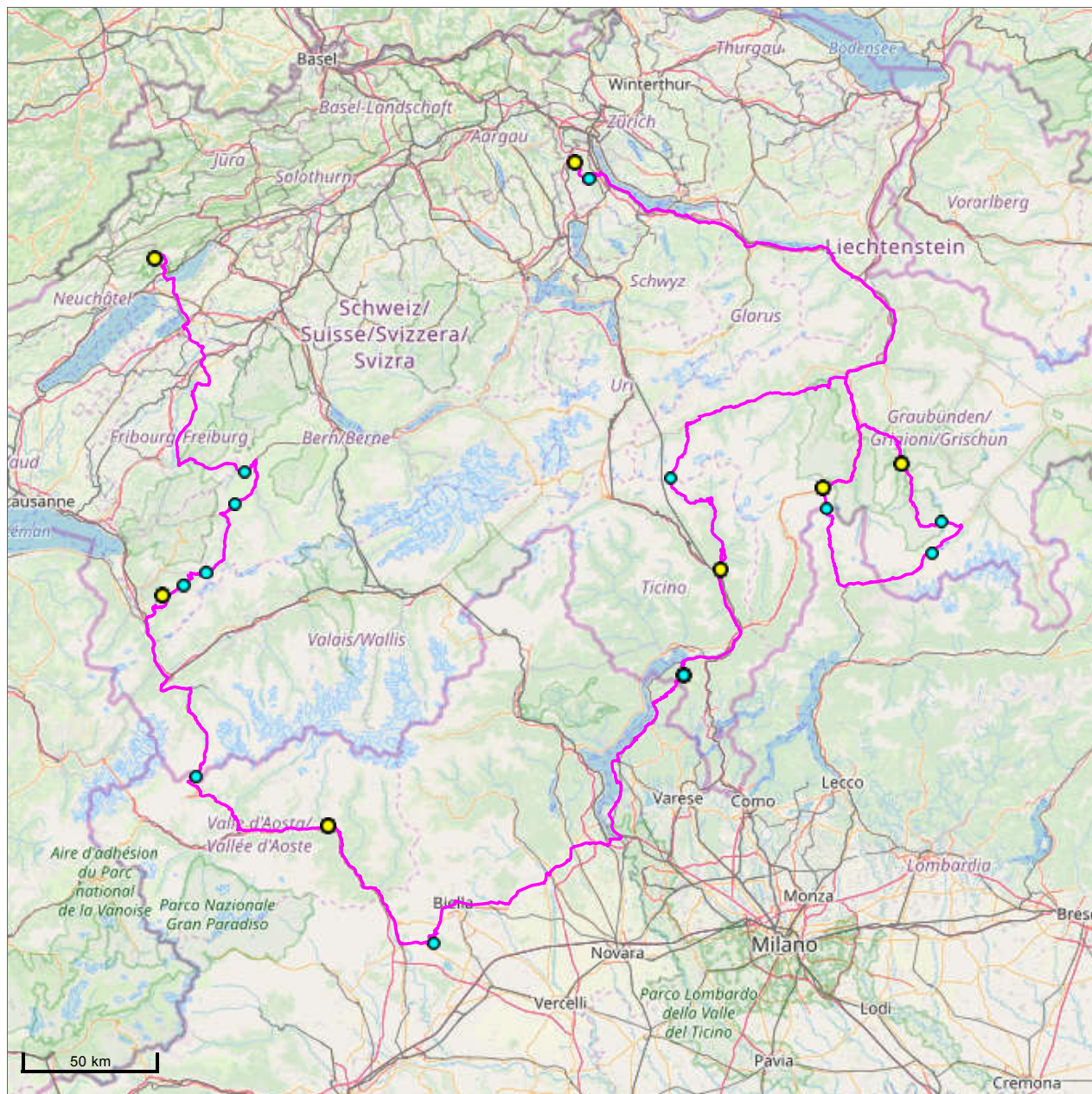
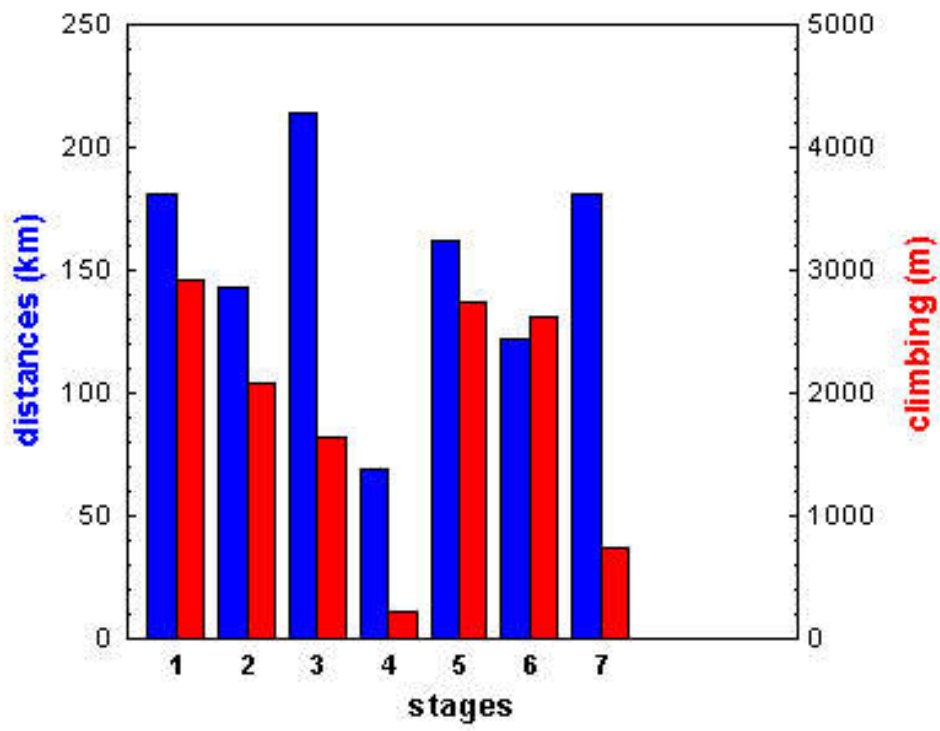


Bicycle tour 1995, 26 July - 02 August

Patrick Schleppe

stage	distance (km)	climbing (m)
Lignières - Jaunpass - Pillon - Croix - Villars-sur-Ollon	177	3080
Villars-sur-Ollon - Grand St-Bernard - Châtillon	143	2100
Châtillon - Ivrea - Sesto Calende - Alpe di Neggia	213	2100
Alpe di Neggia - Bellinzona - Biasca	68	260
Biasca - Lucomagno - Versam - Splügen	161	3060
Splügen - Maloja - Julier - Cunter	122	2640
Cunter - Chur - Bonstetten	181	960
total	1065	14200





Pass Julier, in the upper part of the south side



The Valpeline valley and the Grand Combin as seen from Arollod in the Aosta valley



Indemini



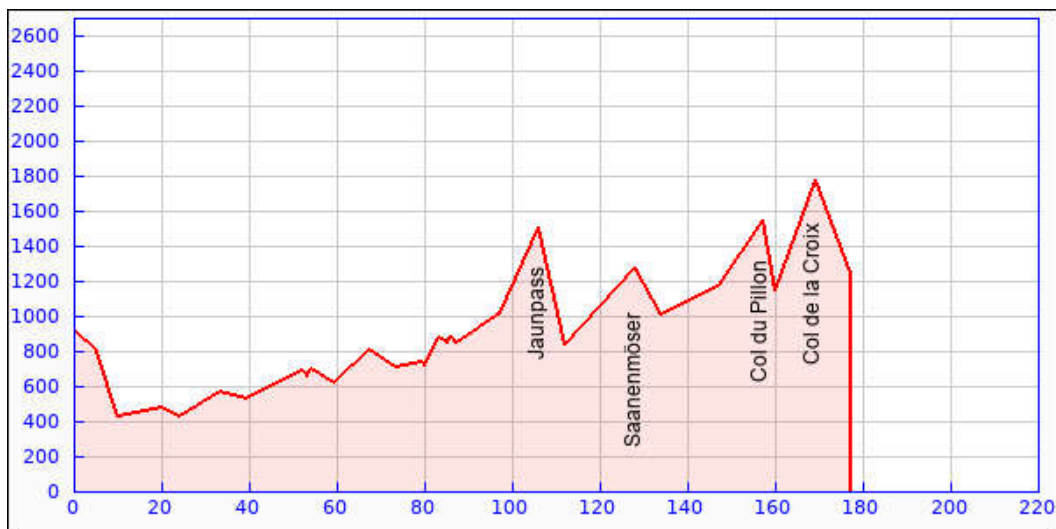
Platta and (further) Curaglia in the Medel valley

Stage 1 (26 July 1995): Lignières - Jaunpass - Pillon - Croix - Villars-sur-Ollon

The 1995 bicycle tour had long been uncertain: i had back pains since a couple of months. Finally, i decided to try. From Lignières, i rode down to Le Landeron. From there, on mostly flat roads, i headed towards Murten/Morat, further towards Fribourg, but then went around that city. Unfortunately, my back was already aching. The roads were slowly getting steeper, but the first real climb started from the region of Gruyères. Riding up to the [Jaunpass](#) was still not too bad, but when i reached the pass, i could barely get off my bike and walk a few steps. My back was aching terribly. I was already thinking of giving up, but now that i was in the mountains, i did not want to cross again the plateau to go back home. So i decided to continue for a while.

This was the best thing to do: from there on, it went better and better. During the afternoon, the pains slowly vanished and i could enjoy the next three passes, [Saanenmöser](#), [Pillon](#) and Col de la [Croix](#). I rode to the second one together with two other cyclists. And on the top of the last one i talked a while with a young lady who had climbed the pass from the other side. I was thinking that, yes, it had really been better not to give up. After the descent, i stopped at Villars. The hotel i found was rather expansive but comfortable. Unfortunately, the dinner they had was nothing for a hungry cyclist!

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Les Prés (Lignières)	0	920	
Lignières	5	800	
Le Landeron	10	430	
Ins / Anet	20	480	50
Bellechasse	24	430	
Salvenach	33	570	140
Schiffenen	39	530	
St. Ursen	52	690	160
Tasberg	53	660	
Römerswil	54	700	40
Marly	59	620	
Les Chenalettes (La Roche)	67	810	190
Hauteville	73	710	
Botterens	79	740	30
Montsalvens (Broc)	80	720	
Châtel-sur-Montsalvens	83	880	160
Lac de Montsalvens	85	850	
Charmey	86	890	40
La Tsintre	87	850	
Jaun	97	1020	170
Jaunpass	106	1510	490
Reidenbach	112	840	
Saanenmöser	128	1280	440
Saanen	134	1010	
Gsteig	147	1180	170
Col du Pillon	157	1550	370
Les Diablerets	160	1150	
Col de la Croix	169	1780	630
Villars-sur-Ollon	177	1250	
total	177		3080



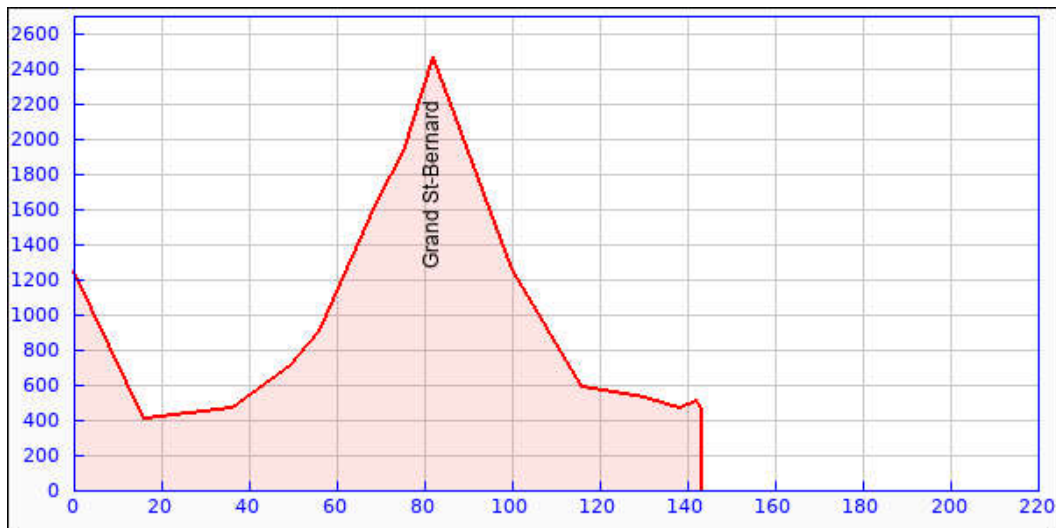
Stage 2 (27 July 1995): Villars-sur-Ollon - Grand St-Bernard - Châtillon

The next morning, descending towards Bex, i saw a famous cyclist: Pascal Richard. He was coming the other way, climbing to Villars. I recognised him... but he didn't recognise me. (Perhaps he would sometimes prefer to be able, like me, to ride incognito?) Once in the valley, i followed the main roads towards Martigny. After crossing the town, i began to climb to the only pass of the day: the [Grand Saint-Bernard](#). One pass, but 2000 meter to gain in elevation. And this on the steps of some historical characters like Hannibal or Napoleon!

It was not a difficult climb, but long, long. It took me about three hours, including some short pauses. Most of the climb was on a broad road with a relatively important traffic, but then most of the motor vehicles disappeared into the tunnel and the last kilometers were quite. At the pass, i stopped at the hospice for a small lunch. Then i started the long descent to Aoste. Losing so much elevation in short time meant rapidly increasing temperatures. So i was thirsty again when i reached the valley. And then i found quite strong headwinds to continue to the east.

I finally stopped at Châtillon, the bottom of the Valtournanche (the valley from the Cervino = Cervin = Matterhorn). The hotel i found was new, comfortable and not so expansive... but absolutely boring. International standards. Could have been anywhere else in the world. The restaurant where i had dinner was more interesting: enough pasta for a cyclist, with a glass of wine and a dessert for less than 10'000 Lire. A bargain.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Villars-sur-Ollon	0	1250	
Bex	16	410	
Martigny	36	470	60
Sembracher	49	710	240
Orsières	56	910	200
Bourg-St-Pierre	69	1650	740
Bourg-St-Bernard	75	1930	280
Grand St-Bernard	82	2470	540
Etroubles	100	1260	
Aosta	116	590	
Nus	130	530	
Chambave	138	470	
Châtillon	142	510	40
Gléréyaz (Châtillon)	143	470	
total	143		2100



Stage 3 (28 July 1995): Châtillon - Ivrea - Sesto Calende - Alpe di Neggia

The first part of the third stage was to continue down the valley, but now more or less to the south. There was more and more traffic, and the roads were quite bad. I was therefore glad when i reached Ivrea and could turn to the east again. My goal was the Lago Maggiore, and i therefore had to go across several valleys. This means that i had some climbs and descents, but nothing worth to write about. After Biella, there were so many insects that it was impossible to stop for even one minute. At least not with my yellow dress which was attracting all sorts of flies and mosquitoes.

When i reached Sesto Calende, at the south tip of the Lago Maggiore, i thought that i had done the hardest part of the stage. I just had to ride along the lake and find a place to stay. I rode so to Maccagno, one of the last places before the Swiss border. I went to the tourist information, but they told me that every single room in the region was already booked. Bad luck. Especially because, from there, i did not want to continue around the lake, but rather over the mountains. Then, what other choice did i have than riding up to Indémini? It was a beautiful climb, but i was slowly getting tired. I had more than 200 km when i entered Switzerland. At Indémini, i asked if they had a place to stay for the night. One was occupied, and at the other one... there was nobody around. Well, i still had to go further. And the road was really steep. It is finally at the pass ([Alpe di Neggia](#)) that i could stop. It was almost seven o'clock and i was very tired. But very happy: a beautiful view, nice people, a good dinner and finally a deep sleep in the cabin, with the fresh air of the mountains and the sound of cow bells in the night.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Gléréyaz (Châtillon)	0	470	
St-Vincent	3	560	90
Berriaz	9	380	
Pont-St-Martin	29	340	
Ivrea	46	240	
Taglio Grosso	59	580	340
Mongrando	70	320	
Biella	78	420	100
Rivone	88	240	
Porrino	91	280	40
Rolino	94	230	
S. Bernardo	106	290	60
Gattinara	107	260	
Enea	118	350	90
Cureggio	120	290	
Gâtico	128	380	90
Sesto Calende	140	200	
Ispra	151	220	20
Laveno	168	200	
Castelveccana	176	270	70
Luino	185	200	
Maccagno	191	220	20
Indemini	208	970	750
Alpe di Neggia	213	1400	430
total	213		2100

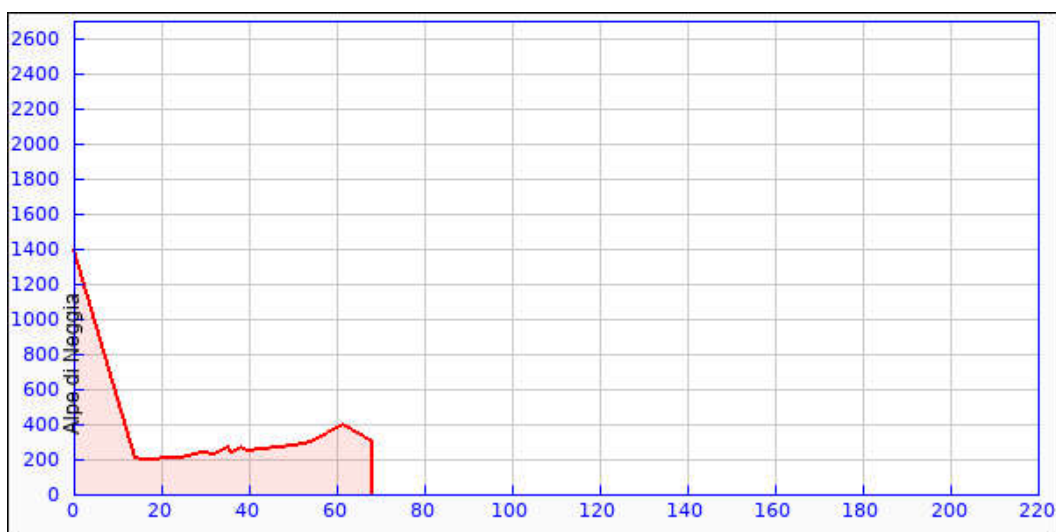


Stage 4 (29 July 1995): Alpe di Neggia - Bellinzona - Biasca

The long previous stage had brought me already quite close to the next goal: Biasca, where i wanted to visit two friends of mine, the twin sisters Michela and Roberta. It was planned that i would arrive in the afternoon and i had thus plenty of time.

After the breakfast, i first had a long and winding road down to the lake (Lago Maggiore). There were already several cyclists coming the other way: it was Saturday and the Alpe di Neggia seems to be an appreciated goal for training and other bicycle rides. From Vira towards Bellinzona, i came partly in a heavy shopping traffic (again: Saturday). Then i crossed the Ticino river and took the smaller and quieter road on the west side of the Riviera towards Biasca. It was an easy ride, and i reached Biasca already around noon. Because i was too early, i decided to ride a bit further, into the Blenio valley. Near Semione, i took a bath in the river. Then i went back to Biasca.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Alpe di Neggia	0	1400	
Vira	14	210	
Magadino	15	200	
Cadenazzo	24	210	10
Giubiasco	29	240	30
Bellinzona	32	230	
Gorduno	35	270	40
S. Carpofo (Gorduno)	36	240	
Gnosca	38	270	30
Spineda (Gnosca)	39	250	
Iragna	50	280	30
Biasca	54	300	20
Semione	61	400	100
Biasca	68	300	
total	68		260



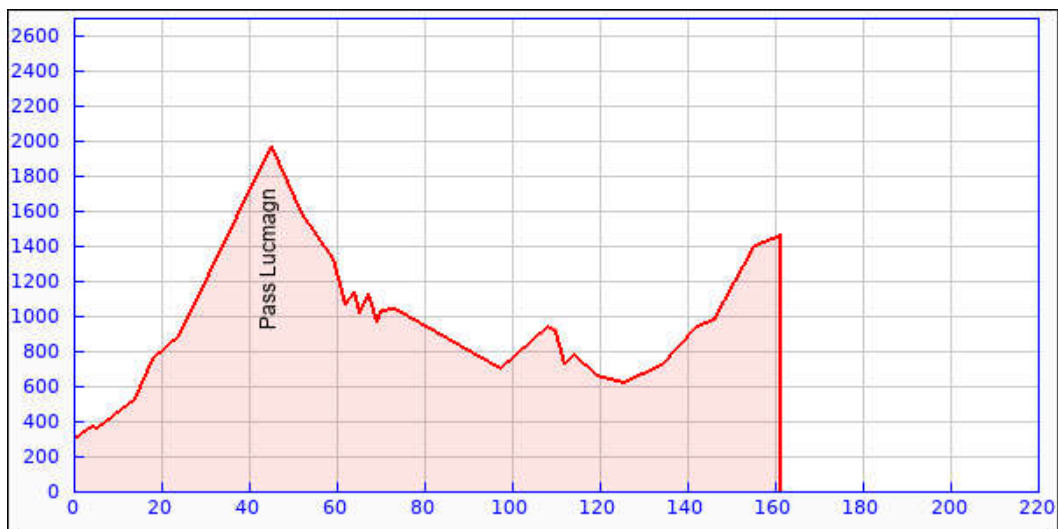
Stage 5 (31 July 1995): Biasca - Lucomagno - Versam - Splügen

I stayed the Sunday with Michela, Roberta and her parents. We went together to the mountains. There, in the forest, they were repairing an old small house (a 'rustico' as they call it there) and we looked at what they had done so far.

After this day off, i was back on saddle early on Monday morning, actually as my friends were still sleeping. For the first few kilometers, i already knew the way from two days before. So far, the Blenio valley had a gentle slope. The real climb came after Olivone. It was quite long but still not very steep. The sky was overcast, and it was quite chilly as i was going up to the [Lucomagno](#). I was therefore glad to take a warm tea at the restaurant of the pass. Then, however, i still had to go uphill for a short distance: there is an artificial lake just after the 'natural' pass and the road climbs a bit to go around it. In the descent, despite my wind jacket, it was really cold. But i soon arrived at Disentis and it was slowly warmer. Just after this town, i followed the signs for the bike road towards Ilanz. This was a bad idea, because it brought me to gravel roads. I had to go up on the left side of the valley to join again the main road. I did not lose much time, but was really angry about this kind of trap!

It was almost noon as i arrived at Ilanz, where i bought a small picnic. Then i continued on the nice road over Versam which i already knew from my [1991 tour](#). From Bonaduz to Thusis, i could ride along with a local cyclist, and we could relay each other against the wind. Then i took the Via Mala, historically, as its name suggests, obviously a difficult passage through a wild canyon of the Rhine river. Nowadays, it's not such a bad road at all, and fortunately most of the traffic takes the highway parallel to it. On the way, i crossed Jacques, a cyclist from Neuchâtel who i know from training camps. As usually, he was descending at breathtaking speed. So fast that he didn't see me at all! After the Rofla canyon (wild and beautiful), i arrived in the high valley of Rheinwald, the goal of this stage.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Biasca	0	300	
Ponte Leggiuna	4	370	70
Malvaglia	5	360	
Acquarossa	14	530	170
Torre	18	760	230
Olivone	24	890	130
Hospezi Lucmagn	44	1920	1030
Pass Lucmagn	45	1970	50
Sogn Gions	52	1590	
Curaglia	59	1330	
Fontanivas	62	1070	
Mustér / Disentis	64	1140	70
Brulf (Mustör)	65	1020	
Cavardiras	67	1130	110
Madernal	69	970	
Punt Grondo	70	1030	60
Sumvitg	73	1040	10
Ilanz	97	700	
Carnifels (Versam)	108	940	240
Versam	110	910	
Versamer Tobel	112	730	
Zault	114	780	50
Bonaduz	119	660	
Rothenbrunnen	125	620	
Thusis	134	720	100
Zillis	142	940	220
Andeer	146	980	40
Sufnersee	155	1400	420
Splügen	161	1460	60
total	161		3060



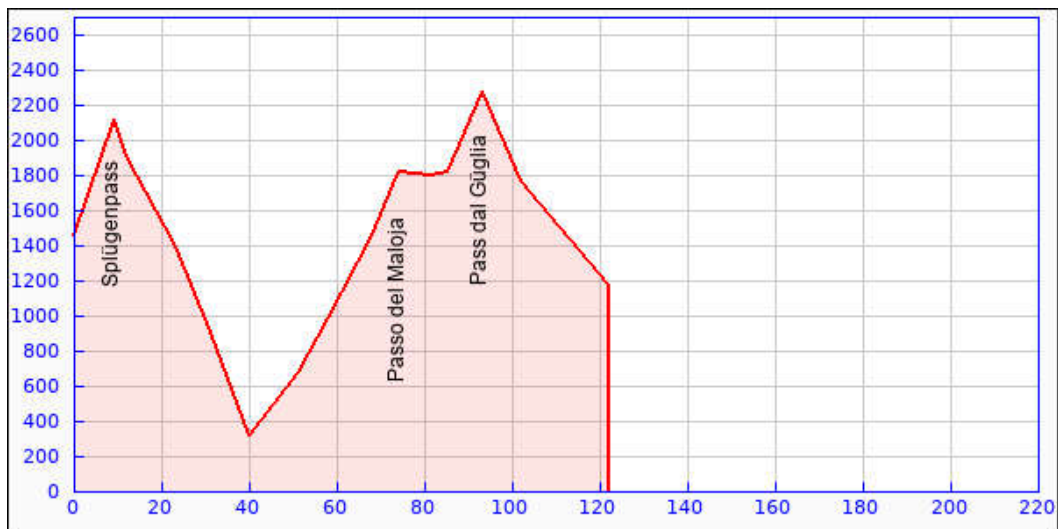
Stage 6 (1 August 1995): Splügen - Maloja - Julier - Cunter

After a night at Splügen village, i took the road to the [Splügen pass](#). Because of the elevation of the valley, it was no longer a very long climb. From the pass, entering Italy, i noticed that the road was not so well maintained. The first villages also appeared half abandoned. The worst were the tunnels: without light, but with potholes. Apart of this, the descent was beautiful. And long, very long, from well above 2000 m elevation down to almost 300. At Chiavenna, i stopped to help two young cyclists who were trying to repair a flat tire but did not have the proper material with them. They were trying to make the round trip over the Maloja and Bernina in one day. I bid them good luck, knowing that they had a hard task.

Both the vegetation and the architecture were clearly showing that i was once more south of the Alps. This, however, was no to last very long because i went to the east after Chiavenna, towards the beautiful Bregaglia valley and the [Maloja](#) pass. This pass has two completely different sides: a steep climb from the Bregaglia, but almost flat from the other side (from the Engiadina). I reached the pass in the early afternoon and continued to Silvaplana. I was refilling my bottles at a fountain as a mountain biker came along who had the same dress as me, wearing the colours of the same local bicycle shop (Prof, St-Blaise)... from the other corner of the country. He was in that region for a mountain bike championship. After exchanging a few words with him, i continued towards the [Julier](#) pass. On its other side i finally looked for a place to stay overnight. It was at Cunter that i found an hotel room. In the evening, because it was the 1st of August, the Swiss national celebration day, i could enjoy the fireworks.

It is only several days later that i talked to my brother and we realised that we had been riding over the Splügen on the same day, even more or less at the same hour. Because he was coming from Chiavenna, we should have met somewhere close to the pass on its Italian side. As far as we could reconstrut it, he was probably taking some pictures a bit further from the road as i passed... Just missed each other.

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Splügen	0	1460	
Splügenpass	9	2120	660
Monte Spluga	12	1910	
Pianazzo	23	1400	
Cimaganda	31	910	
Chiavenna	40	320	
Castasegna	51	680	360
Stampa	58	990	310
Casaccia	68	1460	470
Passo del Maloja	74	1820	360
Segl Baselgia	81	1800	
Silvaplana	85	1820	20
Pass dal Güglia	93	2280	460
Bivio	102	1770	
Cunter	122	1180	
total	122		2640



Stage 7 (2 August 1995): Cunter - Chur - Bonstetten

The last stage of the tour was nothing new for me. Because i already knew the landscapes and the roads, i concentrated more on my speed. Since i was first descending and then had tailwinds (between Reichenau and Chur), i could maintain a good average speed. After three hours riding, i was by the Walensee (lake) and had already 100 km on the counter. Because of some headwind and the final climbs, the average speed later dropped, but it was still 30 km/h as i reached Bonstetten.

This had been my longest bicycle tour. I was glad about it. Slowly but surely, however, i was becoming difficult to find new passes in the Swiss Alps: i now had done most of the them...

	distance (km)	altitude (m)	climbing (m)
Cunter	0	1180	
Tiefencastel	8	850	
Valmala (Alvaschagn)	10	960	110
Sils i. D.	20	680	
Thusis	22	720	40
Rothenbrunnen	31	620	
Bonaduz	36	660	40
Reichenau	38	590	
Tamins	39	630	40
Felsberg	45	570	
Chur	49	600	30
Masans	52	570	
Stelli (Chur)	53	590	20
Untervaz Station	58	540	
Zizers	60	560	20
Sargans	77	480	
Mühlehorn	104	420	
Mülital	105	460	40
Rüti (Bilten)	118	420	
Oberbilten	119	450	30
Allmeind (Bilten)	121	420	
Reichenburg	123	440	20
Buttikon	125	420	
Siebnen	130	450	30
Oberrieden	161	410	
Gattikon	164	550	140
Langnau a.A.	166	470	
Albispass	171	790	320
Türten	173	650	
Habersaat	175	670	20
Aumüli	179	580	
Schladhau	180	640	60
Bonstetten	181	550	
total	181		960

