

Alan Buttler's ride to Paris, Spring 2011

Note by DH: The ride below took some detours through some of the nicest bits of the charming Vexin region, and also involved staying at some very special places. Would be suitable for people with extra time on their hands. There is also now a scenic cycleway down the river Epte from Gisors which would make it even more of a beautiful ride:

http://www.voiesvertes.com/htm_partenaire/detaille27giga1.htm Take this as far as Bray et Lu , then cut across country to Chaussey, Arthies, Wy-dit-Jolie-Village, Vigny (NOT busy D14), Sagy and Courdimanche to rejoin route. I haven't tried this route but am pretty sure it would be really good, taking in the best of the Vexin, though probably about 20-30 miles longer than the main route. There's the potential to find a more direct cross-country route from Forges to Bezu than Alan took to reach his accommodation (though it would still be longer than the main route). After Bray there's a big uphill onto the plateau, but the alternative of following the river route as far as the Seine would probably end you up in a busier and less pleasant route along the Seine valley. Let me know if anyone tries this!

Alan's notes sent to me:

Day 1 - Brighton to Newhaven (11 Miles), 10am Ferry, Dieppe to Forges les Eaux (33 Miles)

Living in Brighton I can't believe I've left it this long before making use of the ferry in Newhaven! We landed in Dieppe and had lunch in the harbour before picking up your guide and taking the Avenue Verte to Forges les Eaux. Was an amazing day, though the beginning of the route was busy with families enjoying the Easter weekend and fantastic weather.

Accommodation - Le Saint Denis, Forges les Eaux

<http://www.booking.com/hotel/fr/le-saint-denis.html>

Cheap room (46 eu on suite) and fairly comfortable. Continental breakfast wasn't enough for sustenance so we stocked up at the small supermarket in the square. We ate that evening in the only place open in town, the [Aux 3 pommes](#) restaurant. Good food and reasonably priced.

Day 2 - Forges les Eaux to nr Bezancourt

<http://www.mapmyride.com/routes/view/32279364>

Due to accommodation availability we had to deviate from your route for the next 2 days and headed to Chateau du Landel, an amazing family run chateau about 15km west of Gornay.

We stopped for lunch in La Feuille in a little place on the junction of the D921 in the north of the village. We had the best food and coffee of the whole trip in this little watering hole!!

Also a small shop in the village was open to get water and fruit. Beautiful scenery, quiet woodland roads especially after La Feuille. We had planned to divert out to Lyons-la-Forêt but keep the miles low today.

Accommodation - Chateau du Landel, Bezancourt

<http://www.booking.com/hotel/fr/chateau-du-landel.html>

Although not cheap (98 Eu) and breakfast (12 eu each) this was the best placed we stayed on the whole trip. A very warm and welcoming family operated this beautiful chateau which

previously was the property of a glass factory owner. For the summer it would be a good stop with its heated outdoor pool. Dinner was of a very high standard and a price tag to match, I think it was 90 eu for 3 courses with wine extra for 2. But we don't stay in those surroundings often, if ever so just made the most of it. Highly recommended if you have the cash and want to stay somewhere special. Good breakfast though pricy including cereal and fruit, cold meats and cheeses.

Day 3 - Bezancourt to Chaumont-en-Vexin

<http://www.mapmyride.com/routes/view/32279624>

Again due to accomodation availabiliy we had to stray from the route, aiming for Chaumont-en-Vexin. We followed the river valley from Bezu-la-Forêt via St Denis to Gisors on what was the most specatular scenery of the whole trip. Beautiful quiet country roads and sleepy villages. I was sad not to be able to keep to your route this day but I'm sure it was very similar scenery. We stopped for lunch in Gisors eating at the supermarket there to keep cost down. We had to follow a very busy A road from Gisors part way towards Chaumont-en-Vexin which wasn't very pleasant.

Accomodation - Chateau De Bertichères, nr Chaumont-en-Vexin

<http://www.booking.com/hotel/fr/chateau-de-berticheres.html>

The only hotel we could find was this golf course and chateau near Chaumont-en-Vexin.

Completely different feel to the family run Landel, this establishment felt more like the hotel aspect was secondary to golf course. We were given a nice room in the main building but couldn't open the windows, so after a little conversation where one moment the place was fully booked so they couldn't move us, to us being given one of the best rooms in chateau at no extra cost. There is a restuarant but for lunch only (for the golfers), but they arranged a cold meats/fish 3 course meal for us that evening which was fairly good value, with wine at 15 eu each. Beautiful room and resonable at 70 eu for a double.

Day 4 - Chaumont-en-Vexin to St Germain-en-Laye

<http://www.mapmyride.com/routes/view/32280560>

Leaving Chaumont-en-Vexin we picked up your route plan just south of Chars. Really nice countryside from Chaumont to Chars, though nothing in comparison to the first few days. As I'm sure you know the architecture begins to change and the villages seem to lose their sleepy fairy tale air and become more real and functional. We planned to eat in Courdimance but nothing was open, so worth noting there is a big supermarket in Menucourt for those low on supplies.

Route plan was perfect, only updated news to add is that the D22 was closed to traffic for resurfacing after Boisemont and before you take the right turn down the hill to Triel-sur-Siene. Passing this was fine though it is easy to get put off by the diversion signs. I know the other lady we met in Paris who followed your route dealt with this ok and just pushed her bike through. We rode through waved on by smiling workmen. Its likely to be complete by now I would have though.

I was amazed by the scenery after crossing the Siene, nothing like I expected at all, for some reason I imagined something more like Shoreham, industrial and unappealing!

After passing through the hospital at Poissy we had no problem finding the entrance to the woods. The surface was hardpacked and fine for our bikes (we were both on road bikes with 700x25c tyres).

Accommodation - Chateau du Val, nr St Germain-en-Laye

<http://www.booking.com/hotel/fr/le-chateau-du-val.html>

We stayed in this old hunting lodge of Louis XIV (I think!). We were scuppered by their strick evening dinner regime, you have to book in the morning if I remember rightly if you want to eat. Unknown to me prior, the chateau is also an exclusive retirement home for recipients of the *Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur* and their widows. We had a large comfortable room and the breakfast was good. Having a good map of the outskirts of paris (michelin if I remember rightly) helped us navigate the forest paths. A little more expensive at 85 eu for a double and breakfast at 10 eu each.

Day 5 - St Germain-en-Laye to Paris

Your route plan really showed its worth today, thankyou again for an extremely well thoughtout route. The section through Rocquencourt was tricky and very busy as you mentioned so another option there would be good. That aside we got to the Eiffel Tower without any hitches. Only other thing to add is we stopped for a hot drink (as it was chucking it down, first day of bad weather) at a very exclusive little restuarant who too pitty on us just before the D7 crosses the D307 before Rocquencourt. Can't remember the name unfortunately but they were very nice to us wet and bedraggled cyclists!