

ONE WAY/ ROUND TRIP

SKI THE ECHALP CROSS-COUNTRY
TRAIL AT ABRIÈS



Haut-Guil's «long cross-country trail down the valley» is a favourite with everybody, including ski champions.



USEFUL INFO

THE CHAMPION'S VIEW

Paul Goalabré, a member of the French cross-country ski team and U23 vice-champion of the world in 2014, was born in Queyras and often comes back here to see his family. And also to practise his favourite sport, particularly in the Haut-Guil valley. «When I come back to Abriès, I love setting off from home and putting on my skis after barely 100 metres. I like going up to Echalp on the left bank (the one that climbs to the right!), which is undulating. It's different from the other sections, because you're climbing steadily higher up the valley, in touring mode, with alternating climbs and descents. Much more so than at Arvioux or Molines, where it's a continuous climb...»

A Sunday morning in March in Abriès. We're still waiting for the sun to show its face. But the shuttle bus is already here. Bang on time and free of charge, how about that! The shuttle makes cross-country skiing in the Haut-Guil valley accessible even to the less physically fit, because it's mostly downhill on the way back.

When you get to Echalp - a remote spot of the kind that Queyras specialises in - you can opt to either carry on further up to the wilderness landscape along the mountain trail leading towards Monviso, or to make your way gently back to civilisation, via Ristolas.

The sun still hasn't made its mind up. It's playing games, drilling bright holes in the clouds and releasing a few snowflakes. All in all it's such a strikingly beautiful scene that we pause to feast our eyes on it before setting off. If you're in no hurry at all, you even can go and say hello to Elise and her sled dogs who like settling down here once winter arrives.

Once you have your skis on and you've crossed the Guil, you're ready to go, starting with a short climb to warm you up. Soon you reach a point where you have

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a choice between left bank or right bank, following the meanders or making tracks toward the villages. Whichever you choose, the sound of the river will be within earshot from start to finish, close by or in the distance, but always audible. It provides gentle background music, keeping in time with the cross-country skiers who find pleasure in this «long cross-country run down the valley», as it's described by sprinter Paul Goalabré, who often trained here before becoming champion. So if you fancy following his lead, now you know where to start...

Text: Cécile Descampiaux

EVENT

TRAVERSÉE DU QUEYRAS

January 29, 2017

People running cross country

42 km, 21 km, 10 km, 5 km ...

more information www.queyras-montagne.com