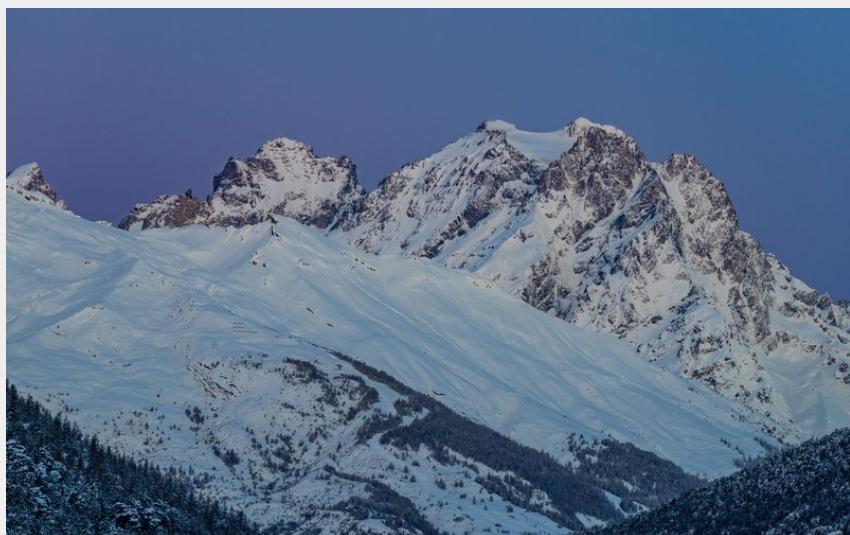
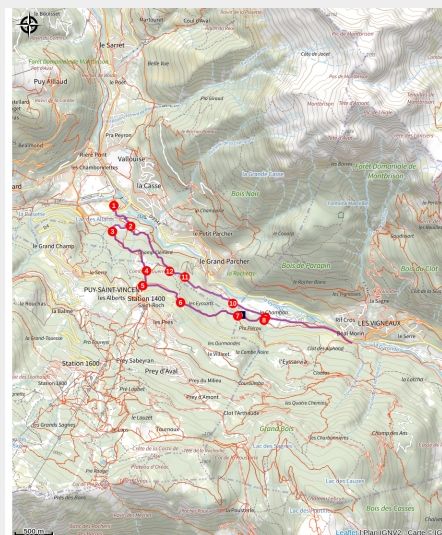


Itinéraire n°10 : Les Eyssarts

Parc national des Ecrins



Vallouise (Rogier van Rijn)



ITINÉRAIRE NON DAMÉ ET NON SÉCURISÉ

Boucle de 10 km et 310m de D+ entre Vallouise, les Vigneaux et Puy-Saint-Vincent.

Balade en forêt essentiellement avec comme point culminant du parcours une vue panoramique sur la vallée de Vallouise.

Balisage : panneaux "raquettes" blancs sur fond violet.

Description :

Départ et arrivée : chalet nordique de Vallouise

Depuis le Chalet nordique, prendre le sentier en face en direction des Eyssarts (piste de raquettes n°10).

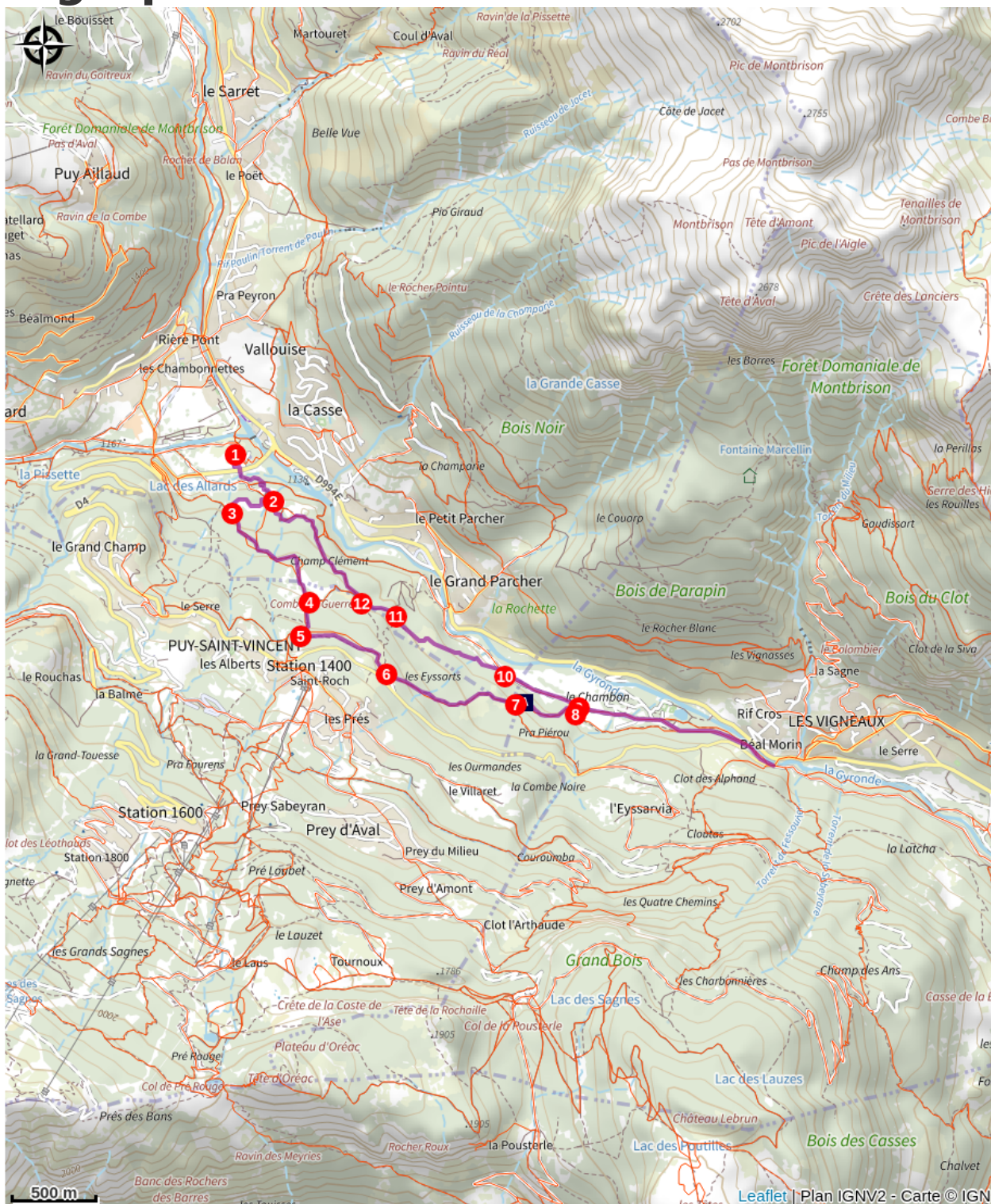
Useful information

Practice : Snowshoe

Duration : 4 h

Quoting : R2

Geographical location





 The village of Les Vigneaux (AA)

 The Gyrone (AC)

 The hamlet of Parcher (AE)

 The Alpine copse snail (AG)

 The Sentier du Facteur - the postman's path (AI)

 The ash tree (AK)

 Wood cranesbill (AB)



















 On the south-facing slope, pine forest (AD)

 The Vallouise Park Centre (AF)

 The roe deer (AH)

 The sun bird (AJ)

 The gerris (AL)

-  The wood nuthatch (AM)
-  Mosses (AO)
-  Thrushes (AQ)
-  The laserwort (AS)
-  The aspen (AU)
-  The ash tree (AW)
-  The church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine-des-Prés and its two sundials (AY)
-  The "ubac" (BA)
-  The house with arcades (BC)
-  The aspen (AN)
-  The martagon lily (AP)
-  Riparian forest (AR)
-  The long-tailed tit (AT)
-  The Eurasian blackcap (AV)
-  The clouded Apollo (AX)
-  The communal oven (AZ)
-  Les Prés, hamlet of Puy-Saint-Vincent (BB)
-  Les Eyssarts (BD)

All useful information

Advice

Please consult the itinerary status :

<https://www.nordicalpesdusud.com/domaines/vallouise-pelvoux-les-vigneaux>

A few rules :

→ You use these itineraries at your own risk. Find out about the weather conditions and avalanche risks published by Météo France. Also, don't hesitate to ask at tourist information offices or the Nordic chalet before you set off.

→ Night-time activities on Nordic areas are prohibited. It must be supervised by a professional and must be authorized by the slopes service.

→ Respect the furnishings: signage, prohibitions, trail directions, picnic tables, footbridges, banners, milestones, road signs.

→ Several itineraries are shared with other users: cross-country skiers, touring skiers, mountain bikers, sled dogs, rando-luge, trail runners. Give them the right of way, always walk along the edge of the trail and be vigilant when using these shared trails.

→ Many routes cross downhill ski slopes; be vigilant and give priority to skiers.

→ Don't walk in the cross-country ski rails, step over them.

→ Don't hesitate to take along a topo-guide so that you have all the information on snowshoeing itineraries to hand.

→ Don't overestimate your possibilities!

→ Dogs are tolerated, on a leash, off the cross-country ski trails (dogs are forbidden on the Lauzet itinerary of the Puy-Saint-Vincent ski area, reserved for approved sled dog teams). Don't forget to pick up after your dog.

→ Take your garbage with you!

→ Don't hesitate to take public transport rather than the car to get to the Nordic area.

Please note : This information is given for guidance only. It is your responsibility to check the weather report before you leave and not to overestimate your possibilities. The Tourist Office and the PNE cannot be held responsible in the event of an accident. In case of doubt, contact professionals: instructors or equipment hire companies.

Mountain Rescue : dial 112

 **Gear**

Make sure you have the necessary equipment:

Water and snacks

Warm clothing (avoid jeans)

High boots (hiking, rigid snow boots)

Walking poles

Sun screen

Sunglasses

Hat/cap

Small first-aid kit

On your path...



The village of Les Vigneaux (AA)

In spite of the altitude, the region's dry climate and the local growing conditions of limestone and sediments facing due south made the planting of grapevines possible as far back as the tenth century. The municipality owes its name to the presence of these vineyard operations, which were very significant in the late nineteenth century. The almost simultaneous appearance of the phylloxera aphid and the Briançon train, bringing wine from Provence, spelled the end of this activity here.

Attribution : Blandine Reynaud - PDE



Wood cranesbill (AB)

The path is edged with large clumps of a plant with purple flowers, the wood cranesbill. The leaves are palmate and divided into 5 to 7 incised and indented lobes. This common plant grows in meadows and cool woods. The «geraniums» we see on balconies are in fact pelargoniums, distant cousins originally from South Africa and cultivated for ornamental purposes.

Attribution : Marc Corail - Parc national des Écrins



The Gyrone (AC)

No, we're not in south-west France where the Gironde flows! The Gyrone (spelt with a «y»!) is the river that flows between Vallouise and L'Argentière-La Bessée, where it flows into the Durance. It originates from the Gyr and Onde mountain streams which merge in Vallouise.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



On the south-facing slope, pine forest (AD)

The track passes through a forest of Scots pines, mixed with some downy oak trees. It is a forest typical of those found in the lower south-facing slopes (those exposed to the sun) in the intra-alpine valleys.

Attribution : Parc national des Écrins



The hamlet of Parcher (AE)

The hamlet of Grand Parcher stands on the alluvial cone formed by the Grand Parcher mountain stream, and on either side of it. It is made up of several old houses and the seventeenth-century chapel of Saint-André. It has two sun dials painted onto its walls. One of them bears the saying HORA INCERTA CUNTIS, ULTIMA MULTIS (This hour is uncertain for all, it is the last hour for many). Food for thought!

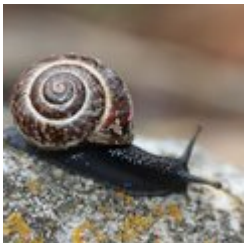
Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



The Vallouise Park Centre (AF)

Vallouise Pelvoux is a municipality within the Parc National des Écrins. Renovated in 2014, the Park Centre ("Maison du Parc") houses the offices of the local Park staff and has a spacious visitor reception area. It offers a permanent interactive exhibition inviting discovery of the territory and its heritage features, a temporary exhibition space on the upper floor and an audiovisual room (screenings and talks). It is currently in the process of applying for the "Tourisme et Handicap" tourism and disability label. Admission is free and so, too, are most of the activities in offer.

Attribution : Thierry Maillet - Parc national des Écrins



The Alpine copse snail (AG)

On the damp banks of the stream, hidden in the grass, is a snail with a beautiful golden brown shell speckled with brown, decorated with a dark spiral stripe. It has a black body. The alpine copse snail is relatively rare and, as its name suggests, it is found in the Alps. It is a sub-species of the ordinary copse snail, which is present across Europe.

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins



The roe deer (AH)

The forest is home to roe deer, which can often be seen. This ungulate (hoofed mammal) is rather unusual because the rut does not take place in autumn, for births in May and June as is the case with other mountain-dwelling ungulates, but in summer. After fertilisation, however, egg development is suspended for 6 months (this is called embryonic diapause). Gestation then resumes so that the fawn (or twin fawns) can be born in spring, a period more favourable for its survival.

Attribution : Robert Chevalier - Parc national des Écrins



The Sentier du Facteur - the postman's path (AI)

In former times, the postman would take this path every day: He would set out from Vallouise, deliver letters in Puy-Saint-Vincent and drop back down to Vallouise, stopping at the hamlets of Parcher on the way. In the winter, when the snow was too deep, the Traversouires (the inhabitants of Puy-Saint-Vincent) donned their snowshoes and wielded their shovels to clear the postman's path down to Vallouise.

Attribution : Christophe Albert - Parc national des Écrins



The sun bird (AJ)

So what is the identity of this sun bird? It's the royal, or golden, eagle of course. Although it is telling the time here, in the surrounding natural landscape it hunts marmots. But what becomes of it in winter when the marmots hibernate deep in their burrows? It's a lean time. It has to make do with a hare or ptarmigan, and in particular the carcasses of chamois which have not survived the winter or have been killed in an avalanche.

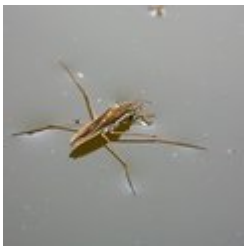
Attribution : Cyril Coursier - Parc national des Écrins



✿ The ash tree (AK)

Even in winter, the ash can be recognised from its large black leaf buds. The leaves are compound. A pioneer species that grows easily, the ash has long been used by man for everyday needs: its foliage was used to feed cattle and its hard, flexible wood was used to make a variety of objects such as tool handles. Its French name *frêne* often appears in local place names too: Freissinières (*frêne noir* - black ash), Le Freney etc. Evidence of its historical importance to human communities..

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins



🦗 The gerris (AL)

Some strange creatures are moving jerkily over the surface of the water: Gerrises, insects related to bedbugs. Like a true insect, they have six legs and they «skate» across the water using their intermediate and hind legs which are covered in hairs to make them water-resistant. They are carnivorous and anything on the water surface, dead or alive, is good to eat! They catch their prey with the forelegs, sucking up the juices with their strong proboscis!

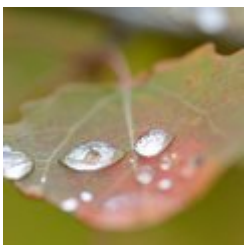
Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins



🦗 The wood nuthatch (AM)

With its strident calls, this little acrobat gets itself noticed. With a blue-grey back and a black stripe over its eyes, it works its way down the tree trunks upside down in search of insects. It nests in old woodpecker nests but if the diameter of the entrance is too large it reduces it with mud, to protect its young from predators. Hence its French name *torche-pot* (a reference to edging the rim of a vessel).

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins



✿ The aspen (AN)

Near the ruined mill, you can see a stand of tall trees with smooth, greenish trunks and rounded, crenelated leaves which take on magnificent colours in autumn. The stem, or petiole, of aspen leaves is flat and twisted, so it can be caught by the slightest breeze making the foliage «quake» hence its common name, the quaking aspen. It needs dampish soils and plenty of light and so it grows in clearings.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins



Mosses (AO)

There are mosses growing on the old wall. Mosses are plants which appeared long before flowering plants, 440 million years ago. They live in damp environments but can withstand long periods of drought. They have very few requirements and can colonise virgin areas. They then contribute to the slow formation of humus, thus allowing more demanding plants to establish in their turn. There are 800 species of moss in France, all of them beautiful!

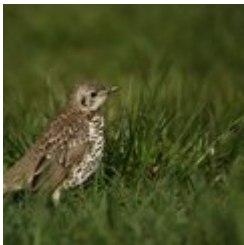
Attribution : Dominique Vincent - Parc national des Écrins



The martagon lily (AP)

Many martagon lilies grow at the side of the path. This superb plant has large hanging flowers with curved-back petals, which are pink speckled with purple and exposed orangey stamens. Its leaves are elongated and whorled. It grows in meadows and cool woods. Although common here, it is rare in many French regions. In fact, picking it is prohibited or regulated.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins



Thrushes (AQ)

In the springtime, the woods echo with the song of birds seeking a mate and defending their territory. Among them is the song of the mistle thrush, similar to that of the blackbird, melodious and piping. As for the song thrush, it has a wide and varied repertoire: its song is a succession of powerful varied notes, each repeated numerous times. In summer, the birds are more inconspicuous: when raising young, there's no point in singing for a mate, better not to attract attention!

Attribution : Damien Combrisson - Parc national des Écrins



Riparian forest (AR)

The track runs through a wood of alder, beech, aspen and oak, the remnant of the natural forest growing at the water's edge, called riparian forest. This type of forest is in decline everywhere, destroyed by urbanisation and by containment of the mountain streams. Yet it is an essential zone for the fixation of river banks and for purifying the water. Since it offers specific natural habitats, it also plays a major role in maintaining biodiversity.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins



✿ The laserwort (AS)

After the bridge, a large plant with flowers arranged in umbels (in other words, an umbellifer) clings to a small rock bar to the right of the track, the laserwort. This plant belongs to the family Apiaceae, which used to be called umbellifers, and grows in dry areas. It has a distinctive feature: in autumn, the basal part of the stem breaks of its own accord and the entire plant, now dry, sets off rolling down the hillside like a large ball, or is blown by the wind.

Attribution : Cédric Dentan - Parc national des Écrins



🐦 The long-tailed tit (AT)

Some birds are causing a stir in a tree, constantly coming and going and uttering little calls. They are round and black and pinkish beige in colour with a long tails, hence their name, the long-tailed tit. They are resident birds and always live in small groups. They inhabit forests, undergrowth and even gardens. They weave a ball-shaped nest out of lichen, moss and dry grass.

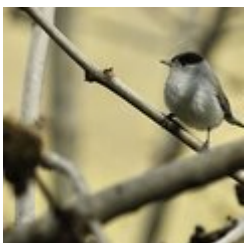
Attribution : Robert Chevalier - Parc national des Écrins



✿ The aspen (AU)

A sizeable aspen grows on the roadside, on the edge of a small wood of fellow-aspens. This tree has a smooth, greenish trunk and rounded, crenelated leaves which take on magnificent colours in autumn. The stem, or petiole, of aspen leaves is flat and twisted, so it can be caught by the slightest breeze making the foliage «quake» hence its common name, the quaking aspen. It grows in places where the soil is quite damp.

Attribution : Bernard Nicollet - Parc national des Écrins



🐦 The Eurasian blackcap (AV)

Hidden in the tree foliage, the Eurasian blackcap announces its presence with its loud and piping song. Its head is adorned with a cap which is black in the male and russet in the female. The rest of its plumage is greyish, its underside lighter than its back. It is a migratory bird which travels to the Maghreb to overwinter. However, increasing numbers of birds make only a partial migration, flying to the south of France to spend the winter.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins



The ash tree (AW)

This is one of the most common trees, provided the ground is relatively cool. It is characterised by its pinnate leaves, that is to say, made up of several segments, and in winter it can be recognised by its large black leaf buds. The ash was extremely important in times past: its foliage was used to feed cattle and its hard, flexible wood was used to make a variety of objects such as tool handles.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins



The clouded Apollo (AX)

This butterfly with hyaline (glass-like) translucent white wings, marked with two black spots, flutters around the clearing or the edges of the forest, where the host plants of its caterpillars grow: the corydalis. Although abundant locally, it is nevertheless a species in sharp decline and is protected.

Attribution : Mireille Coulon - Parc national des Écrins



The church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine-des-Prés and its two sun dials (AY)

The charming little church of Sainte-Marie-Madeleine-des-Prés, which dates from the sixteenth century, stands in the hamlet of Les Prés. It is surrounded by a wall and a cemetery. On the walls of the church, two sun dials can be seen, both engraved and painted on plaster in 1718. The first is above the door, telling the time in the afternoon, bearing the saying « *for a moment of delights, an eternity of torments* » which alludes to the life of Saint Mary Magdalene, the well-known sinner who is venerated as a model of penitence. The second, telling the time in the morning, bears the Latin phrase *Ars longa, vita brevis* which translates as « learning is long, life is short ».

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



The communal oven (AZ)

Legend has it that the Lord caused a communal oven to be built and kept it maintained. The local people could use this oven in exchange for the payment of a levy. Families would prepare and knead their own dough at home and then bring it to the oven for baking. Names were drawn by lot to establish their turns.

Attribution : Office de tourisme Pays des Écrins



The "ubac" (BA)

The track rises gently up the right-hand bank of the Gyronde, on the "ubac" side. The "ubac" is the slope that is exposed to the north, so it is in shadow in winter when the sun is low in the sky.

Attribution : Office de tourisme du Pays des Écrins



Les Prés, hamlet of Puy-Saint-Vincent (BB)

Le Prés is one of the main hamlets of Puy-Saint-Vincent. Like Le Puy and Les Alberts, it stands on a flat plateau which is a glacial escarpment left by the now-retreated Gyronde glacier. Like Prey d'Aval, Prey du Milieu and Prey d'Amant, its name is a reminder that prior to the development of the ski resort, the land here used to be shared by meadows and crops.

Attribution : Marie-Geneviève Nicolas - Parc national des Écrins



The house with arcades (BC)

In the municipality of Puy-Saint-Vincent, there are a number of houses typical of the rural architecture of Vallouise, in particular houses with arcades, in the hamlets of Les Alberts and Les Prés. This type of construction can be recognised by the presence of large arches made from stone from the Montbrison massif and supporting walking galleries. Introduced in the eighteenth century by Piedmontese master masons who settled in the valley, this style with arcaded galleries has become characteristic of the architecture of the Vallouise valley. Elegant and monumental, they replaced modest wooden balconies. They facilitated mobility from one level of the house to the other (the houses did not have interior stairs), and at the same time signalled the wealth of the owner.

Attribution : Office de tourisme du Pays des Écrins



Les Eyssarts (BD)

The track runs through a place called Les Eyssarts, which gave this circuit its name. This name comes from the word essart which refers to «a place that has been cleared, most often to create agricultural land». A few meadows, but above all former canals and low walls hidden under the advancing forest, bear witness to this past use of the land.

Attribution : Dominique Vincent - Parc national des Écrins