

Dirtgirls hit the trails again

By Bex Hopkins



The second Dirtgirls mountain bike riding camp week has been and gone, both weeks were fully booked out this year so keep your eyes on the www.flowmtb.com website for details of 2008 weeks.

Here's a review of the August Dirtgirls week..

The second dirtgirls week of 2007 kicked off in fine style as the sun shone and the trails were in great shape. Claire, a 2006 dirtgirl, was back for more along with a group of other regular riders.



Col de Coux Ridge

Day one took in two half day loops around Les Gets, each group spending half a day on Mont Chery tackling a rocky ridge and some swooping singletrack with Emily; while the other group took in some steep descents and challenging climbs around Ranfolly with Sara. We finished the day with beers in Bar Robinson and grins all round.

On day two the weather was less kind and clouds and rain came in. Undeterred, we still all ventured out well wrapped up. We headed up the Super Morzine bubble and then took the chair towards Avoriaz, riding along the ridge we gained a little more height before coming out on the Col de Joux Verte. The fast and long downhill covered rocky and steep sections interspersed with smoother wooded sections. Heading up the Chaux Fleurie lift we took a long fast swooping singletrack route, that lead to some rockier more technical singletrack and finally a fast fireroad down to a much needed hot chocolate. With café staff providing plastic bags to sit on and a welcoming smile despite us dripping mud, we all warmed up quickly. After that we descended to Lac Montriond for some trackstanding practice before a final rocky swooping descent into Morzine. Charlotte and Adele coached each other and were soon finding it easy. We all headed back up Super Morzine to ride the fast 'zigzag' track down, taking in rocks, roots, ruts and switchbacks along the way, and then up the Pleney lift to descend on the 'creperie' trail. All was going well, with everyone riding the steep sections and fast rollercoaster, till Adele fell on a slippery grassy bank right at the bottom and landed badly on her ankle. All the dirtgirls helped out moving bikes off the trail and keeping an eye out for other riders till we could carry her to the doctors, while others took the bikes back down. Two weeks on crutches saw her missing the rest of the week and everyone was gutted for her.

The rain continued for day three so we decided to all meet back at the chalet for lunch. With one group doing the route of yesterday, the others took in a rooty rutted singletrack descent to Lindarets. The chairlift back up to Avoriaz gave us a quick look round the ski resort before a long fast gravely descent to Morzine. Most of the dirtgirls opted for an afternoon mechanics session with Emily, while Pam and Lynne headed over to Les Gets with Sara on a route taking in some tough, but short climbs and fast muddy descents. Sliding down the slippery downhill course it was grins all round before a fast singletrack route back to Morzine to join the others breaking and fixing chains.



Taking a break

On day four some dirtgirls eschewed the 'rest day' and headed for the Les Gets downhill tracks. Others headed to the long zip wire at Chatel, while the more sedate among us wandered round the market and had coffee in a café by the river. We all headed out for pizza in the evening and watched the Morzine Ice hockey team beat Nottingham 16-0!

Back in sunshine for day five each group headed out on a big mountain day. Emily took her group on a tough climb up the Col de Coux where the reward was incredible views along a great ridgeline descent and steep rocky switchbacks into Champéry and then a fast swooping singletrack route home around Lac Vert. Sara's group also headed to Switzerland, taking rocky tracks and fast fireroad to Morgins, singletrack and fireroad climbs to Champoussin and then back to Les Crosets via a rocky exposed singletrack route. Catriona amazed us all with her riding, tackling lots of tricky stuff, despite only getting into biking earlier this year! A fast gravely descent saw us letting off the brakes, before a final rooty singletrack route to join the 'zigzags' of day two back into Morzine and beers.

For the final day there was an overwhelming vote of dirt jumping so the whole group headed to the park in Les Gets. Emily demonstrated how to pump to get air and we all set off to practice. Soon wheels were lifting off the ground and most progressed onto the bigger jumps. Jo and Lynne showed particular skill in gaining height, and were soon clearing most of the jumps. Lisa took a big tumble after landing on her front wheel, but after a short rest was back up to master getting air, and landing! We all then headed off to try the different downhill tracks, with Emma amazing herself by completing all the steep descents of the Les Gets four cross, and Natalie amazing everyone at tackling some scarily steep singletrack sections on Pleney.



Checking out the descent

A final night of beers in bar Robinsons, bike packing and dinner was followed by drinks out and dancing until the early hours. Until next time!