

Dirtgirls hit the mountains - day 1

By SheCycles July 2007



A happy bunch heading over to Les Gets

Sunday 15th July saw the first day of the Dirtgirls women's only mountain bike skills and ride holiday. It was blue skies and mountains all day long with a quick trip to the famous (well in Morzine anyway) Bar Robinsons for a post ride beer (or two) followed by a glorious dinner and slideshow.



Expect blogs and write-ups from the Dirtgirls camp shortly...we're off to bed now!



Emily Horridge shows us how to ride berms on the Green Run in Les Gets

A round up of day 1 and 2 from the Dirtgirls camp

By SheCycles



The [Dirtgirls](#) camp kicked off in great style with two days of clear blue skies and miles of beautiful trails to test out the women's new found skills. We'll be bringing you daily blogs from the Dirtgirls camp but in the meantime here is a roundup of the riding so far!

Day 1

We headed from the chalet to the Plenay cable car and then headed upwards and across top of Plenay, round the Ranfoilly bowl across sweeping singletrack toward Les Get. We practised our cornering on the red and green downhill runs down into Les Gets and then ventured up the Mont Cherie lift and chairlift for some more downhill action with views of Mont Blanc in the distance. By the time we rode back into Morzine we'd covered 33km of mostly downhill terrain ranging from steep berms and banked tree riding to rocky singletrack with sharp switchbacks and fast fire track descents to get the pulse racing faster!



Cat leads the way towards Les Get

Day 2

We headed out and up the Super Morzine bubble and then took the chair towards Avoriaz, riding along the ridge we gained more height in the shadows of the treeline before popping out at the top of the descent into Linderet valley. The fast and long downhill covered rocky and steep sections interspersed with smoother wooded sections and the odd stream crossing for a quick cool down. Another chairlift took up to Mossettes (altitude 2250m) on the Swiss side of the border and then we rode down the rocky trail to Lac Vert and picked up the goat track singletrack into Linderet. We welcomed the cooling breeze across the Montriond Lake and along the shaded river path finishing up with a fast country lane into Morzine. A total of 25km once we arrived back at the chalet for lunch and then a skills session learning the art of manualing and wheel lifts, perfect practice for hoping those rain gullies.

So what did the Dirtgirls have to say?

SheCycles member and regular Forum poster, Caroline said "the best bit was getting faster as day went on and gaining confidence to ride things that I normally wouldn't"

Enrica drove over from Milan, she "liked the berms yesterday, it was really exciting. I found I had the set up on my bike today, I noticed on the rocks. But it's good, now I know I was wrong before. Today we did rocks that I would have walked before, or I would have avoided the rocks but by end of day I had overcome that and went for it. I realised that otherwise I was going to be a XC rider for the rest of my life, so I decided to ride them now' She went on to say "I don't like getting off and being a pain for the riders behind, so now I realise it's no big deal because I know how to do it."



Emily Horridge shows the Dirtgirls how to ride a corner at speed

Ruth rides with groups and men and women and was pleased to say "Having a whole day to ride was great, and with someone there to look after everything I could focus on the riding not looking at a map or finding the route. It's good to be shown the skills and have the chance to practice sections several times. When I bike with boys I'm usually at back, so I learnt to ride in a different way, I was just surviving really. Riding with a bunch of women it's nice to come round a corner to find everyone still there, I'm keeping up well."

Look out for Nikki's blog later from day 3 at the Dirtgirls camp, she's loving "the supportive environment to practice the new skills in and the trails are brilliant!' More soon.....

[Visit www.flowmtb.com](http://www.flowmtb.com) for full details on the Dirtgirls skills week



Debbie sports her SheCycles jersey on the chairlift in Les Get



Elaine practises her cornering

Dirtgirls - day 3

By Nikki Lebedis

Nikki joined the [Dirtgirls](#) camp for the first time this week and is enjoying the Alpine trails so much she's extended her stay for another week! During the Dirtgirls week she'll be bringing us the gossip from each day as part of her regular blog.

Day 3 saw some of our Dirtgirls getting slightly weary, with a couple of casualties due to over-enthusiasm from earlier in the week. But still nine of us ventured up the Super Morzine lift along with Sara from Dirtgirls, DH racer Emily Horridge and the excellent mtb guide Ulrika (who incidentally looks exactly how you would expect a mountain biker called Ulrika to look - tall, blond and very tanned..).



Ulrika leading the way

We were all now familiar with the traverse and descent to Linderet so we made it in record time, switchbacks, rocks, roots and all. Our only casualty was Sara who forgot she was on a hardtail for the day and slipped out on a rocky section.

After more descending Emily lead a master class in riding rocks, a useful lesson surrounded by rocky trails. The main things to remember are:

- Ride in the neutral position so you're prepared for everything
- Cover your brakes, and use them gently if you need them, this stops you bucking your bike
- Look up and ahead, focussing several meters down the trail so you can assess the obstacles well in advance
- Relax! Make your arms and legs loose to let your bike move underneath you.

Following our expert instruction we were happily floating over the trail like a flock of Dirtgirls butterflies. Descending further with lunch firmly at the forefront of our minds we were aghast to find a landslide blocking our way. A nice Frenchman manning a JCB was repairing the damage, and Ulrika worked her charms and he let us through safely. Lunch at the lake was followed with a spot of sunbathing, then off we went again for the afternoon.



The morning's floating had taken a lot out of us, so the moderate post-lunch climb was transformed into our own mini Everest. Finally we all made it to the top, and were rewarded with some swoopy smooth singletrack before our final lift of the day up to Avoriaz. Topped off with 14 kilometres descent on lovely smooth tarmac all the way back to Morzine. Wheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

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Dirtgirls day 4 - action on rest day!

By Nikki Lebedis



Yesterday was our mid-week rest day at [Dirtgirls](#) HQ with almost everyone taking a well earned day off. But.....

I was unable to curb my enthusiasm I broke with the flow and went to check out the 10ft berms at the Les Gets Bike Park. The constant stream of downhill riders was a bit intimidating, but after lots of pschying up off I went and dropped in. What followed was an absolute party of berms, rollers, steps and jumps! The park was so well made every feature just rolled into the next, with more fun around every corner turned.



Kona Bike Park Les Gets

Another nice surprise was how supportive all those seemingly scary downhillers were. All I got was encouragement and patience when they caught me up, and I couldn't have asked for more.

Definitely worth conquering the nerves for, and a brilliant add-on to an already great Dirtgirls week!



Nikki in action

Dirtgirls day 5

By Nikki Lebreidis



We headed up the Super Morzine lift then split into two groups. We headed off with Emily for a session on riding roots and ruts. We saw off the nice gentle section, then sped round the bend to hit the steep stuff. Dirtgirl carnage ensued, with three stacks in as many minutes. I came off a bulky root, Ruth ended up in a herb garden (smelling fragrant for the rest of the day!) and Terri went a bit leftfield after dabbing her brake at the wrong time.

After dusting ourselves down in back to HQ for a mechanics session. Emily took us through the mysteries of sag, pre-load and compression until we were all bouncing around like new-born babies. After that came brakes, resulting in some serious servicing for those of us suffering from brake-fade.

Meanwhile, Elaine had taken out a Santa Cruz VP Free demo bike for the day and had a great time belting down the tracks. Along with Terri she headed off to the Bike Park for more fun and games, only to get caught in the thunder. The rain turned the course into an ice-rink, so it was only with well practiced skills we got them back in one peice.

Luckily Sara had a pot of tea and cake on offer to warm them up and welcome them home.

So a few bumps and bruises, but none to dampen the excitement! Roll on tomorrow!



Sara in funky Minx jersey

Final installment from the Dirtgirls in Morzine

By Nikki Lebreidis



It was up and about early for the Dirtgirls on our final day of the trip. In fact, we were so up for it we made it out so early the lift wasn't open! If you had seen the previous levels of faffing in the mornings you would understand just how impressive that early start was.

The night before the morning after had been super stormy, packed with thunder, lightening and torrential rain. Unbenownst to us Dirtgirls it had turned our favourite tracks into slipperly, slidey scary stuff.

Even so, we tackled the well worn traverse across to Lac Linderet. Only today it wasn't so well worn, and we were all a bit cautious on the rocky sections. After getting to Linderet we split into two groups, with some of us heading off with the lovely Joe for some guided riding, and the rest with Emily and Sara for some coaching.

The group with Joe had a great tour around the high tops, before descending to Les Crosets. This was perked up by Joe pointing out some good restaurants on the the hill - a bonus for this Dirtgirl who's staying on for a few days after the camp finishes.

The rest of the Dirtgirls were riding rocks, and poor old Emma shipped a fairly scary injury after taking a tumble. It was back to Morzine to get patched up, and I'm pleased to report she's smiling again!



Emily rides a mini rockgarden

The groups swapped over at lunch, which meant it was our turn for the afternoon rocky section. We managed a trip down Puncture Alley without too many problems, then Emily coached us down a particularly tricky section. Yet another set of skills to add into our expanding quivers.

As we set off for our final descent, the rest of the group sped off while Terry and I hung back faffing around with our brakes. Our attempt to catch up with the group was thwarted by a wayward bull who lunched himself across the path as we hurtled down. After some tricky negotiation we managed to convince him he was best off the path, but not before making his presence felt in every way.

By this time we all had scent of the beers in Bar Robinson and sped down the last stretch, bemoaning Elaines puncture for putting an extra 5 minutes between us and our final destination. Finally we made it, running into the girls from the other group who made it down about half an hour later.

Much discussion about our week ensued, with all of us agreeing we were heading home better riders than when we arrived. For some it was about building confidence, for others it was learning new skills. Caroline reckoned it was "biiiiiiiiiiig - I was riding down stuff today I would never have tackled on Sunday", Debbie reckoned it was "scary, steep, rocky but fun" (but is also convinced she's getting a full sus for next year!).



Emma tests a Santa Cruz Heckler

Aside from the biking there was also general nodding around the quality of the food and accomodation. The breakfasts and evening meals were consistently excellent, with the full plates cleared off every night.

Ultimately everyone was particularly touched by the patience and sensitivity that Emily and Sara invested in each of us. No-one ever felt left behind, or conscious of being a bit timid or slow. We were all part of the Dirtgirls family and looked after each other for the week. I think I speak for all of us when I say that we found the atmosphere unique to the Dirtgirls environment.

Caked with mud but sporting huge grins all round we raised our glasses to Sara, Emily and the rest of the team for a fantastic week all round!

The Dirtgirls week is run twice a year in Morzine, France by FlowMtb.com The next week is August 18th 2007, you can check out the itinerary [here](#).