

Scialet du Chassillan



A description by
Glenn Jones
for
Speleo Vercors
(Summer 2009 project)



Speleo Vercors

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About Speleo Vercors:

Speleo Vercors is a UK based caving club that specialises in Vercors caving. Speleo Vercors was created in 1997 to formalise and document the experience of UK cavers that have been meeting (on an ad-hoc basis) in the Vercors for the best part of two decades. Membership is by invitation and prospective members must demonstrate a long term commitment to Vercors caving as well providing on-going support to the club.

Other SV Publications

Trip Reports: Speleo Vercors has published the following reports:

Skiing '99 (paper)

Caving '99 (paper)

Skiing 2000 (paper)

Caving 2000 (including a Speleovision report) (paper)

Skiing 2001 (paper)

Bigbang Doggiepoopoo (parchment)

Skiing 2002 (CD or paper)

Caving 2002 (CD only)

Skiing 2003 (paper)

Skiing 2004 (paper and DVD)

Sun and Ski 2005 (DVD)

Guides:

Scialet Cloches (DVD)

The Mont Aiguille Guide (paper)

Scialet II des Chuats (Draft - paper – translation)

Trou des Anciens (Draft -paper – translation)

Scialet du Combeau (Project description - paper)

Scialet du Combeau Rigging Topo (Paper)

Scialet du Chassillon (Draft - paper)

Long Term Projects:

Access: We are developing a data base of all known Vercors caves.

The data base will reference caves by name and grid reference and provide links to surveys and other publications.

Guide Book: We are developing an English Language guide to the Vercors for cavers, to augment the two French guide books currently available

Speleo Dossier 1: We are documenting all previous (caving) visits (by SV members) to the Vercors to date, which have been published previously in various journals.

Contact Speleo Vercors: <http://www.speleo-vercors.org>

Scialet du Chassillon Location:

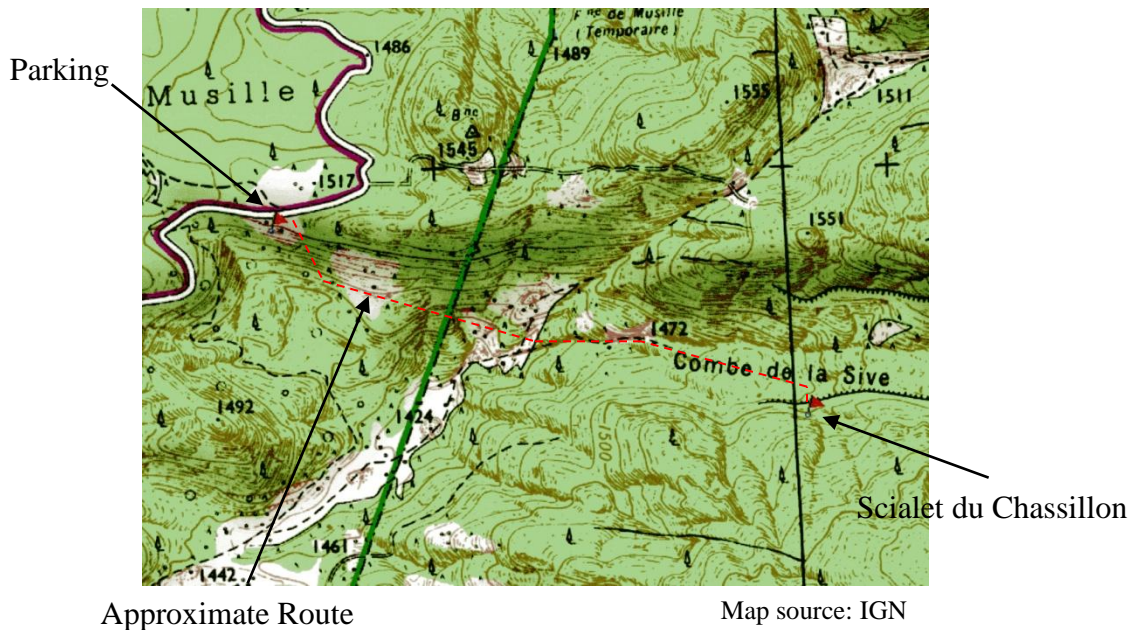
Map: IGN TOP 25 3236 OT Villard-de-Lans

IGN: 848,60 X 3292,30 X 1530

GPS: 31N 696398E 4973639N Alt: 1577m

Length: 1187m

Depth: -85m



Access:

A fine walk on the high plateau. From the D518 south of St Agnan and just before the village of Rousset, take the Route Forestiere de la Coche on the left. Continue past Mon. Fre. de la Coche (abandoned farm house) taking the left turn (Route Forestiere des Charbonniers) for approximately 2 kilometers to a lay-by (on the left - north side of the road) at an obvious track heading north-west, at the clearing shown on the map near spot height 1517 (space for 1 car, a bigger lay-by is a few metres further along the road). About 40/50 minutes from La Chapelle)

Opposite the path shown on the map is a vague path dropping steeply down the valley side (south) to a cairn marked 99/94 in red paint (the open shaft you pass is Scialet Combeau – see separate report). From here a vague path contours east and eventually joins a well defined track (running north-east/south-west) at a large depression. Follow this track north until it splits (not far) and bear right (east) up into Combe de la Sive. Follow the path past a large area of exposed lapiez to the north of the track (also shown on map) to a cairn sometimes containing a forked stick (GPS: 31N 696386E 497368N Alt: 1553m).

From the cairn, follow a vague path to the south (right) up the side of the valley (scree) to the first limestone bench where another cairn can be seen, the entrance (a slot in the limestone bench) is just beyond this cairn, near a tree with a black plate marked SCV attached. Allow about 30 minutes for the walk in good weather.

Care: Many of the paths shown on the map, and indeed many surface features shown on the map, are not always apparent on the ground. Route finding in poor weather will be difficult. Check out the route before attempting the cave.

Overview: The cave was discovered in 1967 by R. Chassillon, a local shepherd. The Speleo Club Vercors continued exploration the same year. Two years later, the GSV discovered the Reseau Valerie and surveyed the cave. Scialet Chassillon is a Vercors classic but it is unusual to find a cave with so much horizontal development and so close to the surface, on the high plateau. The system contains large fossil galleries, avens, shafts and a remarkable roof (especially in the Reseau du Metro), together with many (once) beautiful and enormous formations.

Description: An interesting cave with an impressive and unusual entrance pitch and some large ancient phreatic passage. Once very beautiful - it is now clearly over caved by groups.

A single entrance pitch of 38m drops via a succession of 4 chambers formed between the limestone beds. The rope should be backed up to either a convenient tree or an obvious thread. Whilst there are many Spits to choose from, not many give confidence! It should be possible to rig a Y hang over the pitch and descend through the top of the next "floor" where a spit will be found for a short deviation. Just under the deviation are two further Spits for a Y hang that will give a clear drop (via a deviation some 10m further down - or a re-belay if preferred - several Spits to choose from) to the bottom of this fine entrance pitch. A steeply descending pile of rubble leads down to the pitch bottom, but part way down on the left is a short crawl providing access to the rest of the system.

The crawl leads to an impressively high phreatic rift which is followed via a well trod route past the pretty P40 (beyond a low passage on the right) via a short, slippery climb up (rope useful) to l'Entonnoir - a P25 which must be traversed to continue. (Tie off rope to a stal boss, 2 Spits provide a Y hang and just over the edge of the pitch is a further Spit that provides a short drop and traverse to the far side of the shaft (20m rope - the guide book is very misleading here!). Some crawling through an excavated section leads to the high rift once more.

Climb up to the left at a carbide arrow pointing down (indicating a further blind pitch) and pass a further blind pitch on the left and after some brief crawling emerge into a large cross rift. Turning right here leads to a low muddy crawl into a chamber not marked on the survey, or, above the crawl is the slippery climb up to Reseau Valerie (allegedly this has a permanent rope in place, but was not in place in August 2008).

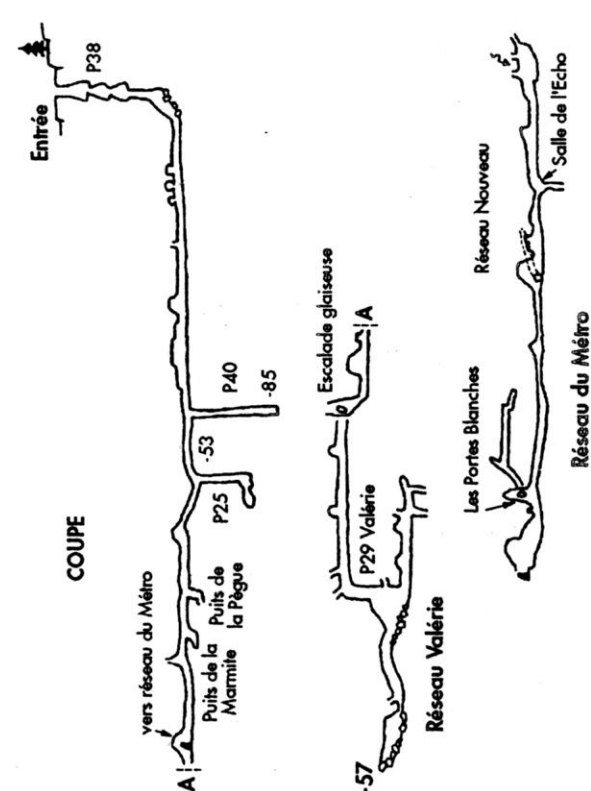
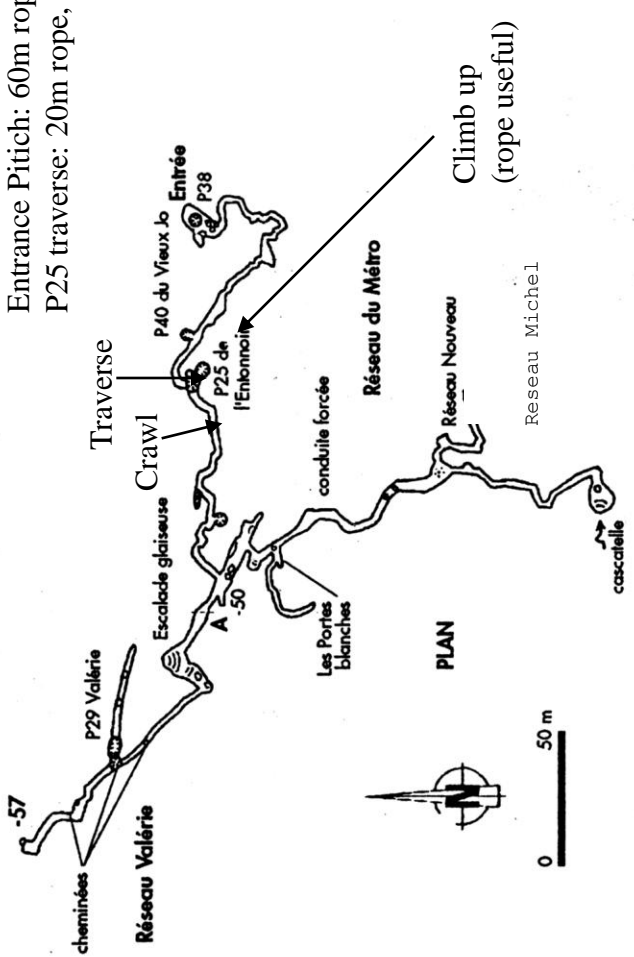
Turning left is a short low crawl which leads to a short section of enormous passage. The way on is to the right - Reseau du Metro, a fine phreatic passage a little like Duke Street but without any water. There are some superb swirl pools in the roof of le Metro. Eventually the passage forks - left it quickly closes down, to the right a high meandre can be followed to the short P8 (Salle de l'Echo). Traversing (care) across this pitch will soon lead to the final small chamber.

There are still plenty of fine formations to be seen in Chassillon, but all above head height. Beneath this level the once beautiful moonmilk has been turned into chocolate porridge - you have been warned!

Equipment:

Entrance Pitch: 60m rope, 7 plates and mailions, 2 slings

P25 traverse: 20m rope, 2 plates and mailions, 1 krab



Scialet du Chassillon

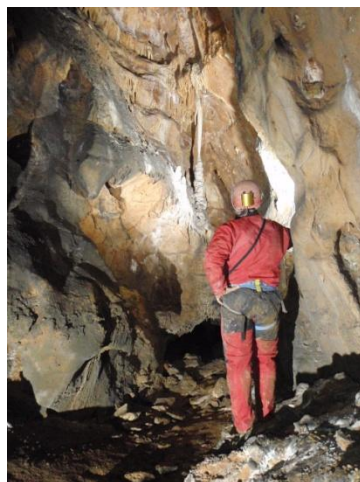


Entrance pitch



l'Entonnoir traverse

Formations
in main
passageway



Formations near P25