

Corsica

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A trip in July 1972 during which a large section of the Haute Route de Corse (from the Col de Bavella to Monte Cinto) was traversed, prompts a few words about climbing possibilities in Corsica. Mountains occupy most of the land area, and approximately half of them are granite or related rocks which potentially offer excellent climbing. Anyone who wants a change and fancies some good rock climbing in some rugged and unspoilt country, with a virtual guarantee of finding himself undisturbed by other parties on almost any route he cares to choose, might do worse than think of Corsica. While many people probably have done this already and have enjoyed the island's mountains, it seems worth while to try to arouse the interest of those who have not.

The highest peak is Monte Cinto (2710 m), and nearby lies perhaps the most spectacular-looking mountain in Corsica, Paglia Orba (2525 m). In addition, there are a great many other summits which rise above 2300 m. Five useful guides (in French) have been written by Michel Fabrikant—*Les Topo-Guides de l'Alpiniste et du Randonneur en Corse*, published under the auspices of the CAF and the FFM.—which cover respectively Monte d'Oro and Monte Rotondo, Le Massif du Cinto (in three parts), Bavella, Incudine-Renoso and La Haute Route. In addition, a brief German guide (*Korsika* by Hans Schymik. Aalen 1968. Germany) has been published, which does not claim to be exhaustive. Unfortunately, there appear to be no English guides to the mountains, a situation which hopefully will be remedied one day. An excellent series of maps produced by the Institut Géographique National are available with scale 1 : 25,000.

From preliminary impressions, the area of the Massif de Bavella (Topo-Guide No 3) appears to offer the best scope for hard rock climbing, particularly in the Tours d'Asinao, which contain many impressive granite cliffs and pinnacles. There is obviously considerable scope in many other places, particularly Monte Cinto and Paglia Orba, the latter having fine routes on its N face. The island's fine W coast would no doubt furnish some good cliff climbing. At least two new CAF huts exist, one to the SW of Lac du Monte Rotondo, and another SE of Lac de Nino. The latter is perhaps more suited to the needs of mountain walkers than climbers. There is a shelter at the Grotte des Anges S of Monte Cinto and accommodation is available at the Col de Bavella. During the very warm summer season bivouacking obviously presents no problem.

The winter offers the possibility of ski-touring and the Haute Route can be traversed in this manner. Some descriptive articles appeared in February 1969 *La Montagne* pp 13 and 20. The second of these gives some details of available maps and earlier references to ski-ing in Corsica. These include, in the same journal, 'Le Ski en Corse' (January 1951, p 4) and 'Le Monte Cinto à skis'

(February 1935, p 59). A further article entitled 'Pâques en Corse' appears in February 1962, p 173.

It is hoped that these notes may encourage others to get off the beaten track and have a look at Corsica.

62 *Forest of Bavella*

63 *Scenery near Porto*

(both illustrations reproduced from *Journal of a Landscape Painter in Corsica*, 1868, by Edward Lear)

