



## The French sibling of Austrian's "Opera Vertical" in the Hochkönig massif

"Wenn ein Tag wie alle ist, so sind sie alle wie einer; und bei vollkommener Einförmigkeit würde das längste Leben als ganz kurz erlebt werden und unversehens verfliegen sein." (Thomas Mann, Zauberberg). What's better than climbing to experience a day as varied and long. But perhaps it was the magic atmosphere in this alpine cirque between Pointe Percée and Pointe des Verts in French Aravis near Chamonix, which inspired Michel Piola to give his climbing masterpiece the name "Zauberberg" ("The Magic Mountain"). The similarity to the "Opera Vertical" in the Austrian Hochkönig area (see SigmaDeWe-Routeninfos-Opera Vertical\_engl.pdf) regarding rock quality, character and length come to mind.

<b>Zauberberg</b>	M.Piola,
ED, 7a(6c), S2	S.Schumacher (1994↑)
SW, 2200 m a.s.l.	160 clm (550 vam)
	overall impression ★★★★★
	climbing ratio 50%
	variety ●●●
	scenery ●●●
	exposure ●●
	rock quality ●●●
	steepness \
	fun factor

After a shorter and more comfortable approach than to the "Opera Vertical" you reach the beautiful wall of Paroi de Gramusset in about 1:20 hours. It is located just south of the 2750 m high Pointe Percée. The route starts on a grassy ledge below the right edge of a prominent roof (note: do not confuse the start of "Zauberberg" with the beginning of two new routes about 5 m to the right). As in the "Opera Vertical" you have only a few meters to warm up before the climbing becomes complicated on tiny hand- and footholds. As there are virtually no traces of previous climbers, the crux section is difficult to climb on sight when there are no chalk marks. In the difficult P2 the small handholds continue, sometimes the climbing is even painful in the sharp, gray limestone. The last meters to the belay via small holes and already pretty steep give a taste of the different character of P3, the heart of the "Zauberberg". That pitch now leads mainly through yellow rock, it is partially overhanging and very varied. Two moderate run-outs could be protected with smaller Friends, but this is not really necessary. P4 starts slightly left ascending up to a ledge under a small roof, where the next meters are not immediately obvious. A belay to the left belongs to a new route. The correct way is diagonally up to the right to a hidden bolt above the edge of the roof which can be climbed in a spectacular but relatively easy way. A gray ramp with water grooves leads to the next belay on a comfortable platform. After an easy start of P5 (approx. 10 m) a difficult face climbing section follows, reminiscent of the crux section in P1. The following meters are steep with strenuous clipping positions and probably the hardest meters of the entire route. Overall, the 7a rating of the "Zauberberg" is rather hard - the route was opened in the early 90s without any inflationary tendencies.

On the perfectly equipped rappelling you can visualize once again what a fantastic route you have just climbed. To have optimal temperature conditions you will need some luck: if you get there too early (before about 11:30 a.m.), it may be too cold in the shade, particularly in view of the early crux section. In full sun, on the other hand, it becomes easily too warm for the tiny hand- and footholds.

**Approach:** Parking on the Col des Annes near Le Grand Bornand (between Cluses and Annecy). In about 1 hour to the Refuge de Gramusset and another 20 minutes to the clearly visible wall.

**Start of the route:** On a grassy ledge below the prominent slanted roof. The grassy ledge can be reached either by following the normal route to the Pointe Percée until the left boundary of the wall, then turn right and scramble up. Or follow the hardly visible green marks through the boulder area until the base of the wall, leave the rucksack and climb easily up to the grassy ledge.

**Guidebook:** "Itinéraires d'un grimpeur gâté", Ph. Mussatto, Edition Gap, 2010; [www.camptocamp.org](http://www.camptocamp.org)



# Zauberberg on Paroi de Gramusset (F)

Multi-pitch climbing routes in the Alps



## **P5: 7a**

Easy start, then a difficult slab section followed by steep rock that requires stamina.

## **P4: 6b+**

Up to an overhang, then keep right (not left to a belay of a new route!). Climbing the overhang is spectacular.

## **P3: 6c+**

Fantastic!  
Steep, varied and complex with two moderate run-outs.

## **P2: 7a**

First, straight up on holds that are difficult to grab. Then slightly to the right in a very rough wall (somewhat monotonous climbing) with a bolt that is hard to clip. Difficult to the belay.

## **P1: 7a**

Start on the higher ledge. Easy begin with an inclined ramp, then difficult face climbing after the overhang.



The crux section of P1.



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The fantastic P3.



P2 - very rough with tiny holds.



The difficult slab section in P5.