



## Giro d'Italia Macugnaga



A tourist resort that was very fashionable in the early postwar period and then fell into a sort of lethargy ... awakened by the magic kiss of the **94th Giro d'Italia**, with the success of domestique **Paolo Tiralongo** (in his first victory as a professional), second to his former team captain as well as pink jersey **Alberto Contador**. It was the 209-kilometer 19th leg Bergamo-Macugnaga, and it was on Friday, May 27, 2011.

The ascent to the foot of His Majesty Monte Rosa begins in **Vogogna**, the ancient **capital of the Ossola Inferiore** overlooked by the **Visconti castle** and where the **Val Grande National Park Authority** is headquartered.

Shortly after departing from the Vogogna Town Hall, one encounters an interesting historical relic: a rock and a stele complete with an eagle that testifies to the presence of a **Roman tombstone from 196 AD** and the memory of **Geo Chavez**, the first transfer of the Alps.

Next, there is a double-curve railway underpass with a left turn onto the **Masone Bridge** over the Toce River, dated 1810.

Highway underpass, traffic circle, second exit towards Piedimulera, another traffic circle, then straight ahead following the course of the **Anza stream**, which gives its name to the **Anzasca Valley**, until you reach the foot of the climb proper.

The considerable length of this climb should be manageable, as, apart from a couple of somewhat hostile sections, it runs smoothly with gradients that hardly exceed double digits, alternating with several flat sections.

The first 3 km contains the most challenging section, with the passage through the **Gozzi tunnel**, where gradients reach 11 percent, followed by a long falsopiano up to Pontegrande, where, in Visconti times (11th-14th centuries), the **Valley Council**, composed of the various "consoli" (representatives of the six "**degagne**" of the Anzasca Valley), looked after the interests of the valley community.

It climbs slightly again to **Vanzone con San Carlo**, where, from the **Fonte dei Cani**, located within the ancient gold mines at 1450 meters, gushes the most prosperous mineral spring in the world, indicating a cure for numerous pathologies.

Going up in a more sensitive world, one reaches **Ceppo Morelli** (where cross-country skiing is possible along a five-kilometer loop in winter) and then **Campioli**.

The slope visibly decreases after **Pestarena**, the first hamlet in the municipality of Macugnaga.

Just over 4 km to the finish line, but the most is done.

Of particular note is the **Ancient Walser House Museum** in **Borca** (complete with a fountain right near the entrance), where objects from the daily life of this ancient and proud person of Alemannic origin have been admirably collected, catalogued and preserved.

From the hamlet of Borca, one exits along a flat section and then faces the last rough stretch of the day, the one that separates from the town hall square, where the famous **San Bernardo Fair** dedicated to the "artisans of the Alps" is held every year on the first weekend of July.

Before resuming the return journey, a visit to the "**Dorf**," the old Walser settlement with typical "blockbau" (interlocking larch logs) dwellings, is recommended. Here, you will find the **Old Church**, the cemetery (complete with tombstones and graves in memory of climbers who died during ascents to Monte Rosa), and the **Old Lime Tree** (which is more than 700 years old), under which the community used to gather to discuss common administrative and judicial practices.

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Long climb, with a few short, challenging sections (never over 14%), but overall pleasant and affordable.

The use of 26-28/36 ratios is recommended.

## CRITICAL POINTS.

A series of tunnels (the longest being the Gozzi tunnel, just after Piedimulera) that are often poorly lit penalize one of the most scenic alpine routes in the entire area.

## TECHNICAL DATA.

Relevant geographical area:	Ossola
Place of departure:	Vogogna
Number of legs:	1
Length:	31.2 km
Height difference:	1090 m
Total ascent:	1150 m indicative
Difficulty:	MEDIUM
Average duration:	2 hours 30 minutes
Minimum altitude:	219 m.a.s.l.
Highest altitude reached:	1309 m.a.s.l.
Degree of cyclability:	total
Recommended period:	April-October
Presence of dedicated signage:	no
Target audience:	cyclist

## EATERIES

Several stores in different towns in the Anzasca Valley.

## TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

MACUGNAGA - Piazza Municipio, 6 - 28876 Macugnaga (VB), Tel. +39 0324 65119,  
iat@comune.macugnaga.vb.it

## BIKE SERVICE

Schranz Sport, **Rental**, Staffa hamlet - 28876 MACUGNAGA (VB), Tel. +39 0324 65172, Cell.  
+39 338 5376551, schranz.sport@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/schranzSport/

I-Snow, **Rental**, hamlet of Staffa and Pecetto - 28876 MACUGNAGA (VB), Cell. +39 348  
2221679

## CHARGING STATIONS

Town Hall Square, 1 - 28876 MACUGNAGA (VB)

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### VOGOGNA

Visconti Castle, Roman tombstone from the 2nd century A.D., Val Grande National Park Offices

### PIEDIMULERA

Ferrero Tower 16th cent., Ancient bread ovens of Pairazzo and Meggiana, Morlongo Torchio,  
Museum of Mineralogy and Mining History, Palazzi Testoni, Church of Saints George and  
Anthony - Old Church 16th cent., Lithoteca "Giorgio Spezia"

### CALASCA CASTIGLIONE

Parish Church of St. Anthony Abbot (Cathedral among the Woods), The "bread route" along  
ancient villages with community ovens, millstones, etc., Antrogna Museum of the Calasca  
Militia, Villa Belli

### BANNIO ANZINE

Parish Church of St. Bartholomew 16th century, Museum of the Immaterial of St. Martha, votive  
chapels 14th-17th centuries

### CEPPO MORELLI

Parish Church of St. John the Baptist 16th century, House of Mirrors, Cross-country ski trail

#### VANZONE WITH SAN CARLO

Museum of milk processing (hamlet of Vanzone), Old Mill "Giacchetti Complex" (hamlet of Roletto), Tower of Battiglio, Old Washhouse of St. Charles, Pertuso Bridge 15<sup>th</sup> century, Parish Church of St. Catherine 16<sup>th</sup> century, Mines of the Dogs, "Cà d'Ninin" - Museum of the Anzasca House, Vanzonis House

#### MACUGNAGA

Ancient Walser House Museum in Borca, Dorf, Staffa Mountain Museum, Ancient Gold Mine of Guja, The Pestarena Mines, Mountain and Smuggling Museum, Monumental Tree - The Old Lime Tree 13<sup>th</sup> century, Wildlife Oasis (loc. Pecetto), Belvedere and Monte Moro cableways