

WHITE OVER RED 06 – MADNESS

Posted on 2023-04-13 2023-04-14 by spd_wp_admin

Dear Reader (2023-04-13),

Forward and Table of Contents can be found [here](#).



Date: Tuesday 2022-08-09 through Wednesday 2022-08-10

Location: Chalet de Bise to Refuge de Chesery to Refuge de Chardonnière

Even though a smooth morning routine is still a week or two away, this morning has all the right things; I sleep, wake up, dress, have breakfast, pack, re-pack because I forgot to first fill my water bladder, lace my boots, and begin to walk. Chapelle D'Abondance is in a valley so first we go up and then we go down. I realize that the only way to get back on plan is to try and get a taxi close to Refuge de Chesery. In my original planning for yesterday I thought I might need a taxi, and had saved a number in the trip book (1). Today I need that number and no taxis are available for anytime today. I try another two cab companies (2) and on the fourth attempt, someone agrees to come in an hour and half.

Ninety minutes later a stunningly gorgeous woman picks-me. We careen along country roads until we get to a festival of mountain bikes going down the slopes and up the chairlifts of the alpine resort Portes du

Soleil. Somewhere around 40 years ago I had been here skiing – I recognize nothing. It is time for a late lunch and then a chairlift to the top. Refuge de Chesery is still an hour or two away. But first I join a small group of people who are watching obviously crazy people flying across the valley. Some time ago I would have been one of those crazy people.

Zipline across the valley at Les Portes du Soleil

In two or three weeks I will be sitting with Edward, Julie, and a philosophical Frenchman who speaks good English. I ask what it is about the French character that has been the impetus for creating events such as Marathon des Sables, Tour de France, Le Mans, the Dakar Rally, and to a lesser extent walking the GR5. The Frenchman appreciates the question and has no answer.

I watch a little while longer, and then leave the festival of mountain bikes and crazy people. In the middle of a plateau, a faded sign marks the border between France and Switzerland. I cross the border. The Refuge de Chesery, next to Lac Verte, is basic, pleasant, and full of life. I throw a salty pair of socks and an equally salty shirt over a fence rail and rehydrate. It is not a great day for photography but I am pleased that I have managed to get to the right place on the right day. Une bière s'il vous plait- bien sur monsieur.

Morning arrives. The day begins (z13). The trail winds along the side of a valley under ski lifts across sloped pastures liberally dotted with cows. I do remember the Portes du Soleil ski complex being a massive web of pistes crisscrossing multiple mountains and straddling France and Switzerland.

My favourite salad is composed of sliced farm fresh ripe tomatoes interspersed with slices of soft mozzarella like cheese drizzled in olive oil, dotted with leaves of fresh basil, and a little bit of ground course salt. It could be time for lunch. The tomato salad I have looking out across the valley doesn't live up to my hope. It is though still enough of a treat for me to think that Gaia and her mountains will be okay. Long after humanity has had its day, the land will take back what was stolen from her. The mountains older and rounder will endure. This thought is comforting.

I continue winding my along the side of the valley to the Swiss French border at Col du Cou.

In the movie Kill Bill Volume 1, the Bride performs a sword duel that is a cross between a pas de deux and a tango with O-Ren Ishii. Throughout the scene the click clop of a Japanese water feature forms part of the soundtrack. There are cow bells just out of site making that same click clop sound. For the next 3 or 4 days, whenever I need a mental boost, I will

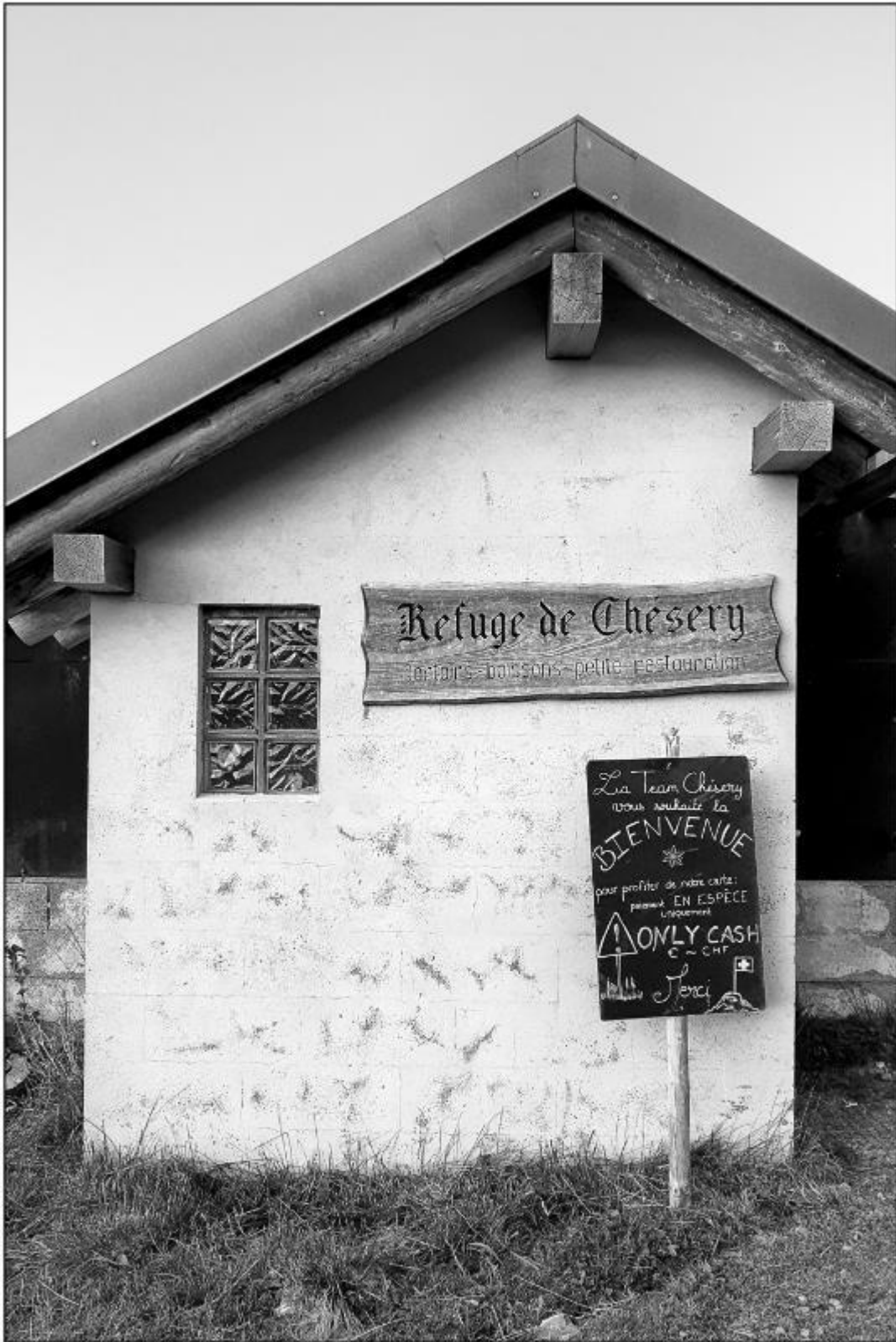
tell myself “I am Uma”. This mantra will be briefly replaced by another mantra, and then prove unnecessary. But that is still days away.

With Uma’s help I arrive at the evening’s farmyard of umbrellas. Today’s cow parade is hidden from view but not from sound. Tonight’s meal will be my only 5 course meal of the trip; vegetable soup, sausages and potatoes, green salad, cheese, crème brûlée.

The pattern established in the previous post continues with this post. Finished photos (labelled f##) have borders. Diary photos(3) (labeled z##) don’t have borders, and are generally in the order they were captured.



f01 Lac Verte





f03 A Swiss View



f04



f05



z1 Chalet de Bise



z2



z3



z4



z7



z5



z6



z9 Chapelle D'Abondance



z10 Crazy Person



z8 Chapelle D'Abondance



z11



z12



z13



z14



z15 Salad Stop



z16



z17



z18



z19



z20



z21



z22



z23



z24 Refuge de Chardonnière

Footnotes and Longer Captions

1 The trip book was an over 90-page (8.5" x 11") pdf document that I kept on my phone. The document had all my logistics including potable water sources for those areas where it was scarce.

2 Rural taxis may also have a government contract to provide medical transport, and that has a higher priority than the wants of a traveler.

3 Diary photos are just that. They are ok photos, not necessarily good ones though, help with story telling, and may prove to be useful at a later date.

z02 Not my trail to a col but the one I'm on would look similar.

z04 Towards Chapelle d'Abondance

z08 Chapelle d'Abondance – Once upon a time offices like these provided critical communication infrastructure.

z14 Off in the distance (small white dot back centre) at Col de Cou lies the old customs building between Switzerland and France.

z15 After salad, a table of key elements

z19 Hot cows asleep in the sun

z21 Swiss French Border

z22 Looking back from Col de Cou

z23 Towards Refuge de Chardonnière

You are welcome to share a link to this page with others.

As always, all comments are welcome and sought.

Cheers, Sean