



The first part of his trip, begun August 26th, is over. This page, written with his companion Patrick Edlinger on the rocky faces of the Dolomites, is turned and Patrick Bérhault is now tackling big routes in mixed climbing together with Philippe Magnin, a mountain guide and teacher at the National School for Skiing and Mountaineering (ENSA) in Chamonix.

### **Sunday, October 8th**

From Monte Spluga to Hinterrheim. We spend the night in a farm. A long walk of 12 hours.

"It snowed during the night. As of 2 000 meters, everything has turned white. Our rope-party crosses a col, at almost 3 000 meters. If everything turns right, we should reach the Eiger within 4 to 5 days."

### **Monday, October 9th**

From Hinterrhein (Switzerland) to Olivone.

"Getting up at 3.30 a.m. as the low valley is closed during the morning because of the Swiss army shootings. It seems that we can get a look on Oberland, far away. We first will have to climb a 3 400 meter high summit. A long walk is awaiting us."

### **Tuesday, October 10th**

A long way from Olivone to Airolo, a village below the St Gothard, over the Passo delle Colombe, at 2 400 meters high. A total of 1 500 meters, in 10 and a half hours.

"It's snowing, it's raining, and we try to go faster. Local people tell us always the same: it's impossible to go there in one day! Nevertheless, we do it. But, because of the cold and the dampness, the camera and the movie camera broke down."

### **Wednesday, October 11th**

From Airolo to Oberwald, at the foot of the Grimselpass. A long trip: more than 40 km. A distance done in 10 and a half hours.

"It rained all night. My friend Philippe left by car, because he hurt his foot. I go on with Emily Lievens. There is a lot of snow and I know the conditions on Eiger won't be good. I'll have to wait, not for really good conditions, but at least for better ones. Which means that I have no idea of when I can climb this mountain! But it's the game. You have to be patient, and accept the fact that you have no choice but wait."

### **Thursday, October 12th**

From Oberwald to Innertkirchen. We announced yesterday that Patrick, with Emily Lievens, was going to reach Mehringen. In fact, they chose to stop a little ahead of Mehringen, in Innertkirchen. Another walk of 45 km, over the Grimselpass, which took more time than what they had planned. Tramping in a wet and heavy snow, they had some problems to find their way.

"What a hell of a weather! You can't imagine worse. And not one single human being. There are not much people in the mountains, generally, but there. A real desert!"

It took them at least ten hours.

### **Friday, October 13th**

From Innertkirchen to Grindelwald.

"Same weather than yesterday, the Eiger is in my mind, I think of the first winter climb, in 1961, by Kinshoffer and Hiebeler. I believe it will be great. I am going to stay for a while in Grindelwald, waiting for better conditions. I don't want to miss the Eigerwand, the idea of the trilogy (together with the Matterhorn and the Jorasses) is a big motivation. I'm going to train and write. A time to rest and think. And wait for the right moment. I might go and equip the first part. Otherwise, it will depend on the conditions, I might go to the Jungfrau or the Monch, as a substitute to the Badile. I have to think about all that."

### **Saturday, Sunday and Monday, October 14th, 15th and 16th**

Patrick Bérhault is waiting in Grindelwald. As we know, through television and newspapers, the weather has been terrible in this area (especially in Valais): heavy rains, snow, landslides and floods.



"I was expecting difficult conditions on the Eiger, but it's even worse! Patrick Gabarrou advised me to go and see a local climber, Kaspar Ochsner, who, in fact, told me it would be wiser to consider the Japanese route rather than the Harlin. In any case, I must wait. I might go and put some equipment in the hardest rope lengths of the Harlin. I could reach the route through the famous Stollenloch, as I would be authorized to have access to the North face by the tunnel of the Eiger train. This would allow me to think of climbing the route in a few days if the weather gets better. I don't want to miss this face, but I don't want either to take extra risks. The face is really in very bad conditions. I know that, in any case, it will be very difficult."

### **Tuesday, October 17th, 2000**

As we let you know yesterday, Patrick Bérhault and Patrick Magnin are heading to the Mont-Blanc range. From Grindelwald to Murren, via the Lauterbrunnen valley. A walk which was, once more, impeded by the rain. Thus, they ran into rivers in spate and had to cross a river of mud. "It was awful, like crossing quicksands!"

### **Wednesday, October 18th, 2000**

From Murren to Kandersteg (Bernese Alps). This part goes along the Blümlisalp range, with mountains like the Breithorn (not to mistake with the other one, near the Matterhorn!). A walk of 9 hours and a half. Arrival in a small "Gasthof" in Kandersteg near the Balmhorn.

"At least a nice day. Made me think of the Andes, with a blue sky, with some snow and the autumn glow."

### **Thursday, October 19th, 2000 (54th day of the trip)**

From Kandersteg to Lenk. A long way. But this is the Bérhault technique to go from one hotel to another. To make in one day a trip which would take, for anybody else, two to three days. As simple as that!

"It looks like I'm heading towards nice weather. To the west, snowfalls were less important."

Total: 9 hours.

### **Saturday, October 21st, 2000**

Last but one stop before the Mont-Blanc range: departure from Villard, near Les Diablerets, to arrive late in the afternoon in Martigny.

### **Sunday, October 22nd, 2000**

Leaving Martigny for Chamonix, where he arrives at the end of the afternoon.

### **Monday, October 23rd, 2000**

After a morning at the dentist's in Chamonix, Patrick is preparing, direction the Grandes Jorasses. He will spend the night at the Leschaux hut.

"The weather is fantastic! Today, we go to the Jorasses for a reconnaissance."

### **Tuesday, October 24th, 2000**

Leschaux hut. Getting up at 3.30 a.m. and departure for the slopes of the Jorasses at 4.30. Bergschrund of the gully on the right hand side of the Linceul at 7.30 a.m. With Philippe Magnin, they tackle the Desmaison-Goussault.

### **Tuesday, October 25th, 2000**

Live from the Goussault-Desmaison.

"Hello, everybody! I didn't call you yesterday night, we climbed with our torches. But it was worth it! We are now around 3 800 m, in the 23rd or 24th rope length [the route makes 36 rope lengths and towers at 4 208 meters]. What an atmosphere, what a route! A stone-fall cut the rope. This night, we bivaqued on a tiny snow shoulder, we cut a little ledge. Just enough to seat. The spirit is pretty high, the conditions are difficult because of the snow, which covers the rock, but we are quite confident. We should finish tonight. At least, we hope to make a bivouac not far from the summit!"

Reminder: in 1971, this route saw a terrible drama, the death of René Desmaison's companion, Serge Goussault, under the summit. Desmaison returned to climb this route with Bertone and Claret during the winter of 1973. It took them 7 days. Stéphane Benoist and Patrice Glairon-Rappaz, who climbed it in 5 days, in January 1999, qualified this achievement of "out of this world"

(source: VerticalRoc n° 2).



### **Thursday, October 26th, 2000**

Summit of the Jorasses on October 29th, at 7 p.m. A bivouac 400 m under the summit, at the Reposoir. Today, descent on Courmayeur, direction (on mountain bikes!) the Matterhorn. Jean-Michel Asselin: "It is 7 p.m. In the helicopter of the CMBH, we wonder if we are going to see the Grandes Jorasses. A sea of clouds has formed. The helicopter is shaken up, the wind is strong but here they are, in the dusk. We can see Patrick and Philippe, a few meters under the summit. Trying to escape the wind, we hide near the face. We wait for a few minutes. And Patrick gets over the summit cornice. He has been going for 60 days, and he just climbed the Goussault-Desmaison within two days (remember, the 342 hours in the Grandes Jorasses of René Desmaison.)! 9 p.m. A phone call: "We bivouac near the Reposoir. Too much wind. We don't see anything. It was incredible, a splendid route. Did you find a rope party to go with us to the foot of Matterhorn?"

### **Friday, October 27th, 2000**

Patrick and Philippe left Courmayeur this morning, after a good night and a strong meal. They called us from the Monzino hut. They are heading towards the Eccles bivouac. To-morrow, they expect to be in the face. Next appointment on Monday. 3.30 p.m. From Val Ferret (live) Patrick and Philippe arrived this afternoon in Val Ferret after a slightly wet and windy bivy above the Reposoir, in the normal route of the Grandes Jorasses. At least they can have a lunch. Again, they wonder: where do we go to-morrow? The spell of good weather seems to be too short for the Matterhorn. They consider the South face of the Mont Blanc. If there is not too much snow, the rocky route is possible, otherwise, maybe the ice route?

"The Goussault-Desmaison?

- It is one of the major routes of the Alps, the upmost of alpinism!
- How can you go so fast?
- We had only one thought: an Italian cappuccino!"

### **Saturday, October 28th, 2000**

Bérhault-Magnin are at the top of the Mont Blanc. It has been a very fast ascent. The two friends spent the night at the Monzino refuge, than at 5 in the morning they left towards "HYPERCOULOIR" (This route has been the first ascent in 1982 by Patrick Gabarrou and Pierre Alain Steiner). At 1 P.M. Bérhault-Magnin were at the top of Mont Blanc, and at 2 P.M. they were resting at the Brenva, before reach Aiguille du Midi. In few days Bérhault-Magnin have been crossing the Mont Blanc Massif two ways!

### **Sunday, October 29th, 2000**

It is about 10A.M. and Patricks has reached one tea room in the valley, and has a typical French "Croissant" for breakfast...The weather is not nice and it looks like it will be bad for the future days...As long as Patrick stays in Chamonix he will work on his "route notes", that will printed in a future Book.