

By bike on the salt routes



European and Mediterranean Salinas



**16000km by bicycle
to promote the conservation of salinas !
90 salinas visited in 14 mediterranean countries**

September 2003 / August 2004

Gilles Dessomme



engane@cheminsdusel.com
www.cheminsdusel.com

Introduction

' **By bike on the saltroutes** ' is a project that stems from the discovery of two "white countries" in France: the salinas of Guérande in Brittany and the saltpans of Salin de Giraud in the Camargue.

My experience in the heart of these wetlands has definitely convinced me to carry out this project of the discovery of the saltpans and salinas on the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts.

1. *The saltroutes :*



For thousands of years, men developed the marshes on the coastlines to make salt-one of life's first necessities. Today saltpans are witness to the union between Man and Nature. Since Man was looking to make a profit from natural resources such as water, wind, the sun or the strength of the tide, he built agrarian landscapes with large economic, cultural and ecological values.

A testimony :

During this bicycle journey in 2003/2004, I would like to witness, first hand, the state of solar salinas on the European and Mediterranean coasts. The objective is not only to promote the value of saltpans of these regions but also to cultivate the exchange of information between each visited region and to share the accounts of the realities of 'salt life' with photographic portraits and reports. A global approach to these areas will be encouraged: life of men, the organization of their work, the layout of the landscape, the biological riches, and the evolution of the saltpans.

My thirst for discovery is symbolic for a desire for the human encounter: at each step a stay of a few days will allow me to share with the producers the spellbinding alchemy that transforms the salinas.

This Mediterranean tour is also an adventure at the depths of one self - a way of accomplishing a 'personal legend' ! It is also a challenge in its own right. The challenge is not really an athletic achievement but a challenge to one's self to follow the discovery's footsteps of another, to overcome one's worries when faced with the unknown.



2. Objectives

1. To promote the values and functions of saltpans and salinas in Europe and around the Mediterranean sea.
2. To gather global information and this capital to the visited sites at the end of the journey.
3. To initiate a dialogue and exchanges between the people and organizations having an interest in the conservation of saltpans and salinas (producers, companies, managers, researchers, local communities...).

To reach these goals, the following actions will be achieved.

3. Actions

- † †Set up of **pedagogical activities** during the scholastic year with the children from the schools in Salin de Giraud and in Guérande (and perhaps with some schools surrounding the Mediterranean).
- † †The creation of a **website** : <www.cheminsdusel.com> (scheduled on-line beginning of 2003). The site will allow the presentation of the project, the contributors, the progress of the trip and the saltpans ! There will also be a means to communicate with the pupils, the collaborators living around the Mediterranean.



- † † **The presentation of the project** all along the route where there is exhibition structure.
 - † † The publication of articles in local newspapers.
 - † † The creation of a database on the saltpans: global data and image bank including digital and slide photos.
 - † † Gathering the addresses and telephone numbers of the people working on the saltpans (an updated address book).
 - † † The creation of an itinerant exhibition upon my return from the journey. The exhibition will review the trip and the accumulated information. The exhibit will be shown at those sites that have the facilities to hold such an exposition.
 - † † The creation of the "**Chemins du sel**" Association.
- † † And globally, to be an ambassador of information exchanges between the sites in the interest of conserving the saltpans and salinas.

4. Education

A primary objective in such a project is the involvement of school children living near the salt making sites.

This journey will be the medium of an educational project for the classes of Guérande (Brittany), Salin de Giraud (Camargue) and Tuz Gölü (Turkey). The study of the production of solar produced salt in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic will be able to tackle the scholastic program with a pluridisciplinary approach. The journey's logbook will serve as the means of educational activities. The contacts created during the trip will be able to encourage a correspondence between the schools of many salt making villages. For such a project, Internet connection will be a very good means of communication.

Throughout the entire journey presentations and speeches will be proposed to the public (in Museums and Salt Houses) and in schools. The goal at the end will be the culmination of a synthesis and the creation of an itinerant exhibition available to the public.

5. Communication

Programming :

- **Radios** : France Inter or RFI, France Bleu Provence (2), France Bleu Loire Océan (1), Radio Camargue (2).
- **Newspapers** : la Provence (2), Ouest France (2), Midi Libre (2), La Marseillaise (2), La gazette des communes (1).

- **Magazines:** Terre sauvage (1), Géo (1).

A partnership with MedWet¹ initiative will allow to reach the media abroad.

6. Why by bike ?

Because the bicycle is an ecological, silent and economic mode of transportation. It is the ideal way to travel at one's own rhythm and to take the time to discover and to meet people.

7. A 'bent' ? !



This 'bent' from Holland, has been baptized '**Engane**' because of the provençal name of the salted soils vegetation

trademark: *Optima*
model: *Dragon*

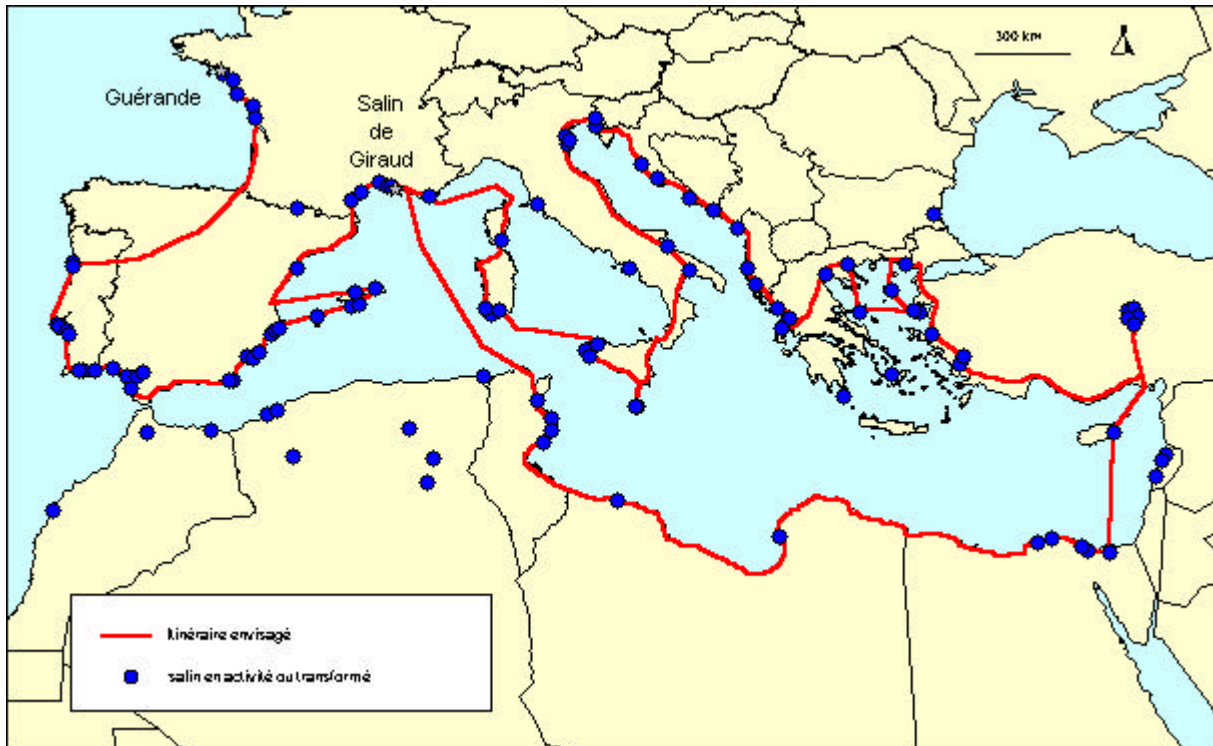
I opted for the 'sit down' bicycle that offers all the advantages of a mountain bike:

- An incomparable comfort: the 'sit down' position allows the body to avoid a number of problems and pains;
- More efficient than a classic bicycle due to better aerodynamics;
- Safer: your feet are in front of you and your center of gravity is lower;
- Can hold the same amount of baggage as the classical bike.

The bent is original and people are genuinely attracted to it, it is also a great way to get the media involved in the project !

¹ Medwet is a Governmental Organization for the conservation of the mediterranean wetlands under the aegis of the Ramsar Convention Bureau: www.medwet.org.

8. Route



The departing point will be the salinas of Guérande, the most northern in all of Europe. The coastline will lead the way to the returning point of the salt pans of Salin de Giraud, the widest in all of Europe. In all, 14 countries will be visited, about 16,000 kilometers will be travelled and over 100 salt pans visited.

The departure date is foreseen to be in September 2003 and the return date in August 2004.



Timetable :

- ?? France : from Guérande to Pyrénées (*Estuaire de la Loire, Marais breton, Ile de Noirmoutier, Ile de Ré*)
- ?? Spain : from Pyrénées to the portugese coast
- ?? Portugal : from Aveiro to Algarve (*Estuaire du Tage, Sétubal, Baie du Mondego, Olhao, Faro*)
- ?? Spain : from Cadix to Pyrénées (*Golfe de Cadix, Ibiza et Formentera, Delta de l'Ebre*)
- ?? France : from Pyrénées to Camargue (*lagunes du Languedoc, Camargue*)
- ?? Tunisia : from Ichkeul Lake to Gabès golf (*Sousse, Sfax*)
- ?? Libia : from Zuwarah to Tobrouk (*Bu kammash, Al maqrum*)
- ?? Egypt : from Saloum to Port Saïd (*delta du Nil*)
- ?? Chyprus : Limassol (*Larnaca*)
- ?? Turkey : from the Göksu delta to the Egea sea (*Tuz Gölü, Fokia*)
- ?? Greece : the isles (*Messolonghi, Lesvos*)
- ?? Albania, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovénia : from Kérkira to Piran (*Piran, Ulcinj*)
- ?? Italia : from the adriatic sea coast to the isles (*Margherita di Savoia, Cervia, Trapani, Marsala*)
- ?? France : from Corse to Salin de Giraud (*Porto Vecchio, Hyères, Salin de Giraud*)

9. Curriculum vitæ



Gilles DESSOMME
Single
28 years

TRAVELS : **' By bike '**

2002 march / october	From Salin de Badon to Salin de Giraud...and conversely ! (France) Badon - Giraud : 4000 km for physical preparation with <i>Engane...</i>
2001 13 days	The Costa Brava (Spain) Barcelone - Valence - Alicante : 1100 km
1996 15 days	From South France to the spanish Pais Basco (France/Spain) Arcachon - Pic d'Iraty - San Sebastian : 900 km
1995 15 days	The Loire valley and the Brittany (France) St Jean de Monts - Belle île en mer - Cholet : 900 km

EXPERIENCES : **' salty '**

Camargue 2000-03 2,5 years	ASSISTANT MANAGER on a nature reserve, property of the <i>Conservatoire du littoral</i> : the Domaine de la Palissade (at Salin de Giraud). Discovery of the mediterranean salt pans.
Ile de Noirmoutier 2000 7 months	Engineer memory on the embanked saltmarshes of the Northern Europe coasts. Sea Laboratory of Dinard - <i>Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle</i> .
Salines de Guérande 1998-99 13 months	EDUCATIONAL MANAGER in the 'Salt House' of Guérande.

FORMATION : **' from ecology to environment '**

1999-00	DEA « ENVIRONNEMENT, TEMPS, ESPACE et SOCIÉTÉS ». Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle de Paris Institut de Recherche et de Développement (ex ORSTOM)
1992-96	Universitary degrees about ecology and biology. University of Angers and Rennes.

HOBBIES **' diversity '**

- **Interactions between Man and Nature** on the heart of coastal ecosystems (over salted environments) : bibliography with 300 references about salt pans and salinas.
- Sport : bicycle (whose 100 km by week to go to work) and football.
- Music : Pop song / folk guitar ; Samba / agogos.



10. Budget

Expenses

Type	Objet	Montant (€uros)	Montant (Francs)	%
Matériel vélo	Vélo et équipement	3 771,70	24 740,47	15
	Nécessaire de réparation			
	Outils			
Matériel photographique	Reflex et numérique	1 269,00	8 324,01	5
	Objectifs (35-80 et 80-200)			
	Sacoques et pellicules			
Matériel de cuisine		384,47	2 521,93	2
Vêtements	Quotidien, cyclo et rando	433,45	2 843,22	2
Matériel de couchage	Tente, duvet, matelas	741,57	4 864,33	3
Matériel divers	Microrordinateur portable	2 453,60	16 094,39	10
	Batteries, photopiles			
	Portable GSM			
	Minidisc			
Frais de nourriture	15 €/ jour	5 115,00	33 551,84	21
Hébergement	25 €/ jour d'hébergement	1 217,86	7 988,53	5
Hygiène et santé	Vaccins, médicaments	516,30	3 386,67	2
Transport	Bus, train, bateau	1 301,00	8 533,91	5
Frais de dossier		455,00	2 984,57	2
Site internet		365,00	2 394,22	1
Frais administratifs	Assurances	1 938,00	12 712,31	8
	Visas, passeport, change			
	envois postaux, téléphone			
Divers	Tirages photos	450,00	2 951,78	2
	Salière de poche	150,00	983,93	1
	Imprévus (5%)	1 200,00	7 871,40	5
Total voyage		21 761,95	142 747,49	88
Exposition de restitution		3 000,00	19 678,50	12
Total avec l		24 761,95	162 425,99	100



11. Collaborations

Technical partners (saltpans, relationships, logistic) :

- The **Société Coopérative Agricole Salines de Guérande** : Producers of traditional salt.
- The **Station biologique de la Tour du Valat** : A research laboratory for the conservation of mediterranean wetlands.
- The '**ALAS**' project : a network of organization having an interest in salt cycle
- The '**MedWet**' initiative : Governmental Organization for the conservation of mediterranean wetlands.
- The **Conservatoire du Littoral** : A french state organization for the coastland protection
- The association '**Rivages de France**' association : The managers association of the Conservatoire du Littoral's lands.
- The **Pôle relais lagunes méditerranéennes** : A centre of resources for the managers and users of lagoons
- The '**Cyclo Camping International**' association : To ride by bike all over the world
- The '**Véhicules à Propulsion Humaine**' association : a 'bent' association
- The bikeshop '**Airodin Optima**'

Educational partners :

- The '**Terre de sel**' association
- The **primary schools** of Guérande, Salin de Giraud and Tuz Gölu area
- A workshop for Internet connections in Salin de Giraud : the « **Salin Média Site** »
- The **Syndicat Mixte pour la Gestion du Domaine de la Palissade** : a manager of the 'Domaine de la Palissade' property of the Conservatoire du Littoral with educational objectives.

Financial partners :

- Few technical partners
- Fondations : **Fondation de France, Tour du Valat**
- Local governments : **Conseil général** des Bouches du Rhône, **Région** Provence Alpes Côte Azur
- Society : **Optima, AET France**



12. Coordinates

Gilles DESSOMME

Association: "*Chemins du sel*"
46, rue Genive
13200 Arles
FRANCE

email : engane@cheminsdusel.com

Website : www.cheminsdusel.com