

## G2. POINTE BARETTI

West couloir 4013 m

- ▶ **Start:** 1550
- ▶ **V +/ V -:** 2460
- ▶ **Aspect:** west
- ▶ **Slope:** 45°/500
- ▶ 3531ET
- ▶ **Durée :** 10h00
- ▶ **Ski:** 5.2
- ▶ **Alpine:** D-
- ▶ **Exposure:** 3
- ▶ 🏠 215

**From the Chalets du Miage**, traverse the Doire River and ascend the left bank of the glacier, which at 2000 m starts to diagonal north. At around 2400 m, head right up the left bank of the Mont Blanc Glacier and start climbing up, 500 m higher, an obvious narrow couloir directly beneath the Pointe Baretti. Climb up the entire couloir. It narrows even further at around 3600 m and is even disrupted by a short ice-chute (10 m *rappel* on the first descent). Above, the couloir remains narrow and tops out left onto a snow dome. The climb finishes left, up a hanging couloir that reaches a maximum of 40°. (P. Tardivel, S. Sainte-Marie, J. Janody, mai 2006.)

**G2.1.** Col Emily Rey, west side. The preferred approach is via the Quintino Sella hut since the Mont Blanc Glacier is rarely in skiable condition. 47°/400 (ski: 5.2). (P. Tardivel, J. Janody, 2/06/05.)

*The remoteness Baretti's obvious couloir (G2) and the edge of the vast west face clearly explain why it was not skied until May 2006. Regarding Mont Blanc, the mountain may seem white from afar, but favorable conditions are rare on this 1000 m high face, scoured by winds from all directions, perched above a 2000 m rock and glacial platform that requires a full day to reach the hut. So it is not surprising that repeats are few and far between. In May 2003, Jean-Luc Meyrier and Eric Guilhot stopped at around 4700 m due to ice in the upper section of G3.1.*



*Even at this high altitude the glaciers have felt the effects of climate change, the couloir has become narrower and does not fill in as easily. The central route (G3.2) is the most often in skiable condition but exposed to serac fall. In addition, you may need to ascend via the Saudan route (G3.1) and risk skiing the route onsight. The key section is at the bottom of the face during the traverse between the rocks and can take time when there is not enough snow: this is unfortunately the spot where you are beneath the huge serac. Recent known repeats (Charlet/*

## G3. MONT BLANC

West Face 4810 m

- ▶ **Start:** 1550
- ▶ **V + D1+D2:** 1850/1450
- ▶ **V - D1+D2:** 0/3300
- ▶ **Aspect:** west
- ▶ **Slope:** 50°/400 ; 45°/1000
- ▶ 3531ET
- ▶ **Time D1+D2:** 6h00+11h00
- ▶ **Ski:** 5.4
- ▶ **Alpine:** D-
- ▶ **Exposure:** 3
- ▶ **Hut:** Quintino Sella
- ▶ 🏠 213, 214, 222, 296

**D1. From the Chalets du Miage**, follow **G2** and then at around 2400 m start ascending the Mont Blanc Glacier's right bank (*depending on conditions on the glacier, you may need to take a short snow couloir on the left, which often has a crevasse, followed by a traverse right*). 400 m higher, a small south facing cirque comes up against the rocks. A couloir allows you to continue climbing and tops out at a small plateau and the hut (*you can also approach via Gonnella – see G4 – and then a west facing couloir*).

**D2. From the hut**, start climbing the west facing slopes of the icecap that allows you to come out on the upper end of the Mont Blanc Glacier. Traverse the glacier (short descent) to the base of the west face without going too far right (serac fall). Climb up to the bergschrund, to the highest point, and start climbing the wide slope that follows, taking the path of least resistance through the rocks. Above, do not enter the couloir on the left, but aim for a short couloir straight above you, followed by a short, 15 m section of mixed terrain (*rappel* on the descent). The slope widens before you reach another couloir that allows you to top out on the summit dome. (S. De Benedetti, 09/80.)

**G3.1.** Mont Blanc, west face via La Tournette (ski: 5.4). Same start and then climb up the left side of the face via a couloir prior to meeting up with **G3**. (S. Saudan, 25/06/73.)

**G3.2.** Mont Blanc, west couloir (ski: 5.3). Extremely exposed to serac fall, preferably skied onsight (D. Neuenschwander, 15/06/86.)

**G3.3.** Mont Blanc, right-side route (ski: 5.3). (P. Tardivel, 08/07/93.)

*Dupré/Malmuit/Mansart then Janody/Tardivel a few days later in 2005) were done onsight (dropped off by helicopter for the first group, ascent via the Three Mounts for the second). Laurent Dupré, who also descended the Greloz-Roch route of 1946 (G3), considers it the most suitable to skiing in spite of the short rappel in the middle: few objective hazards on the face and a regular snowpack. That said, this remains a risky endeavor even on the first day approach to the Quintino Sella hut.*





## G4. MONT BLANC Via the Aiguilles Grises 4810 m

- ▶ **Start:** 1550
- ▶ **V + D1+D2:** 1520/1740
- ▶ **V - D1+D2:** 0/3260
- ▶ **Aspect:** south
- ▶ **Slope:** 45°/100
- ▶ 3531ET
- ▶ **Time D1+D2:** 5h00+9h00
- ▶ **Ski:** 4.2
- ▶ **Alpine:** PD+
- ▶ **Exposure:** 3
- ▶ **Hut:** Gonella
- ▶ 🏠 217, 219

**D1. From the Chalets du Miage**, follow **G3** to around 2400 m at the junction between the glaciers and head to the base of the rocky spur where the Gonella hut sits. Start climbing up the spur at around 2600 m, following the summer route, which is here and there equipped with handrails. The route traverses an east face (*quickly exposed to rock fall in soft snow conditions*). Head to the hut by climbing over one last bulge (*when the snowpack is deep, you can ascend via the right bank of the Dôme Glacier, very crevassed, all the way to the hut*).

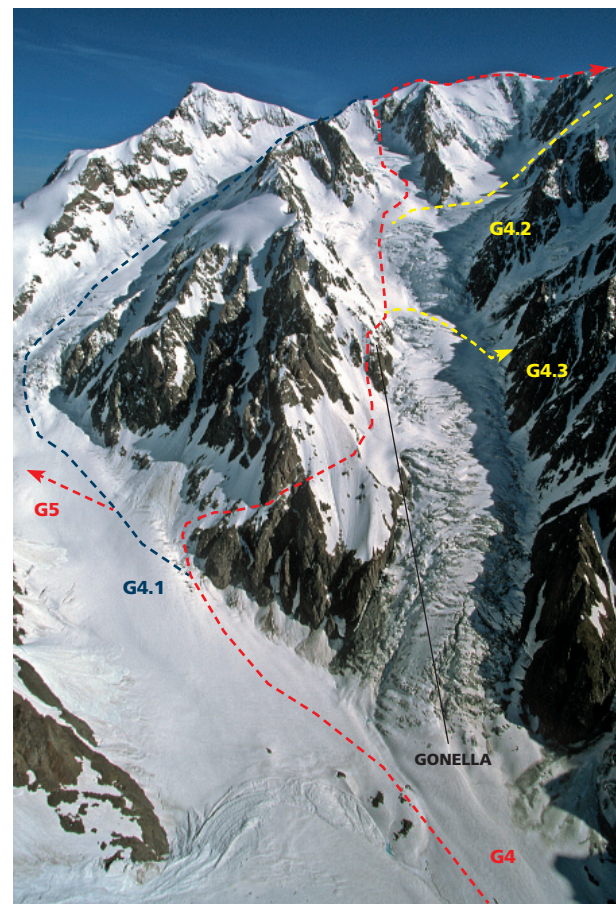
**D2. From the hut**, traverse to the Dôme Glacier (tricky) and ascend via the right bank to approximately 3000 m. Head over to the left bank in order to cross over a series of crevasses before coming back left onto a plateau beneath the icecap of the Aiguilles Grises. Head to the Aiguilles Grises ridge above the icecap and from here to the subpeak of the Dôme du Goûter called the Pitons des Italiens. Follow the ridge, which progressively gets easier, to the dome where you will meet up with **A1**.

**G4.1.** Mont Blanc, south side, descent via the Bionnassay Glacier. You can also do it via the Durier hut (see **G5.4**).

**G4.2.** Mont Blanc, Bosses ridge, southwest slope. A steep, 800 m high altitude slope, often ice, with a problematic ice bulge low down that should be scouted out beforehand (ski: 5.2/E3).

**G4.3.** Approach variation to the Quintino Sella hut. From Gonella, traverse the glacier and climb up the west-facing couloir.

*This is the Italian regular route for Mont Blanc, which has nothing "regular" about it except for the fact that it is relatively easy when compared to the other Aosta Valley routes. You will need to deal with a number of hurdles, which make this such a spectacular ski-mountaineering route: a low starting altitude, sections of heavy mashed-potatoes snow on the ski below the hut, a very crevassed glacier, steep slopes below the Dôme du Goûter... You can also descend via the Bionnassay Glacier (G4.1) but you will need to check it out beforehand in order to avoid having a hard time navigating through the crevasses. The upper section meets up with two of the three French "regular" routes, just below the Vallot hut (which is only an emergency shelter for rope teams who are lost or in trouble). Built by Joseph Vallot in exchange for authorization, from the town of Chamonix, to build an observatory that also bears his name (located just below the hut, for use only by scientists). The scholar had first imagined*



*placing it on Mont Blanc's summit but he had his doubts as to the stability of the glacier ice. He was proved right a few years later when J.C. Janssen decided to build an observatory on the summit, contacting the one and only Gustave Eiffel to help him successfully complete the project. In spite of recommendations from the inventor of the famous tower, Janssen completed construction of the observatory on snow in 1893. It was abandoned fifteen years later, half swallowed up by the ice.*



The Vallot hut and observatory form the Col du Dôme where the Italian (G4) and French (A2) regular routes meet.