

**PRESS INFORMATION**  
**PRESS RELEASES - BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**17<sup>th</sup> FAI WORLD HANG GLIDING CLASS 1  
CHAMPIONSHIPS 2009**

France hosts the 2009 World Hang gliding Championships



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Photos, video clips, news, pilot profiles, plus more information on the website :

[www.chabre2009.com](http://www.chabre2009.com)



## 1. THE EVENT - AT A GLANCE

The objective of the FAI World Hang Gliding Championship is to determine the world champion pilot and the world's best nation hang gliding team through a safe, fair and satisfying flying contest.

- The 17<sup>th</sup> FAI World Hang Gliding Championship 2009, Laragne-Chabre, France takes place from 19<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2009.
- The mandatory Test Event for the Championship took place from 24<sup>th</sup> June to 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2008. The 2008 Chabre Hang Gliding Pre-worlds was deemed a great success.
- The World Championship is held under the auspices of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale (FAI), the airsports equivalent of the International Olympic Committee. The FAI establishes the rules and regulations for competitions and records, and confers medals and diplomas. It operates through its various airport commissions; for Hang Gliding, this is the Commission International de Vol Libre.
- 130 pilots from some 30 countries will compete in 2009. Each national team, comprising between 4 and 6 of the country's top pilots, will participate, accompanied by team leader, coach and supporters.
- The event starts with an official practice day (20<sup>th</sup> June), an opening ceremony (21<sup>st</sup> June) and up to 12 competition days, followed by a closing ceremony (4<sup>th</sup> July). The FAI gold, silver and bronze medals, plus diplomas are awarded to the individual and team winners.
- Each competition day the pilots are transported from Laragne town centre to the take-off. A course is set, depending on weather conditions, which may be in excess of 200km, taking in a number of 'turnpoints', and specifying a 'goal' landing field. Courses may be a straight distance to a remote goal or more usually an out and return via turnpoints.
- At the end of each day's task, pilots submit their GPS tracklogs to the scorers. Points are awarded for speed and distance around the course. The competition is won by the pilot and team scoring the highest cumulative score. Consistency is essential and the key to success.
- Scores will be posted at the Laragne town centre headquarters each day. Photographs, task reports and pilot reports will be posted on the website daily, and video footage will be available during and after the event.



## 2. THE WORLD'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS HANG GLIDING EVENT COMES TO LARAGNE-CHABRE, FRANCE

The FAI World Hang Gliding Championships takes place every two years. In 2007, Texas, USA hosted the event, in 2005 it was in Hay, Australia, and in 2003, in Brazil.

Now it is Europe's turn to show the world's best pilots that France has a world-class site, and is capable of organising this World Championship event.

- The 17<sup>th</sup> FAI World Hang Gliding Championships will take place from 19th June to the 4th July 2009 at Laragne, in the Hautes-Alpes department of south east France.
- 130 pilots from at least 30 countries are expected to compete. Each national team, comprising the country's top pilots, will participate, accompanied by team leader, coach and supporters. FAI gold, silver and bronze medals and diplomas are awarded.
- Prior to the World Championships in 2009, a test event was held, providing an opportunity for the organisers to demonstrate that the site and the organisation are up to the FAI's exacting standards for Category 1 events.
- The steward of the FAI who attended the 2008 Pre-worlds reported that the event was exceptionally well run, meeting FAI requirements. A number of minor recommendations were made to improve the event further for 2009.
- This World Championship event provides an excellent opportunity for the local region to further enhance its deserved reputation as a superb location for the practice of a wide range of airports and tourism, as well as providing commercial benefits both directly and indirectly.
- Located in the Hautes-Alpes department of south east France, Laragne-Chabre ridge is an exceptional flying site with a unique aerology and excellent climate.
- The competition will be complemented by a programme of social events for pilots and the public. An extensive media campaign will promote both the sport and the area.
- The organising group, Chabre 2009, has been created as a cooperation between the Fédération Française de Vol Libre (FFVL), the local hang gliding and paragliding clubs, and the local authorities, to run and finance the events.



### 3. LA MONTAGNE DE CHABRE :

## AN EXCEPTIONAL SITE FOR HANG GLIDING & PARAGLIDING

Overlooking beautiful countryside, the Chabre ridge already enjoys an excellent reputation among the hang gliding and paragliding community. An average of 300 sunny days a year, a unique aerology and climate, combined with its proximity to the southern end of the Alps, makes Chabre an exceptional flying site, and the whole region is ideal for free flyers.

- Located in the Hautes-Alpes department, above the village of Chateauneuf de Chabre, this 18km ridge overlooks the town of Laragne-Montéglin, the beautiful Gorges de Méouge and the Buech and Durance valleys.
- The Chabre ridge features both north and south facing take offs. While the dominant wind direction is northerly, diurnal evolution, valley breezes and strong, reliable thermal activity, generally create a southerly flow up the hill.
- The launch area is easily accessible by car, with parking and toilets close to the summit. Official landing fields are located at Laragne-Montéglin, Ribiers and Barret sur Méouge.
- The valleys of the Buech and Durance are wider, and less prone to strong valley winds than the higher Alps. This provides safer outlandings, while good interconnecting roads aid the retrieval of pilots.
- Chabre has a great reputation as a competition and record-setting site. Long distance, out and return and triangular flights, often beyond 250km have been made from here. The French Hang gliding triangle distance record held by Gil Souviron was set here in 2007. After launching from Chabre, he flew 275km over Mont Ventoux, to Dormillouse, then to Grenoble before returning to land at Laragne. Local pilot, Alain Chauvet holds the site out and return record of 230 km.
- Laragne-Chabre has, over the years, become a favourite site for national and international competitions. In recent years it has hosted:
  - the European Hang Gliding Championship in 1994,
  - the French Hang Gliding Championships in 2000, 2003 and 2006
  - several Belgian, Dutch, British and Danish national championshipsIn 2008 Chabre hosted the national hang gliding championships of the UK, Holland and Belgium as well as a number of paragliding competitions



## 4. DEVELOPING THE SPORT, TOURISM AND ENHANCING THE WORLD REPUTATION OF THE SITE

The impact of this major event will be considerable both for the reputation of hang gliding in France, and the reputation of the site worldwide. There is huge potential to expand the tourism in the area based on aerial sports.

- The event will encourage more pilots to visit Laragne-Chabre and the surrounding area, not only this year and next, but every year; not only for competitions, but for flying and family holidays throughout the season.
- A local initiative, Excell'Air, is promoting the wide range of aerial sports available in the region, incorporating a major programme to gather and disseminate information, and help promote local flying sites, aerodromes and other facilities for air sports.
- The FAI World Hang Gliding Championships at Laragne and the FAI World Air Games in Turin, will be held within weeks of each other in 2009, geographically split by the southern Alps. These major events are focal points of the cross-border Excell'Air project.
- The organisers of the World Championships have planned a major communication campaign, in English and French, aimed at local, national and international press. Primary targets are newspapers, magazines (specialist, sports and mainstream), radio, TV and the internet.
- An awareness campaign is planned for local schools to include discussions on the theory of flight, weather, plus practical sessions on kite building and flying. Building on a similar initiative last year, this education campaign, part of the FFVL's Educ'en-ciel programme, will be run in partnership with local educators. The aim is to bring a real 'air culture' to young people and to encourage some of them, at least, to take up aerial sports.
- Film cameramen will follow the competition during 2009, providing not only a great souvenir for the participating pilot, but equally, a demonstration of the fantastic visual opportunity provided by this sport. Daily footage will be available for broadcast by local, specialist sports and international TV channels. The region will benefit from a film showing, literally, a bird's eye view of the beautiful countryside, to help promote the area.
- Providing interest for the general public are: opening and closing ceremonies with a parade of all pilots and their national flags, musical evenings, exhibitions and flying oriented decorations around the town, and a Fête de l'Air & Sports during the middle weekend (27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> June) of the event.



## 5. A FIRST CLASS COMPÉTITION

The Pre-Worlds in 2008, is an FAI Category 2 'open' competition, running from :  
23rd June to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

The 17th FAI World Hang gliding Championships is a Category 1 event, taking place from:  
19th June to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

- 130 pilots from at least 30 countries are expected to compete. Each team will be accompanied by a trainer, coach and supporters.
- Typically, the event takes place over two weeks, with training days, official practice day, opening ceremony, 12 competition days and a closing ceremony with prize giving, to present the FAI gold, silver and bronze medals to the individual and team winners.
- Safety is of the utmost importance. A Safety Director is appointed to coordinate information from meteorologists, expert staff and pilots observing the weather conditions developing during the afternoon, at launch and along the length of the course.
- A system of hooks and cables has been installed on the summit of Chabre, to attach the hang gliders while pilots are setting up and waiting to launch. A large team of assistants will be present on launch to help both pilots and organisers.
- A fully qualified and equipped medical team will be on launch each day, with access to local helicopter and rescue services as required.
- The task for the day is decided each morning, and is highly dependent on the weather conditions, especially wind speed and direction. Courses can vary between 40km and more than 200km; and can be out and return, triangles via several turnpoints, or simply a race to a distant goal field.
- The headquarters facility will be based at the Salle des Fêtes in Laragne-Montéglin town centre. Equipped with computers, printers, WiFi, office equipment, noticeboards, briefing room and pilot lounge, the area will provide a central location for pilots, press, officials and organisers.
- The event website, [www.chabre2009.com](http://www.chabre2009.com) is in English and French, and features a wide range of information about the competition, including pilot registration, rules, photos and video clips. It will be updated daily with results and reports during the competition.

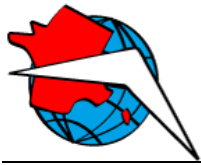


## 6. GOOD FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND AN EXCELLENT LEGACY FOR THE AREA

Running these top-level, international competitions at Laragne-Chabre will bring substantial direct and indirect commercial benefits to the area and leave a valuable legacy for locals and visiting pilots.

- The arrival of 130 pilots, team leaders, coaches and supporters for two weeks represents a significant boost to business for local hotels, B&Bs, villas, and camp grounds over a 30 km radius around Laragne-Chabre.
- Since the success of France's bid to organise the World Championships was announced, three countries chose to hold their national events at Laragne in the summer of 2008. Each week-long event, brought around 100 competitors plus organisers and supporters to Laragne in July and August.
- This influx of visitors will have a positive impact on the revenues of the bars, restaurants and businesses in Laragne and throughout the local Sisteron and Buëch valley areas.
- The huge variety of sporting activities on offer in the area (climbing, mountain biking, canoeing, wind-surfing, rafting, horse-riding, via ferrata and more) will be truly appreciated by pilots and their supporters.
- The economic benefits will continue beyond the competitions themselves. The publicity surrounding the events will attract more pilots to the area, keen to visit the site of the World Championships. The excellent flying and the warm welcome they receive will bring them back, year after year.
- Through poster campaigns, newspaper and local radio advertising, extended articles in the local press, the local public are more aware of the importance of this sport to the region. The availability of flying-oriented tourist information on flying in the area, such as brochures, postcards, envelopes and maps, has reinforced the message.
- The World Championships will leave a valuable legacy, reinforcing the importance of hang gliding and paragliding to the area and its economy, and establishing a A world class reputation for the site of Laragne-Chabre is assured. greater awareness among the young and the local public.





LARAGNE  
Chabre  
FRANCE 2009

17<sup>th</sup> FAI

Championnat du monde de delta  
World Hang Gliding Championship



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## 7. HANG GLIDING, PARAGLIDING & VOL LIBRE

Vol Libre, or Free Flying, perfectly describes these amazing aerial sports that requires no engine or motor, depending solely on wind, air currents and natural thermic activity. Pilots can launch unaided from hill tops, fly for hours, over hundreds of kilometres and land where they choose. With no noise, no engine and no pollution, this is truly an eco-friendly sport, requiring no specific infrastructure, just access to a suitable take off.

- Hang gliders feature an A-frame with a light weight, fixed-wing structure above. The pilot is suspended from this structure in a prone position. The pilot shifts his weight using the base bar of the A-frame to control air speed and turn direction. There's no closer way to truly fly like a bird.



- Paragliders have developed from parachutes and comprise a flexible canopy with long suspension lines connected to a seat-style harness for the pilot. The entire aircraft weighs less than 20Kg and packs up into a rucksack, providing a much greater range of launch site options.
- Hang gliding and paragliding are adventure sports and while sometimes regarded as 'extreme' need not necessarily be so. Training is essential, and experience counts highly in minimising risk. Hang gliding is more 'physical' than paragliding, and both require high levels of mental concentration.
- Weather is a major factor in hang gliding and paragliding. The choice of launch site is dependent on the wind direction. Hang gliders can launch in wind speeds up to about 40km/hour. Paragliders are more limited to wind speeds less than 30km/hour.



- Weather-watching is a full time activity for pilots, both before and during their flight, as the weather can change rapidly, especially in mountain areas, with possible storm developments and increasing winds in the afternoon.
- Hang gliding and paragliding activities are generally governed by the national aviation authority, and pilots are generally required to hold a qualification and licence. Learning to fly hang gliders and paragliders requires several stages of training which should be undertaken with a school qualified by the national federation. Training covers three basic disciplines: theory of flight, meteorology and air law.
- Hang gliders and paragliders can be self-launched from hills or mountains, into air currents which may be a 'dynamic' steady breeze enabling soaring along a ridge or a coastal cliff, for example. In addition, thermals, essentially pockets of rising air, can be used by the skilled pilot to gain altitude. Eventually, the pilot can leave the launch site to fly 'cross-country', seeking further thermals to regain altitude and extend the flight.
- Paragliders and hang gliders can also be launched by winch or aerotow from an airfield. Some of the greatest distances have been achieved over the 'flat lands' of the US, Australia and South Africa utilising this launch method.
- The first hang gliders were built over 100 years ago, but only developed into leisure aircraft in the 1960s. Technology and design improvements have brought today's light weight and more aerodynamic structures. Competition level gliders today fly at speeds over 100km/hour in still air, with a glide ratio of 16:1. The world record distance flight is now 700km.
- Hang gliders have developed into three classes: Class 1 -Flexwing (pictured), Class 2 - Swift or ultra light sailplane, Class 5 - Rigid wing (with carbon fibre leading edge). The World Hang Gliding Championships taking place at Laragne, France in 2009 are for Class 1 flexwing Hang gliders.
- Paragliders, developed from 'ram-air' parachutes, became popular in the mid to late 1970s. Tremendous progress has been made in recent years in terms of design, materials and fabrication, to improve their performance. Glide ratios are now up to 10:1, and the top speed of competition level gliders is approaching 65km. Stability has also been improved greatly, and most manufacturers have a range of wings, suitable for beginner, recreational and competition pilots.

## 8. CONTACTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Organisers & Local Club contacts :

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### French Federation de Vol Libre (FFVL) :

Web Sites : <http://federation.ffvl.fr/> or <http://delta.ffvl.fr/>

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### Local authorities & tourism :

Web Site : [www.laragne.net](http://www.laragne.net) & [www.ot-laragne.com](http://www.ot-laragne.com)

Communauté de Communes de Ribiers Val de Méouge :

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### Fédération Aéronautique International (FAI)

[www.fai.org](http://www.fai.org)

### Commission International de Vol Libre (CIVL)

[www.fai.org/hang\\_gliding/](http://www.fai.org/hang_gliding/)

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