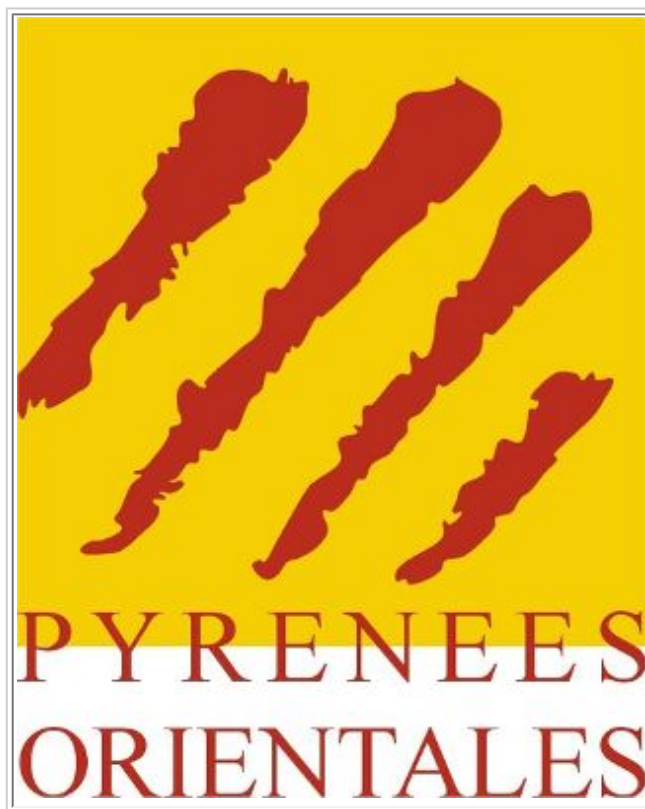


## AVSIM Commercial Scenery Review

# *FranceVFR Pyrenees*



Product Information		
<b>Publisher:</b> <a href="#">France VFR</a>		
<b>Description:</b> Add-on scenery		
<b>Download Size:</b> Base - 459 MB Autogen - 44 MB	<b>Format:</b> Download	<b>Simulation Type:</b> FS9 / FSX
<b>Reviewed by:</b> <a href="#">Angelique van Campen</a> AVSIM Staff Reviewer - September 5, 2007		

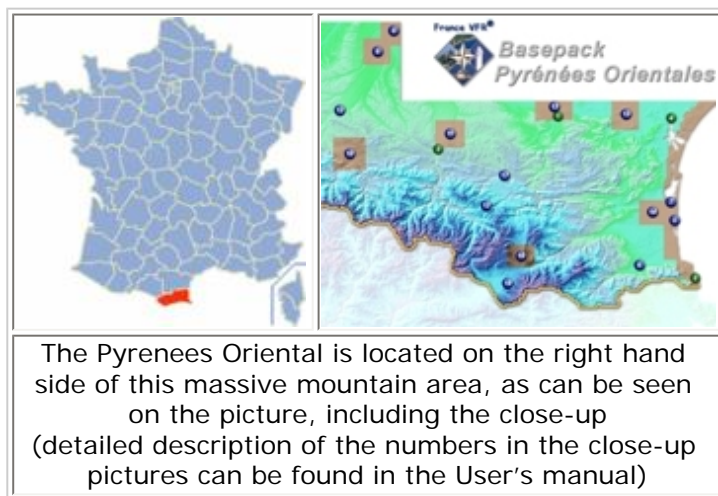
## Introduction

The Pyrenees are a range of mountains in southwest Europe that form a natural border between France and Spain. They separate the Iberian peninsula from France and extend for about 430 kilometers from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Located somewhere in the middle we will find the free state Andorra, where it's fun to buy a lot of things since prices are all without local tax. In other words, one of the busiest places of the Pyrenees.

In the Atlantic Pyrenees, the average elevation gradually decreases from east to west, until they merge with the Basque mountains near the Bay of Biscay. In the Eastern Pyrenees, with the exception of one break at the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees Ariégeoises, the mean elevation is maintained with remarkable uniformity until a sudden decline occurs in the portion of the chain known as the Albères.

The amount of the precipitation, including rain and snow, is much greater in the western than in the eastern Pyrenees, which leads to a marked contrast between these sections of the chain in more than one respect. In the first place, the eastern Pyrenees are without glaciers, the quantity of snow falling there being insufficient to lead to their development. The glaciers are confined to the northern slopes of the central Pyrenees, and do not descend, like those of the Alps, far down in the valleys, but have their greatest length in the direction of the mountain chain. They form, in fact, a narrow zone near the crest of the highest mountains.

Here, as in the other great mountain ranges of central Europe, there is evidence of a much wider extension of the glaciers during the Ice Age. The case of the glacier in the valley of Argelbs in the department of Hautes-Pyrénées is the best-known instance. The snow-line varies in different parts of the Pyrenees from 2,700 to 2,800 meters above sea-level.



What do they – France VFR – say about there new VFR Pyrénées Orientales software:

La scène modélise la partie **Est des Pyrénées françaises** en textures photoréalistes sur une surface d'environ 16000 km<sup>2</sup>, sur lesquelles chacune des plates-formes aéroportuaires a été positionnée avec précision et améliorée par rapport au standard de Flight Simulator 2004.

**L'AutogenPack** représente le second volet de la scène Flight Pyrénées Orientales, venant ainsi compléter les textures photoréalistes du BasePack (requis) avec les bâtiments et la végétation indispensables à un rendu réaliste de la zone.

Ce complément fournit une couverture autogen d'environ 16000 km<sup>2</sup>, composée d'arbres et de bâtiments (**immeubles, bâtiments industriels, maisons...**) soigneusement disposés sur les textures photo-réalistes du BasePack. Afin de représenter au mieux les spécificités des différentes zones de la région, nous avons développé un jeu de textures autogen spécifiques permettant ainsi un rendu différent pour les grandes agglomérations, les villes de banlieue, les zones industrielles, les villages...

### Can you read it?

I can't and probably the majority of our readers can't either. Ok then, some highlights!

It covers the French Pyrenees, ranging from Beziers to Toulouse, straight to the Pyrenees and running backwards along the French/Spanish border to the Mediterranean Sea. Within this square it offers photorealistic scenery with a 16.000 km<sup>2</sup> covered area. Additionally you can add the AutoGen package, which generates agglomerations and other small villages.

Ok, that was it for me as well. Let's have a thorough look into the Pyrenees Oriental.

## Installation and Documentation

### FS9 Installation

Test System
Dell Precision 650 Dual Intel Xeon 3.06Ghz 4Gb RAM DDR 533Mhz nVidia 7800GS+ 512Mb AGP RAID-0 HDD's - SCSI 340Gb Windows XP Professional SP2 FSX with SP1 CH USB Pedals CH USB Flightsim Yoke  <b>Flying Time:</b> 14 hours

When you have finished the download process, you can continue on with the installation of the package(s). You first start with the Base Pack. This is a 459Mb package which installs the photo-realistic scenery of the East Pyrenees and only covers summer time. There is nothing special to mention or to inform you about this process.

In the beginning you can chose between French- or English windows. I chose the English installation. The only remark I've got is the fact that at the end you've got the possibility to see/read a readme file. Unfortunately, this appears in French, so why I got the French version, I have no idea since I had selected the English installation.

I would like to make one note and that's with the use of the Autogen package. You can live without the Autogen package and stay with the Base package. However, all kinds of buildings, vegetation, towns, industrial areas and villages, which are generated by the Autogen package, are missing and will give the landscape/scenery a lunar look and that's not where you're looking for.

Last note regarding FSX compatibility. France VFR offers a free patch on their website to make this photorealistic scenery compatible with FSX.

### Documentation

Although the website is currently only available in French (a English version is coming soon), the supplied Acrobat documents are not only in French but are in English as well. The reason I mentioned the website is because a lot of information is not available for the potential English customers.

Let's look what kind of manuals they are supplying. After you've installed the Base Pack, you've got:

- **User's manual** (flightpyreneesori\_EN.pdf)

The file describes in detail which area of the Pyrenees Oriental is covered, where you can find certain things after the installation but more important, useful or recommended display settings.

- **SIA-DIRCAM charts and flight documentation** (flightpyreneesori\_charts.pdf) – linked to other Acrobat charts and data. The supplied charts – VFR/IFR airport data and en-route maps - are outdated versions of the French SIA but absolutely no problem in relation to the offered scenery.

What I personal miss is an ICAO VFR flying chart(s). The France VFR group offers LOW- and HIGH ALTITUDE ENROUTE maps, but I've no idea what those have to do with a VFR photorealistic scenery. It's nice to have them but when you're crossing the Pyrenees during a IFR flight at 30.000 feet, all the spectacular details of the Pyrenees Oriental are completely lost.

For the Autogen pack you've got:

- **User's manual** (flightpyreneesoriAP\_EN.pdf)

The Acrobat file consist out of 2 pages but contains all the necessary information. No adjustments for FS2004 are made since adjustments belong to the Base package only.

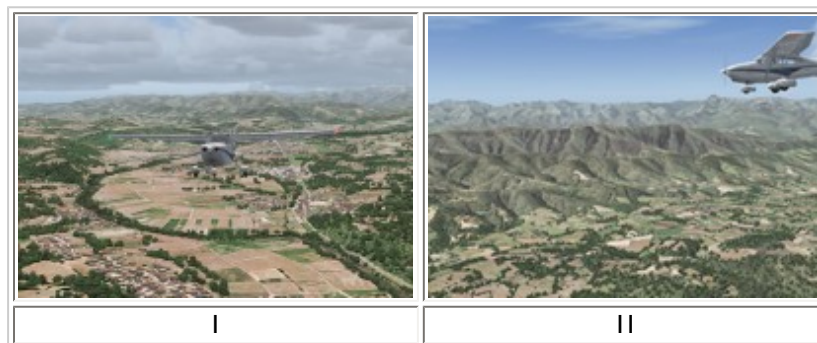
Final conclusion regarding the documentation: the customer is well informed about the covered area, what you all can expect and how to get the best out of France VFR Pyrenees Oriental, recommended display settings as well as FS9.cfg adjustments.

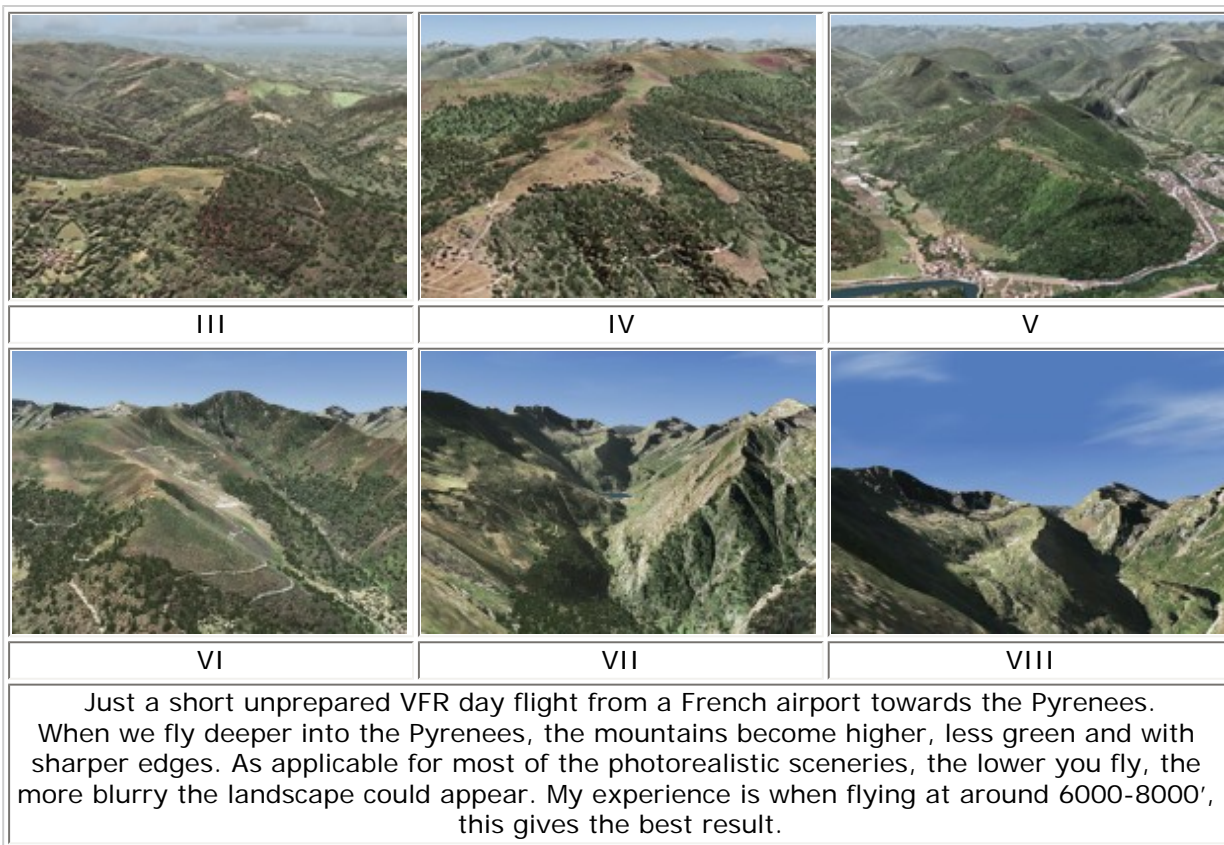
### **First random flight impression**

As everybody is probably doing (I did) after FS9 is started and running, is jump to an airport which is within the covered zone and started immediate flying around towards the Pyrenees. I can tell you, it's overwhelming. Although I'm not living in southern France, but during planned Spanish holidays I always chose the Mediterranean side to pass by these countries.

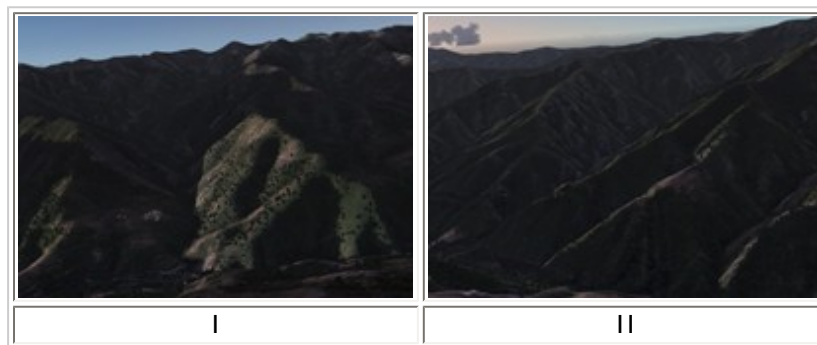
Strange when thinking about this sentence. Since there is no other way unless you want to take a boat trip, so there's no need to pass this corridor between the two countries. During this holiday, a short trip towards Andorra is one of the options.

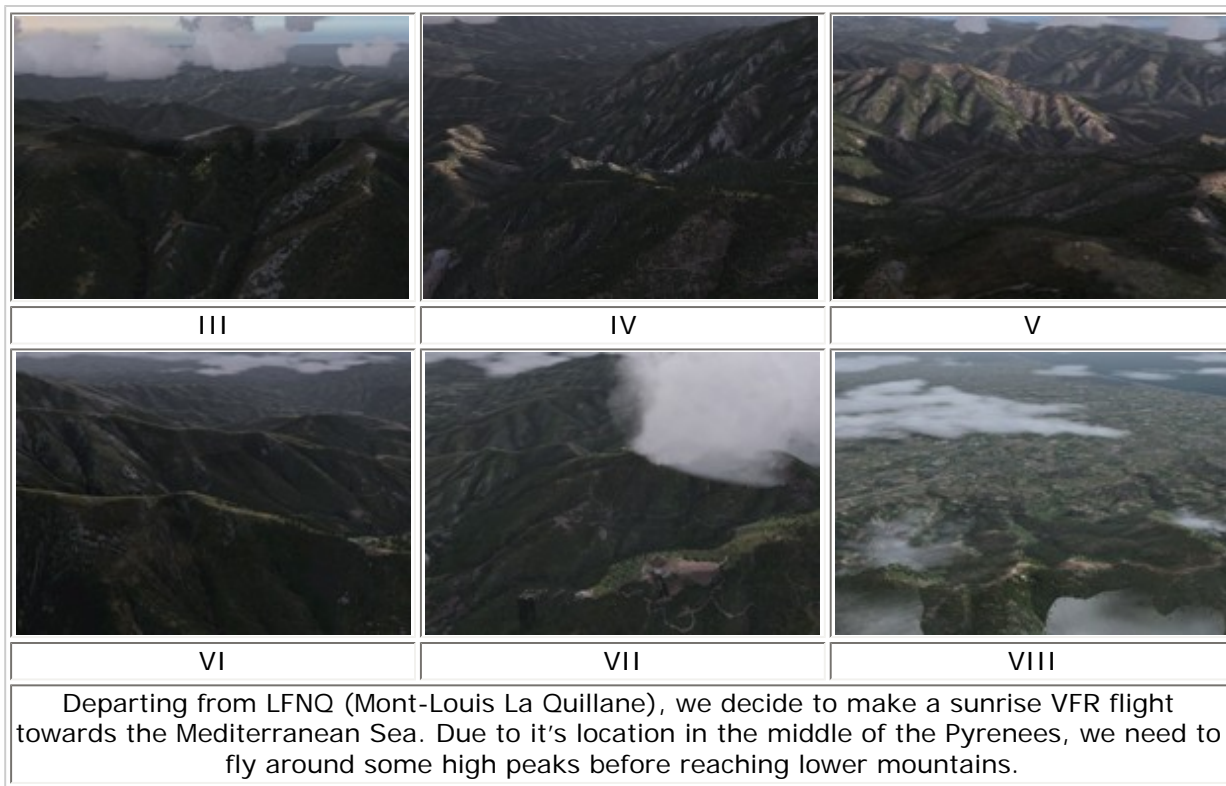
It is indeed very, very photorealistic. It doesn't make any difference if it's daylight, sunrise or sunset. Some screenshots look so unbelievably real, it's scary! Let's have a look at the following daylight flight pictures.





While during daylight we've a good view of all the details, during the following sunrise flight from the heart of the Pyrenees, we get a totally different impression. Flying towards the Mediterranean Sea in an eastern direction, we get a magnificent view of rays of sunshine on the mountains. Where at the same time in colder areas, the fog stays till it becomes a little warmer over there.

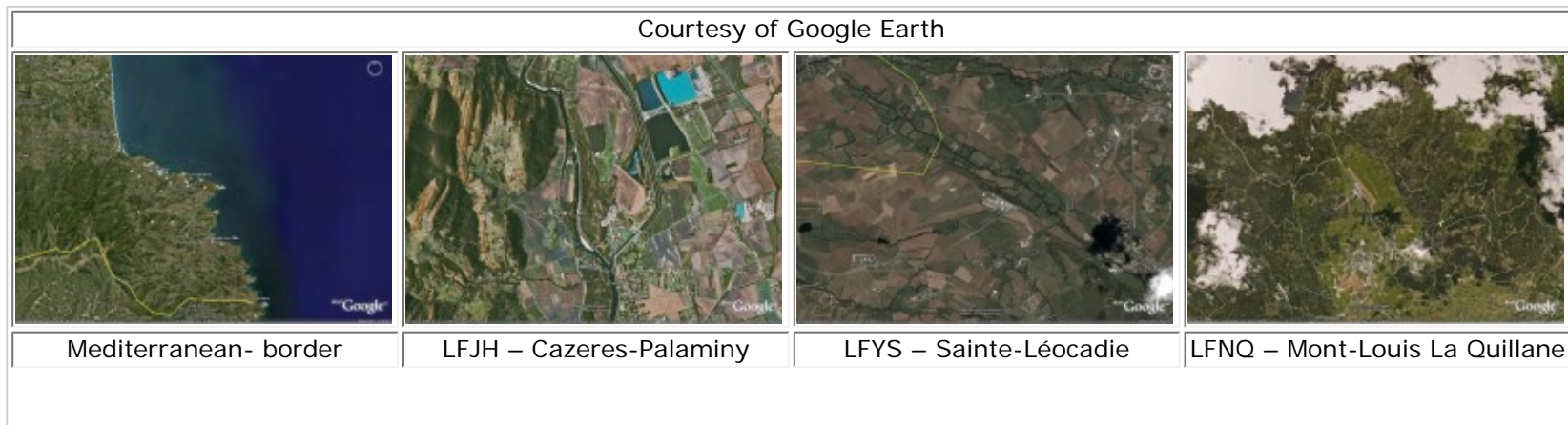


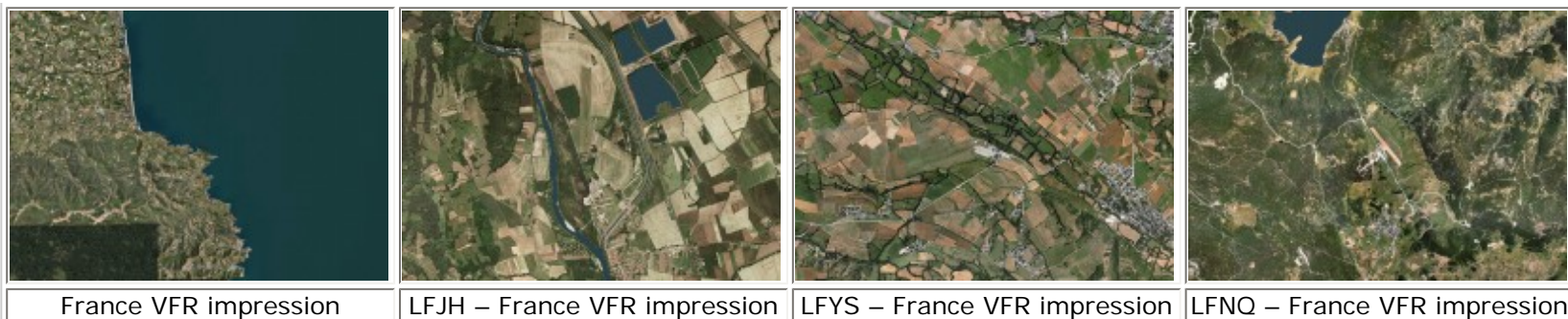


### France VFR Scenery versus Google Earth

The best way to check the realistic factor is to compare it with Google Earth.

While hovering above several places of the Pyrenees Oriental, we made some great pictures from roughly 7-8 kilometers AGL. It was sometimes difficult to figure out which one was the real one, thus demonstrating the France VFR scenery really is awesome.





Screenshots from France VFR Pyrenees Oriental.

The quality of these pictures is of such a high level, that sometimes I asked myself if I was using fake or real Google Earth pictures. They aren't of course, but this has to do with the unbelievable realistic look of the France VFR product. When you look, for example, at the Google Earth picture LFJH – Cazerès-Palaminé and you compare this one with the France VFR picture, the Google Earth version looks very unrealistic although it's a real shot.

These pictures are just a collection of what you can expect from France VFR Pyrenees Oriental software.

As with every photorealistic scenery, it shows you what is possible and with the additional autogen package, it makes it even more compatible with the real world. The only problem is where the Pyrenees scenery ends, as can be seen on the picture "France VFR impression" (lower left hand corner-dark spot). Those problems are later in "**Where the French Pyrenees ends**".

Our next challenge is using a Michelin road map and with the help of these digital papers, flying through the mountains or just following rivers and/or roads.

### VFR flight with Michelin road maps.

For those who know the famous high quality U.S. Rand McNally maps, the same can be found in Europe for France from Michelin and also on its ViaMichelin website. Another option is buying/using a paper version but even then, we can do some pre-planning on the Michelin website.

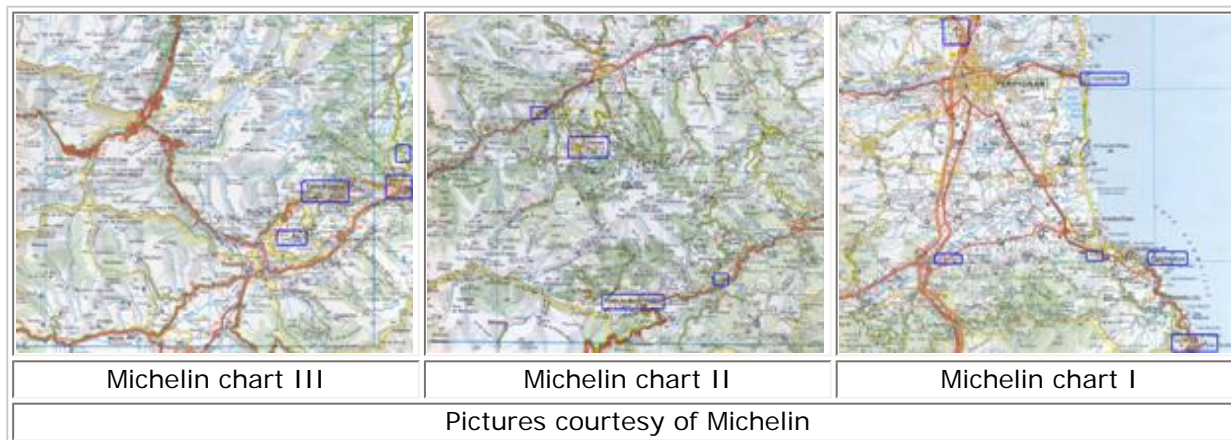
I will take you on a short VFR trip starting near the city of Perpignan, flying towards the Mediterranean Sea (Canet-Plage) towards the Spanish border (Cap Cerbère) and back to Port-Vendres.

Then it's time that we make a left turn into the Pyrenees by following highway N114 to le Boulou. This part is covered by Michelin chart I.

We continue via D115 to Prats de-Mollo. Just before Prats de-Mollo, we turn on a HDG of 320 where we try to catch Vernet-les-Bains. A little further we pickup the N116 in western direction. This part is covered by Michelin chart II.

While flying along the N116, we pass first Mont-Louis. Just above this village lies along the D118 aerodrome Mont-Louis La Quillane (LFNQ). Before landing there, we fly further along the N116, circling around the city Llívia, then towards Font-Romeu and enjoying the outside view, before landing at LFNQ. This part is covered by Michelin chart III.

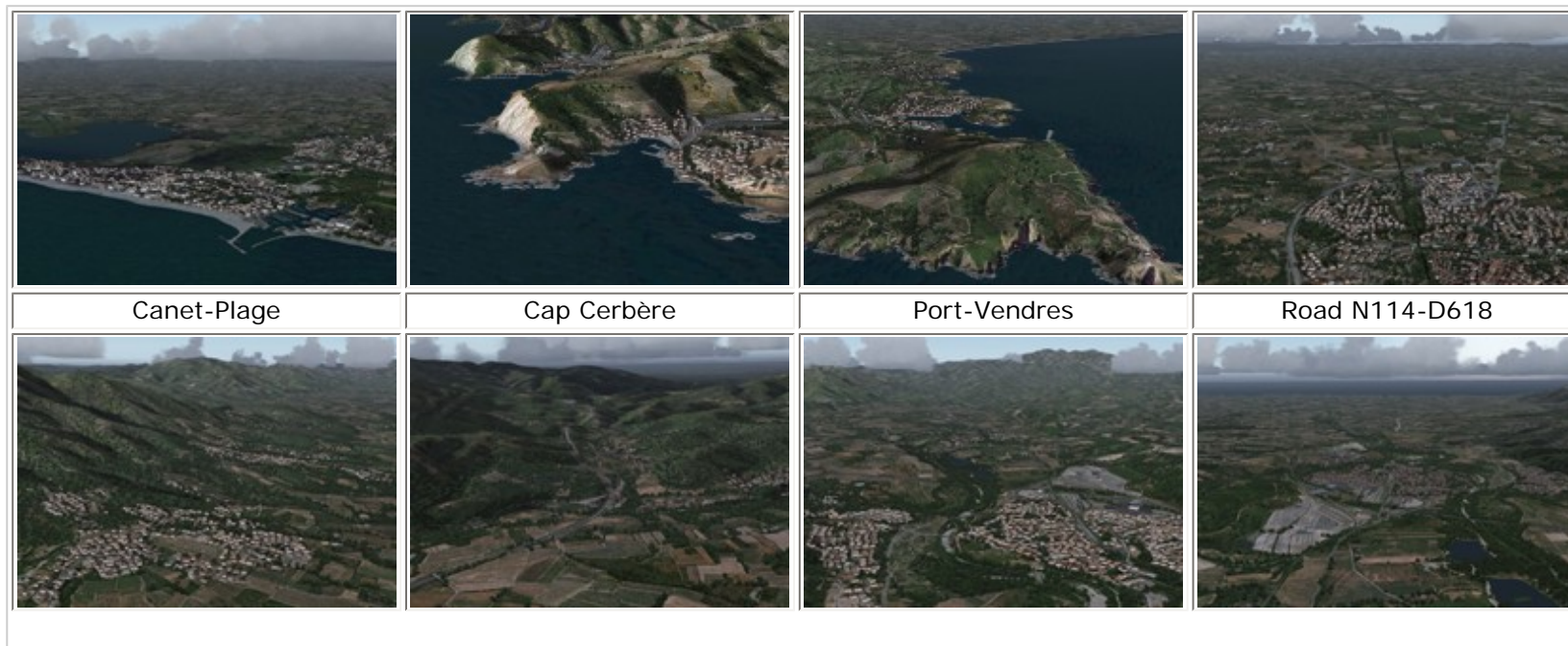
For your convenience, find below the three necessary Michelin charts which covers our short VFR trip through a part of the Pyrenees Oriental.



So, let's go.

It's early in the morning but already sunny with some clouds. We take off from airport 6651 – Torreilles, which is situated right of Perpignan, close to the Mediterranean beach. Once we have reached the beach, we follow our planned route to **Canet-Plage** -> **Cape Cerbère** -> **Port-Vendres** -> **N114** -> **le Boulou**. Since the whole route towards the south is autogen area, we have a very lovely view of this part of France.

The best is of course to judge for yourself when looking closely to the pictures. Unfortunately, this is just a collection of the many great views there are. The overall scenery is so beautiful and realistic, that I could make 20, 30 or even more screenshots.













Monts Alberes	Road A9 to Spain	le Boulou	le Boulou (coast direction)
Canet-Plage -> Cape Cerbère -> Port-Vendres -> N114 -> le Boulou			

While we are entering the Pyrenees, we fly as planned from **le Boulou** to **Prats de-Mollo** -> **Vernet-les-Bains** -> **N116** to **Mont-Louis**. It's not a long leg but due to the huge amount of screenshots I made, it seemed like I was flying hours in this area. Words are not enough, pictures dictate what I see and gives you the right impression of what you can expect from this add-on.

The sun shines and reflects gently on the mountains while fog, lying as a blanket in the valleys, is still present. Due to the engine sound, we are not able to hear any birds but on the other hand, that doesn't matter since the view is spectacular.

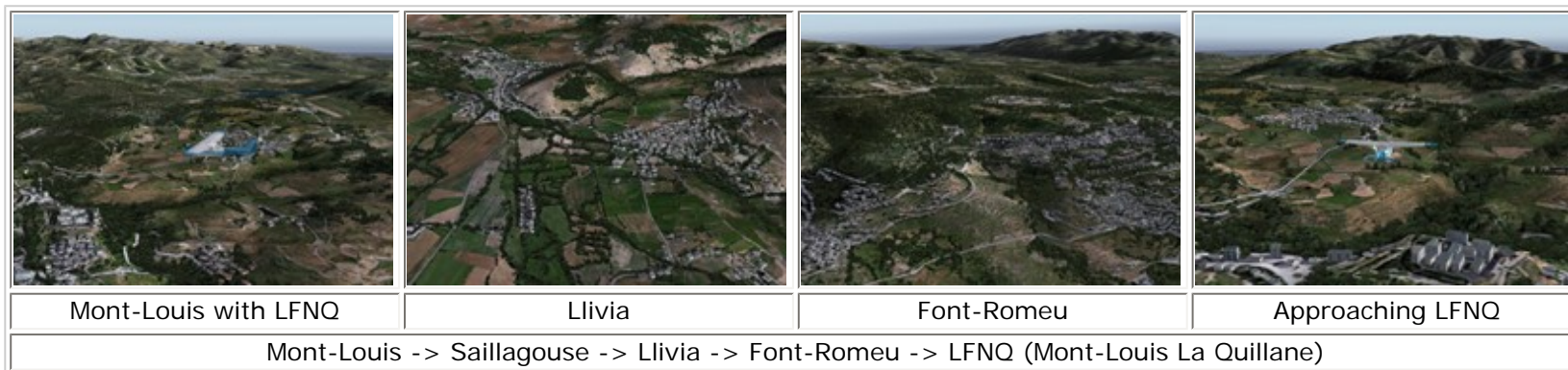
			
Road D115	Road D115	Massif du Canigou	Prats de-Kollo
			
Crossing Massif du Canigou	North side Massif du Canigou	Pic du Canigou	Road N116
Le Boulou -> Prats de-Mollo -> Vernet-les-Bains -> N116 to Mont-Louis			

The more we go into the Pyrenees, the more I'm impressed with the scenery.

The fact that we have almost reached our destination is simply due to the Michelin map. Without it I can tell you, you're lost! Since we fly between mountains and valleys, our helicopter view is very limited and therefore we cannot see which direction we need to go. All the mountains look the same, so that doesn't help. No, with this roadmap it works perfectly and every scenery detail can be found on the map. Pretty incredible, when you think about it!

We reach our last stretch from **N116** to **Mont-Louis** -> **Saillagouse** -> **Llivia** -> **Font-Romeu** -> **LFNQ**.

Leaving these villages behind us, we finally turn into the direction of LFNQ. Since I'm not very familiar with these aerodromes, I make a full circle at a higher altitude to see what I can expect during the approach and landing phase.



So, we are back on the ground.

It was a great VFR flight, although it wasn't that easy. During this flight there's another problem that appears. I saw so many things that looked alike, but they aren't of course, and before you know it, you've lost your way. So carefully checking the map helps understanding where you are. Alas, I made it and I hope you have, in combination with the Michelin road maps and the screenshots, have a good impression what you can do with it. At least I had a lot of fun on this VFR trip by not losing the way!

### Where the French Pyrenees ends

That's always the same problem. Where does this France VFR photorealistic scenery end?

Sometimes it's horrible to see how designers have done it. While other times, the designers try to create a smooth change-over. In this add-on it's somewhere in-between. Due to the different landscape, it's easier to see than at other locations.

On the screenshots below you might think "Is this France or Spain"? Due to the straight running line over the mountain edge, we may assume that this is where France VFR Pyrenees Oriental ends.



### FPS

No frame drop at all. At least it was not noticeable by me if I had any frame rate drops. In the Scenery Library, I had activated FS Global 2008 but that was it. Ultimate Terrain Europe was switched OFF and no other scenery enhancer was active. The FPS slider was limited at 30 and during the day and sunrise flights, it was constantly running against the limit.

## Summary / Closing Remarks

Before this one, I had tested the photorealistic scenery " MegaScenery X Dallas/Fort Worth" and a while ago Aerosoft's "Cape Canaveral X".

For this photorealistic scenery I can say, it is and it stays impressive. I think it's mainly because of the reality.

Taking the Michelin road maps in my hand and using them to guide me through the Pyrenees, it's amazing how easy it was to fly though the mountains. Every road, train track, river, village and town is there.

When France is your favorite country and you want to spend a little more money, I can advise you to buy the Mediterranean Base and Autogen package and the Riviera packages as well. With all of this France VFR software installed, you can literally fly from the French Pyrenees Oriental, along the coast to Monaco at photorealistic levels that you can't imagine! Based on these flight experiences, I can conclude that this package is definite a worthwhile investment.

The only disappointing item is the price. This package does not come cheap. The base pack and the autogen pack together are, in my opinion, absolutely necessary to have. However, when you calculate it in US\$ it's a lot of money for 16000 km2 area. The final decision is, of course, up to you. But although it's expensive, it's worth your money!

### What I Like About FranceVFR's Pyrenees

- Suburb photorealistic scenery, representing the Pyrenees Oriental.
- Free FSX update patch available on France VFR website.

### What I Don't Like About FranceVFR's Pyrenees

- The website is only available in the France language but soon available in English.
- Both packages cost you around €39.80 (\$51.00), which is a lot of money.
- Missing of a VFR ICAO area chart to make for example cross-country flights.
- The scenery covers only the summer period.

### Printing

If you wish to print this review or read it offline at your leisure, right click on the link below, and select "save as"

**[FranceVFR's Pyrenees](#)**

[\(adobe acrobat required\)](#)

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