

## **Giro Donne 2009 - There's more than one big race in July**

Just because the French wine lovers are busy plotting their evenings for July doesn't mean that you have to hide away those bottles of Valpolicelli and Spumante for when no-one else is looking, because this Friday, 3rd July, sees the start of the 20th running of the Giro Donne, probably the most prestigious race on this year's women's calendar. 144 riders will be starting out from the little village of Scarperia hoping to make it successfully to Grumo Nevano, ten stages, 918km and lots of mountains away. RAI sport have in the past shown daily highlights, so expect some video to turn up somewhere and somehow.

### **The Stages**

#### **Friday 3rd July : Prologue – Scarperia (2.5 km TT)**

Just like last year, we kick off with a short, floodlit prologue around the town centre. 2.5 km shouldn't make much difference to the riders at the top of the field, but it will be a nasty jolt to the girls on the national teams who aren't part of the regular pro circuit. Let's just hope that they have a few more floodlights than last year.

#### **Saturday 4th July : Stage 1 - San Piero a Sieve - Pratolino di Vaglia (99.9 km)**

In a curious innovation, the first stage proper does not leave from Scarperia where the prologue was held, but instead from San Piero a Sieve, a few miles away. It then sets out on three loops into the countryside, coming back into both San Piero a Sieve and Scarperia three more times before finally finding the real way out and heading South to Pratolino di Vaglia. It's a short stage, fractionally under a hundred km, with one small hill at Barberino di Mugello giving only 300m of ascent (oddly this isn't classified in the GPM competition, not even as an excuse to give the jersey away). Expect gruppo compatto most of the day until the 200m climb in the last km or so gives the classics riders a chance to kick and gain a handful of seconds. Vos in pink would be a good bet.

#### **Sunday 5th July : Stage 2 - Pontedera - S. Maria a Monte (13.5 km TT)**

The final stage of the first weekend is a short, 13.5km time trial, finishing with a couple of light uphill sections. Nothing yet to prepare them for what the rest of the week will bring.

#### **Monday 6th July : Stage 3 - Calcinaia - Prato A Calci/Monte Serra (106.4 km)**

A compact stage from an organisational point of view, but one that seems designed to give a bit of mental torture. They start out with two laps of a dead flat 23k circuit, before heading out on two loops to climb the mountains that they had spent the morning admiring. GPM points are available at the 1st cat Prato a Ceragiola then at the finish on the 2nd cat Monte Serra. This looks like the only real uphill finish of the whole Giro so expect Fabiana Luperini to show herself here if anywhere.

#### **Tuesday 7th July : Stage 4 - Porto S. Elpidio circuit (109.2 km)**

A long transfer (roughly from Pisa to Ancona) precedes a day swanning around by the beach. Four laps of a 27k circuit that rises and falls about 350m each time round looks like the sort of stage that Columbia will want to keep for Teutenberg, so expect them to stamp down on any attempts at a breakaway. Are there enough riders up for taunting them and making them work, or will it be piano to a sprint.

#### **Wednesday 8th July : Stage 5 - Fossacesia - Cerro al Volturno (109.2 km)**

A long drag of a stage designed to give the LA equivalents in the women's peloton a chance to moan? Looking at the profile it seems that the organisers have tried to mimic what Angelo Zomegnan did on stage 7 of this year's men's Giro. 90km of gradual uphill that will hurt the part timers a lot more than it does the full time pros, followed by a short downhill stretch taking you most of the way to the finish line. Don't expect a lot because most of the girls will be preparing themselves for what comes in the following three days. Could this be the day of the Pooley break?

#### **Thursday 9th July : Stage 6 - Cerro al Volturno - S. Elena Sannita (119.3 km)**

A nasty, if inconclusive introduction to the mountains. Two big cat 1 climbs today, but they are so far from the finish that it could all come down to a sprint again.

#### **Friday 10th July : Stage 7 - Andria - Castel del Monte (131.2 km)**

Today is the longest stage of the race at 131k, and it could be a nasty day too. There are no massive climbs, just 3 3rd cat hills, but there isn't much flat either. The sort of day when a lot of the riders will just be getting their heads down and hoping they make it to the end. The last 5k or so looks like it averages 5%, so again Vos could get another handful of seconds on her rivals.

### **Saturday 11th July :Stage 8 - S.Marco dei Cavoti - Pesco Sannita (115.6 km)**

Another hard day in the Appennines where a lot of energy will be spent by the leaders trying to mark each other. Only one cat 2 and one cat 3 climb, but lots of lumpiness to hurt the legs. What happens today depends a lot on what has happened earlier in the week. Let's hope that Cervelo have three or four riders in the top ten, but not the leader's jersey.

### **Sunday 12th July :Stage 9 - Grumo Nevano (111.2 km)**

112k of laps on a circuit in the industrial outskirts of Napoli, probably leading to another sprint victory for Teutenberg. It's sad that they don't ride in the pretty bits of town, but that seems to be a characteristic of this year's Giro Donne, which is visiting lots of minor and very obscure villages. I had to look up virtually every start and finish town on a map to find them.

### **Participating teams:**

AUSTRALIA NAZIONALE BIGLA

CYCLING TEAM BIZKAIA

CERVELO TEST TEAM

EQUIPE NURNBERGER VERSICHERUNG

FENIXS-EDILSAVINO

GAUSS RDZ ORMU - COLNAGO

LOTTO - BELISOL LADIES TEAM

MICHELA FANINI RECORD ROX

SAFI - PASTA ZARA TITANEDI

SELLE ITALIA GHEZZI

TEAM CMAX DILA

TEAM COLUMBIA HIGHROAD WOMEN

TEAM FLEXPOINT

TEAM SYSTEM DATA

TOP GIRLS FASSA BORTOLO RAXY LINE

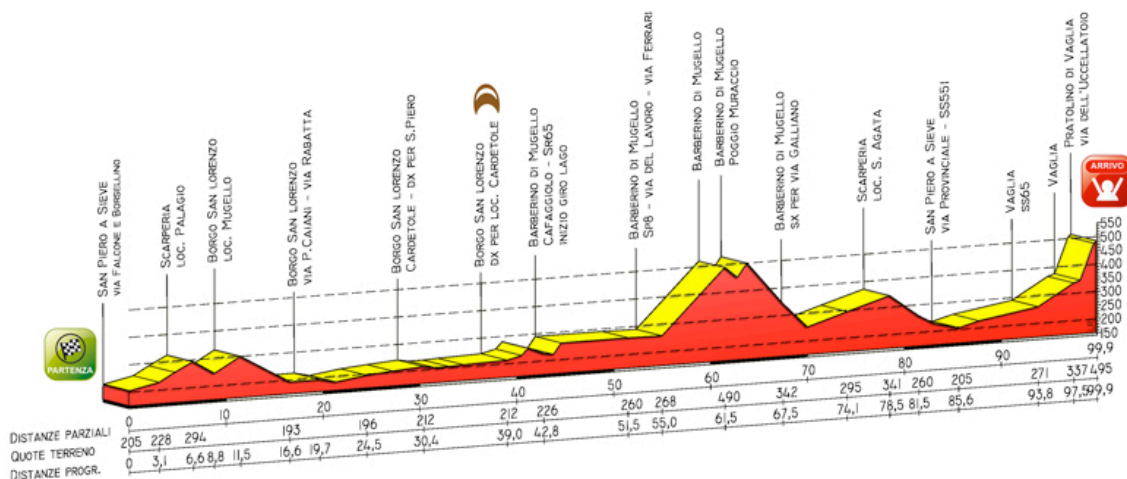
USA NATIONAL TEAM

USC CHIRIO FORNO D'ASOLO

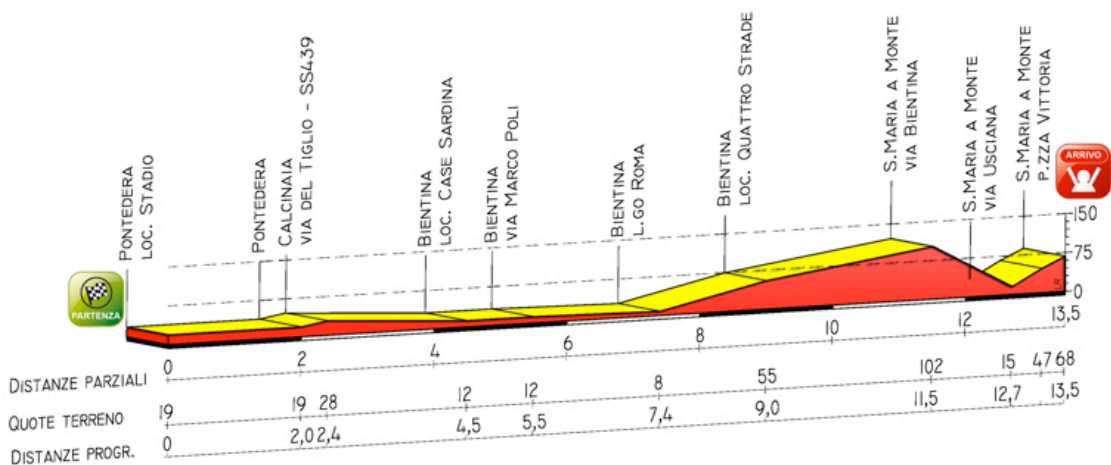
### **More info**

<http://www.cyclingnews.com/races/20th-giro-donne-2-1>

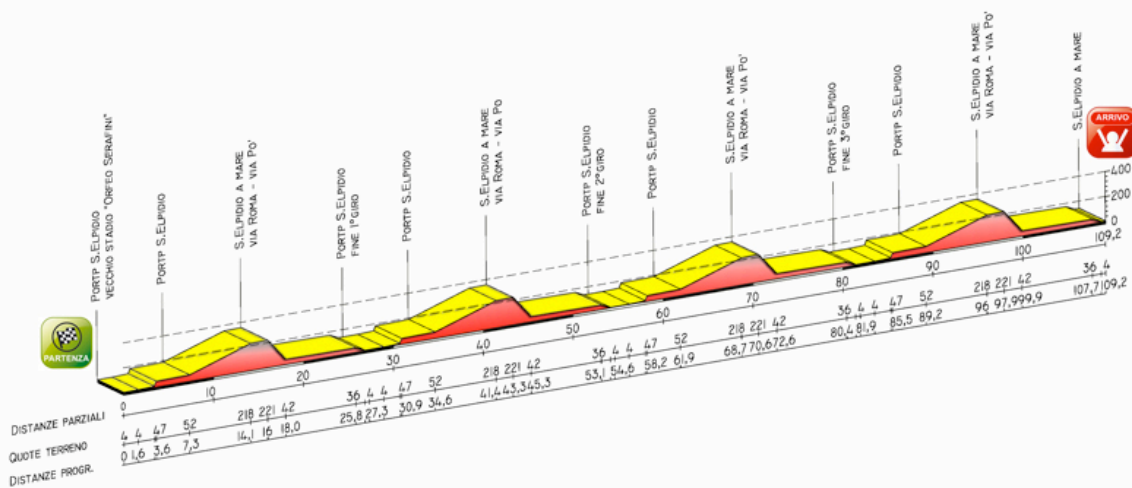
## Stage 1 Profile



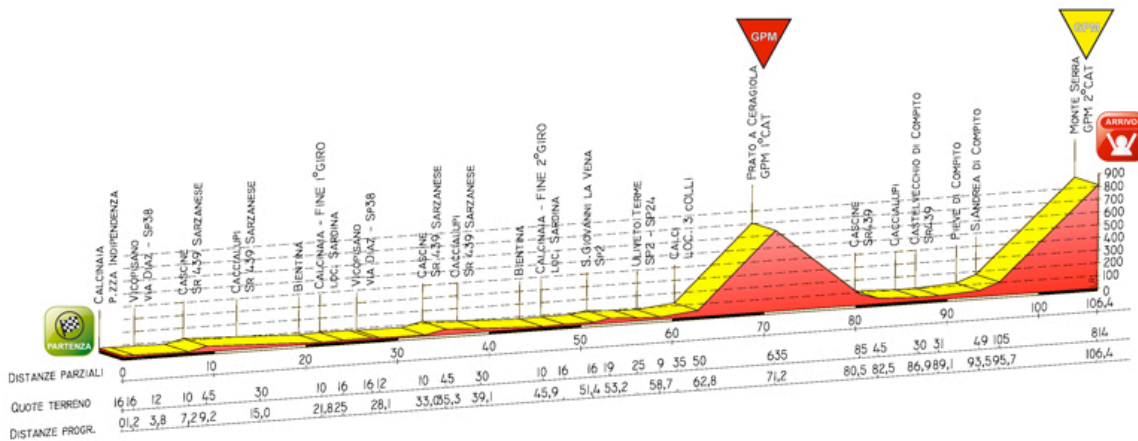
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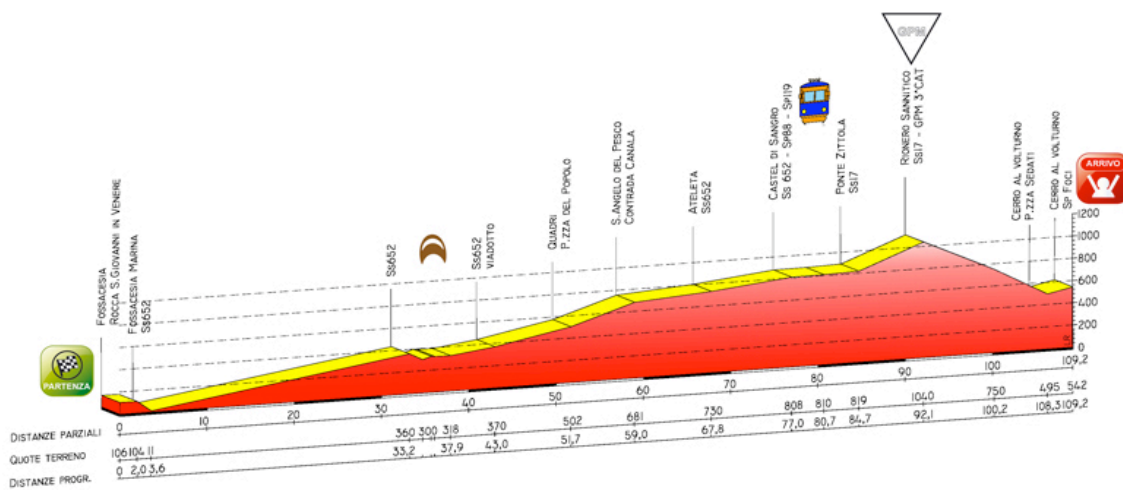
## Stage 3 Profile



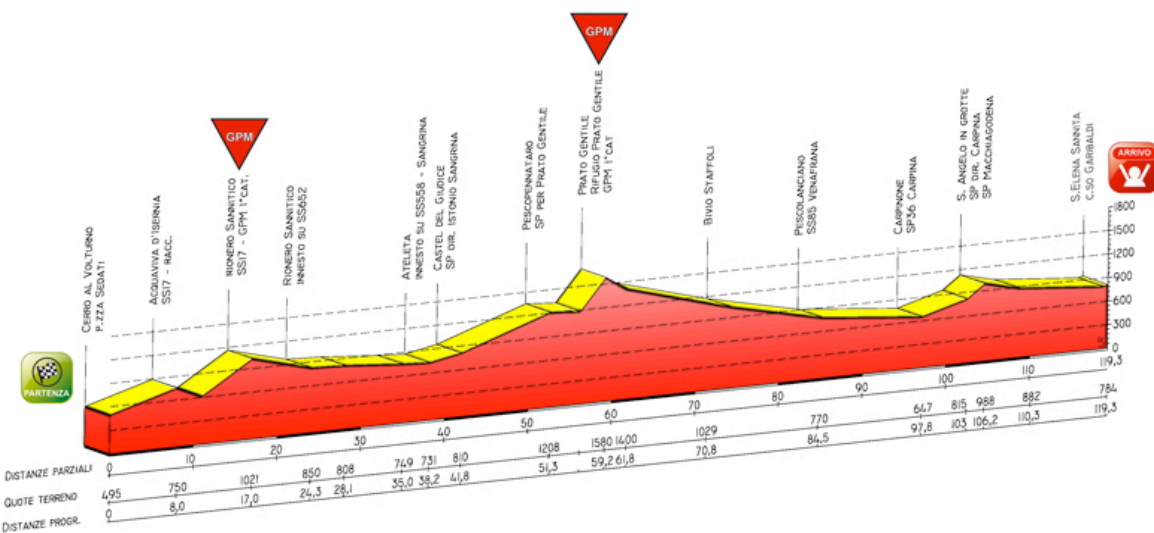
## Stage 4 Profile



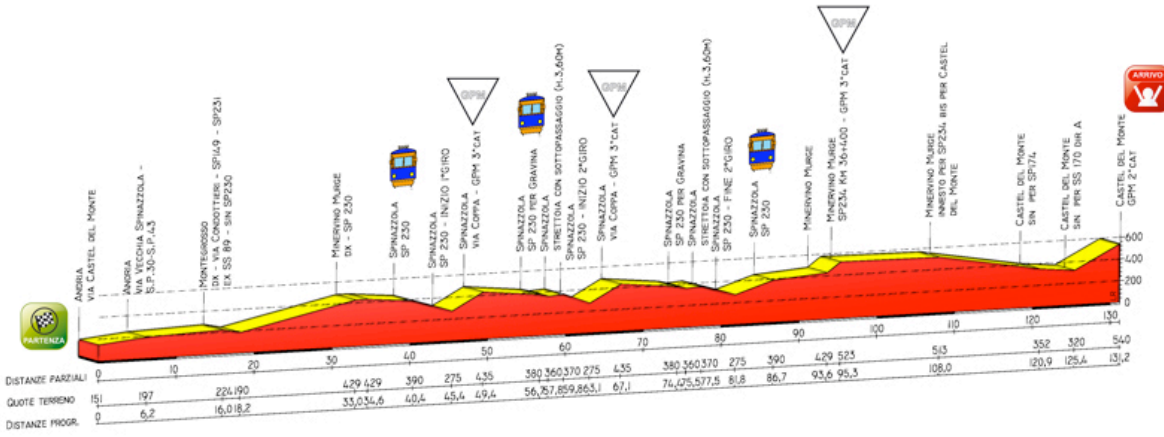
## Stage 5 Profile



## Stage 6 Profile



# Stage 7 Profile



# Stage 8 Profile

