

Pizalun HB/SG-040

May 10, 2014

Paul, HB9DST

Summary: Most 2-pointers are pretty nondescript and don't deserve a separate write-up. This one, however, is an exception to the rule: a very pleasant hike and a great 360 degree panorama at the summit including a spectacular overlook of the Rhine Valley. Be aware, however, of the small activation zone and many visitors, factors which make setting up an antenna a challenge.



Note: the arrows on this track are pointing to the way back down from the summit; my GPS batteries died on the way up. The trail is very well marked and easy to follow.

First of all, getting to the final bus stop (pay no attention to the Furggels marked on the map here; the bus service calls the end station "St Margrethenberg, Dorf". From the train station at Bad Ragaz you take a regular sized bus to Pfäfers, then a mini-bus for the last leg of the trip to St. M (and note that for this last leg there is very limited service, just a couple times a day, so check the schedule). You can also park in this village but can't drive any further up.



Final bus stop with Pizalun in the background.

Pizalun is already visible from the bus stop. The 2.3 km hike up takes roughly 45 minutes and climbs 281 meters of elevation. The trail, most of it in the forest, is quite good throughout. It's a steady climb the whole way but not really terribly tiring. The final ascent to the summit consists of a set of metal stairs, which are pretty steep (tricky when dry; be extra careful when wet).



Stairway taking you to the summit platform (where the Swiss flag is flying in this photo).

The views from the summit are spectacular. You can look across the Rhine Valley into Austria and Liechtenstein, but there are beautiful mountains in any direction you look.



My mast strapped to the far end of the metal observation platform, which is quite small.

The activation zone is actually quite small and consists primarily of a metal observation platform. This summit is a very popular destination, and even on this day when the weather started out not so great there was a steady stream of visitors. This makes putting up an antenna a challenge. You're best off with a vertical. A magnetic loop might have problems if there are more than a few people because they would be standing very close to the loop and de-tune it.



I strung my end-fed dipole to the cross, around the back, and then back to the platform. Note the small distance behind the cross where it drops off straight down several hundred meters. In the background you can see part of the Rhine Valley.

My solution was to mount my mast on a far corner of the platform opposite the flag and then extend the wire to the small summit cross adjacent to the platform. Here I had to be extremely careful – on one side of the cross there was only a few meters of rock to stand on before it dropped off; on the other side of the cross there was not much more than a meter of stone before a straight vertical drop of several hundred meters. I always made sure I had a very good grasp of the cross while wrapping my antenna wire around it!

Towards the end of my activation, I heard my buddy Peter HB9TVK/P blasting my ears off with a 599 + ∞ signal. By coincidence, he was just across the valley, 2 km away, at SG-032 Chimmispitz. Had I known we were so close, I would have timed my trip so we could have met for a beer!



View from my QTH across the valley to where HB9TVK/P was activating SG-032.

All in all, one of the more pleasant 2-point easy summits to activate – if you can avoid the crowds.