

67 miles never felt so "good"



What an awesome spring day for a ride! Mid-60s, a few clouds, a bit of a breeze blowing in from the coast and a playground of fantastic roads snaking through our coastal hills. Finally, a chance to push the legs; the last few weeks have seen no rides of greater distance than the 31 miles on Tuesday & Thursday mornings, and like a car that's been sitting around too long, or not driven at speed, my body felt like it really needed a thorough thrashing to cleanse itself of weeks of built-up muck.

The "normal" ride would be a simple coast loop, out to Pescadero, across Stage Road and then back via Tunitas. Done that, probably 100+ times. We needed to do something more today, something that we'd feel in our legs the rest of the day. Over Old LaHonda, out to San Gregorio (a nasty drag into a headwind), south on Stage to Pescadero, then back via Haskins and, for fun, West Alpine.



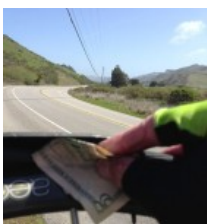
Stopping to help two women fix a flat on Old LaHonda

I thought about holding Kevin back, telling him we should take it easy up Old LaHonda, but the way he tore up the first couple hundred meters, I realized he was on a mission. But about 1/3rd of the way up I saw him pulled over and yes, my first thought was darn, he had a seizure. Nope. He was being civilized and seeing if two women at the side of the road needed help.

Being me, of course I don't remember their names, but Kevin tells me the one with the flat was Susan. Very nice people (aren't most cyclists?) younger than me (isn't everybody?) but still looking for women on bikes Kevin's age (Susan and her friend had a bit more "life experience" than the 18-21 year old he'd like).

I pulled a lot of little pieces of glass out of her tire; please, make sure you inspect your tires after a ride and if you see any little cuts at all, let the air out and squeeze the tire so you can make sure there's no embedded glass. Chances are there's more, and if it stays in your tire, it will eventually push through and cause a flat.

From there Kevin rocketed on ahead, determined, even though he no longer had a Strava time to shoot for, pushing himself as hard as he could. Go figure. Me? I'd think this was an opportunity to take it easy.



\$5 flat fix. Had a \$20 but hoped \$5 would be enough.

The ride out to the coast was not easy though, pushing against a fair headwind most of the way, and then, a couple miles out from San Gregorio, right when I was getting into a groove and pushing into the wind pretty well, my front tire went flat (looks like the cardboard from a tube box, which I'd used to reinforce a tiny spot where a piece of glass had gone through, actually wore a small hole in the tube). Yes, I admit it, I used one of Kevin's CO2 cartridges instead of my hand pump! Saved a lot of time. The repair to the tire did cost me \$5 though. :-)



Looking towards the south-most climb on Stage Rd

Stage Road, with a slight tailwind, was fun. It was clearly an opportunity to try and post some new best times, which we did, on both the first and second climbs. The fairly-gentle grades work well for me; my breathing won't keep up on anything over 5%. Glad I had my chance on Stage Road, because that was the only time I could hold my own against Kevin; the subsequent climbs up Haskins and West Alpine were rude formalities, as he established a new personal record on West Alpine 5 minutes better than anything he'd done before (which just happened to be 5 minutes faster than I climbed it today).

I've said it before, I'll say it again. Life goes by at just the right speed on a bike. You don't notice the smell of breakfast when you drive past a house in a car. You don't see the snakes in the road that need to be picked up before a car runs over them. You don't



Kevin admiring girls admiring the view

notice the red-tailed Hawks circling overhead a bit up the road, which might just happen to correspond with another rider on the climb. And you smugly think that those people who drive up to Skyline, to admire the view from the scenic overlook... do they really appreciate it? They're just looking at it, while those of us on bikes... we're part of it. But that didn't stop Kevin from admiring the view of the two young women admiring the view in the photo.

67 miles, just over 6700ft of climbing, and yes my legs hurt when I walk down stairs. It feels "good" to hurt like that. I'm going to get more of that "good" feeling.