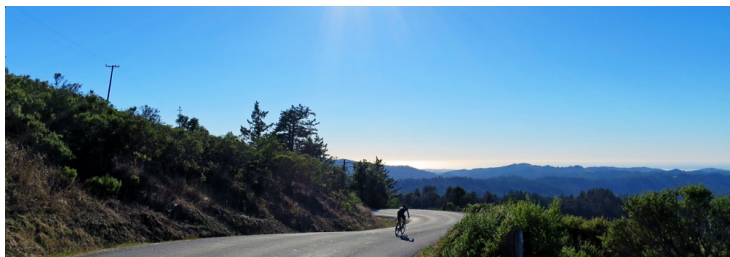


Started out ugly & slow but turned into really nice ride!



Got off to another really late start (what else is new?). Had to clean up some flight details for my brother Steve, who's returning from a Trek Travel vacation in Italy. He'd switched his return flights on-line but they weren't showing up in his itinerary, so I spent about 20 minutes getting things changed from being waitlisted to actually having a flight home. OK, that's 20 minutes out of a 2+ hour delay. Not sure I have a good explanation for the rest!

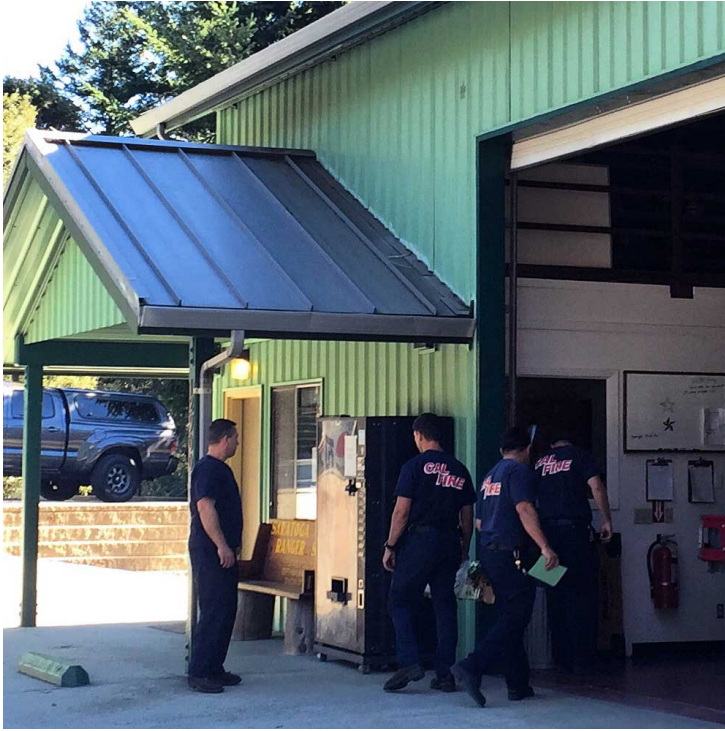
Maybe we just wanted to make sure we got to ride when it was uncomfortably-warm heading up Stevens Creek Canyon towards Redwood Gulch? Or maybe we just enjoy racing the sun, trying to time our rides so we get home just before dark.



No Mr. Mustard with cokes & hot dogs... again?

Of course even our late start got twisted backward a bit, when Kevin realized he hadn't taken his epilepsy meds in the morning, we by the time we got done backtracking, it was about 12:30. The original thinking was to do a ride through Big Basin, but not quite enough time for that. Instead we did a run through the foothills to Los Altos, dropping in to say Hi at the Los Altos Chain Reaction and then grabbing a sandwich and coffee at Peets before the run up Redwood Gulch and 9 up to Skyline.

Neither of us felt very energetic so it was a pretty easy pace up Redwood Gulch (if "easy" is possible up Redwood Gulch), and it was a bit annoying to get to the top of Highway 9, at Saratoga



Fire fighters liberating cokes from the machine for us

Gap, and not find Mr. Mustard! Thankfully, there's a coke machine at the nearby fire station, and we'd wisely brought along 8 quarters, since the machine hasn't taken dollar bills in some time. Even more thankfully, the firefighters were there to let us know the machine wasn't working but they were happy to open it up for us and exchange a couple of cokes for our \$2 worth of quarters. Fire fighters truly are heroic!

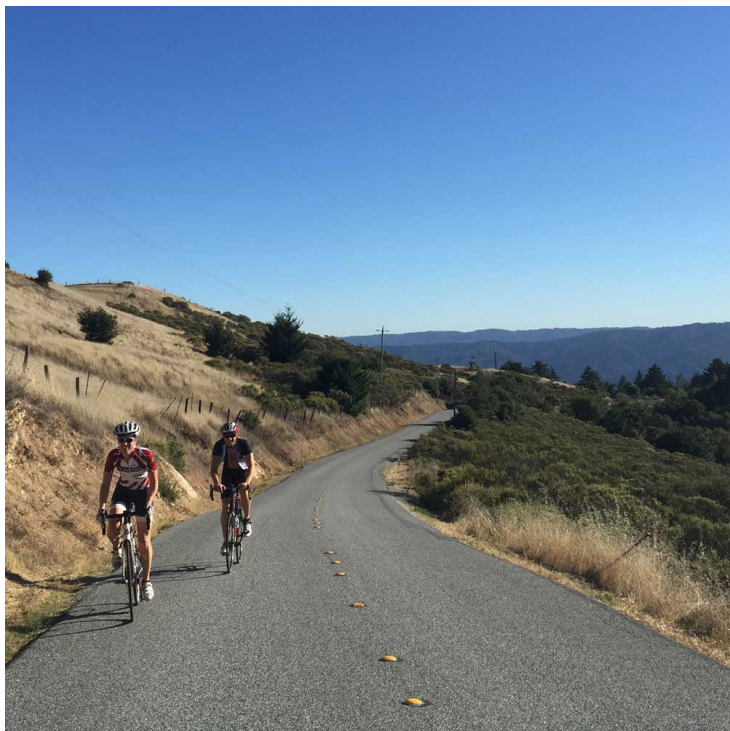
From there the ride took a bit different route than normal. One option would have been to descend West Alpine, take 84 out to the coast, and return via Tunitas. But how many times can you go up Tunitas before it gets old? This from someone who's climbed



Incredible view from West Alpine

Kings twice-weekly since the beginning of time... so Kevin suggested an alternative, heading all the way north on Skyline to 92, returning via Canada Road. We compromised; we added the West Alpine descent, then climbed back up to Skyline via 84 before heading north on Skyline to 92. An awesome choice, because the timing was just right for incredible views of the coast and the bay. Nice enough to cause us to stop a couple times for photos, something Kevin usually isn't into, but today was just too darned nice not to.

79 miles, a bit over 6000ft of climbing, plenty of sun, fair amount of heat, pretty much ended up being the perfect ride for the day.



Riders heading up West Alpine



Kevin heading down West Alpine



Great views from West Alpine