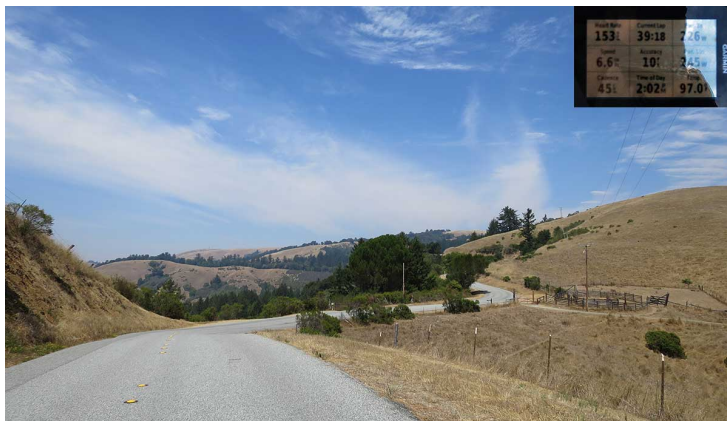


Hot? Only on the steepest, exposed parts of the ride!



Saturday afternoon, around 3pm I think, it suddenly got hot. The day started out pretty nice, but over the course of maybe half an hour everything changed, and it became hot. I checked the weather report for Sunday, and yep, it would be hot again. How hot? 90 degrees in Pescadero hot. That's hot! So you'd think I would have given some thought to altering the ride we did today, maybe dropping out the climb up West Alpine, one of the steeper, more exposed climbs in the area. That might have been sensible. Perhaps move the big climb to Tunitas, which, with its tree cover, tends to be quite a bit cooler. But that wasn't the plan. I always try to stick to the plan.

Kevin and I took it fairly easy up Old LaHonda, which hadn't gotten too hot yet, and rode at a moderate pace out to the coast. Despite the heat coming from the valley, we didn't get the expected tail winds though, which I had counted on to be one of the redeeming features of the ride! Not much in the way of headwinds either though, so overall a fairly pleasant ride to Pescadero. I was surprised the roads weren't busier, figuring a lot of people would be heading to the beaches, but no, as usual, not much traffic on our regular loops. Another surprise was that Pescadero was really pleasant; after getting our sandwich & cokes and heading out to the picnic tables, it just seemed like the perfect day to just sit in the shade and read a book (or take a nap). Not like that could happen, but in a different reality, maybe. But of course, it wouldn't last. We'd been playing with mid-70s to maybe 80 so far, and that was about to change.

I made sure we refilled our bottles (two large ones each) and hoped that would be enough to get us through the next section- over Haskins, up West Alpine and then north on Skyline to Sky Londa. That's a long way between water stops! Normally not much of an issue, because normally you'd go through one, maybe even less than one bottle per hour. But Haskins and West Alpine redefine "normal" on a hot day. Kevin was just about out halfway up West Alpine, so I gave him the full bottle I had left and I got to sip fumes the rest of the way. It all worked out, but not much margin to spare, and not sure how we could have done better. Tough to carry three bottles on a bike, and there are simply no places to refill on the way. Heck, I even went into the parking lot at the top of West Alpine and asked someone getting into a car if they had any to spare (they didn't) Let me tell you the Mtn Dews we had at Sky Londa were pretty awesome.

In the end it was hot, but not nearly as bad as we'd experienced a couple days in France! 68 miles, 5900ft of climbing, highest temp I saw was only 99 degrees. We arrived home feeling a whole lot better than we felt heading up West Alpine, and that's the great thing about riding. You can almost always ride through the tough spots and start feeling better again, and almost never do you get home and think you would have been better off not riding. --Mike--