

## What time did Burt get up yesterday? (Tour de France coverage)

Some people are even more faithful to the Tour de France than I am. Me, I do like to get a bit of sleep now and then. Doesn't seem like it lately, but I'm not the type to get up to start watching the race coverage at 3:30am. Given the choice, I'd rather fly 6000 miles, take a train or two to either Grenoble or Lourdes, get up at the leisurely hour of 7 or 7:30 and then ride my bike a few hours to see the race in person. Much easier than getting up at 3:30am right?

But yesterday, Saturday morning, the 'Tour's first day, they also had a single-stage women's event on pretty much the same course the men were riding. Only it started four hours earlier. Coverage beginning at 11:10pm Friday night. So I've got to wonder, did Burt watch coverage continuously from 11:10pm until 8am the next morning?

Last year Kevin and I didn't make it to the 'Tour, due to Covid-19 restrictions. We had everything set up and ready; all the routes planned, hotel reservations and plane tickets (completely refundable, of course). I didn't give up until just two weeks to go. It was a bit sad, watching the opportunity come and go, and certainly would have been a race to talk about.

This year, it was 50/50 odds whether I could pull it off or not, at least early on. Europe got hit hard by a second (or was it third?) wave of the virus, and it wasn't until early-May that things looked like they might settle down. In the meantime Kevin and I had both been fully vaccinated, I'd purchased completely-refundable (and very inexpensive!) plane tickets, secured hotels (a different place in Lourdes; our usual, adjacent to the train station, had remained shuttered during the Covid crisis) and waited for the release of the official, detailed tour routing.

And it looks like everything is a go! Covid is settling down, we've got all the transportation arranged, and on Thursday, July 8th, we're off to France. Kind of hoping it might be a bit less crowded than past years, although I don't think I'll ever again see the crowds that used to storm the country during the Lance years.

And we're bringing in some reinforcements while Kevin and I are gone; Chris Weber, longtime manager from back in the day who's going to be doing the service triage, and Bruno Colchen, former service manager who will be directing customers on the sales floor. We've also got a couple new younger employees, River and Simon, also working the sales floor. Plus Christoper, the new young guy in our service department working behind the curtain, where the magic happens.

I think I'm close to being ready. Tomorrow's ride to Santa Cruz could prove otherwise!