

November in California... you gotta love it! (And some climbing advice)

There's no getting around it; cycling is a year-round thing in these parts. November 4th, darn close to winter and the shortest day of the year, and we get temps in the mid-70s to 80! And yes, a lot of us took advantage of the beautiful day; I saw far more people heading into the hills and out to the coast than usual.



Unfair advantage, having two engines on Old LaHonda!

No Kevin on the ride today; he's nursing inflamed tonsils and a sore throat, which gave me a chance to see if I could push myself for the entire ride, without the usual stops that are the norm when you're traveling with others. The ride? What else, the "coastal classic" loop, up Old LaHonda, over Haskins to Pescadero, Stage Road to Tunitas and back. 57 very high quality miles. I started out feeling fat & slow. Seriously. I've put on a few pounds since the end of summer (about 4) and for a variety of reasons some of my rides lately have been shorter than normal. So what? You get on the bike and turn the pedals and go.

Old LaHonda was the first challenge, but it went better than expected. I was seriously expecting to see 24 minutes yet managed to get just under 22. Easy? No.



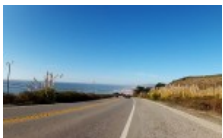
The duck pond on the shortcut to Pescadero. But it's been a very long time since I've ridden any hill in an "easy" manner, a bit over a year in fact (corresponding to when Kevin first started climbing faster than me).



Pescadero Bakery, best food-stop on the Peninsula!

Instead of the usual food & drink stop at Pescadero, I just picked up something to drink, used the bathroom out back and headed back out. Let's see... that means instead of the usual two pastries and coke I had an 8 ounce Acai-Pomegranate drink, and maybe 12 minutes off the bike instead of half an hour.

No records on Stage Road; too much of a headwind heading north, but again, so what? You just keep plugging away, finding that barely-sustainable level that gets you a respectable Strava score.



November in Northern California! You have to ride to appreciate it.

But it was on Tunitas that I had one of those revelations, epiphanies, whatever you want to call them. How do you go faster when it seems like you're on the ropes? People tell you to "dig deep." Look inside yourself and find something you didn't know was there.

Nope. That's not how it's done. Don't overthink it like that. You just tell your legs to go harder. Period. That's all there is to it. You stand up and try a harder gear and see what happens? No, you stand up, use the higher gear and go faster. It's really that simple.