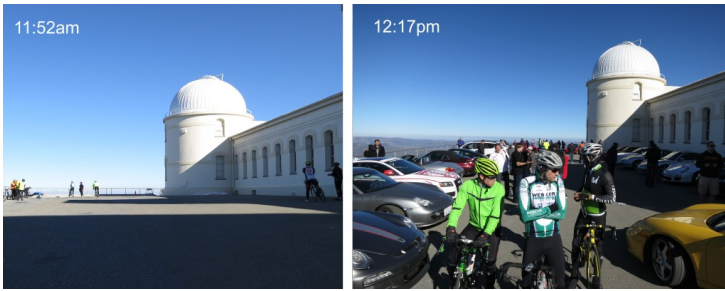


Mt Hamilton was popular today!



Quiet when we arrived, crowded when we left! We were quite surprised by the arrival of a large number of sports cars, filling the parking lot, and then some.

Yet another great day to be out on a bike! Instead of the usual Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride, it was time for the annual cruise up Mt. Hamilton, the Bay Area's tallest mountain. I'd been looking forward to a more "casual" ride up the hill this time but that didn't work out when Burt, my designated casual rider partner, let me know he was going up an hour earlier than our 9am starting time. Dang.



Eric leading Kevin through a hairpin.



Closer look. Didn't realize Eric was so tall!

Lots of people riding up the hill today, including Burt (former CR alumni), Steve L & Milo (former Tuesday/Thursday-morning riders), Eric (regular Tuesday/Thursday-morning rider) and Kelsey (if I'm getting his name right), one of our customers. Steve & Milo left just as we drove up, getting maybe a 10 minute lead on us, which Kevin (my son) decided to eradicate sooner than later. First he dropped Kelsey, then Eric drifted off the back a bit, then Eric caught back on and it was my turn off the back... which remained the case up the final climb to the top.



Milo riding strong!

At one point I'm looking at my heart rate, 163, and thinking it's going to be tough maintaining this for another 45 minutes or so. I'm hoping that maybe Kevin is close to redline so all I have to do is wait until he blows, so I ask him about his heart rate. Now keep in mind that, at almost 57, my max heart rate, absolute max before she blows, is going to be right around 170. Kevin, who's just turned

20, has a max of around 200, so I'm expecting him to tell me he's running at 180 or so. Uh... no. 167. I'm am so about to die and he's just idling!!!

Very few cars on the way up, and not too many bicycles. Yet. That changed very quickly at the top, when we were joined by a sports car rally of some sort, descending, er, rather, ascending on the parking lot at the top en masse. Apparently, the no-entry sign that cyclists ignored was similarly-ignored by 4-wheeled motorized beasts as well.

We "cooled off" for a bit at the top, literally, as it was 34 degrees (according to a display in the observatory). They didn't even have the observatory open at first, but when they did, it was questionable whether the surging mass heading for it was because people really had to go, or because they knew it was warm inside. Me? Both were good reasons to pay a visit! Even had a mild altercation with a local inside; there was a bin with a ton of newspapers in it, and I figured SCORE! Something to put in-between my base layer and jersey, to keep me a bit warmer on the way back down. Uh, no. Turns out they were the property of some generic old crotchety guy cleaning out his mailbox, and he wanted them, outdated Christmas ads & all. Pretty funny, actually.

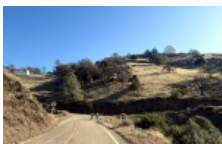
On the way back down we started out together, but when we caught up with Burt at Grants Ranch, I dropped off to ride back the rest of the way with him. I wanted to do at least part of this ride at a civilized pace! We were back at the start by 12:30, making it a 3.5 hour round trip. Not bad, and would have even had a sorta respectable time on the way up if not for a flat tire on the second climb.



Cresting the first climb on the way up



Heading into Grant Ranch and the start of the second climb



The top is so close, yet so far… not really, this is about 10 minutes from the top.



Entering the ice box! Not much further to go.



This didn't stop the 20 or so sports cars from heading to the top



We're looking so warm & happy here!



Can you count the number of people taking photos in this photo?