

Andrew Strong like Bull on Sequoia Century

First organized ride in a while, the classic Sequoia Century, put on by our local Western Wheelers club. My son (Kevin) and Andrew from the shop joined me for 100 miles of darned good cycling! The day turned out a lot nicer than forecast; it only got semi-hot (about 90) for the last 10 miles or so, with very mild temps on all of the climbs.



Kevin & Andrew crossing the Bridge of Death on China Grade

The climbs? Quite a few of them! Redwood Gulch, Highway 9, China Grade, Tunitas Creek... and then they tossed in some annoying little rollers in the last 5 miles.

Redwood Gulch. Not my favorite, although I think I'm wrong in my assumptions about why. It's not just that I've lost power on the steepest climbs, but more importantly, I have issues on the first climb of the day. I can't just jump on the bike and climb efficiently (fast) like I used to. But climbs that come later in the day give me much less trouble! So yes, I sucked on Redwood Gulch, but didn't do all that badly on nearly-as-steep China Grade. And Highway 9 from Waterman Gap to Saratoga Gap? Nailed it. Best time so far by over a minute.



Andrew & Kevin strategizing the attack on the next section of the ride

What about Andrew? After lunch in LaHonda we had a long drag to the coast, into a stiff headwind. So Andrew goes to the front and pulls. And pulls, And pulls. And keeps on pulling for the longest time, until I start feeling a bit sorry for the guy (guilty, actually) and finally go to the front myself and do a few turns at a pretty high speed, something I wouldn't have been able to do had Andrew not sheltered us from the wind for so long.

Tunitas was taken at a fairly easy pace, as I enforced a truce... no dropped riders. Actually, the way I put it was that the time would be taken for the 3rd rider crossing the line at the top. Kevin didn't get it, but Andrew picked up on it immediately. 3 riders, and if the time that counts is rider #3, then it does no good to charge on ahead on your own. :-)



Chain Reaction once again sponsors the "secret" soda stop at the top of Tunitas

And at the top of Tunitas came the reward... an ice-cold Mtn Dew, thanks to a local shop (you can figure out who from the sign on the truck in the background) that bought about 900 cans of soda and 400 pounds of ice to keep it nice & cold. And that local shop's employee, Patrick, who took care of mechanical needs and made sure the tubs were filled with ice & drinks.

There is finally a feeling that I'm not going to fall apart on some of the longer rides in France next month, like I did last year. Looking back on it, it's possible that the crash I had on my second ride, the one where they guy was flying downhill, lost control in a corner and sent my flying, might have hurt me more than I'd thought. Certainly not as much as it hurt him, since he had to be hauled away in an ambulance! But two fantastic 100+ mile rides on consecutive weekends is a good sign for my immediate future.



Big crowd at the Bike Hut, last chance to rest & drink before final climb up Tunitas



the 100k, 100mile and 200k rides all converged on Tunitas, making it almost crowded!



Fishing for Cokes & Mtn Dews & Diet Cokes & Sierra Mist & lots of other sodas



Macaroni, Mashed Potatoes, Eggplant Parmigiana, Chicken & more.



The big post-ride feeding frenzy