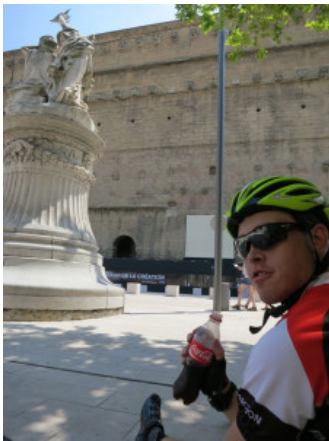


Hot shakedown ride in France



Mont Ventoux from afar. Why do we admire something that's going to try to kill us tomorrow?



Kevin recovering from a rough first part of the ride with a coke.

First real ride in France down, and a very good thing we got out there. Can you say HOT? This is the South of France, and it's both hot and windy, the sort of conditions that suck the moisture out of everything, especially you. Which was a bit of a problem for the first half of our ride, because I didn't think about the fact that Kevin drinks water on a "schedule" which normally means he drinks a lot more than me (I typically don't drink enough). Today, I went through water almost twice as fast as Kevin, and didn't realize it until we arrived in Orange, where he felt really bad and had his second seizure of the ride (he'd earlier had one on a not-much-fun busy 4-lane highway where there was fortunately a guard rail that he could hide behind so people didn't think he was injured and start pulling over to help).



Hot enough that even our bikes needed a break!

If it's hot, drink lots of water. If it's windy, drink lots of water. If it's both hot and windy, you really need to watch things carefully and plan on some extra stops along the way. In the SF Bay Area, these aren't conditions we see very often, if ever. Very good thing we saw them here, today, before taking on something really challenging and stupid, like Mont Ventoux tomorrow. :-)

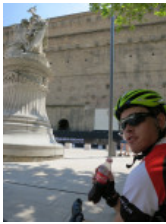
Aside from the water issue, which we addressed appropriately on the second half of the ride, it was really nice getting out there today and seeing some different things. I'd wanted, for years, to see the Roman amphitheater in Orange, so that was our destination. Of course, I didn't think about bringing a lock & cable for the bikes so we could actually see it; we just got to tour the outside. It

looks impressive though, so I guess we have to come back here sometime. Orange actually seems like a pretty nice place to stay, definitely preferable to a crowded place like Avignon that isn't so easy to get around and is kind of industrial once you're outside the old city walls.



You see it from a distance, you just gotta go see it close up. Early remnant of Borg cube?

If you look at the Strava map, you'll see an interesting little jog which was **not** intentional, but a result of misreading (or not really being able to read at all) my Garmin's display. Not a bad diversion though; pretty countryside, nice roads. There are definitely more-scenic and less-busy routes to & from Orange than we took though! Specifically, avoid D907 if at all possible. There's nothing nice to say about it, and there are plenty of alternatives in the area. In our area, the closest thing to it might be Central Expressway. Sure, it will get you there, but it's not something you'd ever look forward to unless you were in a real hurry and had to take the shortest route. But if life is that much of a bother to you, something you have to hurry through that much, I suspect you'd be in a car and not out riding a bike. :-)



Kevin recovering from a rough first part of the ride with a coke.



I still don't get smoking cyclists.



Had to find something really Orange in Orange!



Kevin's got safety on his mind; putting away sun screen, wearing a helmet to protect his head, and more protection dispensed in the vending machine behind.



Hot enough that even our bikes needed a break!



You see it, you just gotta go see it close up. Early remnant of Borg cube?



Worth the side trip indeed!



Storming the castle at the Pope's Chateaux



Sigh. I have a real fondness for chocolate, but when the Garmin's showing 101.8, not much chance of it surviving!



Only 5 or 6 miles to go, but down to almost the last of our water, it was time for a Coke! Guy inside is staring at our funny bikes.