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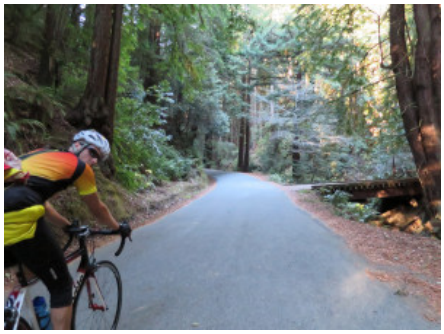
A Great Day, A Great Ride

Last night's weather forecast included hyperbole that was excessive, even for TV weather. Today was going to be the last really nice day until Spring. Oh really? As if California doesn't routinely have "rogue" winter days with temps well above the norm? Who cares, ride one day at a time and take advantage of each nice day as it arrives.

And arrive it did. Perfect day for the coastal classic, the "reference" ride that would tell me just how bad off I was (after two weeks in Thailand and a number of days after recovering from an apparent salmonella issue picked up at the end of the trip). A solo ride, since Kevin wasn't feeling well, which meant I got off to a very late start (12:15pm) seeing if he'd get feeling better (which he didn't).

I knew I wasn't going to be fast; I was just hoping that I'd ride myself back into... what? It's not like you can ride yourself into shape during a ride, except that you can. Or at least it feels that way. It certainly did today! Pretty slow climb up Old LaHonda (over 23 minutes), followed by a mediocre time over Haskins (jsut over 10), but I was feeling better mile-by-mile. I even thought about skipping a stop at Pescadero for food, but I couldn't avoid one effect of too long without much riding... I was getting hungrier than normal. I did keep it short though, since I was racing the sun to get home before dark. By the way, this time of year, it's not a bad idea to carry a small front light just in case you don't make it back before dark; I brought the new Niterider Lightning Bug 100, a little USB guy that runs $45 and works better than $150 units of just a few years ago. Yeah, that's a product plug.



Paul listening to my explanation of the "Bridge of Death" on Tunitas

Thankfully there were no headwinds going north on Stage, so the ride just kept getting better. On the Stage Road climb (from San Gregorio up to Highway 1) I caught up with Paul, someone from Mtn View doing a similar loop. Very nice guy and maybe just a little bit slower on the steeper parts, but it was nice having someone to ride with for a bit and make sure he knew about the "Bridge of Death" which each real climb has at its base. He was unaware of the concept but caught on quickly when I mentioned West Alpine and China Grade, both of which he's ridden and remembered the bridges. He was going to include the bridge at the base of Old LaHonda as well, but I had to point out that Old LaHonda isn't quite epic enough to qualify for a true Bridge of Death. Today I needn't have feared the Bridge of Death; my legs were feeling surprisingly good on the steeper stuff. It was also nice not having to drill it on the upper flat part, riding at a pace where I could actually talk rather than the lung-searing speed if Kevin's with me and we're going for time (which is always the case).

Before descending Kings Paul asked me how fast I liked to ride downhill; I told him I'd follow whatever pace he chose. He chose fast, considerably faster than I usually descend the upper part of Kings. Next time I'll suggest "moderate." :-)