

Still learning about myself... at 58, I don't yet have it all figured out.

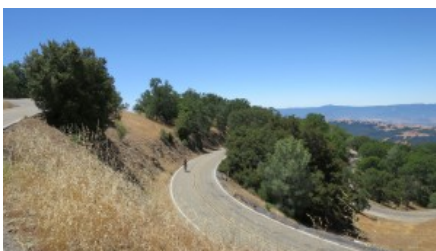


Rarely seen on this, or any other website, a photo showing me (on the right; that's my son Kevin on the left, at the top of Mt Hamilton)

Some things are too much fun to do just once a year; Mount Hamilton is one of them. Maybe we'll be starting a new tradition; On New Year's Day and 4th of July... one of the coldest and warmest days of the year. Either way, a great ride.

We started the day at a reasonable hour, riding down to catch the 9:07am train to San Jose, and then the slow ride through San Jose's infinite number of stop lights up to the base of Mount Hamilton, where we met up with Andrew, Chain Reaction alumnus (who will be seen again in the store on the two Saturday's Kevin and I will be gone for France). And yes, it was very unlike the weather for a January 1st ride, running between 82 & 94 degrees most of the way up. It would be wrong to say that I really enjoy riding when it's hot, that I'm not more comfortable at 72 than 92 on a climb, but the reality is that I climb well when it's hot.

Kevin thinks he was the person pushing the pace on the first part of the climb, but his story is a bit different from mine. He thinks I was in trouble, I think I was just trying to keep a steady hard pace, which allowed him to get out front a couple times, and a couple times he was behind. In the end all three of us stayed together over the top of the first rise, and, at least for myself and Kevin, it was a good two minutes faster than we'd done before.



Kevin one hairpin behind

It wasn't going to be a Strava day for the entire climb though, as first we stopped at the top of the second rise so Kevin could use the facilities, and on the final climb, I was just barely hanging on for a while until I decided to just try to keep a steady pace between 200 & 220 watts and found myself gradually riding off the front. Eventually I got far enough in front of Kevin that I was able to stop and take some photos of Kevin and Andrew a curve or two down the hill from me... probably the last time THAT will ever happen!

Don't know if a full-on effort without stops would have gotten my best time up the hill or not, but I'm thinking not. The really hard ride up the first part of the climb took something out of me, going from 280 watts down to 220 or so. But evidently it took even more out of Kevin (Andrew I'm not so sure about; he apparently had to stop to get a rock out of his shoe on the way up).



Lifesaving coke machine!

Very little traffic on the road today, which surprised us all. Not many bicycles (although we did come across a group of Google cyclists, some of whom we've seen on our Thursday-morning ride), or cars, or motorcycles. The parking lot at the top was nearly empty, but thankfully the coke machine wasn't! This was that rare 2-coke day at the top, both of which went down pretty quickly.

Overall it seemed like a much nicer ride than should have been the case. And I learned something about myself, and how, if I pay attention to the power meter, I can do a lot better, in a relative sense (relative to others on the ride), than if I try to match someone else's pace. Which, I guess, makes me a pretty boring rider, like Cadel, as opposed to someone more animated like Contador.



Kevin and Andrew at the top of Mount Hamilton