

In praise of the â€œrain bikeâ€•

I tried to time it just right, missing that period of time in the morning when it was threatening but not really raining, maybe just a light mist, the type you don't get much credit for riding in but really messes up your bike. Besides, I was working at trying to get my blog feed integrated with my twitter account (without much success, but thanks to a note from Ueyn it's probably fixed now).

By the time I finally got going it was much more than a drizzle, but much less than a downpour. A moderate amount of wind, but with the promise of heavier rain in the hills, so that's where I headed. I'm stupid like that, and anyway, I needed a dry run for the cold, wet & windy days that will surely come this winter. Which brings up something interesting... if it's a ride in the rain, how can it be a "dry" run?



Rain bikes don't get the respect they deserve. Their utility goes far beyond being a rack to drip-dry your clothing on.

I thought (briefly) about avoiding Skyline entirely, but why? So I pointed my bike in the appropriate direction and rode. Slowly. Not really that slowly, but the legs really didn't seem to have it, and the rest of the body seemed content to go along with the legs. As a result it was one of my slower rides up Old LaHonda, and at times I felt like I was just riding a bike, without any of that magical transformative feeling I usually get. The rain made it interesting, but it wasn't until I got over the other side and was riding back up 84 towards Skyline that I began to feel alive, and started to appreciate a bike that doesn't care about finesse, it just works. The rain was getting harder, the winds kicking up, but the gears worked, the brakes worked, the fenders kept most of the spray off me, and I was able to keep up enough steam to stay comfortable. I was, finally, in the zone.

Heading back into Woodside I realized that it was far too soon to head home, as the purpose of riding wasn't just to say I got on a bike in the rain (not that there's anything wrong with that) but to actually go on a ride, so I added "the loop" including the little extra section on Arastradero before turning back up Sand Hill and heading for home. It was only 38 miles in the end, but it felt good, I got plenty of rain & wind (but only marginal bragging rights because it wasn't very cold) and I know my rain bike is ready.

Oh, almost forgot, as I was passing through Woodside on the way home I took a short detour to avoid some of Canada Road, and came across a guy jogging who asked "I don't know who's more stupid, you or me" (for being out there in the rain). I told him it was me, because I'd just returned from Skyline. Thinking about it shortly after, I almost turned around to find him and say that we're not the stupid ones, it's those who think they have an excuse to sit on the couch and watch TV when they could be out having fun with us!