

## Sometimes you throw away the planned ride and improvise on the fly

Interesting ride, to say the least. The plan was to ride up Page Mill, down West Alpine, and back via Tunitas. That would have been about 62 miles, maybe 6200ft of climbing. A normal Sunday ride for Kevin and I. No biggie.

Yeah, that was the plan, which started falling apart on the climb up Page Mill. Page Mill wasn't my idea; it's never my idea to climb that beast. It's mainly the lower part, below Foothill Park, that kills me. I just can't get any kink of rhythm on it. No difference today, but I did fine, as usual, once we got to the "real" parts. Including the steep section between gates 3 & 4. But Kevin was not having an easy time, lagging behind a bit.

By the time we got to the top I knew wasn't in for the full ride, asking if we could skip the coast today and maybe head south on Skyline, a direction we very rarely ride. OK, that's fine, we might still get about a 50 mile ride in, heading to Saratoga Gap and down Highway 9, then Hicks, followed by The Maze and eventually stopping for lunch at our Los Altos store.

And, as usual, the ride got better as we went, with Kevin getting progressively stronger. Eating lunch at Peet's even had a vaguely-similar feeling to eating at a French cafe in the middle of a ride! After lunch we bounced around the local roads a bit, mapping out test ride loops for the Los Altos store, before heading north on Foothill for home.

Things got interesting on Foothill. A fair number of other cyclists out there, enough to start feeling a bit competitive, so Kevin and I start hammering at the front of a small group, putting out quite a few watts and feeling really, really strong. Where did this come from? Don't know, but it felt good. We looped back home through Arastradero and Alpine but, just a few miles from home, about to pass the base of Old LaHonda, Kevin and I both had the same idea at the same time. Why not climb Old LaHonda before going home?

It was a bit of a nutty idea, made more sensible by agreeing that we'd take it easy, maybe a 27 minute pace. Oh yeah right, like that was going to happen. We finished in 22-something (OK, almost 23, but much faster than 27).

In the end, instead of 62 miles, we rode a more-challenging 73 miles, and had a really great time. Just goes to show you should never give up on a ride. Let it play out. Things almost always get better. --Mike--