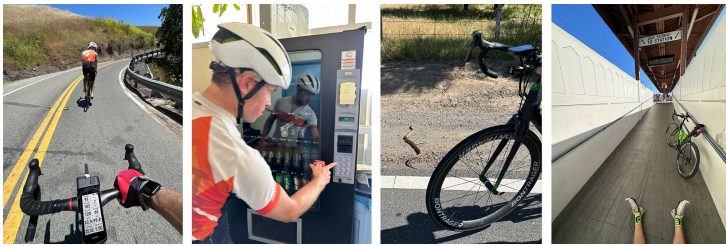


Could NOT miss opportunity to ride in "hot" weather!!! Mt Ham, here we are.



After missing Thursday morning's ride due to the break in at the bike shop (more on this in a future post), there really wasn't a choice but to get some real miles in, another tougher ride, like last weekend. But where?

I'm dying to do another Santa Cruz loop, but the weather isn't quite there yet. I have become determined to do rides **WITHOUT** base layers, leg warmers and, due to my hands, thermal or heated gloves. So at the last minute, Sunday morning in fact, I looked at the temps and Mount Hamilton looked like it could fit the bill. Had to tack in some extra miles, not just from downtown San Jose, so we got off at the Mountain View train station and rode from there (but took the train all the way back). Found a great Vietnamese coffee place in San Jose (The Coffee Cup on Toyon) where we enjoyed iced coffee, ham & cheese croissants, and a couple other pastries, all of it very good.

Hot? It was definitely warm, but not that bad. My Garmin was reading 99.6F at one point on the climb, but I'm guessing that was about 6 degrees high. I know, most would think of that as hot, but I deal with warm temps a lot better than cold. On the other hand, Kevin prefers it cooler, so we were pretty evenly matched today.

Not very crowded road, auto or cyclist. Strange for such a nice day. Just prior to the final descent on the way up (Mt Hamilton has three main climbs, punctuated by two fairly short descents, on the way up) we stopped and drank cokes that we'd brought up the hill in our "France" seat bags (they have a pocket at the back for a coke bottle, which is super handy in France) before final section. I think this is the first time up Mt Hamilton that we made a point of actually stopping along the way for food or drink),

At the top, again, very few people. I think just two other cyclists? We bought cokes from the machine, used the bathroom, checked out the view for a bit and then headed back down. Due to getting a pretty late start, we didn't want to risk later and later trains, so we headed back down (after just 20 minutes) at 3:46pm, hoping to catch the 5:12 train. Not a good plan; it can take up to 1hr 45min to get from the top to the train station, and we had 1hr 26 minutes.

And that would have been with a couple minutes to spare if we hadn't had to save a snake, who really didn't want to be moved out of the roadway, about 2/3rds of the way down. This guy wouldn't have survived on a typical busy day on that road, but today he was fortunate. He didn't want to cooperate though, constantly moving in the opposite direction we wanted. Eventually we finally got him going in the right direction. We didn't waste time on the run-in to the train station, but unfortunately there's not much you can do about the massive number of lights, none of which seemed to be in sync with our speed. Things were looking really grim.

Finally the train station's in site, and we race through the parking lot, into the station and notice on the big board that our train is leaving in 1 minute. Yikes. And we have to walk down the ramps and through the "subway" to the tracks. No way would we make it, but you gotta try.

At first glance, things didn't look good. No train on the tracks, but there were people. And just as I turn to look in the other direction, the announcement is made that the train is approaching. And I turn around again and... where's Kevin? Yikes. He's only halfway up the ramp and tells me he's beginning to get a seizure. Talk about bad timing! That's what you see in the far-right photo. Kevin's feet on the ground, the ramp, and the approaching train towards the very top of the photo.

OK, the train is a minute late, but it's here, we gotta get on it and go! But Kevin's having a seizure, which can last 2-3 minutes, and

the train would leave before he's recovered if it's a long one! Fortunately, it was only a couple minutes and he was back up on his feet. With no time to spare, to say the least; the train started moving as soon as we were on it.

Overall a really, really good ride. No single part of it warrants such enthusiasm; this was a ride that was much more than the sum of its parts.