

We came, and can hardly believe what we saw. Trek's Mollema in 2nd place at TdF!



Pretty amazing. More on our day at the TdF time trial after we head we get dinner taken care of. But you're looking at Bauke Mollema riding into 2nd place at the Tour de France! Nobody could have predicted the outcome of today's stage. Oh sure, the part about Froome keeping the yellow jersey and even adding to his lead over his rivals, that part was pretty much inevitable. But seeing Trek's Burke Mollema ride the time trial of his life, and end up in 2nd place overall? That was beyond belief. We'd already seen him do an astounding climb up Mont Ventoux just yesterday, and then this today. I have conflicting feelings... on the one hand, it's time to head home, we've been here long enough, and on the other, well, let's just say I'm going to be glued to the coverage once I get back home Monday night.



The ultimate selfie! Check out the reflection in Greipel's lenses. That's Kevin on the ground, taking the photo. Today's stage had us driving from our place near Avignon to a little town on map named Bidon, located about 4 miles away from the road the time trial was being held on. From there we rode the short distance to the course, which was a whole lot easier than trying to drive there, since you couldn't park within a mile of the race, and it would have taken hours to get back out. We watched from Saint Remeze, the self-proclaimed Lavender capital of the world (at least they have a museum), although the field of lavender across from our photos was pretty weedy. Several good places for sandwiches and drinks. Weather was sunny, warm and... windier than you could likely imagine. Crazy windy!

Kevin got most of the good shots of the leaders, which I'll claim is largely because my main lens went bad on me (my Canon 70-200 F4L), giving me an "01 error, difficulty communicating with lens). I'd loaned Kevin my nice all-purpose 15-85, which left me with either his slower-focusing 55-250 or my 10-18 wide angle. I figured what the heck, do something different, try the wide angle for everything. Not a great idea, but it's true, a poor photographer blames his equipment, while Kevin just goes about taking photos and getting better each time. Hate that.

Regarding the tragic terrorist events in Nice, that's something that I feel uncomfortably disconnected to. I can read all about it in the US-based news feeds on my iPhone, but I can't understand the conversations on the street, nor talk with anyone about it, offering my condolences and solidarity. It's a very odd feeling, basically with some guilt attached to just going ahead with my plans regardless of what's happened here in France. I should make it clear that I have no fears for my or Kevin's safety; the odds are with us and while you could say we're in a "large gathering", that gathering is spread across 100 miles road, not all packed into a small space. I will say that I have picked up on one thing quite strongly. For reasons that I don't fully understand, France has become the focal point of hatred from the radical terrorist groups. This will not stop me from coming though. If I had means for a second home somewhere,

this is where it would be.

Tomorrow (Saturday) we move on to Lyon, viewing the first stage in the Alps on Sunday, then we pack for home, leaving literally before the crack of dawn (5:50am train, yuck!) to catch a flight from Paris back to Chicago, and then home. I miss the strangest of things, like the day-to-day unusual challenges at the shop, along with the regular things, like my wife, my daughter Becky (who's running the store, so obviously I couldn't be in France otherwise), maybe the dog just a little tiny bit, the cat a little bit more. And the employees at the shop. Really good people, whose hard work has allowed me to take this trip with Kevin.

It's time to come home and take a vacation from the vacation. Sleep on a regular schedule, eat regular food and drink COFFEE!!!
--Mike--