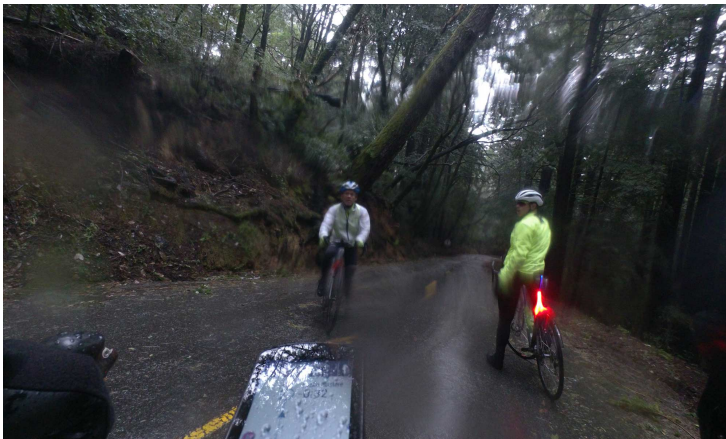
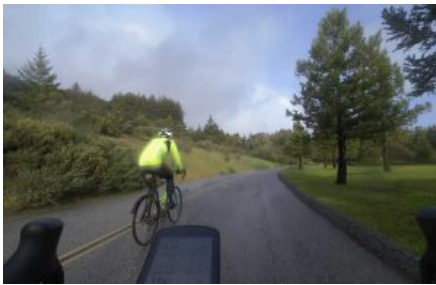


"How about we don't. It's windy enough to be scary." Glad we did.



Wednesday night things looked hopeful for an epic ride. High winds, rain, likely thunderstorms. Thursday morning I wake up and it's just not all that bad. We didn't get the massive 4am slam that had been forecast, but Kevin was apprehensive because it had been pretty windy overnight, waking him up a few times. And thus the text he sent me, from an adjacent room that said "How about we don't. Its windy enough to be scary." Except that it really wasn't. But it did take us longer to get going than normal, at least partly due to his lack of enthusiasm. Besides, he was pretty sure nobody else was going to be out there. IAnd if that wasn't enough, I had a text alert that said Highway 84 was closed due to a downed tree. I suggested perhaps riding part of the loop and heading up Alpine Road towards Joaquim. He wasn't impressed with that idea. But I did get him out on the road with me.



You can see how nice it was heading up through the park. Even a rainbow in the distance! Clearly in the eye of the storm at this point. We arrived at the start about 5 minutes late and, sure enough, nobody out there. A bit windy but not crazy windy, and a break in the rain. As you can see in the photo taken as we rode through the park, it appeared we might have been riding through the hole in the center of the storm. I decided we'd see what the diverted traffic might look like after we emerged from the park and either head up or down from there. What we didn't know was that we had ridden past Kevin (pilot) without knowing it, as he'd shown up for the ride, left on time but used the Huddart Park facilities (toilets) on the way up, so we actually passed him.

Kevin (younger) and I had a nice pretty easy climb, knowing we weren't in any big rush because we couldn't do anything but an out & back due to the road closure. We stopped for a bit to take photos of the wildly-rushing creek on the way up, got to the top, put on the rain jackets and headed down. On the way up there'd just been a light drizzle but towards the top that turned into a legit rain. Almost immediately after starting down we see something unexpected- the flashing headlight of a bicycle making its way up the hill. It's Kevin (pilot)! So now Kevin (younger) was glad he hadn't skipped out, thinking nobody else would be out there. Kevin (pilot) did a more-ambitious ride, heading down Tunitas to the Bridge of Death before climbing back up. As ambitious as that sounds, it had the advantage, for him, of ending on a climb (he lives up on Skyline) while we got to descend Kings.

As usual, thank goodness for 28c tires & disc brakes. Amazing traction and control.

Overall, not epic, but reasonably windy at times (mostly heard, not felt), fun to see the creeks flowing strongly, pretty steady rain

once we got to the top, and the unusual situation of the ride starting out warmer than it ended. Definitely glad we didn't stay home.