

## A day for an "Ugly" ride



The view from Skyline looking towards the coast, with West Old LaHonda center-right. It's been a really really REALLY rough past few months. Actually longer than that. It's probably been pretty obvious, from the relative infrequency of my almost-daily-diary postings. A combination of things including personal, business and extended family.

Some of the personal stuff deals with my Dad, who died over 30 years ago. Normally that would be "background noise" (thinking about him) but a lot of it came rushing to the foreground recently when my mom's "new"(??) husband died. He was a great guy and made my mom very happy for 8 years, but I had some real issues, totally in my head, I get that, that calling him a "step" dad somehow took away from my "real" dad.

Other stuff I can't go into, although on the business end, look for a pretty significant announcement coming soon. No, we're not closing or selling out.

For now, we'll focus on today. Kevin (kid) wasn't available; he'd ditched for a girlfriend gig. Kevin (pilot) was originally going to ride, but he got out of it by trading with another pilot for a trip to New Zealand that left a day earlier. Geez. The trouble some people go so they won't ride with me. So... just me.

The original plan was to leave pretty early, but that kinda died with my wife offered to make breakfast (and when she makes breakfast, it's WAY better than Safeway canned orange roles, 400F at 17 minutes). Then I got around to getting some other stuff done that needed to get done (personal stuff) and finally left the house at about 11:30. All I really knew, leaving the house, was that it was going to be just over 4 hours. But... where?

Two options really. The coast, Pescadero/Tunitas, which I've done enough of lately so it's not really that interesting doing it alone. Or... an "Ugly" ride. The ride you do when you have those thoughts of maybe not riding at all, maybe getting some work done around the house, maybe you just feel lazy.



Coffee at Peet's in Los Altos. So Ugly ride won out. Heading south through the foothills, a stop for coffee at the Peet's in Los Altos, where I could verify that our old location is STILL vacant (after more than two years!!!), and then... up Redwood Gulch to Highway 9, to Skyline, and return. I was thinking maybe I'd try lower gears on Redwood Gulch this time, and see how it went? So yeah... just when I thought it was time to go to my lowest gear, I look back and... darn. I'm already IN my lowest gear! I click the shifter anyway, just to make sure, but this time, the eyes didn't lie. It was ugly. Did catch up to a couple of people on the way up though. Highway 9? Thought I might just phone it in and take it easy, until I saw a pair of cyclists behind me, looking like maybe they were catching up. Darn again! This is when you live by the watt meter. You try and gauge what it takes to keep even, power-wise, and

then go about 20 watts higher. As if you can just twist a throttle and go another 20 watts? Right. But it at least keeps you honest and not drifting into too easy a pace up the hill. I kept looking back on the straighter sections and never saw them again.

Still no sign of Mr Mustard on Skyline. So, immediately headed north, feeling OK, not great, but OK was good today. Descending 84 was actually fun; got behind a car that was capable of a bit of speed, especially on the straighter sections, and found it pretty easy to crank the watts up to 500, 600, even 700 watts coming out of the corners. I liked that. Just checked; I actually hit over 800 watts twice. Descending. Of course, descending, I don't have the breathing issues I have at other times, because with all the curves, any bursts of power are just that, bursts, punctuated by plenty of recovery time in-between.

Overall a pretty darned good ride. I don't think I'll ever actually enjoy Redwood Gulch again, especially now that it feels like I could use a bit lower gear. Hate that.