

Two epic Peninsula climbs, one great ride



The oft-pictured "Bridge of Death" at the start of the steep section of Tunitas. It's tough coming up with a ride you haven't done in a while, but the bar is a bit lower when you're adding someone to the ride who doesn't have decades of experience riding 'round these parts. So in the end I'm sure at some point in the past 14 years I've likely done this exact same ride with Kevin, but maybe just once or twice.

The one climb I'll avoid at all costs on a Sunday ride is Kings. Twice a week is enough for me; on Sundays I want to do something else. "Something else" typically means Old LaHonda, the traditional gateway to the ocean side of the hill, but y'know, been doing that a lot lately too. Then there's Redwood Gulch/Highway 9, but been there done that a few weeks ago. Which leaves... Page Mill. Yuck. I've never liked that climb, mostly because that first part, from the start of the climb to Altamont, just plain sucks. You can't get a rhythm on it. Once you get past Foothill Park, it's not so bad because the steep stuff goes on for a while, the traffic becomes a lot less, and you can get into a rhythm.

I had to be content with letting Colin and Kevin gap me for a while, until I found that sweet spot where my breathing leveled out a bit so I could ride at a sustained hard pace. According to Strava I succeeded; it says I put in a 100% effort and had my 6th-best time (out of 21 rides up the hill since 2009). Kevin and Colin finished a couple minutes later, Kevin saying he could have ridden me into the ground but he didn't think it fair to let Colin ride alone. Yeah, maybe.

Beautiful views heading down West Alpine; unfortunately, my fears of the lower part being an ice box came true. Hate that. Easy ride out to the coast though, as Kevin decided he just wanted to stay at the front and pull us the whole way! Who am I to argue? We stopped at San Gregorio for a coke and a pastry (Guava/Cheese, an odd but very tasty combo!), and have to say that place (the General Store) has really turned itself around w/regards being friendly to cyclists.

Instead of heading directly up Tunitas we tossed in one new hill for Colin's benefit- Los Lobitos Cut-off. By the time we got to Tunitas we were a bit worse for wear, but still maintained pretty good speed until the top part where, for once, we took it fairly easy. No more Kevin going to the front and drilling it.

Nice ride, exceeding the 1000ft/climbing per 10 miles that earns the "tough ride in the mountains" designation.