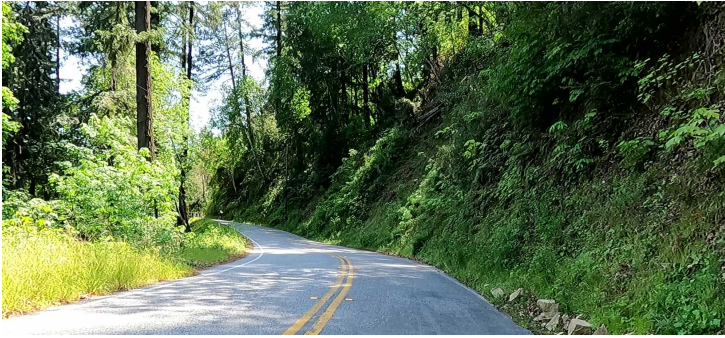


Not many more rides up RWG with a 34/28. This is not fun to confront.



It was time to do the Ugly Ride again, heading south and up Redwood Gulch & Highway 9. The ride starts out pretty nice; you get to ride past Old LaHonda early on, instead of heading up. A pleasant loop through the foothills down to Los Altos, where you stop at Peets to refuel, and see if the old shop location has finally been rented (it hasn't). Actually roll things back a bit to when we're heading over Jefferson and I realize, we forgot to bring masks! Only that's not a requirement anymore, and didn't keep us out of Peet's. In fact, there was only one person wearing a mask inside. Overall, I'd say employees are the most-likely to not be wearing masks.

I told Kevin ahead of time that my plan was to take it easy at the start of Redwood Gulch, and hope not to run out of steam on the steeper parts. You know, those sections where your Garmin is reading it as a 16% grade but you're certain it's under by half. Unfortunately, it's not about taking it "easy" anymore. The problem is a too-low cadence messes with what's left of my breathing; it's difficult to breathe at a rate higher than my cadence, and I need more air than 46 gasps/minute allows. Which means... I might be strong enough to push a higher gear, but it doesn't take long to run out of air.

Last big change in gearing for me came... what, 2009 or so? When compact gearing first came to be a big thing, and I moved from a 53/39 up front to a 50/34. I never, ever, missed the larger chainrings. Still kept an 11-28 in the back. Next step is going to be an 11-32 I think. More than my rear derailleur will handle, but I don't think going to an 11-30 will make enough difference. New bike time might be closer than I thought!

Once we got to Highway 9 I was good. I'm always good on Highway 9. Kevin hates it; he doesn't deliver as much power on shallower grades. I reminded him it was like the lower part of the Galibier in France, only shorter. For him, it's just a grind. For me, it's just a grind. I prefer a grind.

Beautiful day; we started with base layers but removed them early on, before starting the climb. Warm enough to stay loose and feel like I still had something as the ride went on. Definitely looking forward to warmer weather ahead. And climbs less steep than Redwood Gulch.