

Goat Rock

We had a total of ten regulars on this ride with Ed Buckner, Frank White, Gary & Beth Helm, George Schjelderup, Greg Leopold, Mark McCoy, Sachin Brahme, Skip Moffatt, Steve Wright, and myself. To start with, we only had seven bikes as we rolled to the bottom of driveway, but Greg and Gary showed at the last minute. Also I was expecting Steve at Stanley Ln over in Napa.

First off, this route owed us from last year -- and it paid off very nicely indeed. Frank covered the tail gunner spot as we rode out and onto Hwy 80 -- thank you. The temperature was slightly warm and muggy. The first part of this ride is just to get to the good stuff, but this time traffic was mild and at speed. And this allowed us to roll smoothly. We caught a traffic break on Bennett Vly Rd and was able to roll over the rough ground with modest spirit. As we got to the light where we would make a left turn so we could stay on Bennett Vly Rd, I went brain dead and went straight on Yulupa. A simple turn on Bethards got us back on path and to our first stop for gas.

Greg had to go to work, so he said goodbye as we rolled onto Hwy 12 for Sebastopol. As usual, the downtown traffic got thick and sluggish. This time I stayed in the correct lane to get through town -- yeah. And traffic slowly thinned out and got up to speed the farther out of town we got. Finally the turn onto Bohemian Hwy and we were able to let loose and enjoy sweet twisties. We slowed down and rolled gently through Occidental. Then we had more fun getting to Monte Rio.

We hit our first slow traffic on Hwy 116 with a pickup and trailer, but he pulled over soon enough. We pulled over at Duncans Mills for a rest. I was expecting much colder weather, but it was still very comfortable. Both the deli and the gift shop are out of business now. So those needing snacks either rode or walked across Hwy 116 to the more touristy styled bakery. I do miss that deli.

Then we went the short way down the hill to get to Hwy 1...and traffic...lots of it and slow. Not as bad as it could have been, but slow enough. I was getting anxious knowing the real good stuff was just ahead.

The turn onto Meyers Grade Rd was what I was waiting for. Plenty of twisties of all varieties and all to ourselves...well...not this time. We actually encountered quite a few cars this time. The good news was the cow patties were few and mostly avoidable. The road had plenty of dirt and debris and pot holes...and even good sized branches. The glimpses of the Pacific were few, but very sweet.

We took a nice break at the top of the loop and enjoyed the silence of nature. We talked about a lot of subjects, including Dr Demento. Some wild turkeys wandered by. Food was calling, so we saddled up and rode towards Goat Rock. Frank said it was an obvious big rock, but I was too focused on the road to notice it (grins). At last we rolled into Cazadero and proceeded down the hill to Hwy 116.

The Garden Grill's parking lot was full in front, but we found spots by the day care fence. The waitress said they would put two tables together for us to seat us all. Mark helped and soon we had enough places and chairs for all. Frank left before lunch. I hope he had a nice ride home. The food was good, with big servings, and modestly priced. The mild temperature, gentle breeze, and fun chatter made a real nice lunch.

We took our group photos out front, then got ready to ride again. Gary and Beth said they were going to head straight on River Rd and said goodbye. George also went an alternate route home from here. The traffic on Hwy 116 was nice and either moved out of the way or ran at pleasant enough speeds...until Forestville. Fortunately, we turned onto Guerneville Rd shortly there after and left him to his rude ways. This stretch of straight road was not clogged with slow traffic or too many red lights. We did catch one light that split the group. I found a parking lot to pull the front group into so we could wait.

Once back together, Steve headed out aiming for Hwy 101 as planned. The zig zag through Santa Rosa got us to Calistoga Rd and again there was very little traffic. The five of us that were left made the turn onto St Helena Rd/Spring Mtn Rd. Nice tight, narrow twisties makes this road one of my all time favorites. We stopped and took a rest in St. Helena. Ed and Sachin decided to just take Hwy 29 to home. Skip, Mark, and myself continued on and stopped at the gas station for drinks, snacks, and a failed chance at using the restroom.

We zig zagged out of town and onto Silverado Trail. A quick break at Lake Hennessy and I felt better -- once I could breath fresh air...way too many chemicals in the tank. From there the road was ours and we ran at a nice, mild, sparky pace. On Wooden Vly Rd and almost home -- and we ran up on two very, very slow cars that just would not move over. We passed them after the one-lane bridge finally. I pulled my bug bespattered bike into the garage and went into the house and get my hot gear off. It wasn't that hot until I stopped. My bike needs a good cleaning. A great day.