

Goat Rock 2011

We had a total of six bikes with regulars Charlie Myatt, Skip Moffatt, George Schjelderup, Steve Wright (who met us at Stanley Ln in Napa), and myself. New to the group was Roy Murray. Again, not too many riders. I wonder if this is because of no newsletter or just a normal fluctuation.

There was no wind in the morning and the temperature was nice – as long as you weren't standing in the sun. We started out, happy for the fresh wind caused by riding, with Charlie as tail gunner – thank you. The run down Hwy 80 and across Hwy 12 to Napa wasn't as filled with slow traffic as I expected. But once Steve joined us, the traffic was slow. Not Steve's fault – or was it? Maybe some cosmic karma he caused. Naw.

We finally got rid of the slow car when we turned onto Arnold Dr. Again, the traffic here was mostly at the speed limit, unexpectedly so. We made our way to Glen Ellen after making it passed the manicured lawns of the state hospital and the many stop signs.

We then turned onto Warm Springs Rd. My hope here was for limited traffic and we were rewarded. We were able to roll at a pleasant pace right onto Bennett Valley Rd. This road has had some patching done and even some full sections repaved, but it is still a bucking bronco, rough road in the narrow section. Alas, we did run into traffic close to the end of Bennett Valley Rd. But even so, it was only slow, and not excruciatingly slow.

We had our first gas stop in Santa Rosa before heading onto Hwy 12 to Sebastopol. I am so glad I have my note to stay in the right lane in Sebastopol. The traffic is so thick that any chance to correct a wrong lane choice is nearly impossible – done that before and learned. And without foreknowledge the choice is not obvious until way too late.

But we rolled out the west side of town and towards Bohemian Hwy. This is where the fun starts. The traffic has been hit and miss over the various times we did this ride. This time it was nice and the few cars mostly moved out of the way for us. Sweet! All too soon we came to Occidental, but this is only the half way for Bohemian Hwy. The second section, to Monte Rio, is just as sweet and twisted as the first section.

The route then puts us onto Hwy 116 and we were force to maintain a mild pace. We took a break at Duncans Mill and found that the deli has reopened (under new management). Sodas, candy, sandwiches, and such. Yay! After a nice rest, we continued west. I was moving a little over the speed limit and as I approached the cars, they found a nice convenient way to move over. So sweet and kind. The rest of the gang was either in close formation or not too far back as we got to Hwy 1.

Just six miles to go until we reached the real pot of gold...Meyers Grade Rd and the fun loop ahead with no traffic at all. I was getting itchy. I needed to be there – NOW! But we ran up behind a very slow truck with a load of wooden boxes. Erg! He eventually found a spot and pulled over. And with a honk or two and a lot of thank you waves, we rolled on by.

I pulled the group over at the start of Meyers Grade to make sure everyone had there thinking caps on. I gave extra instruction to those that had not done this road before. Once I was sure all was ready, I started walking back to my bike...and that slow truck turned off of Hwy 1 onto our road. What?! No!! It couldn't be. I got on my bike sadly but took off with hopes, weak hopes, that I could get by the truck and that the rest of the group could also. I quickly caught up with the truck and had a nice view around him...clear. Around I went. As I sped up the hill, I saw a few others getting around. Nice truck driver.

After having myself a grand time misbehaving, I pulled to a stop at Fort Ross Rd to allow the group to regather. Skip was the first to catch me and then I think it was George (it was a black bike and more than that my memo-

ry doesn't work) who rolled in third. Where that truck was I never found out. We proceeded much the same to each intersection - I would squirt ahead with spirit (but safely), then I would wait. Of course my face had a big grin. Oh just wheee! And so much for no traffic. We had half a dozen cars or better on the northward section of this fun loop.

We took a good break at the top of King Ridge Rd. While resting, another bike rider rolled up from Tin Barn Rd, looking lost. After talking with him, I pointed him to Kruse Ranch Rd. It is not fully paved, but he had a dual sport bike. It would be just perfect for him. The sun was warm and our stomachs were starting to rumble. It was time to ride again. And ride we did – down King Ridge Rd.

Unbelievable to me, we encountered more cars. I think we topped at around a full ten or more by the time we hit Cazadero. I was going just a bit fast when I came upon one of the many cattle grates. I saw, a bit late, that the road dipped down sharply just passed the grate. I applied my brakes to slow some, but was soon in the air. My tires now freed from the road must have stopped, and when I touched down I heard two distinctive chirps. The brakes then slowed me just enough to make the tight right turn. I actually had plenty of room and time. But I tried to slow down a bit after that.

All too soon we came to Cazadero. Then for three miles we passed twenty one speed limit signs saying 35MPH...and one last one saying 45MPH for maybe two blocks. Then it was a short run east on Hwy 116 to Guerneville and lunch at the Garden Café.

Skip took off without staying for lunch to get home early. The rest of us sat outside under the canopy and enjoyed some fine sandwiches. I forsook my usual pastrami and went for the BBQ pulled pork, cole slaw, and beans. Good food, modest prices, and nice staff. By the time I got out of the restroom from washing my BBQ sauced hands and paid my tab, the gang was already gearing up. No group photo. Oh well.

Charlie, Roy, and Steve all said they needed to get home so they went straight on River Rd, while George and I continued on the planned route. Hwy 116 had its usual spate of slow cars, but overall was not as bad as it could have been. Then the long, boring, straight run into and across Santa Rosa to Calistoga Rd. A lack of traffic allowed me to use that fun uphill to play hooligan some more.

Then George and I tackled St Helena Rd/Spring Mtn Rd. Twelve miles of turn after tight turn, narrow road, lack of sight around most corners, no run off room. It is just near perfect. If only they would pave the Sonoma county side some day. The weather was getting warmer and warmer as we rode inland. The expected high of mid 80s was being felt, so we stopped in St Helena to get cool fluids and used the can.

Leaving there, we road over to Silverado Trail to get to Hwy 128 and a last blast of twisties. Silverado Trail had traffic, but it was almost close to the speed limit. Almost. Once on Hwy 128, we had almost free run. So I used it at a modest sparky pace. After one last stop at the Corners, we two rode home, hot, tired, and happy. Nice, nice day.