

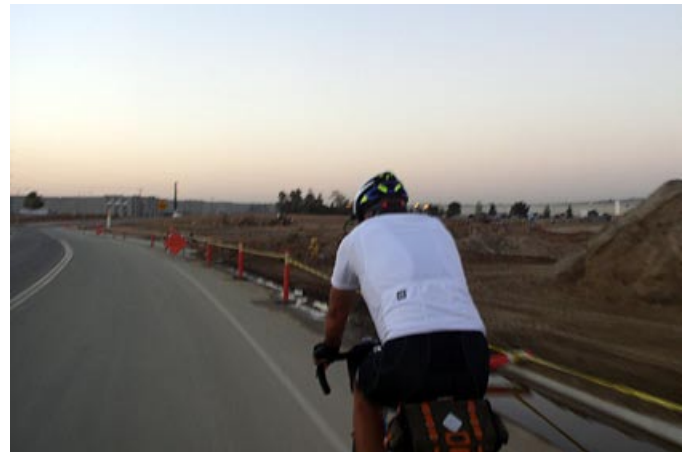
Rancho Cucamonga To Hemet 205K Brevet Pre-Ride Report

At first glance the route sheet didn't look too interesting. Lots of CROSS Freeways in there. Trying to keep an open mind, I hit the research and started to see some interesting terrain to cover. We were heading South through Fontana, crossing the Santa Ana River Eastward past several natural reserve areas before skirting the foothills on the way to Hemet. On the way back it was lots of agricultural areas as we swung past Lake Perris and finished up with some suburban riding. That's better!

Since there had been warm for the last few weeks, John Mestemacher and myself decided to get an early Saturday start. We arrived at the It's A Grind Coffee House in the darkness and started to prep up. It was easy to find coming from San Diego. On I-15 northbound, take the Route 66 Exit at Rancho Cucamonga, turn left and then turn right onto Day Creek Blvd. A few more blocks and it's on SW corner of Day Creek Blvd./Baseline Road intersection. First a sprinkler system came on and then as I was shaking a bottle, the lid came off and my rear wheel got an electrolyte bath. John was working on his lights. Finally we were glad to get out of there and on the road towards Hemet!



Start and Finish at the It's A Grind Coffee House at the corner of Day Creek Blvd. and Baseline Road. Henry's is next door too!



Mile 22: There was some well marked road construction in the area along Central Avenue and Sycamore Canyon Road.

With the ambient street lighting, our headlights did a minimal job of showing the road ahead. I hit something as we crossed a freeway and jammed my neck. There was one section of real rough roads as we turned south on Etiwanda Ave. through Fontana. We could feel the temperature drop as we dipped down into the Santa Ana River Valley at Mile 16. That felt real good! Dawn was breaking as we encountered some construction areas on Canyon Crest Dr. and Central Ave. As we crossed I-215 Freeway and turned onto the Service Road, we passed rows of big rigs parked for the night. I pulled down my helmet a little so the visor could block the sun in my face as we made the turn due East on Alessandro Blvd. and our first AM/PM Control Stop at Mile 28.



Mile 25: 215 Service Road is lined with tractor and trailer rigs that were parked for the night. Some trash on the roads here.



Mile 28: First Control Stop was at AM/PM on Alessandro Blvd. in Moreno Valley. We arrived as the sun was warming up!



Mile 31: Plowed fields surrounded this “hill island” in the middle of flat country. Lots of agricultural fields in this valley.



Mile 45: Church Of Scientology Golden Era “Base” dominates Gilman Springs Road outside of Hemet.

We collected our receipts, watered up and stretched out at the stop. We headed due east now on Alessandro Blvd. with good flat roads through Moreno Valley agriculture country. We came up on a road rider with his camelbak cruising along. He was a local rider, not very friendly and wearing all black! Probably on a short local ride. There is a little jog on Alessandro Blvd called Theodore St. More ag-land as we soon turn southward on Gilman Springs Rd. at Mile 37. Gilman is a major link from Hwy 60 to Hwy. 79 as it winds around and follows the foothills toward Hemet. There are several golf resorts along this road, one of which is run by the Church Of Scientology. Just past Hwy 79 near Mile 46 is the Scientology Golden Era Base. This is 500 acres at Gilman Hot Springs which has been the area of controversy with its mansions and rumour mill gossip about what happens behind those fences. The roads are good and after a few more turns Ramona Expressway takes you into Hemet on Florida Ave. At Mile 55, this is the far point of the route. Many possible refuel stops along the 6 mile road through Hemet, including the old Control Stop for the Hemet 400 Brevet!



Mile 61: Leaving Hemet, the roads were smooth and the air smelled of feedlots and brown sprinkler water in the sun.



Mile 70: Ramona Expressway northwest of Hemet is also lined with feedlots and sod farms. Bike lanes are good.

We were familiar with the roads around Hemet and traffic didn't seem too busy as we stopped off at a Burger King. After a break, the roads seemed smooth and we traveled northwest on Warren Road from Hemet through the agricultural flatlands and the “sweet” smell of feedlots. We had a slight quartering tailwind as we turned west onto Ramona Expressway at Mile 66 and found little traffic as we cruised past irrigated fields being watered with the unsightly brown water from the elevated sprinkler heads. We encountered a few minor climbs as we zagged around Lake Perris and started to feel the sting of the sun on our backs. There was some breeze across my face, so the temps seemed tolerable.



Mile 78: Ramona Expressway skirts around Perris Lake and offers a few low grade climbs of this route.



Mile 95: Great ride here on the long Victoria Avenue with wide smooth bike lanes and tree lined streets. Lite traffic here.

John picked up a thorn in his rear tire just before we crossed I-215 at Mile 80. Unlike me, he does really fast tire changes and I took a some pics. A few more short climbs and we were back onto Alessandro Blvd. as it skirted Sycamore Canyon Park on our right.

As we turned southwest onto Victoria Ave. at Mile 93, the ride became noticeably different. Victoria is a long tree lined avenue with various home styles mixed in with some small citrus groves. A few turns through newer residential areas brought us to the last Control Stop at Circle K on McKinley Street at Mile 104. We took an extended break here as John redid his rear tire and I chatted with two local dudes on mountain bikes. Neither had helmets and one bike had no brakes at all! Asked how he stopped, he said he just stuck out his feet!



Mile 104: John lectures the boys on the virtues of wearing a helmet and having brakes on your MTB at Control #2, Circle K.



Mile 108: After pushing and pulling this stalled mini retro Blazer out of the lot, this dude still wasn't able to get it started.

Traffic was a little heavier now as we rode through Corona, past Riverside Community College Campus, shadowed I-15 northward on Hammer Ave. and crossed the Santa Ana River/Rivertrails Park. Our last rest stop found us at a 7-11 on Haven Ave. We refueled here as John was stretching out and I was helping this guy push start his hapless mini Blazer. Of course it was uphill to get out of the parking lot and his feeble attempts to roll start ended in failure. Slippery cleats on asphalt don't make a good combo and I suggested to him to get a tow or push start! He finally conned someone to push start and he was on his way to Downey Chevrolet for a new truck. I sure believed that story.



Mile 110: Storm clouds build over the San Gariel Mountains as we ride north on Hammer Avenue. What a great name!



Mile 119: John rides north on Haven Avenue and passes a classy "Rancho Cucamonga" sign on his right.

The final leg took us straight past Ontario International Airport and under the approaching aircraft. You could almost see faces in the windows as Southwest Airlines flew just a few feet above us on its approach. I thought it memorable that we rode on Rochester Ave. and Jack Benny Dr. as the final streets in our route back to It's A Grind and the Finish at Mile 127.

Rancho Cucamonga is located in the foothills of the south face of the San Gabriel Mountain range, near Cucamonga Peak and Mount Baldy. It is made up of the three communities of Cucamonga, Etiwanda and Alta Loma. The San Bernardino Mountains lie to the east. During the ride, I often thought there has to be some great routes up through those mountains.

Cucamonga was formerly home to old citrus groves and grape vineyards. The reason many homes still have orange and lemon trees on their property and also is the reason why grape vineyards can still be seen in random parts of the city. Many canyons in the area are favorites among hikers, although dangerous due to the rough terrain, possible flooding and wildlife. Rancho Cucamonga was affected by the October 2003 Grand Prix fire, which ripped across the mountains above for six days destroying 13 homes and personal property.

I had several reservations about this route in looking at the cue sheet and maps. But instead, I found the route to be interesting in that it combined a city start with a loop out to the agricultural areas very well. That, mixed in with 3300' of climbing, nice weather and a few unexpected glitches made it a memorable ride. I found the route sheet might need a little tweaking but overall the mileage and directions were accurate enough to use your computer for navigation. I also felt the Control Stops should have been spaced better with one in the Hemet area, the most distant point on the ride. This route had a nice aura about it and included different areas while still maintaining the suburban-rural connection.

I hope this report helps you with your ride and makes it safer and more enjoyable.

Have a good ride,
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Mile 125: One of the final turns onto Rochester Ave. shows the San Gabriel Mountains nestled up to Rancho Cucamonga.