

Boulevard and Kitchen Creek Loops

By Rob Verfurth (Pictured below)

December 6, 2008

Participants: Dave Voris, Mike Hodges, Rick Bienias, Jim Broder, Dave Guidotti and Rob Verfurth

Start/Finish: Park at Kitchen Creek Road and Old Highway 80, just south of I-8



Weather: Sunny and cool, about 50 degrees with strong winds

Distance and Elevation: 55 miles, about 6,000 feet. Boulevard Loop—30 miles and 2,000 feet of elevation. Kitchen Creek Loop—25 miles with 4,000 of elevation.

Route: Boulevard Loop--Old Highway 80 east to Highway 94 and up La Posta Road back to Old Highway 80 to car. Kitchen Creek Loop—up Kitchen Creek to Sunrise Highway and down Old Highway 80 back to car.

Comments: We all met at Dave Voris's house on a cold morning at 7 am, piling into two cars for the drive to Kitchen Creek. The drive is about an hour east of San Diego along I-8 where we parked at the Rangers Station at the bottom of Kitchen Creek Road.

We started the Boulevard Loop by going east along Old Highway 80 with winds in our face for about 4 miles on a slight but steady climb. The shoulder of the road was a bit dicey so we hugged the white line in a pace line most of the climb where fortunately there was little road traffic. We pedaled past Live Oak Spring and hit the descent on Highway 94 just west of Manzanita. This was a recently repaved/tarred road that was wickedly fast with plenty of tight curves. We descended together for 7 miles until we took the sharp turn to the right on La Posta Road and over the train tracks.

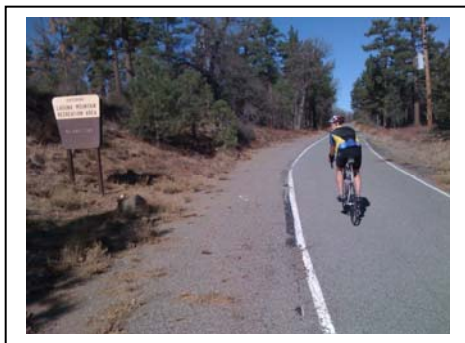
The climb up La Posta was superb. The road traffic was non-existent with only a handful of Border Patrol trucks roaring past. The climb was steady with a few steep pitches of 10% grade. We split into 2 groups on the climb and regrouped back where La Posta hit Old Highway 80 again. We did a quick return to the cars having completed 30 miles and in need of some more water. The day was sunny and winds died down a bit so we peeled off a layer of clothes for our ascent up Kitchen Creek.

The Kitchen Creek Loop is a steady climb on an isolated road up a beautiful canyon in the Laguna Mountains. We started again from the cars and climbed 12 miles with about 2,800 feet of elevation to the Sunrise Highway. The climb went on forever but was worth every pedal stroke. We all started together and took the below photo at the gate at the 4 mile mark. The road narrows from there up to the second gate at the 9 mile mark. There

are no cars on this section and we only saw a handful the entire ascent. Dave, Rick and Guido quickly took off after the first gate while Jim and Mike took the pace a bit slower due to back problems Jim was facing. I started with the lead boys and gradually fell back, enjoying the solitude and beauty of the climb. The road is a bit rough with some gravel spots and a few larger rocks just covered over with asphalt, making a fast descent a dangerously impossible ride. The narrow road snaked up the valley where the views on both sides were picturesque. As we rode in our small group, a handful of Marine helicopters flew in formation over the mountains from the east and passed overhead. I felt great as we hit the pines where I mistakenly thought the climb was ending. The road widened a bit but kept climbing another 2 miles to Sunrise Highway. We all regrouped at the top and decided to descend Sunrise instead of going north to the fire station for more water. We were at 5,820 feet in the sun but in cool temperatures.

The descent down Sunrise Highway was fast and fun with few cars on the road. I got blown off the back and fell behind the boys but they waited for me at the bottom after crossing I-8. We rode back 5 miles down Old Highway 80 towards Kitchen Creek to complete the 25 mile loop.

We returned to the car, changed clothes and drove back home with a stop at Rubio's in Scripps Ranch for a late lunch. We needed the food replenishment and Jim needed a beer.



Rob Verfurth