

Santa Cruz Randonneurs

HMB CENTURY

A Permanent Populaire Brevet of 167 kms/104 miles

Minimum Time Allowance: 5 hours, 34 minutes

Maximum Time Allowance: 11 hours, 8 minutes

Randonneurs USA Permanent Route #XX

Unlike many of the Santa Cruz Randonneurs' other events, this brevet is a "permanent populaire". Being a "permanent" means it is a self-conducted randonneuring ride with a date and starting time of the rider's choice, and "populaire" means it is less than 200 kilometers in length. This permanent populaire is sanctioned by Randonneurs USA (RUSA), and can count toward their Distance Awards once per year for a rider's kilometer total. Awards aside, the HMB Century is an enjoyable ride with fine scenery throughout, and if you are building up to a 200k event, it is excellent training too. You can ride alone or with other participants, but only RUSA members can sign up for a permanent.

Route Description: This ride travels north from Santa Cruz to Half Moon Bay (HMB) along the beautiful Pacific Ocean shoreline. The route also detours into charming coastal valleys that lie inland from the shoreline. There are no extended climbs but there are lots of little- and medium-length hills. Most have gradual gradients but a few steep pitches will be encountered too—and it could be while riding into a headwind. The average rider will be happy he or she brought a triple crankset "just in case". Stronger riders will do fine with a 39 x 27 low gear. Overall, this would not be considered a terribly difficult ride (unless the weather is awful.) In any case, most participants will be tired by the time they get back to Santa Cruz—but hopefully there will be a helpful tailwind on the return leg.

This is not a complicated route but if you want to see it on a map, a very good one is the Krebs Cycle Products "South San Francisco Bay & Monterey Bay Areas" bicycle touring map, 2003 edition. They are available in most local bike shops or on-line (check REI). The AAA motoring organization also makes good regional maps for its members; their detail is useful for cycling on back roads. The route will be found in good detail on their San Francisco Bay map (except for the first and final few miles in and out of Santa Cruz; but as this is a route section with no turns, it shouldn't be a problem.)

Special Route Note: In the space of a mile or so, there are *three* Verde road junctions with the coast highway. (Verde road itself runs parallel to Highway 1; these turns are short connectors between the two roads.) Take the second Verde road turn at mile 42.1. The other two will eventually get you to the Higinis-Purisima Wilderness Preserve, but they will involve more climbing, especially the first one you encounter coming from Santa Cruz. Take the second Verde Road turn; turn right, then immediately go left (north).

Services: To buy food and drink along the route, you'll find stores and cafés in Santa Cruz (mile 0) Davenport (mile 10), Gazos Creek (mile 25), Half Moon Bay, (mile 53), Pescadero (mile 71), Gazos Creek (mile 77), and Davenport (mile 94). Most are open until about 6 or 7 PM, a few until 8 or 9 PM. There are also many state beaches along the route with public toilets that are easily accessible during the brevet.

Start/Finish Location: This brevet begins and ends at the corner of Mission & Miramar streets in western Santa Cruz. (Mission Street becomes the Pacific Coast Highway as you leave Santa Cruz.) There is a Valero mini-mart at the start/finish. You'll need receipts (or some other proof of passage from the store, such as their store stamp used on checks) from the start and the finish; the time imprint on each receipt is your proof of passage or "control". If a group of riders is doing the ride together, one receipt per checkpoint for the group is fine so long as each person's last name is on the back. If the group splits up, then individuals need to get their own receipt(s) after the split.

Parking & Eats: If you drive to the start, there is parking along Miramar Street near Mission. For either before or after the ride, a place with good food and coffee is Kelly's French Bakery. It is just off Swift Street, at 402 Ignalls Street, about a half-mile northwest from the start/finish. Another good place to eat is closer; Beckman's Bakery will be found at 2341 Mission Street, about 2 blocks from the start/finish. They are both "bike friendly" businesses with an informal ambiance and a good selection of food and drink to get you going before your ride. Or, in the nearby Safeway shopping center, you'll find Westside Coffee; they open earliest and have simple foods for breakfast. In addition, there are many other eating places along Mission Street for after the ride. In any location, you'll want to lock your bike.

Recommended Start Times: This brevet can be ridden any time of the year. Summer temperatures won't be too hot and winter rarely sees freezing temperatures. Cold rain can be a serious factor from December through March, so keep an eye on the weather forecasts. Come loaded for bear, dress appropriately, and bring fenders if you want to survive. During summer, some regional riders have been surprised how cool coastal temperatures can be while inland areas are roasting with triple digit temperatures—bring layers just in case. Probably the best months for this ride are in spring and fall; summer can be foggy and usually has more tourist traffic, while winter can be unduly cold and rainy. Remember, though, once you register you **must** use that start time and date. Per RUSA regulations, there is no entry refunds or "make-ups" for non-starts caused by poor weather, bad luck, illness, etc.

The best time of day to start the ride is probably between 5 AM and 8 AM. Most days from March through October will have a strong northwest wind along the coast, and it usually starts blowing hard by mid-morning. If you can get some distance north before then you'll enjoy the outbound ride more than if you battled headwinds all the way from Santa Cruz. Also, if you start this ride late in the day, you might find some stores are closed by the time you get there. If you are doing this ride in winter the short days will likely require you to ride for a time in the dark; please be sure you are properly equipped for nocturnal cycling, per RUSA regulations. Its "Rules For Riders" will be found at: www.rusa.org

In terms of traffic, weekends are probably best, and Sunday is usually a little quieter than Saturday. Weekdays are good too since most folks are at work, but there is a high-speed morning commute going north from Santa Cruz from about 6 AM to 8 AM that will be annoying during the beginning of your ride. (Curiously, the afternoon doesn't see a similar concentration of traffic; perhaps these drivers return at widely different times?) In any case, there is a good shoulder on the coast highway so it can be ridden with relative safety compared to some other popular cycling roads in the greater Bay Area. A few of the inland roads on this ride don't always have as much, if any shoulder but they carry hardly any traffic so that isn't a problem. (On the coast, there are a handful of short bridges with no shoulder; cross them only after taking a look behind you.)

This brevet can be done as a night ride, and the roads will have much less traffic than encountered during daylight. The strong coastal winds usually drop by 9 PM too. However, you'll need to carry food and water for the entire distance to Half Moon Bay. Also remember that a full moon will make it much more enjoyable (and safer); check the calendar carefully before you send in your entry for a night ride. (In summer, foggy nights are not uncommon, so keep that in mind too.) If riding before sun-up or after sundown, be sure you follow RUSA's regulations for nighttime cycling. Anyone failing to do so will be disqualified.

Checkpoint Procedures: The first control is at the 24-hour Valero mini-mart in Santa Cruz at Mission & Miramar Streets. Get proof of passage a few minutes before the start time and begin your ride at the time listed on your brevet card. (If you are late, the clock is ticking from the official start time you signed up for, not the time you actually left. Being late to the start is to be avoided.) Whether on time or late, *do not depart without getting your proof of passage.*

The second control is an Information Control at the parking lot of the Higgins-Purisima Wilderness Preserve at mile 47. Your brevet card will ask you a question to be answered from information you see at the parking lot there. Be sure to bring a pen to write the answer to question upon your brevet card, along with the time. Be sure and let us know if you are color blind; we'll make an alternate question for you if so.

The third control comes soon after in Half Moon Bay, at the junction of Kelly Street and Highway 1. You can go to either the More-For-Less mini-mart or the Tres Amigos Taqueria (*recommended!*) and get proof of passage. Be sure to write your time in your brevet card too.

(If you do this as a night ride, you will need to go a little farther north into Half Moon Bay to find some 24-hour business to control at. Or, you can use a ATM machine receipt—just cross out any personal financial info before you turn it in at ride's end. Mainly, look for services at the junction of Main Street and Hwy 92; there are a couple of convenience stores that are usually open all night; they are about one-half mile north of the normal HMB control on Kelly Street & Hwy 1.)

The fourth control is in the little town of Pescadero; you can choose from several grocery stores or Duarte's Tavern to find store receipts. If you are doing this as a night ride most stores will be closed; you

can mail a postcard from Pescadero, or use the ATM strategy. (The mini-mart is open to about 9 PM and Duarte goes until midnight or so if you want to go into the bar.)

The fifth and final control is back in Santa Cruz at the Valero mini-mart where you started. Get proof of passage and write your time upon your brevet card. Also be sure to sign the back of the card on the line for the rider.

Be aware that there may also be one or more secret controls during this brevet, so stay on the route. If you should get lost or go looking for food, backtrack to where you got off-course. Otherwise, you might miss a secret control. Failure to sign in at a secret control means disqualification from the brevet. If there are any secret controls, they will be in plain sight and impossible to miss. In your application, be sure to specify the start time and date you want. You must begin your ride at that time, and any secret control opening and closing times will be based upon the start time you select.

During your ride, all the normal rules of randonneuring apply. Go to www.rusa.org to learn more. You should also review the various other pages of the SCR web site to familiarize yourself with randonneuring if this type of cycling is new to you.

The All-Important Control Opening and Closing Times:

Higgins-Purisima Preserve: Opens 2h32m after the start/closes 5h02m after the start.

Half Moon Bay: Opens 2h50m after the start/closes 5h40m after the start.

Pescadero: Opens 3h48m after the start/closes 7h36m after the start.

Finish: Opens 5h34m after the start/closes 11h8m after the start.

If you get to a control early, you must wait patiently until it is open. If you get there after it is closed, the ride is, unfortunately, over for you this time around.

When You're Are Done: After the permanent is completed, return your brevet card and receipts to the ride organizer. The easiest way is to just ride over to 226 West Avenue (behind the Valero) as soon as you're finished and put them in a baggie and put them under door mat on the front porch. Or, mail them if you like: Santa Cruz Randonneurs, 226 West Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060. For your results to be processed they must be received within 10 days of the finish, per RUSA regulations.

In either case, be sure and sign the correct space on the back of the brevet card for the rider's signature before your turn it in at ride's end. We'll figure out the total time, all you need is your name on the back.

Safety Note: Even if you are confident that you'll finish this ride well before darkness arrives, smart riders will take reflective ankle bands and a bright headlamp & taillight nonetheless. You might encounter patches of dense coastal fog at any time of day throughout the year; being more visible to motorists is essential for your safety.

Also, if you must abandon the ride or don't make a control in time, please call or e-mail when you get home. The same goes if you have to take a DNS (did not start) for whatever reason. There are RUSA insurance matters we will need to attend to.

Good luck and good riding! ☺

Bill & Lois