



THE CENTRAL COAST TOUR

JUNE 1-9, 2013

**Big Sur to the Pinnacles...and back
Seven stages, plus prologue • 400-490 miles**

The Central Coast Tour is an exploration of both the well-known Big Sur coastline and the little-known inland hills and valleys behind the coast. The trip begins and ends in Monterey (or in nearby Carmel Valley Village with the aid of an easy van shuttle). It starts in grand fashion with a tour around the world-famous Monterey Peninsula's 17-Mile Drive before heading south along the rugged cliffs of Big Sur.

After two days of cliff hugging and ocean viewing (and an optional side trip to Hearst Castle), the route heads inland to visit some of California's best kept secrets: the winding, rolling country roads of San Luis Obispo and San Benito Counties, with overnights at Santa Margarita Lake, Paso Robles, and the old Mission San Antonio de Padua. If your only exposure to this area has been a run up Hwy 101 in your car, you will be amazed at the wealth of obscure backroads that wind around the rugged ridges and wooded canyons of this region...one of the best cycling venues anywhere.

After a quick spin across "America's Salad Bowl"—the vegetable farms of the Salinas River Valley—the route heads north and east up into the beautiful Pinnacles National Monument. After an overnight at East Pinnacles, we begin the last day of the tour with a hike through the towering rock spires (and canyons and caves) of this geological fantasyland. Done as drawn up, it's a rare opportunity to go in the east side of this roadless wilderness and come out the west side... something that can't be done in a car. We end the tour cycling down out of the mountains and back toward Monterey via Arroyo Seco, Cahoon Summit (high point of the tour), and finally the nearly perfect cycling road down the tree-shaded, creek-hopping length of Carmel Valley.

The easier route options each day add up to a fairly moderate tour package, but the longer, hillier options present some serious challenges for stronger riders. Overall, it's a tour accessible to most moderate riders. The best time to visit this region is in the Spring—May or early June—when the wildflowers are blooming and the tourist traffic on the coast is lighter, and when it's not yet too hot in the interior. That's when we plan to be here.

This was one of the first club tours we organized, back in 1997. It was an excellent tour then and we hope this edition will be even better. Over the years since the first tour, we have learned a bit more about the region and have slightly revised a few stages to make use of better roads than we employed before.



Day 0: Arrive at start in Monterey; prologue ride

When we did our first club tour of this region in 1997, about half the participants used the free afternoon (after the drive to Monterey) to visit the famed Monterey Bay Aquarium on Cannery Row. Group rates can be arranged, which will save you a few bucks. But by now, we figure most of you have had a chance to visit the aquarium, if that sort of thing interests you.

So instead, this time around, we have laid out a prologue ride for those who want to get an early start on their cycle-touring. It explores downtown, historic Monterey and Cannery Row, making use of the excellent Monterey Bay bike trail that wends its way along the shore. It then wraps around the coastline in the charming town of Pacific Grove, with its purple iceplant “lawns” (above). Finally, it climbs from the coast, up and over the ridge of the Del Monte Forest, back to our wooded camp. The loop is 12 miles around and packs a great deal of scenery and cycling fun into those miles.

Day 1: Monterey to Lime Kiln State Park

70 or 61 miles, 4500' up, 4800' down

Our campground sits nearly flush up against an area known as the Del Monte Forest, a beautiful preserve given over to vast tracts of pine forest, exclusive country clubs, and posh homes.

We are going to leave camp and head in a mildly uphill direction to a sneaky back-door entrance

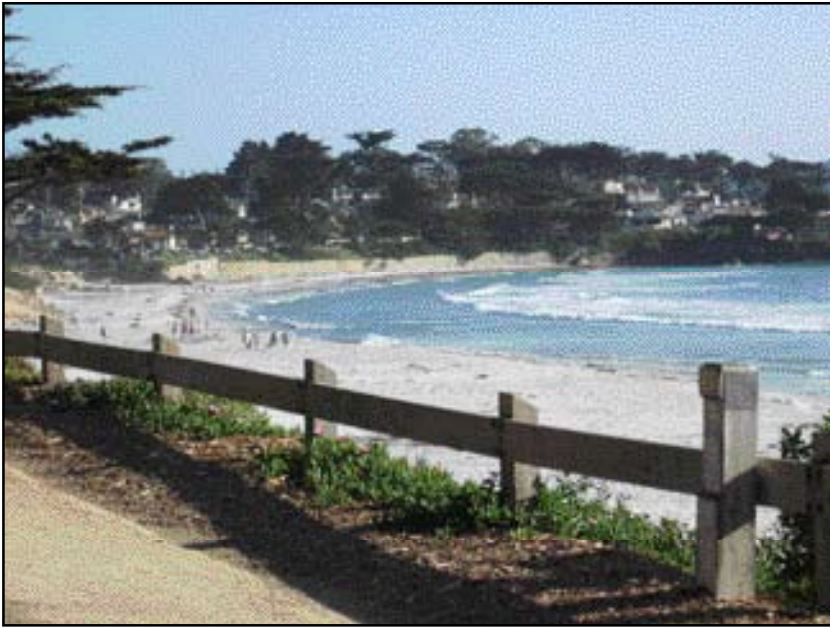
to the Del Monte Forest. It's not official, it's not paved, and it's probably not approved by the gated community's security force, but cyclists and walkers use it all the time.

Those same security forces stipulate that cyclists must ride single-file within the forest and never in groups of more than three, and that they must stay on the main road. However, no one seems to pay much attention to their rules. (I've seen double pacelines of over 20 riders here.) As to straying off the main road onto some of the smaller lanes, it won't be an issue for us, because we're quite content to stay right on the appointed path, once we get to it. From our back-door entrance down to the point where we pick up the main road can be a bit confusing, so I suggest we begin the day all together until we're down to the main road.

You will note that there is a shorter option offered today, which skips this first loop around the Monterey Peninsula. We are not really recommending it, as we feel the full loop is one of the highlights of the tour. However, the shortcut is obvious and handy—we use it at the end of the tour on our way back—so it would be silly not to at least point it out.

The full route follows the best parts of the famous 17-mile Drive (below) and it's easy to see why it's so famous. The Monterey Peninsula embraces some of the most beautiful beaches and rocky headlands anywhere, and it has all been preserved and perhaps even enhanced by the careful deployment of stately, zillion-dollar estates and several of the world's most legendary golf courses. This is a Republican's idea of a wilderness experience, with all the best scenery and ambience that money can buy and, happily





for cyclists, some of the smoothest, silkiest roads that money can buy as well. This is not a section through which to hammer. There are so many beautiful sights to see, from white sand coves, to dappled woods, to herds of deer, to elegant homes, to emerald green golf courses, that to hurry past it all would be a terrible waste. Take your time here. You can hammer down the coast later.

At about 13 miles, we pop out the southern gate of the Del Monte Forest and into the equally famous village of Carmel. This relentlessly quaint little town—filled with cute cottages and chic shops—has a love-hate relationship with the hordes of tourists who come to gawk at its precious Hansel-and-Gretel architecture (lower photos). I guess you'd have to say they're victims of their own success, in that they've created and sustained such a charming, lovely, and lovable town for themselves that now the rest of the world wants to come and see it. Year after year, the city elders (including former Mayor Clint Eastwood) try to balance their residents' desire for privacy and preservation with the desire of their merchants to bleed a healthy profit out of their many visitors.



So far, they seem to have done a fairly decent job of keeping things in balance, at least from the point of view of a cycle-tourist, just passing through. And although you're just passing through, there's no law that says you have to hurry...take your time and wander off-course to explore the shops and the cozy little lanes. If you want to take a break and meet up with a sag wagon, the gorgeous white-sand beach (top photo) at the foot of Carmel Way is a good spot for it. Hey, you morning coffee drinkers: here's your first shot at a restroom! Perhaps your sag driver didn't want to pay the steep toll to do the 17-mile Drive? If so, this is the first spot where you can reconnect. (Autos pay a hefty toll to enter the Del Monte Forest, but bikes are free, even if they come in through one of the toll gates and not via a sneaky backdoor trail.)



After taking a break, we head south along the Carmel beachfront as far as it goes and then wind back inland along neighborhood streets, passing—and perhaps visiting—Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Rio Carmelo, one of the earliest of the California missions. (Unless you're a die-hard mission junky and can't bear to pass one by, I suggest you save your mission touring energy for another one that we'll see later in the tour...Mission San Antonio, where we will be spending an overnight.)

Just beyond the mission, at mile 16.5, we finally hit Hwy 1, heading south. Hwy 1 south of Carmel

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means Big Sur, that mythic reach of rugged coast beloved of travel writers, nature photographers, poets, artists, and tourists... motorized tourists, unfortunately. Actually, in spite of acknowledging that there is a fairly heavy load of traffic on this stretch of road, I have to say that I've never really felt overwhelmed or harassed by cars while riding here. It's a pleasant cycling environment.

The highway along Big Sur follows the craggy contours of the coastline, dipping and bending back into creek-cut canyons, then struggling up and over the next rocky headland, and then the one after that. The road is seldom, if ever, level. Along the way, we cross over Bixby Creek Bridge (above)—one of the most photographed spans in the world—and then climb to the windy hilltop of Hurricane Point. Near the mouth of the Big Sur River, the road leaves the coast for a time and follows the stream inland to the town of Big Sur at about mile 40.

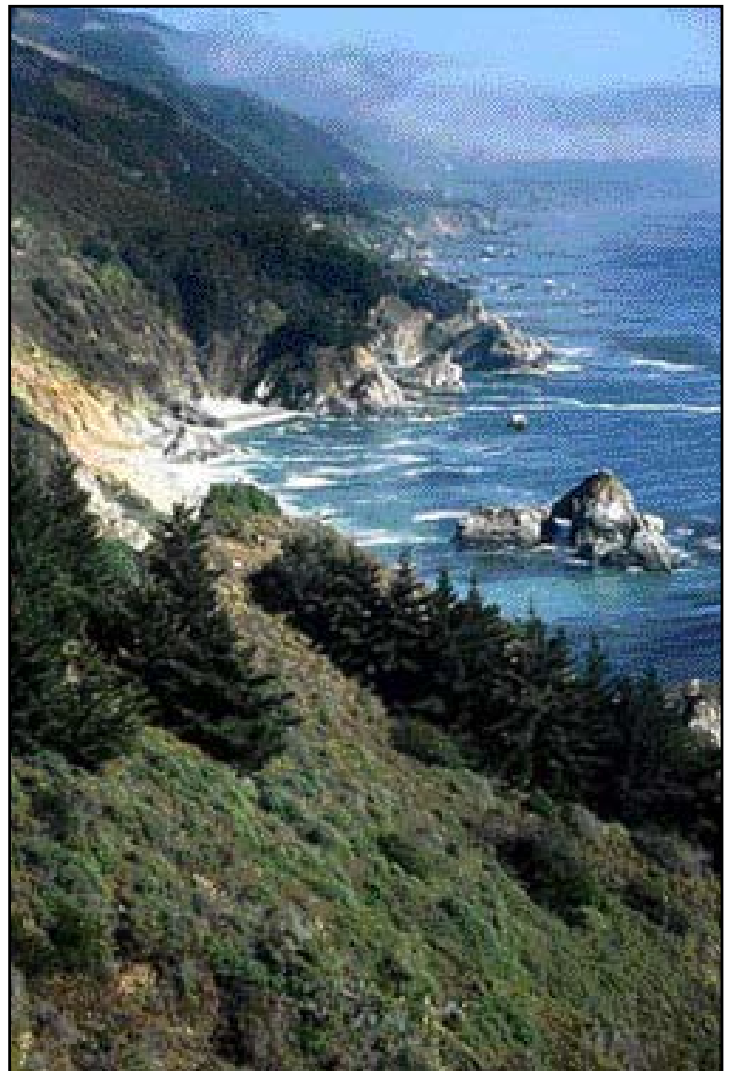
After the town, we begin the biggest climb of the day...up and out of the canyon by the creek and over the next ridge to the south. It's an ascent of about 900' in three or four miles. Not brutal, but enough to wake you up. Once over the top, we have a fun descent, but you might want to break it off after less than a mile for a stop at Nepenthe. This is a well-known cafe hanging off the cliff face and commanding a panoramic view of everything this side of Hawaii. There are several ways to part with rather large chunks of money at this ostensibly bohemian enclave, but sitting on the terrace and soaking up the view are absolutely free. Nepenthe seems—to me anyway—to mark the end of the road for Monterey-based tourists having a day trip in Big Sur. From here on, the traffic load tapers off to mainly the folks who've made the commitment to drive all the way through to the south, and there really aren't that many who choose to do so. The road is too curvy.

We'll continue to ride up over headlands or down into can-

yons all the way to the end of the stage, always with the ocean on the right... sometimes with the surf crashing right next to the road—at the bottoms of the hills—and sometimes, after a climb, far below. If we're lucky, there won't be any fog, and we'll be able to see down into one turquoise blue cove after another. And if we're really lucky, we'll have a brisk tailwind blowing us along. I don't want to oversell this stretch of coastline. It's been written about and fawned over so much that I'm reluctant to add any more frothy prose to the pile. But I will note that this road was designated an American Heritage Highway in 1997—along with only the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Natchez Trace—mean-

ing it has been recognized as a significant national treasure and is protected in its current state forever. That pretty well says it all.

Lime Kiln State Park has only recently become a part of the state park system. Formerly it was a private camp, and it





The ride is a reprise of yesterday's superb Big Sur scenery, with the same ups and downs into and out of canyons and up and over rugged headlands (below). There are several climbs that will get your heart pounding and a few descents that will do the same. At mile 23, Ragged Point makes a perfect regrouping waystation. There is a good shop for buying munchies, clean restrooms, and a pleasant little walk out along the cliff with knockout views down to the ocean, 500' below.

Once past Ragged Point, the cliffs of Big Sur give way to rolling, open grasslands that shelf off down to a rocky shore. Sometimes the road is right near the beach and sometimes it wanders inland for awhile. At one point, you ride right past a beach that is home to a colony of sea elephants... quite an impressive sight, and worth a stop.

has that slightly hodgepodge look of a private camp that just grew over time, without a master plan. The individual camp sites are of every sort and size and you don't know what you're going to get when you make your reservations because, although we may have site reservations, the local ranger chooses which sites we get. However, the overall camp is very nice, with access to a sandy beach at the bottom of the park, and trails leading up into the forest at the top. In particular, one small trail leads to a beautiful waterfall dropping off a 100' cliff and splashing into a pretty, mossy grotto (photo in gallery at back). It's a little tricky to get there, but finding the falls is well worth the effort it takes. Downstream, the same creek splashes through a lovely canyon (above) and eventually meanders right through the center of camp. Many of the campsites are right along its banks. Lime Kiln was on the list of state parks slated for the chopping block, but for the time being it is still open.

At mile 38, there is a right-turn detour off Hwy 1 that leads to a funky old market called the Sebastian Store. If you miss this turn, you haven't missed much, but it does have some small, historical interest. At the same site, you can see an old, one-room school house and some interesting, mission-style buildings that are part of the Hearst estate's old beachfront development. Off in the distance, up the mountain, you get your first glimpse of the distant Castle, high on the ridge.

If you've never visited Hearst Castle, you ought to do so. Unless you're seriously offended by the life-styles of the rich and famous, it's worth the time and the price of admission. It's so grandiose and out-of-scale, it's difficult to remember that it was once someone's private home and not a museum. An edifice complex, if ever there was one.

For those who want to do the tour, our plan will probably

Day 2: Lime Kiln to San Simeon State Park

43 miles, 2500' up, 2500' down
Bonus miles: 13-mile out-&-back, 900'

This is the shortest stage on this tour, and there is one reason why: Hearst Castle. The destination campground at San Simeon is just a blink away from the Hearst Castle Visitors' Center, where the shuttle buses depart for the journey to that famous castle in the sky. The mileage has been left short in order to allow people an opportunity to spend the afternoon taking the tour. It's best to make reservations in advance for the tour, especially for a group with a limited time window. We'll provide more information on that closer to the tour.





be to ride straight to camp, get cleaned up, and shuttle back to the visitor's center in our sags. Or you could ride back from camp in clothes more suitable for touring castles. Camp is six miles south of the visitor center.

Those not wishing to do the tour can relax at camp or stroll along the sandy beach—accessible from camp. Or they can pad their miles with an out-&-back on San Simeon Creek Road (above), a 13-mile round trip right out of camp and heading inland. It starts out relatively flat near camp but becomes increasingly steep as it climbs into the hills (over 10% near the top). It's a very pleasant road—at least until it gets steep—and you can always turn around whenever the going gets tougher than you want it to.

San Simeon State Park is a vast, master-planned camping factory. Everyone gets just this much space and every space is just like everyone else's, all laid out on a lawn next to the creek, with a smattering of little trees here and there to break up the football-field flatness of the site. A fast stretch of Hwy 1 runs just along the edge of the camp, and while it may not be a major interstate, the big rigs that do go by are hard to ignore. It can be windy, and when we camped there in late June (on our previous Central Coast Tour), it was quite chilly after sundown. The showers are pay.

Having said all that, let me add that we had a great time here on that first tour! We bundled up in sweatshirts and flannels and trooped down to the beach to watch the sunset. Then we all brought armloads of driftwood back to our camp and sat around a campfire swapping yarns and being rowdy far into the night.

Day 3: San Simeon State Park to Santa Margarita Lake

67 miles, 5000' up, 4000' down

57 miles, 3000' up, 2000' down

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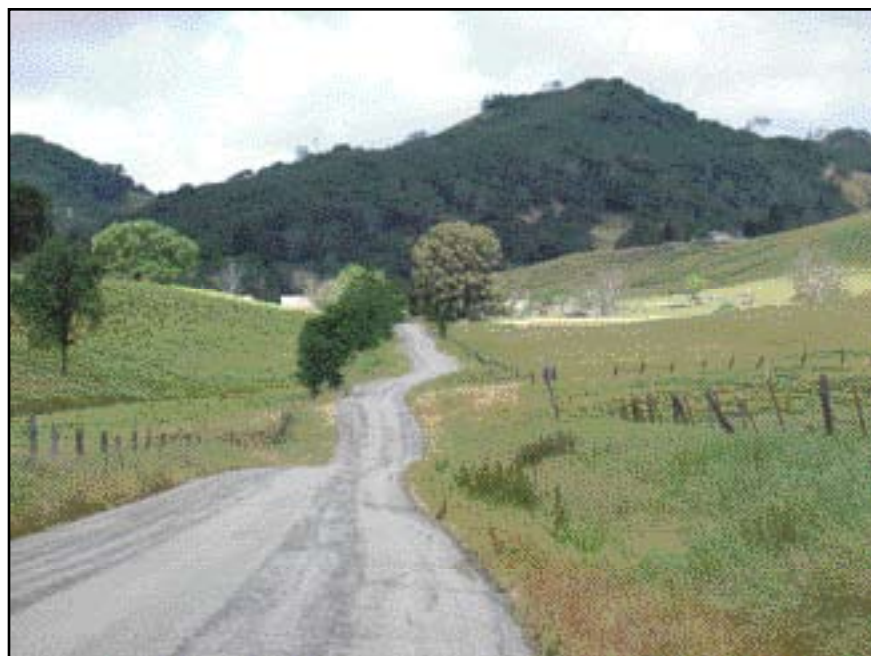
Regarding the long and short options today, the elevation gain numbers tell more of the story here than the extra miles. Riders on the longer, hillier route tackle one seriously steep climb—Santa Rosa Creek Road—and are rewarded with some of the best downhill on the tour. It's hard to overstate how much fun this section is...but also how hard.

Meanwhile, the shorter route will continue down Hwy 1, which begins to look suspiciously like a freeway as it approaches Morro Bay. To avoid as much of this busy road as possible, the route veers off on a series of bypasses through the beach towns snuggled in between the highway and the ocean. This confusing section is a case where the simplicity of the route has been sacrificed in the interest of escaping from traffic.

Both routes leave camp together and both leave Hwy 1 on the Moonstone Beach Scenic Bypass, the first of several similar detours. At the end of the bypass, both routes cross the highway and head into the little town of Cambria (pronounced "CAM-bree-ah," as in Camelot). Cambria is a town with serious aspirations as someplace a little bit nicer and more charming than the average town. There is a distinct anglophile ambience here, with even a traditional bowling green in the center of town and numerous shops and lodges sporting Shakespearean or Dickensian monikers. There's probably a good reason for this high-tea-wannabe packaging, but I don't know what it is. I guess I was too intent on what lay ahead—on the great road just south of town—to stop and enquire.

What lies ahead is Santa Rosa Creek Road, a classic bike adventure. (This is where the two routes diverge.) It begins with a nearly level run up a pretty valley, but soon begins to tilt up (and down) in a series of rolling stairsteps alongside its namesake creek. The further you go, the more pinched the valley becomes, until the road is traveling up a narrow canyon, right on top of the rocky creek, shaded by glades of sycamores and other leafy trees (below). It's a beautiful sec-





There is one uphill in all that downhill, near Whale Rock Reservoir.

The short-course riders will not have expended nearly as much energy, nor, I suspect, will they have had anywhere near as much fun, on their run down Hwy 1. Actually, this lowland route is quite pleasant, and no one on our tour who chose this option complained about feeling deprived. (We also did this section on our Mid-State Tour in 2007, and we caught a killer tailwind that blew us along at a great rate.) The first 15 miles are along the wide shoulder of the main road, with a long, gradual climb south of Cambria and then a longer, even more gradual downgrade on the other side. All of this is inland, away from the sea, but near the beach town of Cayucos, the water reappears, and at about the same time, the highway begins to take on that freeway feel.

tion, but it finally ends, as the road twists about and rears up on its hind legs, searching for a way up and out of the canyon. This begins one of the toughest ascents on this or any other tour. The valley floor, at mile 8, is at about 100', and the summit, at mile 18, is at 1860'. Over 1700' in ten miles doesn't seem that brutal, but it actually works out to more like 500' in the first eight miles and 1200' in the last two. Those two miles are serious work, with pitches approaching 20%, mercifully broken up by little "flats" of only 5% or so, where one can catch a breath or two.

Once over the top—after a last glance back at the beautiful valley and the switchbacking climb (below)—we get to enjoy the Newtonian payback: what goes up, must come down...and in this case, it applies to the first of several wild descents into peaceful, empty little valleys dotted with old oaks (above). After the run-out at the bottom of the first hill, we cross Hwy 46 and pick up Old Creek Road. We climb very briefly and then descend for most of the next ten miles on some of the most entertaining downhill stretches around...a slithering, twisting snake of a road that takes you as fast as you dare to go almost all the way back to Hwy 1, where the long route rejoins the short.

So we bail out onto the streets of Cayucos and wander along a series of residential lanes that stay as close to the beach as we can manage. The general run of architecture in these seaside neighborhoods seems to be postwar ticky-tacky, but with a windblown, driftwoody feel that softens and mellows the overall effect. And of course, having the surf crashing nearby covers a multitude of little aesthetic sins, so that the ride remains enjoyable and never boring.

At mile 21, the two routes rejoin, and now we all do one more residential detour through the outskirts of north Morro Bay before everyone leaves town, Hwy 1, and the ocean behind and heads east into the mountains on Hwy





shade on the front porch of the general store. The friendly folks at the store will even let cyclists refill their water bottles, and not just with water, but with ice from their soda machine.

After we've rehydrated and recovered, we set off on the final run to Santa Margarita Lake...mostly level, but with a few small climbs. The surrounding grassy meadows begin to show outcroppings of stone monoliths that become more prevalent and more impressive as we



near the lake, culminating in some really outstanding crags that loom over the southwest shore of the lake (below)...home to eagle, osprey, bobcat, puma, and more...a wild, beautiful place.

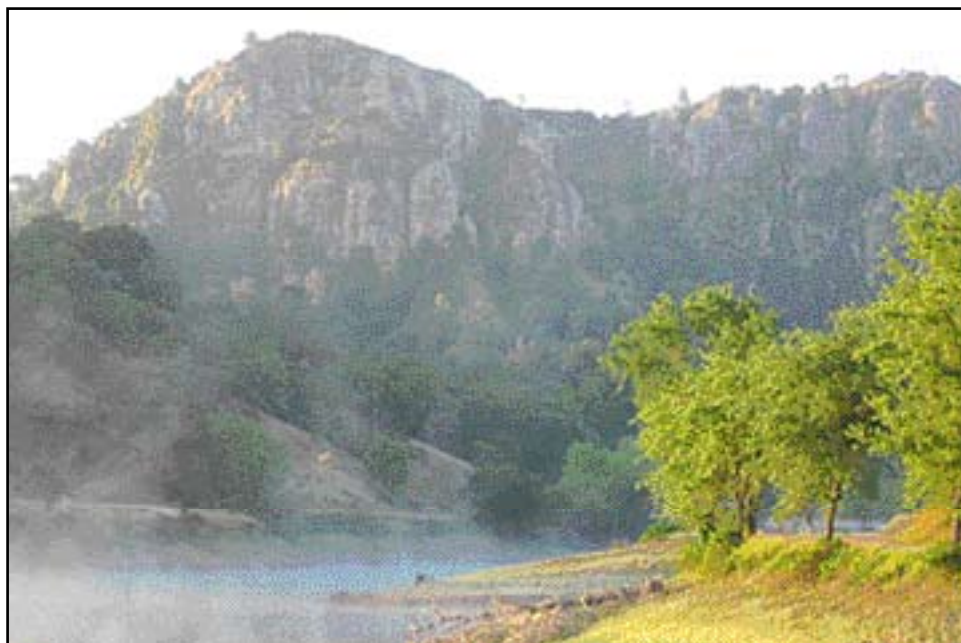
Santa Margarita Lake is actually a reservoir, but does a better-than-average job of disguising that fact and looking like a natural lake. The conventional campsites, including an RV-oriented group site, aren't all that great for tenters, but we have made special arrangements with the local rangers to stay in a beautiful area known as White Oak that's off by itself, halfway around the lake from all the other campsites. It's prettier than the other camps, with lush green lawns sloping right down to

41. This rather busy highway has wide shoulders, just enough to give cyclists a little elbow room on the 14-mile run up and over the mountains to Atascadero. Not every inch of the road has the big shoulders, but enough of it does that the overall experience feels safe. This is a long climb...1400' in nine miles...and while most of it is very gradual, there are a few sections that make you work.

Beyond the summit, there is a fairly mild (but fun) downhill to the fringes of the city of Atascadero, where we will once again dive off onto dinky roads skirting the perimeter of the town. The closest we'll come to this population center will be a few rural ranchettes and suburban/horsey spreads (middle photo). We've left all trace of the marine environment behind and are now in the hot, dry interior...sometimes very hot. The terrain and ecosystem are classic central California: rolling hills of grass—green in the winter and spring, golden in the summer and fall—with oak trees scattered about the meadows. Our roundabout bypass of Atascadero delivers us (at mile 46/56) to the little town of Santa Margarita, and if it's anywhere close to as hot as it can get around here, we'll be very glad to set a spell in the

the lakeshore, lots of picnic tables, nice bathrooms, shade trees, and everything back-dropped by those magnificent rocky crags. Normally, it's designated as a day-use area only and is closed off at night. But we have swung a deal to use it overnight.

The camp has a nice swimming pool and also nearly new shower facilities—not to mention the lake—where you can wash off the salt from a hard day in the saddle.





Day 4: Santa Margarita Lake to Paso Robles

75 miles, 4800' up, 5400' down

63 miles, 4000' up, 4600' down

This might be my favorite day of the whole tour. There isn't really anything special that I can point to as being exceptional...no marquee climbs or descents, no spectacular scenery or roadside attractions...just 70 miles of pleasant backroads through the middle of nowhere, with smooth pavement, no traffic, and pretty countryside. As the old song goes, who could ask for anything more?

After leaving camp, we retrace Lake Road back to the junction and pick up Pozo Road again. (We were on it yesterday and continue on it this morning.)

This junction—Lake and Pozo Roads—is where the long and short routes diverge today. The long route turns left and the short route right. Let's deal with the short route first, because it's a simple shortcut to the long route.

Retrace a bit of Pozo Road from the end of yesterday's stage and then turn right on Las Pilitas Road and follow its uphill course until it tees into Park Hill Road, where it rejoins the long course. See? Told you it was simple.

Las Pilitas leaves Pozo with a one-mile climb over a ridge and then descends back to a crossing of the Salinas River. This descent is marked at 10% for half a mile. Short but intense. We cross the river on an old iron truss bridge built in 1917 (above) and then begin a series of stairstep climbs up the canyon. We're going to gain about 900' over the course of the next five miles. That's an average of 3%, but because of the on-again, off-again nature of those stairstep pitches, some of the climbing will be significantly steeper than that average

figure, with easier, catch-your-breath bits in between. There are two half-mile sections that will be double-digit steep, but most of the rest is moderate...stairsteps and rollers.

The scenery you can imagine, based on these two photos. Usually the road is winding; often it does so in dappled shade beneath a canopy of broadleaf forest, but occasionally rolls out across open meadows or farm fields. In the spring, when the rains have been abundant, these hills and valleys will be as green as Ireland, and the wildflowers will be out in force.

Now then, if Las Pilitas is so nice, why would you want to go the other way and miss it? I'll tell you why: because the roads around the longer loop are every bit as nice and there are ten more miles of them. More is better, right? It is, as long as you have the legs and the attitude to tackle

the extra miles. Frankly, both options are excellent, and the only shame is that we can't all do them both.

So, the long option... After a brief level run, Pozo Road rears up into a fairly substantial climb of 300'-400' in a couple of miles. Over the top, we cruise downhill on smooth pavement for most of five miles...a sweet, spicy run that takes us past the Pozo Saloon, which my local friends tell me is of some historical significance, but which looks from the outside pretty much like any other ramshackle redneck bar. The saloon is apparently the only reason why there is a little dot on the map with the name Pozo appended to it. There's nothing else here, except miles and miles of the prettiest, emptiest backcountry you'd ever want to visit. This is wonderful cycling country, as Pozo Road gives way to Park Hill Road...smooth roads, little climbs and frisky, snappy descents, with nary a car, billboard, gas station, or other mark of civilization to be seen.





the map, saw that “Hwy 229” designation, and assumed it must be a busy, over-engineered highway. I have since discovered how wrong that assumption was and have rerouted the stage to include this little gem. Look at the photo below and at another one in the album at the back: do they look like your idea of a busy, over-engineered state highway?

The only problem with this wonderful road is that the good part—the curvy, swervy part—only lasts a bit over five miles. Also, the first half of that sweet section is uphill. It would be better as a downhill, but...oh

Park Hill (above and in the gallery at the back) passes the Las Pilitas junction at about mile 21, and after that, the two routes are together to the finish, but with just that ten-mile difference in their totals. For all of the miles since the start, or at least since the Pozo Saloon, our roads have been bumping up and down over a lumpy terrain...small dips and uphill humps and the occasional flat spot, but nothing much the same for long. At about mile 26, Park Hill finally decides to do one thing and one thing only for a while: go downhill. For four miles, it wiggles down the hillside in a pretty good run of fun. Nothing too extreme. 800’ down in four miles won’t frighten anyone, but it might put silly grins on a few faces.

At the bottom of the hill, down in Calf Canyon, we tee into Hwy 58, turn right and head east. We’ll be on this road for a little over a mile. In theory at least, 58 is going to be relatively busier than the roads we’ve been on so far today, but I doubt it will be choked with traffic. From the little town of Santa Margarita, a few miles west of the Park Hill junction, one would have to travel almost 70 miles of winding two-lane before encountering another town, and that one—McKittrick—is not exactly a booming metroplex. This is the proverbial middle of nowhere.

We’re looking for a left turn onto Hwy 229, and when we get there, be prepared for a treat. This little byway, also known as Webster Road, is a legendary road among both cyclists and motorcyclists. Silk-smooth pavement, slinky curves, and next-to-no traffic make it perfect for two-wheeled play. When I first laid out this tour in 1997, I skipped this road and used another nearby, which is a good road, but not a great road. I looked at

well. When the slinky curves end, we roll out across a wide open, empty valley of cattle ranches. It could be Wyoming or Eastern Oregon. But that flat section won’t last for long.

At about mile 40, in the middle of that flat section, we hit the tiny town of Creston. It goes by quickly, with a small clutch of houses, a school, and a sleepy little cafe. If you have lost track of your sag, the likeliest place to get water all day is here, at the school.

The rollers and flats continue all the way to the point where the route crosses Hwy 101 just outside the town of Templeton at around mile 50. We pass through about two miles of suburban sprawl on the south edge of town, but it’s still moderately pleasant for riding. A few miles after crossing 101, Vineyard crosses Hwy 46, and when it does, it quickly





becomes apparent that we're done traversing the flat valley floor and are now headed up into the hills on the other side. These are the same clustered hills that gave us the Santa Rosa Creek climb and Old Creek descent yesterday, so it's not surprising that visiting them again means getting out of the saddle and shifting into the little ring.

One mile up Vineyard after crossing 46, we turn right onto Willow Creek Road, then, four miles later, right again onto Peachy Canyon (both photos this page, cover photo on page 1, and more photos in the gallery at the back). As nice as the roads have been today—and they have been really wonderful—I think this Willow Creek-Peachy Canyon run may be the pick of the litter. I've been over it many times, and it never ceases to amaze me how perfect it is for cycling. It's 14 miles long, and it compresses a huge number of exciting sensations into those miles. There are a couple of fairly stout climbs, one of which switchbacks up a rocky cliff face, and there are two or three of the silkiest, tastiest downhills you could ever dream up. In between are miles of undulating curves and rollers meandering through lovely woods and along creeks and over hilltops. I think the thing that makes it so special is something I call scale: all of the dimensions—curves, ups, downs, lane width—are scaled to the speed and energy output of a cyclist. Things keep happening at a rate perfectly tailored to a moving bike: never boring, always entertaining.

This nearly dream-like run ends with a speedy descent right into the streets of the city of Paso Robles. We had

planned to stay at the Mid-State Fairgrounds in Paso, but couldn't close the deal with the administrators. So, as you all know, we are staying at the Motel 6, just a few blocks further along the same road from the fairgrounds. We will head out on the town for restaurant dinners, but will provide at least some food from our truck supplies for those who do not wish to go out.

Day 5: Paso Robles to Fort Hunter Liggett

51 miles, 3900' up, 3100' down

61 miles, 5000' up, 4200' down

68 miles, 6000' up, 5200' down

This stage picks up where yesterday's left off, with more absolutely gorgeous miles of quiet

backroads winding through the wooded hills west and north of Paso Robles. It's easy to see why the Great Western Bike Rally can be held here, at the fairgrounds, year after year, and still manage to find new and entertaining routes for its participants. This area is a cycling paradise.

From the motel, head south to a right, gently uphill, on 24th Street, a rather busy city boulevard. In less than a mile, we leave Paso Robles, the road name changes to Nacimiento Lake Drive, and we find ourselves quite suddenly out in the country again. Just under three miles into the stage, the long and short courses diverge, with the shorter route staying on Nacimiento Lake Drive and the longer route turning left onto Adelaida Road. The shortcut is simple and easily described: a gently uphill grade of just over six miles to a junction with Chimney Rock Road, where the long course rejoins. Nacimiento Lake Drive is a wider, smoother, more engineered road than the





Somewhere amidst all this lazy descending, we pass a junction with Vineyard Drive...the same road we were on yesterday. This is its northern terminus. Bear right on Adelaida at the junction and carry on toward Chimney Rock Road. On all of these roads, the scenery remains delightful... almost perfect. After the long descent on Adelaida, you bounce up and down over a series of steep little pitches on the tail end of Adelaida and on the beginning of Chimney Rock. Eventually, you fly downhill on another long, wicked descent—all fast, snappy turns on satin blacktop—before hitting more rollers at the bottom of the hill. At one point on an easy downhill run, there is a vista off to the right of a small lake, a nearby meadow, and a white barn nestled into the forest at the far end of the lake (below). It's such a harmonious setting...hard not to enjoy cycling through a world like this.

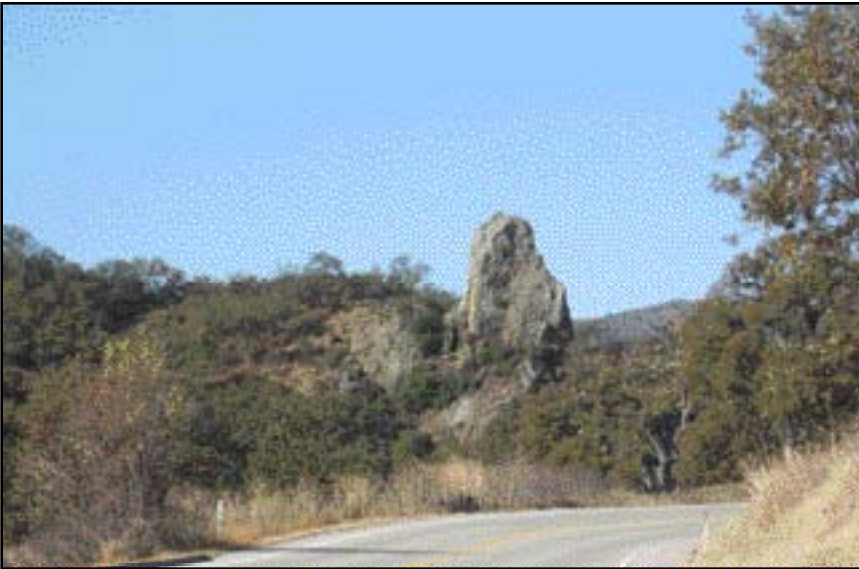
long-route roads it bypasses, but it is still a pleasant road (above).

The longer course requires a longer description. In fact, there are two longer courses...longer and longest. Right from the start of the stage, we have been climbing, and we continue to do so once we turn left onto Adelaida Road, only it gets a bit steeper, although nothing so steep as to be considered brutal. This lovely road climbs in a series of rolling stairsteps for most of six miles to a 1900' summit near the little settlement of Adelaida (1100' of gain in those six miles, which include almost a mile of flats and downhill in the middle). The surrounding countryside is a mix of hillside orchards, forest, and grassy meadows, all of it pretty and unspoiled. Over the summit, we launch off into a wonderful downhill flier...one curve after another, all nicely banked and all with smooth pavement, and never so steep that you can't just let it roll. As the descent eases off, we cruise through miles of beautiful broadleaf forest, with the occasional picturesque old farm tucked back in the trees. It is scenic and charming...a perfect road for cyclists.

But hang on: we have to back up and mention our longest option. This is a new addition for this tour. We missed it last time. A little over a mile past the Vineyard Road junction on Adelaida, there is a left turn onto Klau Mine Road. This is the beginning of a loop to the west that will bulk the miles up by a net gain of seven. Klau Mine starts out with funky old pavement that might cause you to question the wisdom of tackling this little detour. But two miles into the loop, the road name changes to Cypress Mountain Drive and the pavement changes to new and very good. Two-thirds of the way around the loop Cypress Mountain bears right onto Chimney Rock and that will lead us back to the 61-mile route. Klau Mine and Cypress Mountain are both mildly downhill, but Chimney Rock is all uphill, beginning with a one-mile pitch that is pretty stiff. Why do the extra miles? Same answer we gave for the Pozo-Park Hill loop yesterday: these are all wonderful, scenic, bike-friendly miles, and if you have the legs and the mindset to tackle them, they are simply more of a good thing.

At around 20 miles (or 27 miles for the longest course), the great run on Chimney Rock Road comes to an end with a





left turn back onto Nacimiento Lake Drive—right near the namesake Chimney Rock (above)—where the long-course riders rejoin the short coursers, although now 11 or 18 miles behind them on the road.

Over the course of the next nine miles, we'll climb and descend almost constantly, gaining or losing elevation in 300' foot chunks...four climbs and three descents, with a few level spots in between. The climbs are mostly fairly easy and the descents are mostly medium-fast and not too technical. The photo below does a good job of illustrating what the scenery is like along this run: rolling hills and valleys, horse and cattle ranches, and old oaks dotted round about.

One of the flat sections of road is the run across the top of the rock-fill dam at Lake Nacimiento. There is a pullout at the far end of the dam which might make a good spot for a regroup. After the dam, we do the fourth and final climb to a junction with Interlake Road. This

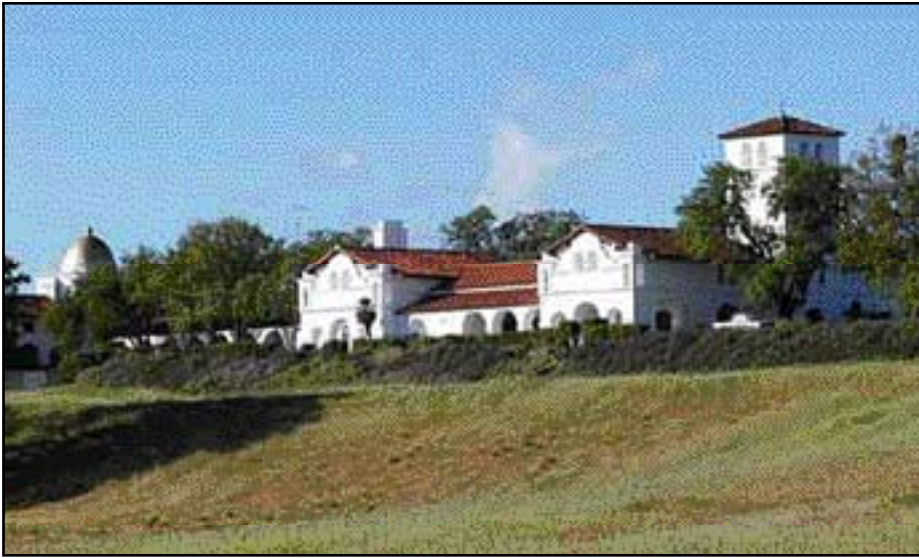
is the steepest of the four climbs but is still reasonably easy. Turn left on Interlake Road and climb a bit more before topping out on a ridge with panoramic vistas down into Lake Nacimiento on the left and Lake San Antonio on the right. It's quite a view, but enjoy it while you can, for you're about to drop off the other end of the ridge on a free-fall descent that's as fast as you want to make it...900' in two miles, with only a couple of sweeping turns between you and whatever your personal terminal velocity is.

Any momentum accumulated on the fast descent will be quickly dissipated at the bottom, as we immediately begin climbing again, this time very gradually. Easy, false-flat climbing, interspersed with occasional mild downhills

and level stretches, will be the order of the day from here on, all the way to the finish, all of it through rolling hills of oak and grass...and in season, dazzling displays of wildflowers. This landscape has a timeless, slumbering quality that makes it easy to imagine that it hasn't changed much since the first Spanish explorers came this way hundreds of years ago.

Interlake Road tees into Jolon Road just before mile 50. There is a small store here and a couple of shade trees. It might be a good spot for a stop before the last run up to the finish. Jolon is one of the more boring roads on this tour: flat and straight, with slightly abrasive pavement, and no special scenery nearby. Other than that, it's a nice road! (Actually, the scenery is fine, just not very spectacular: more rolling grasslands with scattered oaks.) After six miles, we turn left on Mission Road into Fort Hunter Liggett army base...tonight's destination.





old...a place outside of time. It's very easy, sitting in the quiet cloister garden, with the little fountain piddling into its pool, to feel transported back to 1780 or thereabouts.

We don't know yet whether we can use the showers at the mission. It will depend on whether they have a full-tilt retreat scheduled while we're there. If we can't use their facilities, we will hope to get access to the gym showers and pool at the army headquarters. We used these facilities on our previous trip.

Day 6: Fort Hunter Liggett to East Pinnacles

57 miles, 3200' up, 3200' down

67 miles, 3200' up, 3200' down

We had hoped to have the route leave Hunter-Liggett via a very cool byway called Sulphur Springs Road. We used it on our last tour through here, and I have also ridden it in the Central Coast Double and in the two-day Big Sur Ride (which overnights where we did, at the Mission). But it's a restricted access road, and in recent years—since tightened security after 9/11—they have decided to close it entirely, no exceptions. So instead, we have to go back out the main gate, where we entered the fort yesterday. In a small effort to make it not entirely an out-&-back, I use Infantry Road on the way out today, a two-mile side road which passes in front of the Hacienda Ranch House before rejoining Mission Road. The revised route adds about five miles to either route over what we had originally listed for this stage, but it is still a relatively easy stage.

The fort is huge, and we have to ride another six miles just to reach base headquarters. Once inside the base, the natural scenery actually seems to improve in some very subtle way, while at the same time, you begin seeing evidence that this is a working military installation: rows of parked tanks and helicopters, long sheds with mysterious acronyms stenciled on their sides designating some arcane martial purpose. Finally you arrive at something that looks like a cross between a college campus and an industrial park... GHQ. In the center of "town," there a gym and swimming pool complex. Behind the gym is a large complex of office buildings, including the administration building. Up on the hill beyond this complex is a grand old mission-style mansion. This is the Hacienda Ranch House (above), another of William Randolph Hearst's home, where he used to bring his Hollywood friends to play at being cowpokes. Finally, just visible, a half-mile off to the north, is the Mission San Antonio de Padua (below right).

We are going to be camping in a little wood behind the mission, as we did on our previous tour. Last time around, Franciscan friars were still in residence and we made our arrangements with them. Now the mission complex is run as a retreat center and our arrangements have been made with the retreat manager. It's very quiet here and very private...a lovely spot. There are benches and picnic tables and bathrooms. And the mission is well worth an extended exploration. This is one of the oldest of the California missions and it has a wonderful feeling of authentic antiquity. Having been locked up off the beaten path inside this vast military complex for so many years seems to have saved it from some of the ravages of "progress" that have befallen many of its contemporaries. It has been restored and is in good working order, but generally, it just feels





Lonoak Road (middle photo)—the long route—is a remote, lightly traveled backroad serving a handful of ranches. It winds along beside a little creek, all aglow with the blushing colors of blossoming wildflowers. Near the top of one of the climbs, we pass through a zone of intense building activity and a densely packed population center...in fact, a vast community of ground squirrels. They scamper back and forth across the road constantly as we pedal up the rise...an entertaining diversion while we climb. This whole stretch is delightful, as empty

and traffic-free as anything on the trip. (Bitterwater is the shorter, straighter route and gets all the long-haul traffic—what there is of it out here—while Lonoak gets only the occasional local rancher.)

Once out of the fort, we end up heading north on Jolon Road. It climbs very gently for a few miles and then topples off the ridge on a descent that is much more impressive than the easy little climb might have led you to expect...a high-speed flier, with tandems approaching 60-mph. Down at the bottom, we've reentered the Salinas River valley, and this time we're at its heart, an area of sprawling vegetable farms known as America's Salad Bowl. For most of the next 20 miles, we'll roll along flat fields of peppers and onions and broccoli and lettuce and tomatoes...and more. It's a landscape that might seem boring from a car, but it's a fascinating spectacle when viewed from the front row seat of a bicycle.

Smack in the middle of the valley is King City. After crossing the river on a bike bridge next to Hwy 101, we roll right up Broadway, the main street of town. At the far end of town, the long and short routes diverge, and this is a good spot for a regroup with a sag (mile 26). After leaving town, both routes climb through the hills on the east side of the valley. The short route actually climbs to a higher elevation than the long route, but both register about the same total elevation gain because the long route climbs two smaller but slightly steeper hills. The short route is a simple up-and-over run on Bitterwater Road (above)...a long, gradual ascent, a sweeping panorama from the summit, and a short, steep screamer down to Hwy 25, where it rejoins the long route. If you look to the north while up on the summit, you can just make out the sculpted rock towers of the Pinnacles, reaching up like stone fingers from among the distant hills. That's where we're headed.

Hwy 25 (bottom photo) is another wonderful road, with many little ups and downs, and a few not-so-little ones.





For cycling pleasure, it is constantly entertaining and over too soon. From a scenic point of view, it impresses one with the vast, brooding emptiness of the land.

The final three miles of the ride are on Pinnacles Highway (above), heading into the campground. This road is as nice as you would expect a road to be on the way into a national monument...more wooded than the empty valleys of the past few miles and extremely pretty. The campground is large and very pleasant, with some of the larger sites set aside as more suitable for groups. (We have group sites 133 and 134.) There are showers and a swimming pool.

Now, having arrived at the destination, I need to stop and explain the great gimmick of this tour. We're on the doorstep of the Pinnacles National Monument. This is a region of towering spires and crags, dark canyons and darker caves. It bears no resemblance to the surrounding smoother, rounded hills, and with good reason. These dramatic rock formations are the remains of a volcanic eruption that broke through along the San Andreas Fault 23 million years ago. The eruption actually took place nearly 200 miles to the south, but the half of the volcano that formed on the western, Pacific Plate has been slowly sliding north over time to its present location as the Pinnacles. Meanwhile, the forces of erosion have been at work on the old volcanic plug and have carved the rock into the sculptural fantasyland you see now. It's almost as if a little section of redrock canyonlands from southern Utah had been transplanted here. (I know: entirely different geology, but the visual effect is similar.)

We've just ridden in on the access road to the park from the east, off Hwy 25. Three miles beyond camp, the road ends at the trailhead into the wilderness. There is another access road from the west that also ends at a trailhead. The two trailheads are a little over three miles apart and there is no connecting road. The only way to cross the park is to walk. (No, THE CENTRAL COAST TOUR

you can't take your bike.) What I'm proposing is that we hike through—first thing tomorrow morning—and connect the two roads. Wait a minute, you say. What about our bikes and gear? I'll tell you: we're going to load all the bikes on one of our trucks and have them driven around the perimeter of the park and up to the western trailhead. Then, when we finish the hike, the bikes (and presumably bike shoes and helmet, etc.) will be waiting for us. Back on our bikes, we'll head off out the west side of the park on the final stage of the tour.

It sounds like a complicated production and it is. But the rewards are great. The hike itself is superb. Any one of several trails through the park will expose visitors to wonderful sights. If you've been to the Pinnacles before, you'll want to visit them again, and if you've never been here before, you owe it to yourself to have this awesome experience.

It's about 60 miles by road around the southern border of the park, retracing today's route on Hwy 25 and Bitterwater, then heading north from King City along Metz Road and up into the park on Shirttail Canyon. It is just barely possible that the truck could beat the hikers around the loop, arriving before they finish their hike, especially if the truck leaves early in the morning and also especially if the walkers take their time, exploring and snapping photos and generally gawking about, which most people will want to do on this delightful trek.

One final note on this stage: there are another three miles of very nice road from the campground on up into the park, ending at the Bear Gulch trailhead and visitor center. If you want a few more miles today, consider doing this as a six-mile round-trip out-&-back. It's all very pretty and the road is good quality, mostly up on the way out and down on the way back.



Day 7: Pinnacles to Carmel Valley Village

61 miles, 4000' up, 5000' down

65 miles, 4800' up, 5800' down

79-83 miles (all the way back to Monterey)

Plus: a hike of at least 3.5 miles

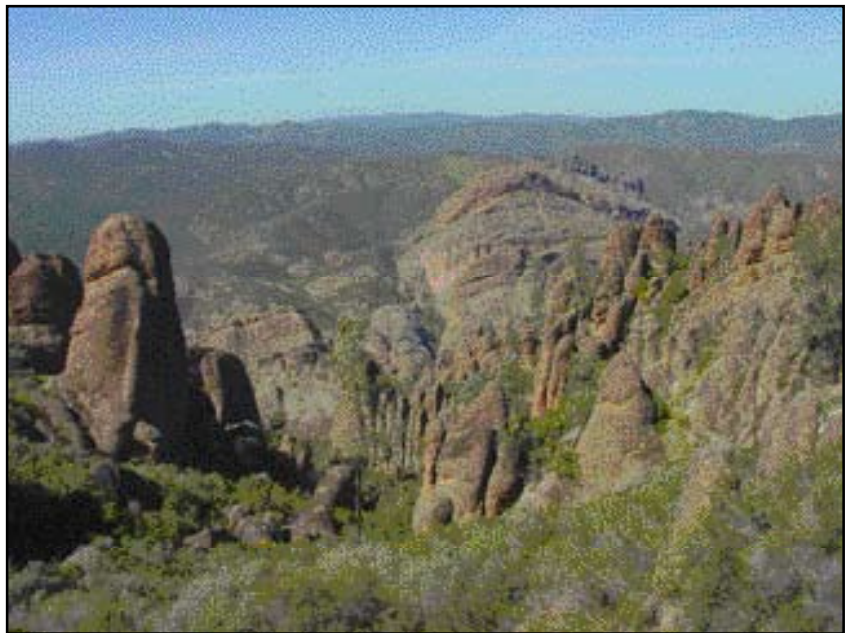
Before starting the final stage today, with the complicated hike and all the rest, we have to consider what we plan to do tonight. Do we stay another night at Veterans Park in Monterey (where we spent our first night)? Or do we drive back to Santa Rosa after the hike and ride? We chose the latter option last time, including having a late lunch in Carmel Valley before heading out. We were back in Santa Rosa by 10:00 pm, and we were exhausted by the long day, with no time and no energy for dealing with the truck(s), vans, supplies, equipment, etc. Even to manage this, we had to keep the hammer down at every point along the way, all day. No time for enjoying the hike or the very good ride....hurry, hurry, hurry.

This time, we're going to reserve the campsite for that night. I know there will be an inclination on the part of a few people to instigate a jail break: to buzz off toward home right after the ride. But based on our prior experience, I will lobby for staying over one more night so that this really special final day can be taken slowly and savored, and so that the travel time and logistics associated with getting home will be easier and less stressful on Sunday.

Now, let's get going! There are two trailheads on the east side of the Pinnacles, Chalone Creek and Bear Gulch. I'm suggesting the Balconies Trail out of Chalone Creek as the quickest, easiest hike. If you're willing to take more time and expend more energy, some of the other longer and hillier trails will reward you with more spectacular scenery. Not that Balconies Trail is dull...far from it! After an easy walk along the valley floor for over a mile, the trail enters the zone of the great rock formations. From here on, it's one mind-boggling, eye-goggling vista after another, as the trail winds up and down through little slot canyons, squeezes in amongst house-sized boulders, and even slinks through a cavern-like tunnel (bring a flashlight). If you're claustrophobic, the cave can be bypassed. My writing skills really can't do justice to this special place. You just have to see it and experience it for yourself.

If things have gone according to plan, our bikes will be waiting for us at the west (Chaparral) trailhead. The road out of the park—Shirttail Canyon (top photo, next page)—is a doozy. You begin with a stiff climb of nearly 800' in two miles, followed by some up and down along the ridge, and then nearly 1700' of downhill frenzy in a little over five miles, with one little climb in the middle. It's a really wild ride, with some steep, technical sections and a couple of nasty, rim-bending, bottle-launching cattle guards to watch for.

You can decompress at the bottom with a nice rolling run south along Metz Road, overlooking our old friend the Salinas River. At around mile 17, we turn right and head west on Elm Avenue, a long straight road that crosses the river, crosses Hwy 101, skirts the southern border of the town of Greenfield, and heads on out into the coun-





ing for the tour is now essentially over. There are a couple of very minor bumps ahead, but mostly it's all downhill (or level) from here...and it's also some of the most enjoyable cycling on this tour or on any other tour. This is cycle-touring as it was meant to be.

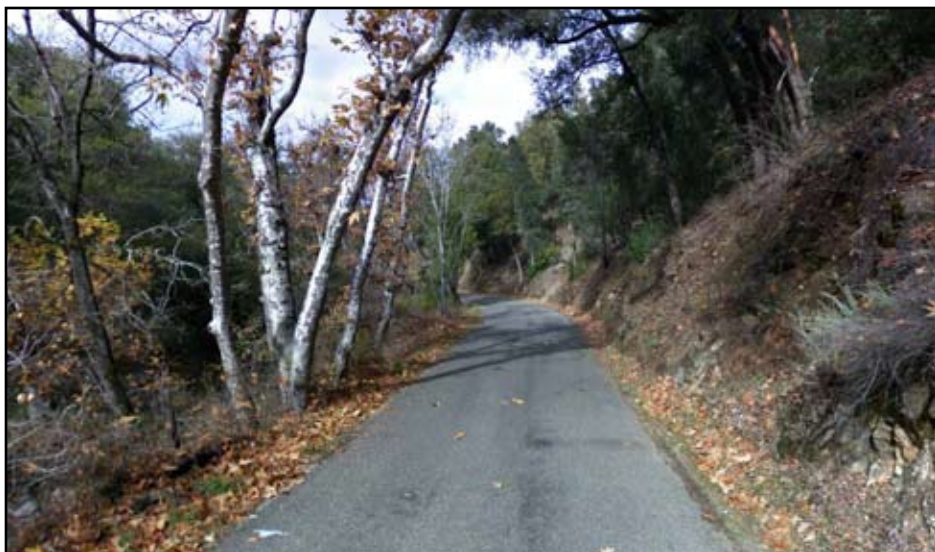
Take one last look backward from Cahoon summit down into Arroyo Seco canyon and beyond, out across the Salinas River valley that has been our home, off and on, for the past few days. Now turn your attention to the great ride ahead, as we drop off the summit and slip into a wooded wonderland along the banks of Tularcitos Creek (photo, next page). If one were to lay out a perfect cycling dream road, this stretch would come close to being it...slightly downhill—not steep enough to need the brakes, but just steep enough to keep you flying along almost effortlessly—and all the while the little road is snaking back and forth through S-bends that hug the curves of the beautiful, bolder-strewn creek, with the smooth pavement dappled by sunlight filtering through the leaves of huge old oaks and sycamores. This daydream descent lasts for about five miles, takes a break for a short level stretch and a tiny uphill and then resumes on a much steeper, more wide-open drop before settling into another section of through-the-trees-along-the-creek fun.

But wait: we passed the turn for the longer, hillier option

try again on its way to Arroyo Seco Canyon. This may be the single most boring road on the tour, but it gets interesting again after about six miles...it actually has a bend in it and a slight climb! And then it swoops downhill to a little bridge over the Arroyo Seco River (middle photo), and from here on, everything is fabulous, all the way to the finish.

When we cross the little bridge at mile 26, we're at 500' in elevation. Now we begin to climb into the Santa Lucia Mountains, at first in roly poly ups and downs, and then, at mile 32, in a steady, gentle grade (bottom photo), and finally, at mile 39, in a regular, just-do-it ascent. All this levitating will eventually bring us to Cahoon summit at mile 43...at 2400', the highest elevation on the entire tour. It's never really a wicked climb, but as a steady diet over 17 miles—and on the final day of a hard week of riding—it can begin to wear on a body. But unless you're planning on doing the longer options, your climb-





back around that level spot, before the last great downhill. Unfortunately, it's true: if you do the optional route, you'll miss part of the wonderful downhill run. This is a case of an embarrassment of riches, of having to choose between two delicious desserts. So many roads, so little time!

But the longer, hillier option—a loop off Carmel Valley Road on Tassahara and Cachagua Roads (below)—has charms of its own, and being five miles longer, has about that many more miles of them. It does involve another challenging climb of nearly 800' in just two miles, but it's an interesting climb, in some ways unlike anything else on the tour. A good portion of the climb traverses a cliff face of white chalk. The stone exists throughout the region, lending its flavor to many of the fine local wines, but I don't know of anywhere else where it's so visible and impressive. After the climb, there is a neat section where the road dances along the ridge top, overlooking rugged little canyons, and then it falls off the mountain in a down-the-rabbit-hole plunge back into Carmel Valley to rejoin the shorter route. Is it worth doing? If you have the time and the energy, definitely. And if a headwind is beating you up on the more open Carmel Valley Road—which is a possibility—this secluded side canyon excursion should offer some shelter.

After the routes rejoin, everyone gets to share in one last five-mile, slightly downhill run along the canyon wall above the beautiful Carmel River. After many miles of nearly empty country, you begin to see increasing evidence of human settlement. But this is Carmel Valley, and the signs of its quiet affluence intrude on the natural beauty in a subdued, tastefully muted manner. Here, it is much as it was along the 17-mile Drive at the start of the trip: all the best scenery and ambience that money can buy. Tacky tracts and messy malls need not apply.

The ride officially finishes in Carmel Valley Village, but we are offering another option for riders who want to wring every last drop of sweat and biking fun out of this last day: continue from this point onward, all the way back to Veterans Park in Monterey. We will plan to load up our two big passenger vans with people who wish to end their rides in Carmel Valley Village. The two vans will hold about two dozen people. If enough hardy souls choose to ride into Monterey, we may not need to retrieve any car pool vehicles for extra transport duty. But if need be, we will make extra van runs or bring out

vehicles from our car pool fleet (which will have been stored at the park for the week). No one who doesn't want to will be forced to ride the extra miles into Monterey.

Those extra 18 miles are a mix of nice and so-so. Carmel Valley Road becomes busier and more suburban as it heads back into town but is still okay. A short bike trail at its end connects to the road into Carmel that we used on Stage 1. Just for variety, we'll head through the quaint village on a different street but still end up at the Carmel gate onto the 17-mile Drive. We'll use a different but equally pretty section of the Drive, plus another nice road, to get back up to that sneaky dirt trail that cuts over to the roads by Veterans Memorial Park, going the other direction now. Overall, it's easy. It's almost level, with just a bit of climbing right near the end.

After we're all back in camp and cleaned up, we may head down into Monterey for a big, celebratory dinner out on the town. A good way to end a great week.





Prologue: Monterey Bay Coastal Trail

Stage 1: Cypress Point





Stage 1: Hurricane Ridge, Big Sur



Lime Kiln Falls



Stage 2: Hwy 1, Big Sur

Stage 3: Santa Rosa Creek Road





Stage 3: Old Creek Road



Stage 4: Park Hill Road

Stage 4: Hwy 229



Peachy Canyon





Stage 5: Halter Ranch, Adelaida Road (above)

Mission San Antonio de Padua (below)





Stage 6: Lonoak Road (above)

Hwy 25 (below)





Stage 7: Pinnacles National Monument (above)

Shirttail Canyon (below)



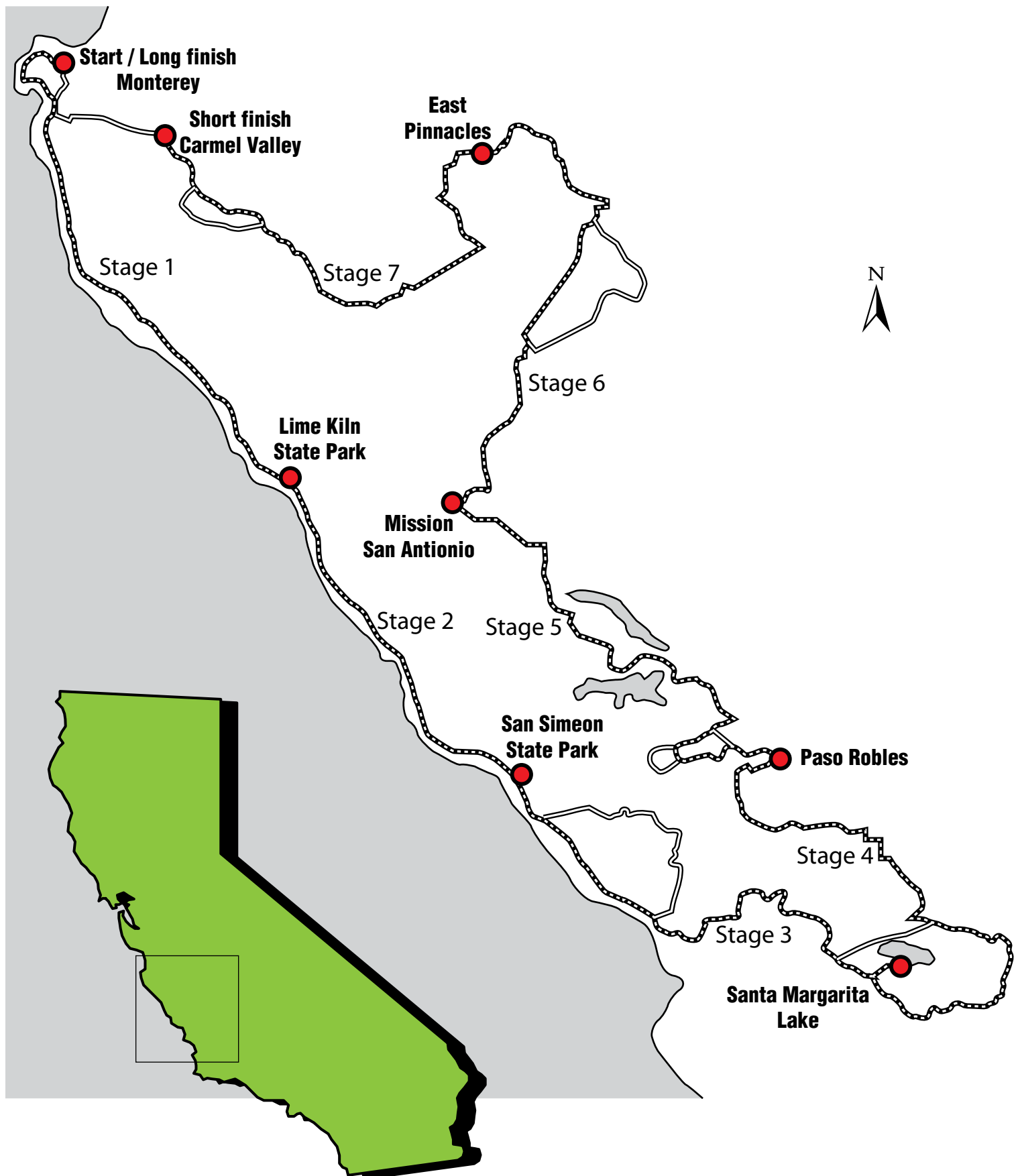


Stage 7: Arroyo Seco (above)

Carmel Valley (below)



CENTRAL COAST TOUR



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

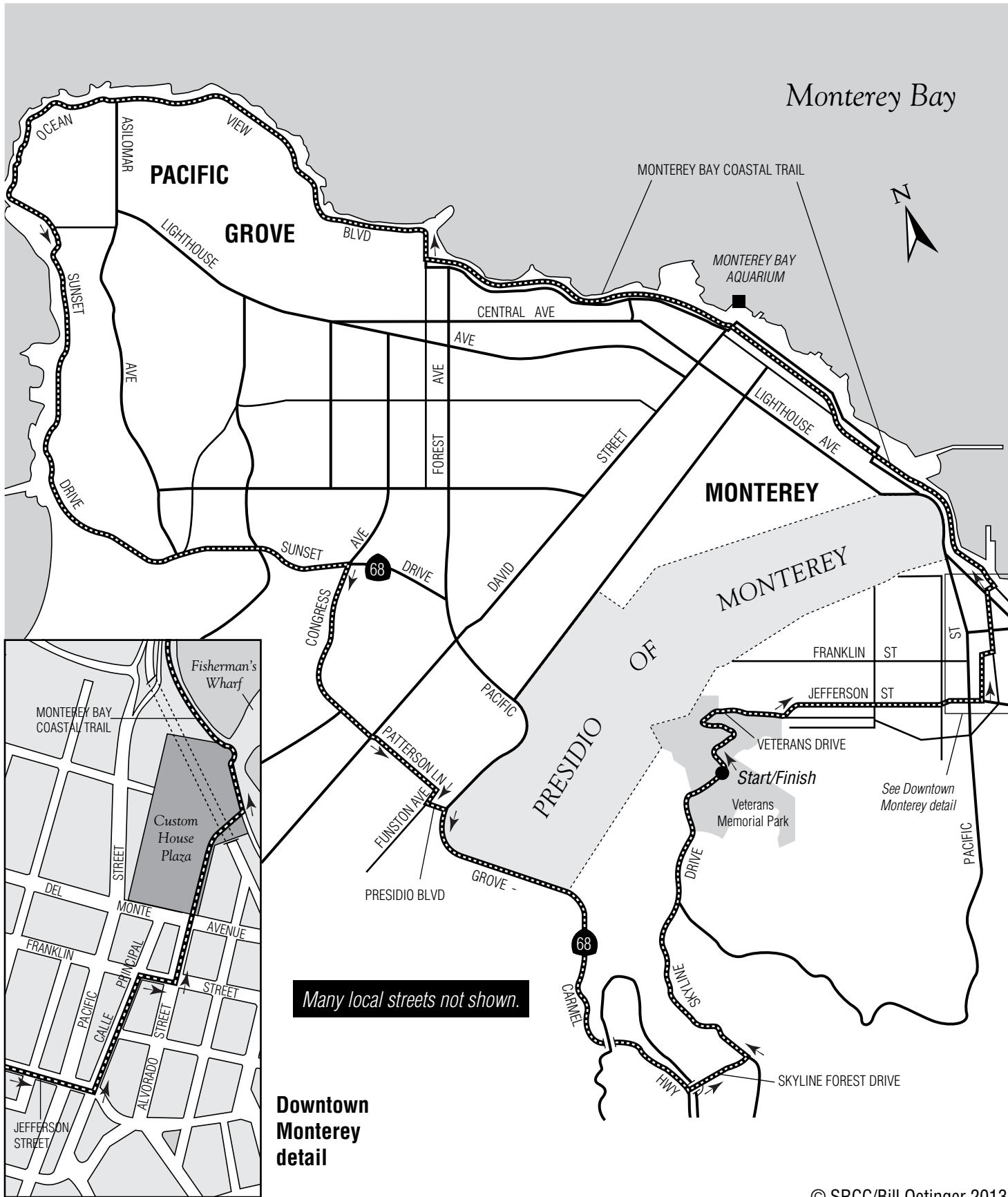
Prologue: Monterey-Pacific Grove Loop

11.4 miles, 1000' up and down

R on Veterans Drive (downhill)	0.0
Bear L on Jefferson Street.....	0.5
L on Calle Principal	1.2
R on West Franklin Street.....	1.3
L on Alvarado Street.....	1.3
Through Customs House Plaza	
L on Monterey Bay Coastal Trail.....	1.5
Past Cannery Row, Aquarium, etc.	
R on Ocean View Blvd	3.8
Town of Pacific Grove	
Straight on Sunset Drive	5.0
R on Congress Avenue.....	7.6
Straight on Patterson Lane.....	8.3
R on Funston Avenue	8.5
L on Presidio Blvd	8.6
R on Cal Hwy 68 (Holman Hwy).....	8.7
Also known at Pacific Grove-Carmel Highway	
Could be busy, but good shoulder; uphill...	
L on Skyline Forest Drive	10.1
L on Skyline Drive	10.3
Bear R on Veterans Drive	11.2
Return to camp	11.4

CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Prologue: Monterey and Pacific Grove
12 miles, 1200' up and down



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 1: Monterey to Lime Kiln State Park

70 miles, 4500' up, 4800' down

L on Veterans Drive (uphill)	0.0
Bear L on Skyline Drive	0.2
R on Skyline Forest Drive	1.1
Bear L on dirt path off left side of Skyline Forest Drive, just before bridge	1.3
Enter Del Monte Forest Preserve.	
R on Scenic Drive	1.4
Bear R on Los Altos Drive	2.1
Straight on Costanilla Way	2.5
(Los Altos turns R)	
Straight on Sunridge Road	2.6
R on Ronda Road	2.7
R on Sunridge Road	3.0
Straight on Lopez Road	3.5
Bear R on Lopez Road	4.4
R on Sloat Road	4.9
L on 17-mile Drive	5.4
(17-mile Drive has red center stripe.)	
Bear R on Carmel Way	13.2
Leave Del Monte Forest.	
Becomes San Antonio Avenue	13.5
R on Ocean Avenue	13.8
Village of Carmel; take a break at the beach.	
L on Scenic Road	13.8

Along Carmel's beach front.

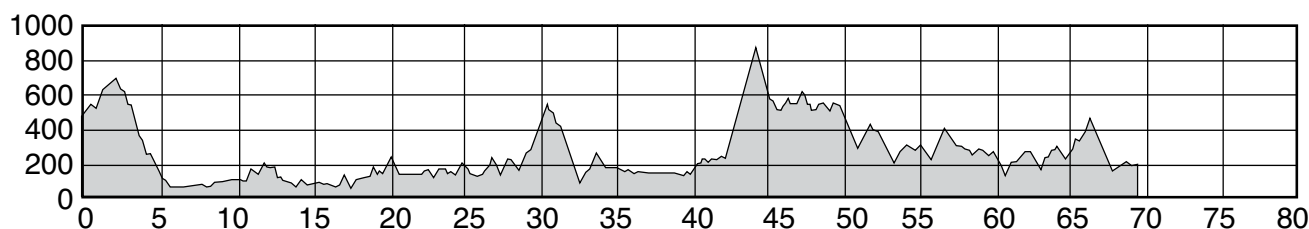
Scenic Road leaves beach and becomes

Carmelo Street	15.9
R on 16th Avenue	16.1
L on Monte Verde Street	16.2
R on 15th Avenue	16.3
Becomes 14th Avenue	16.4
R on Dolores Street	16.5
Continue on Lausen Drive	16.6
Carmel Mission	
R on Rio Road	16.8
R on Hwy 1	17.4
Bixby Creek Bridge	30.6
Hurricane Point (582')	31.8
Village of Big Sur (155')	41.3
Climb ahead...	
Summit (971')	45.6
Nepenthe (rest stop?)	46.2
L into Lime Kiln State Park	69.3
Finish	69.4

Short option:

From dirt path...

L on Scenic Drive	1.4
L on Sunridge Road	2.5
Bear L on 17-Mile Drive	2.7
R on Carmel Way	4.1
Rejoin long route, minues approx. 9 miles.	



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 1: Monterey to Lime Kiln State Park
70 or 61 miles, 4500' up, 4800' down



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 2: Monterey to Lime Kiln State Park

43 miles, 2500' up, 2500' down

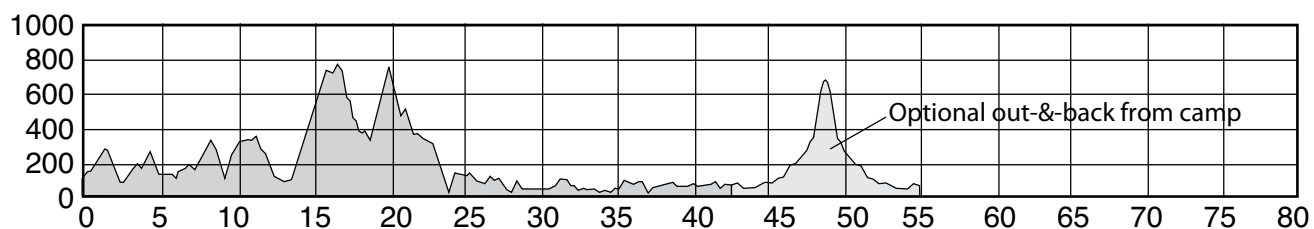
Optional out-&-back: up to 13 miles, 900'

Leave Lime Kiln State Park.....	0.0
L on Hwy 1.....	0.1
Ragged Point (rest stop?).....	22.5
R on San Simeon Road.....	36.9
R on Hwy 1	37.5
Town of San Simeon	40.8
L on San Simeon Creek Road	42.1
R into San Simeon State Park.....	42.2
Finish	43.0

Optional out-&-back:

From camp, head inland on San Simeon Creek

Road as far as you want to go...return.



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 2: Lime Kiln SP to San Simeon State Park

43 miles, 2500' up, 2500' down

Bonus miles out-&-back: 13 miles, 900'



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 3: San Simeon State Park

to Santa Margarita Lake County Park

67 miles, 5000' up, 4000' down

57 miles, 3000' up, 2000' down

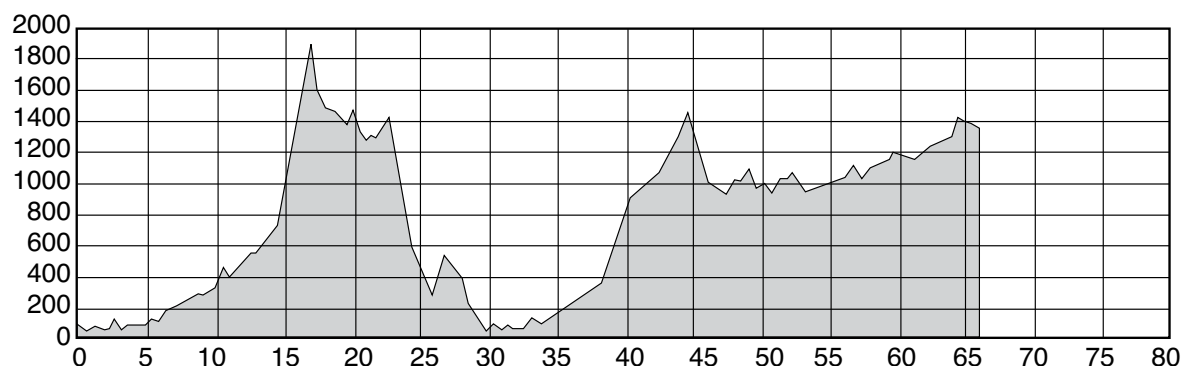
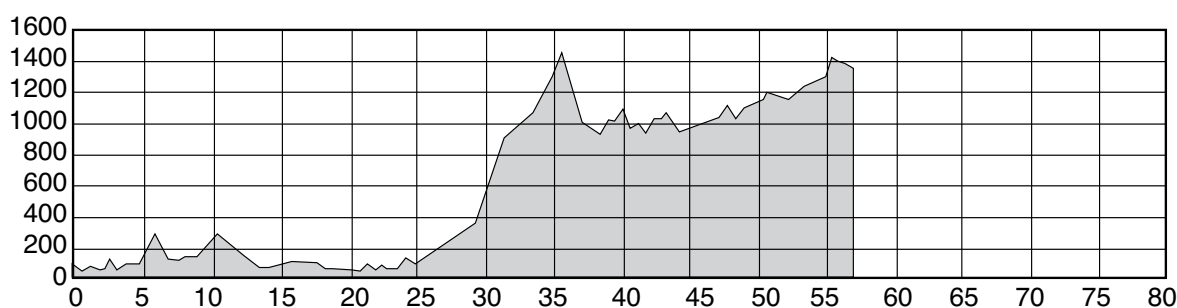
Long Route:

Leave San Simeon State Park	0.0
L on San Simeon Creek Road	0.2
L on Hwy 1	0.4
R on Moonstone Beach Drive.....	1.4
L on Weymouth Street	2.5
R on Charing Lane into town of Cambria	2.8
Becomes Main Street	3.1
L on Santa Rosa Creek Road.....	4.9
Short route diverges.	
Summit (1865').....	17.3
Cross Hwy 46, straight on Old Creek Road ...	21.2
L on Ocean Blvd, just before Hwy 1	30.3
South on Hwy 1	30.9
Short route rejoins.	
R on Beachcomber Street (Drive)	32.2
Bear L on Java Street	32.7
R on Sandalwood Avenue	32.7
L on San Jacinto Street.....	33.1

R on Ironwood Avenue	33.5
L on Hwy 41	34.4
Devil's Gap summit (1438').....	45.3
R on San Gabriel Road.....	48.2
R on Atascadero Avenue	49.6
Becomes Santa Barbara Rd, cross Hwy 101 ..	51.3
R on San Antonio Road.....	51.6
L on Carmel Road	53.3
R on El Camino Real	53.7
L on Hwy 58 (town of Santa Margarita)	56.8
R on Pozo Road	58.3
L on Santa Margarita Lake Road	64.8
In park, R along lake road to White Oak.....	65.8
Finish	67.0

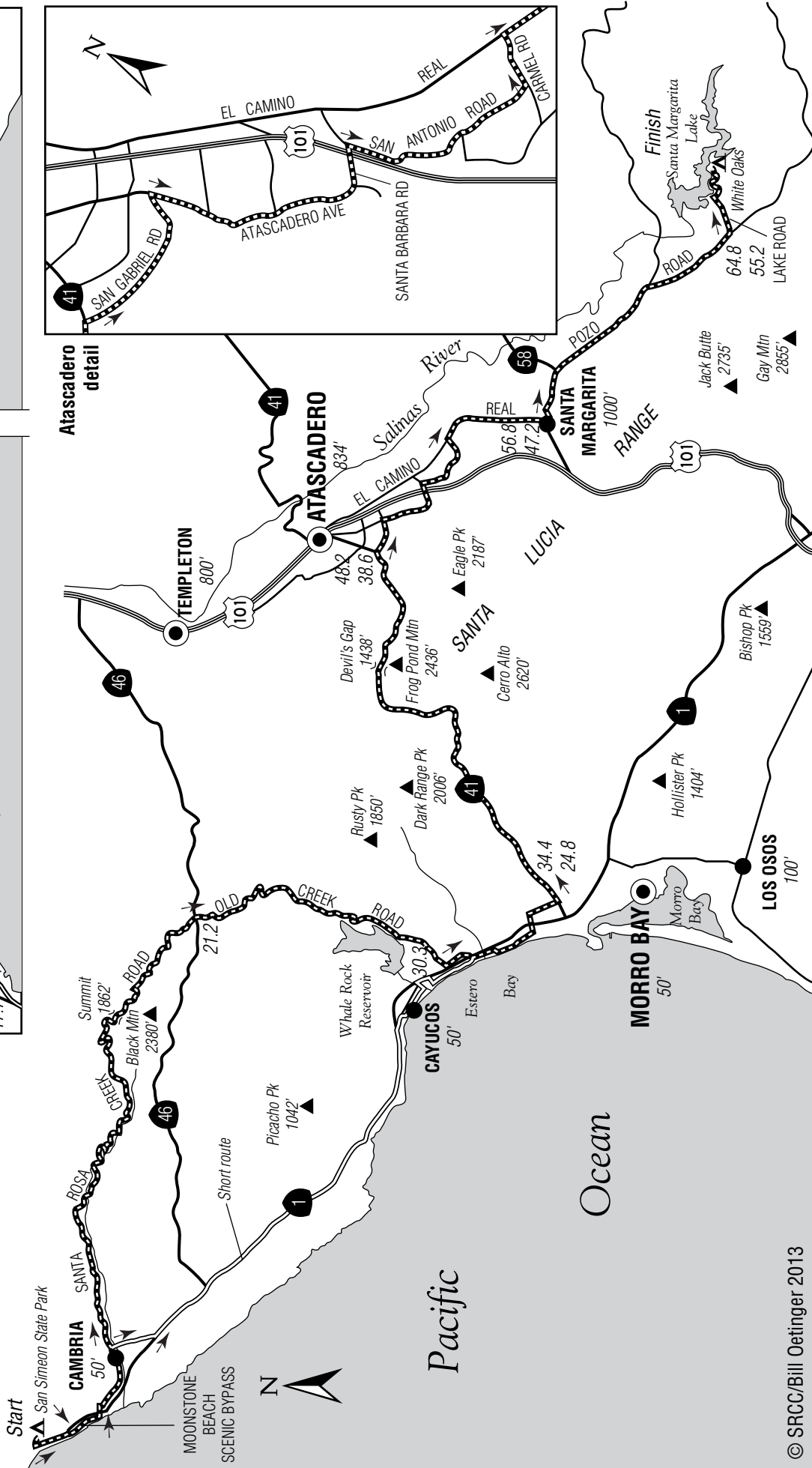
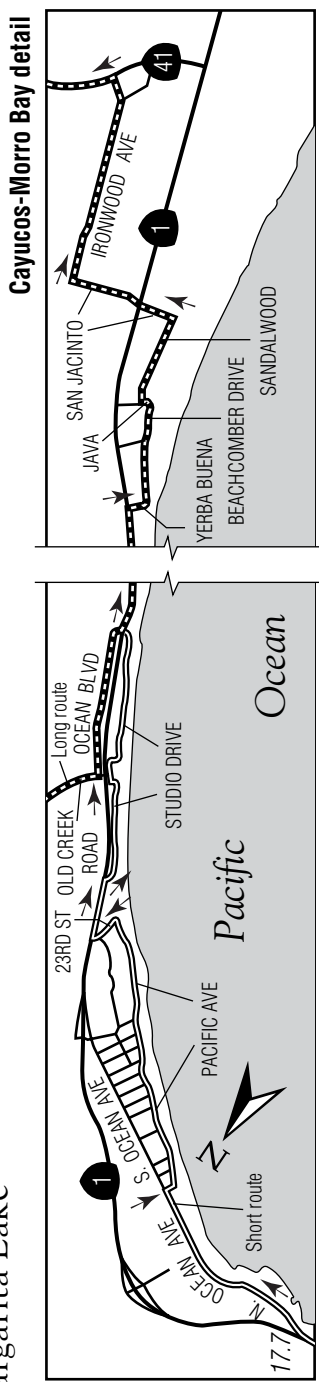
Short route:

In Cambria, when long route turns L on SR Crk, stay on Main Street (uphill).....	4.9
L on Hwy 1	6.0
R on N. Ocean Avenue (in Cayucos).....	17.7
R on Pacific Avenue	18.7
L on 24th Street	19.8
R on Cass Avenue to R on Hwy 1	20.0
R on Studio Drive.....	20.7
R on Hwy 1, rejoin long route	21.3
Follow long route from here, minus 9.6 miles.	



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 3: San Simeon SP to Santa Margarita Lake
 67 miles, 5000' up, 4000' down
 56 miles, 3000' up, 2000' down



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 4: Santa Margarita Lake to Paso Robles

75 miles, 4800' up, 5400' down

63 miles, 4000' up, 4600' down

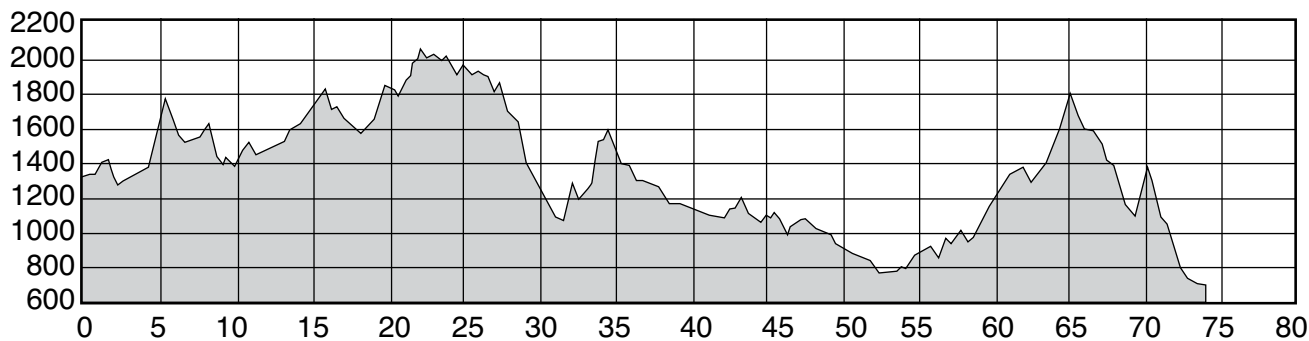
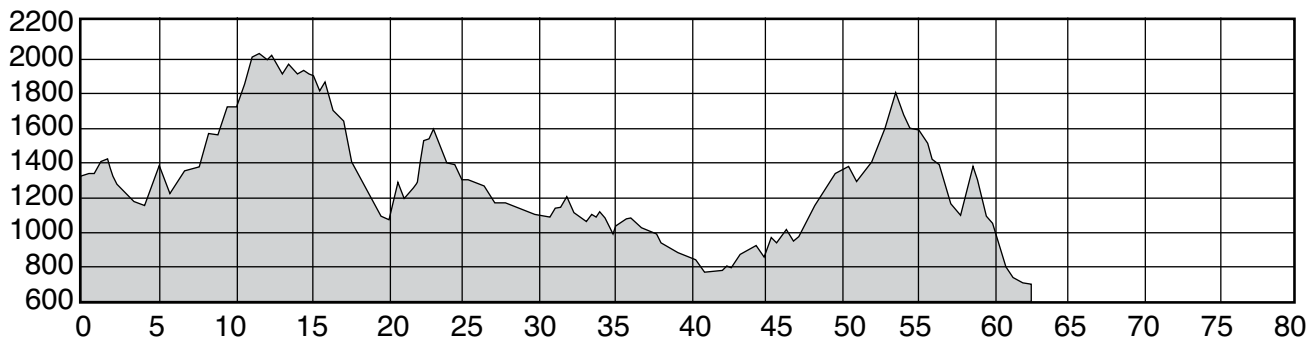
Long Route:

Leave White Oak camp.....	0.0
L on Lake Road	1.2
L on Pozo Road.....	2.2
Short route diverges.	
Straight on Park Hill Road.....	13.0
Las Pilitas Rd junction: short route rejoins ...	22.6
R on Hwy 58	31.4
L on Hwy 229.....	32.7
Town of Creston	40.6
L on Hwy 41.....	41.7
R on Cripple Creek Road	43.5
L on El Pomar Drive	44.5
Straight on Templeton Road, cross Hwy 101	53.5

Straight on Vineyard Drive	53.9
R on Willow Creek Road	58.2
R on Peachy Canyon Road.....	62.3
Straight on Pacific Avenue	71.9
City of Paso Robles.	
L on Olive Street	72.4
R on 7th Street.....	72.5
L on Pine Street	72.8
R on 13th Street.....	73.3
L on Riverside.....	73.4
R on Black Oak Drive	74.5
Left into Motel 6, finish	74.6

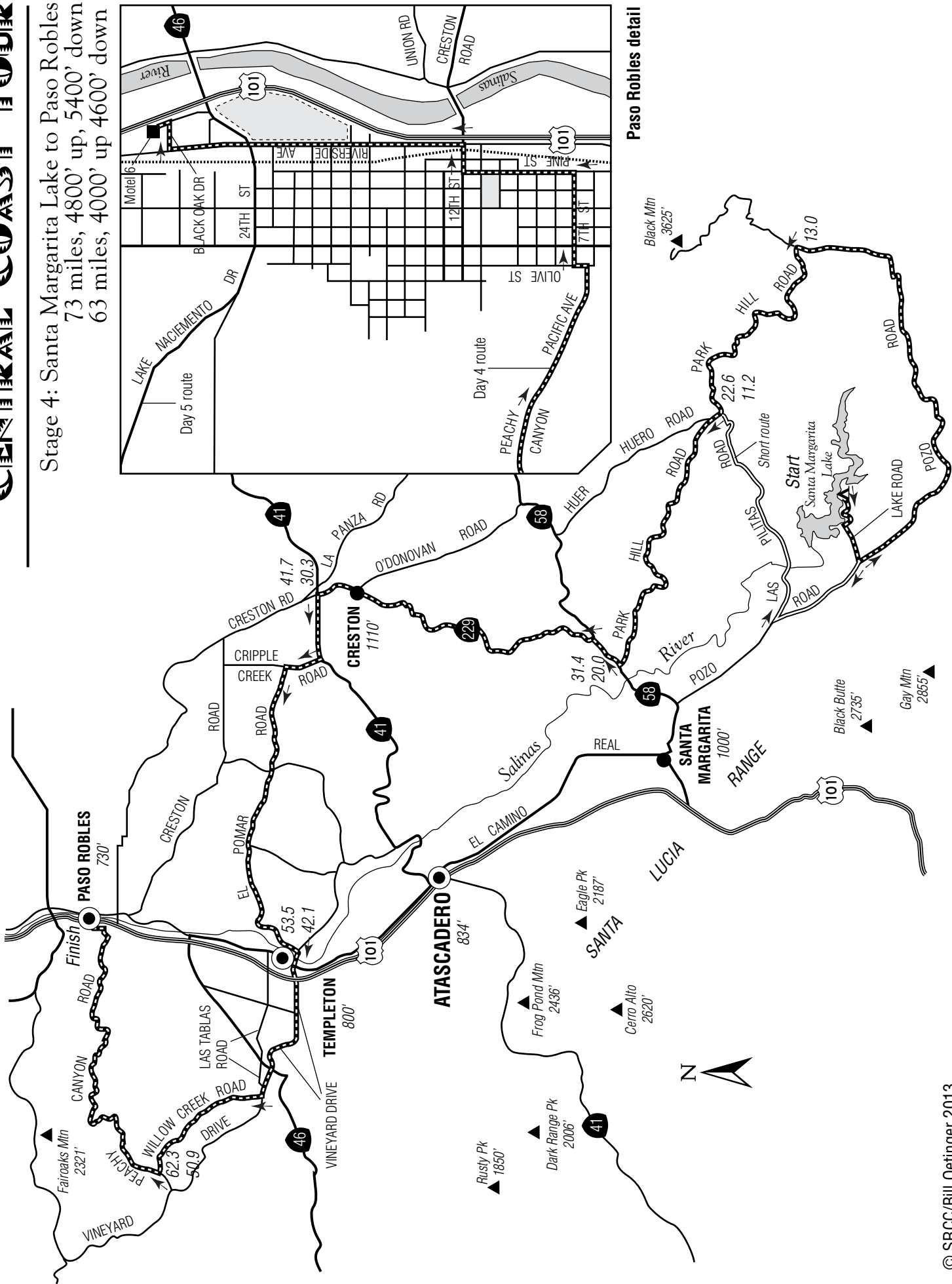
Short route:

Leave White Oak camp.....	0.0
L on Lake Road	1.2
R on Pozo Road	2.2
R on Las Pilitas Road	4.2
L on Park Hill Road, rejoin long route	11.2
Follow long route from here, minus 11.4 miles.	



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 4: Santa Margarita Lake to Paso Robles
 73 miles, 4800' up, 5400' down
 63 miles, 4000' up 4600' down



Paso Robles detail

CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 5: Paso Robles to Mission San Antonio

51 miles, 3900' up, 3100' down

61 miles, 5000' up, 4200' down

68 miles, 6000' up, 5200' down

Medium route:

Leave Motel 6.....	0.0
Left on Riverside Ave	0.1
R on 24th Street.....	0.4
Bear R on Nacimiento Lake Drive.....	1.0
L on Adelaida Road	2.5
Klau Mine Road: long route diverges	12.9
R on Chimney Rock Road	14.0
Long route rejoins.	
L on Nacimiento Lake Drive	19.8
Lake Nacimiento Dam (rest stop?).....	27.9
L on Interlake Drive.....	30.0
L on Jolon Road.....	49.5
Town of Lockwood (rest stop?).	
L on Mission Road.....	55.4
Enter Fort Hunter Liggett Army Base.	

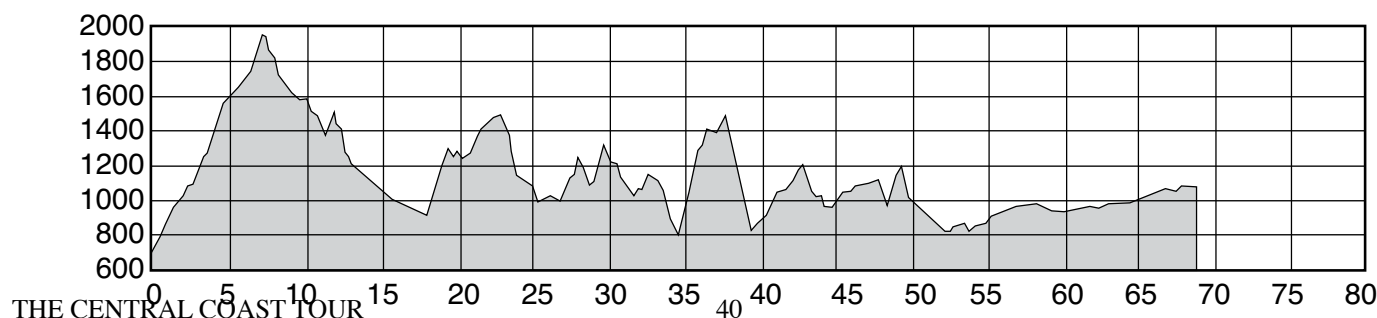
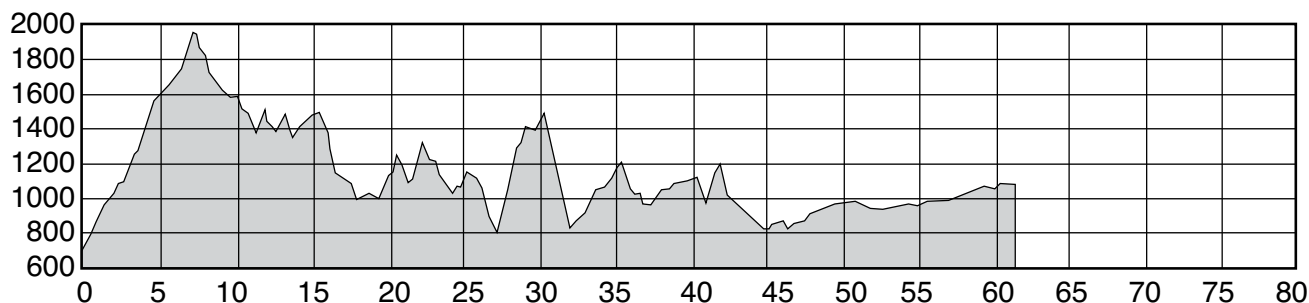
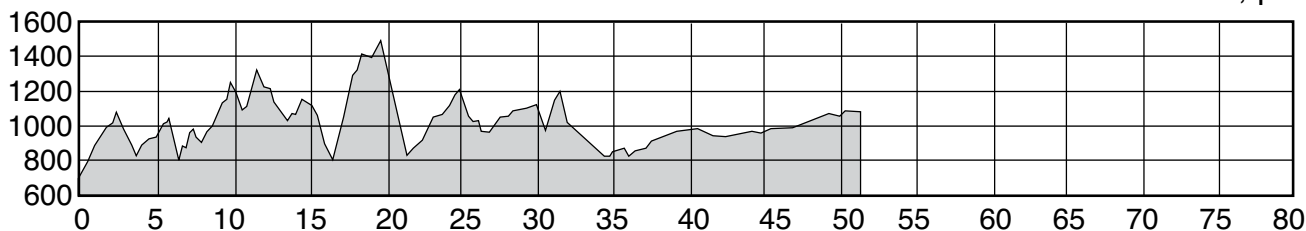
Base headquarters	60.3
Mission San Antonio de Padua	60.6
Finish	61.2

Short route:

Leave Motel 6.....	0.0
Left on Riverside Ave	0.1
L on 24th Street	0.4
Bear R on Nacimiento Lake Drive.....	1.0
L on Interlake Drive.....	18.8
L on Jolon Road.....	39.3
Town of Lockwood (rest stop?).	
L on Mission Road.....	45.3
Enter Fort Hunter Liggett Army Base.	
Base headquarters	50.2
Mission San Antonio de Padua	50.5
Finish	51.1

Long route:

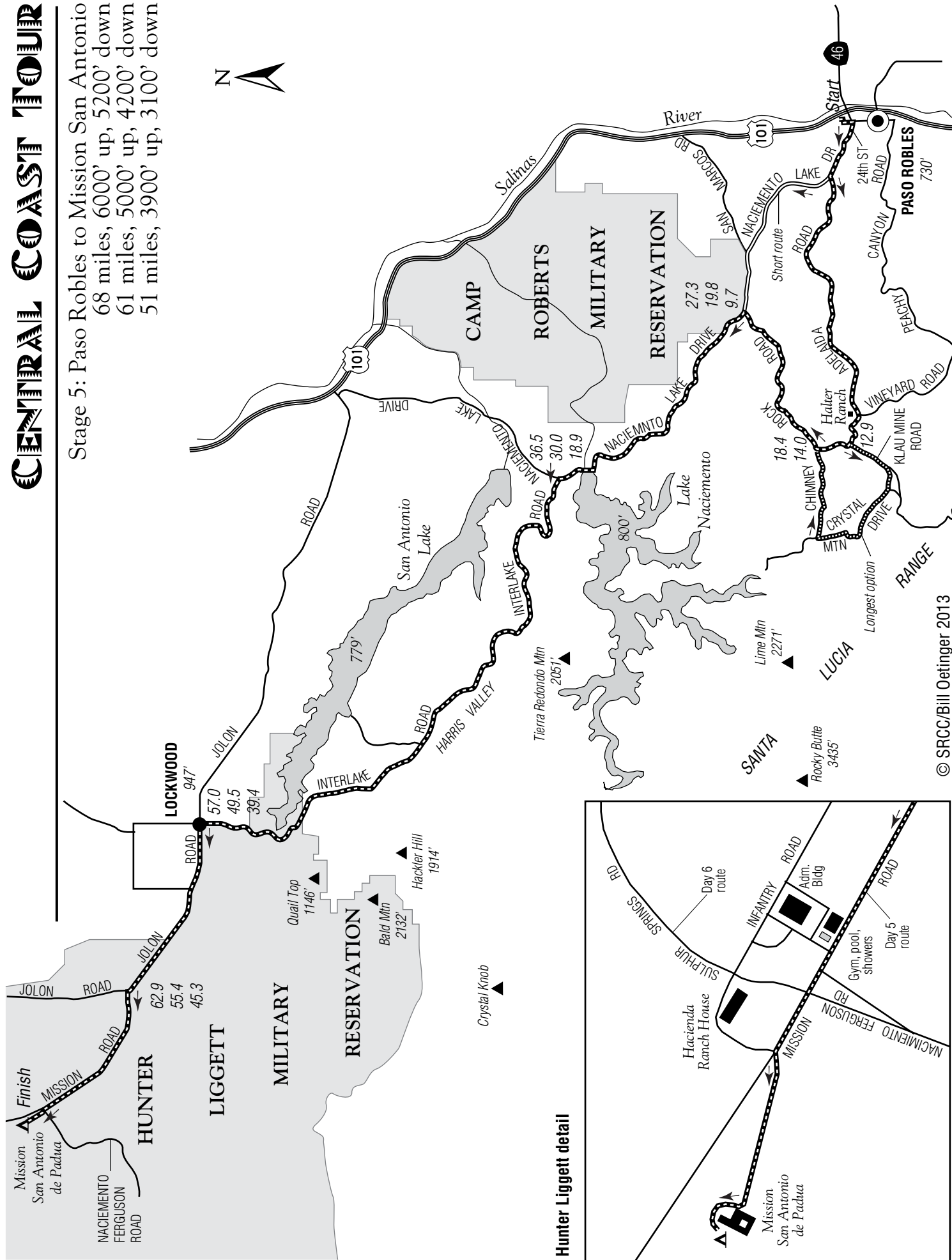
On Adelaida Road, L on Klau Mine Road.....	12.9
Becomes Cypress Mountain Drive	15.1
R on Chimney Rock Road	18.4
Rejoin medium route on Chimney Rock Rd ..	21.5
Follow medium route from here, plus 7.5 miles.	



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 5: Paso Robles to Mission San Antonio

- 68 miles, 6000' up, 5200' down
- 61 miles, 5000' up, 4200' down
- 51 miles, 3900' up, 3100' down



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 6: Mission San Antonio to East Pinnacles

57 miles, 3200' up, 3200' down

67 miles, 3200' up, 3200' down

Short route:

Leave Mission San Antonio.....	0.0
L on Infantry Road.....	0.7
L on Mission Road.....	2.7
L on Jolon Road.....	6.3
Cross under Hwy 101, R on bike path.....	24.0
R on Broadway into King City	24.5
L on 1st Street (rest stop?).....	25.8

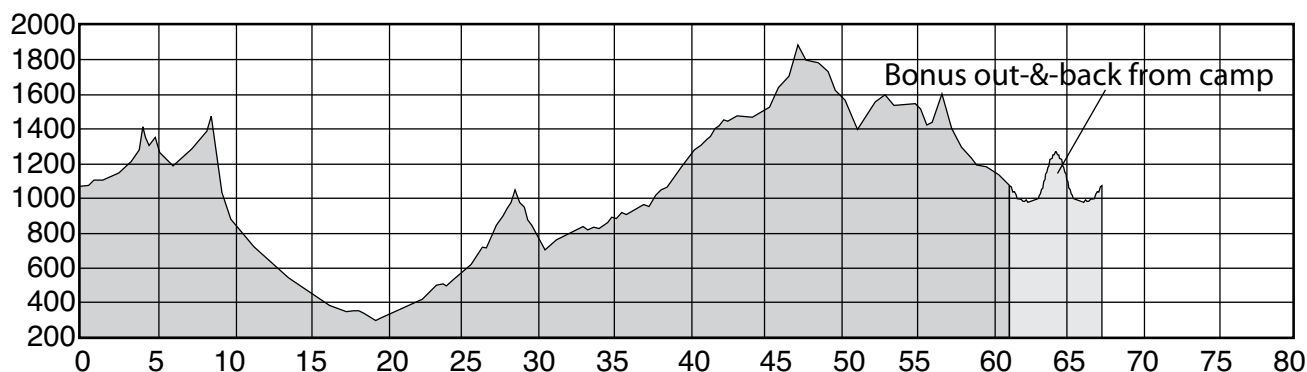
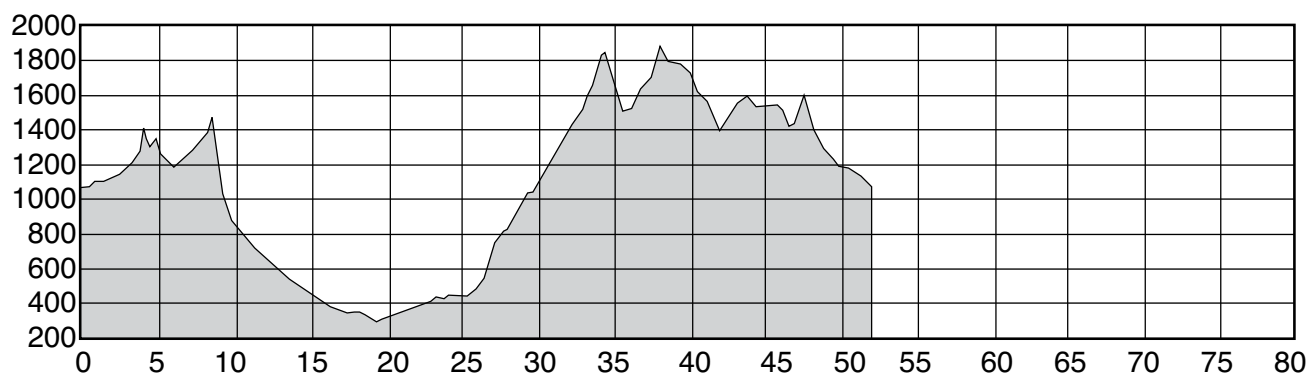
Long route diverges.

Bear R on Bitterwater Road.....	26.0
L on Hwy 25.....	40.2
L on Hwy 146 (Pinnacles Highway)	54.4
L into campground.....	56.3
Finish	56.6

Long route:

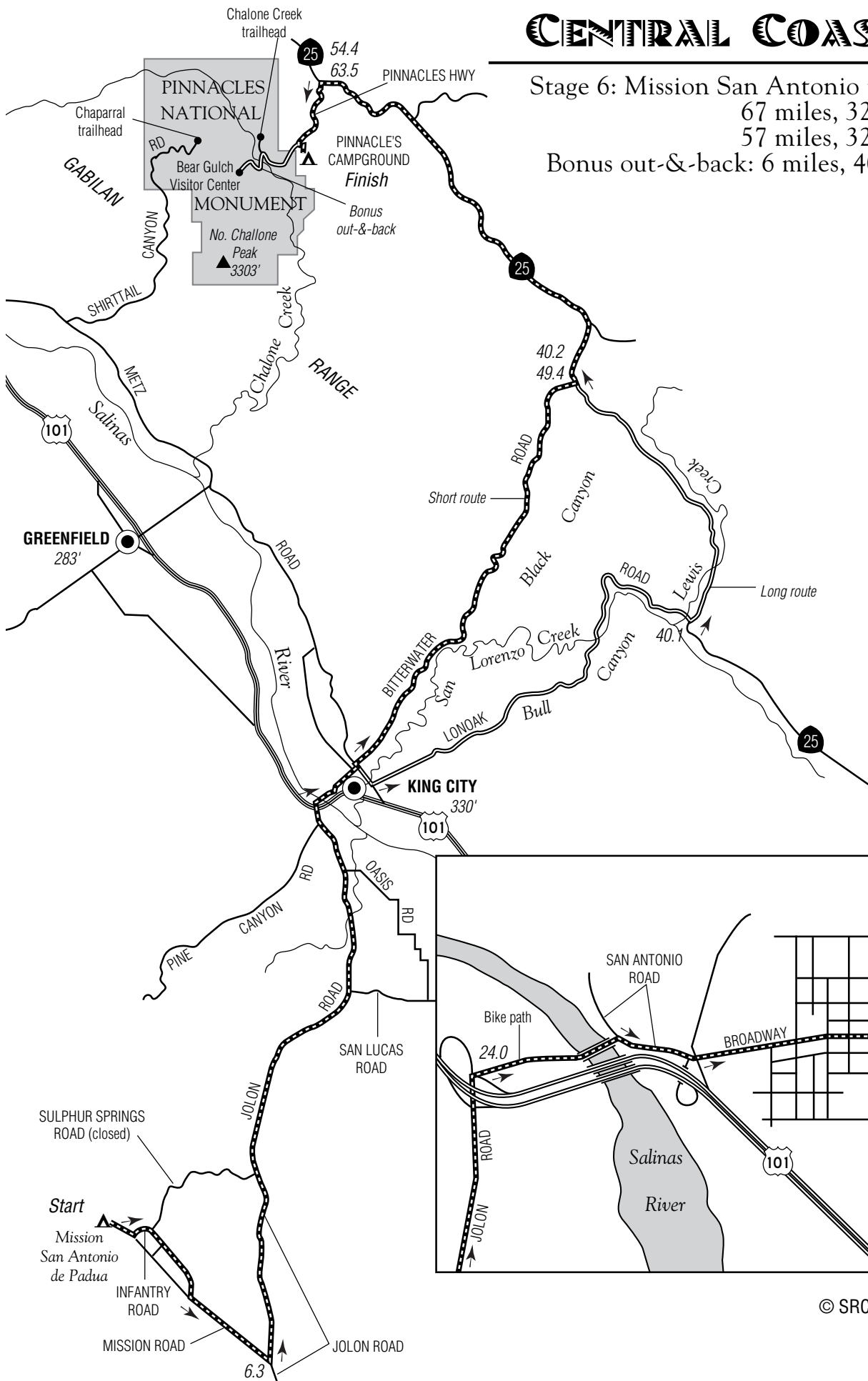
Leave Mission San Antonio.....	0.0
L on Infantry Road.....	0.7
L on Mission Road.....	2.7
L on Jolon Road.....	6.3
Cross under Hwy 101, R on bike path.....	24.0
R on Broadway into King City	24.5
R on 1st Street (rest stop?)	25.8
Short route diverges.	
L on Lonoak Road.....	27.0
L on Hwy 25.....	40.1
L on Hwy 146 (Pinnacles Highway)	63.5
L into campground.....	65.4
Finish	66.7

We have group sites 133 and 134.

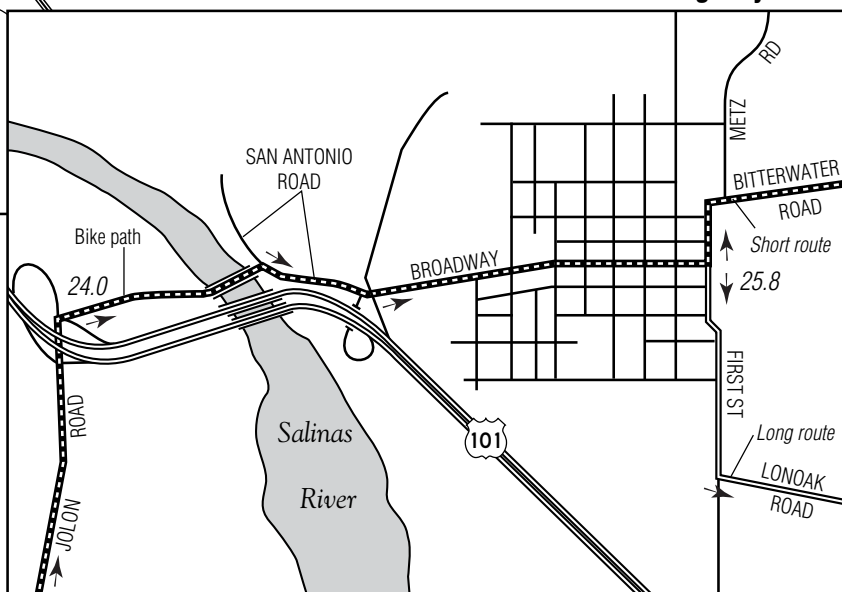


CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 6: Mission San Antonio to East Pinnacles
 67 miles, 3200' up and down
 57 miles, 3200' up and down
 Bonus out-&-back: 6 miles, 400' up and down



King City detail



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 7: Pinnacles NM to Carmel Valley

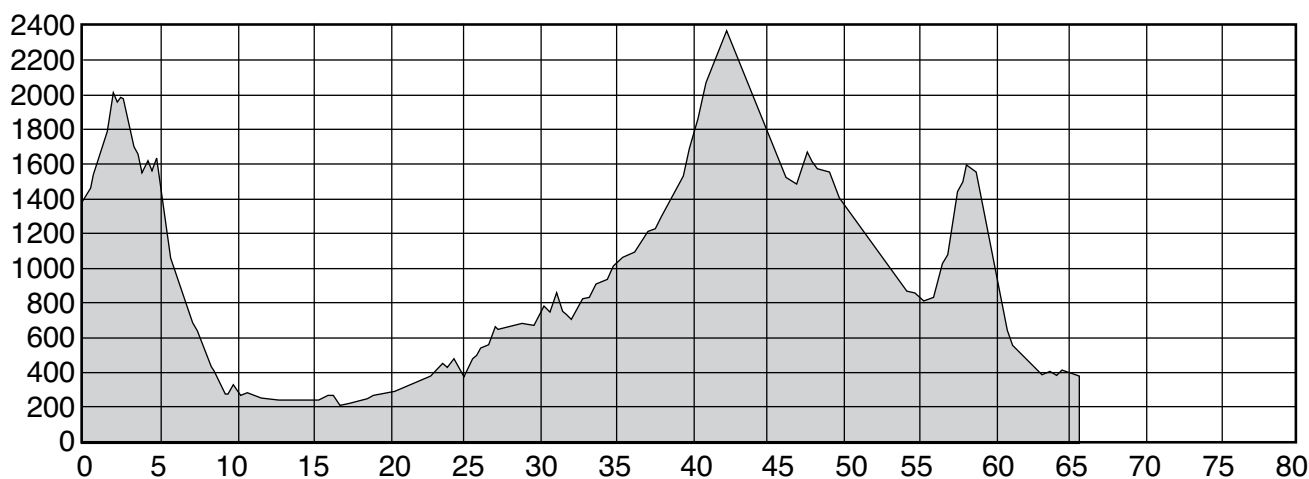
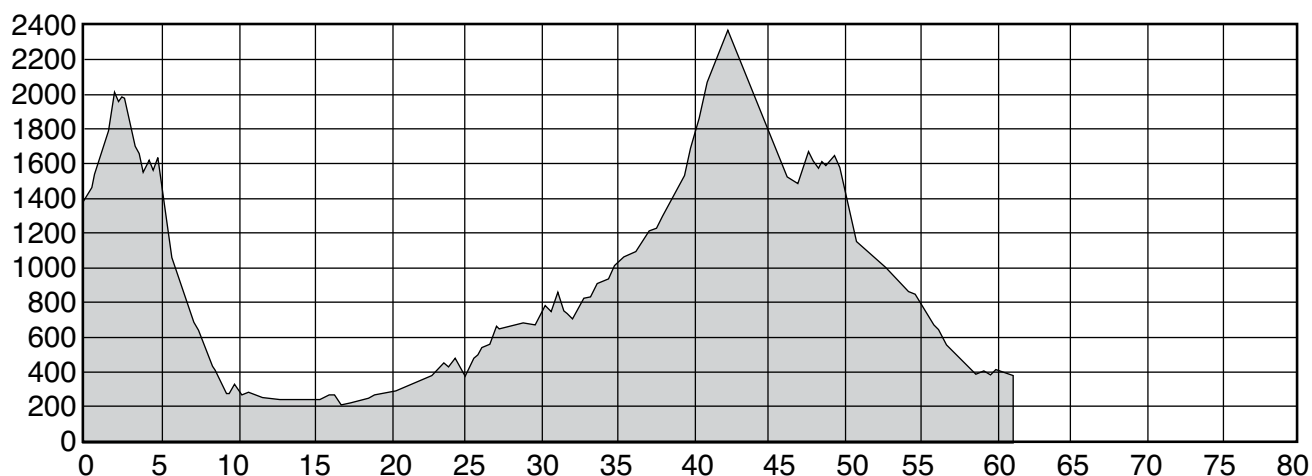
61 miles, 4000' up, 5000' down

65 miles, 4800' up, 5800' down

Leave Chaparral Trailhead on Shirttail Canyon	0.0
L on Metz Road.....	9.3
R on Elm Avenue into Greenfield.....	16.6
Cross Arroyo Seco River.....	24.9
Becomes Arroyo Seco Road	25.2
Becomes Carmel Valley Road.....	31.7
Cahoon summit (2394')	42.2
R on Ford Road in Carmel Valley Village	60.8
Finish at Carmel Valley Comm. Center	61.0

Long route:

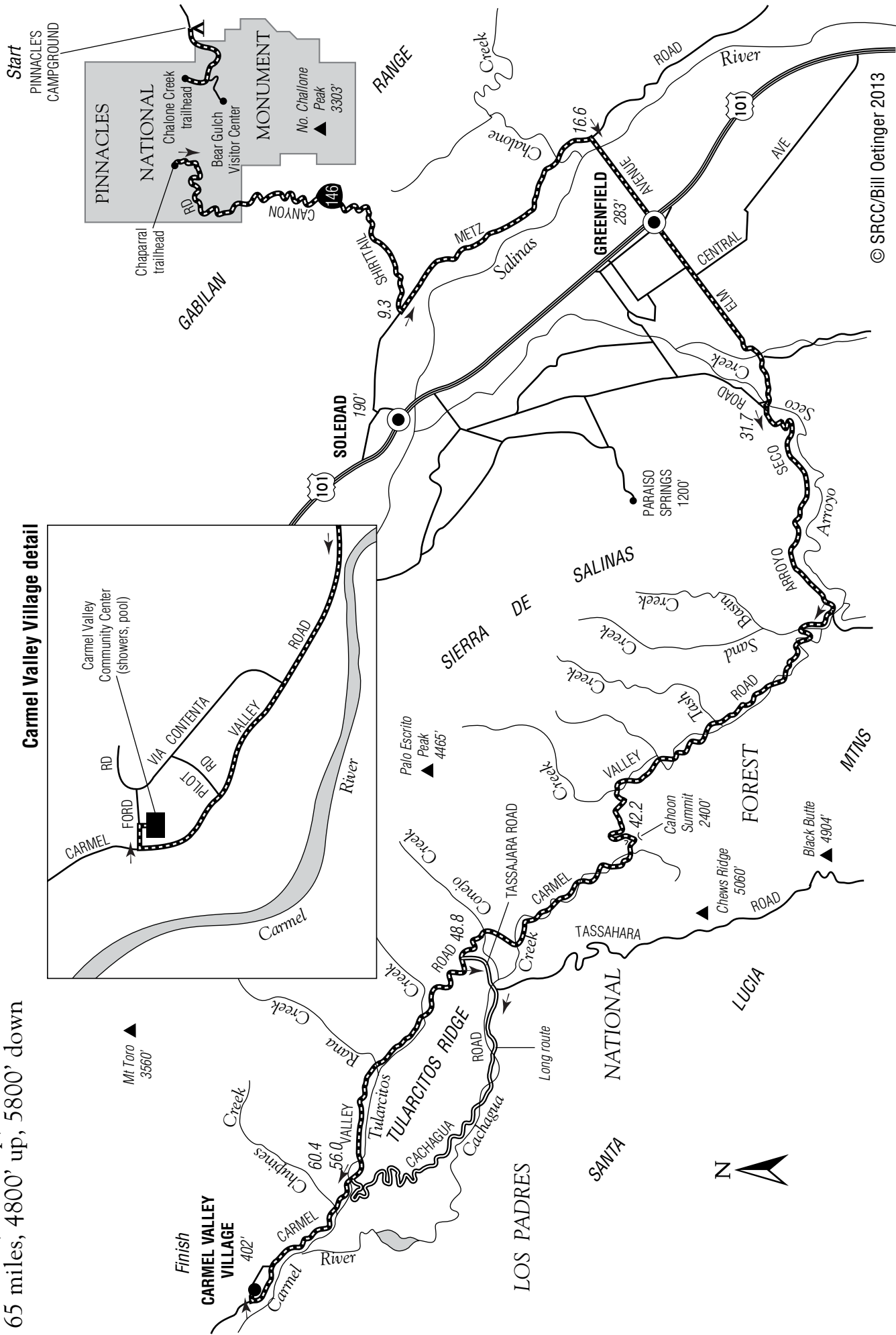
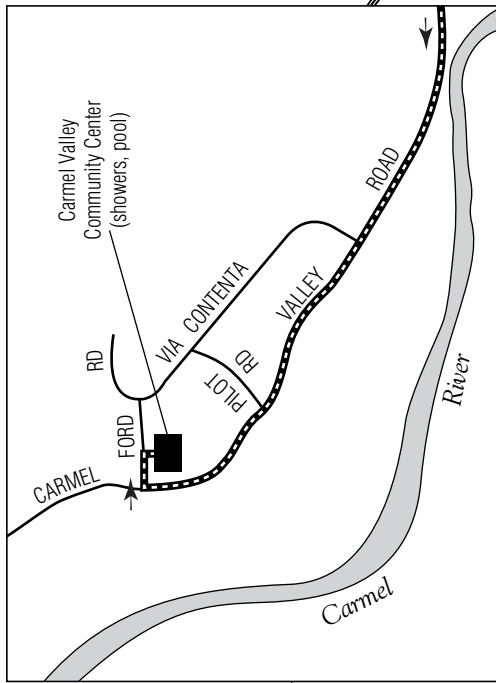
Leave Chaparral Trailhead on Shirttail Canyon	0.0
L on Metz Road.....	9.3
R on Elm Avenue into Greenfield.....	16.6
Cross Arroyo Seco River.....	24.9
Becomes Arroyo Seco Road	25.2
Becomes Carmel Valley Road.....	31.7
Cahoon summit (2394')	42.2
L on Tassajara Road.....	48.8
R on Cachagua Road.....	50.2
L on Carmel Valley Road	60.4
R on Ford Road in Carmel Valley Village	65.2
Finish at Carmel Valley Comm. Center	65.4



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 7: West Pinnacles to Carmel Valley Village
 61 miles, 4000' up, 5000' down
 65 miles, 4800' up, 5800' down

Carmel Valley Village detail



CENTRAL COAST TOUR

Stage 7 (bonus): Carmel Valley Village to Monterey

Monterey-Carmel detail

Mileage based on short course;
for long course, add 4.4 miles to totals...

Continue on Carmel Valley Road	60.8
L on bike path	71.9
(Just before Hwy 1 junction)	
R to cross Hwy 1 to onto Rio Road	72.3
L on Santa Lucia Avenue in Carmel	73.0
R on San Antonio Avenue	73.5
Bear L on N. San Antonio Avenue	74.3
Becomes Carmel Way at Carmel Gate into Del Monte Forest	74.4
Bear R on 17-Mile Drive	74.7
L on Sunridge Road	76.1
R on Scenic Drive	76.3
R on dirt bike path (around fence)	77.4
(Just before going under bridge)	
R on Skyline Forest Drive	77.4
L on Skyline Drive	77.6
R into Veterans Memorial Park	78.6
Finish	78.7

