

# SOUNDINGS Trade Only Today

DAILY NEWS FOR MARINE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

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## HULL OF A TOUR: Hairpin turns, tunnel tapping and Half Moon Bay

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ROHNERT PARK to MONTEREY, Calif. — Don't you just hate it when you pass the midway point on a long-awaited vacation? That precious time you've been banking on and dreaming about for months now just seems to be zooming by.

When your vacation centers on riding powerful beasts like ours from sunup to sundown every day, well, you'd be right to conclude that time really does fly by when you're having fun.

Our ride Thursday had many highlights to recount. We shoved off at 8 a.m. with cool temps and layered skies — not a ray of sunshine in sight. Our morning agenda took us from Rohnert Park to the Golden Gate Bridge, with many hair-raising points in between.



The first 65 miles were a thrill-a-

minute, action-packed adventure ride, complete with super-fun and stimulating hairpin turns and switchbacks. Many of us enthusiasts live for these rare opportunities to push ourselves and improve our game.

For some of our Florida riders who carried both luggage and significant others in tow, the steep monster hills and tight turns were a real test of skill. Despite a few stalls here or there, everybody hammered down and juiced it enough to avoid those dreaded stalls and

tumbles. Phew! Coming into these sharp turns is one thing, but baby, braking and then having to push it and accelerate on a dime while on a sharp incline is another. I'm so glad we got the job done.

There were a few welcome breathers, including a quick scenic cruise as we rolled through two iconic California towns — Port Reyes and Stinson Beach. However, our primary stop was the National Park Service's Marin Headlands Visitor Center, featuring Fort Barry and the Bonita Point Lighthouse. The latter juts out as an entrance to San Francisco Bay.



Pacific Coast Rush riders enjoyed exploring the area surrounding the Marin Headlands Visitor Center. Photo by Jim Krueger

After the grueling and exhilarating two-hour session we'd just had, I was glad to relax for a spell and just inhale the fresh air and take in all the beauty. We snapped photos galore, but the fog was too soupy for us to see the Golden Gate Bridge.

However, from different vantage points, we could view large rock formations, a slew of slumbering sea lions and seals and a few hardy boats in the distance. A few members of our group explored designated trails; others climbed down to view Fort Barry, an Army post originally built in 1908. Unfortunately, access to the lighthouse was closed.

We boarded our trusty steeds to head to our next location via the Golden Gate Bridge. As part of my bucket list on my 50th birthday I had ridden this famous bridge on a motorcycle with my hubby and daughter Chelsea in tow. It was awesome to be back and to ride it again with a large group of friends. We rode nice and tight, with the fog swirling around us, white slivers appearing almost ghostly at times. Crossing together was a breeze!

We were en route to Half Moon Bay, a laid-back beach community with an artists' colony, great restaurants and boutiques, plus a big wave area called Mavericks that attracts seasoned surfers who come in search of the ultimate 50-foot-tall waves.

We were looking forward to riding there, having a bite and hooking up with former tour riders and industry colleagues Phil and Cam



Sea lions and seals put on a show for the tour riders. Photo by Jim Krueger



This walkway led tour riders to historic Fort Barry. Photo by Jim Krueger

Arnold. Phil heads up engineering for Nordhavn Yachts; Cam worked for many years at Suzuki in charge of marketing.

Today she works for the Motorcycle Industry Association, doing a variety of projects. They share our passion for boating and motorcycling and provided great insight about places to go and things to do while we were here.

So much for the best-laid plans. We had no sooner exited the bridge and taken the first ramp when we literally came to a screeching



Fog prevented a clear view of the Golden Gate Bridge, but the tour riders loved it just the same. Photo by Judy Robinson

halt. The two-lane traffic was backed up for miles, including through a long tunnel. I'm not exaggerating one bit when I tell you that we practically walked our bikes a mile, including points of incline.

It's one thing to be stuck in stop-and-go traffic, but it's something altogether different when there is no escape and only one way out.

We toed it through the entry and then the entire tunnel, feet up and feet down, for 45 very long and tiring minutes. My arms and fingers were screaming when we finally saw light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. We saw blue flashing lights ahead, and after a few more minutes we could finally plant our butts solidly in the saddle and throttle forward. Whew! That was an experience I won't soon forget!

I have to say I'm so proud of all of our riders. They successfully conquered today's most thrilling curves, as well as the unexpected challenges. I always learn so much from these bumps in the road, and they truly make me a better, more experienced rider.

Not only did the group as a whole perform like champs with zero incidents, but also no one complained. Our riders kept their calm, pushed through the anxiety and came out on top.

When we could finally rev it up, we did. As we navigated and rolled onto the world-famous Pacific Coast Highway, the stress just melted away.

Although there was still a layer of fog shrouding the coastline, the view from our first-class

seats was nothing short of fantastic!

I had researched lunch spots on Yelp and settled on a Mayan restaurant called Café Capistrano. The family-run operation and staff were very accommodating and were awaiting our arrival. Homemade salsa and chips, fresh fish tacos, shrimp and chicken fajitas — the choices were plentiful, the food phenomenal. Sitting outside in a small patio surrounded by a great group of road warriors was just what we needed.

After lunch our group split and went its separate ways. Some wanted to stay in Monterey, others in neighboring burbs. We're meeting at a joint destination early in the morning today and then heading together to witness the spectacle of Big Sur, followed by a visit to the impressive Hearst Castle in San Simeon.

On Saturday we'll be riding the San Jose Mountains, having lunch at the one and only Alice's Restaurant, and then wrapping our big trip with a Sailabration on San Francisco Bay!

I'll be back on Monday with a final blog. Hope you're enjoying the ride and sharing the fun. Have a great weekend — I plan to!

If you missed a day of Pacific Coast Rush and want to catch up, check out the archives at Soundings Trade Only and type in Hull of a Tour.

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*Wanda Kenton Smith is the event producer and publicist of Boaterz n Bikerz of America: Hull of a Tour. This year's Pacific Coast Rush is presented by title sponsor Freedom Boat Club, platinum sponsor Regal Boats, retail sponsor Alexander Marine USA and media sponsor Soundings Trade Only, with Kenton Smith Marketing handling publicity.*



Tour riders connected with industry colleagues Cam and Phil Arnold in Half Moon Bay.

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