

## Ashland Adventures

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### Oakland to Ashland in 18 innings

Fall is a great time for biking in southern Oregon and in early October I spent a week riding first in the countryside around Ashland and then a section of the Oregon coast. Ashland is a 5 hr drive north from Oakland, and the last time I did this drive was few years ago with my wife and two kids. I distinctly remember the section near Lake Shasta, as my son (then 16) was driving FAST through the curves. This trip was a lot more sedate and I was able to snap a couple of pics along the way.



One can see that Lake Shasta is a bit low and that the snow cover on Mt. Shasta is a thin. Shasta is still impressive, even with out much snow.



Four of us drove up in my truck and kept up a good conversation along the way, tuning into the Giants playoff game somewhere around Williams. We kept track of the game and chatted about introversion for miles (here is a handy guide to understanding introverts:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/16/understanding-introverts-\\_n\\_5989656.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/10/16/understanding-introverts-_n_5989656.html))

The Giants managed to tie the game in the 9<sup>th</sup> inning while we were in some rugged terrain, and I recall that we rolled into our hotel somewhere around the 13<sup>th</sup> inning. We checked in, asking the young lady at the desk if she knew of a good place to watch the game. She replied ‘Oh, are the Ducks playing today?’ So we rephrased the question and asked if there was a Sports Bar nearby. The hotel was a very nice Best Western and had tavern. We wandered down there at 7 pm, game still going – drank some beers, ordered and consumed dinner, and still hung around until the Giants won in the 18<sup>th</sup>

### **Fall Colors, Dreadlocks, Great roads and drivers**

The continental breakfast at the hotel was less than we needed for riding (although they did have a pancake machine) so we wandered across the street to the Little Espresso Shop on Clover Ave. where an elegantly tattooed lady barista was making espresso drinks. This shop is just off the freeway and sells a variety of river rocks laser engraved with various sayings like *Call Your Mother*, as well as coffee. Among other things at the coffee stand, we did notice that dreadlocks are quite popular among the younger folks in this part of the world.

Our color tour began almost immediately as we cycled along Main Street, just outside of the business district.





We really enjoyed riding through the rolling hills west of Ashland, with lots of folks living off the land in a myriad of ways.



Moreover, there seem to be a lot of peaceable folks around Ashland!



With lots of gorgeous horses and a few other critters.



The rolling country side makes for great for cycling, very scenic, not much traffic, lots of photo ops.



After 66 miles and 4400 ft of ascent we were ready for some eats, and dinner that night was at the Standing Stone Brewing Company in downtown Ashland. This is a bike friendly brewery/restaurant, as is indicated by their T-shirts. ( <http://www.standingstonebrewing.com/index.html> ). Great food and beer selection.





## Mt. Ashland or Bust

Monday morning and the task for the day was to ride to the top of Mt Ashland, uphill - 20 miles with 5000 ft of ascent. With that in mind, we had to find a good coffee shop, where we could sit and contemplate while we caffinated. We headed to the Rogue River Roasting Company (<http://ashlandcoffee.com/>) which we had passed on the previous day's ride. This turned out well, as they make very fine espresso drinks, and have three different blends of house coffee. I had the *dark* roast in a 20 oz mug. The pastries were also top shelf, especially the chocolate-hazelnut crescent, not to mention the various croissants, etc. The place was rustic but comfortable, with several placards to make coffee lovers feel comfortable (e.g. *Life is Good – After Coffee*).





The coffee shop was a flat spin from the hotel, but in the opposite direction of Mt Ashland. So we retraced our route and headed south parallel to I-5. The profile for the ride indicates a 20 mile climb to the top of Mt. Ashland, followed by a 20 mile descent back to the hotel. This is a beautiful ride, with a steady grade, views of Mt. Shasta, etc. Given the length of the climb and our recreational (e.g. snail) pace, there was a lot of time for conversation, none of it about bikes.

Ron was heading up, just in front of me.



Steve and Sally took a break (or two) on the way up



The road was definitely cut into the side of the mountain.





David, Ricardo and Susan working hard with about 3 miles to go



Finally, I could see the destination.



The top of Mt. Ashland is a small ski area that has fabulous views of Mt. Shasta. Ron showed his photographic talents with this shot of Sally coming to the crest.

Victory!



The long climb up is more than rewarded by the descent, which was fantastic! The slope is perfect for a smooth cruise. I controlled my speed without using the brakes, just crouching a bit to accelerate, or sitting up to slow down. I cruised down at 30 mph, with a huge grin on my face.

We stopped for lunch at Callahan's Mountain Lodge, which is along the route, where Old Highway 99 crosses I-5, a few miles south of Ashland (<http://www.callahanslodge.com/>). It is a comfortable place with a huge deck overlooking the valley. We were all hungry and the offerings on the lunch menu hit the spot. Bikes seem to have a prominent place in the Oregon psyche, this flower stand was outside the door at Callahan's



After lunch, we continued coasting back to Ashland and then met up with one of our club members for pizza and beer.





### Day 3 – The Lakes Loop

On this day we were shuttled up to our starting point at Howard Prairie Lake, about 20 miles east of Ashland, on a plateau, a 2000 ft climb up Dead Indian Memorial Road (no kidding). Well, this lake was as dry as any lake in California.



But there were incredible views of Mt. McLaughlin and several wonderful meadows.



The route then took us through a wooded area of the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest, with views of Mt. McLaughlin, gentle rivers and some lava flows.







We had lunch at the fabulous Lake of the Woods.



It was at this point when our guide, Mark, let us know about a change of plan for the trip. It seems that the Mercedes Sprinter support van started overheating on the climb to the start of the ride, and while Mark was able to limp it along to Lake of the Woods, it was clear that it need a visit to the shop. Our plan was to ride back to the hotel – down the 9 mile grade on Dead Indian Memorial Rd – and Mark would take the Sprinter to the Mercedes dealer in Medford, and then meet us back at the hotel.

We really enjoyed the scenic ride back along Dead Indian Memorial Road







Then came the 9 mile descent back toward Ashland. The first few miles were exhilarating, but as this was on a highway, I found the last few miles exhausting, mostly due to wind and the fact that there were no obvious places to stop and regroup - just down, down, down.



It turned out that it was going to take a few days to get the parts to repair the Sprinter, so Mark rented a SUV that would seat 5 and mounted a bike rack on the back, and we used my truck as a second support vehicle. Moreover, as my bike rack lives in the back of my truck (I keep it handy) between the two vehicles we were able to transport all the riders and bikes when necessary.

### Burgers and Bitters

Our last night in Ashland we had dinner at the Caldera Brewing Company, where I had one of the best burgers ever. It was a ‘knife and fork’ burger, but neither knife nor fork were needed, it was more a ‘melt in your mouth burger. Just amazing! (<http://www.calderabrewing.com/>). They make a wide variety of beers, and among other brews we tried the IPA, Hoppportunity Knocks and the Hop Hash - all top-notch hoppy ales. The IPA lovers among us were discussing the nuances of IBU and SRM, when finally a non-IPA fan asked how we could drink those beers as they

are so bitter. He even tried a sip – declaring it way too bitter. This led to a Google search of bitters in beer, and we found a recent study that shows about a quarter of the population has a taste receptor gene (TAS2R38) that makes them very sensitive to bitter. So, it turns out that some folks will never be able to appreciate a good IPA.





Caldera Brewing Company was established in 1997. Caldera is dedicated and determined to produce uncompromised quality craft ales and lagers by balancing premium malted barley, fresh whole flower hops, and natural carbonation.

## Year Round Brews

<b>Lawnmower Lager®</b>	For all you people who are afraid of beer you can't see through, this one is for you. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Pilsener, Flaked Rice, Flaked Barley; <b>Hops:</b> Willamette; <b>Alcohol by Volume:</b> 3.9%; <b>IBU:</b> 16; <b>SRM:</b> 3
<b>Pilsener Bier</b>	This is a true German-Style Pilsener, fermented at 47° and cold lagered for eight weeks. <b>Malts:</b> Pilsener malt, CaraHell, Carafoam; <b>Hops:</b> German Hallertauer; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 5.2%; <b>IBU:</b> 33; <b>SRM:</b> 4
<b>Pale Ale/Dry Hop</b>	A West Coast-Style Pale Ale balancing plenty of hops with a malty backbone. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Munich, Crystal; <b>Hops:</b> Centennial, Cascade; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 5.6%; <b>IBU:</b> 55; <b>SRM:</b> 5
<b>Dry Hop Orange</b>	A conundrum in the world of beer. This ale does not fit any conventional beer style. Orange in color only, this beer has hop characteristics of oranges and tangerines. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Crystal; <b>Hops:</b> Amarillo, Cascade, Galena; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 5.6%; <b>IBU:</b> 80; <b>SRM:</b> 9
<b>IPA</b>	An American-Style India Pale Ale brewed with plenty of body and an assertive hop profile. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Munich, Crystal; <b>Hops:</b> Citra, Simcoe, Centennial, Amarillo; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 6.1%; <b>IBU:</b> 94; <b>SRM:</b> 10
<b>Hoppportunity Knocks IPA®</b>	Our other IPA brewed with even more body and perfumy hop profile. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Munich, Crystal; <b>Hops:</b> Centennial; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 6.8%; <b>IBU:</b> 100+; <b>SRM:</b> 14
<b>Hop Hash IPA</b>	Caldera's Hop Hash was made for the 2011 Oregon Brewers Festival. This beer uses non-traditional hopping techniques, as pure, compacted, lupulin hashlike chunks are used in the brew. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Munich, Crystal; <b>Hops:</b> Hop Hash, (Simcoe, Centennial); <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 6.7%; <b>SRM:</b> 12
<b>Ashland Amber®/Dry Hop</b>	A crisp, well balanced, refreshing Amber. Simplicity is the key to this recipe. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Crystal; <b>Hops:</b> Centennial, Cascade; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 5.4%; <b>IBU:</b> 24; <b>SRM:</b> 11
<b>Rauch Úr Bock</b>	German Style Lager billowing with intense cherry and beechwood smoke flavors. Two different smoked grains in this lager, one cured with cherrywood and the other cured with beechwood. Warning, this beer has an intense smoke flavor. <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 7.4%; <b>IBU:</b> 23; <b>SRM:</b> 22
<b>* Vas Deferens Ale®</b>	Caldera's Vas Deferens Ale is a Belgian Style Strong Ale with a unique twist incorporating a little snip of this and a little snip of that. This is a rare release, as this ale is not meant to reproduce. <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 8.1%; <b>IBU:</b> 26; <b>SRM:</b> 35
<b>Pilot Rock Porter®</b>	A smooth, creamy, chocolate laden Robust Porter. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Crystal, Munich, Brown, Pale Chocolate, Chocolate; <b>Hops:</b> Willamette; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 5.8%; <b>IBU:</b> 27; <b>SRM:</b> 43
<b>* Mogli® Bourbon Oak-Aged Chocolate Imperial Porter</b>	Caldera's Mogli was inspired by the loss of a dear friend. This is a chocolate, bourbon, oak-aged Imperial Porter. Mogli is complex, sweet, chocolatey, big and full of unconditional love! Sure to warm your heart. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Crystal, Munich, Brown, Pale Chocolate, Chocolate, Dark Belgian Candi Sugar, Natural Chocolate, Bourbon-Soaked Oak Spirals; <b>Hops:</b> Galena, Willamette; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 8.5%; <b>IBU:</b> 55; <b>SRM:</b> 55
<b>* Old Growth Imperial Stout®</b>	The behemoth of all Stouts, this will leave your tongue sticky and ready for more. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Crystal, Munich, Brown, Pale Chocolate, Chocolate; <b>Hops:</b> Galena, Willamette; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 8.8%; <b>IBU:</b> 100; <b>SRM:</b> 56
<b>* Premium Beer Served in Half Pints</b>	<i>IBU – International Bittering Units (the higher the number the more bitter the beer)</i> <i>SRM – Standard Reference Method (the higher the number the darker the beer)</i> <i>Dry Hopping – Process of adding hops to the cold brite tank, like making tea</i>

## Seasonal Brews – Check for Availability

<b>Helles Lager</b>	A German Style Light Lager. The German word "helles" means light in color. This beer is cold fermented and lagered for eight weeks before its release. <b>Malts:</b> Pilsener, Vienna, Light Munich; <b>Hops:</b> German Hallertauer; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 5.6%; <b>IBU:</b> 17; <b>SRM:</b> 5
<b>Rose Petal Imperial Golden Ale</b>	This ale is like a party at Grandma's house, with the intense, aromatic fragrance of roses. Brewed with real rose petals. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Light Munich; <b>Hops:</b> Willamette; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 6.7%; <b>IBU:</b> 16; <b>SRM:</b> 5
<b>Ginger Beer</b>	A light golden ale brewed with organic fresh ginger and light Belgian Candi Sugar. <b>Malts:</b> Premium Two Row, Carafoam, Light Munich; <b>Hops:</b> Willamette; <b>Alcohol by volume:</b> 4.7%; <b>IBU:</b> 19; <b>SRM:</b> 3

We had one more turn of good fortune at the Caldera. Per earlier discussion, the Giants were in the playoffs, and on Sunday and Monday there were NFL games in the evenings. Well, the TV in our hotel rooms was only getting the games in standard definition. It was a nice flat screen TV, but had a rudimentary remote, and no channel guide. Three of us tried in vain to find a channel guide, and occasionally a guide would pop onto the screen, and then disappear when any channel was selected, not to be found again. We asked at the front desk but got no guidance, and despite 3 BAs, 2 Masters and 1 PhD between three of us, were unable to make progress. Well, there at Caldera, the Giants game was on in high def, and we asked about their TV service and which channel were they watching. It was channel 92.1.

Returning to our room, we tried to get 92.1, but there was no decimal pt on the remote. David, being deep in 'high def withdrawal' pressed 921 on the remote, and BINGO! There was High Def. Our game was actually on 92.4, which meant entering 924. Pressing 'channel up' just took us to integral numbers, e.g. 93, 94, 95 etc. with no indication that there were hidden high def channels.

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We did one more day of riding around Ashland, after which we loaded up the bikes and drove to Bandon for 2 days of riding down the Oregon Coast, as described in my next blog post: Bandon to Brookings - Art and Coffee on the Oregon Coast

#### **Video Link**

This trip was organized by Black Sheep Adventures and here is a link to a shortvideo of the trip that they produced ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVwmeD8UtD4> ).