

# VCM Vernal Equinox Century Challenge

## Best of Santa Cruz County - Route and Food!!

Peggy and Jon Beard - March 23, 2021

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Velo Club Monterey (VCM)

**Equinox metric century for VCM - best of Santa Cruz county.**

Distance 70.94 mi | Elev Gain 3,160 ft | Achievements 53

**You're the Local Legend on Corralitos Mkt to Hames/ Pleasant Valley intersection**  
Most segment efforts in the last 90 days

Map showing the route through Santa Cruz, Capitola, Aptos, and Watsonville.

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## Saturday, March 20, 2021

The challenge came via email. When was the last time we rode a metric century? For Jon it was 2019 during RAGBRAI in Iowa. For Peggy, once in August of 2020. It was time to tackle this! I chose the route to be doable and start along the coast as the starting temperature was in the 30s. We ride the coast route quite frequently, so I added in a few inland highlights, Arana Gulch and the brand-new Westside bike lane from near the Dream Inn to Natural Bridges.

Our first stop was Natural Bridges for a quick restroom and obligatory selfie.



Next stop - Capitola at mile 20. It was starting to get crowded with visitors, so we waved to our beloved Monterey in the background and smiled through our masks.



As we got around to Seascapes it was feeling like lunchtime and we were about halfway done, so we stopped at a sunny market for a quick sandwich.

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Feeling refreshed, we made our way around San Andreas to the end at Beach. Then, skipping our usual right turn which is our route when biking to Monterey, we wound our way on a new route through Watsonville over to Carlton where at 40 miles in we had a tough decision to make:



After some complex negotiation, we shared a slice of strawberry rhubarb and set off to tackle the only real climb of the day - up Mt Madonna to go over Hazel Dell. What a beautiful day it had turned into, and one of my favorite roads in any California county.

As we emerged from the Hazel Dell shade back into the sun in Corralitos, we of course came upon the Corralitos market and sausage company. How could we resist sharing a quick Polish sausage there at mile 50ish? It would be disrespectful at best. So of course we indulged.

Now, I wasn't completely certain how many miles from there back home, and I didn't want to have to do circles in the driveway to get to the metric century. So instead of a common route up Hames, I took us a longer route around

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Corralitos to Freedom to Pleasant Valley. Once we were on Valencia, I announced “hey there’s our 62.3 miles”, with plenty to spare to get us home. Whoo hoo! Jon was kind enough to not mention that I had proposed a 60 mile ride, well, perhaps besides a bit of extra slowing in those last few miles. He rallied at the notion of a stop at Beer Thirty, but when we got there the thought of having to order food changed his mind (apparently he does have a limit!).

We got home to find our neighbors outside waiting to hear about our adventure as they had seen us out and about on our bikes. We got to share our tale of the best of Santa Cruz County with them, and now with you all dear friends. :)

Hope to see you on the bike soon!!

Pegggy and Jon Beard



**Beginning Temp, Pie Smiles, Ending Temp**