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RETRO RACER WITH MODERN ATTITUDE



RIDES cont'd from page 25

riders the proposed route you will take. This map is a fantastic resource for Sonoma County bicyclists. It shows all major county roads and delineates between high traffic (shoulders, no shoulders), medium traffic (shoulders, no shoulders), low traffic (paved, unpaved), central business district route, bike path (paved, unpaved) and freeway (no bicycle access). The map also show grades (5% +, 7% +, 9% +), summits, passes, gates/road ends and where you can find restrooms, water, parking, picnic tables, bike shops, food stores, delis or coffee shops, hospitals, view points and schools as well as camping information. It is the perfect tool for choosing a bicycle route that is suitable for your level of experience as well as your kid's level of experience.

Now you are ready to ride! There are two wonderful, very kid-friendly rides in West Sonoma County. They are each about 14 miles round-trip and most of them are on bike paths so that kids will feel safe and can practice their riding skills. The Joe Rodota Trail mostly parallels Highway 12 and runs between Sebastopol and Santa Rosa. Start in Sebastopol at the West County Revolution Bike Shop (6731 Sebastopol Rd) or grab a coffee and pastry at Coffee Catz (6761 Sebastopol Rd) and ride on the trail through the beautiful laguna and into Santa Rosa. When the Joe Rodota Trail ends, turn left on the Prince Memorial Greenway Trail (which runs along the Santa Rosa Creek) and follow it into downtown Santa Rosa. This trail ends at a refreshing water fountain (Santa Rosa Ave/Sonoma Ave) that kids love to run through! Go south on Santa Rosa Ave for a block and enjoy Julliard Park (227 Santa Rosa Ave). There are bike paths, a small play area, lots of shade trees and a bountiful community garden.

On another day, head out to Forestville from Sebastopol on the West County Trail! The West County Trail pretty much parallels Hwy 116 and there's more opportunity for



practicing some road riding skills. Be sure to follow the well-marked signs as there are several places where you must ride on the road to get to the next part of the path. The trail goes through Graton and ends right in downtown Forestville. If you are feeling up to it, take a right on Mirabel Rd and head out to the Forestville Youth Park (7045 Mirabel Rd) for a picnic lunch. If it's a hot, sunny day and you feel the river calling to you, continue on Mirabel Road all the way to River Road and take a left, go about a mile and turn right into Steel Head Beach Park (9000 River Rd, this part adds another 3 miles round-trip). Bicyclists enter for free and there are lovely beaches where you can hang out and swim in the river. You will be nice and cool for your ride home!

Sonoma County is a joy to experience from the saddle of a bicycle, and the more kids get an opportunity to ride on our beautiful bike paths and roads, the more confident and independent they will be. Remember to always wear a helmet, practice safe riding skills and have fun!

*Sarah Hadler is employed by the Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition whose mission is to promote bicycling for transportation and recreation and works to educate the community about bicycle safety and the benefits of cycling, including good health and protecting the environment.*

**KEEP READING - BUT...there's more! - I'm sending you to my web site for the REST of the Story - all the articles that didn't fit - all the fun you can have!**

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