

Heart-to-Heart



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Tour Director Musings

Wind!! Springs brings warmer temps and that devilish wind. You either get in lots of wind training or you don't ride around western Colorado. Probably most of the US suffers in the spring from the crazy weather too. We plan our rides around the wind forecast. Where ever you live, hope you are getting out there for some fun bike rides. Do you still need a bike tour for this year? Over Hill & Dale Vermont and West Virginia has room for you and a handful of your friends. Check our website for the updated 2024 tour list and openings. It is not too late to cycle with your HeartCycle friends this year, make new friends and explore some new roads with HeartCycle.

Hope to to see you on the road soon,

Judy Siel, Tour Director

Paso Robles Wine Country - 2024

by Kurt Arehart

Paso Robles is a HeartCycle annual classic attracting full sign-ups year after year, and the 2024 edition did not disappoint. Ride leaders Cindy Alvarez and Helayn Storch did a fine job adjusting our schedule for weather and road closures while allowing for plenty of options to shorten rides or take time at the many great wineries we visited. This tour is also made pleasant because it is fixed-base, staying at the very nice Oxford Suites, an easy walk to Paso's wide array of great restaurants. Five of the six planned rides started and ended on the hotel property, with one remote start out of Santa Margarita, twenty miles south.

The daily scenery was magnificent with green pastures and mountains rivaling Ireland due to the wet spring California had, and with each route featuring different aspects of this classic riding country. Participants mingled easily on the bike, at the breaks and in the hotel, making for an enjoyable week that passed too quickly.



Helayn rolls up an easy grade...

The SAG team of Martha McCormack in the Sprinter and Danna Korak in the Penske brought their excellent food and snacks, upbeat zen, skillful caring and creative problem solving to the aid of all. Under their care we had great days winding along the beautiful roads of the region. Perfect execution on my scorecard.

Cindy hinted that the 2025 edition may be in the fall, when the rolling pastures are golden and the vines heavy with grapes. A completely different riding experience!

...and disappears around a bend that beckons.
Everywhere, the magnificent oaks!



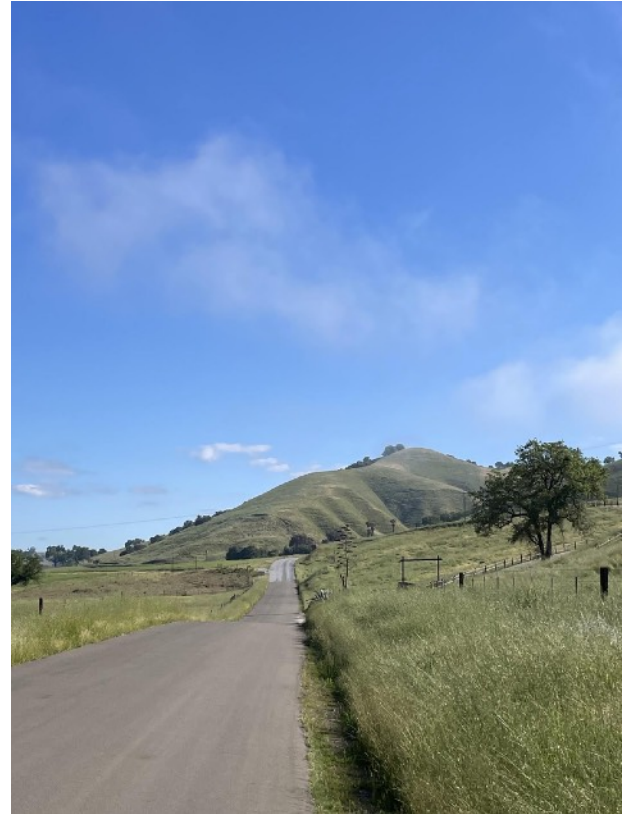
Day 1: Sculpterra. We rode a CCW (counter-clockwise) loop to the south, then northeast before swinging west back into Paso. With lunch in a lovely community garden and an afternoon break at the iconic Sculpterra Winery, this was a fine first outing.

Sculpterra Winery's grounds. A sculpture garden of note!

Day 2: San Andreas Fault. This was the tough one: a long, steep climb, then a fast descent to lunch on the Fault at the Parkfield Cafe. Then back up and over the same ridge to return home. Easy does it!



We had a gray, misty start, then it burned off, just like we planned!



Insane scenery. But the tough climbing grades were up the road.



PLEASE, let this be the top. It was not.



Cindy and Jeanne find Fault.
Photo Credit: Graham Hollis.

Day 3: Tobin James. This was another ride south out of Paso, again looping CCW to the east and then north. Lunch at Tobin James Winery and a nice afternoon break at Riverstar Vineyards. Much wine was loaded into the Sprinter. With an easy 10 miles back to Paso, a few of us gave Riverstar's wines a careful review.



Bob powers up an early grade.



Mark is close behind...



...with Polly catching on.

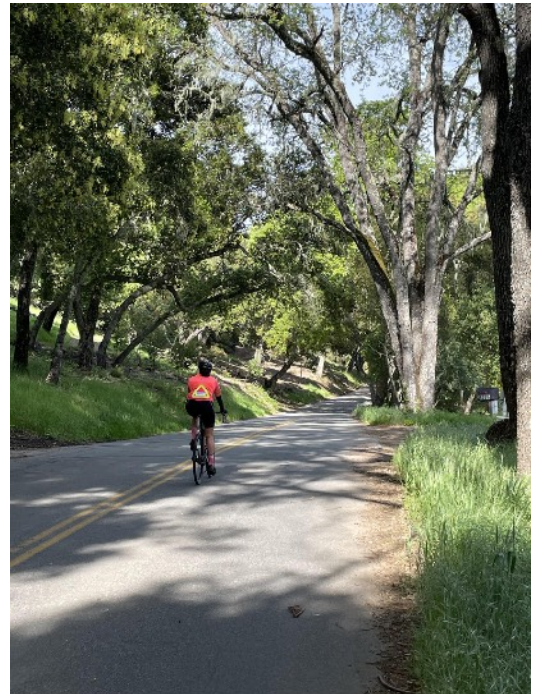


Kurt trying to keep up. But not trying too hard. Photo Credit: Mark Lestikow.

Day 4: Peachy-Pasolivo. Is it possible for the terrain and scenery to get any better? Yes! Most of us thought this one the favorite. After a long but manageable (and beautiful) climb to start the day we were treated to superb terrain and an olive oil tasting at Pasolivo. Lovely stuff!



Shaded to perfection.



Anita rolls through gorgeous country after the climb broke over. The oaks!



Cindy at Pasolivo. Restored and ready to press on! Photo credit: Jeanne Tubb.



When we finally broke out of the hills, the screamer descent back into Paso.



The allure of the lone tree.



Rolling pasture lands today, and the perfect riding weather continues!

Day 5: Vintage Cowboy. This was the remote start out of Santa Margarita, a clockwise loop to the east, and a completely different look, being mainly ranch land. The variety!



Jim ready to descend. We'll turn south before we hit those mountains, so no worries!



Cindy and Mark share a moment. Photo Credit: Judi Duncckley.



The wise seek shade at ride's end as we prepare to shuttle back up to Paso. Photo Credit: Cindy Alvarez.



Clare and the Vintage Cowboy, our fine lunch stop. Photo Credit: Anita Herman.

Day 6: Mission San Miguel. Our last ride featured a pretty climb up Hog Canyon, then a descent to San Miguel for lunch and a tour of the historic Mission.



Matt in the early mist.
Photo Credit: Anita Herman.



The beginnings of the Hog Canyon climb as the day's mist burns off. Still cool and lovely!



Scott smelling the barn on our final day of riding.



Mission San Miguel.
Photo Credit Jeanne Tubb.



An artful vineyard shot.
Photo Credit: Scott MacCormack.



The full team. Happy folks, all! Photo Credit: A nice guy in the lobby.

HeartCycle Tour Directors are working on the 2025 tour schedule and we have three foreign tours that will have early registration this summer. Full tour descriptions and details will be posted in July.

Now a short teaser from each tour...

Cycling Japan's Islands, Backroads, and Temples

April 6th-18, 2025

I invite you to cycle Shikoku Island, a hidden gem nestled in the heart of Japan, where ancient temples whisper secrets of centuries past and the emerald, green landscapes and terraced gardens of rural life. Embark on a journey through time and tradition as we explore many of the 88 Buddhist temples dotting this sacred land, where pilgrims seek protection from the shadows of evil.

Guided by local experts, for 10 cycling days, we'll traverse the labyrinthine paths and hidden hamlets cradled within Shikoku's mountains, where the very air hums with ancient wisdom. Cycling across islands connected by graceful bridges, we'll pedal through landscapes untouched by time, where the population thins and the roads wind like serpents through untouched wilderness.

Our adventure begins in the enchanting town of Koyasan, a mystical enclave founded 1,200 years ago by the visionary Kukai, the main temple of Shingon Buddhism. Here, amidst the hallowed grounds of a World Heritage Site, we'll encounter the spiritual essence that permeates every stone and shadow.

As dusk falls, we'll find refuge in Ryokans, traditional Japanese inns steeped in familial warmth and hospitality. Here, on the tatami floor mats, we will sleep on freshly made futons. And what better way to rejuvenate body and soul than soaking in restorative Onsens, found in many Ryokan's where natural hot springs bubble forth, soothing weary limbs and washing away the cares of the day.

Feast upon the bounty of the sea as we indulge in the freshest bonito, plucked from local waters, and savor the delicate artistry of sushi-style fish. Each meal is a symphony of flavors, a celebration of Japan's rich culinary heritage.

But our journey is not just one of the body and palate, but of the mind and spirit. Amidst the tapestry of food, culture, history, and nature that unfolds before us, we'll discover the true essence of Japan—a land of infinite diversity.

South Island New Zealand Lakes, Mountain and Coast

March 07-22, 2025

This superb cycling adventure from Christchurch to Queenstown and back starts with a chance to explore the vast and impressive Mackenzie Basin by bike to truly appreciate its huge glacial lakes and snow-capped mountains. The itinerary also allows you an opportunity to stretch the legs to admire the grandeur of Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, when you walk beneath its flanks.

The tour begins with an awesome ride on the Banks Peninsula with views of the vivid blue Lyttelton Harbour, the crater of an extinct volcano. Day 2 takes us through beautiful farm country before some superb riding alongside the stunning turquoise lakes of Tekapo and Pukaki. Following the Waitaki River to the coast via the "big-sky country" in Central Otago we head inland again to have a mid tour break in Queenstown, nestled beside the impressive Lake Wakatipu.

The second half of our adventure is characterized by the lush green rolling plains, wild windswept coastlines and unique wildlife experiences of New Zealand's southern most region. We cycle the scenic rural roads of the Fiordland National Park before visiting Invercargill, the world's most southern city. The wildlife experiences of the remote Catlins Coast, home to an ancient petrified forest, fur seals, rare Hector's dolphins and yellow-eyed penguins will leave you wide-eyed, before exploring Dunedin, a city known for its Scottish history, and the Otago Peninsula with its tiny villages and panoramic vistas.



Road to Mt Cook,
South Island, NZ

Photo J. Siel 2003

Randonnée à Vélo en Dordogne

June 1-14, 2025

There is nothing like an extended bicycle tour in France to create enduring memories. We will spend 12 days exploring some of the less-visited parts of the Dordogne, a region known for its scenery, its food (especially truffle and foie gras), its wines (think St. Emilion), its prehistoric sites and relics (home to Lascaux and its famous Neolithic cave art) and much more. If the idea of pedaling on quiet rural roads through the French countryside, visiting villages which date to medieval times, leisurely lunches in village restaurants, gourmet dinners and charming hotels appeals to you, this could be your tour. The itinerary has been designed to offer reasonable daily distances and terrain, with room for improvisation for the more curious and energetic.

We'll gather in Bordeaux, then head to our first village, Brantôme, known for its waterways as the Venice of the Perigord, in the region known as the Perigord Vert. This will be our base for two nights to explore the surrounding villages. Next we head across the Perigord Blanc to Montignac, an excellent base for soaking in some prehistory as well as cycling through more beautiful rural villages and roads in the Perigord Noir. Then on to Sarlat-le-Caneda, a larger, but still charming town with a medieval core and many excellent restaurants. Along the way we can visit a foie gras farm and truffle museum.

The itinerary then heads south and west across the Dordogne River into the final region of the Perigord, the Perigord Pourpre, where we will stay in Monpazier, Bergerac (remember Cyrano?) and St. Emilion, where we will stay for two nights before returning to Bordeaux by bike. Several group dinners and other activities, such as visits to vigneronns, are included, as well as bicycle rental (e-bikes, gravel bikes, hybrid and road bikes available) as well as luggage transfer, van support and a local French guide. Lunches, and stops for coffee, pastries, etc. are not included.



Dordogne, France

Photos J. Siel. 2010

Colorado HeartCycle 2024 Tours

Spring Training in Texas Hill Country

Fredericksburg, Texas

March 15 - 22 Status: Complete
 6 days, Int./Adv. \$1,900.00
 Jim Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
 Tina Vessels, tina.vessels@gmail.com

Springtime in the South Bay Area

Campbell, California

May 19 - 25 Status: Complete
 6 days, Advanced \$1,900.00
 Carol Fredrickson, swmcarol@yahoo.com
 Janet Slate, jslate@ultrasys.net

Portugal: West Coast & Algarve

Lisbon, Portugal

April 7 - 17, 2024 Status: Complete
 11 days, Intermediate \$4,900.00
 Judy Siel, judy.siel@gmail.com

Explore the Door in '24

De Pere, Wisconsin

June 2 - June 9 Status: Closed
 8 days, Intermediate \$2,000.00
 Jim Bethell, bethell.jim@verizon.net
 Cindy Dore, cdorecycle@gmail.com

Paso Robles Wine Country

Paso Robles, California

April 13 - 20 Status: Complete
 6 days, Int./Adv. \$2,000.00
 Cindy Alvarez, sindelou@cox.net
 Helayn Storch, helaynstorch@hotmail.com

Bike & Barge Beautiful Belgium

Bruges, Belgium

July 20 - 27, 2024 Status: Open
 7 days, Easy/Int. \$2,150.00
 Rita Kurelja, ritakurelja@hotmail.com

Underground Railroad Year 1

Mobile, Alabama

April 27 - May 12 Status: Complete
 14 days, Int./Adv. \$2,840.00
 Jim Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
 Ron Finch, blouie-rfinch@comcast.net

Basalt & Aspen - Road & Gravel Tour

Basalt, Colorado

July 24 - 28 Status: Open
 4 days, Int./Adv. \$1,100.00
 Ron Finch, blouie-rfinch@comcast.net
 Robin Heil, heikrobin1@gmail.com

Balkan Quartet

Tirana, Albania

May 17 - 31, 2024 Status: Complete
 14 days, Int./Adv. \$2,600.00
 Lisa Evans, lceski@comcast.net

Puget Sound Island Hopping

La Conner, Washington

August 3 - 11 Status: Open
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$2,560.00
 Cindy Alvarez, sindelou@cox.net
 Helayn Storch, helaynstorch@hotmail.com

Colorado HeartCycle 2024 Tours

Over Hill & Dale, NW Vermont

Burlington, Vermont

August 17 - 24 Status: Open
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$1,700.00
 Jim Bethell, bethell.jim@verizon.net
 Gail Golderman, goldermg@union.edu

West Virginia

Charleston, West Virginia

Sept. 21 - 28 Status: Open
 7 days, Advanced \$1,600.00
 Jim Schroeder, jimmyschweb@gmail.com
 Kurt Arehart, klarehart@gmail.com

Tuscany

Florence, Italy

Sept. 5 - 18, 2024 Status: Open
 13 days, Intermediate \$3,550.00
 Cindy Dore, cdorecycle@gmail.com

Le Monastere in Southern France

Limoux, France

Sept. 28 - Oct. 5 Status: Waitlist
 7 days, Int./Adv. \$3,100.00
 Guy Kelley, guy.kelley@comcast.net

Black Hills of South Dakota

Custer, South Dakota

Sept. 7 - 13 Status: Open
 6 days, Int./Adv. \$1,600.00
 Judy Siel, judy.siel@gmail.com
 Barry Siel, bsiel03@gmail.com

Save the date:
HeartCycle Annual Meeting
October 19th