

## The Rossi's Driveway Ride:

"Rossi's Driveway" is the name given by some motorcyclists for an approximately 6 mile stretch of California State Highway 229 starting south of the very small town of Creston and ending at the intersection with Highway 58. As the motorcycling web site Pashnit.com description says, "If Valentino Rossi had a driveway, this would be it."



*It's narrow, no centerline, winds up, winds down, little traffic, doesn't suffer fools.*

### **Cambria Pines to Vineyard Drive (20.6 miles, 33.1 km):**

The Rossi's Driveway Ride begins the same as the Parkfield ride, they both branch off from the roundabout at the junction of Highway 46 and Vineyard Drive about 7 miles to the west of Paso Robles. To get there take Highway 1 south from Cambria and in about 4 miles take Highway 46 toward Paso Robles. Highway 46 from Highway 1 toward Paso Robles is a fine ride all by itself. The road surface is smooth and wide and well-marked. It goes up into rolling wooded hills for 10 miles (16 km) until it

reaches a high point of 1762 feet (537 meters). Along the way up to the high point on Highway 46 are two wide turnouts (unfortunately not paved) that have outstanding views of the Pacific Ocean and Morro Rock to the southwest. A couple miles beyond the high point, the Santa Rosa Creek Road crosses Highway 46, and on the other side it becomes the Old Creek Road which winds down into the coastal town of Cayucos. Vineyards and farms become more prevalent as the road curves east through valleys and ridges. About 8 more miles after the Santa Rosa Creek / Old Creek intersection comes the roundabout at Vineyard Drive. Three rides pass through this intersection, the Parkfield Ride, the Rossi's Driveway Ride and the Vineyard Drive Ride. The riders for the Rossi's Driveway and Parkfield rides will peel off at the **first** exit of the roundabout (Vineyard Drive – east) and ride the 4 miles to the little town of Templeton where they will find a gasoline station. Those just going to Paso Robles for the day can circle to the **second** exit and continue on Highway 46. Those going on the Vineyard Drive Ride will circle around to the **third** exit, Vineyard Drive – north.

### **Vineyard Drive to Templeton (3.8 miles, 6.1 km):**

Templeton is the last place to get gas until the ride passes back through in 99.8 miles, 160.6 km. Going from Highway 46, Vineyard Drive winds past vineyards containing 100-year-old Zinfandel vines, down a narrow wooded valley before coming out into a more settled area of houses and ranchettes. The road continues on to cross a bridge over Highway 101 and shortly beyond comes to traffic light at Main Street, Templeton, where you turn left. The gas station is at the Templeton Market and Deli, on your left on Main Street as you ease past the downtown area. Templeton is a small ranching, farming, western town. You can't miss the very large grain elevator that towers over the town and is the home of Templeton Feed & Seed Co.

Running total, 24.4 miles, 39.3 km.

### **Templeton to Creston (15.0 miles, 24.1 km):**

We will retrace our route on Main Street back to the intersection with Vineyard Drive and turn left. Vineyard Drive magically becomes Templeton Road, crosses the Salinas River, and shortly comes to the right-hand turnoff for, of all things – Templeton Road. Continuing on straight puts you on El Pomar Road, which is the route the Parkfield Ride takes, not this ride. Once safely on the Templeton Road going south the ride goes through horse-ranchy country with pastures and alfalfa fields, now dried out after summer, and rolling hills of oak trees, anxiously awaiting the beginning of rainy season in only a couple more months. We'll also be passing vineyards which have popped up in the last 20 years as more and more Americans have discovered the pleasures in a glass or two of wine. It's hotter country out here to the east of the Salinas River which is a happy coincidence because the wine craze is now in love with wines that emulate the wines of the southern Rhone Valley in France which is also nice and hot in the summer. We will also pass vineyards of Italian varietals such as Sangiovese basking in the sunshine.

Soon, the ride comes to Highway 41 where we turn left and follow it for about 9 miles to the turn for Highway 229 which will lead us through the little cow town of Creston. We'll have just missed the Creston Classic Rodeo, with calf ropin', barrel racin', steer ridin' and a bunch of other events, but not the dangerous professional stuff like bronc ridin' and bull ridin'. It's a family-oriented show raising funds for local good causes.



*The Rolling A Ranch – both sides of the road - lots of money to buy fancy fencing for the quarter horses.*

Running total, 39.4 miles, 63.4 km.

### **Creston and Rossi's Driveway (Highway 229) to Highway 58 (7.9 miles, 12.7 km):**

Highway 229, also known as Webster Road, heads out of town through a broad flat valley and is like any country two-lane road for a couple miles, then starts to rise into the hills and narrows down to a single lane. It goes up, it goes down, it goes sweeping right, it goes sweeping left, it goes into hard lefts and rights, often blind curves. It's like following a big flat snake. It does this for a little over 5 miles. If that isn't enough, we'll come back the opposite way. At the end of all this exhilaration is the junction with Highway 58 where we turn right.

Running total, 47.3 miles, 76.1 km.

### **Highway 58 to the Pozo Road (3.5 miles, 5.6 km):**

Highway 58 itself is no slouch in the curves department, mostly sweepers, for several miles. It's more heavily travelled, and it seems that many people can't manage to keep their wheels on the pavement through the curves and their tires throw sand on the road surface. Not so great for motorcyclists. It's also called the Calf Canyon Highway, and we'll be going down Calf Canyon past steep hillsides of oak and chaparral to the crossing of the Salinas River, which we probably won't notice since it is more like a brush-filled nearly dry creek than a river. That is because the Santa Margarita Dam about eleven miles upstream governs the amount of water that is released from the Santa Margarita Reservoir. The country then levels out making room for a few scattered ranchettes. A little further on there are no more habitations just open ranch land.



*The mighty Salinas River (the leaf-strewn puddle bottom center).*

We didn't notice, but we've crossed a fence line onto Rancho Santa Margarita. It is 17735 acres or 28 square miles (7200 hectares, 72 square km) and was granted to one Joaquín Estrada in 1844 by the Mexican government. When the Spanish Franciscan friars showed up in Alta California in the latter 1700's to establish a Spanish presence through a chain of 21 missions, and to bring Catholicism, agriculture, viticulture, horses, cows, sheep, pigs, and barnyard fowl to the pagan heathens, Spanish soldiers and eventually a few settlers came along. They contributed smallpox, syphilis, diphtheria, typhus, influenza, measles, and firearms, not to mention capitalism-slavery or maybe more accurately feudalism-serfdom, the slaves or serfs being the local Indians. When the Mexican Revolution got rid of the Spanish government in 1821, the new Mexican Republic was wary of loyalties the Spanish friars probably had to the Spanish king and the Pope. The missions had rights to large tracts of land. The Mexican government found it a wise move to secularize the missions under the guise of returning the land to the natives. They hustled the Franciscan friars off the stage, conveniently forgot about the Indians, and divvied up the mission lands among their friends. Hence, Joaquin Estrada, the new owner of the newly created Rancho Santa Margarita. This rancho, probably not on the best of sites being out in the dry hills, that didn't even include within its boundary the nearby Salinas River, managed to stay intact to the present day, when nearly all of the hundreds of other Mexican and earlier Spanish land grants got divided up and sold off. Many of California's towns and cities got named after the Rancho or Pueblo where they were established. This gave newly arriving Anglos many, many opportunities to mispronounce and mangle their Spanish names, "Las Ann-gel-ease" being among the most egregious, but "El Pueblo de la Reina de los Angeles", or alternatively (some controversy) "El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciuncula" would be a bit of a mouthful for everyday use even by Spanish speakers, and even if pronounced correctly.

Running total, 50.8 miles, 81.7 km

### **Pozo Road to Las Pilitas Road (3.5 miles, 5.6 km):**

There is a stop sign for the junction of Highway 58 and the Pozo Road where we'll turn left on the Pozo Road and travel in a broad open valley, in September the ground will be covered with dried out grasses and scattered trees. This area is still Rancho Santa Margarita, and the road is mostly straight for several miles to the turnoff for the Las Pilitas Road.

Running total, 54.3 miles, 87.4 km

### **Las Pilitas Road to Parkhill Road back to Highway 58 (15.7 miles, 25.27 km)**

Las Pilitas Road sends us back to the east through the back country, re-crossing the Salinas River, where we can stop and look at, but not ride across, the 1917 Rinconada Las Pilitas Bridge spanning the river, which is more the size of a creek. It is now used only by bicyclists and hikers. We'll cross on the newer concrete bridge just upstream. Then we wind towards slightly higher country with more hills by following Las Pilitas Creek upstream. Las Pilitas Road is narrow and a bit rough in places. In the flatter areas will be some ranchettes with pastures. The hillsides will be covered in dried out grasses, oaks, and chaparral. In about 7 miles Park Hill Road comes in from the left.



*The Rinconada Las Pilitas Bridge 1917 built for your Model T.*

Parkhill Road is a bit more travelled, is wider, and usually has a centerline. From the junction, the road rises a bit further in elevation. Then the road levels out and crosses a fairly flat grass covered upland with scattered oaks and even some pine trees, where you can't tell in which direction the runoff from the rain that comes down in the winter goes. In a couple miles the road finds the headwaters of a shallow drainage to follow, Moreno Creek. It also begins to have more and more ranchettes close upon one another compared to the Las Pilitas Road. The vegetation becomes thicker. Brushy trees line the road, and chaparral covers much of the hillsides. The pastures are smaller. This landscape is sometimes called the "Wildland – Urban Interface", although this particular interface couldn't be called very "urban". This is not a good place to be when the wind blows and a wildfire starts. Even given the heavy rains of last winter, nobody can predict with accuracy how serious the fire season will be this year. Late September is the right in the middle of it. Late September can be quite windy. The Wildland – Urban interface in Moreno Creek will be dry.

In a few miles the drainage of Moreno Creek widens out into larger clearings. The brush is pushed back to gentler hillsides. The fire danger is lessened for the "urban" part of the Wildland – Urban interface. We'll be heading toward another one of those Mexican land grants, Rancho Huerhuero, which did get broken up into smaller parcels and sold off and is now in many pieces, and today the name Huer Huero

applies only to a small dry creek a couple miles to the east. We won't notice Rancho Huerhuero just as we wouldn't notice the following former ranchos where towns were established in the later 1800's and early 1900's, Rancho Atascadero (Atascadero, 1913), Rancho La Asuncion (Templeton, 1886), Rancho Paso de Robles (Paso Robles, 1889), or Rancho Santa Rosa (Cambria, 1860's). On another day when we ride up Highway 1 to Big Sur, we will travel through Rancho San Simeon and Rancho Piedras Blancas. Those Ranchos are still intact and are now known as the immense Hearst Ranch. Now, we'll come to the intersection with Highway 58 completing a loop, because we've been here before.

Running total, 70.0 miles, 112.67 km



*Up on top on the Parkhill Road.*

## **Retracing Highway 58 to Highway 229 to Highway 41 to the Templeton Road to Templeton to lunch and return to Cambria (53.8 miles, 86.6 km)**

After our loop around the countryside, we'll be heading back the way we came. This means a repeat in the opposite direction of Rossi's Driveway - Highway 229, Creston, Highway 41, Templeton Road, to Templeton, where we'll take a detour on the access road paralleling Highway 101 to a local establishment for the production of beer and have lunch. Afterward we'll retrace the detour back through Templeton to Vineyard Drive thence to Highway 46 down to Highway 1, then to the Cambria Pines.

Running total, 123.8 miles, 199.3 km

The map does not count the detour for lunch in the total miles.

