

## Introduction to the proposed rides for the Cambria Stage, September 18 – 22, 2023

All the proposed rides follow routes taken during past VOC rallies held in Cambria. These rides were planned and led by either Marty Dickerson or John Laughney. Both were locals to the area, and both sadly are no longer with us. I'm hoping to reconstruct these rides mainly from memory, although a couple of them I've taken recently.

All the rides will be in the area of California called the Central Coast. You have the Pacific Ocean on the west, then the coastline running roughly northwest to southeast (or vice-versa), then the Santa Lucia Mountain Range running in parallel to the coastline. Except not quite parallel. Near Cambria the bulk of the mountains begin 2 or 3 miles inland, but as you go north from Cambria the mountains converge with the coastline to plunge directly into the ocean making the spectacular Big Sur Coast. The Santa Lucia Range is around 20 miles wide and 100 miles long of rugged peaks and valleys covered with chaparral and oak woodland. Paralleling the Santa Lucia Range on the east is the Salinas River Valley where the city of Paso Robles and small towns of Templeton, San Miguel, and Santa Margarita are. To the east beyond the Salinas River are rolling hills of oak woodland, pasture, vineyards, and ranchland culminating in the Temblor Range, home of the San Andreas Fault. The rides will try to visit all these varied terrains.



*Looking east from Cambria over the Santa Lucia Range to Paso Robles and Templeton. Highway 1 and Highway 101 are marked. Highway 46 is the yellow line in between Cambria and Harmony.*



*Looking to the east of Paso Robles, the San Andreas Fault is the straight line across the top of the image. Parkfield is directly on the San Andreas Fault. Ride destinations Parkfield (upper left) and Creston/Rossi's Driveway (center).*

There is a guide for each ride. The guides are in two parts. First, is an overall description, including the total miles, type of road, hazards, and pavement condition, the expected weather, the landscape, scenery, and points of interest. The purpose is to help a rider decide if the ride is something they would like to do. Second, turn-by-turn directions with a map for each ride, for those who wish to go on the ride.

All rides begin and end at the Cambria Pines Lodge. After considering feedback from those who submit to the VOC Forum and the rally organizers, we will choose two or three of the following rides for the Cambria stage of the rally. Each ride will have a ride leader or cat herder and a chase vehicle. Feel free to follow one or more rides on your own (without the official cat herder and chase truck). All the rides have areas where cell phone service is mostly non-existent or at best spotty.

**The proposed rides are:**

- Big Sur Ride – 150 miles, 240 km
- Rossi's Driveway Ride – 124 miles, 199.3 km
- Parkfield Ride – 175 miles, 281 km
- Vineyard Drive Ride – 84 miles, 135 km
- Vineyard Drive Ride + Mission San Miguel – 90 miles, 145 km
- Vineyard Drive Ride + Mission San Antonio – 168 miles, 270 km

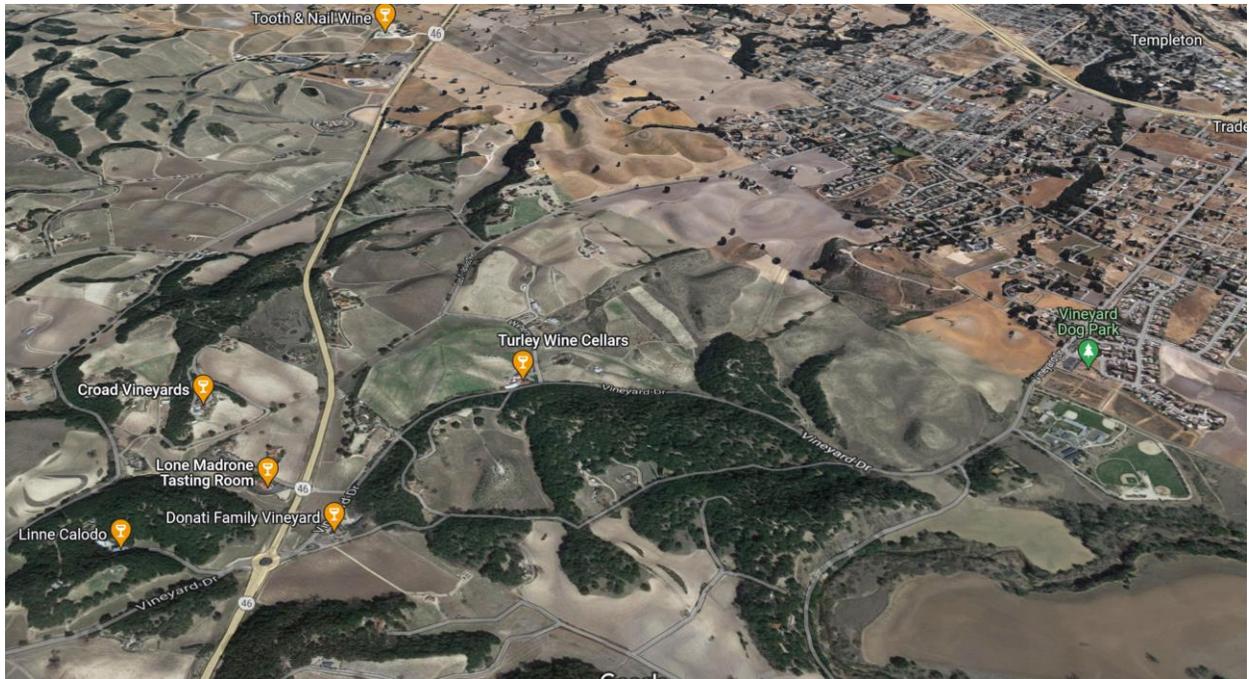
There are three ways to leave Cambria and go on a ride; Highway 1 to the north, Highway 1 to the south, and the Santa Rosa Creek Road. As far as I can tell, the Santa Rosa Creek Road was the only way into Cambria by motor vehicle until the 1930's. One trip over the Santa Rosa Creek Road today will show you why tourism was of little importance in Cambria from the town's beginnings in the 1860's until Highway 1 and Highway 46 were built.

### **Ride by taking Highway 1 to the north:**

There is only one ride that goes to the north from Cambria, the Big Sur Ride. Everybody wants to go up Highway 1 past San Simeon and Hearst Castle to Big Sur, and sometimes beyond to Carmel by the Sea and Monterey, or at least to the Bixby Bridge. We'll go up Highway 1 past San Simeon to Big Sur about 80 miles north of Cambria. Trouble is, Highway 1 doesn't always cooperate. It slides off the mountainside into the sea, the mountainside slides down on it from above and then into the sea, the mountainside burns up and the road is closed, or a flood knocks out a bridge, or a debris flow from a fire knocks out the road. It's also clogged with motorists that aren't you, and therefore shouldn't be there. Yet, in spite of all that, it's a great ride. Sometimes it's even relatively free of traffic, but that's usually in January when the very storms that send Highway 1 off the side of the mountain move in. September is usually perfect, and everybody knows it.

### **Rides off Highway 1 to the south:**

Three of the rides branch off from the roundabout at the junction of Highway 46 and Vineyard Drive. To get there take Highway 1 south from Cambria and in about 4 miles take Highway 46 toward Paso Robles. Highway 46 west of Paso Robles is a fine ride all by itself. The road surface is smooth and wide and well-marked. It goes up into the rolling woodland 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 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 intersects Highway 46, and on the other side it becomes the Old Creek Road which winds down into the coastal town of Cayucos, but that is for another ride. 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 and 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.



*Roundabout at Highway 46 and Vineyard Drive (lower left), Templeton upper right.*

**The Santa Rosa Creek / Old Creek Road:**

As of June 2023, both roads are closed to through traffic because damage due to the winter rains. No ride is planned.

**Disclaimer:**

The rides will pass many wineries. That's just it – we will pass many wineries. Stopping for tastings is entirely on the individual's volition.



*Santa Rosa Creek – Looking towards Cambria and the Pacific.*