

Rancho Murieta to Kirkwood and Back By Jack Parker

The object of many of my events/runs is to stay off freeways as much as possible. Let's face it. Huge 18 wheelers, SUV's and 70 miles per hour in a straight line are bad habits we all try to stay away from most of the time. The road trip that is described here accomplishes just that. So much so that the area is only passable in non-snow months. This trip is best done from May to October. It is part of the Breakfast at Kirkwood event we are doing in June of 2007. We utilize many of the roads in the gold country and Sierra foothills and the west side of the Sierras so the terrain is varied and beautiful. We get above to 8000 feet in elevation and the trip takes about one and one half hours to get there and same back. But it is worth it, especially in the springtime after a good amount of rain when the fields and hills are very green.

Starting in Rancho Murieta at MarShaTe's coffee shop, where by the way there is a great gathering of classic, sports and hot rods on Saturday mornings around 9:00 AM, take highway 16 to the east. About ten minutes into the drive you will come across Old Sacramento Road. Turn left. Follow Old Sac Road into Plymouth, home of Taste, one of the ten best restaurants in the Sacramento Area according to the Bee. It is on the right about halfway through town. Continue through town and across highway 49 onto Fiddletown Road. Take the "Y" ahead to the right which remains Fiddletown Road. Go through Fiddletown and continue up the hill. When you get to the "T" intersection turn to the left onto Shake Ridge Road. When you get to Highway 88 turn left, east, and continue up the hill to Kirkwood. On the way you will pass some of the most beautiful scenery in the Sierras. The Dew Drop Station and Ham's Station have places to pull off the road and get something to drink. A couple of lakes on the right side are also places to stop for pictures. Kirkwood Inn is on the left just past Kirkwood Meadows. Pretty funky place but it is 150 years old. Enough said.

On the way back you might try Omo Ranch Road, which is a right turn, a little past Ham's Station. Stay on Omo Ranch Road to Mt. Aukum Road and turn left. Mt. Aukum becomes Shenandoah Road and stay on that into Plymouth. For a fast way back, turn left onto 49 and continue into Sacramento.

Hope you take this during springtime as it is a great ride. For a real variation take Mormon Immigrant Trail, a right turn off 88 on the way back. It goes into Sly Park which is also a beautiful ride.