

I rate this ride as one of the most spectacular rides in southern California. It starts high above the city of Palm Springs at the Pinion Flats campground and winds it's way down to Palm Springs. Approximately 30 miles of mostly single track with a few short miles of sometimes sandy fire road makes this ride a premier choice for strong single speeders and geared bike riders alike. Don't be fooled in thinking that loosing over 4000' of altitude on the ride will make it an easy ride- IT ISN'T!!

The first 4.3 miles of the trail are primarily downhill single track. At times rough and somewhat technical, the trail always hugs the canyon walls and requires concentration and balance to avoid the various species of cacti and the protruding rocks from the canyon wall. A crash here can hurt! I compare these nasty and technical sections to the Silverado Motorway.



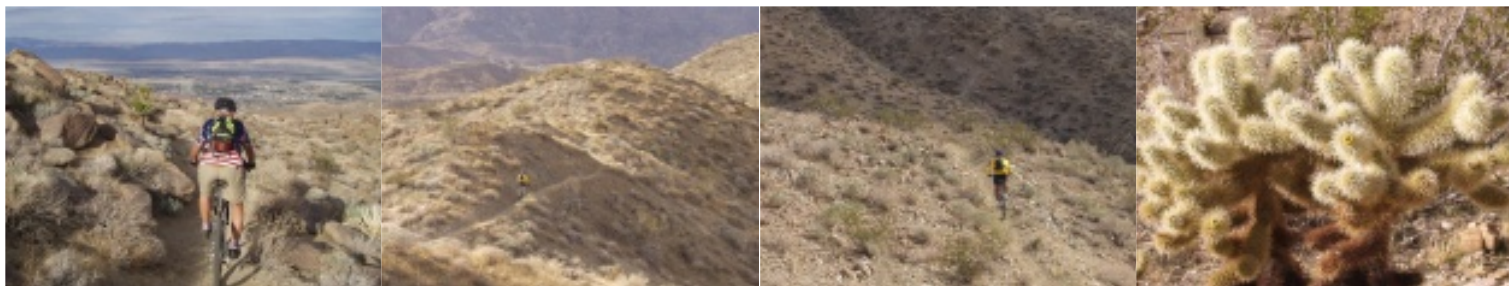
After the first downhill section we enter miles of desert single track with numerous washes - too many to count. Some perfectly rideable others need to be walked, which gives us the opportunity to soak in the gorgeous desert flora showing off their spectacular color schemes, making the trail is never once boring. Occasionally, the trail disappears and we need to fall back on our old boy scout skills. But not to worry, you can't get lost in a canyon unless you climb the walls out of it.



Eventually we'll come to the one and only longer fire road climb ending at Dunn's Desert Rider's Oasis (DDRO). That's quiet a fancy name for a couple of picnic tables and an old earth moving machine. However, DDRO is also the end (or beginning) of 2 spectacular trails- the Art Smith Trail, another super and technical ride for another day right through the breeding area of the endangered California Bighorn Sheep- and the Hahn Buena Vista Trail, which will be the one we are taking.



The Hahn Trail is about 1/2mile of single track climb and then it's all downhill from there. This trail is as close to perfection as it can get for a mountain biker and about 4 miles of it!! Also, it's now at that time of the day, when the sun starts setting and the light will give you a totally new impression and appreciation of the various species of cacti and the desert environment. The interplay of sunlight, desert terrain and the desert flora is simply breath taking. At the end of the Hahn Trail we stay down in a wash for a short distance and then go up Wild Horse Trail to the Clara Burgess Trail where we go left and ride along the ridge for our final descend to Palm springs.



Spectacular views of the Coachella Valley, basking in the last sunlight, will await us and the last stretch of our ride has began. We can literally smell and taste the well deserved pizza and the pitchers of beer waiting for us down in the city. Ah, and yes, if someone didn't get his or her fill of single track, you can take the goat trails for some final technical single track towards town. Personally, I opt for the fire road. It definitely gets us 15 minutes faster to the beer and pizza .

