

The Almost Famous Inaugural Euroa-Melbourne 200

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Most will want to talk of the inaugural SM1200 but everyone knows that it's not the distance, it's the quality of the ride that counts and where else can one do a 1000 km prelude in preparation for the real ride?

I joined the go-for-distance group under the Sydney Harbour Bridge for the start and as a real tortoise I was soon at the back of the pack.

A note to the organiser. Please tell the fast riders to slow down when passing so as not to cause backwash on passing. Please note this Howard (Dove)!

The first day was eventful I met Sophie (Matter, French) and Rick (Blacker, American) at the first and the second checkpoints where we talked about permanents. See Sophie's permanent at super-randonnee-de-haute-provence.blogspot.com. I think this will be a must do for those going to France. I know I want to have a go in 2011.

For me the most memorable part of the first day's ride was the wind and hills. I twittered the kids at home that on occasion I could not get to 20km/h going down hill. Speaking of hills, I figured there would be 25-33% more than the guesstimate on Bikely. My Garmin recorded a bit over 4000m climb for the first day.

On the first night I loved the rain and the ride to Gunning because I have a real neat Cinettica Velocita rain jacket (shameless plug for gear that works). It is water proof, it breathes, it insulates and packs down to the size of a sock. Thanks Lisa (Turner) for telling me about this jacket.

Another note to organiser. Please organise the weather better, I am prepared to pay more for less wind and a sunny day that is not too hot.

Day two, up for breakfast and a bit of a disappointment: the fast people were already gone and had eaten the first serving of breakfast. I was in between shifts and time was not on my side so I headed off to

Cooma. I got lost in Canberra following the Audax signs.

Note to organiser. Please shoot without prejudice people in Canberra who touches your signs.

The good thing about Monday's ride was the wind: could not get more if you paid for it. I had a slow ride to a DNF Monday morning come afternoon. But as I was using the 1000 as practice for the 200 I was not too grieved. Matter of fact I was following advice from Dave Minter to use each day's ride as practice for the following day, advice which proved effective on this occasion. I enjoyed the ride in the car up to Cabramurra and sat at the Table-of-Shame with my mentor Dave who also DNF'd. At least he had the excuse of a broken body and ibuprofen-resistant pain. Best part was Judith (Swallow, English) talked to us as if we were real riders, well Dave is by dint of his past, me I had a paper run a long time ago. FYI: was totally impressed by the quality of the riders who did cycle through the alpine section.

Day three and I started from Corryong a bit late and without papers, like Big Bill (New Jersey, USA) who has a neat permanent in that you nominate the distance, the checkpoints as well as the start and finish locations. If we had this I would have nominated a Sydney-Broken Hill ride with the wind not the SM1200 against the wind.

Note to organiser. Is it possible to consider this in 2013?

Anyway the day was a light-wind-blue-sky day. It was just a nice day to be out riding and I spent the morning talking to Judith and riding in the sun. Walwa, Albury, the Wang. Must mention Pepe and co at the Wang, they offered me some of their chips.

Benalla and Violet Town came and went quickly and it was back to the welcome and familiar hospitality of the volunteers at Euroa. Euroa. Finally. At last I could relax. Tomorrow I would start the Inaugural Euroa-Melbourne 200. **Yeah.**

Another note to organiser. A banner across the street like they do for the Tour Down Under would be appropriate in 2013.

Day four, the big 200. I rode with Bruce (McMillan) and Rick all day. They were great company. We breakfasted in Seymour. Thanks Bec (Morton) for directing us to the café. Now I want to mention a possible error in the route sheet. The ride was in Victoria, which is known to be very flat so that unbelievable distances can be covered doing an Oppy, so how come there were hills. The route had us going through Lancefield. This must have been a typo.

Note to organiser. Please check for typos that lead to hills in Victoria.

Short story (200km ride) long (1200km SM) was we arrived in Melbourne and at every second intersection we accumulated more SM1200 riders who were able to tell us which roads not to take. Navigation is not an Audax requirement but like mice in a maze we found the feed at the Boat Club. Free **beer**, food and good company were the order of the evening and I for one happily partook. However I feel more attention should have been paid to the 200. Apparently a heap finished the 1200 and only a few finished the 200.

So final note to organiser. Was fun doing the IEM 200 please thank all those who made the prelude possible and a banner across the road in Euroa would be nice in 2013.