

Orange County

Coast:

Laguna Wilderness

http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/laguna_wilderness/laguna.htm

200-900 ft.,

The Laguna Wilderness Park is a recent addition to the Orange County Mountain Bikers' riding options. It is my understanding that, until earlier this year (summer of 2002), the park was only available for riding on docent led tours. The park is now open for mountain biking without a docent (at least on the weekends, I don't know about the weekdays). The park is relatively close to both El Moro and Aliso Woods parks.

The Laguna Wilderness Park has an extensive network of fireroads that provide the opportunity for quite a cardio workout. The fireroads that I rode never stayed level for more than a few feet. The first fireroad climb is short but incredibly steep. The terrain is typical Southern California shrubbery. However, the park contains a tree-lined canyon that follows a creek that had more greenery than I expected in the drought year that I rode the park. It must be very attractive in wetter years.

For the trail riders, the park has two singletracks that are legal for mountain bikes. I no longer have a map of the park, so I can not tell you the names of the singletracks; you can pick up a map at the park building next to the parking lot. One singletrack drops west off a ridge, toward the interior of the park. It is the more moderate of the two singletracks. There is enough of a grade at some of the singletrack sections and enough bumpiness to keep the trail fun. However, the second singletrack is the gem of the park for riders that are looking for some advanced terrain. This singletrack drops off of the same ridge as the first one, but it drops east toward Laguna Canyon Road. This singletrack is steep and rutted with a number of rock drop offs (Yea-ha). Some strategically placed cactus will help motivate you to utilize proper downhill technique. This trail is beyond doubt for skilled riders only.

Laguna Wilderness Directions

- * The Laguna Wilderness is near Laguna Beach.
- * Take the 5 or 405 freeway to the Laguna Canyon Road exit.
- * Head south on Laguna Canyon Road for a few miles.
- * The parking lot is about a hundred yards past the intersection with El Toro road, on the right hand side of the road.

El Moro

http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/el_moro/el_moro.htm

0-900 ft., 12 mi.

El Moro is one of the most popular mountain biking parks in Orange County. The park is about 3,000 acres and has both fireroads and singletrack. The park is situated next to the Pacific Ocean, so it tends to stay a bit cooler than inland rides during the summer. The park is crowded on weekends, and mountain bikers share the park with hikers, joggers, and occasionally equestrians. The total elevation gain in the park is only a bit over 900 feet. However, the elevation tends to be gained in short but somewhat steep spurts resulting in a good workout.

The 12.5 mile path that I took runs the park in a counterclockwise direction. The ride starts off with a short fireroad descent into El Moro Canyon and then begins a steady one-mile climb up to the ridge. The fireroad continues to climb along the ridge. Once the back fence line is reached, the singletrack begins. Most experienced riders will have no trouble with this singletrack. A mile or so of fireroad descending follows. At the end of the fireroad, the jewel of the park is reached -- Rattlesnake. Rattlesnake starts off as a narrow, irregular singletrack climb. Eventually, it turns downhill and becomes very rocky. I have seen some experienced riders handle Rattlesnake without too much difficulty, but I have also seen Rattlesnake damage a number of body parts on other riders. While I was photographing the trail, I watched three or four riders descend Rattlesnake. All of them put their feet down several times (or walked the difficult parts).

After Rattlesnake, the trail climbs for a while on fireroad. There are a couple of options to get back to your car: follow the ridge or drop into the canyon and then climb out to the parking lot.

El Moro Directions

- * Take the Pacific Coast Highway South of Corona Del Mar.
- * Turn left onto El Moro Road. Drive past the booth and park in the lot.

Inland

Chino Hills

Guidebook, http://www.socamtbr.com/chino_hills/chino_hills.htm

500-1500 ft.

This Chino Hills ride is about nineteen miles long. Chino Hills State Park is primarily fireroad with some short sections of singletrack. This ride includes the two-mile Raptor Ridge singletrack. There is plenty of up and down as can be seen in the elevation profile. Chino Hills is a good place to go if you are interested in a cardio workout. On the other hand, it has little to offer those who are interested in technical rides.

The majority of the park is grassland with some trees. The scenery can be very eye catching in the spring. However, in the summer, everything turns brown. The west end of the park (where this ride is situated) is formed by two ridges surrounding a narrow canyon. Generally, there is light to moderate traffic on the ridges. The canyon is a very easy ride. Thus, the traffic can be quite heavy as you will encounter many hikers, runners, and beginner riders.

Whiting & The Luge (Orange County)

Guidebook, http://www.socamtbr.com/whiting/whiting_luge.htm

1000-2000 ft., closed after rains

This fifteen mile trail starts out on pavement, enters a wilderness park, and transitions to the Cleveland National Forest. It consists primarily of singletrack and doubletrack. The ride has three short (about half a mile each) but tiring climbs. If ridden as shown in the map, the three climbs occur close together. Most of the trail is technically easy. However, the last mile of singletrack is The Luge. It is rutted and drops about 600 feet in one mile. The Luge makes the whole trip worthwhile.

Whiting Directions

Option One

- * Take the 5 Freeway.
- * Exit at El Toro Road (El Toro area).
- * Travel north about 8.5 miles.
- * Turn right on Live Oak Canyon Road.
- * Park on the left about one hundred yards up Live Oak Canyon Road (next to Cooks Corner).

Option Two

- * Take the 55 Freeway.
- * Exit at Chapman Avenue (Orange area).
- * Travel east several miles.
- * Chapman Avenue turns into Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Continue east on Santiago Canyon Road about twelve miles.
- * Turn left on Live Oak Canyon Road.
- * Park on the left about one hundred yards up Live Oak Canyon Road (next to Cooks Corner).

Tijeras Creek

http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/tijeras_creek/tijeras_creek.htm

400-1400 ft., not good after rains

This twenty-mile ride starts off on the other side of the ridge from O'Neill Park and is composed mostly of singletrack with some fireroad and pavement. The trail starts off with a series of short but steep climbs. Singletrack descents in O'Neill Park follow. The trail then enters an arroyo. This area is fairly flat and is very sandy in some places. The trail crosses a creek several times. I suspect that this area is incredibly wet and green in the spring. The author of the guidebook where I found this ride warns riders not to ride this trail when run-off is heavy. Eventually, the ride leaves the arroyo and works its way back to O'Neill Park via fireroad and pavement. Some singletrack climbing followed by a sandy fireroad descent brings the rider back to the starting point.

Tijeras Creek Directions

Option One

- * Take the 5 Freeway.
- * Exit at El Toro Road (El Toro area).
- * Travel east/north about 7.0 miles.
- * Turn right on Valley Vista.
- * Turn right on Meadow Ridge.
- * Park at the end of Meadow Ridge.

Option Two

- * Take the 55 Freeway.
- * Exit at Chapman Avenue (Orange area).
- * Travel east on Chapman Avenue several miles.
- * Chapman Avenue turns into Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Travel 13.4 miles on Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Turn left on Valley Vista.
- * Turn right on Meadow Ridge.
- * Park at the end of Meadow Ridge.

Mountains

San Juan/Chiquito Trail (Orange County)

Guidebook, http://www.socamtbr.com/san_juan/san_juan.htm

600-3500 ft., 19 mi, loop, or max. 25 mi w/ Chiquito (out-back part)

This is a twenty-four mile singletrack ride that spends the first fourteen miles on the San Juan Trail and the last ten miles on the Chiquito Trail. While the total elevation gain on San Juan is only about 2,600 ft, the climb is far from easy as you are climbing on rutted singletrack. Chiquito adds further elevation gain after an initial drop. In short, this is a strenuous ride. Furthermore, Chiquito is one of the most technical rides in the Southern California area. The first time I rode this trail, my riding partner (with over ten years riding experience) shattered his knee cap and had to walk out for five very rugged miles. The second time I rode it, I banged up my knee. The third time I rode it, my partner (a different one) messed up his thigh, ribs, and elbow. Those desiring a less technical ride can skip Chiquito and return on San Juan.

In spring, the scenery is incredibly varied: transforming from greenery and flowers to dry chaparral to grassy meadow to oak forest to lush jungle-like canyon. The scenery is great and the trail challenging. However, please be aware that San Juan is a very popular trail and is usually crowded on the weekends -- enjoy your ride.

Trabuco Canyon/West Horsethief (Orange County)

Guidebook, <http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/trabuco/trabuco.htm>

2000-4000 ft., 10 mi - not worth it now

The Trabuco Canyon/West Horsethief trail may be a mere ten miles long, but it provides a rigorous singletrack climb, a little bit of fireroad cruising, and a steep singletrack descent with several switchbacks. The first three miles of the trail are as much hike-a-bike as riding. At the beginning of these three miles, you encounter many boulders. Then, you face sections of steep climbs on very loose, busted-up rock. In some places, the trail is actually paved with this rock. The last 1.5 miles of the climb is a comfortable ride on gradual singletrack. A couple of miles of fireroad up and down follow. The descent on West Horsethief is relatively steep, loose, and narrow. At the time I rode the trail, there was a lot of rock that had rolled off the mountain and onto the trail (see the last photo on the next page). This rock combined with a good downhill grade (1330 feet of drop in 1.5 miles) made this a ride for experienced bikers only.

There are only a few photos for this ride. I rode this trail after work and was attempting to outrun the sun before it set. In addition, my riding partner broke his freehub. As a result, I had less time for photos (especially on the singletrack descent).

Trabuco Directions

Option One

- * Take the 5 Freeway.
- * Exit at El Toro Road (El Toro area).
- * Travel north about 8.5 miles.
- * Turn right on Live Oak Canyon Road. Travel about 4.5 miles.
- * Turn left on Trabuco Creek Road (dirt road), Travel about 5.5 miles.

* Park where the singletrack starts.

Option Two

- * Take the 55 Freeway.
- * Exit at Chapman Avenue (Orange area).
- * Travel east several miles.
- * Chapman Avenue turns into Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Continue east on Santiago Canyon Road about twelve miles.
- * Turn left on Live Oak Canyon Road. Travel about 4.5 miles.
- * Turn left on Trabuco Creek Road (dirt road), Travel about 5.5 miles.
- * Park where the singletrack starts.

Tijeras Creek (Orange County)

http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/tijeras_creek/tijeras_creek.htm

400-1400 ft., 19 mi., not good after rains

This twenty-mile ride starts off on the other side of the ridge from O'Neill Park and is composed mostly of singletrack with some fireroad and pavement. The trial starts off with a series of short but steep climbs. Singletrack descents in O'Neill Park follow. The trail then enters an arroyo. This area is fairly flat and is very sandy in some places. The trail crosses a creek several times. I suspect that this area is incredibly wet and green in the spring. The author of the guidebook where I found this ride warns riders not to ride this trail when run-off is heavy. Eventually, the ride leaves the arroyo and works its way back to O'Neill Park via fireroad and pavement. Some singletrack climbing followed by a sandy fireroad descent brings the rider back to the starting point.

Tijeras Creek Directions

Option One

- * Take the 5 Freeway.
- * Exit at El Toro Road (El Toro area).
- * Travel east/north about 7.0 miles.
- * Turn right on Valley Vista.
- * Turn right on Meadow Ridge.
- * Park at the end of Meadow Ridge.

Option Two

- * Take the 55 Freeway.
- * Exit at Chapman Avenue (Orange area).
- * Travel east on Chapman Avenue several miles.
- * Chapman Avenue turns into Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Travel 13.4 miles on Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Turn left on Valley Vista.
- * Turn right on Meadow Ridge.
- * Park at the end of Meadow Ridge.

Joplin Trail (Orange County)

<http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/joplin/joplin.htm>

1500-5000 ft.

This twenty-four mile ride is composed of three trails (Harding Truck Trail, Joplin, and Santiago Truck Trail -- I photographed only Joplin) and combines strenuous climbing with a very technical, singletrack downhill. The ride starts off with a climb up Harding Truck trail, a gain of about 3,000 feet in slightly over seven miles. It is followed by two less strenuous climbs before you arrive at the Joplin singletrack.

The Joplin Trail drops approximately 1,800 feet in 1.9 miles. When you consider that sections of the trail climb or are fairly level, that means that the downhill parts of the singletrack are dropping at a rate of over 1,000 feet per mile. When I took these pictures of Joplin (July 2001), much of the trail was on the verge of unridable. The downhill sections were composed of extremely loose dirt and rock -- often over two inches deep. I tried riding the trail with cross-country racing tires, which meant that I was forced to walk some of the steepest loose sections. A riding partner of mine rode the trail the previous weekend. Despite the fact that he used 2.1 inch knobby trail tires, he was thrown off his bike several times. I could see many areas where previous riders had locked-up their tires and skidded to the edge of the trail where the edge of the soft trail simply collapsed -- dumping the bike onto the steep hillside. The conditions on Joplin can change significantly during the year. I rode Joplin last fall with the same cross-county racing tires and was able to ride the entire trail.

Joplin Trail will lead you to Santiago Truck Trail. This trail will take you through several climbs and downhills before placing you on the pavement ride back to your car.

Joplin Directions

Option One

- * Take the 5 Freeway.
- * Exit at El Toro Road (El Toro area).
- * Travel north about 10.7 miles.
- * Turn right on Modjeska Canyon Road. Travel about 2.0 miles.
- * Park at the Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary.

Option Two

- * Take the 55 Freeway.
- * Exit at Chapman Avenue (Orange area).
- * Travel east several miles
- * Chapman Avenue turns into Santiago Canyon Road.
- * Continue east on Santiago Canyon Road about 9.7 miles.
- * Turn left on Modjeska Canyon Road. Travel about 2.0 miles.
- * Park at the Tucker Wildlife Sanctuary.

San Diego County

Coast:

Del Mar Mesa

http://members.cox.net/garyfox/del_mar_mesa.htm

0-450 ft.

This ride is only moderately technical but we keep a fairly fast pace so you should get a good workout.

Meeting at Second Stop: Take 5 to 56 east. Exit at Carmel Country Road and turn right. Make first right into the dirt parking lot where the gate in the fence is.

4 Rider Level: Intermediate

4 Technical: Moderate

5 Aerobic: Moderate to strenuous

5 Pace: Moderate to fast

5 Distance: 17 miles

5 Riding Time: 2 hours

Sweetwater

<http://members.cox.net/garyfox/sweetwater.htm>

110-540 ft. more inland and SE of SD (far from Escondido)

Fun narrow single track. A little bit of technical. One challenging hill with bench at top to catch breath. Fields of flowers and 3 water crossings.

Directions

Take 94 (East or I-8 East to 125 South to 94 East) past 125 and keep going (aprox 5 miles). You will pass Bancroft, Kenwood, Sweetwater Springs and Jamacha. Turn right at the next signal (there is a TGI Fridays on the corner). Go aprox 1/4 mile and you will see the old iron bridge on the right. (Thomas Bros Map 1271 J-7)

Rider Level: Strong intermediate

Technical: Moderate

Aerobic: Strenuous

Pace: Moderate

Distance: 11 miles

Riding Time: 3 hours

Inland

Elfin Forest

Guidebook, http://members.cox.net/garyfox/elfin_forest.htm

500-1300 ft., 10+ mi, < 5 mi from Escondido

Get ready for a steep climb before you get to the upper single tracks. It isn't a long ride but the switchback climb will give your legs and lung a good workout.

Directions

From Interstate 5 North exit La Costa Avenue. Go east for 3.6 miles and turn left on Rancho Santa Fe Road. Turn right on San Elijo Road (1.5 miles). Turn right on Elfin Forest Road East (1.6 miles). Look for parking lot on Right (4.4 Miles).

Rider Level: Strong intermediate

Technical: Moderate to difficult

Aerobic: Strenuous

Pace: Moderate

Distance: 9

Riding Time: 3 hours

Daley Ranch

Guidebook, http://members.cox.net/garyfox/daley_ranch.htm

1100-1900 ft., 10+ mi, < 5 mi from Escondido

Daley Ranch is a great place for a workout. Lots of uphill and some fun single track downhill. There is a great pizza place we like to stop at on the way home. So bring your lunch money.

Directions

15 north, east 78 (turns into Lincoln Avenue) go about 2.5 miles and turn left on Citrus (stop sign & road narrows) and then make first right on La Honda (aprox 200 feet, there is a sign for Dixon Lake) go up hill to end of road and park in dirt lot on left. It is about 10 minutes from the freeway. (page 1110-C3 in Thomas Bros)

5 Rider Level: Intermediate

5 Technical: Moderate

7 Aerobic: Strenuous

4 Pace: Moderate

5 Distance: 11

5 Riding Time: 3 hours

Lake Hodges

Guidebook, http://members.cox.net/garyfox/lake_hodges.htm

280-500 ft., < 5 mi from Escondido

We usually split into two groups for this ride. The lower trail is great for beginners. It has a couple of grades to get the heart pumping but nothing very technical. The advanced riders add in a climb to the top of Bernardo Peak. It is a grind to the top with several technically challenging sections.

Directions

Take I-15 north to the Via Rancho Parkway exit and go west (left). Go to dead end and turn left on Del Dios Highway (3-4 miles). Go 2 miles and turn left on Rancho Drive (there is a small sign for Hernandez' Hideaway). Parking lot is at the bottom of the hill across from restaurant.

Rider Level: Novice / strong intermediate
Technical: Moderate to difficult
Aerobic: Moderate to strenuous
Pace: Moderate
Distance: 17 miles
Riding Time: 2-3

Mission Trails

Guidebook, http://members.cox.net/garyfox/mission_trails.htm
350-950 ft., E of SD

There are some fun single track downhill trails. They are hard pack with a few cobblestones.

Directions

Take Clairemont Mesa Blvd. East from I-15, hang a right on Rueda Dr. and a left on Calle de Vida. Park underneath the big power lines. If you get to Colina Dorado, you've driven too far.

Rider Level: Intermediate
Technical: Moderate to difficult
Aerobic: Moderate to strenuous
Pace: Moderate to fast
Distance: 17 miles
Riding Time: 3 hours

Mountains

Noble Canyon

Guidebooks, http://members.cox.net/garyfox/nobel_canyon.htm
3700-5400 ft.

Nobel Canyon is one of the most advanced and technically challenging rides in San Diego County. The uphill is steep and strenuous. The downhill offers lots of stepped rocks, drop offs and hairpin turns. You should be an advanced or aggressive intermediate rider to do this ride.

Directions

Meet at the lower trailhead. Take I-8 east to the Pine Valley Road exit and turn left. Drive .3 miles to Old Hwy 80 and turn left. Drive 1.2 miles to Pine Creek Road and turn right (sharp hairpin turn just past bridge). Drive 1.5 miles and turn right into the National Forest parking area (if you get to the new bridge you have gone too far). (Thomas Guide 1237-C3)

If you want to do the shuttle to the top, you will need to work out the details in advance with another driver so there is enough vehicle space for bikes and bodies both ways.

(Adventure Pass required for parking)

Rider Level: Advanced or Strong intermediate
Technical: Difficult
Aerobic: Strenuous
Pace: Moderate to fast
Distance: 14 miles
Riding Time: 4 hours

Laguna Trails

Guidebooks, http://members.cox.net/garyfox/laguna_loop.htm
5400+/- ft

Deserts

Coyote Canyon

Guidebook SoCal, shuttle 90 min.

3900-600 ft.

probably not worth it

Table Mtn. - Jacumba Mtns.

Guidebook

3200-3600ft., 11 mi out-back, doubletracks

Valley of the Moon - Jacumba Mtns.

Guidebook

3200-3600ft., 7+ mi out-back, doubletracks

the two of these can be done a day before Carrizo in case it's warm enough

Grapevine Cyn.

Guidebook

1400-4100 ft., 30 mi.

probably not worth it, doubletracks

Carrizo Gorge

Palm Desert

Palm Canyon (Palm Sprigs Area)

Guidebook, http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/palm/palm_canyon.htm

4300-300 ft., 28 mi, shuttle (= probably not worth it).

This twenty-eight mile shuttle ride works its way through the desert mountains and washes above Palm Springs. The trail is both fun and laborious depending on where you are. The trail has several miles of impressive singletrack. It also has several miles of slogging through sand -- sometimes over three inches deep. A look at a topo map would bring one to conclude that this is mostly a downhill, and therefore easy, ride. The reality is that pedaling through sand, climbing over rock, and negotiating the constant ups and downs of the washes make this ride more work than expected from examining the map (I have no map or elevation profile for this ride since an error on my part wiped out the data in my GPS and prevented me from mapping the ride).

The first 4.3 miles of the trail are primarily downhill singletrack. This part of the trail is the same as the first part of the Pinyon/Palm Canyon ride. For more photos of this part of the ride, check out the first nine photos of the Pinyon/Palm Canyon ride. Much of this singletrack is narrow, canyon-wall hugging trail. You are sometimes forced to choose between riding close to the edge of the trail or brushing cactus. As a result, long pants are not a bad idea -- unless you want to end up LOOKING LIKE ME.

Once you reach the 4.3 mile mark, the slogging begins. You spend a lot of time working your way through sandy washes. The trail often splinters or disappears entirely, leading to some confusion. However, you are in a canyon. So, unless you climb the canyon walls, you can't go in a wrong direction. The washes eventually lead to desert floor singletrack, which leads to more washes, which lead to more singletrack, which leads to more washes -- you get the idea. Eventually, you find your way to a sandy, three-mile, fireroad climb.

After a rest at the Mike Dunn Desert Riders Oasis (a rather grandiose term for some picnic tables) and a half-mile singletrack climb, the fun begins. An inspiring, three-mile, downhill singletrack follows. Some more climbing on singletrack and fire road leads to more downhill singletrack. The singletrack brings you to a sign for the Clara Burgess Trailhead. From here, you are supposed to ride some more singletrack back to the car. However, we got seriously lost and ended up carrying our bikes over rugged hills in an attempt to get out of the mountains before the last rays of sunlight disappeared.

Palm Canyon Directions

Car #1

- * Take the 111/Palm Canyon Drive to Palm Springs.
- * Slightly east of Gene Autry Trail and Palm Canyon Drive, turn into the Rimrock Shopping Center (south side of the road) and park.

Car #2

- * From the shopping center, turn right on Palm Canyon Drive.
- * Continue on Palm Canyon Drive.
- * Turn right on Highway 74.
- * Drive about fourteen miles on Highway 74.
- * Turn right on Pine View. Drive about a hundred yards and Park at the end of the pavement.

Art Smith (Palm Springs Area)

Guidebook, <http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/art-smith/art-smith.htm>

1000-2300 ft., 15 mi. out-back

The Art Smith Trail is a seventeen mile, cardio busting, skill testing, singletrack ride through desert mountains. This is definitely one of the best trails that I have ridden. The ride starts off with a little bit of relatively level singletrack and sandy wash. This only lasts for half a mile. Then, the work begins. The trail begins to rapidly ascend the mountain. Rapidly is the key word here. The trail twists, turns, and switchbacks its way up a rugged, sheer mountain of rock. The author of the book where I found this ride claims that it can be ridden if you're feeling very strong. I would really like to meet the guy/gal that can climb this part of the trail. At one point, the trail gains about 375 feet in 0.30 miles (a third of a mile). However, the steepness is only part of the challenge. The climb is often over stair-step type rocks. Not only do you have to have great cardio, but also the skills of a trials rider to clean some sections of the trail. Needless to say, my riding partner and I walked much of this initial climb (my partner is one of the strongest climbers with which I have ridden and he walked most of this).

The nastiness is over at about the 2.5 mile mark. Then, the fun begins. The singletrack begins to roll up-and-down across the desert. This is an easy two miles. Subsequently, you start climbing again. As opposed to the first climb, this climb is quite manageable and is less than a mile long. A mile of rapid, fun descent is next. A bit of slogging follows as you ride through a sandy wash. A one mile climb takes you out of the wash and up some more singletrack to the Mike Dunn Desert Riders Oasis. This is a rather grandiose name for a bunch of picnic tables and a broken down bulldozer. You will not find anything lush around here, nor will you find any water (drinkable or not). This is the place to rest up. From here, you head back the way you came. The return trip is more of what you have already been through -- climbing and descending on desert singletrack (with that short section of sand slogging, only in the opposite direction).

Remember that mountain of rock that was such a pain to climb -- it's still there. Only now, it's a glorious downhill test of nerve and skill. The trail zig zags steeply down the mountain as it tumbles over rock. Everywhere are boulders that are just waiting to catch your front tire and introduce you to the endo. A fall here could be serious business as parts of the trail traverse rock cliffs (the cliffs are not tall, but falling twenty or thirty feet onto solid rock is not my idea of fun). This is definitely for skilled riders only. I have ridden very few descents that provide such a constant test of skill as this one.

The mountain deposits you a half mile from your car. A little bit more singletrack and sand and the ride is over.

One last note: Various parts of the Art Smith Trail are closed at different times of the year due to the mating season of the Big Horn Sheep that live in

the area. It appears that the entire trail, the way that we rode it, can only be legally ridden between the beginning of October and the end of December.

Art Smith Directions

- * Take the 10 Freeway to the Palm Springs area.
- * Exit at the Monterey Ave offramp.
- * Travel South on Monterey Ave.
- * Monterey Ave. will turn into Highway 74.
- * Continue on Highway 74.
- * About seven miles from Freeway 10, there will be a paved parking lot on the left for the trail.

Pinyon/Palm Canyon (Palm Springs Area)

http://www.socamtbr.com/trails/pinyon/pinyon_palm.htm

3400-4400 ft., 11 mi.

This 11.5 mile ride winds through the high desert in the mountains southeast of Palm Springs. With the exception of three miles of pavement at the end of the ride (to return to the car), the ride is almost entirely singletrack with a small amount of doubletrack at the beginning. The trail is excellent, but it does require some technical skills. The trail starts off by descending. It seems to descend forever, and I kept thinking that sooner or later I was going to have to pay for all the downhill fun. A few places along the descent are somewhat steep (although the steep sections are short). Much of the descending is on narrow and loose ground. The hillsides are generally steep and, in some places, covered with sharp rocks. The trail eventually bottoms out in a canyon. The climb out of the canyon starts steep, but the steep portion only lasts about a mile. After that, the climb is moderate. All along the trail, the rider has to negotiate sections of rock and, occasionally, sand.

The trail has great scenery along the entire ride. I road a couple of days after a rainstorm and could see large mountain lion tracks that had been made in the soft earth after the rain (this is common in the Southern California Mountains). The tracks continued for about a mile.

I highly recommend this trail for singletrack connoisseurs.

Pinyon/Palm Canyon Directions

- * Drive twenty miles south on Highway 74 from Palm Desert.
- * Turn right on Pine View. Drive about a hundred yards and Park at the end of the pavement.