
FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2014 AT 1:12 PM



Bottega Gran Fondo - Pre Event Day

So we arrived into Oakland, CA successfully; nothing too eventful to discuss. Normal rushing in am to finish packing, normal plane ride (including normal "travel grumpies", all later relieved by a nice salad and iced tea for lunch at Redd Wood in Yountville), normal husband psychoses (ie - he cannot stand the airline tags on his bags, so they must be RIPPED from the bags with the ferocity of a warrior and the expediency of a panther mid-chase...as if their attachment for one more moment could somehow cause the bags to self-destruct), normal shuttle to car rental with the usual sardine-like packing of 100 people of all shapes and sizes into a bus made for 30, and normal drive into Yountville. Witness to husband psychoses and sardine packing both contributed to our pleasant interactions with a nice couple who also enjoyed cycling and had done a "Trek through Maine" event; likely we will run into many more shared enthusiasts this trip.

Arrived way too early for check-in apparently, so had to kill over 3 hours in Yountville, which if you've ever been to Yountville (and don't plan on drinking at 11:30am), is difficult to do. We walked to the farthest restaurant, had a leisurely lunch, stopped in the bike shop where we will be renting our bikes, walked through Napa Style, stopped at the grocery store for basic necessities, then alas had to kill the remaining (nearly) 2 hours sitting at the hotel (well, I

may be exaggerating slightly, but close). Thankfully the (outdoor) lobby area of Hotel Yountville is really beautiful, complete with fountain and fireplace (which came in really handy as I commandeered, due to the less than forecasted temperatures). Even managed a little post-travel nap, which would have been a bit more comfy in the room, but not a bad alternative.

After another display of husband psychoses (he must IMMEDIATELY unpack every item traveling with us upon entering the room...for fear it might suffocate in the bags? I'm not sure the reason exactly, but god bless is little OCD heart... at least I'm not married to a slob!), had yet another fantastic meal at Bottega, eating way too much (and way too many things I shouldn't be eating), but enjoyable of course nonetheless. A perfect distance post-dinner walk back to the room and out for the night (I am, if nothing else, a very "cheap date"...2 glasses of wine and lights out!).

So, it's officially the day before the event and we are again exhibiting our normal routine...John is at the (highly coveted; sense sarcasm here) Yountville Fitness Center working out and I am in the room taking my normal leisurely amount of time to wake up and recover from my 2 glasses of wine hangover while recapping the previous day's events, slowly garnering enough energy to work-out. This "alone time" also allows me to prepare for the amount of patience I imagine parents have to muster when their young children awake at 4am on Christmas morning, jumping on the bed with exuberance while Mom and Dad still need their morning coffee. My 47 year-old will turn into a 4 year old today in anticipation of seeing, meeting, and potentially conversing with cycling greats like George Hincapie, Dave Zabriskie, Christian Vandavelde, Chris Carmichael and Bob Roll, while also being surrounded by culinary legends like Michael Chiarello and the celebrity chefs he has amassed for this event. Cycling AND food? Good grief, my lovely husband's head might explode today...he already had that look on his face...oh wait, interrupt that very timely thought as I just received a text from him that said "George Hincapie just rode by me!". Ugh, need I say more?

