



The Flyin' Solo VanLife on the Highways and Byways of North America

**RICK'S ROADS**

Ride Along and Enjoy the People, Places, and Who Knows What



BLOG POST: 2022.09.07

Pacific Coast Highway, CA – Day 2, 17-Mile Drive



Anyway, on Thursday, I headed down CA-1 to Carmel-by-the-Sea. I paid \$11.25 to enter 17-Mile Drive, mainly to photograph Lone Cypress again. But 17MD is more than just that tree.

It's a beautiful ride, curving and rolling, much of it right along the coast. Those cypress trees that I like so much abound, in some places creating a dark green tree tunnel to drive through.

And the road winds past and through two beautiful golf courses: The Links at Spanish Bay and The Cypress Club. The latter had pasture-like, lush fairways and wide

rough, while the former was more enclosed, lined with cypress trees and deep sand bunkers. Several deer were grazing in the healthy grass of both.

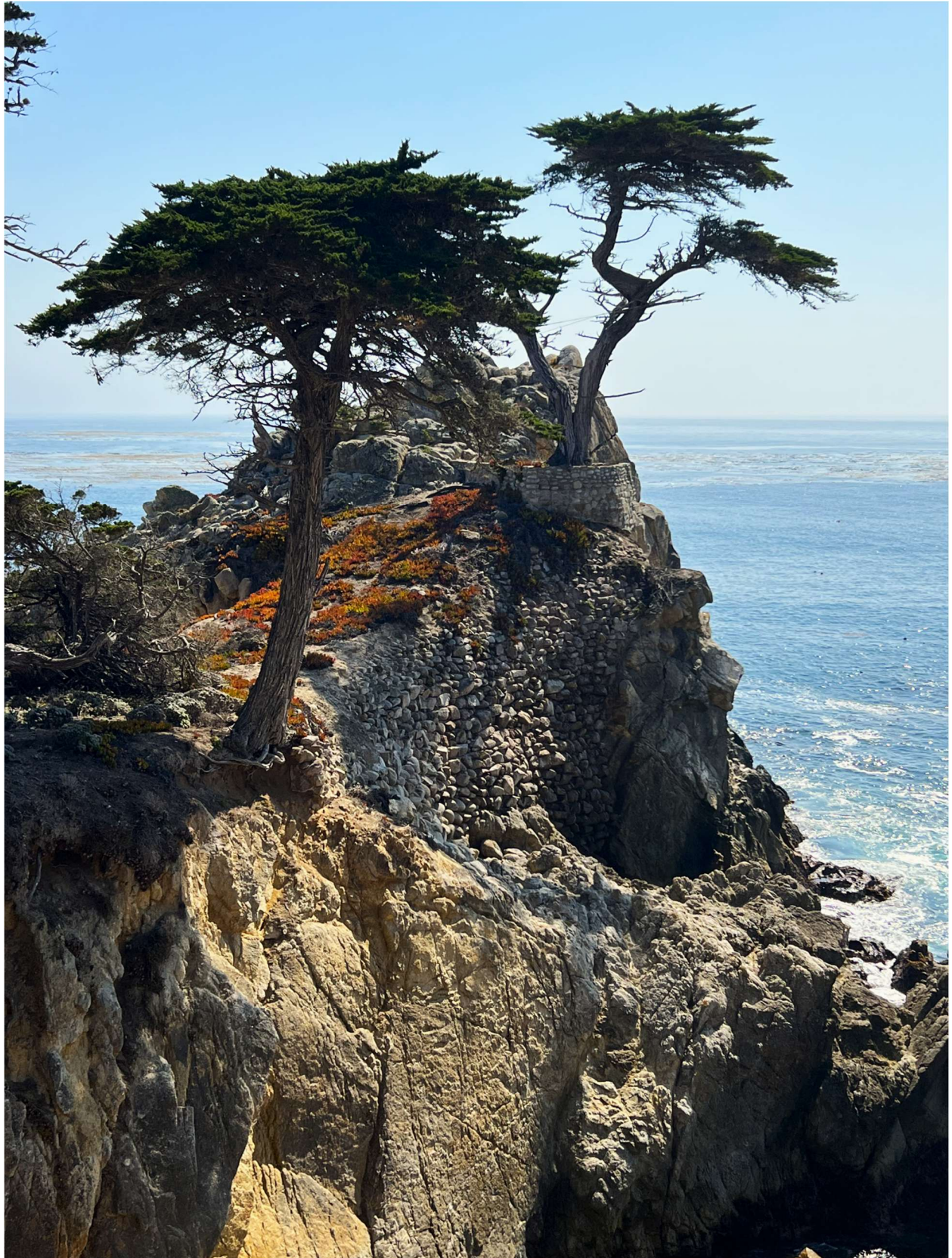




I did not remember the overlook platform at Lone Cypress. I did recall standing on the shoulder of the road to snap my pics, but this platform – whether it was a recent addition or I just plain missed it before – is enormous!









LC is not the only tree around. Just down the road, there is a cool seaside park with a great mix of rocks and vegetation. Great spot to hang out in the shade for a bit.

LC was also not my only reason for coming here. In fact, it was secondary. The primary goal was to walk around in one of the USA top golf courses.

Pebble Beach Golf Links is a public course. It's not some exclusive, private club like Augusta National or many of the other elite courses. Anyone can play here ... if you can afford it.



I got to be buds with Mighty Mike, one of the owners and bartenders of Alabama Jack's, the off-the-beaten path, open air, waterfront bar and restaurant on Card Sound Road, between Key Largo and the tip of the Florida peninsula.

For a few years, I was as much of a regular as a guy who lived 120 miles away could be. It was in my pre-iPad days, so I always had my Notbook with me and I'd sit there and write as I drank a couple of Key West Summer Ales and chowed their awesome cheeseburger. Mike took interest in my writing, especially when I told him I had included A-Jacks on my website.

Anyway, it turns out that he was an avid golfer. On one visit, he told me he had just come back from a trip with three friends to play Pebble Beach. When I asked how much it cost him, he pursed his lips as if he didn't want to think about it, and said, "about a grand, once you factor in all the extras."

That "grand" did not include travel and lodging, either. I looked it up online and saw the greens fees are \$675. Mannnn, you better hit a lot of shots to get your money's worth there. If you shoot 100, it's \$6.75 per stroke. If you shoot sub-70, you're ponying up almost \$10 per. So, hack away!

Throw in a dozen golf balls, a souvenir golf shirt, and a high-priced dinner with cocktails and, yeah, \$1000 is doable. Oh, and of course, I would imagine that on-course beverages are not cheap. Ya think a bartender and bar owner might have a few of those? Me too.

Caddies, though not required, are strongly recommended. Carrying the bag is nice, but their true value is in their knowledge of the course and how to play each shot. They start at \$150 per bag.

Carts are allowed, though only on cart paths, which means you could end up doing more walking than if you actually walked. They cost \$60 *per rider*.



So, yeah, I am **amazed** that I did not do this before on one of my other trips. To be honest, I don't recall even seeing PBGL before. Maybe I took a different road once 17-Mile Drive changed over into Cypress Drive? No idea, and no way to check.



Make no mistake; I was not here to play golf. There was no way I was going to drop 5000 miles worth of gas money on one round of golf, but I did want to walk around the grounds and in the clubhouse and just soak in the Pebble-Beachness of it all.

I pulled in to a spot on the street, locked up, strolled in through the open gate, walked around like I owned the damn place, and was not unwelcome. There's a putting green between the gate and the clubhouse. I should've brought my putter and a few balls with me; no one would've known.

Feeling very much like a stallion, I strolled through the lodge, restaurant, balcony, bar, tap room — yes, I said *tap room* — and shops. I got photos of the 18<sup>th</sup> green and fairway from the balcony of the restaurant. It's actually kind of far from the green, but that's why God created zoom lenses.







I wanted soooooo much to have a seat at the bar in the Tap Room and sit there digging a \$20 beer, or whatever outrageous price they would be. But the eight large cushy bar seats were all taken, and nobody — N-O-body — looked like they were leaving anytime soon. And I went back and checked two more times. Oh well, I used the money to buy a PBGL hat instead.

On my way back to Maxx, I had a photo lined up — a cool reflection of the flowered pergola that covered the walkway in front of all the shops, using the windows themselves to create the reflection — but it would only look cool enough without people in it. So, I had to wait. And wait. And wait.

It's a fairly busy walkway, you see, and rather lengthy, so it is not often vacant. People saunter along, stop and window shop, linger to watch the putting green, emerge from shops unexpectedly, and so on.

A couple of times, I found myself saying, "... give me ten more seconnnnds...." then some douchehead would spill out of a store and ruin my masterpiece. But I held my ground.

One dude who worked somewhere thereabouts (judging by his name tag) walked out of a store and seemed to be on his way, but a big fat fellow-worker came out and joined him, engaging him in conversation. Ohhh shittt. I kept reminding myself that a true photographer would wait it out, allow the moment to happen, without rushing it.



Name Tag Guy looked my way several times. He was a good 25 yards away, but that's close enough to see eyes, and I know he was locking his on me, wondering WTF I was doing. I had the phone up against the window, but it was focused right on him. I kept hoping he would get the fucking hint and step back inside. He was the *only one* in view.

I lowered the camera a couple of times, assuming the overlapped-hands-in-front-of-crotch position of patience and continued to look his way. Occasional glances around confirmed that no other intrusions were imminent. GAHH! GO AWAYYYYY!!

Patience, pic-clicker, let the moment come.

After a couple of almost-breakaways, where he took a step away, but came back to finish a thought, he finally effected his departure. But just as he did, three people walked past my right shoulder and started down the walkway. Dammmn!

Wait! What!?! Swiftly, those three practically dove into the very first store. I looked forward in disbelief. ALL CLEAR! CLICK IT, DUMBASS!

And I did. Three times, just to be sure. And it came out great. Silly pic, really, but I will always like it because of the commitment required to get it.

Then I ran outa gas. Not figuratively. Literally.

I left PBGL, returned to BM the PM, and was sitting there, doing something on my iPad, when I glanced at the dashboard, saw 318.9 on the trip odometer and thought, "Crap! I forgot to get gas!"

Now, 319 miles is not a lot – I figure on 350 for a safe-enough total (I've gotten almost 420) -- but my last fill-up was before I even got to San Francisco, and with all that stop-and-go city driving, *all those hills*, and a bit too much of AC-running-while-parked, my MPG must've been camel crap. My gas gauge needle was down flat.

I quickly Googled "gas station near me" and found a Shell station 1.8 miles away. OK, might be close, but, hey, it's not even 2 miles.

I stalled out less than a half-mile from the station and drifted to a stop at the bottom of two little hills, right next to someone's driveway. I left a note – "OUT OF GAS! BE RIGHT BACK!!" – on BluMaxx's windshield, grabbed my never-before-used, red plastic gas can, and started walking.

After only about 20 steps, some guy pulled up and offered me a ride, saying the gas can was as good as a "HELP!" sign. This was my logbook entry for the pit stop:

\*\*\*\*\*GAS, Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA

66479 / 321.2 miles / 13.1 mpg / 25.4 gals / \$6.00 per gallon / \$151.94

Yes, more than \$150 to fill up. Ughhh. I did see a cool car there though.



Then it was back north to Monterrey and the Stargazer. I hoped somebody had blown up the pickup truck by now.

As it turned out, it was still on property, but parked way in the corner of the lot. I had to go in to the office for something, so I mentioned it. The woman rolled her eyes and said their phone had been ringing off the hook with complaints, but the guy had left the property and did not have a cell phone, so they could not get in touch with him till that morning.

They immediately chastised him for being a douchebag (my term, not hers), and instructed him to either shut off the alarm or park far away.





2000 U.S. Open  
Tiger Woods

In one of the most dominant performances in golf history, Tiger Woods shot 12-under to crush the field by a record 15 strokes. The win was the first of four straight Majors for Woods, the beginning of the "Tiger Slam."

