

## Touring The Area and An Update

Written by

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At the risk of making some “northern based” readers jealous, the weather here is really great; sunny every day with no rain and quite warm, 30 – 33C (86 – 92F). The evenings stay warm and overnight it hasn’t gone below 17C (63F), but just cool enough for a great sleep. Until today, the only evidence of a severe fire in the area was our ability to see the smoke in the distance at Banning Pass. Today the valley was blanketed in a thick layer of grey smoke thanks to a shift in the wind direction.

With such great weather, we decided to go for a motorcycle ride along Highway 74 through the Santa Rosa Mountains to Hemet and possibly all the way to the coast. Mt. San Jacinto is the beautiful one that I photograph so often and it amazes me because it looks so different when we are up close and personal with it. We stopped a couple of times long the way but the smoke prevented any picture-taking of the Coachella Valley. We stopped in the village of Idyllwild for lunch, and then carried on westward. This picture was taken just west of Idyllwild where you can clearly see the smoke lingering over Hemet and the San Jacinto Valley.

Eventually we ended up in Murrieta, east of the coast, where we decided to head back. LA and its suburbs have spread far and wide and rather than riding on scenic country roads we found ourselves hitting one traffic light after another. At every intersection there were dozens of “human billboards” directing drivers to various new subdivisions to buy into. Our route home brought us past the area of the deadly wildfire that has been burning since Thursday and though it is evidently scorched, we could see no fresh smoke billowing. According to the latest available information, they have it almost fully contained (85%) though it has destroyed 34 homes and 20 outbuildings, killed 4 firefighters, critically injured 1, slightly injured nine civilians and so far has cost over \$8.3 million, a very expensive crime!