



Tom's Message Board



Prepping for Italy

After a couple of months vacation Printips is back! Truth be told, Lauren (my ever steady Project Manager) delivered her daughter in July and I've been helping fill in during the past 12 weeks. We're sure happy to see her back but more importantly, we're happy for her and her husband and their brand new healthy baby girl! Next week we start cross-training little Addison so she can step in when her mom retires 😊



Next big news ...on 10/19 my wife Sue and I head to Tuscany, Italy for 12 days. We've been dreaming of this trip for a long time and now that the time is here, it's almost surreal. This was originally a 50th birthday (and she just turned 54) gift from me to her but the economic climate 2008 was not exactly fuzzy and warm so we put the trip on hold. Business still isn't what it used to be but it's improving and besides, life is too short to not celebrate this occasion.

The quite startling part about this trip – for anyone who knows Sue – is that we'll be *cycling* around Italy rather than her usual preference of lounging by a pool, on a beach, or *driving* to sight see. That she agreed to *bike* her way around Tuscany is both a tribute to her sense of adventure and also her affection for me, as she knows how much I like to ride a bike. I'm also sure her motivation to bike has *nothing* to do with burning enough calories during the day to enjoy countless gelato stops and sumptuous Italian meals! Works for me! Works for her! Win-win!

So how have we prepared for 6 days of cycling at 25+ miles per day? While I distance bike a lot, not so much for Sue, so she needed goals – both long term (the trip), and short term (for the training ride destination), like a soft-serve cone half way into a ride (this is the *gelato* part of the training). It's been several months of endurance and distance training. For Sue, *fashion* plays an influential part in many endeavors. Not only is it important to *feel* good but also to *look* good at all times, which I'll never disagree with 😊 So the cycling *clothes* have been key for her. The right colors, the right fit, the right materials, the right *look*. Fortunately for this sport, the fashion not only serves an aesthetic role, but also a functional role. From padded shorts, to gel-palmed gloves, to lively-colored jerseys to help motorists notice, and just the right shoes, all serve both form and function. The only rub is the helmet that messes up the hair. But... safety first!

Tackling hills make a rider stronger but can be humbling at the same time. The first few weeks hills were not Sue's friend (at least the *uphill* kind). More than once she would get part way up and have to get off and walk her bike to the top. But like I said... hills make a rider stronger. It wasn't long before the walking disappeared, replaced with a steady and relentless cadence to each peak. Bravo, or in Italian, Brava! Or, was it the creemee stand at the top of the hill that pulled her up like a ski slope tow rope? Doesn't matter, she's conquering hills she never dreamed of climbing and peaking at just the right time for the hills of Tuscany. I'm proud of her.

We're ready for our trip and I'll tell you all about it next month!

Ciao!

Tom