

## PMVC-Europe, Annual Meeting 2014

The usually-annual meeting of PMVC-Europe this year occurred at the end of the season, September 18-21, mostly in San Zeno di Montagna, Verona, Italy. On the second evening, however, participants convened in the city of Verona, at Pizzeria Saval da Mario, PMVC's Verona clubhouse. Even though for all intents and purposes he is the organization's Verona mechanic, Michele's friend Carlo (shown here in a picture taken just prior to the pizzeria session) was not present. It was members only--and members's wives, of course.

*The Maestro (l),  
the host (r).*

Other than visiting with old associates, the meeting was convened to give Ruud some badly needed quality climbing before the close of the season, and to clarify as much as possible PMVC's possibilities for next year, the potentially historic year of 2015. The riding, as always, was great. On the issue of 2015, however, little progress was made. When would be Michele's heavy teaching month:

March, April, May? TBD. How about Majorca? Intriguing. Visiting Daniela in early June, when it will be warm? The food will still be great. And so on, and so forth. The only thing that's confirmed is Michele's keynote at some big math conference in Pittsburgh in July.

Michele was his very hospitable self for the entire duration of the meeting, but he seemed less than his very self-assured self, at least **the first day**. Picking me up from the Verona airport (as always, he had parked underneath the giant billboard with the young lady in her underwear), he began by needlessly driving into a small parking lot



from which it then proved impossible to leave. We were saved by a young lady—life-size, alive, and fully dressed—who was nice enough to validate our ticket in the machine beyond our fenced-in area. Having escaped from the airport, Michele announced that he could not ride the next day due to some important business in Padua. (A story about a Skype conference—where have I heard that before?). Then, once we were riding alongside the Brenner freeway toward Avio on our fine Nikor bicycles, he looked over to the bike I was using, and remarked that he should have taken it for himself because now he was at a disadvantage. The list goes on: on the climb up Monte Baldo from Avio he claimed to be riding "three or four" teeth lighter than only a month ago (even though he was only a minute or so behind); and at the top, when he was looking for the arm warmers he was sure he had brought, I had to point out that he had put them between his knees in order to be able to zip up his vest.



*I just missed getting that shot; but I did get a selfie*



*yes, the sign says: Avio 17, as in 17 kilometers of climbing--we saw about 2.5 cars on the way up*

Maybe it was the landowner's burdens that weighed on his mind. Because when we got home after almost 100 quality kilometers (also including a quick excursion to the boards of Lake Garda in Bardolino for some badly-needed gelato), it was clear that his lawn was long overdue for a trim. And maybe getting on with that business freed his mind, because as the reader can see, my host did not suffer much doing this chore:



*if you want to pee with the big dogs, you have to lift your leg*

So Michele was fine: 100 kilometers of riding with some serious climbing, then no intellectual activity but straight to an hour of mowing the lawn; after that, still no intellectual activity, still no sitting down, but instead into the kitchen to cook dinner (a *good* dinner). My contribution? I made my own bed (out of solidarity with my host, I did not try it out, even though I had risen at 4:45 that morning to make my flight), picked some fresh figs off Michele's tree, and helped with dinner (not just the eating of it).

**Day two** was my own: we were to meet up at the end of the day in Verona, after Michele's return from his very important business at the university. I had my bicycle, and I had time. If you don't have time, the quickest way to cycle from San Zeno to Verona is to bomb down the hill through Castion Veronese, proceed to Rivoli, pick up the bike path, and ride it almost all the way to the city. You could probably do the whole ride in less than an hour and a half, and it would not even be a bad ride. I did have time, and so it would have been unacceptable not to take a detour through the hill country of Valpolicella. The night before we wrote down a series of names of towns: Sant Ambrogio, Mazurega, Fumane, Marano, Valgatara, Negrar, Tramanal,

because when you take them in this order, you get four very nice climbs, varying in length from three to six kilometers and rarely steeper than 6%. Like the previous day, it was in the mid-70s, mostly overcast, but pleasant. In Valpolicella's vineyards, the harvest had begun. On my way up to Mazurega, I ran into a farmer pulling a small cart piled high with grapes. On many farms, people could be seen cutting the fruit off the vines. There was little traffic--did I say it was pleasant? The only disappointment came in Valgatara, where for years they have had a store with excellent gelato. I had been looking forward to stopping there even before I got on the plane in Amsterdam. When I arrived, however, it turned out they had moved to another town just a week earlier. So it was a chocolate bar for me.

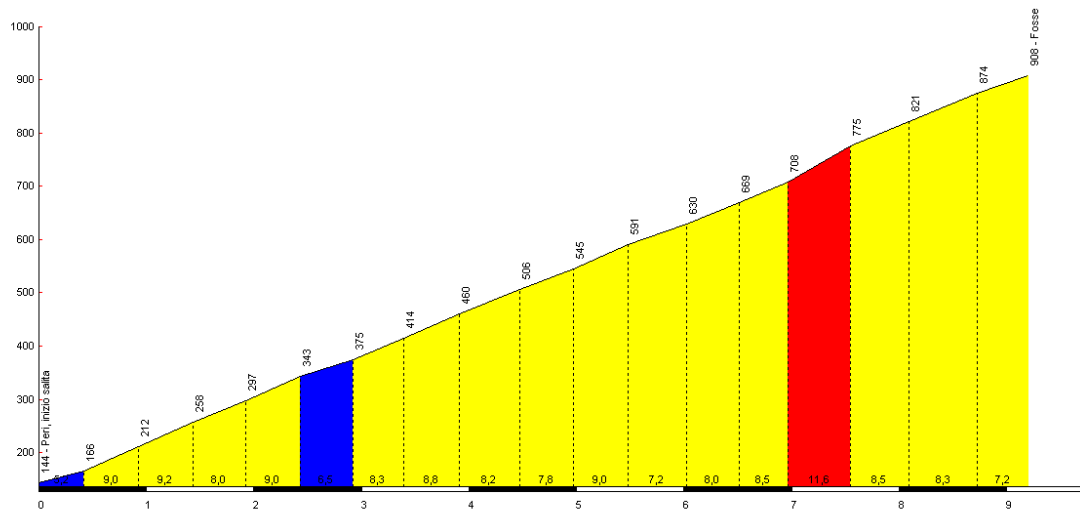


*such a hardship*

After about three hours and 70 kilometers my ride through Verona's backyard ended in the city, where you can't very easily find foreign-language newspapers any more. Fortunately, Carlo had saved a Campagnolo catalogue for me.

**Day three** led us back up the valley of the Adige for a return to the Peri-Fosse climb (for earlier visits, see the report on this PMVC web page of the 2002 Granfondo Chesini, and the report on last year's PMVC-Europe meeting). There is nothing wrong with these 9.5 kilometers, not least because going up, you only encounter an average of 2.5 cars:

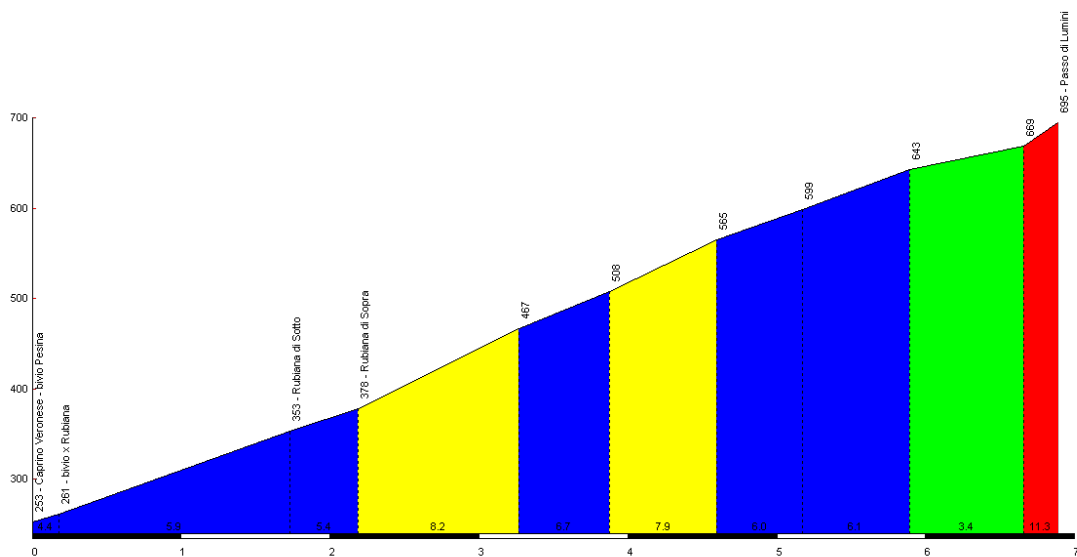
Fosse, da Peri



*what could possibly be wrong with this?*

The climb was followed by a beautiful, albeit increasingly narrow and sketchy, descent into Fumane. Michele decided that in order to get home in time for lunch, we'd better skip the planned climb to Mazurega. He was promptly punished with a slow leak in his front tire. In spite of this, we did make it home in time--sort of--for lunch. I added the Caprino-Lumini climb to ride all the way to the house (78 kilometers).

Passo di Lumini, da Caprino Veronese



Michele was happy we left the car in Caprino: this way he could stop pumping his tire every 5 kilometers and drive the last bit home. We took an hour after lunch for intellectual activity, but then it was on to mowing the second half of the lawn, for Michele, while I volunteered to patch his tube.



*it goes on, and on*

**The last day**, we had one more thing left to do: a quick ride down the hill (through Pesina: "new road!") to the pastry shop in Caprino, and indulge only a little--if you do more, you'll regret it, because the way home leads over the Caprino-Lumini climb. This, indulging just a little, is not easy, as the following image will illustrate:



*the view when you walk in*

To say nothing about this:





*we decided not to go there*

In the end, we stuck with our favorite: Risini:



*because as hard as you may try: you really can't do any better*

As is his custom, Michele led the entire way up on our final climb--he always wants to get Capriono-Lumini over as quickly as possible. I was happy to stay behind, and make sure that my enjoyment of the risini was as great at the top of the climb as at the pastry shop at the bottom. We both succeeded brilliantly, the way all our endeavors succeeded, and the way, I'm sure, PMVC will succeed in getting everyone together around Daniela's table again, next year.

Respectfully and insistentlly submitted:

Ruud