

Matheny's Musings

by Fred Matheny of www.roadbikerider.com

I've found cycling paradise.

I don't know your definition of velo Valhalla but I found a reasonable facsimile in south-central Wisconsin when I coached at PAC Tour's Wisconsin Cycling Camp (www.pactour.com).

Nearly every road in Wisconsin is paved, thanks to the dairy industry. Farmers had to get the milk to market each day so the dairy lobby pushed for pavement. Tiny roads that would be dirt or gravel anywhere else are glorious blacktop in the cheesehead state.

These black ribbons thread their way among steep hills and traverse pastures via winding curves. Most are bordered with grass manicured by local residents. (Lawn mowing seems to be required for residence). Drivers were courteous but there weren't many cars. We rode for miles in echelons, taking the whole lane (or the whole road).

I didn't see one patch of glass in 600 miles. There's virtually no roadside junk either. It made me wonder why Wisconsinites are so much prouder of their landscape than people in other states where chucking beer bottles and fast food wrappers out of car windows seems to be the official state sport.

Although Wisconsin roads are bliss, they aren't eternal bliss, at least for me. They're great for a week but for daily training I like my home roads in western Colorado--the altitude, big climbs and wild feel of riding in the mountains.

I like to see the occasional elk and there's a definite shortage of the horny fellas in Wisconsin. And jeep road adventure rides up in the hills, done on a modified road bike, remain a standard in my training arsenal.

So I won't be moving to Wisconsin any time soon. But would I do another tour in the Badger State? You wouldn't have to ask me twice. With apologies to West Virginia and John Denver, Wisconsin is almost Heaven.