

Driving up Pacific Coast Highway

Living in Southern California has its advantages. One of those advantages is living so near the mighty Pacific Ocean. It is the largest ocean in the world -- big, blue, and beautiful. One of my favorite pastimes when I was growing up was taking a long drive up Pacific Coast Highway. It is a beautiful drive, winding lazily in and out of sight of the sea, and going up hills and down coastal valleys. For first-time cruisers, it could be breathtaking.

One lazy Saturday, I was a bit bored, so I called my girlfriend, who was studying for her English test on the coming Monday, to see if she wanted to go for a ride. "Hey Sheila, want to go for a cruise?" She hemmed and hawed for a while before finally agreeing to go with me. "Where are we going?" she asked, but I wanted it to be a surprise. She had been hitting the books pretty hard lately because of her upcoming mid-term exams. I figured she needed a break, and so did I.

We started driving. Soon we were going through the Santa Monica tunnel. This tunnel is especially nice. When you enter it, you have no clue what is waiting at the other end. As soon as the exit comes into view, the ocean, in all its glory, appears right before your eyes. Sheila was instantly delighted. She turned to me after a while and said "Thanks, baby. I really needed this." I said "Me too, babe."

We talked for what seemed like hours. After that we went up and down, left and right, with the ocean as our companion. We ended up in Santa Barbara, a coastal town about 140 miles north of Los Angeles. It was getting late, so we decided to stay for the night. Santa Barbara is a college town, so it's easy to find affordable rooms to spend the night. That was one of the best nights of my young life.