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Tucsonan pens concise guide to cycling routes around town

By Doug Kreutz, **ARIZONA DAILY STAR**

Tucson often wins praise as a bike-friendly city, but riders have had to rely on word of mouth to learn about some of the best road-cycling routes. Until now. A new book called "Desert Journeys: A Guide for the Tucson Road Cyclist" (\$25, published by author Jerry Rosen) details 32 diverse rides in the Tucson area.

Rosen - a Tucson cyclist, photographer and writer - offers a concise guide to routes ranging from mostly flat spins to a challenging ascent of the Catalina Highway. The spiral-bound book includes directions, route descriptions, mileages, topographic profiles, riding tips, maps and color photos by Rosen. Eddy Muka, a physicist and cyclist, contributed an essay on hill climbing.

Another section of the book offers advice for riding in groups. Rosen, who has lived in Tucson for 35 years, said the book idea was born after he became an avid road cyclist a few years ago. "After some investigation, I discovered to my surprise there was not a guide for local road cycling," Rosen said. "I had never written more than ad copy up to this point, so the idea of writing a book was more than a little scary... Nevertheless, something pushed me forward."

Rosen credits cycling friends, family members, graphic artists, designers, an editor and a printer for helping him complete the project.

Among routes covered in the book are short cruises such as a 1.86-mile stretch of Trails End Drive. A longer - but still moderately rated - ride extends 24.5 miles from a starting point on the Northwest Side to the town of Oracle. In the challenging category: a steep 12-mile pull to the top of Kitt Peak southwest of Tucson.

Other useful features in the book include a section on safety and a listing of Tucson-area bicycle shops, with a map showing their locations. And, yes, cyclists love their caffeine. Thus, the book concludes with a list of some popular coffeehouses.

Rosen's Web site - www.jr photo.org - offers an online purchase option and also lists places where the book is available in Tucson. They include Bookmans Entertainment Exchange stores, Summit Hut stores and several bike shops.

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