

San Diego Rock 'n' Roll Marathon - June 5, 2011

One would be hard pressed to find a more gorgeous and welcoming marathon to run on the cusp of summer than the San Diego RNR. Other than the spectacular climate and temps, the area is bubbling with excitement in the days prior to the event. Elite Racing / Competitor Group host a great event with promos including a great SeaWorld – San Diego special, an impressive expo and a pretty decent after party.

Highlights of the event:

- 1) 59 degree temps on race day morning with a 6:15 a.m. start!
- 2) Start line at Balboa Park is very easy to maneuver through.
- 3) Though a BQ'er, this event is just pure fun, from the regular race outfits of tutu's and Elvis impersonators to the extreme guys racing in their tighty-whitey's. Gotta love it!
- 4) NutriLite Vitamins had small buckets filled with ice to soak tired feet and tootsies after the race, providing also plastic sleeves to slide over your feet.
- 5) Volunteers along the way with bowls of crushed ice to grab & munch on (oh, where were these peeps during B2B!).
- 6) Relatively flat course for the last half.
- 7) A more-than-spectacular view around Mission Bay for the last few hard miles of the marathon. A view of the area is a great distracter from the aches and pains starting to set in at that time.
- 8) My race bib gets me a \$10 discount at P.F. Chang's.

Points to Ponder:

- 1) No longer a race with "a band at every mile". Other 'entertainment' such as cheerleaders from local schools and locals handing out nice snacks along the way. Not necessarily a bad thing but if you're like me and used to running with music, take your Shuffle with you.
- 2) Best if you have friends or family to pick you up after the race. It's not too far of a walk to catch a return bus back to Balboa Park but it's certainly not something one especially wants to do after running 26.2.

For those visiting the area, this second part of the report has just some personal recommendations for things to do while there. We'll start with FOOD, then activities.

- 1) HODAD'S – a beachy, surf place that serves an awesome bacon cheeseburger as well as a decent selection of draft IPAs. Originally only in Ocean Beach, they've recently opened a location in downtown San Diego. Not pricey.
- 2) THE FISH JOINT (near downtown) – grrreat fish tacos, stuffed with salmon or north atlantic cod, slaw and salsa. I ate there more than once in a 7 day period. Not pricey.
- 3) BRONX PIZZA – New York style pizza, whole or by the slice. My recommendation to this place is backed up by the hundreds of reviews on Yelp.com. Not pricey.
- 4) BOUDIN'S BAKERY – Numerous locations in San Francisco and along the Wharf, they now have a mall location in San Diego. Incredible sourdough bread. My fav at this deli is the soup bowl, which is a hollowed out sourdough bread bowl filled either with beef chili & cheese or with clam chowder. So very good and not pricey.

Okay, so I'm full now and ready for other activities!

Three places not to miss – Balboa Park, Three Sisters Falls and Wilson Creek Winery.

BALBOA PARK – inviting trails for running, walking or biking plus a local dog park. Wonderfully clean and maintained, huge trees, green grass. Spent more than a couple of early evenings there playing Frisbee.

THREE SISTERS FALLS – Due to time constraints, I did this hike two days before the marathon. Maybe not the best of ideas but I don't regret it at all. Hands down, I would do it again. This incredible hike stimulates on three levels as you reach each set of falls. Icy cold crisp water to dive into and fun falls to play in. See reviews and pics on yelp.com.

Do not miss this if you are in the San Diego area.

WILSON CREEK WINERY & VINEYARD – San Diegans voted this best winery.

Award winning wines. Moderately priced tastings. Fantastic almond champagne, known as their “Oh My Gosh” champagne. I was swept off my feet; not an easy thing to do. So much so that I joined their wine club. Do not miss.

Sorry to go on so long. As you could probably tell, I love this place. The San Diego area reminds me in some ways of my hometown San Antonio.

One last note of interest. The San Francisco Marathon is on July 31, 2011. Currently, the marathon and one of the halves are still open. As of Thursday nite (6/09/11), SouthWest has rates of \$113 each way flying in/out on a Tuesday or Wednesday. This would be fun to do with a group. Anyone?

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