

Report & Pictures

Curve technique-course 1



Saturday July 5, 2025

After trying for some time to organize a course with the KT1 participants, I finally succeeded: I took part in the THU evening ride on 19 June, had already made a few contacts beforehand, and so the participants suggested the course for Saturday, 5 July. After all, the four required participants were found in the ranks of the 'Sunset Riders'. So I advertised the course to my former customers, because anyone who has taken part in this course (there are participants with up to 5 visits!) knows how valuable it can be. The course was often booked in the spring with a new machine. One of the four registered participants dropped out (lost his license because he was riding far too fast on the motorway) and a new registration was received at the last minute: The participant collected his new bike from the motorbike dealer on Friday afternoon, attended the course on Saturday and by the evening he knew the full dimensions of the bike! A successful day had thus come to an end.

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We met on Friday evening at 6.30 p.m. in the theory room at Schwamendingerstrasse 50 in Oerlikon, at the driving school-center De Cristofaro/Martin, where the junior boss Pitsch welcomed us. More than 30 years ago, he was my student to become a motorcycle riding teacher at the Fahrhof in Wohlen AG. When I had to move out of Tramstrasse 100, he found the next location Apfelbaumstrasse 28, in the closer neighborhood, which was a huge stroke of luck for me. I am eternally grateful to him for that. He also helped me out that evening, now without my own business premises: a big "thank you" at this point.

As it was a repeat of the course for Nikita, he didn't have to attend the theory: He had already committed to this evening earlier and so the lessons took place in threes. The language of instruction was English. After introducing ourselves to each other, we started with the lean angle model: this shows the additional space required laterally when cornering with a motorcycle in a deeper lean angle. From this, we derived the driving line and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this line. The left-hand bend is therefore approached in the right-hand wheel track, where you ride on the outside until you straighten up the bike at the end of the bend and land back in the center of the track. Correspondingly, a right-hand bend starts in the left-hand wheel track, where you also stay until you see the end of the bend and return to the center of the track. These lines were transferred to the work and memo sheet for each individual bend accordingly.

An essential contribution to maintaining this line, especially on left-hand bends, lies in the correct viewing technique. The question that arises here is: "How can you prevent coming dangerously close to oncoming traffic due to the lean angle?" According to the rule: "A motorcycle goes where I look!" Thanks to my extensive experience in training novice riders, I was able to provide some good pointers: On a left-hand bend, the main line of vision must remain within the right-hand half of the road. One way of doing this is to look ahead of the center* of your own lane, which is usually visible - to look ahead of the bend - without taking the space of oncoming traffic into account. Oncoming traffic is monitored with peripheral vision, without fixating on it. Every direct gaze acts like a magnet that automatically draws you to the center line. As the right-hand bend is approached clearly to the left, you can see "deeper" into the bend and can therefore react earlier if you run into an obstacle or slow vehicle or if the radius of the bend narrows, a so-called "dog bend". In this position within the traffic lane, you will also be noticed by oncoming traffic as early as possible.

To enjoy cornering, the speed has to be right. In "field tests", the work in advanced training courses with experienced and seasoned motorcyclists, we were able to find out that the "feel-good speed" for each individual rider lies within a very narrow range of 2-3 kilometers per hour. This depends, among other things, on the machine, the extent to which it can be angled and the lean angle at which the footrests touch. The aim is always to negotiate a bend with a certain amount of reserve in order to remain maneuverable. Approaching large vehicles such as coaches, lorries or extra-wide agricultural machinery, especially in summer, can narrow the riding space, or you can run into a slow-moving obstacle at the end of the bend that you could not foresee due to the terrain. The theory room is the perfect place to share experiences and learn from each other. As we had to start early the next day, we also had to finish on time. We finished the theory at around 9 p.m. and at half past nine I was able to thank Pitsch for his hospitality and say goodbye to him.

The next morning we gathered at the Agrola gas station at the "Landi" Hegnau-Volketswil. I handed my camera to a stranger to take the starting picture. Unfortunately, I didn't check the result and then realized that there was no picture on the camera. Too bad, so the pictures only start in Dussnang. The ride began with a first detour in Gutenswil, then I bumped into another one on the way to Russikon. Despite all these detours, we were already at the destination restaurant, Restaurant Brückenwaage, at 07:50. That morning, the local motorcycle club had set off here for a weekend ride, and for 25 years the responsibility had been in the hands of the landlord. But, now 77 years old, he passed the sceptre on a few years ago. He has since sold his bikes and stopped riding due to his age.

While we enjoyed coffee and croissants, I announced the driving rules for the whole day. It was also important to point out that we were not allowed to obstruct other traffic with our lessons and how we would behave accordingly. Surprisingly, although it was a Saturday, we hardly ever came into conflict with other traffic. Also, with only 4 course participants, we were not a large group in traffic.

The morning was used to practice individual learning steps: Riding and maintaining a riding line, trying out the eye technique, gaining a sense of speed for the different bends, surpassing yourself in the group. On the occasion of a task to concentrate on speed, which had to be carried out individually - everyone on their own - I positioned myself on the track without prior notice so that I could monitor three bends and take photos of the individual participants. As always, the results were different, as everyone had already learned the right or wrong way to behave, but the implementation was only partially successful. The route was chosen so that it made a difference whether you were one meter more to the right or left.

Leaning training also took place in the morning: Here, too, the aim was to leave the comfort zone behind and make the most of the freedom to lean, to find the right gaze technique and the optimum seat and head position. Photos were used for analysis and corrections could be implemented directly. During this time, the specified circuit was ridden several times in pairs, with mutual assessment and feedback discussed from an outside perspective. Afterwards there was time for lunch. The restaurant can be warmly recommended as a place to consider on an excursion. The food is excellent and very reasonably priced.

After lunch, there was a second part of the theory in preparation for the afternoon program, for which the "bicycle-wheel model", which was stored here, was used to demonstrate and experience counter-steering. It was emphasized in the theory that bends are primarily ridden with the eyes, that the counter-steering technique, compared to parachuting, is like an emergency parachute. If all visual signs have failed in terms of speed selection, you can "push" if necessary: Of course, this only applies if you have not already exhausted all your reserves! Then luck is

**) The middle of your own half of the lane stands out in color compared to the lanes "drawn" on the road by the wheels of the four-wheeled vehicles. When driving with the light on, the two tracks are dark and the middle section is light; in the opposite direction against the light, the middle is dark and the left and right are light. This applies to almost every asphalt surface.*

the only thing that can help, and there are plenty of videos on the internet of riders in emergency situations, some with more luck and some with less. But under no circumstances should you get involved.

After we had settled our debts and visited the restroom to prepare for the afternoon, we set off again on our old tour. Once again, there were tasks to solve that were quite challenging: Deliberately initiating the banked turns with light and heavier jolts, for which we started with a 30-second gap. After turning off at Bennenmoos, we then performed more violent evasive maneuvers before meeting up for the next briefing. One of the participants reported that he actually got into an emergency situation on this short ride because a driver came onto his side of the road and he was able to save himself with the emergency maneuver he was practicing. This was followed by the next exercise, which again had to be carried out individually: it was the combination of conscious looking and conscious steering in order to gain experience. Everyone arrived safely at the next assembly point, again a little slower than before, but with the feeling that there was still a lot to discover when cornering ... This was then the next task set: How to steer a motorcycle, apart from steering with the handlebars? How does the machine react to weight shifting? How does it react to thigh pressure? How does it react to foot pressure? This varies from machine to machine; first and foremost, the rider must allow the reactions at all. So sit light as a feather on the seat, no jamming of the bike, hands totally relaxed on the handlebars and see how it reacts to the corresponding action. And always keep an eye on oncoming traffic so that you don't get into an emergency situation or unsettle other road users. At the next stop, the experiences could be shared again and the fact that riding downhill hands-free became a matter of course was a side effect of all these exercises. After all, "holding on to the handlebars" is one of the biggest mistakes behind the handlebars of a motorcycle! This is because, as we had already learned in theory, from a certain speed the motorcycle is completely stable and the rider is just cargo to be transported. It is often the (wrong) reactions on the handlebars that cause the motorcycle to get into a rider-initiated emergency situation.

At the filling station in Fischingen, where we were able to observe temperature displays ranging from 18° to 27° during the day, we set off for the last part of the riding course: In this phase, one participant always drove ahead, followed and controlled by me as the course leader. The other participants could follow and observe. The aim was to create a clean and safe ride, especially in the bends, in order to demonstrate the learning progress. A good motorcyclist knows his limits, for example in terms of speed and riding technique. They always ride with certain reserves, ride correctly on their side of the road and do not allow themselves to be tempted to go beyond their limits. Due to road closures, we had to drive on different roads than planned, but as I know the area like the back of my hand, it was no problem for me to give all participants an exciting task. Especially in the hairpin bends near Schmidrüti, there were some serious breaches of these rules downhill and we were lucky that on more than one occasion no vehicle came towards us at the same moment. This was very instructive and I regretted at that moment that I didn't record this ride with the video camera. The recordings would have spoken for themselves, as the participant saw things much less dramatically. The difference between external and internal perception is also a major sticking point in further training. Pictures (and films) don't lie - unlike our own perception.

The last part, from Sitzberg to Turbenthal, with its never-ending bends and the last "Stutz" (extreme gradient) with the name Sack, we ended up in Wila, where we had our final briefing in front of the public bathing facility "Neuguet". Here everyone was told what they had done well and not so well in the learning check. I saw some excellent results, but also some that I would describe as risky for the narrow and mountainous roads, which are often also used by over-wide agricultural vehicles, where there is hardly any room left even for a large motorcycle. I generally recommend thinking about the dangers and always planning in reserves: In a blind bend, you have to be able to stop within half your visibility! Drivers who rarely drive on such narrow roads are not sufficiently aware of this.

On the way back, I took those who didn't have to rush along many small roads via Wildberg, Rikon, Neschwil to Rumlikon, Mesikon, Illnau, Bisikon and in Hegnau we past the Agrola gas station, where the day had started, back onto the highway to Zurich. What a wonderfully beautiful summer's day, with a great group eager to learn and lots of wonderful experiences - what could be better for an enthusiastic motorcycle riding instructor? This experience report is dedicated to the four participants.

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