Here at Vandenberg Air Force Base in central California, the InSight launch team is moving into high gear.

It's time to encapsulate the spacecraft.

"So we're at the phase of the mission where we're encapsulating with the launch vehicle and the ULA team with their fairing has now come in and they take the two halves of the fairings and they make a clamshell around the spacecraft."

"And then that's to protect it during launch because it has to go through a lot of pressure changes and temperature changes as you ascend through the atmosphere."

Once InSight is encapsulated it's off to the launch pad.

"It's on the transport vehicle and it's ready to roll.

And we'll be rolling out around 2 a.m., at that point we'll have a clear convoy that drives very slowly from the payload processing facility out to the SLC-3 Atlas V facility.
And once it arrives, we'll hoist the encapsulated spacecraft up to the top of the mobile service tower and place it on the launch vehicle.

This morning when it was sitting on the truck, and they put the crane on it and started lifting it up that's the last time this spacecraft's ever going to feel the ground of Earth."

I'm just - just kind of jumping out of my skin this is so exciting.

We're getting so close to launch and it's been a long, long road for me.

We got it on top of the rocket, we're going to blast it off in just a few days, and when it gets to Mars and lands, finally it'll have solid ground under its feet again and will get to work on probing the depths of Mars."

But InSight isn't traveling to Mars alone...there are a couple of hitchhikers on board.

"So MarCO is a dual payload riding as a secondary mission on its way to Mars." "MarCO is a pair of CubeSats, and cubesats are really small spacecraft.
They're essentially the size of a large cereal box, so they're about this big.

"It's going to be relaying telemetry from the entry, decent, and landing of InSight back to Earth in near real time.

After InSight is deployed on orbit, and is heading to Mars, Centaur which is behind me, ejects MarCO-A into orbit, and it will slowly rotate itself so that MarCO-B ejects 180 degrees on the other side of the vehicle."

"But MarCO is a technology demonstration mission. It's actually one of the smallest spacecraft we've ever launched interplanetary space.

It's the first interplanetary CubeSat, so in and of itself it has all of this technology that we've never tested in deep space before.

So if MarCO works this time, the cool thing we could do is actually replicate that system and fly it with other missions in the future.
Whether you're going to Mars or Venus or maybe even further away to an asteroid, you could think of it as bring your own telecon relay.

So now that our rocket has been assembled, we're ready to go Mars and we're really excited to be able to launch the first planetary mission from the West Coast.

So everything went well today with the lift of the spacecraft and mate onto the rocket. It started off very foggy and windy. Right now it's a beautiful day, typical California weather, and now we're ready to go to Mars.

Just a few more checkouts and final launch preps, and it's time to send InSight on its mission to probe the depths of Mars.