

The Lifestyle Magazine of the Central Coast

Carmel

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SAMMY HAGAR

The Red Rocker
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Strong at 67



Poolside lounging at the Santa Cruz Dream Inn, a Joie de Vivre property, comes complete with beach, wharf, and Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk views. Barbecue and restaurant fare are offered, along with cocktails and cozy seating by the firepits.



Photos: Santa Cruz Dream Inn

DESTINATIONS



DREAM INN

Santa Cruz, California

BY SABRINA SPEIDEL

On California's scenic coast, only a handful of hotels are situated directly on the beach. The Santa Cruz Dream Inn of the Joie de Vivre brand is one of those lucky gems and is located across from the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf.

The hotel sits on the sands of Cowell Beach and boasts ocean-facing rooms for the entire property. Guests can sip cocktails like the Dream Inn margarita on the deck of the beachfront swimming pool (which will soon be converted into an infinity pool), enjoy poolside yoga, barbecue fare like sliders and shrimp skewers, warm up by the firepits or in the hot tub, or simply walk right onto the sand and join a game of beach volleyball. Weddings and other events take place frequently on the soft sands or in the hotel's banquet rooms, and guests often book an annual family vacation at the property.

"Joie de Vivre believes in creating opportunities to celebrate the joy of life," says Sales and Catering Manager Aurora Smith.

Gentle waves make the sheltered waters across from the Dream Inn ideal for stand-up paddle boarding and beginning surf lessons, both of which can be arranged through nearby rental shops. More aggressive surfers can take on famous Steamer Lane just around the bend, named for the steam-powered boats of the past.

The 107-year-old Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk attraction is just down the street, with miniature golf, arcades, bowling, laser tag, and rides ranging from rollercoasters to free fall towers to log rides to kiddie boats. A circa-1911, hand-carved merry-go-round with antique band organs harkens back to the original days of the "Coney Island of the West," and is a National Historic Landmark. Spectacular views of the Monterey Bay can be had from the Boardwalk's famous wooden coaster, the Giant Dipper, which opened in 1924,



Legendary surfer and pioneering wetsuit and surfboard creator Jack O'Neill operated the world's first "surf shop" in San Francisco then moved it to the location of the current Santa Cruz Dream Inn. The hotel restaurant honors O'Neill.

and has been in movies such as "Lost Boys."

The Dream Inn has its own stake in local history. Built in 1963, the hotel is located where wetsuit and surfboard king Jack O'Neill's first surf shop relocated from San Francisco, and the property pays tribute with historical images and a lounge in his name. Whimsically decorated with surfboards on the ceiling and the motto: "It's Always Summer on the Inside," O'Neill's favorite foods are found on the lounge menu, (try a habanero pickled egg or an oyster po' boy) and a permanent mural with black-and-white images of 1950s and '60s-era surfers decorates the retaining wall outside the restaurant. A plaque honors the site of the world's first "surf shop" which was designated a California

Photos: Santa Cruz Dream Inn





The Dream Inn Santa Cruz has a location unique to California. Very few hotels are situated directly on the sands, but the Dream Inn allows for immediate beach gratification. At night, the soothing sounds of ocean surf and the recently remodeled modern suites provide a peaceful evening against the backdrop of the Monterey Bay.



Photo: Santa Cruz Dream Inn

“Surf City, USA,” aka sunny Santa Cruz, revolves around the ocean culture, which permeates into the mellow and carefree attitude of its residents and visitors.

Dream breakfast burrito with egg, chorizo, avocado, salsa, onion, potato and cheese, and the award-winning clam chowder:

With a “retro-chic” decor that was launched during a recent remodel, the non-smoking hotel is also a certified green business. “One of our core values is to cherish our resources,” says Smith. The Dream Inn has partnered with nonprofits Save Our Shores and Mountain Parks Foundation to educate the public and to help protect the ocean and local state parks. The hotel rooms have glass balconies, which allow a view of all the action on the Monterey Bay, the beach and Boardwalk.

Within walking distance from the hotel is downtown Santa Cruz, centered around busy Pacific Avenue, where an eclectic assortment of shops, restaurants, movie theaters and a well-stocked bookstore offer up plenty of diversions and healthy treats. It’s a great way to get a taste of the quirky, laid-back creative vibe that per-



Photo: Courtesy Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk

The historic Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is just steps away from the Dream Inn. Attractions take place against a backdrop of sun worshippers and water lovers.

point of historical interest.

Aquarius restaurant emphasizes local organic produce and meat, seafood from the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary, and local

wines and craft beers. Sea scallops, black kale salad, crab risotto and hanger steak are some of the dinner options. The restaurant also offers a full breakfast, Sunday brunch and lunch. Try the

meates the area. Stop in to Café Gratitude for organic, local, vegan and homemade soups called, "I Am Thriving," fresh pressed juices like, "I Am Powerful," and entrees such as "I Am Transformed." Listen to street performers play music on the sidewalks, wander into surf shops, or grab a funky souvenir.

Nearby parks offer mountain biking and hiking, or sign-up for a sailboat, whale-watching or kayaking excursion. Wander down to the Wharf for fresh-caught seafood as fishermen cast their lines and sea lions slide through the waves below. Enjoy live music, bites and drinks at The Crow's Nest. Grab funnel cakes or even deep-fried Twinkies (really!) on the Boardwalk. There's something for all tastes in "Surf City, USA."

The Santa Cruz Dream Inn is located 175 West Cliff Dr., Santa Cruz, CA, 95060. 831/426-4330 or www.dreaminnsantacruz.com.



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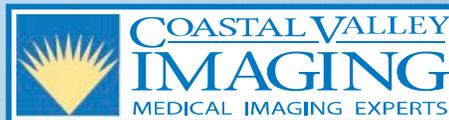
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