

Cruz News

Santa Cruz County's Latest Wave of Information for Travel Media

Winter 2022 - 2023

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Cruz News features Santa Cruz County travel-related news, information, and story ideas specific to the travel, tourism, and hospitality sector and is distributed quarterly to qualified travel, lifestyle, and consumer media outlets and representatives. Visit Santa Cruz County works with media on a year-around basis to offer story ideas, photography, b-roll footage, and itinerary suggestions to assist journalists with their assignments.

PRESS VISIT:

Visit Santa Cruz County hosts qualified journalists on assignment for individual media visits year-around. At this time, we do not host group familiarization tours. Our press policies are posted on www.visitsantacruz.org/press/

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CASTRO ADOBE RESTORATION COMPLETED AFTER TWO-DECADE EFFORT

The restoration of a 175-year-old historic property in Santa Cruz County's Pajaro Valley is now complete, following a twenty-year collaborative effort to preserve the former home – one of just four adobe buildings left in the region and the only two-story adobe remaining. The signature point of interest at Castro Adobe State Historic Park, the adobe was constructed between 1849 and 1850 toward the end of the Rancho Period, is an excellent example of Monterey Colonial architecture.

Restoration efforts over the last two decades included earthquake repairs using handmade 85-pound adobe bricks; seismic stabilization and a new roof; strengthening the second story with an innovative steel beam; installation of a lift to guarantee universal access to the second floor; the addition of electrical and fire suppression systems; restoration of the historic cocina (kitchen) and Potter-Church garden; procurement and historic furnishings and completion of interpretive planning.

When built, the Castro Adobe became famous for having a Fandango room on the second floor where parties and special celebrations were held. Outside the Fandango room, a balcony surrounds the length of the house, which provides a beautiful view of the Pajaro Valley. The Castro Adobe features an indoor kitchen and is one of only a few Mexican Rancho kitchens in California that can still be viewed.

Juan Jose Castro and Rita Pinto Castro were the original owners of the adobe and lived on the 8,800-acre Rancho San Andres with their 12 children and was the home of the prosperous and prominent Castro family for many years. California State Park docents provide free

90-minute guided tours of the adobe at Castro Adobe State Park on a monthly basis.



FOUR NEW EATERIES ON THE HORIZON

In a town where organic farming began, it's no wonder that there is a deluge of chefs who glean inspiration from the produce grown at local farms and featured at weekly farmer's markets. This year, locals and visitors eagerly await the openings of four new places to try in Downtown Santa Cruz, Midtown, and in Felton.

Midtown Santa Cruz is awaiting the opening of a new eatery by former La Posta chef Katherine Stern. Her legions of fans at the Santa Cruz Community Farmers Markets and from her recent residency at Bad Animal in Downtown Santa Cruz are eagerly awaiting her new venture, which promises local, seasonal, farm-fresh, comforting dishes, like her signature squash cappelletti with crispy Brussels sprouts, roasted apple, brown butter, and sage. The opening date will be sometime within the first months of this new year. Within a few city blocks of Michelin's Bib Gourmand-rated Alderwood restaurant in Downtown Santa Cruz, a second location has opened with a more casual flair: baked bread in-house, salads, cocktails, and a raw bar. Local chef Jessica Yarr will open a bakery focusing on hearth breads, vegan options, and locally roasted 11th Hour Coffee in late February. This new spot by the daughter of owners of Felton's The Bigfoot Museum will be a welcome place to nosh in the San Lorenzo Valley. Twin brothers Peter and Henry Wong are up and running with Mad Yolks, a Downtown Santa Cruz breakfast place on Pacific Avenue. Creative, egg-forward sandwiches housed on homemade brioche rolls and Eastern-adjacent tea selections make up most of the menu options. But other dishes like "dirty" tots, a curry moco, and the namesake Mad Yolk with coddled egg and whipped potatoes in a jar with bacon, chives, and toasted crostini keep things interesting.



BAY OF LIFE EXHIBIT OPENS AT THE MUSEUM OF ART & HISTORY

Bay of Life: From Wind to Whales, an exhibition that brings land and sea together for a unified view of Monterey Bay and its natural abundance is on view at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History through April 30, 2023.

The project features works from locally-based renowned National Geographic photographer-writer team Frans Lanting and Chris Eckstrom about Monterey Bay. Lanting has created some of the world's most iconic images of wildlife and nature, while Eckstrom is also a videographer and producer.

With extraordinary images alongside maps, archival photos, and interpretive text, Bay of Life is designed to showcase the wonders of the Monterey Bay landscape by highlighting the area's unique mix of physical features and microclimates. The exhibition features iconic wildlife, from mountain lions and peregrine falcons to salmon, whales, and elephant seals, all surviving in a region where endangered endemic species mix with cosmopolitan migrants.

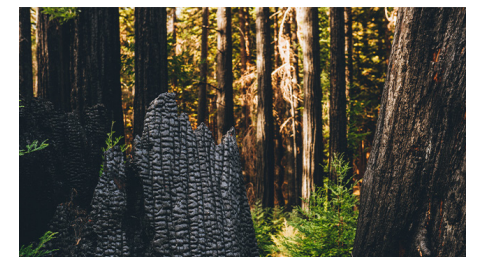
Bay of Life celebrates a remarkable recovery which shows that damaged ecosystems can be restored when people care and take action together. That may offer a model for other places at a time when we need such stories of hope as we face new challenges of resource stewardship, habitat connectivity, and impacts from climate change. The project is supported in part by The Humanities Institute at UC Santa Cruz.



SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS AVA WINERIES TAKE HOME GOLD AT WINE COMPETITION

Wines of the Santa Cruz Mountains AVA scored big at the 2022 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, held last fall in Sonoma County. Cheers to Peter Bargetto, Paul Bargetto, and Jon Morgan's Soquel Vineyards, which earned four Gold medals in addition to a Best of Class for a Vosne Romanée Clone Pinot Noir. They were awarded Double Golds for the 2021 Santa Cruz Mountains Estate Pinot Noir, the 2021 Ben Lomond Mountain Coast Grade Vineyard Pinot Noir, 2021 Santa Cruz Mountains Stretched Boundaries Pinot Noir, the 2021 Santa Cruz Mountains Lago Lomita Vineyard Partners Reserve Nebbiolo, and the highly popular 2021 Trinity Rosso Blend.

Keeping things in the family, cousin John Bargetto's Bargetto Winery scored Double Gold and Gold for six varietals. In mid-county's bucolic Corralitos, Nicholson Vineyards scored Double Gold for their 2020 Amador County Barbera and Gold for the 2020 Santa Cruz Mountains Estate Brooks Block Pinot Noir. Silver Mountain Vineyards fetched Golds for two of their Chardonnays, a Pinot Noir, and the Santa Cruz Mountains Syrah. Storrs Winery earned seven for seven Double Golds for the 2021 Monterey Sauvignon Blanc, 2021 Santa Cruz Mountains Chardonnay, 2019 Central Coast Zinfandel, 2019 Santa Cruz Mountains Petite Sirah, and 2019 Santa Clara County Rusty Ridge Petite Sirah. The winery also brought home Gold for the 2019 Central Coast Grenache, 2018 San Ysidro District Merlot, and the 2018 Santa Clara Valley St. Clare, a Petit Verdot leading blend. The event is America's largest Wine Competition.



ADDITIONAL PORTIONS OF BIG BASIN REDWOODS STATE PARK REOPEN FOLLOWING DEVASTATING FIRE

Following the devastating 2020 CZU Complex Fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains, small portions of three more sections of Big Basin Redwoods State Park – 97 percent of which was decimated during the fire – have now opened: an additional four miles of roads and trails. Hikers can now explore the renovated Meteor Trail, a one-mile segment of the iconic Skyline to the Sea Trail, and dog-friendly access along the first mile of North Escape Road.

The first mile of Sunset Trail is finishing reconstruction and is expected to open by March 2023. Redwood Loop and Dool Trail, both of which opened in the summer, are also available to visitors. Additionally, about 20 miles of multi-use fire roads near the historic park core remain open to hiking and biking.

The amount of parking available by reservation has nearly doubled since portions of the park have reopened. The newly opened trails offer visitors more ways to explore the amazing regrowth happening since the CZU Fire. Park visitors can witness the regrowth of the iconic trees and can also see signs of wildlife returning to the forest as it recovers, including deer, raccoon, fox, mountain lion, coyote, bats, many bird species, and other wildlife.

Visitors will continue to be required to make a reservation online in advance to guarantee access to the limited parking area to visit the new trail segments. Services remain limited within the park. There is no cell phone coverage, running water, or electricity. Recovery from the fire is an ongoing and long-term effort expected to take many years.



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