

CRUZ NEWS

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



Winter 2023 - 2024

SANTA
CRUZ
COUNTY

CALIFORNIA

CRUZ NEWS

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 VISITS:

Visit Santa Cruz County hosts qualified journalists on assignment for individual media visits year-around. Our press policies are posted on www.santacruz.org/press/press-policies/

MEDIA CONTACT:

Christina Glynn
cglynn@santacruz.org
TEL: 831.425.1234 ext. 112

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

C A L I F O R N I A

303 Water Street
Suite 100
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
TEL: 831.425.1234
WWW.SANTACRUZ.ORG



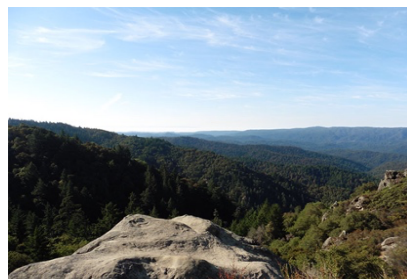
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk's Roller Coaster to Celebrate 100th Birthday in 2024

The Giant Dipper Roller Coaster – one of two national historic landmarks at the iconic Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk - will celebrate its centennial birthday in 2024. Visitors welcomed the Giant Dipper when it debuted on May 17, 1924 and lined up to pay 15 cents to experience the ride. Today, guests pay \$8.00 per ride and it is arguably the most popular attraction at the admission-free Beach Boardwalk.

The thrill ride, with speeds up to 46 MPH, is the fourth oldest coaster in the United States, continuously operating in its original seaside location. The coaster was built by Arthur Looff in just 47 days at a cost of \$50,000 (nearly \$900,000 today.) Amusement rides seemed to be part of the family's DNA: In 1911, Looff's father, Danish woodcarver Charles I.D. Looff delivered a new merry-go-round adorned with 73 hand-carved horses to the Boardwalk after achieving success with his first complete carousel at Coney Island and went on to create several more around the country, including Venice Beach, Santa Monica, Long Beach, and San Francisco, among others. In June 1987 both the Giant Dipper and the antique carousel were designated National Historic Landmarks by the U.S. National Park Service.

The roller coaster – the true star of the boardwalk - also made appearances in many American films, including Clint Eastwood's *Sudden Impact*, *Dangerous Minds*, and *The Lost Boys*.

Photography and B-Roll available upon request.



Over 200 Acres Added to Castle Rock State Park

Known as one of the prime locations for rock climbing due to a diversity of sandstone options, Castle Rock State Park will soon grow to nearly 6,000 acres with the addition of forest lands, ridgetops and a recently built entranceway and main hub for the park. The additional 200 acres, purchased by California State Parks from the Sempervirens Fund means that visitors can more easily access trails, picnic areas, climbing rocks, campsites and other points of interest within the park.

With an average attendance of 180,000 visitors a year, Castle Rock sits adjacent to two other outdoor spaces, one of them being Big Basin Redwoods State Park – California's oldest – which is still recovering from the CZU August Fire in 2020 when 97 percent of the park was destroyed. The expansion includes old growth redwood forest and portions sit above the San Lorenzo River, a 30-mile-long body of water whose headways originate in Castle Rock State Park and winds down through the Santa Cruz Mountains, eventually emptying into the Monterey Bay, adjacent to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. The 30-mile-long Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail, one of the most iconic hikes in California, passes along the edge of the new acreage.



Upscale Wine Tasting Experience Opens in Scotts Valle, Santa Cruz Welcomes New Brewery

Santa Cruz County's food and drink renaissance continues as two new spots to sip have opened in the past month. Kicking things off on the eastside, a few blocks from the Pleasure Point neighborhood, home to some of the best surf breaks in the United States, a new brewery has debuted with the intention of creating a neighborhood gathering space. A mere 15 minutes away, an upscale wine tasting room opened its first location in Santa Cruz County, expanding the tasting experience for visitors.

With a two-Michelin-starred San Francisco restaurant he opened in 2009 under his belt, sommelier Mark Bright is on to his next venture, landing in a Scotts Valle location for Saison, his wine tasting concept. Already a successful restaurateur and wine maker, Mark decided to expand his knowledge of wine from the tasting room he initially opened in nearby Los Gatos and establish something closer to home. The Saison concept features two areas of the tasting room in which to learn more about wine: the front room is a wine bar, complete with couches, dining tables, bar seating and an outdoor area, offering tastings by the flight or glass. The back room is a cellar area providing a comfy lounge where guests can linger. The cellar area is similar to a private club, but with a more relaxed, laid-back vibe. Lined with 30 temperature-controlled lockers for collectors to store their bottles, the cellar is a unique spot for like-minded individuals to gather,

creating an ideal spot for wine education, events and themed tastings.

Balefire Brewing offers American and English-style ales, with the two owners refining their brewmaster skills locally at Steel Bonnet Brewing before venturing out on their own. The philosophy here is to keep things simple, producing pared-down ales using quality ingredients. Traditional brewing methods include cask-pulled ales, which involve firkins, a different fermentation process and natural carbonation. A regular food truck schedule supplements limited snacks at the brewery, providing a rotating menu for patrons.



Hotel Paradox, Autograph Collection Completes Renovation

Near downtown Santa Cruz, Hotel Paradox, Autograph Collection by Marriott has completed a major renovation of its public spaces. With 170 guest rooms and nearly 5,000 square feet of special event space, the Hotel Paradox is capitalizing on its presence as the only Autograph Collection property in Santa Cruz County, featuring 1,500 square feet of deck space adjacent to a redwood-tree adjacent pool.

Designers maximized the footprint of its onsite restaurant by expanding the seating area, employing glass where possible and extending the ceiling, designing a seamless transition from indoors to outside. Santa Cruz native Chef Stefan Shatto is combining his ag-based culinary roots with the culture of community that is intrinsic to the region to reimagine the menu offerings at Solaire, the onsite eatery. Forest-themed touches and modern furnishings

enhance the lobby-meets-lounge common area, bringing nature-inspired touches to the indoor space.



Filipino Heritage and History Digital Archive Debuts

A preservation effort showcasing the valuable contributions to the region made by the first wave of Filipino immigrants who arrived in the 1920s and 1930s is now online. These digital archives include oral history recordings, original documents, photos, and family artifacts highlighting Filipino history in the Pajaro Valley, starting with the "Manong generation."

Despite the long history of Filipino farm workers in Santa Cruz's south county, there was a lack of representation these immigrant families made to this rich agricultural area. Focused on the pioneering families of Watsonville and the greater Pajaro Valley, the archive preserves the contributions of the Manong, and tells the stories of the women who married the Manong and their descendants' memories of migration, labor, leisure, and community

CRUZ NEWS

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 VISITS:

Visit Santa Cruz County hosts qualified journalists on assignment for individual media visits year-around. Our press policies are posted on www.santacruz.org/press/press-policies/

MEDIA CONTACT:

Christina Glynn
cglynn@santacruz.org
TEL: 831.425.1234 ext. 112

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

C A L I F O R N I A

303 Water Street
Suite 100
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
TEL: 831.425.1234
WWW.SANTACRUZ.ORG

formation. Partnering with UC Santa Cruz, faculty and student researchers from the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Arts Divisions began collecting oral histories as part of the university's McHenry Library's special collections. The project, [Watsonville is in the Heart Digital Archive](#) is an ongoing project and will continue to gather stories from the Pajaro Valley's Filipino community.



Seymour Marine Discovery Center Completes Renovations with Focus on Climate Change

The Seymour Marine Discovery Center, a community-supported marine science education center for Long Marine Lab at the University of California, Santa Cruz at UC Santa Cruz has renovated its exhibit space and introduced enhanced, visitor-facing experiences as part of an up glow. Leveraging the unusual natural events that Santa Cruz County has faced recently due to climate change, interactive and hands-on exhibits provide a more hyper-local focus for visitors to the marine science education center, founded over two decades ago on Santa Cruz's westside just north of Natural Bridges State Beach.

The science-forward exhibits tell the story of why waves are 12 inches higher than they were 50 years ago, showcase nature-based solutions to prevent urban flooding, and provide examples of how local organizations are working to reduce the amount of plastic in the ocean and more – all with a focus on an issue and a solution.

Longtime favorite Seymour Center attractions — the aquarium, touch tanks and the daily tours to the marine mammal lab overlook — are still a part of the visitor experience. Complementing the aquarium, a new terrarium celebrates local coastal ecosystems with live plants. The nonprofit Seymour Marine Discovery Center offers visitors numerous unique, educational and interactive indoor and outdoor exhibits for all ages and a glimpse into the research studies taking place.