

# CRUZ NEWS

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

Fall 2024

SANTA  
CRUZ  
COUNTY

CALIFORNIA



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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 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/](http://www.santacruz.org/press/press-policies/)

### MEDIA CONTACT:

Christina Glynn  
[cglynn@santacruz.org](mailto:cglynn@santacruz.org)  
TEL: 831.425.1234 ext. 111

# 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](http://WWW.SANTACRUZ.ORG)



## Historic Capitola Wharf Reopens Following \$10 Million Renovation

An iconic point of interest connecting the Monterey Bay to Capitola Village has been upgraded and renovated after being partially destroyed by waves during a heavy winter storm in January 2022. Two feet longer than San Francisco's Transamerica Pyramid laid on its side and pre-dating the American Civil War, the 855-foot Capitola Wharf has reopened.

The \$10.6 million construction project to rebuild and strengthen the historic wharf began in September 2023. Renovations include new pressure-treated Douglas fir planks, an ornate entrance gate, interpretive panels, a new boat launch area, new restrooms, free mounted binocular stations, and interpretive signage about Monterey Bay, its wildlife and history. Nearly all of the wharf's decking and railings have been replaced and the structure has been widened from 20 feet to 36 feet wide.



## Sustainable Seafood trending in Santa Cruz County

Sustainable seafood has been a bellwether for Santa Cruz County's culinary landscape for many years. A recent critical mass of newly opened eateries have elevated their menu offerings to highlight this mindful way to enjoy the bounty of the Monterey Bay. New restaurants in Aptos, Capitola and Santa Cruz have debuted within the past few months, all dedicated to this global movement.

In the picturesque Aptos community of Seascape, the menu at Dos Pescados is headed up by Chef-partner Trent Lidgley whose background includes Michelin-starred seafood destinations Atelier Crenn in San Francisco and Brae in Birregurra, Australia. Trent created a menu that features raw options like caviar, oysters, razor clams, Hokkaido scallops and an 11-course tasting menu at this California-inspired Mexican spot. Mahi mahi tacos with chipotle aioli and mango salsa, carnitas hard shell tacos with sour orange salsa, and summer squash tacos with salsa matcha on blue-corn tortillas are just some of the signature items that can be enjoyed alongside creative cocktails with a tequila-forward flair.

In Mediterranean-inspired Capitola Village, a mere four miles south of Santa Cruz, patrons at Pete's Fish House on the picturesque esplanade can enjoy views with Hog Island oysters from the San Francisco Bay Area, crudo, and other chilled coastal dishes including a soft-shell crab sandwich, fritto misto and clam linguini on the seafood-forward menu. Oysters of the Day, chilled scallops and caviar have an elevated presence during Pearl Hour daily from 4PM to 5PM with beer and wine choices. Restaurateur Sarah Orr brings her love of culinary arts to the village, as the owner of the iconic Stokes Adobe in Monterey.

And in the heart of Downtown Santa Cruz, the long-awaited Hook + Line has opened on iconic Walnut Avenue, two blocks away from a picturesque tree-lined street filled with historic Victorian homes. Two-years in the making, Hook + Line leveraged the mild, sunny weather by employing

plentiful windows to bring in natural sunlight, turquoise tilework and ocean-inspired light fixtures and a custom-made oyster shucking station to blend the energy of the kitchen with the lively atmosphere of the dining room. Hook + Line features three types of oysters: Miyagi from Tomales Bay, Kumamoto from Humboldt Bay and Hood Canal from Washington State. Each are served with house fermented hot sauce, lemon and shallot Champagne mignonette. The eclectic menu features raw gems like halibut ceviche and kampachi crudo, along with exquisite small bites like Manresa brioche topped with cured salmon and crème fraiche, and deviled eggs with shallots, capers, green onion and tobiko. Plates to share include Tomales Bay mussels with lemongrass fish broth and chili garlic fries, and fried calamari and uni toast with crème fraiche horseradish. Although the menu is seasonal, recent entrées that have proven popular have been roasted halibut with braised greens and potato skordalia, Dungeness crab risotto and whole fried Monterey Bay rockfish. Bouillabaisse, slow cooked pork shoulder and a vegetarian dish with Japanese eggplant round out the main courses.



## Improvements Completed at Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge Interpretive Trail

Enhancing the visitor experience at one of the most accessible parks to Downtown Santa Cruz, new interpretive signage and a floating

walkway are now open at Neary Lagoon, a critical watershed for the city and a picturesque spot to connect with nature.

Made possible by a grant from the California Habitat Conservation Fund, a mile-long wooden pontoon walkway and trail system added greater accessibility to this urban watershed, allowing visitors to access a complete circuit around and through the refuge. Permanent and migrating species to Neary Lagoon include mallard and wood ducks, pied billed grebes, a multitude of coots, the world's meanest geese, several varieties of fish and the occasional great blue heron or hawk. Greenbelt trails, a pollinator garden and recreational facilities are all featured at the park.



## Adorable French Bakery Opens in Scotts Valley

Following the successful opening of authentic Italian bakery Emozioni in Soquel Village in summer 2024, another bakery and bistro has debuted, this time in the family-and-tech-friendly community of Scotts Valley, six miles from Santa Cruz. This area is popular with the Silicon Valley crowd who tend to call this gateway to local state parks home due to its proximity to Highway 17, which connects the coast to more technology-led inland communities.

The Adorable French Bakery is housed in a previous restaurant space, renovated to create an atmosphere of cottage-core-meets-Parisian-cafe. Offering savory and sweet pastries, grab-n-go meals, bread and coffee

daily, a sit-down lunch and dinner service with beer and wine are planned for the near future. Pastry chef and co-owner Muriel D'Agostino, a Paris native makes everything by hand, eschewing the convenience of industrial machinery. With a built-in following thanks to a ubiquitous presence at local farmer's markets, The Adorable French Bakery grew an enthusiastic audience before opening its own brick-and-mortar location. Visitors to the bakery can choose from savory lunch pies like the tomato and zucchini-topped tarte *provencale*, vanilla and frangipane galette de rois, a variety of twisted, generously proportioned breakfast pastries, thick American-style cookies and lemon tarts topped with swirls of glossy meringue.



## Coastal Access Restored at Manresa Uplands State Beach

Public access between the bluff-top campground and the beach has been rebuilt in south county at Manresa Uplands State Beach, located about 15 miles south of Santa Cruz. The seasonal 64-site campground at Manresa Uplands is about a half mile south of Manresa State Beach, a popular day-use area. Reconnecting Manresa Uplands' campground to the beach via the staircase was a priority for State Parks in order to provide a high-quality visitor experience.

Access to the beach from the uplands was closed due to El Niño storms in March of 2016; creating and repairing infrastructure that can withstand climate-driven disasters and sea level rise is the "new normal" on the

California coast. In addition to camping and surfing, Manresa Uplands is popular for birding. Some common birds to spot are red-tailed hawks and white-tailed kites as well as meadowlark and several varieties of sparrows. The coastal sage scrub community along the terrace border provides habitat for wildlife associated with shrubby vegetation, such as Allen's hummingbird, lesser goldfinch, house finch, white crowned sparrow, rufus-sided towhee, and brush rabbit.



## Locally-owned Martinelli’s Sparkling Cider Now Available in a Can

S. Martinelli & Company, producers of America’s favorite sparkling apple juice is debuting Sparkling Cans – just in time for fall. These 250ml cans, available in a four-pack feature the same quality as bottled products from the 155-year-old, family owned and operated company, headquartered in Watsonville, in the heart of Santa Cruz County’s agricultural region.

Available in three sparkling flavors: Apple Cranberry, Apple Juice, and Apple Mango, the recyclable and sustainable packaging pays tribute to the company’s Gold Standard of business practices. Martinelli’s purchases apples grown in the fertile Pajaro Valley and other regions of the U.S. Established in 1868, Marinelli’s began producing champagne hard cider using apples from California’s first commercial orchards. Once Prohibition was enacted, the company shifted production to regular apple juice and sparkling apple juice. During

this time in history, the company grew exponentially, encouraging Americans to “drink their apple a day.” Today, visitors to the tasting room can view archival photos, vintage machinery, and an historical film shown at the tasting bar where free samples of all types of Martinelli’s juices can be sampled.