Day Trippin'

Skip over to Santa Cruz

By Fran Miller



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Hotel Paradox patio

Ljures Beach Boys' tunes and oldschool boardwalk roller coasters, it might be time to re-explore our seaside neighbor. Sure, 'Surf City' (just a 1.5-hour drive south, if the traffic gods are smiling) is all about the beach, but a weekend visit can entail so much more. A hip hotel, fine dining, shopping, and basketrecipe for a rejuvenating getaway.

Stay. Hotel Paradox (a Marsits inland on Ocean Avenue and Park the car, forget about it, and make sure you've got your walking shoes. This cozy retreat, infused in presenting a menu that highwith natural elements that reflect its beach and forest surroundings, once served as UC Santa Cruz's overflow dorms, and students were manipulated dishes that allow the likely sparring for rights to fifth floor, horizon-facing digs. Comfy rooms feature reclaimed wood paneling, river rock shower floors, and eco-friendly bath products.

Central areas are whimsically adorned with artwork by a rotating cast of local artisans. A giant felled eucalyptus tree serves as the checkin desk. Borrow a beach cruiser is home to one of retail's greatest from the in-house fleet, or rent an electric Blix bike or an inboard cific Avenue. From the inspiring, electric skateboard to cruise the independent Bookshop Santa Cruz, downtown corridor. A large, central to the requisite surf shops, to at pool and hot tub area is enhanced least three comfort shoe specific with overhead twinkle lights, a fire boutiques (Santa Cruz residents are pit (grab a s'mores package from in-house restaurant Solaire and roast away), and rentable cabanas. In any season, Hotel Paradox is on Front Street for a true Santa fun, festive, and family friendly.

tion for breakfast, lunch, and din- vibes and re-harmonize mind and ner. Make sure to meet resident body. bartender John Dunleavey, aka 'Rainbow,' a local idol known State Warriors tickets? The Santa for his personable demeanor. For Cruz Warriors are the next best something off-property, head to thing - and in some ways, even Soif Restaurant and Wine Bar on better. This Golden State Warriors Walnut, off of Pacific, a favorite NBA G League 'developmental'

f the mention of Santa Cruz con- and seasonal fare. An intimate dining room with open kitchen sits adjacent to the small wine retail shop lined with unique and exclusive labels, many of limited production and handmade following organic and biodynamic practices. An emphasis is placed on local producers, as well as Italian and French varietals - many of which are feaball, for instance, create the perfect tured on the by-the-glass restaurant menu. Order a half glass of each in order to try several. It's fun to sip riott Autograph Collection Hotel) and compare. Find one you love, and make a post-dinner purchase. is centrally located to every stop (For those who prefer a martini to a throughout this ideal weekend. merlot, Soif also serves classic and modern cocktail creations.)

Chef Tom McNary takes pride lights the finest local, seasonal, and organic products. His regularly changing menu features minimally fresh ingredients to shine, such as a Fogline Farms roasted chicken with lemon and garlic, served with a farmers' market slaw and roasted potatoes, or a salad of 'caught-thatday' crab and winter citrus. Regulars are rarely presented with the same menu twice.

Do. Downtown Santa Cruz shopping and dining streets - Paserious about their shoes), Pacific Avenue has got it all. Don't miss Vibes' Up, just around the corner Cruz shopping experience; prod-Dine. Solaire is a winning op- ucts here promise to increase good

Can't get your hands on Golden



Santa Cruz Warrior mascot Mav'Riks

playing not in a 20,000 seat arena, but in the intimate 2,500 seat Kaiser Permanente Arena, where fans sit within reach of the action and pay a fraction of the price of GSW tickets. (The season runs through

Photos provided

March 23.) And if the siren song of the waves beckons, by all means, head to the Boardwalk. But with so much to see and do in Santa Cruz, the iconic destination is relegated to just another stop along the way.



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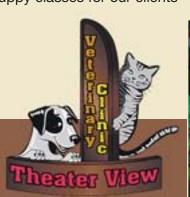


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