



THE
CrossFit JOURNAL

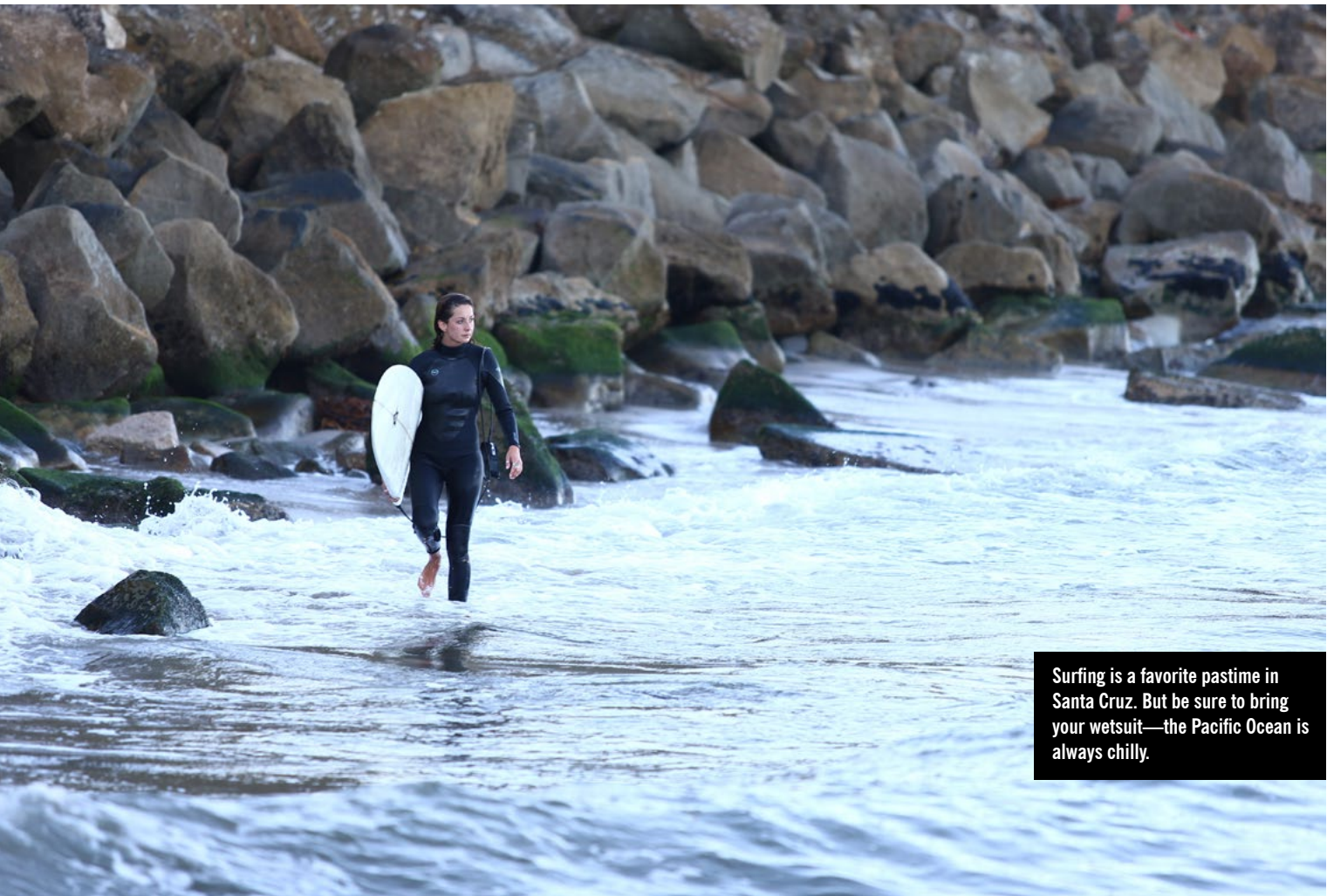
AS PRESCRIBED: SANTA CRUZ

The birthplace of CrossFit is packed with a lot of outdoor fun and a full dose of oddities. And hippies. Lots of hippies.

BY ANDRÉA MARIA CECIL



The Santa Cruz Surfing Museum overlooks famous surfing hotspot Steamer Lane. On display are photos, surfboards and artifacts documenting more than 100 years of surfing history in the city.



Surfing is a favorite pastime in Santa Cruz. But be sure to bring your wetsuit—the Pacific Ocean is always chilly.

Welcome to weird.

That’s how Santa Cruz, California, is known.

For more than a decade, the sleepy Northern California beach town of 63,000 has used the same branding campaign to encompass its idiosyncrasies: “Keep Santa Cruz Weird.”

The city is a mere 30 miles south of Silicon Valley, home to the likes of Apple, eBay, Facebook, Google, Intel, Netflix and Tesla. But it couldn’t be more different.

As the San Jose Mercury-News once **described**, Santa Cruz’s branding “seems like a diagnosis more than anything else.”

Hippies, drum circles, a man walking around town in pink women’s clothing—it’s weird, all right. But Santa Cruz is more than its eccentricity. It teems with life: from outdoor activities among the towering Redwoods, along perfectly carved cliffs and on the Pacific Ocean’s pristine beaches to homegrown eateries offering fresh, local fare. Plus, it offers CrossFit athletes something other cities can’t: insight into the methodology’s history.

Outside the Box

You might be surprised to know that the city considered CrossFit’s motherland is home to only five affiliates. It won’t take you long to get all those drop-ins done. And when you do, Santa Cruz will be waiting. When it comes to being outside, you can make your own fun no matter where you decide to hang out.

Life’s a Beach Cowell Beach

Also known simply as Cowell’s, this beach is west of the Municipal Wharf in Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz Dream Inn sits on its shores, and you can spot the pier jutting out into the Santa Cruz Harbor. There are sand volleyball courts and, of course, surfing. The famous surf spot Steamer Lane is situated between Cowell’s and Point Santa Cruz. If you’re a surfing rookie, plenty of schools can be found in the area. Among them is **Richard Schmidt Surf School**, which has been around since 1978. You can also rent kayaks or paddle boards nearby.
21 Municipal Wharf
Cityofsantacruz.com

ITS BEACH

This south-facing beach is below the bluff on the west side of Point

Santa Cruz. Both the beach and the interior park allow leashed dogs anytime and off-leash dogs after 4 p.m. During low tides, visitors can explore a rock arch at the north end of the beach. Check out the **Santa Cruz Surfing Museum** while you’re there.
740 W. Cliff Drive
Santacruz.org

NATURAL BRIDGES STATE BEACH

Quintessentially Northern California with its sand and rock, this beach is 65 acres of state park. Its name comes from the natural bridge—aka a huge rock formation with a naturally formed arch—that sits across a section of the beach. It’s the same spot where you can watch the migration of monarch butterflies, a sight to behold. And, if you’re so inclined, the park features a short hill for sprinting.
2531 W. Cliff Drive
Parks.ca

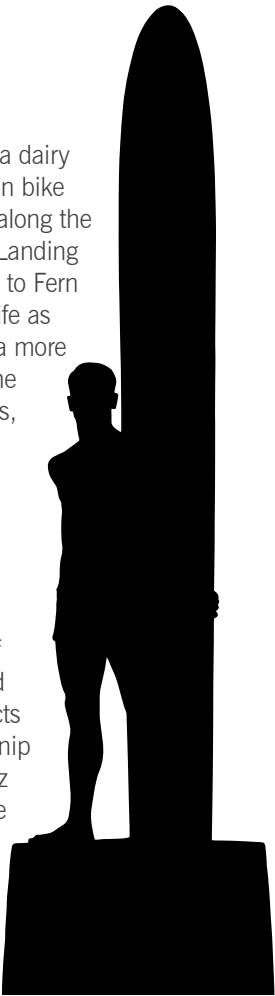
Hiking, Biking and Sucking Wind

WILDER RANCH STATE PARK

This state park was home to an 1800s-era dairy ranch. It boasts of 35 miles of trail you can bike or hike into the Santa Cruz Mountains or along the coastal bluffs. A hike down the Old Cove Landing Trail to the Ohlone Bluff Trail will lead you to Fern Grotto Beach, where you’ll see such wildlife as dolphins, seals and whales. If you prefer a more leisurely pace, you can have a picnic at the cultural preserve, explore historic buildings, and visit the horses, chickens and goats.
1401 Coast Road
Parks.ca

POGONIP

Only 10 minutes from downtown Santa Cruz, these 640 acres includes 8 miles of trail through redwood trees, oak woodland and costal terrace prairie. The trail connects Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Pogonip and the University of California-Santa Cruz campus. If you don’t have a bike, rent one from **Another Bike Shop** or **Epicenter Cycling**.
333 Golf Club Drive
Cityofsantacruz.com





Regardless of where you find yourself in sleepy Santa Cruz, picturesque images abound.

DELAVEAGA DISC GOLF COURSE

This world-renowned 27-hole disc-golf course sits on the hills of DeLaveaga Park above Santa Cruz. The park is said to have one of the original long disc-golf courses, with some holes more than 500 feet long. If disc golf isn't your bag, the park also offers traditional golf, an archery range, ballfields and picnic areas.
850 Branciforte Drive
Cityofsantacruz.com

Catch the Game

All your options are “over the hill,” as the locals say. It'll require at least a 45-minute drive over the infamously windy—and sometimes treacherous—Highway 17 unless you take the more scenic Highway 9.

MLB: [San Francisco Giants](#)
NBA: [Golden State Warriors](#)
NFL: [San Francisco 49ers](#) and [Oakland Raiders](#)
NHL: [San Jose Sharks](#)

Paleo Provisions and Then Some

The question of where to acquire rations in their purest form is always top of mind for CrossFitters, most of whom live hungry. Here are some options.

NEW LEAF

Seven of these stores can be found in the Northern California area. Founder Scott Roseman began with a co-operative and turned it into a community grocery store in the early 1980s. Think of it as a smaller, more local Whole Foods.
Downtown Santa Cruz: 1134 Pacific Ave.
Westside Santa Cruz: 1101 Fair Ave.
Newleaf.com

STAFF OF LIFE

There's only one Staff of Life, and once you go in, you'll see why. This self-described “natural foods supermarket” has been a Santa Cruz staple for more than 40 years. Started in 1969, it grew from a small, natural-foods bakery into what it is today.
1266 Soquel Ave.
Staffoflifemarket.com

EL SALCHICHERO

Into meat? Then this charcuterie is the place for you. Apple-cider bacon, bacon jam, Boston butt roast, duck legs, filet mignon, fresh ham, lard, prosciutto—and more. This six-year-old shop prides



Farmers’ markets are serious business in this town. Be sure to check out the abundance of fresh produce and other offerings.

itself on only using pasture-raised animals from a select group of local farmers.
402 Ingalls St.
Elsachichero.com

COMPANION BAKESHOP

If foraging for bread is more your jam, then this gem is a must. It's run by a self-taught baker who holds a degree in agriculture and fruit sciences. Its offerings include rosemary sourdough, cinnamon raisin mini-loaf, baguettes, cookies, shortbread, biscotti, cakes, brownies, macaroons, croissants, tea cakes, scones and galettes. The joint's also outfitted with a coffee-and-espresso bar for your caffeinated pleasure.
2341 Mission St.
Companionbakeshop.com

WHOLE FOODS

Nestled in Santa Cruz's midtown neighborhood, this Whole Foods store offers what many of its cohorts do: a healthy selection of organic and natural products, as well as prepared food when you need to eat quickly or on the go.
911 Soquel Ave.
Wholefoodsmarket.com

CUT OUT THE MIDDLE MAN

Downtown farmers' market: 1:30-5:30 p.m. in the fall and winter, and 1:30-6:30 p.m. beginning April 6, every Wednesday, year round, Cedar and Lincoln Streets.
Westside farmers' market: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday morning, year round, Western Drive and Mission Street.
Live Oak farmers' market: 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Sunday, year round, 15th Avenue and East Cliff Drive.
Santacruzfarmersmarket.org

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is the oldest amusement park still operating in California.





Aquarius Restaurant features local organic produce and meat.

More Eating

The town might be small, but it certainly has no shortage of eateries. Good food is easy to find in Santa Cruz.

AQUARIUS RESTAURANT

Located inside the Santa Cruz Dream Inn hotel that sits right on the beach, Aquarius offers waterfront views that are hard to beat. It boasts of seafood from the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary and meat and produce from small, local organic farmers.
175 W. Cliff Drive
[Jdvhotels.com](#)

BANTAM

This cozy spot on the Westside has brunch and dinner menus that change daily based on seasonal availability. The offerings are succinct, one might say, but everything is made from scratch—that includes the buttermilk biscuit, wood-oven meatballs and 10 pizza varieties.
1010 Fair Ave.
[Bantam1010.com](#)

burger.

In the mood for a burger dressed any way you like? How about a burger at burger.? “The Dude,” “the Chuck Norris” and “the Johnny Cash” are just a few of its 22 burger offerings. Also on the menu: sliders, a small variety of fries, shakes and wood-fired pizza. And don’t forget the beer. This place has 45 on tap and a bunch more in bottles and cans.
1520 Mission St.
[burgersantacruz.com](#)

ENGFER PIZZA WORKS

Handmade dough, original-recipe sauces, homemade desserts and, of course, checkers, chess, backgammon and ping-pong. Choose from the shop’s pre-planned options or build your own pie. Engfer’s has a small-but-decent beer selection with six brews on tap, ranging from oatmeal stout to hefeweizen.
537 Seabright Ave.
[Engferpizzaworks.com](#)

HARBOR CAFÉ

For half a decade, this has been the brunch spot of choice for many locals. The ample patio area is lively and welcomes dogs, even offering a special dog menu that includes lamb jerky treats and peanut-butter cookies. And with breakfast served from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m., you can enjoy a few happy hours the night before and make it in on time for the Mexican Armada omelet.
535 7th Ave.
[Harborcafesantacruz.com](#)

LAILI

This fine dining restaurant describes its fare as “rich Mediterranean flavors with a unique Afghan twist.” Laili is right in downtown Santa Cruz and offers outdoor seating in a lux patio filled with green foliage, umbrellas and heat lamps for those chilly NorCal evenings.
101 Cooper St.
[Lailirestaurant.com](#)

POINT MARKET AND CAFÉ

This hole-in-the-wall is a perfect blend of local convenience store and food stand. Known for its “bomb” breakfast burritos, as Northern Californians say, this joint sits right next to Pleasure Point Park. It’s only a block away from the ocean.
23040 E. Cliff Drive
[Point Market and Café on Facebook](#)



Independent coffee shops are scattered about. Seek one out.

RISTORANTE AVANTI

Open for lunch, dinner and dessert, this place offers Italian -inspired cuisine in a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere. Ristorante Avanti has also been known to make a mean cocktail and offer an OK beer selection, though it isn’t expansive.
1917 Mission St.
[Ristoranteavanti.com](#)



Connoisseur? Soif’s menu includes hard-to-find wines.

SOIF

This one’s for the wine enthusiasts: an intimate eatery that prides itself on offering wines that are a challenge to find—limited and handmade. And, of course, perfectly pairing the vintage with items on the menu. Soif also offers wine flights of local pinot noirs, Italian exotics and a so-called “Guilty Pleasure Flight.” The menu is simple, printed on a single page including the likes of steamed manila clams, cider-braised pork belly and cornmeal buttermilk cake.
105 Walnut Ave.
[Soifwine.com](#)

WEST END TAP AND KITCHEN

This gastropub offers 18 beers on tap, including seven of its own creations. And the taps aren’t relegated to brews. West End also offers on tap seven wines of the red and white varieties. Its menu is simple and intended to complement the libations. The owner’s family is responsible for Fords Coffee Shop in Watsonville, as well as Tied House Café and Brewery in Mountain View.
334D Ingalls St.
[Westendtap.com](#)

WOODSTOCK PIZZA

This shop puts the fun back in pizza. Choose from classic combos or you can create your own, starting with the crust (gluten-free option available), then moving on to the sauce and the toppings.

For the pickier eaters in your group, salads and sandwiches are available as well. Woodstock also keeps 16 beers on tap that include some gluten-free options.
710 Front St.
[Woodstockscruz.com](#)

Happy Hours

515 KITCHEN AND COCKTAILS

Sit back and relax with a “cucumber rhubarb cooler” or perhaps an “ain’t life grand”—two of the eight cocktails this establishment offers. There are a few wines for those who prefer grapes, but only two beers for those who prefer hops. A limited selection of four food options might make this place ideal for pre-dinner drinks. Happy hour is 4-7 p.m. every day, and 11 p.m.-closing Sunday-Tuesday.
515 Cedar St.
[515santacruz.com](#)

CROW’S NEST

An ocean view and live entertainment. Crow’s Nest has most of the typical offerings when it comes to libations, with a great view alongside the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor. Happy hour is 3:30-6 p.m. weekdays and all night Wednesday.
2218 E. Cliff Drive
[Crowsnest-santacruz.com](#)

LÚPULO CRAFT BEER HOUSE

Lúpulo—it’s Spanish for the word “hops.” And this cozy joint ain’t short of any. Part craft-beer restaurant, part tasting room and part bottle shop, this place offers 16 taps and a 7-p.m. Trivia Night the third Monday of the month.
233 Cathcart St.
[Lupulosc.com](#)



Santa Cruz: Surfing, mountain biking or hiking with breathtaking backdrops.



Vibrant sea life is among the joys of visiting Santa Cruz.

O'NEILL YACHT CHARTERS PUBLIC SAILS

Schedule a local beer-sampling or wine-tasting sail, oftentimes with appetizers provided. You'll leave from the L Dock at the Santa Cruz Harbor and head out to scenic—and likely windy—views of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary aboard a 65-foot catamaran. Grab a group of friends, a jacket and even your own food, if you like.

275 Lake Ave.

Oneillyachtcharters.com

OSWALD

Some say the best cocktails in town can be found right here. Choose from beverages with such names as “apio gimlet,” “briar patch,” “velvet underground” and “valentine.” Cocktail Hour is 4:30-6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturdays at the bar and in the lounge.

121 Soquel Ave.

Oswaldrestaurant.com

SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAIN BREWERY

Local, organic and award-winning, this taproom and garden is sure to provide something you like. Happy Hour is noon-1 p.m. and 5-6 p.m. weekdays. Be sure to catch Hangover Sundays!—brunch from 10 a.m.-noon, beermosas and chavelas from 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and happy hour from 5-6 p.m.

402 Ingalls St.

Scmbrew.com

SÜDA

Twenty beers on tap, specialty cocktails and top-shelf classics in a lively atmosphere make this spot a great place to meet friends. Happy hour is 3-5:30 p.m. weekdays.

3910 Portola Drive

Eatsuda.com



Verve Coffee—makers of the CrossFit Blend—take their beans seriously.

VERVE COFFEE ROASTERS

If alcohol doesn't interest you—and even if it does—this coffee shop is a must-try. Roasted right in Santa Cruz, these beans are smooth and come from small farmers throughout the world. If you're a java junkie, this is worth your time.

1540 Pacific Ave.

1010 Fair Ave.

104 Bronson St.

816 41st Ave.

Vervecoffee.com



Site Seeing



The Silver Spur is a CrossFit tradition that goes deep. Stop by and you might be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Coach Greg Glassman.

THE SILVER SPUR

Just around the corner from CrossFit Founder and CEO Greg Glassman's original CrossFit gym on Research Park Drive, The Silver Spur continues to be a favorite breakfast spot. Many an impromptu meeting has occurred at the Spur, where it's easy to grab a so-called “CrossFit Sandwich”: 2 fried eggs, bacon, cheese on 2 pieces of toast—4 Zone blocks.

2650 Soquel Drive

Scsilverspur.com



If you know CrossFit history, then you know the name Garth Taylor. Stop by his gym, Kaijin, for some jiu-jitsu training.

KAIJIN

If you've been doing CrossFit a few years, you've heard the stories of our founder training a gifted Brazilian jiu-jitsu fighter in the 1990s. His technique was good. His conditioning, not so much.

That fighter was **Garth Taylor**, today one of the most decorated Americans in Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Taylor has won or medaled in both national and international competitions and at every belt level at the world championship. He also competed in the invitation-only Abu Dhabi Combat Club World Championships. Taylor is co-owner and head jiu-jitsu instructor at Kaijin. Drop in for a lesson or two. Taylor is a great teacher who uses CrossFit movements as analogies for jiu-jitsu training.

403 Swift St., Suite D

Kaijinmma.com



While you're in Santa Cruz, take a CrossFit Inc. seminar at The Ranch in Aromas and soak in the CrossFit history.

CROSSFIT RANCH

Better known to most as The Ranch in Aromas, this affiliate is only open when it needs to be. So check CrossFit.com for **seminars** scheduled there to get a taste of history—the rusty hopper, the dusty hill. The site was host to the 2007, 2008 and 2009 CrossFit Games, as well as to the opening events of the 2016 Reebok CrossFit Games. Be aware this is private property and still owned by the family of Dave Castro, Director of the CrossFit Games and Co-director of Training. We wouldn't recommend stopping by unannounced and milling about.

275 Dunbarton Road, Aromas, California, 95004. ■

About the Author: Andréa Maria Cecil is assistant managing editor and head writer of the CrossFit Journal.