

PET FRIENDLY

Santa Cruz visitors council launches a place for pets

New website aims to attract pet-related tourism



Buddy enjoys the sunshine outside of Pacific Coffee Roasting Co. on Monday during an outing with his owners Valerie and Dennis Thomas.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

Animals

By TERRI MORGAN

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SANTA CRUZ — There are plenty of places for visitors to sit, stay and play with their dogs in Santa Cruz County. To help entice pet-loving tourists, the Santa Cruz Conference & Visitors Council has expanded its website to provide pet-friendly information.

The resources can help visitors find hotels, motels, inns, campgrounds and vacation rentals that have opened their doggie doors to four-legged visitors. Travelers and local dog lovers alike can access the site to find restaurants, retail businesses, attractions, parks and beaches that welcome canines.

"We are enhancing the visitor experience by shining a spotlight on what we have to offer to those traveling with pets," Maggie Ivy, CEO and executive vice president of the council, said in a press statement.

The site also lists areas where people legally can take leashed dogs, like Capitola Village and Santa Cruz's Pacific Avenue. It also includes dog parks, beaches and trails where dogs can romp off-leash.

Dog lovers were pleased to learn about the new site.

"It's wonderful there are places you can take your dog," said Nancy Stucker, whose family includes an 11-year-old Australian shepherd named Scout. "Dog owners really appreciate it."

For many people, like Valerie Raby and her husband Dennis Thomas, their dog is part of the family. The couple has taken their dog Buddy to restaurants in the past, and new website will provide them with more options.

"One of the places we enjoy taking Buddy is Michael's on Main, because we can all sit together out on the deck," Raby said. "They also provide dog



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Buddy and other canines are welcome at Pacific Coffee Roasting Co.

biscuits, which he really likes."

The site also includes information about local leash laws and city ordinances regarding pets. For travelers on the go, the council offers a mobile version of the site. Pet-friendly information is also included in its 78-page 2014 Official Santa Cruz County Traveler's Guide.

Staff at the Santa Cruz SPCA also welcomed the news about the new website.

"It's been a long time coming to make Santa Cruz more pet-friendly like Carmel," said Lisa Carter, executive director. "I think it's amazing people are coming forward."

The SPCA also has a pet friendly directory on its website. Carter hopes to share information and links with the CVC's new site.

"We're really open to working with them," Carter said. "This will be just great."

Follow Sentinel correspondent Terri Morgan at www.twitter.com/soquelterri

ON THE NET

The Santa Cruz County Conference & Visitors Council's website is www.santacruzpetfriendly.com.

The Santa Cruz County SPCA's pet friendly resource center can be accessed at <http://spcasc.org/programs-resources/pet-friendly-directory/>

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