

## Tale Of Two Cities

# From Ocean View Avenue To Ocean Street

By Rick Chatenever  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Sunday morning. The sky is bright, electric blue, tinged with a hint of fall coming on.

A solitary bicyclist makes lazy zig-zags past the gables and porticoes of the Victorian houses that sleep late this morning on either side of Ocean View Avenue.

The street is deserted. The only sound is the soft whirring of her tires on the pavement. Behind their long sidewalks and driveways, through trellises and stained glass, faded Victorian facades glimmer in caught rays of sunshine. Like old women they are aging — but still there is a twinkle in their windowpane eyes.

Meanwhile, two blocks away and down the hill, Ocean Street is already crowded with tourist traffic. Sleek, shiny cars from "over the hill," their radios blaring, their grills sparkling in the sun, do a jerky dance called the "stop and go," all to the rhythm of the traffic lights.

Two and three and four teen-agers to a car, the Ocean Street parade grinds its way toward the beach and boardwalk. They have gurgling engines and four-speed transmissions, and background music provided by 8-track tape decks.

It is a flashy, noisy spectacle.

Above on the hill, the Victorians try to ignore it, languishing indifferently behind their well-barbered foliage. Their haughty pose is nothing new — it has been cultivated for decades.

It is more than two blocks from Ocean View Avenue to Ocean Street. Actually the measurement shouldn't be made in distance terms at all. Years...or light years...would provide a better gauge.

It is as though Ocean Street and Ocean View Avenue are in totally different towns, with little in common save that they both bear the same name.

Santa Cruz.

For the hot rodders down below, now on the brink of a traffic jam at the Soquel Avenue intersection, Santa Cruz is the end, the destination. It has wide bustling streets crowded with familiar signs for carry-out food and motel rooms.

This is the town that poses for snapshots which later show up in Sunset Magazine.

It is the setting for families, all clad in casual tennis attire, roaming the mall and asking directions to the Cooper House.

It is the roller coaster and the Coconut Grove, and on occasion the Del Mar Theater, and more recently the new Catalyst.

It is a tourist town.

In this town you circle for a half-hour in front of the Crow's Nest, looking for a place to park. And then wait another hour for a table.

In this town you go to the beach with enough provisions to last for two weeks in the Sahara. Ice chests and portable radios and rubber rafts and whole cases of cold ones.

This Santa Cruz is a Hollywood back lot, all full of backdrops just waiting to be photographed with instamatic cameras.

It is the fresh catch laid out on ice at the wharf, and a hundred other things to see, that the outsiders can make into souvenirs and take home with them when they leave.

The other Santa Cruz is the one of the Sunday morning cyclist. Traveling a route to avoid contact with auto traffic, she stays mainly in residential areas, moving from one neighborhood to another.

From Ocean View she moves to the wide, flat security of Cayuga Street, where she can get almost all the way to the beach without seeing anything (other than one cat on one front porch) moving.

From the Third Street overlook she watches a fog bank like a gray curtain

just off shore, as below small expeditions are staking their claims in the sand.

(A claim consists of a beach blanket surrounded by an imaginary circle, its radius determined by the length of a Frisbee throw.)

Leaving her perch, her bike fairly flies down the Atlantic Avenue hill. She is peddling for another spot off the tourist maps — the upper harbor, where the sailboats have hinged masts, and all manner of converted World War II relics bob up and down in their slips.

The cyclist's Santa Cruz is held together with streets where children play and their fathers mow the lawn. It includes Garfield Park and the tree at Natural Bridges where the monarchs hang out upside-down when it's too cold to fly.

Her route huffs and puffs its way up Western Drive, where the distinction is still clear, between the houses proliferating on one side, and the still unspoiled arroyo on the other.

Her meandering course includes few overlooks for picture taking, but does include a number of places to stop for breakfast, where the customers and waitresses call each other by their first names.

This Santa Cruz is still provincial, and still accessible by bicycle. Like an awkward adolescent in the face of inevitable growth, it seems shy and slightly embarrassed by the cosmopolitan image being cultivated in the tourist sector.

Although it has been living with the tourists for more than a half-century now, through times when they came in elegant limousines to the veritable palaces that overlooked the famous Santa Cruz surf, still it has not yet become completely comfortable with the role.

Less a tourist town, it's still a small town.

A quiet town.  
A hometown



A Sunday morning ride past an Ocean View Avenue Victorian



The Ocean Street parade . . .