

'Outside' magazine touts city

Santa Cruz ranked top college town

By **DAN WHITE**

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

History

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SANTA CRUZ — At long last, the magazine world has placed Santa Cruz at the top of the heap.

In its latest issue, now in newsstands across the nation, Outside magazine has ranked Santa Cruz the No. 1 college town in North America, and singles out UC Santa Cruz as the best place where you can "hit the books and the backcountry."

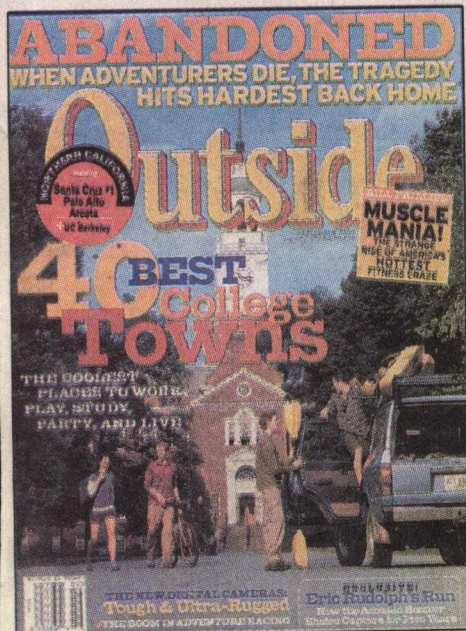
This accolade is much more impressive than anything magazines have doled out to Santa Cruz in the past few years, including Rolling Stone's May issue, which declared Surf City a hotspot for gutterpunks — homeless "pirates of the railroad" who live by their wits and their fists.

In April, Men's Journal ranked Santa Cruz as its 20th best place to live, though Santa Cruz got trumped by Provo, Utah, which came in at No. 7, and by Santa Barbara, which ranked No. 13.

The Outside article, which lists the Top 40 selections, draws attention to UCSC's one-of-a-kind backdrop of "beautiful beaches, great surf, redwood forests" and a Mediterranean climate that makes this seaside burg "a hard place to study."

Much of the article is devoted to UCSC's laid-back "largely native-Californian student population," its agroecology program and marine sciences, along with recreation oppor-

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The September issue of 'Outside' ranks Santa Cruz as the No. 1 college town in the country 'to work, play, study, party and live.'

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tunities from surfing and hiking to kayaking.

The article also states that "you'll find kayakers on the class III-IV San Lorenzo River" on week-end mornings and name checks Santa Cruz brand mountain bikes.

UCSC spokesman Jim Burns hadn't read the story but said "I'm not surprised."

Neither was Graham Mattingly, 24, a UCSC student and avid mountain biker.

"The single-track around here is some of the best you can find in the West Coast," he said. He could think of no other place where "you can ride a redwood forest like this so close to the ocean."

While he was reluctant to divulge his favorite bike spots, he welcomed the kudos from Outside because he said such attention helps make "my sport more normal, more respectable, and it makes it easier to fight for trail access. If like-minded people get together it can be a good thing."

Besides, he said, the local mountain biking resources have been a "decently kept secret. The mountain biking here is kind of below the radar."

Dan Forbus, 22, attended Chico State University for two years, then UCSC where he earned his degree. He agreed UCSC was located in a recreation mecca with far more outdoors opportunities than Chico, but felt the Santa Cruz community was not as warm and accepting toward students.

"The local attitude is that the Slugs are invasive, taking over the best housing and waves," he said. "Chico was more embracing."

Those who care about geographic and collegiate rivalries will get a kick out of the fact that UC Santa Cruz is ranked higher than University of Colorado, Boul-

der (No.2) University of Vermont (No.11), Humboldt State University (No. 12) Stanford University (No. 17) and the University of California at San Diego (No. 32)

The Outside recognition may also serve as a balm for those who felt burned when MTV came to town this summer to film a local frat, Delta Omega Chi, where two members, later claiming they were trying to impress the program, filched and killed a pet koi. MTV, which didn't film the incident, is set to run a program featuring the frat this fall.

Contact Dan White at dwhite@santa-cruz.com.

How they ranked

A partial listing of Outside magazine's college-town rankings:

1. UCSC
2. University of Colorado, Boulder
3. Middlebury College, Vermont
4. Warren Wilson College, North Carolina
5. Montana State University
6. Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia
7. Dartmouth College, New Hampshire
8. University of Virginia
9. Northern Arizona University
10. University of Iowa
11. University of Vermont
12. Humboldt State University
13. Colorado College
14. Cornell University
15. University of Montana
16. Bowdoin College
17. Stanford University
18. University of Wisconsin
19. University of Hawaii
20. Southern Oregon University
21. Prescott College, Arizona
22. Williams College, Massachusetts
23. University of Arkansas
24. Evergreen State College
25. St. John's College, New Mexico