

TIME TO CELEBRATE

# The Tannery's coming-out party

Tanneries

6-4-09



DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

Tannery artists are planning a big bash Friday that will allow the public to see what's happening at the new Artspace Tannery Lofts in Santa Cruz.

## Grateful residents of new arts colony open their doors to the community

By WALLACE BAINE

wbaine@santacruzsentinel.com

Talk to almost anyone living at the Tannery Arts Center long enough and, eventually, they'll express a kind of bedazzled but delighted disbelief, a variation on "I can't believe this has actually happened."

The years-in-the-planning, hotly controversial project on the grounds of the old Salz Tannery is finally a reality, at least the first phase of it. And scores of artists and creative professionals now live in the 100-

unit twin apartment buildings near the intersection of Highway 9 and Highway 1.

Perhaps, now it's time to party.

The residents of the Artspace Tannery Lofts, as they are officially known, are holding a daylong celebration on Friday, as an open invitation to the community to come see what all the fuss is about. Live music and performance, open art studios, food, presentations and, of course, self-guided access to the Tannery

### IF YOU GO

TANNERY LOFTS  
GRAND OPENING

**WHEN:** 2-9 p.m. Friday

**WHERE:** Artspace Tannery Lofts  
at the Tannery Arts Center, Highway 9,  
Santa Cruz

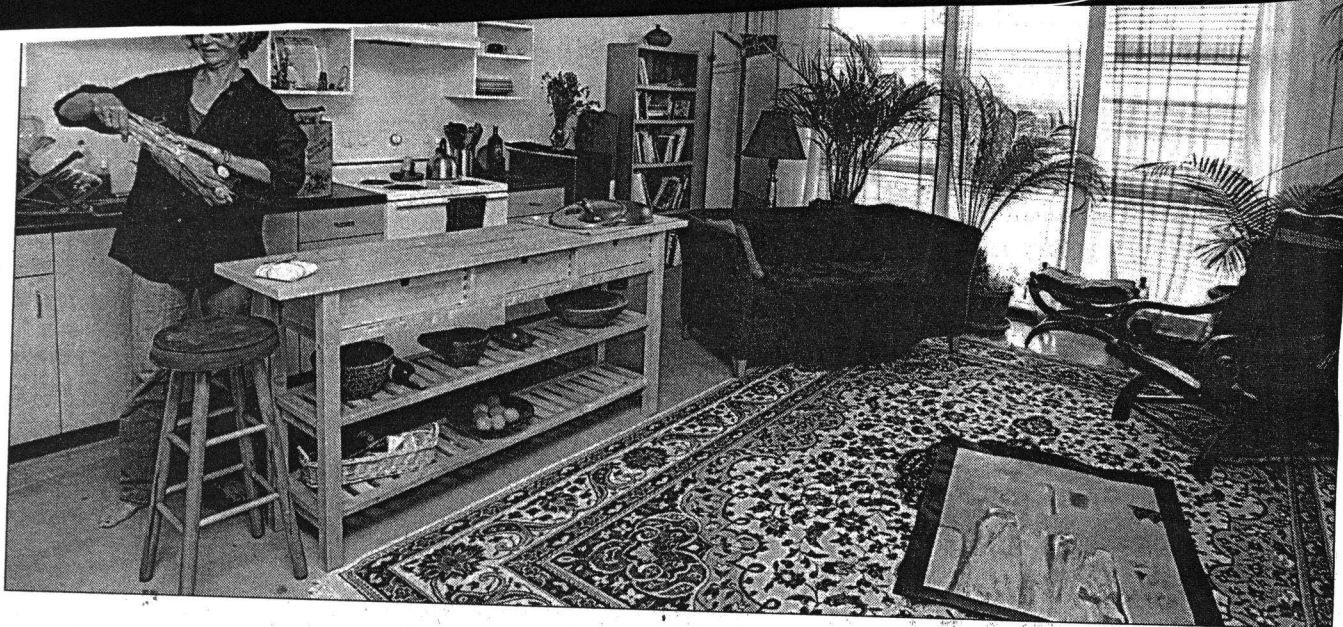
**COST:** Free

**NOTE:** Parking will be limited. Consider  
carpooling or biking to the event.

**DETAILS:** [www.tanneryartscenter.org](http://www.tanneryartscenter.org)

SEE TANNERY ON A2





Painter and jewelry maker Majio lived in shared housing for years before moving into her own 500-square-foot apartment in the Tannery Arts Center. DAN COYRO/SENTINEL

## TANNERY

Continued from A1

buildings will take place at the Tannery "campus" from 2 p.m. into the evening.

"The idea is to thank everyone who made this happen," said Tannery resident Margaret Niven, who serves as the chair of the planning committee of the event. "We just want to say, 'Thank you. Come into our homes and see what we've done to the place.'"

The \$35.4 million project, developed by the Minneapolis-based company Artspace, features studio, two- and three-bedroom apartments designed for low- and mid-income residents who work in the arts or other creative industries. Despite significant opposition to the project, the city of Santa Cruz and the Redevelopment Agency approved the plan that involved a

cleanup of the old Salz Tannery property and construction of the lofts. The project contains two other stages that will include artist work studios and a performing arts center. Construction is expected to begin on the last phase of the center in 2010.

Friday's event will be user-friendly to the community, said Niven, with maps of the buildings and lists of studios open to the public. "It will have a feel very much like Open Studios," she said. "This event is for the public."

Residents first started moving into the new units in March. A social-networking Web site was developed to help Tannery residents get to know each other and form alliances for the purpose of commuting or child care.

"The potential of this place is mind-boggling," said assemblage artist Susan Vaughan, who added she had a few acquaintances but no close friends when she first moved in. "You're in a community of like-minded people, and

we've all gone through the process of getting in here. We're all essentially in the same kind of space."

Many say that a culture is beginning to emerge at the Tannery. The individual buildings are beginning to develop personalities. The interior hallways are beginning to fill in with artwork that mark each apartment. There is still no common meeting space, like a coffeehouse might provide. But Tannery residents are clearly in a mood to socialize, to be open to influence from their neighbors.

"A lot of these people," said resident Kirby Scudder, "have told me that if this had not come along, they would have had to move (out of Santa Cruz County)."

Some residents say that the feeling of elation that prevailed during the first weeks of the Tannery's opening is lingering.

"People are still pretty euphoric about being here," said Vaughan.