

See you around the neighborhood



Exploring a few Santa Cruz favorites

(L - R) [1] A Pleasure Point surfer makes his way along East Cliff. [2] The painted ladies on Walnut Avenue create a colorful backdrop for an equally colorful walker. [3] The quiet streets of local neighborhoods are an excellent venues for cyclists. [4] Clowning around town, Boulder Creek's Mr. Twister – aka Cory McDonald – awaits a ride at his neighborhood bus stop.

By Kirsten Fairchild

There are good ones and there are bad ones. There are safe ones and rough ones. Some are the kind that Mister Rogers would have always had a beautiful day in, and others are the kind that residents can't wait to move away from.

Some neighborhoods change from generation to generation, while others seem to stay exactly the same. Ask any given resident to name some of the neighborhoods in Santa Cruz County and there's a good chance that the respondent would be able to list quite a few. Ask a native or a longtime resident the same question and there's a good chance that the list could be very long.

No matter how long the list, most people agree that when it comes to living, working or just spending time in Santa Cruz neighborhoods, we've all got it pretty good.

We're blessed with way too many great neighborhoods to profile in one article — many remarkable areas don't appear here — but these seven offer a basic palette from which to paint a picture of our diverse community mosaic. They are listed by location from south to north.

Cutter Drive

Watsonville

While there are certainly other neighborhoods with far grander homes in the county, the view from the backyards of Cutter Drive dwellings may be unmatched.

Cutter Drive hugs a portion of the eastern perimeter of Kelly Lake, a private lake among several that make up the little-known Interlaken area. Residents have backyards that open up into their very own water wonderland.

Many have boat docks and spend time water skiing, jet skiing, swimming and fishing. At the north end of the lake stands Kett Castle, privately owned and not open to the public or visible from Cutter Drive.

"I don't think 75 percent of people living in Watsonville know about Kelly Lake," said Rocky Franich, a Cutter Drive resident for the past 35 years. "There is a series of little lakes. Tynan and Pinto and College lakes are located behind the Catholic Church, and then you

have Kelly Lake and Drew Lake.

"Kelly Lake is about the same size as Pinto Lake," Franich continued. "We try to keep boating activity down on Kelly Lake to preserve the wildlife and habitat. It's a beautiful place. We want to take good care of it."

According to Pajaro Valley Historical Association records, Edward Kelly came to the Pajaro Valley in the 1860s. He was an early landowner, and Kelly Lake is named for him.

The Interlaken area is unincorporated

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(Above) Cutter Drive borders the eastern shore of Watsonville's Kelly Lake (right) From water ski boats to canoes, Kelly Lake hosts a variety of watercraft.

but was designated as a "place" by the U.S. Census Bureau for the 1990 census. It was named after Dr. James Bird Cutter, a New York native who arrived in the Pajaro Valley in 1911.

"Dr. Cutter had 70 acres of orchards lo-

offers more than just a pretty backyard view.

"People who live in the Cutter Drive area like it because the neighborhood is friendly," Franich said. "The

weather is a little bit warmer than in town because we're a little farther from the ocean. People who move in tend to stay. It's a nice place to live."

Depot Hill, Capitola

Located off Monterey Avenue. When it comes to views from a front yard, few in the county can outshine the glorious panorama Bruce Arthur wakes up to every morning in his Depot Hill home.

Built in 1888, the Stick Shingle Style house has been home to Arthur and his wife Dori for the past 43 years. With the Monterey Bay shimmering to his left and colorful Capitola Village directly below him, Arthur can turn his head to the right and take in the rest of the area, seeing across Soquel Creek and beyond the city limits all the way to Soquel High School.

Located on Capitola's eastern bluff and on the street with a front-row view known as Cliff Avenue, the Arthur house stands on

a lot that was part of a subdivision of Camp Capitola developed by landowner Frederick Augustus Hihn in 1884.

Considered by many as one of the two most influential men in the development of Capitola along with Henry Allen Rispin, Hihn is believed to have sold the lots on Cliff Avenue to fellow German immigrants who were also friends or business associates from the Bay Area.

The rest of the area developed gradually. Near the back of the subdivision, El Salto Resort was built in the late 1880s and was first called the "English Cottages." Slowly, the middle section was developed, mostly as summer homes. St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church (now with its congregation relocated to Seacliff) was completed on Oakland Avenue in 1898. The entire area was called Capitola Park until after the train depot was relocated to the hill in 1903.

"Depot Hill really reflects how Capitola developed," said Carolyn Swift, the director of the Capitola Historical Museum. "The whole front row was mostly German immigrants from San Jose, and El Salto Resort was the only private enclave of wealthy Bay Area residents."



Kett Castle is not located on the Cutter Drive but the neighborhood enjoys an enchanting view of it.

cated between Drew and Kelly Lakes that he called Interlaken Orchards," said Regan Huerta of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association. "He put in a subdivision after he had been there a while, which eventually became Cutter Drive."

Home to a number of longtime and prominent Watsonville families, Cutter Drive



Many of Depot Hill's oldest homes are perched on the cliff overlooking Capitola Village.

Fast-forwarding to the 1960s, Swift credits the opening of nearby Cabrillo College as spurring a number of educators and professional people to move to the area. When Arthur arrived on Cliff Avenue in 1968, however, he found few newcomers. Many of the original residents had passed their homes down to the next generation.

"When we moved here, all the homes had basically stayed in the family with a few still remaining in the family to this day," said Arthur, who served as mayor of Capitola in 2000 and 2005. "There were a lot of children on the hill when we first moved here. Now, I would say the neighborhood is in transition in terms of property ownership. It's gone from longtime family-owned pieces of property to a number of newcomers. The neighborhood is getting younger again."



One of the small Victorian beach cottages that helped make Capitola a haven for vacationers.

Pleasure Point

Santa Cruz

One recent morning, Robin "Zeuf" Janiszeufski-Hesson opened her front door and discovered freshly caught sea bass on her doorstep. She didn't know who left the generous gift — and she didn't seem in any particular hurry to find out.

"I'm sure it was a neighbor," said Janiszeufski-Hesson, a resident of Pleasure Point for the past 21 years. "It was so fresh. Straight from the ocean. A lot of our neighbors fish and grow their own food. Sometimes, I never find out who brought something by."

If her busy doorstep is any indication, Pleasure Point folks don't seem to bother with keeping track of how many cups of sugar have been borrowed over the years.

Along with her husband Frosty Hesson, Janiszeufski-Hesson often makes sure to have a pot of her popular "Zeufi" coffee on since neighbors often stop by unannounced for a cup and conversation.

That's just the way things are in the friendly neighborhood, according to Janiszeufski-Hesson, whose surf report, "The Girl in the Curl," has been on KPIG radio for the past 14

years.

"We are surrounded by wonderful people and homes in this neighborhood," she

said. "There are incredibly creative surf shacks with some fantastic succulent landscaping and there are some beautiful larger homes. There is no homogenization in Pleasure Point. I pinch myself that I get to live here."

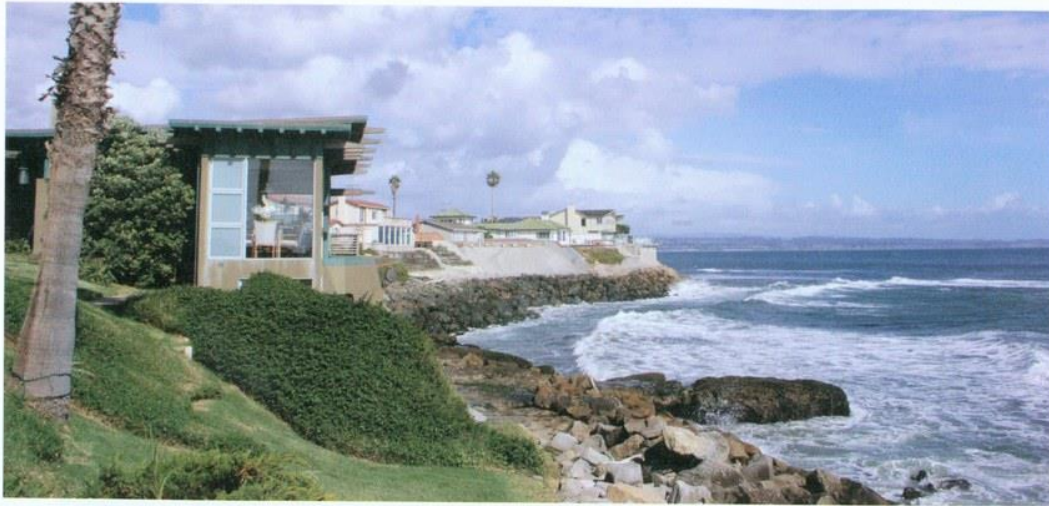
Known previously as Soquel Point and



The view from Depot Hill is one of the area's favorites.

once part of Capitola before its incorporation, Pleasure Point is one of a number of neighborhoods underneath the Live Oak umbrella. While a number of longtime residents and historians insist that Pleasure Point got its name because of the presence of both brothels and rum runners during Prohibition, Swift doesn't agree.

"I have never seen any evidence that the name came about because of the presence of houses of pleasure," Swift said. "It was called



The homes on the cliffs of Pleasure Point have commanding views of some of the area's most outstanding surfing.



Santa Cruz native Niki Pini and her dog Dotti check the surf at Pleasure Point's Rockview Street.

Pleasure Point because people went there to vacation. They had a pleasant time. There was a swimming pool called the Pleasure Point Plunge that a lot of people still remember. It was taken out in the 1950s, but many people learned to swim there."

While the neighborhood's arguably most famous resident, Jack O'Neill, said that his understanding is that the name came about because of the presence of "ladies of the night,"

he is also of a belief that is probably far less controversial among his fellow residents.

"I have traveled to 58 countries because of my work," said O'Neill, the wetsuit titan who has called Pleasure Point home for nearly 50 years. "I always say that I live in the best place in the world. Why would anyone want to live anywhere other than Pleasure Point?"

Walnut Avenue and Lincoln Street Victorians Santa Cruz

Home to a high concentration of Victorians, this two-block stretch of both Walnut Avenue and Lincoln Street boasts structures dating back to the 19th century, with several being built in the 1870s.

Back in 1851, Hihn — who eventually proved to be influential in the development of Capitola — arrived

in Santa Cruz. In addition to his business acumen, Hihn made his name in Santa Cruz as a developer and landowner. The current site of City Hall, at the corner of Center Street and Church Street, is where the Hihn Mansion once stood, built in 1873. As in Capitola, Hihn subdivided tracts in the area and sold the lots to people he more than likely knew, including a number of family members.

Jumping ahead to the decades after World War II, the Victorians on Walnut Street and Lincoln Street — once known as Trust Street — had really started to show their age. With the popularity of the style waning, and a reported lack of interest in upkeep from existing owners, the Victorians were under threat of demolition.

However, the arrival of nationally acclaimed photographers Chuck and Esther Abbott to the neighborhood in the 1960s proved to be a turning point.

"The Abbotts really saved the neighborhood and downtown when they came," said Kurt Haveman, who has lived in the neighborhood for the past 35 years. "At the time, the Victorians were being torn down because people wanted the lots. They came here and



(R-L) Jack O'Neill and surf scribe Drew Kampion relax in Jack's Pleasure Point driveway. Drew's recently completed biography on Jack was released last month.



Photo: Bill Lovejoy

Neither snow nor rain nor painted ladies stays these couriers ... A local postman passes "The Sisters" two Walnut Avenue Victorians that are built in a mirror image of each other.

got together with (landscape architect) Roy Rydell. They bought a bunch of houses and resold them to people who wanted to fix them up."

As the owner of Bill Pitts Painting, Bill Pitts estimates that since 1976 he's painted about 40 Victorians on the two streets. On a recent afternoon, Pitts was painting the front of the late actress ZaSu Pitts' childhood home on Lincoln Street. He believes he's a distant relative of hers.

"Being entrusted by the homeowner and to have them put their home into my hands to restore the outside makes me feel very privileged," Pitts said. "Painting Victorians is technical work. These old homes are held together by ancient steel wire nails, which are made out of a long piece of wire that was cut and stamped with a square head. Part of the process is to re-nail or re-screw the siding or the trim back onto the framing of the house, and that's just the beginning."

But Pitts' interest in restoring these homes goes beyond the technical challenges.

"I'm just crazy nostalgic," Pitts said. "I believe that a Victorian is a piece of art and an antique in its own right, every bit as much as an extremely expensive piece of furniture. Victorians need tender loving care."

Westside Santa Cruz

For longtime surfboard shaper and surfer Johnny Rice, Westside Santa Cruz will always be home. Relaxing alongside his wife Rosemary outside their home on a recent afternoon, Rice waxed nostalgic about the neighborhood he knows and loves so well.

"As a kid growing up on the Westside,

some of which had names that have fallen by the wayside over the years.

Ross Eric Gibson, a Santa Cruz County historian specializing in historical architecture, has lived on the Westside for most of his life. His home borders two neighborhoods — Garfield Park and Natural Bridges.

"The Westside was initially settled along the coast, facing the Monterey Bay from the Lighthouse to Beach Street," Gibson said. "Each of those blocks was a separate estate along the coast. Most of the rest of the area were farms, chiefly chicken ranches and dairy and flower farms."

As the area developed over the years, notable industries included tanneries, lime, agriculture and shipping. At one time there was a slaughterhouse as well as a vegetable



Created from carved wood and clam shells artist Jerry Clarke's sculpture "Morning Catch" is one of several that surround his home on Depot Hill.

you knew where the Italian families, the Portuguese and the Greeks all lived, but then they all began to melt into each other," said Rice, who grew up on National Street. "I remember trying to sneak by the Italian fishermen without being seen to get out of helping mend their nets, but they'd catch me and call me over to work."

More of an area than one specific neighborhood, Westside Santa Cruz actually consists of roughly 10 different neighborhoods,



Bill Pitts applies a finishing touch to one of the 40 Victorians he has restored on Lincoln Street and Walnut Avenue.

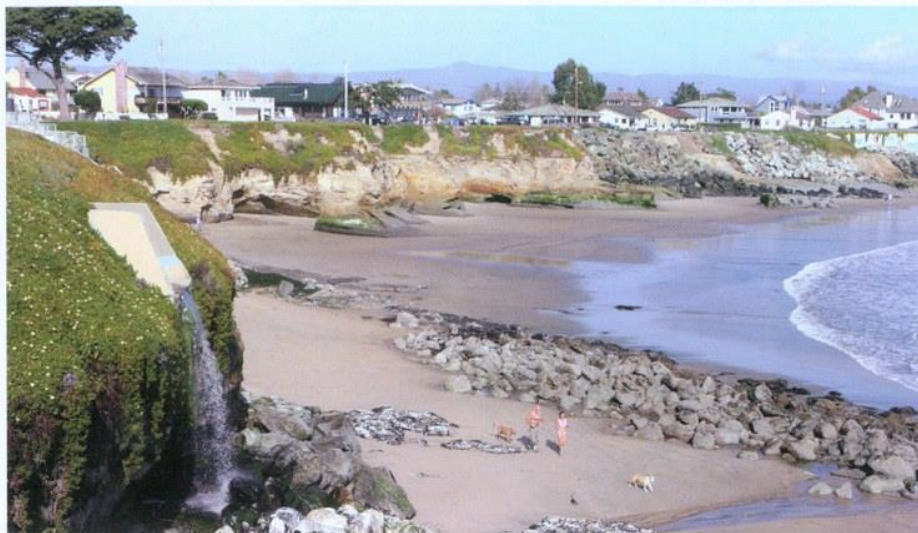


Photo: Shmuel Thaler

Exploring the beaches on Santa Cruz's westside is a popular pastime for its residents.

processing plant. Wrigley, Texas Instruments, and Lipton all had production facilities on the Westside.

In the late 1960s, a lot of professors and students lived on the Westside, Gibson said.

"The Westside had its own intellectual bent that included people deeply interested in literature, conservation and local history," he said. "Of course, the surf culture existed as well and had a huge impact."

Gibson noted that Lighthouse Point was not just associated with surfing, but also was recognized for the all-black 54th Coast Artillery unit stationed there during World War II. A number of those service members eventually settled in The Circles neighborhood.

Rice, who has been shaping surfboards for the past 56 years, works in his studio at home off of West Cliff Drive.

"There aren't a lot of rentals in our immediate neighborhood and not as many students as there once were," said Rice, who still rides his bicycle around the neighborhood daily. "There are a lot of families right now. Little kids ride through the neighborhood on their bikes with shortboards under their arms."

There's no place else Rice would rather be.

"You can go all over the world and say that there are a lot of great places, but you can't beat the Westside," he said. "Everybody's really tight. We watch out for each other. Plus, I'd go crazy if I couldn't smell, see and hear the ocean every day."

Pasatiempo

Santa Cruz

Given that a woman as remarkable as Marion Hollins was the visionary of Pasatiempo, it comes as no surprise that Angela Chesnut has felt a since of dedication to the private community ever since she and her family moved into the William Wurster-designed house that Hollins herself once called home.

Soon after settling into her home in 2003, Chesnut joined the homeowner's association board and eventually served as president. Chesnut and others are credited with helping reopen the swimming pool as well as rekindling interest in Pasatiempo's social activities, for which Hollins was famous.

A pioneer both in women's golf and development in Santa Cruz County, Hollins created an environment at Pasatiempo that was often likened to a Hollywood playground. Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford and Bing Crosby were among the many who came to enjoy Hollins' company along with lavish dinners and dances, steeplechase racing, polo, swimming, tennis and golf.

"In 2004, we started a social committee to establish a sense of the past, present and future," Chesnut said. "We invited all of the older residents and started a monthly ladies luncheon circle

to hear their stories and celebrate the legacy of the past, and also to invite new families to make traditions for the future."

Although resident volunteer historian Bob Beck moved to Pasatiempo in 1993 primarily for the golf — the semi-private, Dr. Alistair MacKenzie-designed course is regarded as one of the top courses in the world — he said there are other reasons the neighborhood is a wonderful place to live.

"One of the biggest attractions to living in Pasatiempo is its accessibility," said Beck, a retired high school history teacher. "You can come and go easily and not be impacted by Highway 1 traffic. Another is the climate. It's warmer here. We have sun early when the rest of Santa Cruz might not have sun all day.



This stone home at the corner of Stockton Avenue and West Cliff Drive is one of the many west cliff landmarks.



Marion Hollins planned her Pasatiempo so its homes would be nestled along the course's celebrated fairways.

"Another is the privacy of the community because of the topography," Beck continued. "Every lot is unique. There are no typical rectangular lots up here. There are a lot of residences that you can't see from the roads. It's not like your next-door neighbor is right up against you. So, I think people make a conscious effort to get to know their neighbors."

While Pasatiempo's history has been well documented, Chesnut is determined to ensure that Hollins' desire for a close-knit community continues.

"We always hear how much Marion loved to have people over and hold parties, so we try to organize social events each month," Chesnut said. "I used to kid that her ghost has inspired me to help create a community."

The Victorians of Pine Street and Oak Street

Boulder Creek

Plenty of sunshine, redwoods and Victorians can all take their place as defining features of present-day Boulder Creek.

Sure, the rain can really come down hard in the town formerly known as just Boulder, but ample sunshine abounds, frequently enticing residents to make the walk downtown to do errands. The Victorians on Pine and Oak streets have been standing since the 19th century, but the redwood trees came and went and then came back again.

"I learned a lot of history from previous neighbors before they passed away," said Barbara Christianson, who moved to the



Pasatiempo's homes range from Alister MacKenzie's historic home designed by William Wurster (above) to the more contemporary style of the Wayne and Peggy Merritt's home.



Built during the lumber boom, the Dool House in Boulder Creek has been the Christianson's family home for several decades.

neighborhood 35 years ago. "One said there were no trees when she was growing up because they had all been logged. But now, the redwoods have grown back up again."

A Boulder Creek resident for her entire life, Emily Cress, 83, witnessed the second growth of redwoods. Although Cress lives in a different part of town, she has ties to Christianson's neighborhood.

"My late husband George 'Hoot' Cress grew up in one of the houses on Pine Street," said Cress, taking a break from her book-keeping duties at Johnnie's Super Market one weekday. "His house was called the Cress House. I often walked through the neighborhood because I went to church at the Catholic Church there."

Christianson and her husband John live in the Dool House. Their 1891 Eastlake Style home needed plenty of work when they first bought it in 1983.

"Billy Dool was a flume walker, a butcher and one of the first wardens of Big Basin," Christianson said. "He was also the only mayor of Boulder Creek when it was incorporated for a short time around the turn of the century."

"It seems like everyone in this neighborhood had to really rehab their houses," Christianson continued. "We had to raise our house up and gut it. That's almost a rite of passage in the San Lorenzo Valley, since the houses had no perimeter foundations."

But the neighborhood has definitely



been upgraded over the years.

"Everyone has taken their houses in hand and done major work on them and worked hard on their yards," Christianson said. "It's a beautiful, pleasant neighborhood to live in."

Whether densely populated and bustling or sparsely populated and quiet, whether part of a new subdivision or one chock full of history, whether the Santa Cruz Mountains or Monterey Bay or one of the many creeks, rivers, lakes or lagoons can be found nearby, neighborhoods in

Local resident Luisa Lashinco walks her dog Titan past the historic Hartman House in Boulder Creek.

Santa Cruz County are often as unique and remarkable as the people who call them home.

"There's a saying that people can become the personality of the car that they drive," Gibson says. "I believe people can feel the same sense of shame or joy in the neighborhood they belong to. A neighborhood can be a kind of coalition of people who feel they belong to a unit. For a lot of us, there's a strong reason why we're all there." ■

Neighborhood Tour



Photo: Bill Lovejoy

A walker on West Cliff Drive explores the neighborhood.

Cutter Drive

Watsonville

Off College Road, not far from where East Lake Avenue eventually turns into Highway 152

Depot Hill

Capitola

Located off Monterey Avenue, with Escalona Avenue as the only entrance and exit.

Pleasure Point

Santa Cruz

Stretching from 41st Avenue to Moran Lake, from Portola Drive to the cliffs.

Walnut Avenue and Lincoln Street Victorians

Santa Cruz

Near Cedar Street and Chestnut Street.

Westside Santa Cruz

Santa Cruz

From the bluffs along California and Bay Streets to the West cliffs, beginning from the corner of Mission Street and Chestnut Street out to Western Drive, including the university and the neighborhoods below.

Pasatiempo

Santa Cruz

Located off Highway 17, with Pasatiempo Drive as the only entrance and exit available to the public.

Pine Street and Oak Street Victorians

Boulder Creek

Located one block off Central Avenue (Highway 9), from Harmon Street to Big Basin Highway (Highway 236).