

10 Cities That Creatives Should Move To That Are Not NYC or L.A.

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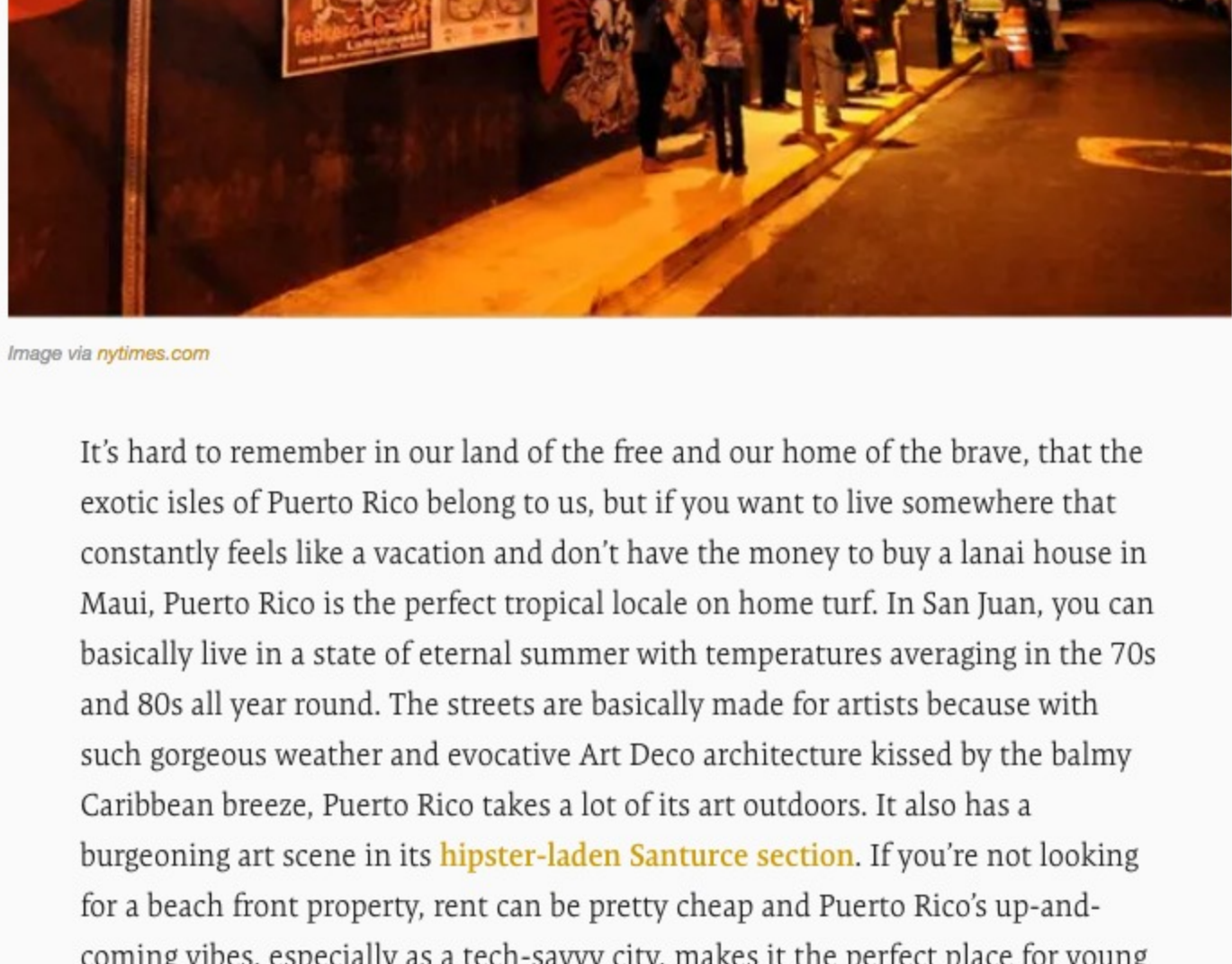
Tired of being a city slicker with a shitty freelance job and nothing to show for all your creative talent except rent that's past due by three months? Maybe you just need to move somewhere cute, quaint, or remote that could help you save money so that you can write the next *Harry Potter*, sculpt your genitalia away to your heart's content, or photograph dead birds. Whatever you consider your "art."

If you are a true artist, check out one of these 10 Cities That Creatives Should Move to That Are Not NYC or LA. Feel free to thank us when your zoo animal sculpting career takes off.

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San Juan, Puerto Rico



Image via rylmms.com

It's hard to remember in our land of the free and our home of the brave, that the exotic isles of Puerto Rico belong to us, but if you want to live somewhere that constantly feels like a vacation and don't have the money to buy a lanai house in Maui, Puerto Rico is the perfect tropical locale on home turf. In San Juan, you can basically live in a state of eternal summer with temperatures averaging in the 70s and 80s all year round. The streets are basically made for artists because with such gorgeous weather and evocative Art Deco architecture kissed by the balmy Caribbean breeze, Puerto Rico takes a lot of its art outdoors. It also has a burgeoning art scene in its [hipster-laden Santurce section](#). If you're not looking for a beach front property, rent can be pretty cheap and Puerto Rico's up-and-coming vibes, especially as a tech-savvy city, makes it the perfect place for young people to start their art careers.

New Bedford, Mass.

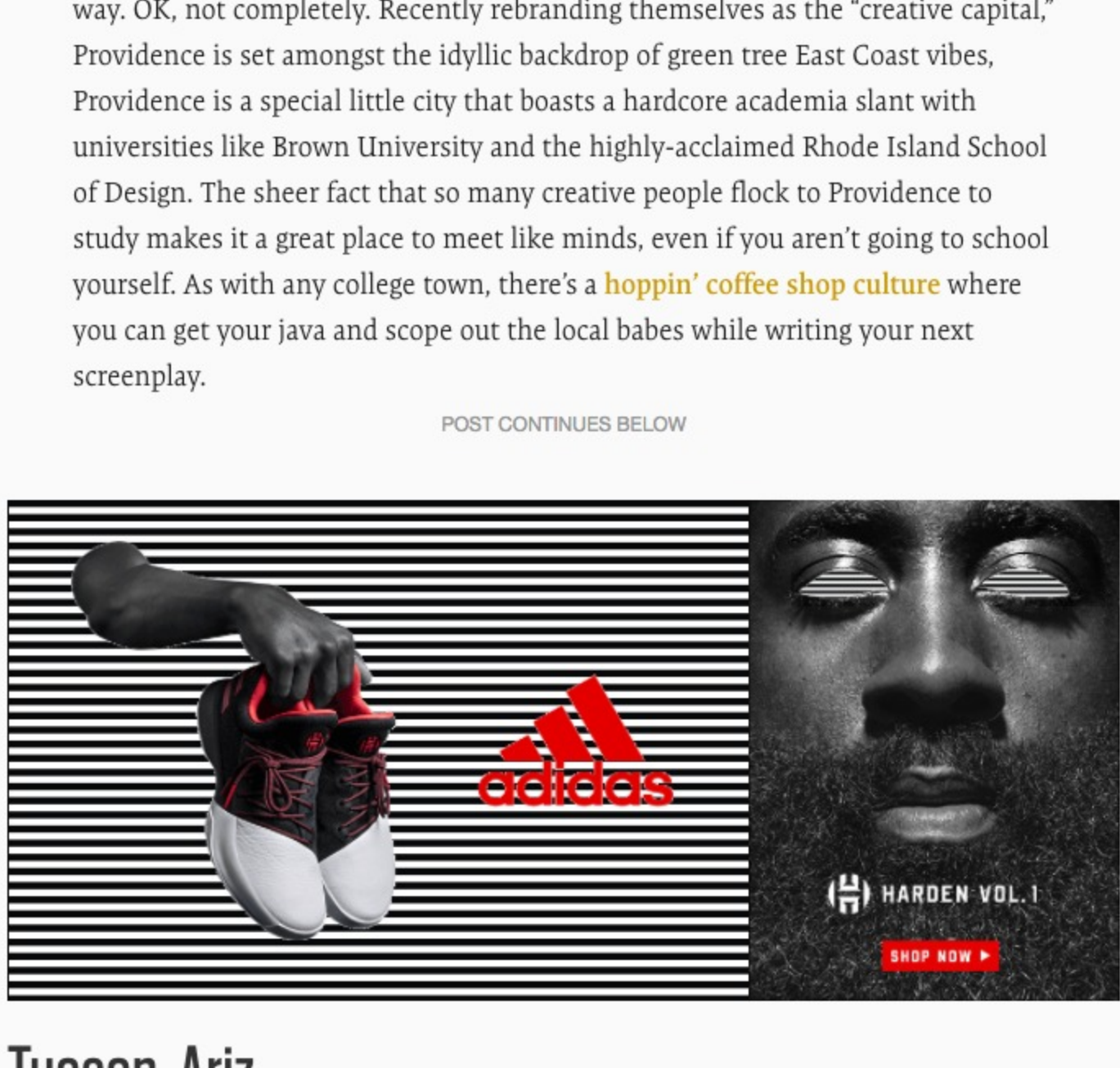


Image via wikipedia.com

Tucked in a cozy little seaside pocket just south of Boston, New Bedford is experiencing a renaissance of sorts with creative people flocking from the admittedly artist heavy city for environs that are more intuitively peaceful. The city boasts what the state calls a "creative economy," which makes it a perfect place for entrepreneurs. Massachusetts itself has 23.5% more artists than the national average and cultural programs like New Bedford's AHA! help raise money for New Bedford's artistic causes. The old buildings in the "Whaling City" also serve as beautiful examples of architecture for painters or architects, or beacons of history for writers. The town even just recently opened a ["work of art" urban park](#). If you're looking for a creative class friendly place to call home while still being obscenely close to both New York City and Boston, you can get a one bedroom apartment for \$650. Yep, that's with no roommates. How's that freelance career looking now?

Providence, R.I.

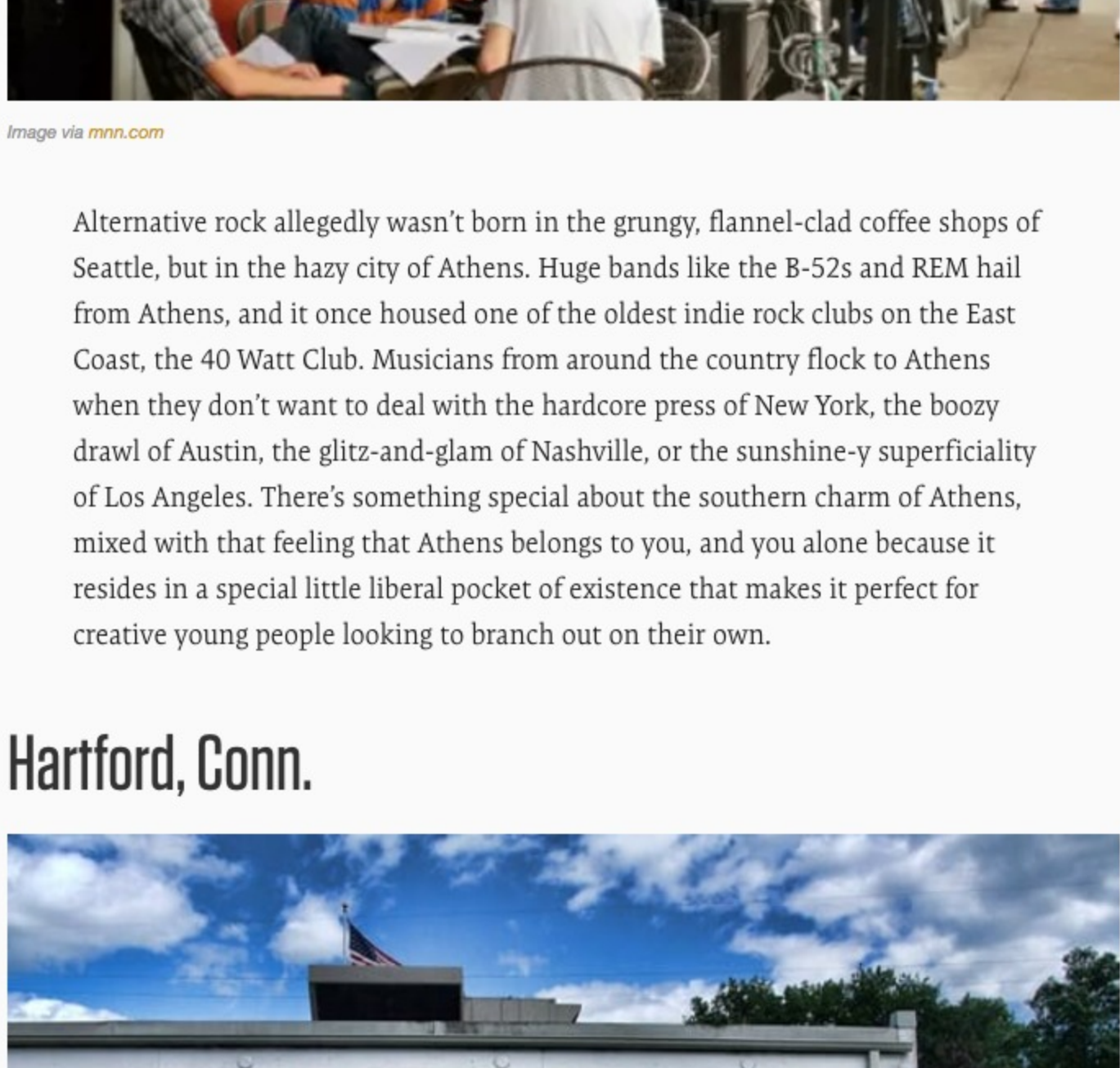
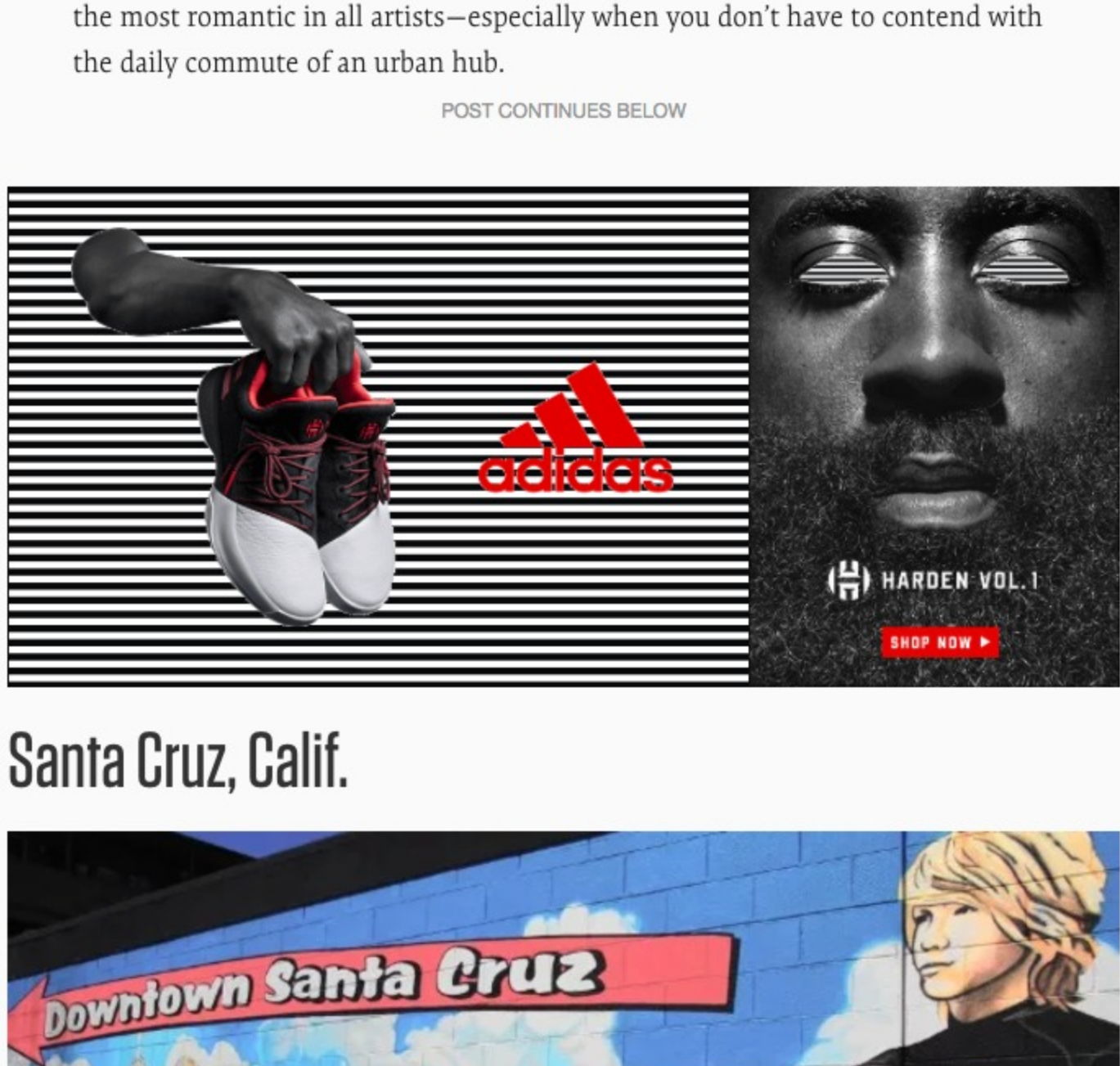


Image via intllarget.com

It's revenge of the nerds, but not in that pocket-protector, Sci-Fi weirdo kind of way. OK, not completely. Recently rebranding themselves as "Creative Capital," Providence is set amongst the idyllic backdrop of green tree East Coast vibes, Providence is a special little city that boasts a hardcore academia slant with universities like Brown University and the highly-acclaimed Rhode Island School of Design. The sheer fact that so many creative people flock to Providence to study makes it a great place to meet like minds, even if you aren't going to school yourself. As with any college town, there's a [hoppin' coffee shop culture](#) where you can get your java and scope out the local babes while writing your next screenplay.

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Tucson, Ariz.

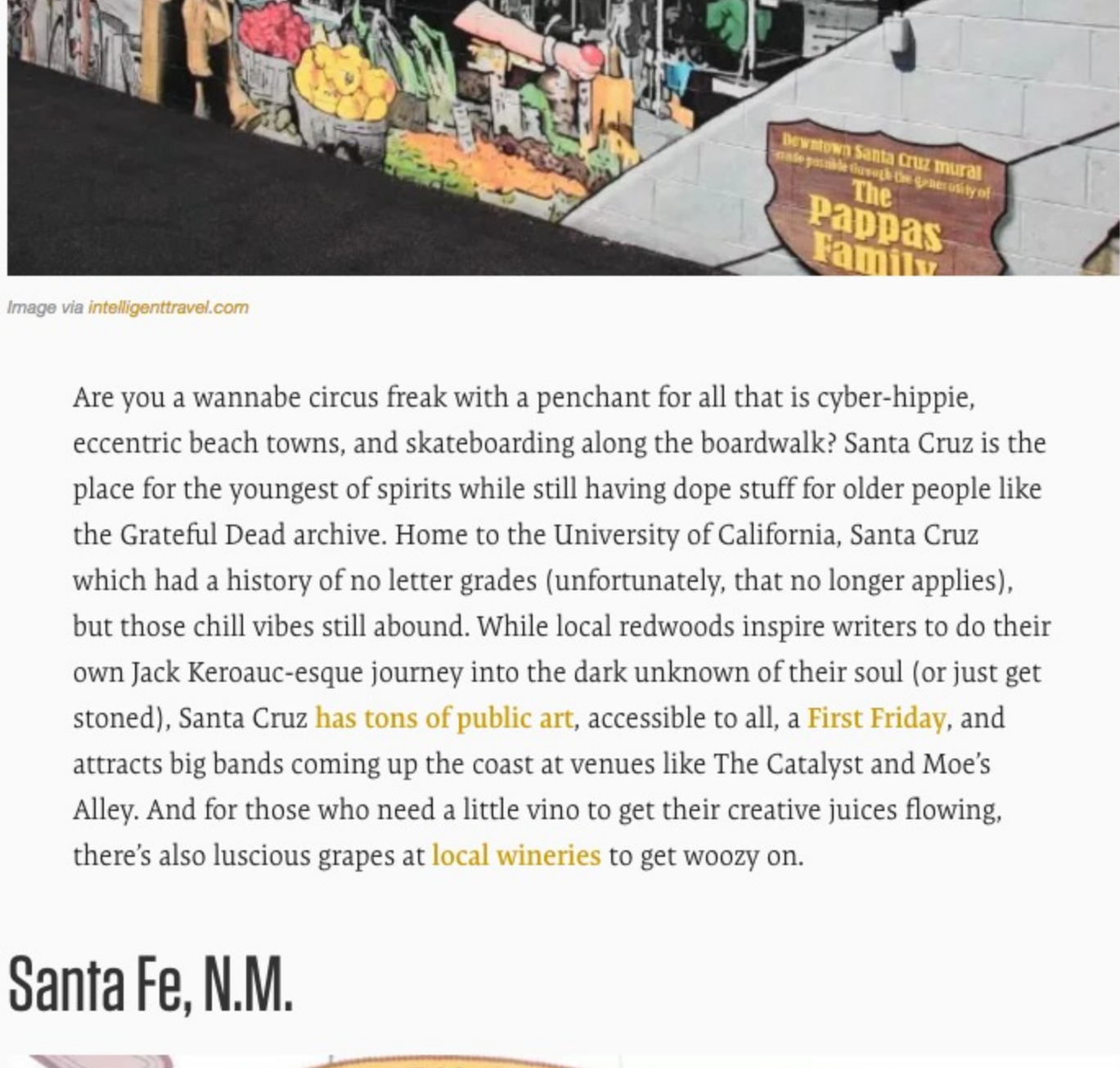


Image via vizanigroup.com

With lush areas that cater to rich people, you'd never imagine it, but Tucson, Ariz. is becoming a great place for up-and-coming creatives to live. Home to one of the country's biggest art schools (University of Arizona), Tucson attracts artists of all types who are catering to younger crowds. But the city is also slick with desert history perfect for the budding mystery novelist. While the sun is down and the co-eds are at play, the thriving downtown music scene wherein artists like [Calexico](#) were born offers cheap amenities to up-and-coming bands plus primo weather for open-air shows and lugging gear back-and-forth as you please. Ramshackle mid-century hotels line the streets and create an air of playful adventure and [Hotel Congress](#) comes packaged with a story about being John Dillinger's hide-out, a venue, and diner vibes near the trendy 4th Avenue. Just imagine that Phoenix is like Dallas and Tucson is like Austin, only in a much cooler area, because, hello? Road trip to Los Angeles!

Athens, Ga.

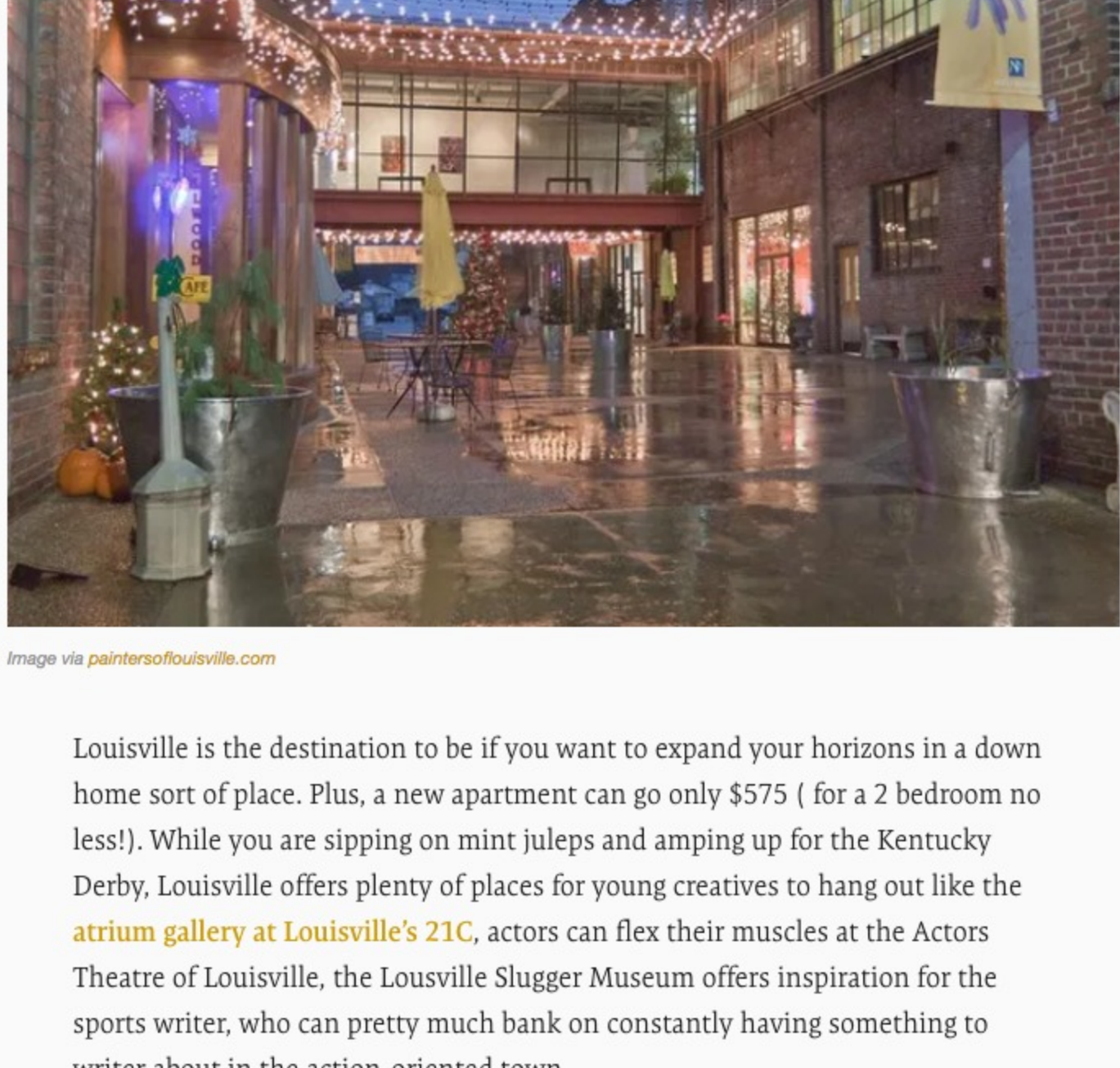


Image via rrvn.com

Alternative rock allegedly wasn't born in the grungy, flannel-clad coffee shops of Seattle, but in the hazy city of Athens. Huge bands like the B-52s and REM hail from Athens, and it once housed one of the oldest indie rock clubs on the East Coast, the 40 Watt Club. Musicians from around the country flock to Athens when they don't want to deal with the hardcore press of the boozey drawl of Austin, the glitz-and-glam of Nashville, or the sunshine-y superficiality of Los Angeles. There's something special about the southern charm of Athens, mixed with that feeling that Athens belongs to you, and you alone because it resides in a special little liberal pocket of existence that makes it perfect for creative young people looking to branch out on their own.

Hartford, Conn.

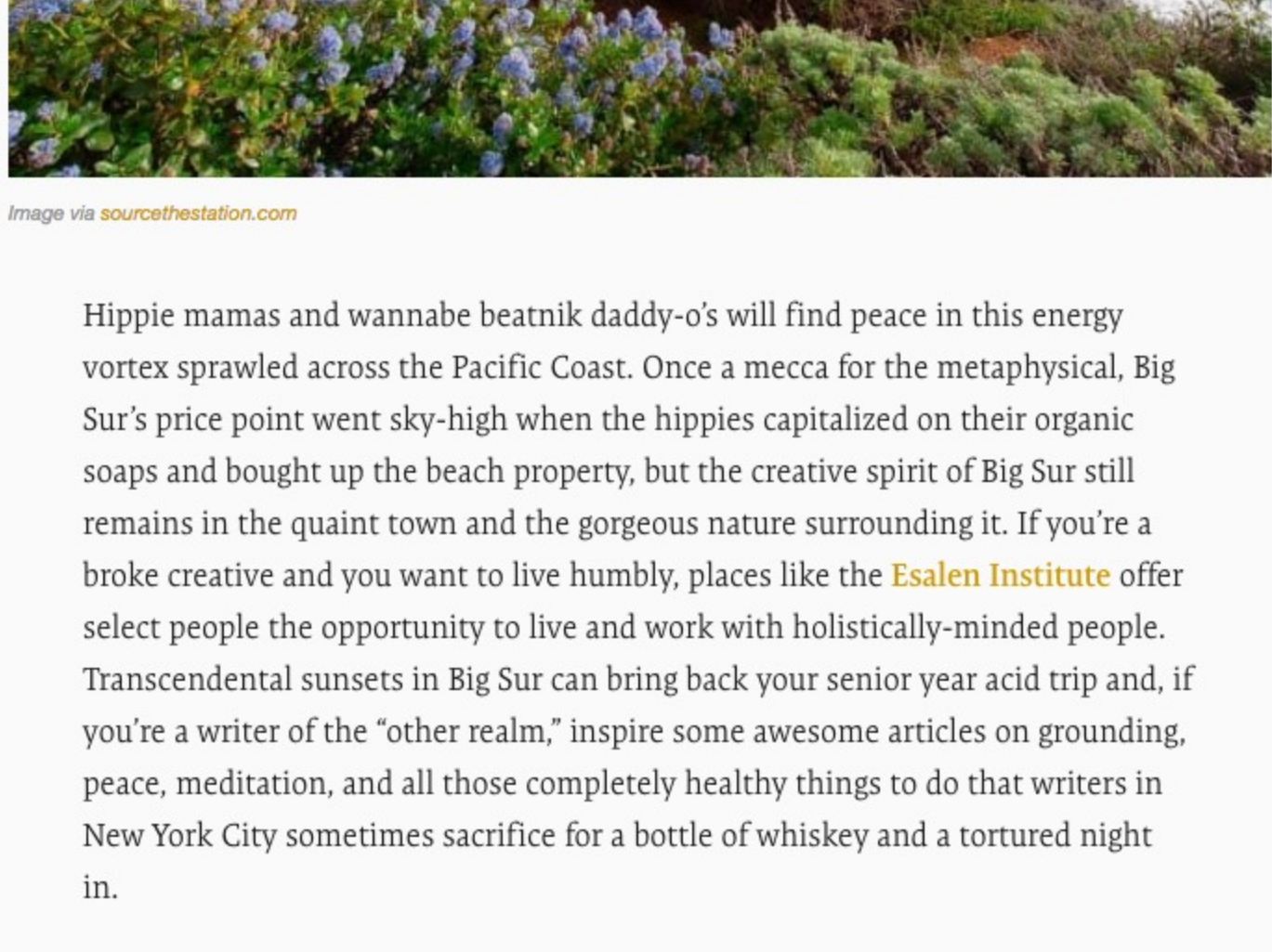


Image via journastroughmylens.com

Hate Boston and can't afford Hartford? Welcome to Hartford, where all your dreams can come true at half the cash and about halfway between both Boston and New York. Nearby West Hartford has a small-town suburban vibe that appeals to those looking to chill out in between shopping their latest art piece or screenplay idea, and there's something about a quaint little town that brings out the most romantic in all artists—especially when you don't have to contend with the daily commute of an urban hub.

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Santa Cruz, Calif.

Image via intelligentravel.com

Are you a wannabe circus freak with a penchant for all that is cyber-hippie, eccentric beach towns, and skateboarding along the boardwalk? Santa Cruz is the place for the youngest of spirits while still having dope stuff for older people like the Grateful Dead archive. Home to the University of California, Santa Cruz which had a history of no letter grades (unfortunately, that no longer applies), but those chill vibes still abound. While local redwoods inspire writers to do their own Jack Kerouac-esque journey into the dark unknown of their soul (or just get stoned), Santa Cruz has [tons of public art](#), accessible to all, a [First Friday](#), and attracts big bands coming up the coast at venues like The Catalina and Moe's Alley. And for those who need a little vino to get their creative juices flowing, there's also luscious grapes at [local wineries](#) to get woozy on.

Santa Fe, N.M.

Image via dpc.com

The [stuff of fantasies](#) for urban cowboys turned power brokers, the rich history of sepia-washed Santa Fe peaks out of the adobe-walled buildings and across the dusty desert streets. While still a major city in the United States, the city is not exactly a steady tourist destination, therefore making it perfect for creatives trying to settle into write the next great American novel or a potter trying to work in a dry climate. The city was simultaneously voted one of the most offbeat and one of the most quiet and peaceful by Travel + Leisure. This relatively cheap-and-cheerful quality of life attracts artists of all walks of life and Santa Fe has tons of [museums](#), [galleries](#), [boutiques](#), and a lively inventive food scene for [those culinary creatives](#). And maybe it's just because it's like the exact opposite of New York, but sun-drenched Santa Fe with its slow pace and wide-open space seems like the perfect place for lackadaisical creative pursuits. Like Angel says in the song "Santa Fe" in *RENT*, "Any place you could possibly go after New York would be a pleasure cruise."

Louisville, Ky.

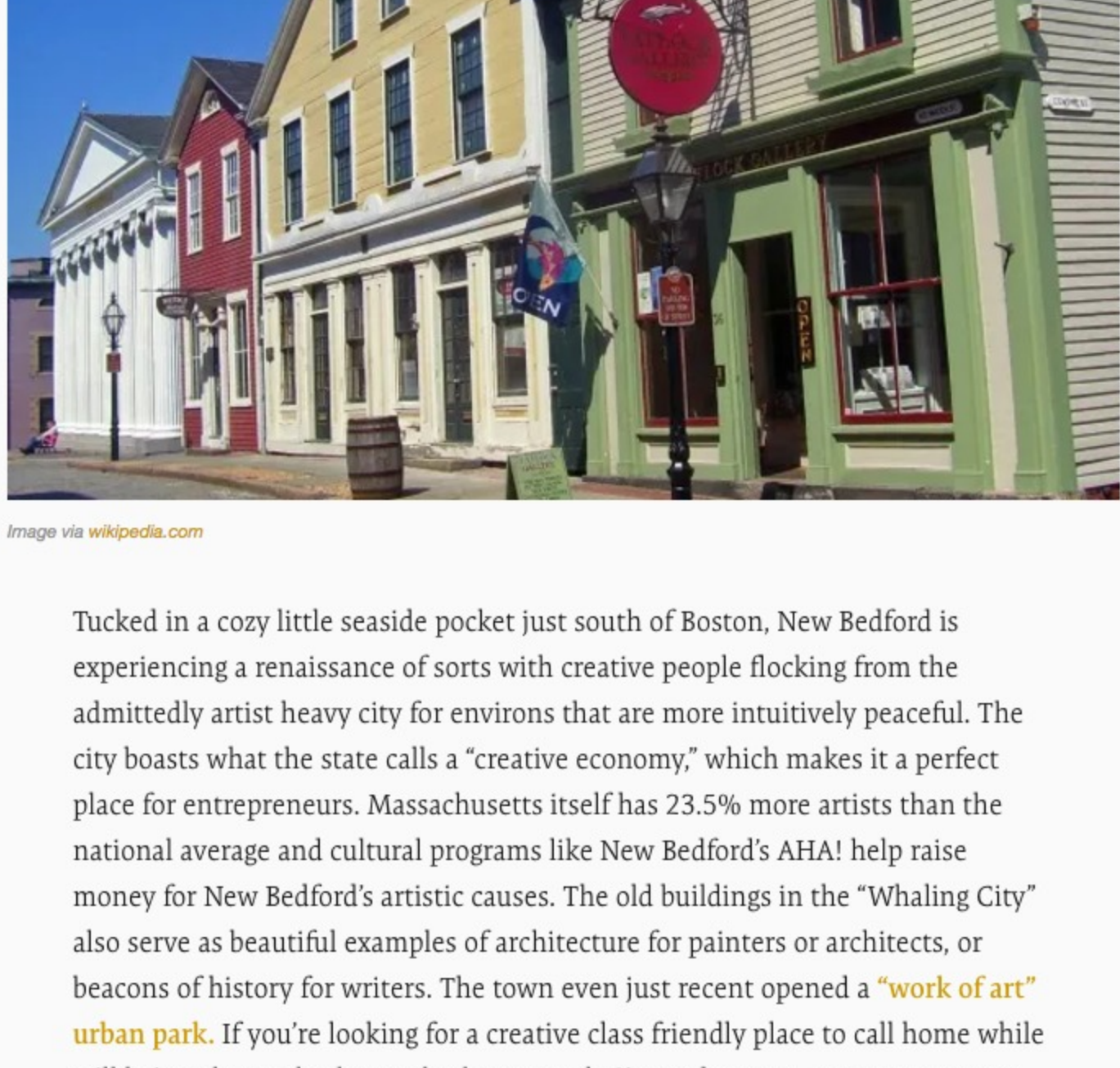
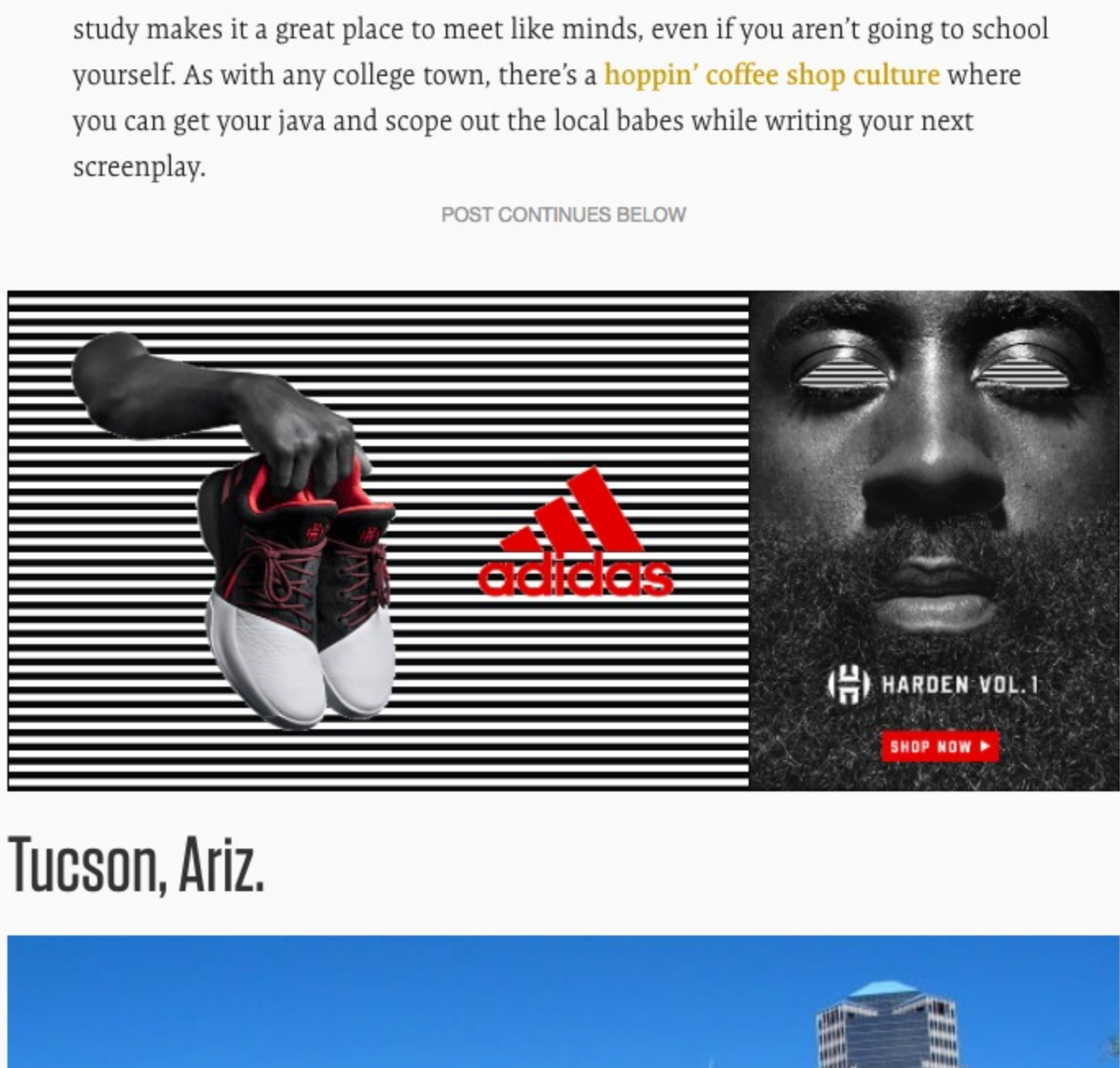


Image via paintersoflouisville.com

Louisville is the destination to be if you want to expand your horizons in a down home sort of place. Plus, a new apartment can go only \$575 (for a 2 bedroom no less!). While you are sipping on mint juleps and amping up for the Kentucky Derby, Louisville offers plenty of places for young creatives to hang out like the [atrium gallery at Louisville's 21C](#), actors can flex their muscles at the Actors Theatre of Louisville, the Louisville Slugger Museum offers inspiration for the sports writer, who can pretty much bank on constantly having something to write about in the action-oriented town.

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Big Sur, Calif.

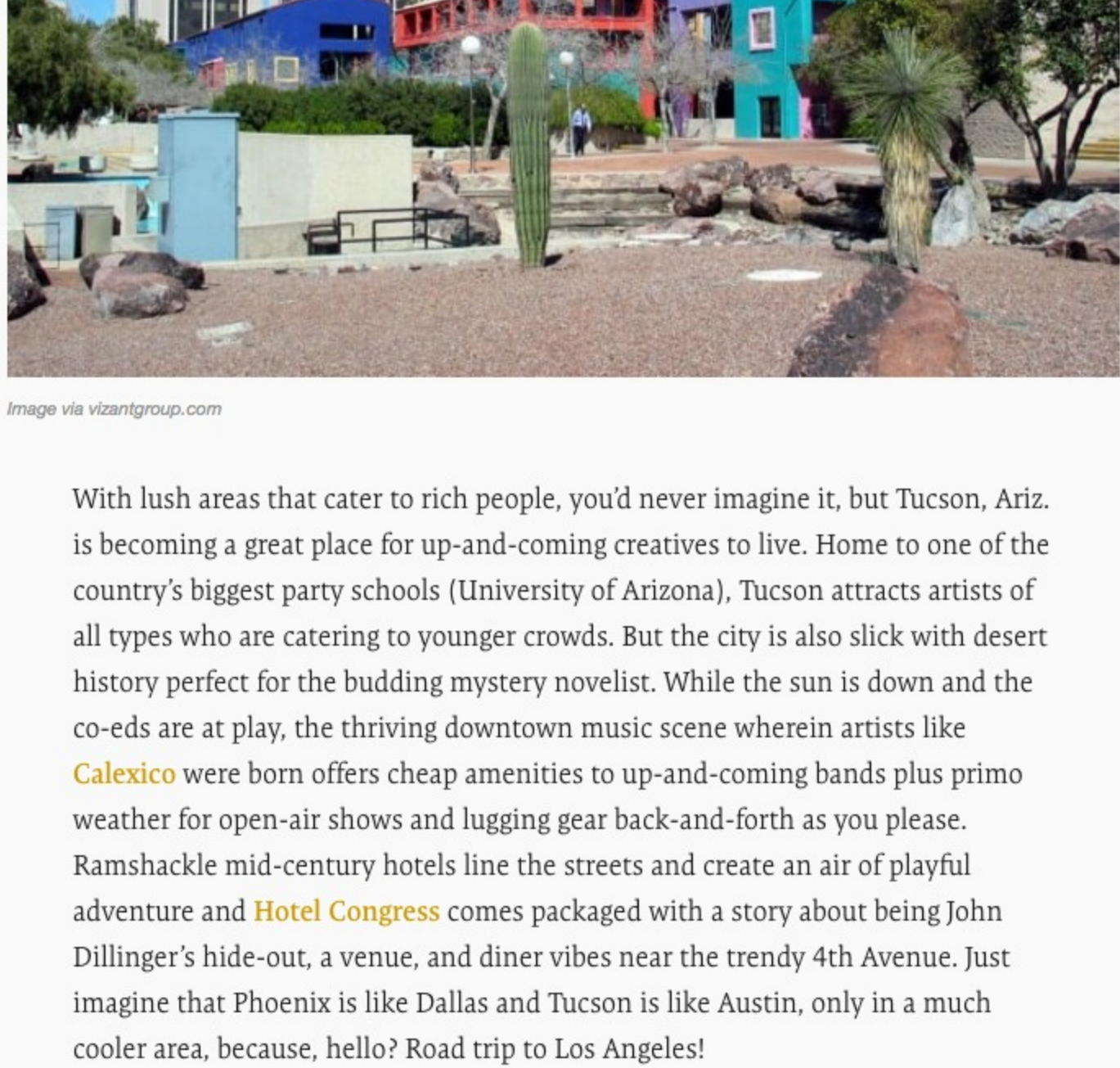


Image via sourcestation.com

Hippie mamas and wannabe beatnik daddy-o's will find peace in this energy vortex sprawled across the Pacific Coast. Once a mecca for the metaphysical, Big Sur's price point went sky-high when the hippies capitalized on their organic soaps and bought up the beach property, but the creative spirit of Big Sur still remains in the quaint town and the gorgeous nature surrounding it. If you're a broke creative and you want to live humbly, places like the [Esalen Institute](#) offer select people the opportunity to live and work with holistically-minded people. Transcendental sunsets in Big Sur can bring back your senior year acid trip and, if you're a writer of the "other realm," inspire some awesome articles on grounding, peace, meditation, and all those completely healthy things to do that writers in New York City sometimes sacrifice for a bottle of whiskey and a tortured night in.