Cal Poly’s new student housing complex, Cerro Vista, is perched on a hill just at the entrance to Poly Canyon. Cerro Vista, which means “Hill View,” provides an undeniably tranquil setting — and view — for students to study, relax or visit with friends. The first occupants, selected through a lottery, were settled in time for fall quarter. The complex accommodates approximately 800 students, increasing on-campus student housing by 35 percent and helping to alleviate some of the community’s housing shortage.

In contrast to older, more traditional residence halls — which generally provide a room for two with just enough space to sleep and study, have shared bathrooms and no cooking facilities — Cerro Vista’s 201 apartment-type suites include four bedrooms, a living room, two bathrooms and a kitchen — all in about 1,000 square feet. And no one has to share a bedroom.

Cerro Vista resident Noa Younse, a fourth-year architecture major who has lived on campus every quarter except this past summer, used that time to teach himself to cook.

“I’ve moved up from frozen food to baked chicken,” he boasts.

Just weeks before the complex was to be completed, Younse was looking forward to his new accommodations.
Earth tones were chosen for exterior walls to blend better into hillsides. Apartments are furnished with solid-maple mission-style tables and chairs.

Pull-out trays for student desks were specially built to have room for a mouse next to a keyboard. Classes are a short walk from the apartments.

because, he said, "A lot of my friends will be living there, so I won't have far to go for help." Or for a meal.

Still More To Come

Cerro Vista is the first student housing facility to be built on campus since 1973, but it won't be the last, if university officials have their way. Plans are under way for additional on-campus housing, dubbed Student Housing North, which will provide space for another 2,700 students.

In addition to the apartment-style units, initial plans include parking facilities and a "village center" with recreation and retail stores. The unique project still requires approval by the California State University board of trustees, but if all goes as planned, work is to begin in fall 2003 and students will be in before the start of fall 2006 classes.

Student Housing North is to be built between Cerro Vista (from where this shot was taken) and the horticulture unit and Leaning Pine Arboretum (center, in the distance).