



MOUTHFUL:

Nick's Cove celebrates cheese: The California Artisan Cheese Festival kicks off Friday with a welcoming reception at the Sheraton Sonoma County in Petaluma, followed by dinners in Petaluma at Della Fattoria, Dempsey's Restaurant and Brewery, Risibisi, Central Market and Tolav Restaurant.

Tonight, in a sort of pre-festival celebration, Nick's Cove (23240 Highway 1, Marshall) teams up with the California Artisan Cheese Guild for a cheesemaker dinner.

The menu features cheeses

from Fiscalini Farms in Modesto and Mt. Townsend Creamery in Port Townsend, Wash., with a humble grilled-cheese sandwich among more refined courses, which we think is a great idea. The world needs more grilled-cheese sandwiches, especially the kind made with really good aged cheddar.

Wines will be paired with each dish. Among the wines being considered — as of press time, tastings to establish the perfect matches were still under way — are Stubbs 2005 Marin County Chardonnay, Point Reyes Vineyard NV North Coast Blanc de Blanc, Flowers 2005 Sonoma Coast Chardonnay, Radio-Coteau 2005 Sonoma Coast La Neblina Pinot Noir and Sean Thackrey 2005 Eaglepoint Ranch Sirius.

The evening begins at 6 with appetizers and an opportunity to watch the sun set over Tomales Bay. Dinner begins at 7. Cost is \$135, which includes food, wine, tax and gratuity. For reservations, call (415) 663-1033.