



Nick's Cove Restaurant

23240 Highway 1
Marshall
(415) 663-1033
www.nickscove.com

Seafood
Lunch and dinner daily
Entrées: \$14-\$34
Full bar, excellent wine list

Nick's Cove has a great feeling about it. Situated on the eastern shore of Tomales Bay, it's the centerpiece of a restored historic fishing village that current owners Pat Kuleto and Mark Franz opened in 2007. The result is a destination eatery (with adjacent luxury cottages) with not only character and ambiance, but absolutely outstanding food.

My friend Amy and I sat near a window overlooking the bay and the pier that leads to the boat house, where fresh fish is delivered daily (the menu changes to reflect the catch as well as local, seasonal vegetables, meats and cheeses). The room features a 30-foot bar, open kitchen, fireplace, marble oyster bar and lots of treasures. It's a bit like eating at an eccentric uncle's coastal getaway (a totally cool eccentric uncle). There's also an outside deck for dining and a private dining room.

We started with martinis and fresh, local oysters, because it's the thing to do in a place like this. The second course was two soups: roasted butternut squash served with sage bread crumbs and drizzled with arbequina olive oil; and a creamy, fun-to-eat *Tomales Bay clam chowder* with Manila clams, chopped fresh leeks and crisp applewood smoked bacon bits.

After that, we shared the foie gras. Chef de Cuisine Adam Mali serves his in bite-sized, coin-shaped terrines atop thin toast rounds alongside a Gewurtztraminer-poached pear. The buttery texture and salty/earthy flavors combined with the sweet pear and edgy sauce is a bite of delights. It was well paired with a Errazuriz (Chilean) Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc.

Next was a panzanella salad made with Full Circle Bakery bread, thin-sliced prosciutto, persimmon, wild arugula and my new favorite cheese in the entire universe, Cypress Grove truffle tremor: smooth, creamy and infused with truffles. The ultimate bite had a little of everything followed by a sip of Schramsberg sparkling wine and, according to Amy, was "pure genius."

For an entrée I ordered the sautéed Dungeness crab (shell on), mussels and Georges Bank scallops, which were served with a Thai green curry sauce with coconut milk, mint, cilantro and basil topped with thin-sliced mango strips. The scallops were large and meaty, prepared perfectly with golden edges, while the first-of-season crab was sweet and tender and the mussels fresh and full of flavor. It was a lot of fun to eat but not for anyone afraid of making a mess. It paired incredibly well with a Rhone-style blend of Marsanne, Rousanne and Viognier.

Amy had the Pozzi Farms seven-hour braised lamb shank, which was served with Sardinian fregola pasta (tiny spheres) and a pomegranate gremolata that filled the nose and blanketed the taste buds but without overwhelming the tender, earthy lamb. A sprinkle of fresh pomegranate seeds added joy to each bite.

Dessert was a warm hazelnut-chocolate pudding cake, served very hot and baked just enough to be moist inside with a perfectly thin, crisp exterior, then topped with Straus coffee ice cream (excellent flavor and so creamy; much like gelato) topped with halved hazelnuts and a caramel sauce drizzle.

We rolled out the door—and hope to roll on back as soon as humanly possible.