



GETTING HERE
Bodega Bay is 67 miles north of San Francisco on State 1.

ladles at **Spud Point Crab Company**, a seafood shack at the harbor's edge. Her specialty, which simmers in iron pots on an outdoor stove, is the nine-time winner of an annual townwide chowder contest. But there's a worthy rival at **Fishetarian Fish Market**, where Shane Lucas, a local fisherman-cum-restaurateur, spikes his with fresh tarragon and black pepper, among other herbs and spices. His secret ingredients? "Exactly," Lucas says. *Spud Point*: \$; 1910 Westshore Rd.; spudpointcrab.com. *Fishetarian*: \$\$; 599 State 1; fishetarian.org.

Good wine comes with great views

After seeing **Gourmet Au Bay** for sale online several years ago, Bob and Sissy Blanchard were blown away by this distinctive pairing: a wine bar with stirring bay vistas. They made an offer on the spot. "How could

you pass up something like this?" says Sissy, pointing to a patio that overlooks the harbor. The Blanchards offer what they call Wine Surfing: your choice of three pours from top California labels, the glasses served to you on a mini surfboard. In the early evening, the deck becomes a lively gathering place for locals. "It's our town square," says regular Perry Marker. Pop any bottle from the adjoining shop and pay no corkage fee. 913 State 1; gourmetaubay.com.

Its surfers will show you the turf

Beaches here can be rocky and wind-whipped, suited to seals but not to novice surfers. Unless a novice surfer has guidance from Bob Miller, the owner of **Bodega Bay Surf Shack**, who grew up riding the wildest local swells. Miller takes first-timers to the gentle breaks off Doran Park for solo or group lessons that begin on dry land and end with everybody hanging 10. At his tiny shop, rent kayaks and stand-up paddleboards. He recommends you start out on the nearby Russian River, or the flat water of Bodega Bay's estuary. "This isn't an episode of *Survivor*," he says. "I want everyone to finish and still want more." *Surf class* from \$109; *paddleboard and kayak rentals* from \$40/5 hours; 1400 State 1; bodegabaysurf.com.



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6. Surfer Bob Miller takes a paddle to Bodega Bay. 7. Stargazing at the Bodega Marine Laboratory's tidepool. 8. The Wine Surfing flight at Gourmet Au Bay. 9. Spud Point Crab Company, nine-time winner of the local chowder contest

THE LOCAL LOWDOWN

"All the surfers here look forward to fall: calm mornings, warm, offshore winds, and no fog. It's the best time to be on the water."

—BOB MILLER, OWNER OF BODEGA BAY SURF SHACK

You can find your sea legs

Water covers roughly two-thirds of our planet but occupies too small a fraction of our thoughts. So says Jeffrey Zankel, who works to raise awareness of the oceans as a docent at **Bodega Marine Laboratory**, where UC Davis scientists study everything from abalone parasites to the "singing" of the California midshipman fish,

a vocal creature whose crooning can be heard just off the coast. On Fridays, when the lab opens its doors to the public, Zankel and his colleagues lead tours of the facility, highlighted by a stop at an outdoor mesocosm—a manmade tidepool brimming with ocher seastars, purple sea urchins, and other native species. *Tours* 2 p.m. Fri (except Nov 29); 2099 Westside Rd.; bml.ucdavis.edu.