

TRAVELER

CHECKING IN

The Nick of Time

Historic cabins are restored on northern California's coast.

A visit to **Nick's Cove** is like drifting back in time—but with better food and Frette sheets. Last June, the motley assortment of historic 1930s fishermen's cottages edging pristine Tomales Bay were transformed into 12 snug havens with wood-burning stoves, deep soaking tubs, wet bars, and plush beds—some looking straight onto the water, where loons, raptors, and the occasional harbor seal put on a show. Each accommodation is unique, including one fashioned from an old houseboat, complete with portholes. Furnish-

ings mix modern comfort with unpretentious antiques, objects that whisper stories of the sea and good times. The placid bay is perfect for kayaking, and hiking trails abound—or try your hand at crabbing (the top-notch on-site restaurant will cook up your catch). But it's tempting just to kick back on your deck, gaze toward Heart's Desire beach and savor some local oysters as the sun slips down behind the Point Reyes peninsula. You're just over an hour north of San Francisco—though it feels more like a hundred years (www.nicks Cove.com; \$225-695). —GAYLE KECK

