

# The Great Tide Pool

**TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA**  
by local award-winning author, [Brad Herzog](#)

## FLAVORS OF PG



I tend to find that a vibrant food scene is a sign of a happy hamlet. Famed chef James Beard once explained it this way: "Food is our common ground, a universal experience." So when a companion and I had the chance to experience Flavors of Pacific Grove last September, I jumped at the gastro-opportunity.



I love to wander my way around P.G. Its walkability was a selling point – perhaps THE selling point – when I moved here back in the late 1990s. But the opportunity to meander from taste to taste? Can't beat that.



Our first stop was Fairway Shopping Center, where we enjoyed a taste of a Kim Crawford rosé from the Pacific Grove Bottleshop, shredded beef taquitos (from Michael's Grill and Taqueria), quesabirria cheesy tacos (from Aquino's Birrieria), and the sound stylings of the five-member Stu Heydon Blues Band playing in the parking lot in front of a wall decorated with... what else?... monarch butterflies.



From there, we traveled just a quarter-mile up Forest Avenue to Forest Hill Shopping Center, where the parking lot appetizer atmosphere featured the Victory Lane Band channeling, among others, the Steve Miller Band. We sampled chicken flautas at Los Amigos, butter chicken and mango lassi at Taste of India, and mouth-watering pumpkin gnocchi at Mezzaluna Pasteria. We capped off this mini-experience with a mid-meal dessert from Julia's Vegetarian Restaurant – a vegan gluten-free brownie with candy cap mushrooms and coconut cream. I'll quote Charles M. Schulz: "All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."

But wait, there's more...

We made our way down to Lover's Point and strolled to the Beach House Restaurant and Bar, where the food was delectable – clam chowder, French dip sliders, and ahi tuna poke wontons (which may be my favorite



bite in the world). Across the street, I loved California Seltzer Company pizza topped with artichokes, pine nuts, and ricotta - as the New Wave Band belted out "Love Shack."

At that point, we weren't even halfway through our 18-course meal.

Lighthouse Avenue beckoned, as did the servers at each restaurant, who offered each taste with a smile that suggested a chef's pride and a neighbor's appreciation of community. As Cesar Chavez once put it, "The people who give you their food give you their heart."



It felt a bit like trick-or-treating, only we were collecting bites of albacore tuna (from Wild Fish) and sea bass tacos (from International Cuisine), eggplant polenta lasagna (Red House) and paella (Fandango), BLT soup (Spotted Duck) and Greek salad with gyros and falafel (Petra). At Monarch Pub, we washed down bear-battered fish with an IPA and listened to the uber-talented Michael Martinez on the keyboard.



Restaurants that aren't located on Lighthouse collaborated with other establishments to provide a taste of all PG has to offer. So there was lemon and olive focaccia from Happy Girl Kitchen available in front of Tessuti Zoo... and a pork empanada from Café Guarini at Coldwell Banker... and a crab tostadito from Fishwife at Bradley Print Services, where Kiki and the Wowettes wowed passersby with their trio of voices.

So as we approach this year's edition of Flavors of Pacific Grove on Thursday September 26, I'll just say that, yes, my stomach was filled with a hodgepodge of flavors. But maybe Mark Twain said it best: "The secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside."

*The Great  
Tidepool*