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Block parties reflect Wine Country spirit

Who says Locals' Nights are for locals only?

At three community-oriented festivals in downtown Napa this summer, everyone's invited to share in the fun. The weekly events — Tuesdays at the Oxbow Public Market, Wednesdays at the Historic Napa Mill and Thursdays on First Street downtown — were created for locals but are open to all.

The celebrations are great ways for day-trippers to the Wine Country to sample great food and community spirit.

Of course, they're also a good way to find bargains in a slumping economy.

Between 5 and 7 p.m. on Wednesdays, the Historic Napa Mill at 500 Main St. has a recurring bash of its own. The magic number here is five, as in \$5 specialty cocktails at Celadon restaurant, \$5 for two cupcakes at Sweetie Pies Bakery, \$5 chair massages at La Pelle Skin Spa and \$5 for two specialty coffees at Vintage Sweet Shoppe.

There's even a \$5 cover charge at Silo's Jazz Club, which brings in live musicians, comedians and other performers every week.

Sara Brooks, who runs the Historic Napa Mill, says that the Napa Valley Arts Council displays the work of a different artist every week at the soirees.

"There are a lot of things that make Napa unique," says Brooks, who also serves as general manager of the Napa River Inn. "We try to make our Wednesday night events spotlight a few."