

experience

WISCONSIN

Spring/Summer 2022

Explore the Fox Cities

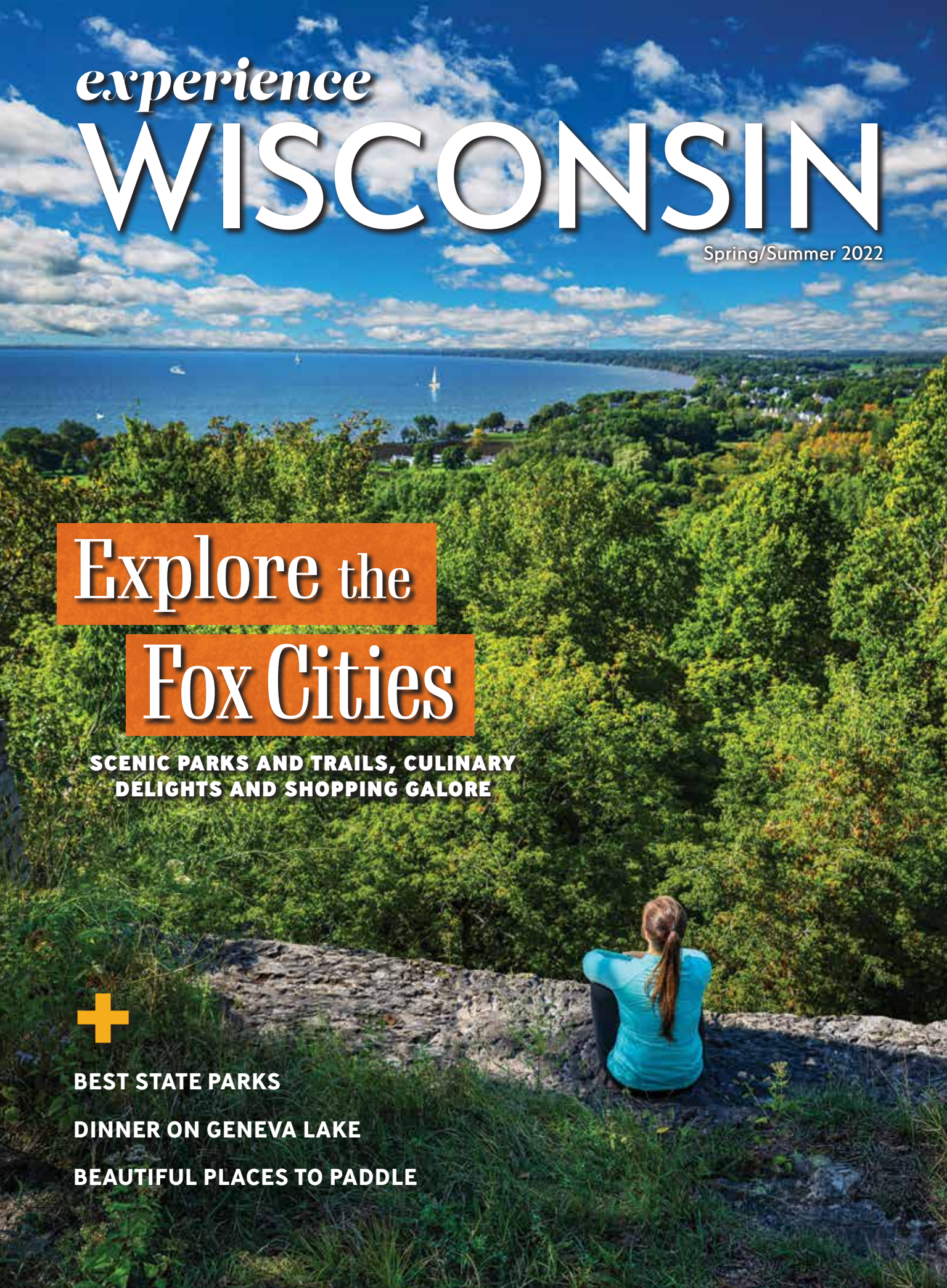
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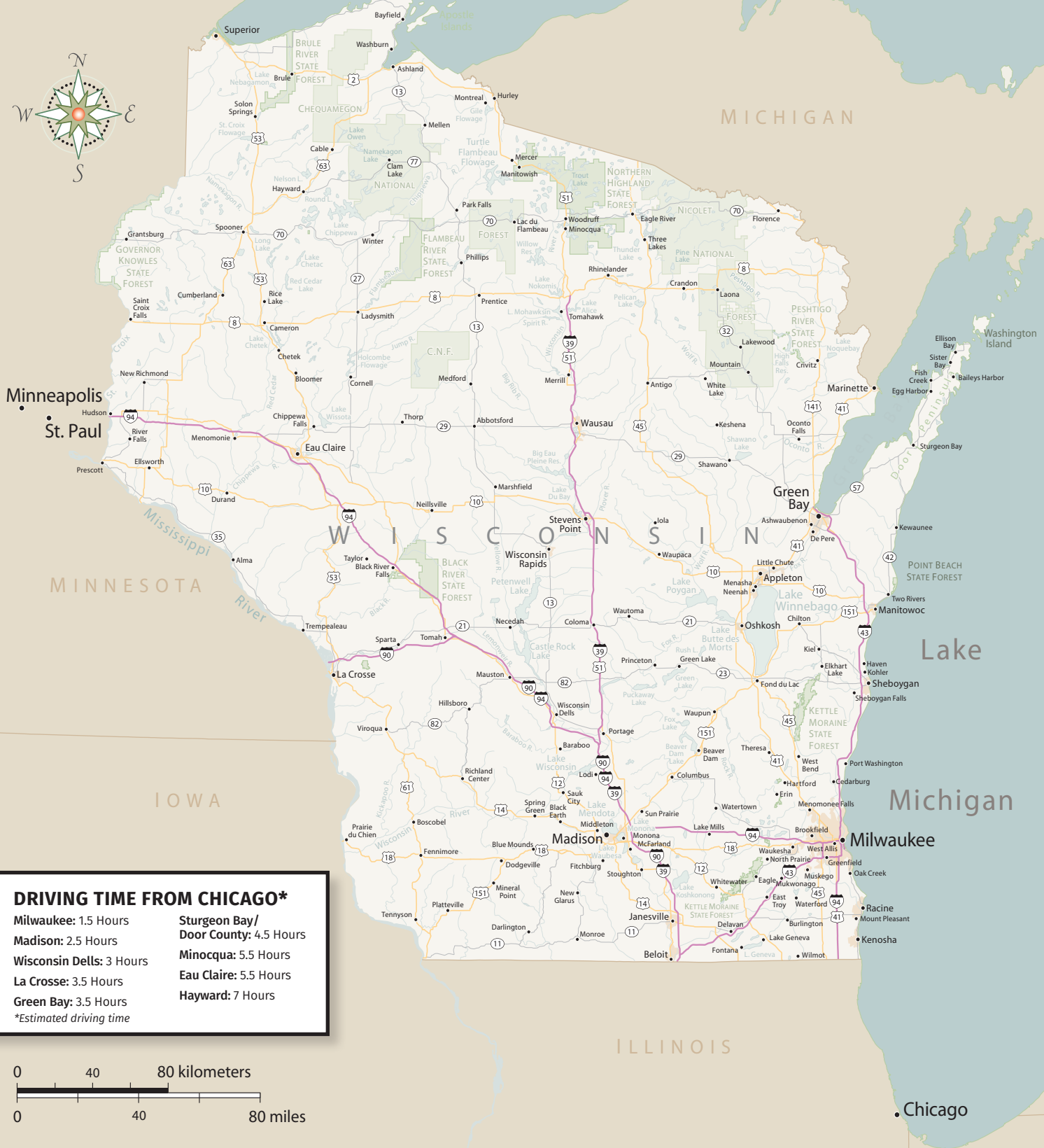
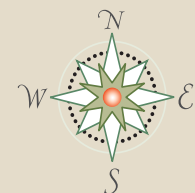
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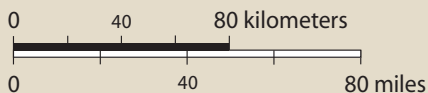
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Madison: 2.5 Hours	Minocqua: 5.5 Hours
Wisconsin Dells: 3 Hours	Eau Claire: 5.5 Hours
La Crosse: 3.5 Hours	Hayward: 7 Hours
Green Bay: 3.5 Hours	

*Estimated driving time



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Dec 2 - 4, 2022
LET IT GLOW

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ON THE COVER: High Cliff State Park.
Photo courtesy of Fox Cities CVB.

experience
WISCONSIN
Spring/Summer 2022 Edition

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Eternal Explorer

Just when I think I've experienced everything this state has to offer — after all, I have called Wisconsin home for 40+ years — I learn of something new and exciting. See, that's the thing about Wisconsin; it's impossible to have experienced every small town, every hiking trail, every quaint shop. And because they are all so unique, you need to continue exploring ... not to mention returning to those favorites that hold special memories.

In this issue of *Experience Wisconsin*, we celebrate the state in all of its summery glory ... when our lush forests, vibrantly blue waters and bustling communities are just waiting to welcome you. Summer is such a fleeting time; the reward for a long, cold winter where we hunker down and dream of the warmer, longer days to come. It's essential that we make the most of this amazing season. Consider this issue of *Experience Wisconsin* your guide to Wisconsin's "Best Of's" ... those must-see, can't miss places that are sure to leave lasting memories for you and those that tag along with you.

Looking to stay grounded? Start out by choosing a few of our beautiful state parks to explore. Melanie Radzicki McManus offers a few favorites beginning on page 24. And on page 16, Danielle Hoffpauir takes us on a tour of the Fox Cities. This collection of communities, following the flow of the Fox River, offer distinctive dining, unique museums and some of the state's best shopping. And for foodies, be sure to check out Kristine Hansen's round up of Lake Geneva area dining spots that offer the best views of Geneva Lake.

Looking for more ideas to plan out your summer? Be sure to visit ExperienceWisconsinMag.com, where you'll find endless reasons to keep returning to your friendly neighbor to the north!

Enjoy!

Becky

Becky Peck

Editor

bpeck@ntmediagroup.com

Want more Experience Wisconsin?

If you're itching for more inspiration, follow us on social media for scenic (and tasty) Badger State photography.

 @experiencewisconsin

 @experiencewimag



HERE'S A PREVIEW OF SOME OF MY FAVORITE PLACES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE!



What says Wisconsin more than a Friday fish fry and a Brandy Old Fashioned at a supper club? Learn more about the culture and their growing popularity, plus a few of author Mary Bergin's favorites on page 20.



With more than 15,000 lakes, rivers and streams, where do you launch your canoe, kayak or paddleboard? Kevin Revolinski shares a few of the many great waterways to enjoy via paddle.



Wisconsin is home to more than 100 shipwrecks (though we're not sure how much "treasure" is waiting to be discovered). Find out more about a new designation that's bringing attention to these sacred sites.

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2022 CHOICE
DESTINATION



1

June 11th & 12th
Sat: 10am – 5pm
Sun: 11am – 5pm
at The Corners
of Brookfield



3

Thursday Nights July 7th – Sept 8th
5:30pm – 8pm at The Corners of Brookfield

2



4



September 17th
Race starts at 9am
at Elmbrook Church,
Benefiting the Elmbrook
Humane Society

Brooktoberfest



5

October 1st, 11am – 8pm
at Stefans Soccer, Brookfield

New to You Spots for 2022

New attractions sprang up over the past year in several Wisconsin communities, and a variety of historic sites received visitor-friendly updates. Here are a few to check out.

By Jessica Steinhoff



INTERNATIONAL CRANE FOUNDATION BARABOO

This conservation nonprofit touts itself as the only place in the world that has living exhibits of all 15 crane species, many of which are threatened or endangered. The Baraboo site closed in 2018 as it undertook a \$10 million renovation, reopening in 2021 with a number of revamped exhibits, more space and water access for the birds, and seven hand-painted murals for the humans in attendance. These updates encourage the cranes to behave like they would in the wild, allowing visitors to observe their mating dances and the loud, distinctive calls ecologist Aldo Leopold described as “high horns, low horns, silence and finally a pandemonium of trumpets, rattles, croaks and cries.”



AMERICA'S BLACK HOLOCAUST MUSEUM MILWAUKEE

Founded by James Cameron, an author and lynching survivor, this museum in Milwaukee's Bronzeville neighborhood fosters racial justice by exploring the legacies of American slavery and Jim Crow laws. After a decade of being entirely virtual and lots of work by community volunteers, the museum re-opened in a new physical space in February 2022. Here you can take a chronological journey from 1619 to the present, learning about Africans' lives before enslavement, their kidnapping and journey to the Americas, the Reconstruction era, the Civil Rights Movement and more.



3RD STREET MARKET HALL MILWAUKEE

Located in the former Grand Avenue Mall, this new hub for cuisine and recreation is also a prime spot for people-watching. Hit up Dairyland for frozen custard, Hot Dish Pantry for pierogi and Mid-Way Bakery for cream puffs worthy of the State Fair, or choose from several other local food purveyors. Wash down your meal with one of the bar's brandy-based cocktails, then snap photos at the Photoverse Selfie Museum, which offers 27 photo stations with backdrops and props created by Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design students. Round out your evening with a game of golf at one of two TopGolf Swing Suites (must be reserved in advance for a fee) or some shuffleboard, bags or Giant Jenga.

ABC SUPPLY STADIUM

BELOIT

The decision to build this one-year-old stadium helped Beloit save its Minor League Baseball team when it faced elimination in 2019. Now called the Beloit Sky Carp, this affiliate of the Miami Marlins brings loads of excitement to the 3,500-person space along the Rock River, which also hosts wintertime ice skating and events such as family movie nights and a craft beer festival. With a 360-degree walkable concourse, a right-field party deck and a kids' playground — complete with an inflatable, bouncy castle — there's fun to be had in every corner of the facility.



YERKES OBSERVATORY

WILLIAMS BAY

Following a major renovation, this stargazers' paradise has a brand-new roof with 83 solar panels, ADA-compliant restrooms and 50 acres of fresh landscaping that reflects the Olmstead family's 1897 and 1906 plans for the grounds. Look closely and you'll also find lovingly restored pendant lights, terrazzo flooring and Carrara marble walls, plus a lecture hall and a pollinator garden. Before you go, be sure to admire the world's largest refractor telescope.



JIM KRESS MARITIME

LIGHTHOUSE TOWER

STURGEON BAY

Part of the Door County Maritime Museum, this new landmark has 10 floors of interactive exhibits exploring shipwrecks, underwater life, boating and more. Start in the first-floor maritime theater, where you'll learn how water has shaped the area's people and industries, and finish on the rooftop deck (weather permitting), which offers panoramic views of both the Lake Michigan and Green Bay shorelines. [cw](#)



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY ABC SUPPLY STADIUM, DOOR COUNTY MARITIME MUSEUM, YERKES OBSERVATORY

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Photo by Ted Thousand



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Fun Fests



June 23-25, June 30-July 2, July 7-8

SUMMERFEST, MILWAUKEE

An event that takes place over three consecutive weekends in downtown Milwaukee, Summerfest is an explosion of live music, fun activities, food and celebration. Musical artists include Jason Aldean, Justin Bieber, Halsey, Machine Gun Kelly and more. Aside from the impressive line-up, you will not want to miss the food of Milwaukee's best restaurants, including Pitch's BBQ and Miss Katie's Diner. summerfest.com

June 24-25

CHEESE CURD FESTIVAL, ELLSWORTH

Dubbed the Cheese Curd capital of Wisconsin, Ellsworth proudly hosts this annual event where it boasts serving 6,000 pounds of curds! Enjoy a variety of dishes where the headlining ingredient is ... cheese curds, of course! In addition, you'll find music, a car show, a vendor marketplace, a cheese curd eating contest, fun run (to help burn off some of those curds) and more than 30 craft beers. cheesecurdfestival.com

June 30-July 4

RIVERFEST, LA CROSSE

A Fourth of July tradition since 1984, this festival is a family friendly celebration featuring the area's largest fireworks display, a parade, food and entertainment. Self-funded and volunteer-run, the event donates proceeds back to local groups and charities. Musician Sawyer Brown headlines the 2022 event. riverfestlacrosse.com



Editor's Pick

Aug. 4-14

WISCONSIN STATE FAIR, WEST ALLIS

You'll find everything from pig races to an 11-story ferris wheel at this annual celebration dating back to 1851. A variety of entertainment, including national acts such as Toby Keith, will take the stage this year. Enjoy all of the classic midway rides, interact with baby farm animals at the Discovery Barn, explore a variety of agricultural exhibits, and indulge in just about anything that can be either deep fried or eaten on a stick. wistatefair.com

TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY VISIT MILWAUKEE, RIGHT: EXPLORE LA CROSSE/DYLAN OVERHOUSE




July 25-31

EAA AIR VENTURE, OSHKOSH

Aviation enthusiasts from across the globe converge on Oshkosh the last week of July, where they are treated to daily air shows (including two evening shows this year), exhibits and get to peruse the hundreds of aircraft flown in for this annual convention. Special in 2022, the festival celebrates the 75th anniversary of the U.S. Air Force. eaa.org

Aug. 13-14

ART IN THE PARK, LAKE GENEVA

View and purchase beautiful art at this serene setting along Geneva Lake for this 42nd annual event featuring more than 80 artists specializing in a variety of mediums and techniques. Budding young artists can create their own masterpieces to take home. Enjoy a variety of entertainment and refreshments across from Geneva Lake. genevalakeartsfoundation.org 



July 28-30

LUMBERJACK WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS, HAYWARD

This international competition displays the best of log rolling, sawing, chopping, boom running, speed climbing and more. Watch in awe as amateurs demonstrate such skills in precision, strength, agility and balance needed to pull off these seemingly super-human feats.

lumberjackworldchampionships.com

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FOLLOW US!  

Exploring Geologic Wonders by Water

Paddlers get a bird's eye tour of the state's most prominent sites

By Kevin Revolinski | Photos Courtesy Travel Wisconsin

Kickapoo River

While the Ice Age Trail gets Wisconsin hikers up-close and personal with some fascinating rock outcroppings, paddlers too can enjoy the state's geological wonders. The "sea caves" of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore along Lake Superior often steal the show, but check out these other amazing options as well.

THE UPPER AND LOWER DELLS

Wisconsin's most popular tourist destination also works for silent sports. The long gorge called The Narrows of the Upper Dells is best early in the morning or during shoulder seasons when paddlers won't contend with boat traffic. But the Lower Dells south of the tour boat routes has slower current and sandstone columns you can paddle all the way around.



MIRROR LAKE STATE PARK

Not far from the Dells, this lake paddle won't require a shuttle. The gorges are gorgeous; to the southwest the exposed rock and trees rise up to the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Seth Peterson cottage, and the northeast gorge gets shaded and narrowest closer to the dam that created the lake. Eagles often perch in the trees and along the forest bluff tops. Camp within the park and get up early to have the lake practically to yourself.

KICKAPOO RIVER

Often billed as the crookedest river in the world, the Kickapoo winds among cliffs and outcrops of sculpted sandstone and the undercuts glow green with moss where you can fit your whole kayak under them as you pass. Occasional riffles rather than rapids make it exciting yet beginner-friendly. The section from Ontario to Wildcat Mountain State Park is popular for day trips, but numerous other takeouts and campsites all the way downriver to La Farge make longer trips possible.



DOOR BLUFF HEADLANDS

Best done with sea kayaks and an outfitter's tour, this trip ventures off the tip of the Door County Peninsula at Garrett Bay and follows over a mile of coastline with rocky beaches beneath vertical limestone cliffs and a bluff rising more than 200 feet. Native American pictographs on the rock are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in the shallow bay you can paddle over the 1888 shipwreck of the schooner Fleetwing.

CAVE POINT

This Door County paddle on the Lake Michigan side follows the rocky edges of the shore which rise about 20 feet and show the wear and tear of centuries of waves. The area along the namesake county park features shallow caves otherwise invisible to landlubbers.

BARABOO RIVER

A gentle tributary of the Wisconsin, the Baraboo flows through its namesake city. But upstream, between Union Center and Wonewoc, paddlers can see the 300-foot-tall pine-crowned outcrop known as the Third Castle. The river runs right into its bluff and takes a left turn. A quarter mile farther and the sandstone appears riverside.



THE LOWER ST. CROIX

Forming the Wisconsin-Minnesota border at Interstate State Park, this National Scenic Riverway passes over an impressive waterfall in the Dalles of the St. Croix. Paddlers can get up close to it from downriver and then head back south along more rocky bluffs, including one that still bears a navigation mark for the steamboats of yesteryear. There are multiple takeouts on both banks, but the Osceola Landing at the 6-mile mark completes an easy day trip. **ew**

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Fox Cities *Treasures*

A COLLECTION OF COMMUNITIES NESTLED ALONG THE FOX
RIVER OFFER CHARM AND HOSPITALITY

By Danielle Hoffpauir



For a destination that blends the friendliness of a small town with the amenities you'd find in a big city, the Fox Cities is the kind of place that brings people back again and again. About three hours north of downtown Chicago, this part of Wisconsin encompasses a collection of 19 welcoming communities along the Fox River. Meet passionate locals who love their hometowns and are excited to share them with you. Escaping the city for incredible natural beauty is easy, between the lake, river and surrounding unique geological formations. We've rounded up some suggestions to get your adventure started, including the best ways to get out on the water, scenic hiking spots, kid-friendly spaces and unexpected museums.

PLAY OUTSIDE 100 MILES OF TRAILS

With more than 100 miles of trails, you really can't go wrong when adventuring out on foot. Soak in the beautiful views of Lake Winnebago at **High Cliff State Park** and stroll the trails that meander along the unique geological limestone cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment. Don't miss panoramic views of the Fox Cities from the top of the 40-foot observation tower. The **1000 Islands Conservancy** zone's 2,000-foot boardwalk through the woods is a hidden gem for an Instagram-worthy photo. Totalling seven miles of trails, including a mile along the Fox River, 1000 Islands is the perfect place to enjoy the peacefulness you can only find in nature. For a bigger excursion, bike or hike the nearly 50-mile **Fox Cities Paper Trail** that connects 11 communities and 20 parks throughout the region.





GET OUT ON THE WATER

Bordering Wisconsin's largest inland lake, Lake Winnebago, as well as the winding Fox River, getting out on the water is a Fox Cities bucket list must-do.

Grab a paddle and take the scenic route along the Fox River or Lake Winnebago via kayak. Local outfitter, **Fox River Kayaking Company**, makes getting on the water a breeze with guided tours and daily rentals. Take your time traversing through four historic lock and dam systems on the Fox River or enjoy a waterfront seat to a beautiful sunset on the sunset tour. For those looking to have their own adventure, coordinate with Fox River Kayaking Company to experience local waterway treasures like High Cliff State Park and Little Lake Butte des Morts on your own timeline.

Spend the day catching walleye and perch on Lake Winnebago with a local expert. Fishing charters have all the equipment you need so you can focus on the best part of fishing — reeling in a big catch. Two local favorites are Captain Ryan Flom with **WinneBayGo Walleye Fishing Guide**, who grew up fishing Lake Winnebago, and Captain Scott Schwarz with **Schwarz's ReelTime Fishing Guide Service**, who specializes in trolling techniques. Don't forget a cooler to bring home your catches!

KID-FRIENDLY FUN

For an all-day activity that will make bedtime a breeze, look no further than exploring at **Building for Kids Children's Museum**. A local hotspot for families, little ones can play pilot, doctor, truck driver, bank teller, firefighter and construction worker, just to name a few curated experiences throughout the museum. Kid favorites include the slide through the middle of a gigantic human

heart, traversing the tree forts in the Discovery Tree, and creating in the STEM innovation lab. And, with a special area for young adventurers ages 0 to 3, the fun is endless for kids of all ages.

Where can you find more than 200 fluttering butterflies? At **Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin**, of course! Delight in strolling through Wisconsin's largest butterfly house where you just might invite a butterfly to land on you. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, you can also find turtles, frogs, and Wisconsin native plants along the trails and maze on the grounds.

ENTERTAINING MUSEUMS

Celebrating 150 years, the **History Museum at the Castle's** award-winning exhibits bring local history to life. The Castle is best known for the opportunity to try Harry Houdini's famous magic tricks and learn about the world-renowned magician who called Appleton home.



If you've caught an episode of "Blown Away" on Netflix, you'll definitely appreciate the art and creativity behind every piece at the **Bergstrom-Mahler Museum of Glass**. Ornately stunning and meticulously designed, the museum is perhaps best known for having the world's largest collection of glass paperweights from 19th-century French creators as well as modern artists. Marvel at contemporary glass sculpture from today's visionaries and admire Germanic glassware from as far back as 1573.

GRAB A BITE

Start your day with a handcrafted cup of coffee and a delicious bite for breakfast at **Tempest Coffee Collective**. You can't beat the view from the riverfront patio while indulging in delicious and seasonal drinks and food.



COURTESY FOX CITIES CVB

With something for every appetite, **Good Company** is the perfect spot for families to enjoy lunch or dinner. Known for classic American dishes, like mouthwatering burgers and sizzling steaks, as well as the iconic Friday night fish fry, the menu is full of fresh flavor.

We'd be remiss if we didn't mention where to find the freshest, squeakiest cheese curds in the area. **Simon's Specialty Cheese** is a must-stop for fresh cheese curds along with award-winning, world-class cheddar, feta, mozzarella and provolone cheeses. Browse more than 100 varieties from around the state and perhaps grab an extra bag of curds for the drive home.

LUXE LOVE STORY

For a luxurious, romantic experience, **CopperLeaf Boutique Hotel & Spa** is a must. Inspired by family-owned European hotels, CopperLeaf is known for delighting guests with personalized experiences and thoughtful touches that elevate your experience to unforgettable. Located in the heart of downtown Appleton, it's easy to explore on foot and unwind with an onsite blissful treatment at **Spa BenMarNicos**. Enjoy one-on-one time over dinner in a private dome, complete with mood lighting and riverfront views, at **Fratellos Riverfront Restaurant**. Featuring a flavorful menu of seafood, steak, pasta, pizza and more, as well as their house-made beer from Fox River Brewing Co., the only thing better than the food is the company you're with. [cw](#)

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Crazy for Supper Clubs

WISCONSIN'S ESTABLISHMENTS SERVE UP THE PERFECT MIX OF TRADITIONAL CUISINE AND CULTURE

BY MARY BERGIN | PHOTOS COURTESY TRAVEL WISCONSIN

On Facebook, a private group called Wisconsin Supper Club Enthusiasts has — as I write this — more than 60,000 members. Like the restaurants they patronize, there is no membership fee (out-of-staters tend to wonder about this) and anyone with a civil tongue can join in the fun.

The group formed in January 2020, as the pandemic kept most of us housebound. Shawn and Ellen Niemann of unincorporated Ellisville, in Kewaunee County, watched filmmaker Holly DeRuyter's "Old Fashioned: The Story of the Wisconsin Supper Club" on PBS. That led Shawn to see if Facebook had a supper club group to join. There was none, so he created one that night.

END OF STORY? HARDLY.

What the group is building is a sense of community, another endearing trait that helps separate a supper club from other places to eat. Members ask for and offer up advice about where to go and what to order, sharing meal photos and — usually — raves about quality and quantity.

In mid 2021, as weather warmed and more folks carefully swapped takeout orders for a return to in-person dining, Jill Paul of Appleton got an idea to help these online supper club fans find each other by designing 4-inch-tall orange cones that



resemble something with which you might mark an obstacle course, if bigger in size.

"Engage with other supper club enthusiasts and make some new friends," she urged, through the Facebook page. "Set this cone on the bar or your table to indicate you are a Wisconsin Supper Club Enthusiast and to indicate that other enthusiasts should stop and say 'Hi.'"

On the cone are "WISCE" stickers, and before the winter of 2022 ended, at least 2,500 cones had been distributed. So now the group's Facebook page adds chatter and photos about where the cones showed up and who has met because of them.

Then began monthly group dinners at lesser-known or newer supper clubs, with the first reaching its max of 100 diners just a couple

of days after the event was announced. It didn't matter that it was winter. And if you were a solo diner, no problem: You'd likely be seated with like-minded souls.

Talking to strangers and sometimes turning them into friends figures into Wisconsin's long-standing supper club character too. Customers turn the meal into a full night out, with no urge to schedule anything else. The need to wait an hour — or longer — for dinner seating is expected, especially since many supper club operators don't take reservations.

Some of us love the debate about what makes a restaurant a supper club. We weigh in passionately and sometimes rigidly because we care about our fond memories, ethnic heritage, lifelong loyalties or family traditions.



Buckhorn Supper Club

The classic supper club is open for dinner only, independently owned for multiple generations and a favorite among local residents. Having a predictable menu, such as a Friday fish fry and Saturday prime rib specials, is an asset because many customers crave the familiar — especially after being leashed by pandemic times.

The evening begins with a Brandy Old Fashioned and ends with a Brandy Alexander (or other ice cream drink that can double as dessert). In a perfect world, a supper club meal starts with a relish tray, entrée portions are huge and the best tables have waterfront views.

One perfect example: *Ishnala*, the popular supper club that began as a log cabin trading post in 1826, inside of Mirror Lake State Park, near Wisconsin Dells. The gravel drive through the pine forest seems secret. Then you arrive and realize that everyone else has as well.

Reservations aren't accepted but the setting is peaceful, with a pretty lake view and unusual architecture. Look for the original stone fireplace. Jockey for a seat at Arrowhead Bar. *Ishnala* is open seasonally, May through October.

Near Minocqua is *Norwood Pines Supper Club*, another gorgeous setting, surrounded by towering red pines, along the shore of Lake Patricia. Whitetail deer sometimes show up as dusk nears. Offering a secluded vibe, its cuisine specialties double as Northwoods fine dining.

With all-you-can-eat fish on Friday (except

for half-pound portions of lake perch) come secret-recipe corn fritters. Gangsters loved it here long ago, dining downstairs and gambling upstairs.

The only supper club accessible by boat on Lake Koshkonong, near Milton, is *Buckhorn Supper Club*. The business began as a small bar in the 1930s; rowboats were rented and night crawlers to root beer floats were sold from a walk-up window.

Live lobster boils happen outdoors twice a month, May through October. The crustaceans are flown in from Maine, 90 are boiled at once and it's not unusual to reach reservation capacity weeks before the meal.



Norwood Pines Supper Club

For date night, head toward Lake Michigan and the neon signage of *HobNob*, located between Racine and Kenosha. Painted on an outside wall is a giant martini glass. Inside is an elegant, retro-rich décor: Naugahyde booths, deep burgundy walls, heavy drapes with fringe and private dining nooks.

Bar seats faces the lake, and some time their visit to coincide with the rising moon. Roasted duckling, served a la orange, is a favorite. Save room if ending with a grasshopper as dessert: The cocktail is made with 10 scoops of ice cream.

Looking for fun and a more casual, laid-back setting? Try *Toby's Supper Club* on the outskirts of Madison, where food orders are placed at the bar and you're led to a table when dining is ready to begin. That could be a while, but the convivial crowd likely will keep things interesting and spark conversation. Expect good food with no pretensions.

Historically it's been rare for a supper club to fit a cookie cutter definition, and that's a good thing. Any good restaurant operator listens and responds to customer feedback. Those supper club owners who survive the growing challenges of restaurant competition adapt in all kinds of ways. That might mean adding lunch hours or gluten-free fare, replacing the tableside relish tray with a salad bar or accepting reservations.

No two supper clubs are exactly alike, which might befuddle the uninitiated, but we who love them sure know a supper club when we see it. **ew**

Mary Bergin of Madison (marybergin.com, roadstraveled.com) is the author of "Wisconsin Supper Club Cookbook," Globe Pequot Press, in its ninth printing. Watch for her next book, tentatively titled "Small Town Wisconsin: Fun, Surprising and Exceptional Road Trips."

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PARK PARADISE

FROM HIKING AND BIKING TO
CAMPING AND SWIMMING,
WISCONSIN'S STATE PARKS AND
FORESTS ARE GEMS TO BE EXPLORED.

BY MELANIE RADZICKI MCMANUS





With more than 60 state parks and natural areas that draw more than 20 million visits each year, Wisconsin is the perfect destination for outdoor fun year-round. Want to truly immerse yourself in all that Mother Nature has to offer? Camping is a great option. Throughout the state park system, you'll find campsites scattered along the shores of Lake Michigan, tucked into fragrant pine forests and set atop the bluffs towering over the Mississippi.

Looking to get out onto the water? A number of parks offer the perfect space for paddle boarding, kayaking and canoeing, without the distraction of motorized traffic. Sand beaches are great spots for building sandcastles and wiling away a summer day. And several parks offer off-road, single track trails perfect for the mountain bike enthusiast. Here are a few parks to explore this summer.

NORTHERN WISCONSIN

Big Bay State Park

Big Bay sits on the eastern shore of Madeline Island, the largest of the 22 Apostle Islands and a short ferry ride from Bayfield. Its campground features 60 sites and a 1½-mile stretch of Barrier Beach. When you're not splashing in the water or ogling the colorful sandstone bluffs lining the bay, check out the park's seven miles of hiking trails. Or paddle around the bay to explore the nearby sea caves.

While You're There: Watch the sun set over Lake Superior from The Pub Restaurant and Wine Bar, preferably while noshing on its famous stone hearth pizzas or freshly-caught whitefish.

Northern Highland-American Legion State Forest (NHAL)

The massive state forest encompasses 236,000 acres and 900 lakes, including the pristine waters of Clear Lake. Just minutes from the Minocqua area and true to its name, the lake's waters are crystal clear, which equates to excellent fishing, boating, swimming and waterskiing.

Visitors will find a large sandy beach, boat landing and campground, along with a paved walking/hiking trail. Additional recreational activities can be found in the NHAL, Wisconsin's largest state forest.

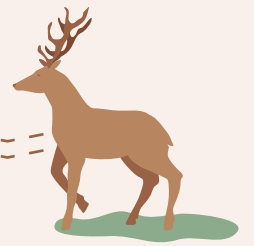
While You're Here: Drive five minutes into Woodruff to grab a selfie with the world's largest penny. The giant coin commemorates a 1953 fundraising event, where local school kids collected 1.7 million pennies to help build a local hospital.

Willow River State Park

Highlights of this park include the scenic Willow Falls and Willow Gorge. And a spacious campground on Little Falls Lake is one of Wisconsin's most popular. There are well over 100 campsites here, three playgrounds, a boat launch and a nature center with numerous hands-on displays — and, sometimes, live animal interactions. Visitors love to boat, hike, canoe and kayak, plus enjoy the swimming beach.

While You're There: Make the 10-minute drive to Hudson, a quaint town on the St. Croix River that's filled with boutiques, restaurants, a brewery and more.





CENTRAL WISCONSIN

Black River State Forest

Two forks of the Black River slice through this 68,000-acre forest, which features nearly 100 campsites spread among three campgrounds: Castle Mound, East Fork and Pigeon Creek. Nature trails hook into Pigeon Creek and Castle Mound (the view is definitely worth the two-mile trek), while Pigeon Creek also offers a canoe launch, swimming beach and access to off-road biking trails. In addition, the state forest contains more than 30 miles of ATV trails and numerous multiuse paths.

While You're There: Keep an eye out for elk roaming through the pine and oak woods. The animals were reintroduced into the forest in 2015 and 2016 after a 125-year absence.

Kohler-Andrae State Park

About 50 miles north of Milwaukee lies one of the state's more popular parks, where Lake Michigan and its majestic shoreline are the stars. A campground offers more than 100 campsites and a cabin for those with disabilities. Hike along the park's dune cord walk, which showcases the lakeshore's rolling sand dunes. You can also bike; try your luck at the fishing pond; or explore the Sanderling Nature Center, which features interactive exhibits, nature films and a rooftop observation deck. There are also seasonal educational programs for kids and adults. And don't forget about your four-legged friends, as the dedicated dog beach is perfect for pooches.

While You're There: Head five minutes north to the Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden, which features several dozen life-size and miniature figures in lifelike tableaux. Created by the late James Tellen, the collection is considered one of Wisconsin's best outdoor art exhibits.

SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

Wyalusing State Park

Incredible vistas await campers at Wyalusing, perched 500 feet above the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi rivers. The campground features 109 individual campsites, plus outdoor group campgrounds and a lodge with dormitories for groups. Check out the park's 14-plus miles of hiking and mountain biking trails, a six-mile canoe trail and fishing spots. Unique spots to explore include the Treasure Cave, where stairs lead to the cave and then a small limestone cavern. There's no beach here, but there's one at Wyalusing Recreation Area, two miles to the south.

While You're There: Explore the park's 69 Native American mounds, namely, the famous Sentinel Hill and Procession mound groups. [ew](#)



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Dinner and a View

Geneva Lake is the perfect backdrop for a culinary outing

By Kristine Hansen

The best pairing with pizza, surf and turf, or a cocktail is a view of Geneva Lake. Watch sailboats glide by or the sun set over the water. Here are six options.

GORDY'S BOAT HOUSE, FONTANA-ON-GENEVA-LAKE

The waterfront doesn't get any closer than the marina setting at this 1955 eatery on the lake's southwest shore. Time your visit to be on a Friday for clam chowder or, on any day, order the Somethin' Fishy tacos: cod spiced with black-bean and mango salsa and chipotle sauce.

THE GRANDVIEW RESTAURANT AT THE GENEVA INN, LAKE GENEVA

Known for its surf-and-turf dinners, only a wall of windows at the South Lake Shore Drive inn's sleek and modern dining room separates you from the water. Begin your feast with the Geneva chopped salad or Wisconsin cheese curds, followed by the crab and lobster roll, Alaskan halibut or petite filet mignon.



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PIER 290, WILLIAMS BAY

The only restaurant to boast actually being located on the lake, Pier 290 is a popular choice. Framing views of docked boats, and next to Gage Marine, the lunch and dinner menus (think burgers, steaks and seafood) also pepper in comfort food, like house-made bacon and blue cheese chips and locally famous deviled eggs. Dock seating hugs a sandy beach. At night, fire pits cast a cozy glow.

THE BAKER HOUSE, LAKE GENEVA

Across from the lake on Wrigley Drive, this 1885 Victorian inn is firmly set in the Gilded Age with vintage hats hung on the walls. Enjoy dinner on the screened porch for the best view, choosing from items like lamb lollipops or prosciutto-wrapped quail. Champagne and Mimosas add a celebratory twist to Sunday brunch.


OAKFIRE, LAKE GENEVA

On the northeast tip of Geneva Lake, Oakfire's 16 signature Neapolitan-style pizzas rooted in Naples, Italy, are marked by their thin, pillow-y crust. The two-level patio frames Italian-esque views — including the Mediterranean-style 1932 Riviera building, located across the street.



Boat House Bar & Grill

THE BOAT HOUSE BAR & GRILL, LAKE GENEVA

This sprawling patio and its red umbrellas across from Geneva Lake's far eastern shoreline, along Buttons Bay, is quieter than downtown but the view as beautiful. In addition to burgers and pizza, the menu caters to health-minded diners with two hearty Big Bowl salads (caprese or house). 

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Hatch Distilling Co. Puts A New Spin on a Classic

By Elizabeth Charney

This Door County distillery forages ingredients and raises its own honey for the production of its liquors.

Craft distillers throughout the U.S. are using honey to create unique spirits with new aromatic and flavor notes. One of these hidden gems, Hatch Distilling Co. in Egg Harbor, started their business four years ago with an aim of going back to the basics with beekeeping and other locally-grown ingredients.

Their edited, but encompassing, list of liquors — from vodka and gin to apple brandy and limoncello — offer a unique tasting experience. The Straight Bourbon Whiskey is smooth with hints of chocolate and caramel notes, making it great to sip on. The Gin — newly-awarded by the National Honey Producers Association — has brighter notes of floral and citrus. For those that crave the clash of sweet and sour, the Limoncello combines lemon citrus with the natural sweetness of honey.

Chris Roedl, co-owner of Hatch, opened the distillery on the main drag of Egg Harbor in 2018 as a way to combine his two passions: agriculture and libations. Roedl grew up around large-scale agricultural work at his family's business, and in 2012, he decided to revive his agricultural past by using his free time to raise bees. This eventually turned him into a “beek” — or a beekeeping geek — as his interests grew.

“I had to do something with the animal husbandry piece of my brain, so I got into beekeeping, and that hobby was super approachable. I started with a few books and a couple of items and that hobby just grew out of control,” Roedl says.

The natural sugar in honey makes it a great distillate. It creates a smoother tasting experience, thus how Roedl has been able to convert gin- or vodka-haters into lovers with Hatch's honey-distilled liquors.

Today Roedl manages anywhere from 50-100 hives year-round at different locations in Door County. They also get some extra help with honey from beekeepers in Stevens Point to keep up with production. During the peak months of June through August, they can harvest anywhere between 20 to 100 pounds of honey per hive, which carries the distillery through the entire year.

Roedl also works with Hyline Orchard for blends of apples such as Honeycrisp, Cortland, Macintosh and Golden Russet for their Apple Brandy to make a 100% Egg Harbor-produced product. Other local partners include a dairy farm up the road that grows their grains for bourbon. Operating with a hyperlocal mindset helps Roedl accomplish one of his other goals: maintaining a low carbon footprint.

Their gin is another example of utilizing local resources to keep their environmental impact small. Hatch's New American style gin takes on smoother notes of floral and citrus by using foraged common juniper berry and white spruce tips.

“What's been really cool is all these craft distilleries across America are really challenging the definition of gin,” says Roedl, comparing the New American style to the harsher, London dry gin many of us are accustomed to. New American style features less of that strong juniper taste and utilizes other botanicals, allowing distillers to experiment with flavor profiles.

Caleb Despins, distiller at Hatch, says achieving their gin's distinct taste is all about the timing. “If you harvest [juniper] at just the right time [during the fall], they're perfect, like really well dried. We will get anywhere from three to five gallons.”

“Overall, it really is a way to connect to local agriculture,” Roedl says. “And just like what craft beer was 10 years ago, 20 years ago, distilling is going into that route. There's always going to be a new local option popping up across the landscape in every town. It's really exciting.” 



Below the Surface

Wisconsin becomes a national sanctuary for shipwrecks

By Kevin Revolinski | Photos courtesy of Travel Wisconsin

A boatload of Christmas trees, a violent Lake Michigan storm and a story that lives on. On November 23, 1912, the *Rouse Simmons* went down with 16 men on board and a cargo of thousands of evergreens, and so became forever known as the Christmas Tree Ship. One of the best known Lake Michigan sailing tragedies, the 124-foot 1868 schooner is now also part of the newly designated **Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary**.

The sanctuary, co-managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association and the State of Wisconsin, covers 962 square miles in Lake Michigan, from just south of Port Washington to about 10 miles north of Two Rivers. Within those cold waters lie 36 shipwrecks — that we know about. The current sanctuary map lists another 23 that are likely down there somewhere, based on historical records. The cold water preserves the ships so that some of them look as if they sank only in recent years. The oldest is the 1833 *Gallinipper*, a 95-foot schooner that went down in 210 feet of water in 1851.

EXPERIENCING THE SANCTUARY

Signs and displays along lakeside roads commemorate some of the ships: A marker for the *Rouse Simmons* stands in a shaded spot along Nashotah Beach in Two Rivers. The remains



of the 130-foot schooner *Lottie Cooper*, sunk in 1894, have been brought up and reassembled in the open air in Deland Park near the Sheboygan harbor. The **Sheboygan County Historical Society & Museum** also has an exhibit about the *Cooper* and the steamer *Phoenix*, which took 190 souls with it in 1847, only two years after launching.

In Two Rivers, six historic buildings comprise **Rogers Street Fishing Village** and **Great Lakes Coast Guard Museum**. Along with an 1886 lighthouse you can see the *Gallinipper's* foremast as well as artifacts from the *Rouse Simmons* and the *Vernon*, an 1887 wreck.


Just south in Manitowoc is the **Wisconsin Maritime Museum**. In addition to fascinating exhibits on shipbuilding and a WWII submarine you can walk through, the museum offers a special interactive exhibit with artifacts relating to sanctuary shipwrecks.

WRECK DIVING

But you can also visit the shipwrecks themselves. NOAA is in the process of marking wrecks with buoys. In early 2022, Port Washington native Matt Savatski co-founded **Great Lakes Diving Center**, a scuba charter in Sheboygan. Savatski says interest in Great Lakes shipwrecks “is growing on the global stage” even with divers outside the U.S. “This is one of the only places in the world where you still get the old wood wrecks that are still intact.”

Open Water certified recreational divers can visit wrecks as deep as 60 feet or up to 130 feet with an Advanced Open Water certification. Anything deeper, such as the *Pringle* or the Christmas Tree Ship, requires technical certification. Water gets down to 40-50 degrees at depth, so a dry suit is necessary. “The shallower they are, the more they’ve been beaten by weather and pulled apart,” says Savatski. At 130 feet, the wreck of the 1851 schooner *Northerner* is perfectly intact, he says.

But if you’re not a diver, there are scattered wrecks near Manitowoc one can see while snorkeling or kayaking, such as the 1881 tugboat *Arctic* and the 1889 *Francis Hinton* that lie in about 15 feet of water a few hundred feet from shore.

The details and story of each ship and its unfortunate end can be found at wisconsinshipwrecks.org. 

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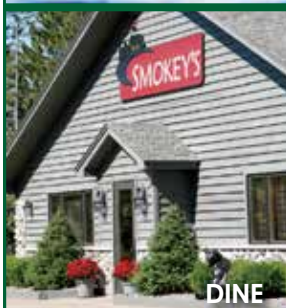


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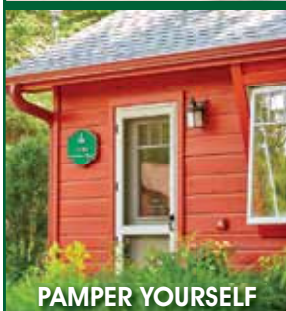


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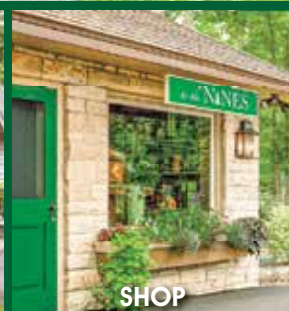
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