

# EASY ESCAPES

## Lake Living, Unplugged

Mirror Lake State Park  
WISCONSIN

3.5 hours  
drive time

The serenity of a simpler time might be hard to summon—until you arrive at this tranquil no-wake lake surrounded by sandstone

bluffs towering along its shoreline. Named for its glassy surface, the jewel of 2,200-acre Mirror Lake State Park, just a few minutes (yet an entire world) away from the Wisconsin Dells, is encircled by an unspoiled forest. Those woods also serve as the backdrop for a 1950s supper club that recalls a bygone era with just the right amount of nostalgia (read: Rat Pack music piped in during leisurely cocktail hours as the sun dips low). Take it all in over a weekend that'll bring you back to the way things used to be.

Wake up cabin-style to the rustle of leaves and venture out on more than 19 miles of hiking trails. Wander the shaded paths

Ishnala Supper Club  
on Mirror Lake

Need to unwind this summer? From woodsy hideaways to romantic beach jaunts, we found seven weekend retreats just a short drive away.

BY NINA KOKOTAS HAHN - ILLUSTRATIONS BY ADAM HAYES

that wind around the lake through canopies of old oaks and white pines. When you've worked up an appetite, take a drive to Baraboo, 15 minutes down the road, for a burger with salsa at the diner-esque Little Village Cafe, then slide over to the well-stocked Village Booksmith for a used classic or a beach read to dive into back at Mirror Lake's shore.

Late in the afternoon, explore the lake's passageways with a kayak or standup paddleboard from Mirror Lake Rentals (from \$12 an hour). Follow the majestic bluffs, steer into the nooks and crannies of inlets, and float under the trees arching over the water. Never once worry about speedboats disturbing your peace—they aren't allowed on the lake.

At sunset, walk the path to Ishnala Supper Club perched among the trees overlooking Mirror Lake. Order an old-fashioned at the arrowhead-shaped bar, a nod to the Winnebago who used to inhabit the area. It's the perfect spot to watch the changing light dance on the water below. Take your time over dinner and go all 1953 (the year the club was built) with garlic-butter-crust ed escargot and roast Wisconsin duck dripping with cognac-orange sauce. Then cap off the day with a frothy grasshopper ice-cream drink. Tomorrow: Just hit replay.

**STAY** Since Frank Lloyd Wright's idyllic Seth Peterson Cottage is booked through 2018, try Peaceful Pines (from \$198), a log cabin with a dock on Mirror Lake, from Sand County Vacation Rentals.

**WHILE YOU'RE THERE** Less than 10 minutes from the park, the International Crane Foundation's restored wetlands (\$9.50 admission) are the only place in the world you can see all 15 species of cranes.



Kayaking on Mirror Lake



Roanoke  
INDIANA

3.25 hours  
drive time

Rolling up to Joseph Decuis Farm in time to catch the sun setting behind the windmill is like arriving at a scene straight out of René Magritte's *Empire of Light*. The 200 acres are part of a family-owned empire in Roanoke that also includes an elegant fine-dining restaurant, a shop that sells locally made foodstuffs, and two charming inns. You've come not just for the homegrown ingredients on the menu at the lauded Joseph Decuis Restaurant but for the rare chance to *really* know

where your food comes from—as in, an up-close look at the journey the prized wagyu beef makes from the pasture to your plate.

The Farmstead Inn's three-bedroom brick farmhouse and a carriage house with two suites sit next to a small barn and across the road from the main farm, framed by picturesque white fences. Overnight guests can enjoy a homemade breakfast—maybe quiche, scones, and pork sausage made with farm ingredients—in the antique country kitchen of the restored 1884 farmhouse.

If you're the type who likes to get your hands dirty, you can start the day in the barn, scooping

grain and tossing hay for the pigs, goats, and chickens and collecting eggs—call it the farm chore lite experience. For a fee (\$100), you can learn how to harness the farm's Percheron draft horses then work the reins during a carriage ride around the property.

By 5 p.m., be ready for a farm tour via hay wagon (dinner reservation at Joseph Decuis required). You'll see a variety of livestock (ask your guide to do a pig call to see the fierce-looking Mangalitsa race to the fence), and you'll learn about the strict Japanese husbandry techniques that make wagyu beef so coveted. Few places raise cattle to the standards that

the Decuis owners, the Eshelman family, do. The cattle have bloodlines from Japanese breeder Shogo Takeda, and the Eshelmans follow his prescription for low-stress cattle raising, including humane weaning for calves, a special vegetarian diet, and spacious pens that funnel in classical music (or Yankees games, depending on the season). In the finishing barn—where pasture-raised cattle are fattened on grain in their final days—you can visit the animals, separated into pens designating their time till slaughter.

This grain-finishing yields lusciously marbled meat, as you'll discover that night at the



Clockwise from left: The Farmstead Inn's 1884 brick house and carriage house; farm-to-fork alfresco dining on the grounds; a wagyu bull out to pasture; the end product at the Joseph Decuis Restaurant

restaurant six miles down the road in town, where you'll taste the passion and care behind the cultivation. Or, time your visit to a feast served alfresco in the farm's lush gardens, like the Farm to Fork Wine Dinner on June 29 (\$160)—a culinary experience of at least five courses that truly begins and ends outdoors.

**STAY** Nab a two-bedroom suite at the Farmstead Inn's carriage house (\$500) for the ranch-like atmosphere—cow-print chairs, sliding barn doors hung with saddles, and views of the tree-lined acreage. If waking up to roosters doesn't appeal to you, try the historical Inn at Joseph Decuis (\$200) in downtown Roanoke.

**WHILE YOU'RE THERE** On your way home, stop in Fort Wayne for another take on farm-to-fork at the new-in-2016 Tolon, an intimate eatery that sources everything locally, right down to the Starlight Rock and Rye whiskey.

PHOTOGRAPHY: PREVIOUS SPREAD (ISHNALA SUPPER CLUB); JOSEPH LEBITE; THIS SPREAD (MIRROR LAKE); LOTZ MANKATZMAN; (FARMSTEAD INN) MITT CARRIGAN; (ALL OTHERS) COURTESY OF JOSEPH DECUIS FARM

# PICKERS' PARADISE



Clockwise from left: Mississippi Cottage Antiques; West End Architectural Salvage; Antique Archaeology



## PRO TIPS HOW TO PICK

**Antique Archaeology store manager Emily Gwin on scoring the best finds**

**Look for pre-1960s.** "Rule of thumb—but not a hard rule: The earlier the better; older items tend to have more value."

**Leave as is.** "If you find something old, sandblasting, painting, or trying to clean it up is a big no-no. Rust is in. So are industrial items like factory carts, no-frills metal pieces, and old pendant lights."

**Watch for reproductions.** "If it's spotless, perfect, and a lighter weight—like aluminum instead of cast-iron metal—it's probably not the real thing."

**Go with your gut.** "The cool thing about antiques, thrifting, and picking is not so much what's hot but what catches your eye. If something speaks to you, pick it up."



Just over the border in Iowa, on the banks of the Mississippi River, lies the hotbed of vintage treasure hunting that is LeClaire. In 2000, the History Channel's *American Pickers* cohost Mike Wolfe opened Antique Archaeology in town, spurring a trend of salvage shops distinct from traditional antiques havens. Here, any kind of collectible goes, from Americana to country chic.

**STAY** Book the two-bedroom Grasshoppers Guest House (\$150) for a deck with river views or the Old Mill Guest House (\$175), a new lower-level unit in a restored riverboat captain's house paces from the Mississippi and—fair warning—train tracks. **WHILE YOU'RE THERE** Board the riverboat *Twilight* at LeClaire's pier for an hour-and-a-half old-timey paddleboat cruise (\$16). Departs June 17, July 15, and August 19 at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m.

**For conversation pieces: Antique Archaeology** Serving as home base for *American Pickers* gives this store a certain star-tourism appeal (Mike Wolfe sightings, though unusual, do happen). Celeb factor aside, hot vintage items you might recognize from the show, like gas station signs (hello, man cave) and Wolfe's personal collection of rare motorcycles (for ogling, not purchasing), make it worth a visit.

**For visionary finds: West End Architectural Salvage** This trove of upcycled castoffs—think chicken feeders repurposed into lamps and reclaimed barn doors—is the newest outpost from the team behind HGTV's *West End Salvage*. Opened in November in a former riverboat captain's house, the shop focuses on industrial objects perfect for creative types who can envision that metal bench as trendy interior decor.

**For old-school collectibles: Mississippi Cottage Antiques** Room after room of period pieces and dainty housewares make for more traditional antiques: Browse 19th-century mahogany desks, handblown Moser miniatures, grandfather clocks, silver plates, and Civil War artifacts.

**For funky surprises: Picker Paradise** From May to October, a flea market takes over the old lumber mill storage sheds (behind Aunt Hattie's Fanciful Emporium), where you can rummage for unexpected finds from dealers and collectors—everything from vinyl records and neon beer signs to golf clubs and vintage typewriters.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (MISSISSIPPI COTTAGE ANTIQUES, WEST END ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE) MIRIAM BULCHER; (ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY) MIKE WOLFE/COURTESY OF ANTIQUE ARCHAEOLOGY

## Hit the Wine Trail



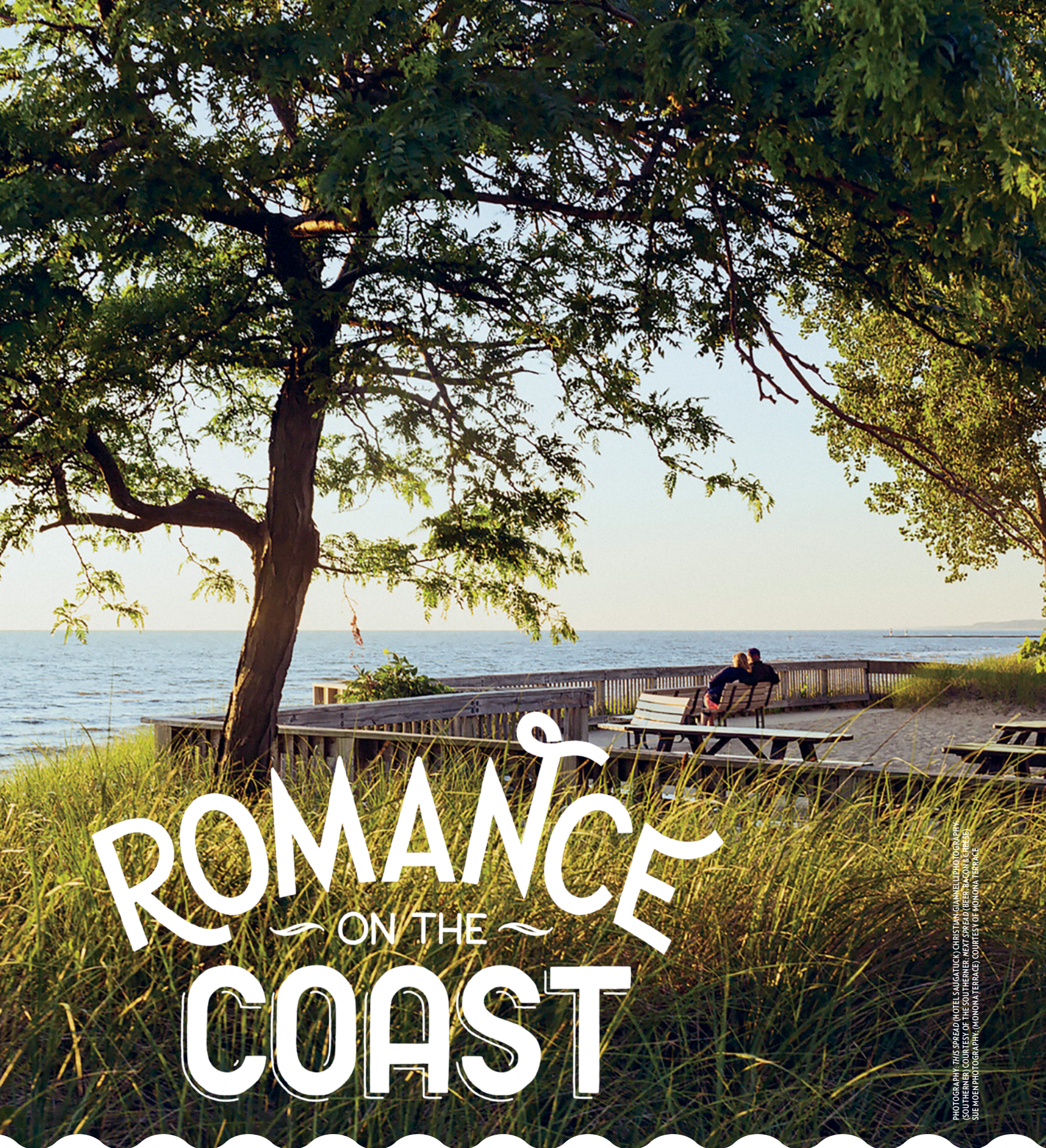
Let's be honest: You're not headed to Sonoma. Let's be even more honest: Does it matter? When all you need are some vineyard vistas and a few good pours, a jaunt around the lake will land you in the breezy bluff-top beach town of St. Joseph at the center of the Lake Michigan Shore Wine Trail. A boon of the fruit belt that stretches across southwest Michigan, the route encompasses 21 wineries, from generations-old family vineyards to walkable in-town tasting rooms staffed by the winemakers themselves. Allow us to make a few suggestions. Cheers.

- 1 Lazy Ballerina Winery**
- 2 White Pine Winery**
- 3 Baroda Founders Wine Cellar** Stroll a block of downtown St. Joseph and clink glasses in these three tasting rooms. At Baroda Founders, the viticulturist winemaker might detail the science behind lake-effect grape growing while he pours you an aromatic Riesling.
- 4 12 Corners Vineyards** Go for the vibrant, semi-sweet Beach Cottage Vacation White; stay for the live music and expansive views of Michigan's fruit-growing farmland.
- 5 Contessa Wine Cellars** The exquisite, well-balanced Chardonnay Reserve aged in French oak barrels should be first on your list at this Italian villa-esque vineyard run by a third-generation winemaker who's been working Michigan vines since he was 12.
- 6 Karma Vista Vineyards** High on a hill with a panoramic view, drink fruit-forward wines with playful names like Stone Temple Pinot and Gunzan Rosé from this 2017 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition bronze medalist. (Psst, that's playing with the big boys out west.)
- 7 Domaine Berrien Cellars** Try the elegant, currant-popping Cabernet Franc—the grapes grow nicely in the region's sandy soil—at this boutique winery known for its dry reds.
- 8 Round Barn Winery** Need a snack to go with Round Barn's spicy, fruity Sauvignon Blanc? Mosey over to the onsite food truck for some gourmet mac and cheese and mellow out to live music on the bucolic grounds—with, yes, a giant Amish-built round barn.
- 9 Tabor Hill Winery & Restaurant** You're drinking: sparkling Grand Mark in the tasting room. You're eating: Duck Cherry Char Siu at a table with a view over the rolling vineyards—some of the region's oldest. You're thinking: *I could get used to this.*



**FESTIVAL ALERT**  
June 17 Sample a sipping smorgasbord stocked by all 21 of the trail's wineries at the Lake Michigan Shore Wine Fest at Weko Beach, 20 minutes south of St. Joseph.

**STAY** At the Boulevard Inn & Bistro (from \$179), extolled for its wine list, you'll find the beach and downtown St. Joseph right outside your door. **WHILE YOU'RE THERE** Try your hand—er, legs—at sandboarding in nearby Warren Dunes State Park with a lesson (\$75) from Third Coast Surf Shop.



# ROMANCE ON THE COAST

PHOTOGRAPHY: THIS SPREAD (HOTEL SAUGATUCK) CHRISTIAN GIANNELLI PHOTOGRAPHY (SOUTHERNER) COURTESY OF THE SOUTHERNER; NEXT SPREAD (BEER, BACON & CHEESE) SUE MOEN PHOTOGRAPHY; (MONONA TERRACE) COURTESY OF MONONA TERRACE



Set along the shores of Lake Kalamazoo and the Kalamazoo River, just over the rolling dunes from one of Michigan's most revered beaches, Saugatuck

is more than another lakeside retreat. It's the anchor of the so-called Art Coast—an area that plein air painters from Chicago established as an art colony at the turn of the century. We can't think of a more intimate way to while away a weekend than picnicking amid the scenery that inspires the art.

**Day 1** The luxe new Hotel Saugatuck takes bed-and-breakfast to the next level: The staff delivers a gourmet breakfast to your door—the perfect precursor to a balmy day at prized Oval Beach. Take a quick drive around the lake to drop and flop on the sweeping golden sands fringed by forested dunes. (Go-getters can park down the road and climb more than 300 steps to cross sandy Mount Baldhead to the beach.) Tip: You'll need provisions for your difficult day of lounging. Try the Southerner, a riverside joint in town where James Beard-nominated Matt Millar whips up Creole-style rémoulade-topped



fried whitefish sandwiches and buckets of Nashville fried chicken for a delicious grab-and-go option.

Tempting as it is to dawdle till twilight, regroup back at your room before an alfresco dinner. Snag a table on the patio at Everyday People Cafe in Douglas, just across the river from the hotel, and knock out some white-wine-drenched mussels. An early reservation will let you catch the legendary Oval Beach sunset. (Bring a blanket.) Back in your room, a dessert tray, courtesy of the hotel, awaits.

**Day 2** Hike two and a half miles through the dunes and protected wetlands in the little-known 173-acre Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area. Sandy peaks offer views



of Holland's Big Red Lighthouse and Ox-Bow Lagoon (the old Saugatuck Channel).

Head back to town and shop gallery-strewn Butler Street for a piece of art that speaks to you. Maybe it's an impressionist-style oil painting from James Brandess Studios & Gallery that captures Saugatuck's coastal scenery, or a midcentury-mod ceramic vase from the sleek Jeff Blandford Gallery. Once you've worked up an appetite, the 36-ounce tomahawk steak for two at the white-tablecloth Bowdies Chop House should do the trick. Then, from the boardwalk that hugs the river, take in the sailboats moored in the harbor, where sunburned boaters sip cocktails as if to cue up another spectacular sunset.



**STAY** The 18-room Hotel Saugatuck (from \$369, breakfast included) opened in a restored lumber mill in November. **WHILE YOU'RE THERE** Browse artwork, bid at live auctions, see glassblowing demonstrations, and sip wine on open-studio nights (every other Friday, June 16 to August 11) at Ox-Bow, Saugatuck's long-standing creative mecca, founded by artists from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Clockwise from left: Hotel Saugatuck; Jeff Blandford Gallery; fried chicken at the Southerner. Opposite page: Oval Beach

# Eat (Cheese), Drink (Beer), and Be Merry

**Monroe & New Glarus**  
WISCONSIN  
2.75 hours  
drive time

Nothing says summer in the Midwest like a cold pint and the best cheese on the planet. Seriously: The first U.S. cheesery to win the world cheese championship (yes, that is a thing) in almost 30 years is in Monroe. The honor solidifies the artisanal-cheese-making cred and Swiss heritage that run deep in Green County, where Monroe is dubbed the cheese capital of the country, and, 20 minutes north, the village of New Glarus is known as America's Little Switzerland. Plus, there's craft beer. Of course. Here's the plan.

**Day 1: Monroe**  
Start at **Alp and Dell**, a cheese store that fronts the flagship **Emmi Roth USA** cheese plant—winner of the 2016 World Championship Cheese Contest with its nutty, full-flavored Grand Cru Surchoix—for a guided creamery tour (Monday through Saturday). Your guide, Swiss-born owner Tony Zraggen, will dish on the cheese-making process and, if you're lucky, yodel a farewell.

Hungry? **Baumgartner's Cheese Store & Tavern**, the state's oldest cheese shop, is one of the few eateries in the region serving rare Limburger. Summon your inner foodie—and your cojones—and order a sandwich smeared with the über-stinky cheese made with the same bacteria that produce foot odor (yep, for real). Can't stomach that much? Grab a tiny toothpick tasting and buck up.

Wash it down at **Minhas Craft Brewery**, the

country's second-oldest brew house. Go for the creamy Huber Bock lager, one of a dozen on tap. The \$12 tour will take you all the way back to 1845.

**Day 2: New Glarus**  
For lunch, try the cozy **Cow & Quince**, which serves local cheeses like the grass-fed Gouda from **Edelweiss Cheese**—a major ingredient in the epic French toast made with Door County cherries and pork belly.

**New Glarus Brewing Co.** only sells its beer in Wisconsin, making it all the more covetable. Explore the Dutch Bavarian-inspired buildings and get a trio of three-ounce samples (\$8), like the hoppy Moon Man.

Dinner at the **New Glarus Hotel Restaurant** calls for a pot of bubbly Old World-style cheese fondue or the classic Swiss dish made with local Emmi Roth mild Raclette cheese melted over potatoes.



**PRO TIPS**  
**BE CHEESY**

**Alp and Dell's Tony Zraggen on what to try on your visit**

**Roth Private Reserve**

"Made with raw milk, defined by an earthy taste—foodies might describe it as 'barnyard-y.'"

**Deppeler's Swiss**

"When they cut this 22-pound wheel, salt water dribbles from the holes in the cheese."

**Marieke Gouda**

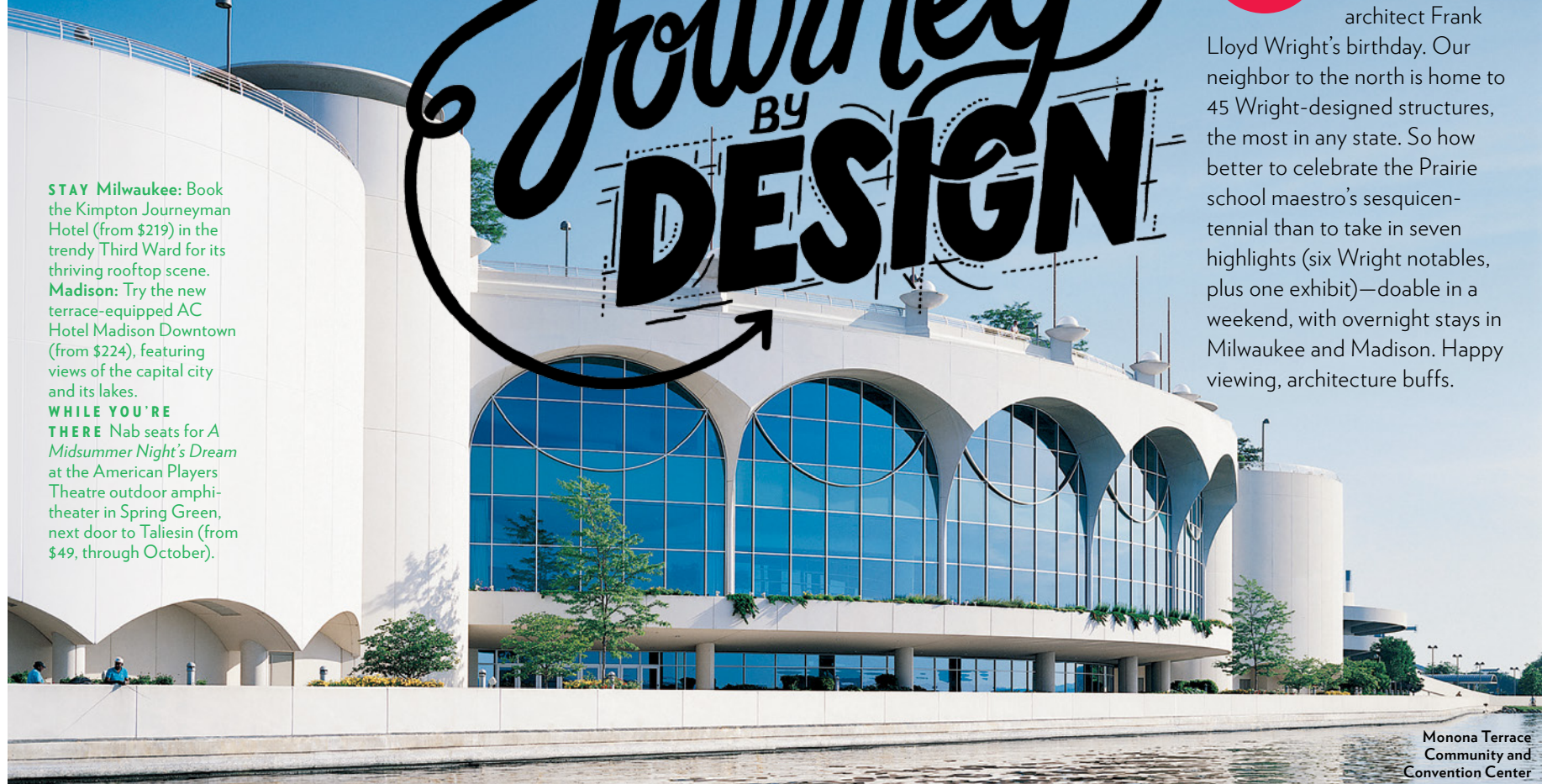
"This one, made by a Dutch family, is available aged beyond 24 months."



**FESTIVAL ALERT**  
**June 10** Beer, Bacon & Cheese, an event sandwiched into New Glarus's weekend-long Bavarian-style Polkafest, is a four-hour deep dive into artisan-crafted gluttony.

**STAY**  
The unstuffy 66-room Chalet Landhaus Inn (from \$159) in New Glarus has traditional Swiss decor.  
**WHILE YOU'RE THERE**  
Bike the Sugar River State Trail (\$5 passes and bike rentals from \$15 at trail headquarters in New Glarus).

**STAY Milwaukee:** Book the **Kimpton Journeyman Hotel** (from \$219) in the trendy Third Ward for its thriving rooftop scene.  
**Madison:** Try the new terrace-equipped **AC Hotel Madison Downtown** (from \$224), featuring views of the capital city and its lakes.  
**WHILE YOU'RE THERE** Nab seats for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the **American Players Theatre** outdoor amphitheater in Spring Green, next door to **Taliesin** (from \$49, through October).



**Frank Lloyd Wright Trail**  
WISCONSIN  
1.75 hours  
to Racine

June marks the 150th anniversary of Wisconsin native son and pioneering architect Frank Lloyd Wright's birthday. Our neighbor to the north is home to 45 Wright-designed structures, the most in any state. So how better to celebrate the Prairie school maestro's sesquicentennial than to take in seven highlights (six Wright notables, plus one exhibit)—doable in a weekend, with overnight stays in Milwaukee and Madison. Happy viewing, architecture buffs.

Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center

**Wyoming Valley School Cultural Arts Center** Through November, tour Wright's only school project, a nonprofit arts center built in 1957 as an homage to his mother (a former kindergarten teacher).

**Taliesin** Wright lived here for 48 years, even after his mistress and half a dozen others were killed by a servant who set fire to the original home in 1914. Today you can roam the 800-acre campus and rebuilt structure with drinks and hors d'oeuvres at twilight (\$100).

**First Unitarian Society Meeting House** As a member (and son of two founders) of the First Unitarian Society, Wright accepted this commission when he was 80. Tours of the church, with its striking prow-style copper roof, are free on Sundays.

**Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center** Construction of Wright's "dream civic center," conceived in 1938, was defeated by a single vote. Thanks to referendums, it was completed in 1997 on the eastern side of Madison's isthmus. Tours are \$5.

**SC Johnson Administration Building** Wrapped in 43 miles of glass tubing, the 1939 structure replaced a planned building deemed "too typical." The free tour includes the 15-story Research Tower, one of the world's tallest examples of cantilever construction.

**Milwaukee Art Museum** Check out Wright's early portfolio designs, furniture, textiles, and stained glass in *Buildings for the Prairie* (\$17, July 28 to October 15), an exhibit at the city's crown jewel museum.

**American System-Built Homes** Wright's bold vision of working-class housing—using an innovative assembly system that saved waste and wages—is reflected in a cluster of 1916 residences (tour one for \$15) along Milwaukee's Burnham Street.

