

Back Road Bounty

WINE TRAILS OFFER ACCESS TO LOCAL FLAVOR *By Dianna Stampfer*

Touring the back roads of Michigan will take you past some of the most beautiful countryside, where orchards and vineyards dot the landscape. Wherever you begin your journey, you'll find unique destinations and attractions that pair well with a trip through Michigan's wine country.

ARTS, ANTIQUES AND AGRICULTURE

As you enter Michigan from Northwest Indiana, you'll find yourself in Harbor Country. Rich in history as a resort destination, the eight communities here have found their niche with quaint stores, antique shops, galleries, restaurants and miles of Lake Michigan shoreline.

If your artistic side is calling, check out the Krasl Art Center in downtown St. Joseph. This visual arts center features three galleries, a library and seven studios. They offer classes, workshops and lectures for all ages. Admission is free. While you're there, pick up a free brochure for a self-guided walking tour of nearby sculptures.

Further up the shoreline, Crane Pie Pantry Restaurant and Orchard in Fennville—near Saugatuck—bakes up some of the finest apple pie around (it's one of 15 fruit desserts on the menu). If your timing is right, you can stop in at the newest regional agricultural attraction. The Great Lakes Farmers' Market will debut at the Allegan County Fairgrounds on May 26, running every Thursday and the first Saturday of the month through October 27.

For information about wineries in this region, visit the Southwest Michigan Wine Trails Web site at www.miwinetrail.com.

NATIONAL (AND LOCAL) TREASURES

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore stretches from Benzie County to Leelanau County in Northwest Michigan. Here, you'll find some of the state's most majestic sand dunes with amazing views of Lake Michigan beyond. The Port Oneida Rural Historic District, Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station and Michigan Maritime Museum are among the dozens of destinations open for public viewing in this nationally recognized region.

The Grand Traverse Lighthouse in Northport is one of 116 lighthouses to dot Michigan's shoreline. Located in the Leelanau State Park at the tip of the

peninsula, this light operates as a museum and is open for tours from May through October.

As you travel south along the eastern shore of the Leelanau Peninsula, be on the lookout for the masts of the Tall Ship Manitou. This schooner sails the waters of Grand Traverse Bay all summer long and is one of the largest sailing vessels on the Great Lakes. You can even spend the night on this "Floating B&B."

A tour of the Old Mission Peninsula wouldn't be complete without a stop at Hooper's Farm Gardens. For a birdseed donation, you can tour one of the most beautiful gardens on the peninsula. It's known locally as the best place for hand-picked cut flowers.

For information about this region's wineries, visit the Web sites of Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Association at www.lpwines.com or the Wineries of Old Mission Peninsula at www.wineriesofoldmission.com.

THE PIONEER PATH

Jackson County in Southeast Michigan is truly the Crossroads of Michigan, accessible from I-94, US-127, Hwy 50, Hwy 106 and Hwy 60. The area is rich in history and heritage.

Take a step back in time at the Ella Sharp Museum in Jackson, featuring a one-room schoolhouse, log cabin, historic home, blacksmith shop and the Granary Restaurant.

Treasures are waiting to be found at the various antique shops in communities like Parma, Grass Lake, Brooklyn and Irish Hills. Antiquing is one of the favorite pastimes in this area.

Jackson is also home to 457-acre Cascade Falls Park, where the best-known attraction is the Cascades—a man-made, illuminated waterfall with music. It's been operating nightly every summer since 1932. Enjoy the show from the comfortable seats or climb to the top of the 500-foot hill alongside the six giant fountains while dodging the sprays of water.

For information about the wineries in this region, visit the Southeast Michigan Pioneer Wine Trail's Web site at www.pioneerwinetrail.com.

Wineries are also located in other regions of Michigan, including the communities of Kalamazoo, Pentwater, St. Johns, Cheboygan, New Era and Bay City. For a list of attractions in these areas, visit Travel Michigan's Web site at www.michigan.org.

Dianna Stampfer, president of Promote Michigan, has a passion for travel, writing and Michigan wine.

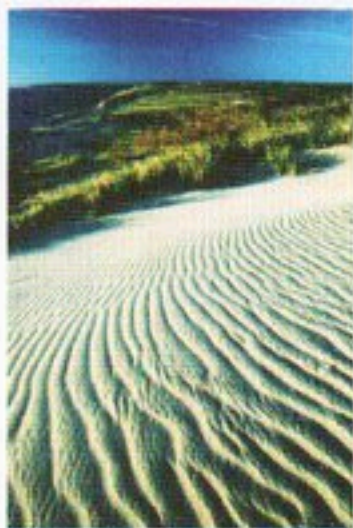
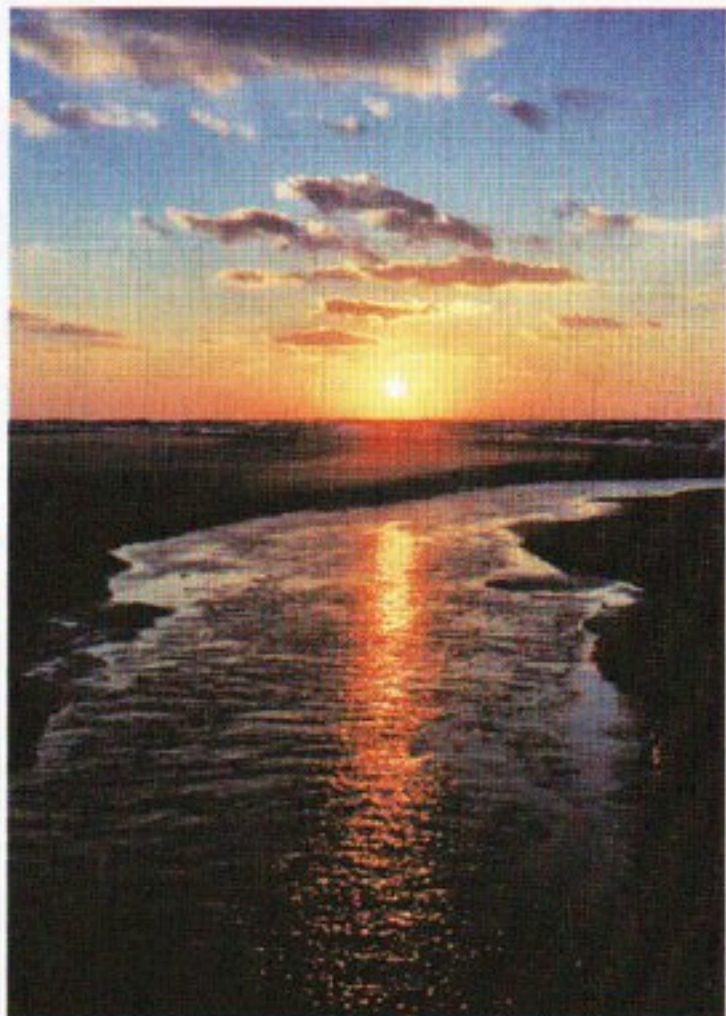
Additional Michigan Travel Information



(888) 78-GREAT
www.michigan.org



(800) 442-2084
www.wmta.org



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:
Visit the South Haven
South Pier Lighthouse
and Michigan Maritime
Museum. Enjoy amazing
sunsets throughout the
state. Discover the beauty
of Grand Traverse Bay
aboard the Tall Ship
Manitou. Visit the

Historic Hillside House
at Eli Sharp Museum
in Jackson. Take in the
breathtaking view from
Sleeping Bear Dunes
along the Lake Michigan
shore. Enjoy a backwoods
stroll through Harbor
Country in Southwest
Michigan.

