

Petoskey • Harbor Springs • Boyne City

Come to a place where the only things
more vivid than our explosion of color
are the memories you'll take home.

Free Vacation Guide
PetoskeyArea.com • 800.845.2828

PETOSKEY AREA
MICHIGAN
VISITORS BUREAU
RECONNECT.



Where the falls plunge farther,
the colors are more spectacular
and the lodging is more inviting.

It's a 5-Star Wilderness.®

Michigan's
Upper Peninsula

UPtravel.com 100 YEARS 800-562-7134

Your vacation dollars go far. You don't have to.

tasting room

Fostering the family trees

Throughout the state, family-owned apple farms await autumn's arrival — generation after generation. BY TAI ALEXANDER

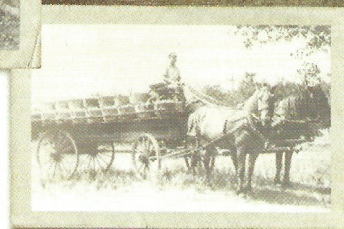
WHEN IT COMES TO Michigan's agricultural hierarchy, apple is king.

Apples are Michigan's largest and most valuable fruit crop, with 7.5 million trees covering 37,000 acres on 950 family-run farms. On a national scale, the state ranks third in apple production, with the most popular varieties being Red and Golden Delicious, Gala and the trendy Honeycrisp.

While the bulk of Michigan apples harvested are processed into other products — apple



Three generations:
Ed, Bill, Allan and
Jim Robinette.



sauce, fresh-cut slices, pie filling, apple cider — the appeal of visiting a pick-your-own orchard during prime apple-time season helps keep these farmers in business, generation after generation.

Case in point: A full year of centennial celebrating is taking place this year at Robinette's in Grand Rapids (www.robinettes.com). While the 136-acre farm itself dates back to the 1870s when peaches were the primary crop, Barzilla A. Robinette and his son, Edward James, purchased it in 1911. Today, the third- and fourth-generation legacy is a favorite year-round destination with a bakery, winery, gift shop and recreational orchard trails, in addition to seasonal offerings like the cider mill, wagon rides and corn maze.

At each of Michigan's family orchards, there's a story to be experienced. Learn more by logging onto MichiganApples.com.

Tai Alexander is a West Michigan-based freelance writer.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHAEL BUCK (TOP);
COURTESY ROBINETTE'S APPLE HAUS & WINERY (CENTER)