
The Spirit of Michigan Distilleries



Eva Deitch, Coppercraft Distillery

Michigan's craft distilling industry is growing at a rapid pace – ranking #4 in the nation in terms of overall number of distilleries (behind California, Oregon and Washington). West Michigan boasts an impressive offering of distilleries, ranging from brand-new local operations to those which have been in operation for close to one hundred years. Producing spirits to satisfy any patron, you'll find traditional age-honored spirits, new twists on your favorite cocktail, and likely a brand new favorite for you to introduce into your liquor cabinet.

Bier Distillery, just ten minutes north of Grand Rapids in Sparta, is easy to find, and provides their guests with a relaxed, casual atmosphere that you don't find at many distilleries today. They offer a full bar featuring spirits that are brewed, fermented, and distilled right on site. They also offer beer and wine, featuring 16 beer taps that are always kept full from their partner business Cellar Brewing. Various entertainment is featured throughout the week, including trivia, karaoke, open mic, and live bands.

Black Star Farms operates locations in Suttons Bay, Old Mission Peninsula and at The Village at Grand Traverse Commons just a few blocks southwest of downtown Traverse City. In addition to its world-class wines, Black Star offers a handful of fruit brandies, grappa, and eau de vies. The most recognizable product in its portfolio is "Pear and its Spirit," which features a full Bartlett pear grown inside the bottle, and then filled full of brandy for a decadent presentation (and memorable flavor).

Coppercraft Distillery is a Holland-based producer of quality spirits, with a focus on local ingredients. Visitors are invited to sample & enjoy hand-crafted cocktails with juices and other mixes made in-house. In addition to its current spirits offerings of gin, rum, vodka and citrus-flavored vodka, Coppercraft is also producing and aging bourbon, whiskey, and brandy, set for release later this year.

Flat Landers Barstillery near downtown Grand Rapids is a new operation, as of 2014. As a producer of premium, certified-organic spirits, the name comes from the association of poking fun at folks that don't live in the hills – with the owners' Northern Michigan kin commonly referring to those 'down state' as Flat Landers. With attention to local, this distillery uses certified organic grains, fruits and fine craftsmanship to yield great premium products.

Grand Traverse Distillery opened its newest tasting room last December at the Downtown Market in Grand Rapids, as well as operating tasting rooms in Traverse City, downtown Frankenmuth and in Leland's Historic Fishtown. Offering a wide selection of award-winning whiskey, gin, vodka and rum, this distillery also offers public tours of its main location for \$10 per person. The Peninsula Gin, True North Vodka, Wheat Vodka, Cherry Vodka and "Ole George" Rye Whiskey are all medal winners in various national competitions.

Journeyman Distillery is housed in the historic Featherbone Factory in Three Oaks, in an area affectionately referred to as Harbor Country. With a focus on whiskey, these hand-crafted artisan spirits also include gin, vodka, and rum, as well as specialized products like Humdinger Jalapeno Spirit



Sanctuary Spirits, Grand Ledge

and Snaggle Tooth Coffee Liqueur. The “Traveling Barrel Program” gives consumers an opportunity to pick out their very own personalized barrel which is filled with Silver Cross Whiskey, aged appropriately, and then bottled for take-home consumption.

Long Road Distillers, based in Grand Rapids, takes full advantage of West Michigan’s rich agricultural heritage by sourcing grain and fruit from local growers. Long Road vodkas, gins and whiskeys will be made 100% in-house at its Leonard Street location (just north of downtown GR), from milling all the way to final distillation.

New Holland Brewing Company & Artisan Spirits is one of Michigan’s most noted breweries, but is also one of the state’s distilling pioneers. Clockwork Orange Liqueur is the newest offering in the portfolio, joining award-winning gin, rum, vodka, Hatter Royale hopped whiskey, and Beer Barrel Bourbon malted whiskey. Small barrels accentuate and accelerate the barrel-aging process, resulting in whiskey with barrel-character well beyond its years.

Northern Latitudes Distillery offers free “Latitude Adjustments” to anyone who stops by their tasting room, located less than thirty minutes from Traverse City, between Suttons Bay and Leland. Owners Mark and Mandy Moseler are always experimenting to find the next addition to their line of unique spirits. Their beautiful copper still produces a wide range of spirits, from their signature Ice Dunes Vodka to a luscious limoncello aptly named Limoncello di Leelanau.

Round Barn began as a winery, but soon added craft beer and distilled artisan spirits to its repertoire. Vodka, rum, bourbon, and fruit brandies can be sampled in the new Round Barn Winery & Public House, in downtown Baroda. One ton of fruit yields about 150 gallons of wine, which when distilled produces roughly 20 gallons of high proof brandy, which means attention to details is paid every step along the way of the process.

Sanctuary Spirits Artisan Distillery is located in the center of the state in Grand Ledge, not far from Michigan’s capital city. Located in an old church, their offerings include fruit brandies, Michigan cherry vodka, a white rum, a gin made with seven botanicals, and its flagship product—Spirit of the Maple, an oak-aged maple syrup spirit. With whiskey aging in barrels, they’re now focusing on fun new products and infusions to serve in the tasting room.

St. Julian Winery in Paw Paw is not only Michigan’s oldest winery, but it has been producing distilled spirits longer than any current operation in the state. Their hard alcohol offerings include A&G Brandy, Grey Heron Vodka, and Cream d’Or. St. Julian operates tasting rooms around the state, including Frankenmuth, Dundee and Union Pier.

Story by Dianna Stampfer, Promote Michigan