

**ROAD TRIPPING THROUGH
WEST MICHIGAN'S**

Wine Coast



St. Julian Winery, Paw Paw



SIP YOUR WAY ACROSS THREE AMAZING WINE REGIONS FILLED WITH FLAVORS

Visitors have been traveling the Lake Michigan shoreline for generations, drawn to the cooler climate, sugar sand beaches and quaint coastal towns. This region – known as Michigan’s “fruit belt” – is also deeply rooted to the agricultural industry with vineyards, orchards and farms dotting the landscape.

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN WINE REGION

Mariano Meconi, founder of **St. Julian Winery**, recognized the value of this grape growing region when he moved his Canadian operations (via Detroit) to West Michigan in 1936. Today, Michigan’s oldest and most decorated winery is run by the fourth generation of the family, offering tasting room experiences at their production facility in Paw Paw, as well as in Union Pier, Dundee, Frankenmuth, Rockford and Troy. Here, visitors can sample from an expansive portfolio of wines, ciders and spirits produced by one of the first female winemakers in the state, Nancie Oxley.

St. Julian is among 21 wineries within the Lake Michigan Shore AVA (American Viticultural Area) – one of five such federally recognized regions in Michigan that stretches along US-31 from the Indiana state line north to the Straits of Mackinac. It is this proximity to Lake Michigan (the second largest of the Great Lakes by volume, third largest by area and the only one entirely within the United States) that provides the ideal terroir – climate, topography and soil – for growing wine grapes.

The next generation of winemakers are honing their skills on the campus of Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor. It is the Midwest’s first commercial teaching winery, where students buy fruit from local growers to produce their own wines which are then bottled, marketed and sold within the Welch Center for Wine & Viticulture under the **Lake Michigan Vintners** brand. The tasting room is open to the public on Fridays and Saturdays, Noon to 6pm.

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Wine and Dine

FABULOUS FOOD TO COMPLEMENT WINE ADVENTURES

Tabor Hill Winery began production operations in Buchanan (Berrien County) in 1972 and a decade later opened a fine dining restaurant – the first of its kind in the state. Overlooking the lush sloping vineyards, this modern eatery even offers al fresco seating when weather permits, with lunch and dinner service Thursday through Sunday. While you’re there, be sure to check out the Mt. Tabor Trails which connects this winery with its sister property, Round Barn Winery, via a series of scenic loops (and yes, you can take your adult beverage with you for the walk).

The Fenville area is an AVA within an AVA, and this little Allegan County village is bursting with culinary and agricultural offerings. *Salt of the Earth* is touted as a rustic American eatery, with a hyper-local menu straight from the farm (including their own chef’s garden just steps from the kitchen). Not only is the mouth-watering food sourced from nearby growers, but the beverages are also Michigan-centric – from beer to wine to spirits. This foodie town is also home to Evergreen Lane Creamery, Gold Coast Farms and Crane’s Pie Pantry – which produces fruit wines in addition to operating a seasonal restaurant and bakery (with the best pies around).

The Village at Grand Traverse Commons is one of Traverse City’s most visited sites. Once home to the Northern Michigan Asylum (Traverse City State Hospital), this revitalized district is a work in progress graced with a handful of restaurants (Trattoria Stella, Spanglish, PepeNero and Red Spire), coffee shops (Cuppa Joe and Higher Grounds) and the state’s first urban winery – Left Foot Charley. If the weather permits, gather with friends on the patio and enjoy a glass (or bottle) of Blaufränkisch, Island View Pinot Blanc, Kerner or Le Caban Riesling from award-winning winemaker Bryan Ulbrich, along with a tasty charcuterie plate.

M-119 is one of the most picturesque drives in Michigan, stretching from just north of Petoskey through Harbor Springs and up to Cross Village. A route highlight is Pond Hill Farm (open Wednesdays through Sundays), where you’re invited to sample wine, cider and beer paired with woodfired pizzas, sandwiches and salads. This year-round destination is all about family, with a pumpkin patch (and catapult) in the fall and a sledding hill and Christmas tree farm in the winter (among other activities). ☘

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TRAVERSE WINE REGION

While a handful of wineries can be found along Lake Michigan's central coast from South Haven north to Beulah, it is the Traverse City region (Leelanau and Grand Traverse counties) which boasts the largest concentration of Michigan's wineries, with nearly three dozen.

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is one of Michigan's premier vacation destinations, with historic sites like the Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive (and covered bridge), Port Oneida rural district, Glen Haven village and Leland's Fishtown – with its preserved fish-shanties-turned-retail-shops (like Carlson's Fishery and the Village Cheese Shop). Just a couple blocks away, **Verterra Winery** uses estate-grown grapes for its various wines like the 2021 Dry Riesling which won a "Double Gold" at the latest Pacific Rim competition or the 2018 Reserve Red Cab/Merlot which was aged in French oak for 18 months.

Mawby Vineyards & Winery, south of Suttons Bay, is all about the bubbles. They produce a variety of sparkling wines, from sweet to dry and white to pink, with fun and creative names like Freestyle, Grace and Sex (if you visit the tasting room, be sure to ask for the back story about this one). They even offer two styles in 4-pack cans – perfect for a day on the beach, boat or trail.

If you're a fan of the History Channel show "The Curse of Oak Island," you're likely familiar with **Mari Vineyards** on the Old Mission Peninsula. Perched on an east facing bluff, this 31,000-square-foot Tuscan-style production facility and tasting room is a must visit for wine lovers. Sean O'Keefe – one of Michigan's premier winemakers and son of Edward O'Keefe, the late wine pioneer and founder of **Chateau Grand Traverse** – utilizes 100 percent estate-grown grapes to craft Mari's Italian-influenced wines. European style grapes such as Nebbiolo and Sangiovese are grown alongside Merlot, Cab Franc and Riesling, then nurtured to perfection in a proprietary Nella Serra hoop house. Upon harvest, the fruit is carefully crafted and aged into an impressive and ever evolving collection of wines. Visitors can order a flight, glass or bottle and congregate in one of the indoor seating areas or on the patio (complete with a fireplace, making it accessible year-round). Private tours take visitors to exclusive places like the wine cave, with its one-of-a-kind 32-foot-diameter Oculus. Here, light shines down from the middle of the vineyard over a large compass rose, which points toward the sun's solstice position.

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Celebrating Spirits

EVENTS AND FESTIVALS
FEATURING WINE, BEER AND MORE

SEPTEMBER

1-30

Harvest Days – Leelanau Peninsula
www.lpwines.com/upcoming-events

9-11

Paw Paw Wine & Harvest Festival
www.wineandharvestfestival.com

10 & October 8

Wine on the Water Cruise
(Star of Saugatuck)
www.saugatuckboatcruises.com/wine-on-the-water

17

Manistee Hops & Props
www.manisteehopsandprops.com

23

Michigan Distilled Festival
Kalamazoo Farmers Market
www.midistilled.com

28

unWINEd Aboard the Aquastar –
Muskegon
www.aquastarcruises.com/unwined-aquastar-wine-tasting-cruise

OCTOBER

1-31

The Hunt for the Reds of October –
Leelanau Peninsula
www.lpwines.com/upcoming-events

21

Fall Finale Art & Wine Walk –
Suttons Bay
www.suttonsbayarea.com/fall-finale-art-wine-walk

22

Food, Wine & Art Experience –
Benton Harbor (ARS Arts & Culture Center)
www.swmichigan.org/eventdetails/food-wine-art-experience

4-6 & 11-13

Toast the Season – Leelanau Peninsula
www.lpwines.com/upcoming-events

NOVEMBER

18-19

Grand Rapids International
Wine, Beer & Food Festival
www.dcvospace.org/events/2022/2022-wine-beer-food-festival

Mari Vineyards, Traverse City



PHOTO: CLO VOSS/OK FENNEL/WINE TRAIL, ABOVE: BRYE BRYE VINEYARD & WINERY

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PETOSKEY WINE REGION

Michigan's newest AVA is the Tip of the Mitt, established in 2016, home to the Petoskey Wine Region. This area is rich with cold-hardy hybrid grapes that produce flavorful wines like Marquette, Frontenac Gris and Catawba, among many others. These distinct varietals drew big attention throughout the state in 2017 when **Walloon Lake Winery** was awarded a "Best of Class" Double Gold Medal in the Dry Red category for its North Arm Noir at the annual Michigan Wine Competition – a rarity for a hybrid wine.

Tucked in off US-131 between Walloon Lake and Petoskey sits **Boyne Valley Vineyards** – easily recognizable by the pale yellow 1952 Chevy 3100 truck parked on a roadside bluff (unless it is winter, when you might spot a vintage snowcat). Down the dirt drive, a monitor barn style tasting room features plenty of windows and natural light, with modern yet rustic decor. This is a popular place for guests to order a glass (or bottle) of wine and a charcuterie platter, hummus or dessert plate, before settling in near the fireplace, outside on the patio or on the elevated Tree House deck.

Heading north out of downtown Petoskey, 3.5 miles past the historic 1875 Bay View summer resort colony, is **Petoskey Farms Winery**. You'll be hard pressed to find a better place to soak up the fall colors than the 60-foot-long outdoor covered patio overlooking the 11-acre vineyard and 22-acre scenic pastures. Less than a mile away is Michigan's sweetest tasting room – **Maple Moon Sugarbush & Winery**, which opened in 2015 as America's first maple winery. This family-run business offers a variety of fruit and hybrid grape wines all crafted with maple syrup from their wooded 80-acres. Wines like Maple Marquette, Maple Blanc and Maple Royal (a mouth-watering dessert wine) are actually fermented directly from the sugars in the syrup. In the tasting room, you can also purchase pure maple syrup and candy, ice cream, jam and other delicious treats.

Whichever wine region you decide to tour, Michigan's growers, grapes and wineries supply winning tastes to be savored year-round. ●



Petoskey Farms Winery



Boyne Valley Vineyards, Petoskey

Sip and Stay

LOCAL LODGING KEEPS YOU CLOSE TO WINERIES

The southwest corner of Michigan is known as Harbor Country, a collection of eight charming communities where folks like film critics Siskel & Ebert, author Carl Sandburg and Chicago gangster Al Capone once lived, vacationed or hid from the law. Historic properties such as Lakeside Inn, Garden Grove Inn and The Inn at Union Pier still welcome visitors to this "Hamptons of the Midwest" region. Further north in St. Joseph, The Boulevard Inn offers spectacular views of Lake Michigan overlooking Silver Beach (with its whimsical carousel) and the 1907 range lighthouses, within walking distance to the quaint downtown shopping district.

Three wineries in the Traverse City area feature on-site B&Bs including Black Star Farms in Suttons Bay, as well as Chateau Grand Traverse and Chateau Chantal both on Old Mission Peninsula. Brys Estate Vineyard & Winery, in the heart of the Old Mission Peninsula, has converted its former barn into a charming 2-bedroom, 2-bath, 1,000-square-foot Guesthouse. While on site, be sure to check out the Upper Deck along with its Vineyard Overlook (a popular place for photos and selfies, with the vines as a backdrop).

Antrim County's WaterFire Winery not only produces a small menu of exceptional wines, but from April through December they welcome visitors to the Torch Lake Vineyard Retreat, a quaint Airbnb unit attached to the tasting room. Located on a former 26-acre cherry orchard, this Kewadin destination is the first Sustainability in Practice (SIP) certified winery outside of California.

Charlevoix is renowned for its rustic "hobbit houses" built out of a collection of boulders and rocks by famed architect Earl Young during the 1920s-1930s. One of his larger public buildings, The Lodge, was opened in 1959 and within the past few years was rebuilt as the elegant three-story, 56-room boutique Hotel Earl (complete with a main level lounge and rooftop bar).

Stretching out along Little Traverse Bay just southwest of Petoskey is the classic Inn at Bay Harbor featuring picture perfect rooms, a relaxing spa, waterfront Cabana Bar and Vintage Chophouse. Steps away, downtown Bay Harbor offers additional restaurants and shops, as well as a boutique collection of suites and penthouses tucked above the shops and eateries. Village Suites Bay Harbor offers one, two three- and four-bedroom options with kitchens, fireplaces and walk-out private balconies, many with panoramic waterfront views. ●