



# Tapping into the Petoskey Area's Brewing Scene

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Michigan is the self-proclaimed "Great Beer State," and July has once again been designated as "Michigan Beer Month" by the state legislature and Governor Whitmer. If you're looking for a place to celebrate, you'll find plenty of places to sip and sample in the Little Traverse Bay region.

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Photo courtesy of Petoskey Brewing

Petoskey's brewing history dates back 125 years ago (to 1898) when [Petoskey Brewing Company](#) – aka the “Old Brewery” – was opened on present-day M-119 (just northeast of the turnoff from US-31). A remote location in its day, the selection was strategic as there were artesian wells on site that were vital to the brewing process and during the winter months, ice was harvested from nearby Mud Lake which was used to cool the massive brick building and the finished beer during the warmer season. The signature brew coming out of this beverage factory was Petoskey Sparkle, which was produced until 1915, when the brewery closed. For nearly a century, this building was used for a variety of things but in 2012 it was once again operating as Petoskey Brewing Company (and producing Sparkle). In addition to the fine beer and food found on site, Petoskey Brewing Company's beers can be found in retail outlets around the state. They also recently opened a second seasonal tap room [at the end of the “Tunnel of Trees”](#) in Cross Village.

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Also along a stretch of M-119, sits [Pond Hill Farm](#) – a winery, brewery, café, market, and all-around family-friendly agri-tourism destination. The beginnings here were humble back in the mid-1990s, starting with a simple fresh produce stand utilizing the old-school honor system at the end of the driveway. Over the years, the operation has grown in scope and size, gracing about 238 acres today. The brewery has been operating since 2014 and head brewer Chad Sealey brings a wealth of expertise and passion for the industry as he creates unique styles and flavors. A signature beer is the Pondhilsner – a light and refreshing pilsner brew which pairs well with a brick oven pizza like the “Fun Guy” which is loaded with fire-roasted cremini mushrooms, caramelized onions, cheese, and add-ons of pepperoni, ham, sausage, and/or bacon.



Photo [English](#) [Hot Memories](#)



For five years (starting in 2012), [Beards Brewery](#) operated one of the state's tiniest taprooms tucked away in downtown Petoskey. While small in square footage, the minds behind the operation had big ideas and barrels of determination and drive. During those early years, creative minds were hard at work developing over 100 delicious beer recipes inspired by the great outdoors, the woods, waters, and recreational opportunities that northern Michigan is known for. In 2017, when the opportunity arose to expand and move into larger digs – an iconic restaurant building overlooking Little Traverse Bay – it was full steam ahead for the Beards team. This growing operation now features 24 taps, a brew-inspired pub menu, local art, game, and trivia nights, community events, a large outdoor four-season patio, and a new lower-level casual venue called [The Root Cellar at Beards Brewery](#) – a throwback to that original location.



Photo courtesy of Mackinaw Trail Winery & Brewery

In 2014, the family-owned and -operated [Mackinaw Trail Winery & Brewery](#) added beer to the impressive list of adult beverages it produces. There's plenty of room to hang out with family or friends in the grand tasting room situated on a 30-acre rolling parcel along US-131 just four miles south of downtown Petoskey. This agricultural operation offers 14 rotating beer taps with a variety of brew  – including a handful masterfully crafted with



Michigan-grown hops. In addition to on-site sampling, Mackinaw Trail sells customer yelpers, howlers, and growlers (all various sizes of to-go containers) as well as serving up tasty small plates and appetizers.



Photo Courtesy of Burnt Marshmallow Brewstillery

Using a wealth of ingredients grown on its 190-acre Rudbeckia Farm, [Burnt Marshmallow Brewstillery](#) – a one-barrel nano-brewery (smaller than a microbrewery) and sister property to Rudbeckia Winery – specializes in adventurous, experimental, and unconventional beers. Opened in 2016, the brewing operation is led by an award-winning brewer who has pulled together fun offerings like S'more Porter (made with marshmallows, graham crackers, and chocolate) and Blonde Honey Lavender Ale (with farm-sourced honey and lavender from Lavender Hill Farm). With plenty of indoor and outdoor seating – complete with a fire pit and bocce ball court – this is a great family-friendly destination.

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As the only brewpub in Boyne City, [Stiggs Brewery & Kitchen](#), is the epitome of northern Michigan – complete with a burly bearded plaid-wearing lumberjack mascot. Housed in the restored 1899 White Timber Logging Company building, the 30 featured taps include on-site brewed beers like Walloonie IPA, Horton Bay Hef, and Boyne’s Best Belgian Blonde, as well as rotating and seasonal selections from other Michigan breweries. There’s also an impressive menu of burgers, sandwiches, wings, and all kinds of bar-b-cued offerings including the giant Mixed Meat Platter. Stiggs even offers Brew School (for up to four people) and Brewing Up Business (for up to 20 individuals), as well as special 5-course beer pairing Brewhouse Dinners available for small groups with prior arrangements.

In addition to these breweries, you’ll find noted beer lists at [Boyne City Tap Room](#), [Tap 30 Pourhouse](#), and [Vernales](#). To arrange transportation for group outings, reach out to the team at [Northern Michigan Wine & Beer Tours](#).



*About the Author: [Dianna Stampfler](#) is the president of [Promote Michigan](#) and the author of the best-selling books “[Michigan’s Haunted Lighthouses](#)” and “[Death & Lighthouses on the Great Lakes](#).” She loves traveling around the Great Lakes state, with Hemingway country being among her favorite destinations.*



PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

401 East Mitchell Street

Petoskey, MI 49770

