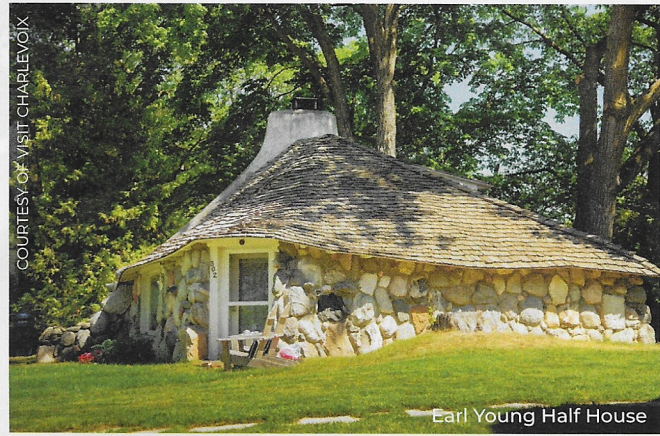


Coastal Color Tour

Bask in the beauty of autumn with blazing hues and breathtaking views along the northern Michigan shoreline

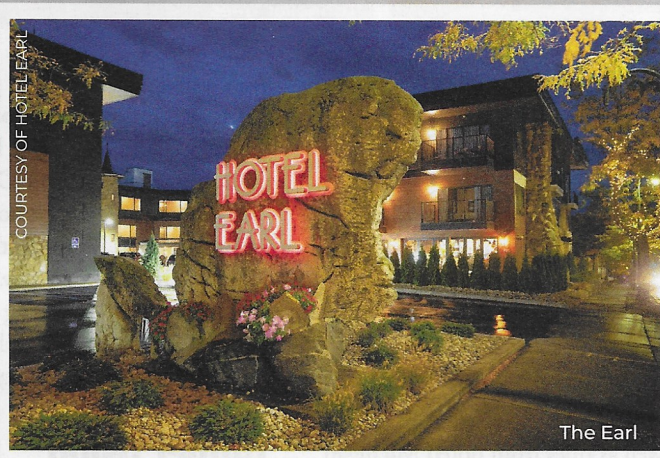
BY DIANNA STAMPFLER

Each fall, Michigan puts on a magnificent show as nearly 150 species of trees turn vibrant shades of red, orange, gold, and yellow, adorning more than 18.5 million acres of forests set against a backdrop of evergreens and the deep blue waters of the Great Lakes. The northern Lake Michigan shoreline, from Charlevoix to Harbor Springs, boasts countless attractions and activities to enhance your coastal color tour.



COURTESY OF VISIT CHARLEVOIX

Earl Young Half House



COURTESY OF HOTEL EARL

The Earl



COURTESY OF VISIT CHARLEVOIX

Castle Farms

Charlevoix Rocks

More than a century ago, visionary Earl Young gathered boulders of all shapes and sizes, crafting them into four noted waterfront businesses and 26 unique homes. Affectionately known as “hobbit,” “gnome,” or “mushroom” houses, these one-of-a-kind dwellings are easily identified by their curvaceous eaves, undulating cedar shake rooflines, and whimsical design.

Designed to blend into the natural landscape, these quaint homes are flanked by towering birch, maple, and oak trees rich in their autumn hues. Hop aboard an 11-passenger GEM car with Mushroom House Tours and meander through the colorful neighborhoods where this inspiring architect’s legacy remains standing strong; a self-guided map is also available for those looking to walk, bike, or drive themselves.

A handful of these charming homes are also rented out for overnight stays, while one of Young’s 1959 commercial properties has recently been renovated into a 56-room Mid-century Modern boutique hotel called The Earl. Perched on the northwest side of the Pine River Channel, which connects Round Lake to Lake Michigan, sits Stafford’s Weathervane Restaurant. This legendary eatery was converted by Young on the site of the city’s former grist mill.

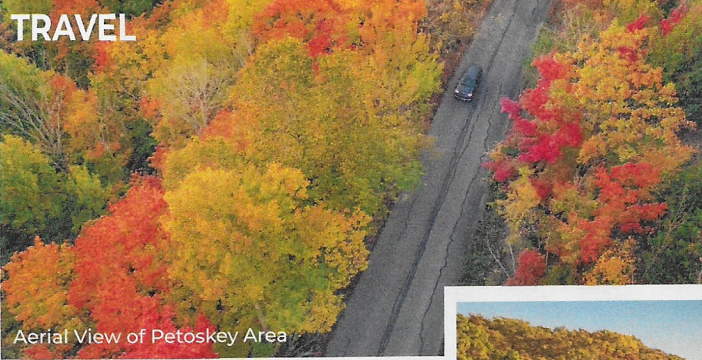
On the outskirts of town, the illustrious 1918 Castle Farms was originally a former working farm designed by Albert Loeb, one-time vice president of Sears, Roebuck and Co., and modeled after the stone barns and castles of Normandy, France. Reincarnated as an outdoor concert venue in the 1960s, Castle Farms now hosts weddings, festivals, and social events as well as public tours of the buildings, grounds, and gardens. Special highlights include the enchanted forest, complete with mystical dragons; Michigan’s largest outdoor model railroad system; and 1918 Cellars, one of a dozen wineries that comprise the Petoskey Wine Trail where the annual grape harvest is sure to be in full swing.

To celebrate the annual harvest, Charlevoix will host its 44th Annual Apple Festival October 13-15. Sample fresh cider and donuts, pick up locally grown seasonal produce, peruse the arts and crafts fair, compete in the apple pie eating contest, and enjoy kids’ activities throughout this three-day event.



COURTESY OF BOYNE MOUNTAIN RESORT

SkyBridge at Boyne Mountain Resort



Aerial View of Petoskey Area



COURTESY OF LEGS INN

Legs Inn



Downtown Petoskey



Tunnel of Trees

AARON PETERSON / COURTESY OF PETOSKEY AREA VISITORS BUREAU

6 Side Stops

- Take a cruise aboard the Little Traverse Bay Ferry, operating into the fall season, weather permitting.
- Cross the new 1,200-square-foot SkyBridge at Boyne Mountain Resort in Boyne Falls, the world's largest timber-towered suspension bridge.
- Gaze at the stars at the Headlands International Dark Sky Park, situated along Lake Michigan north of Cross Village and southwest of Mackinaw City.
- Hop on the ferry in downtown Charlevoix to explore historic Beaver Island, Michigan's Emerald Isle.
- Hunt for Michigan's illusive Petoskey Stone, named the official "State Stone" in 1965.
- Discover additional Hemingway historic sites in Horton Bay, Walloon Lake, Kalkaska, and the Pigeon River Country in Vanderbilt.

Picturesque Petoskey

At the heart of the Little Traverse Bay region sits the city of Petoskey, where million-dollar sunsets are the most treasured souvenirs, no matter the season.

Downtown is loaded with historic charm and quaint storefronts adorned with scarecrows, pumpkins, sunflowers, and other autumn decor. Roast and Toast Cafe provides the perfect place to warm up with hot tea, cider, coffee, and a selection of flavorful soups and sandwiches. Next door, McLean & Eakin Booksellers specializes in the latest releases as well as titles from noted Michigan authors such as Viola Shipman, Stewart James, Karen Dionne, and Cynthia Birk.

While award-winning author Ernest Hemingway is known for spending his childhood summers in the region, his fictional writings — including *The Nick Adams Stories* and *The Torrents of Spring* — celebrate all seasons of northern Michigan. Dive deeper into the writer's life and works during the annual Michigan Hemingway Society Annual Conference held here each fall, and set out in search of the various bronze plaques that have been installed on several downtown buildings honoring his literary legacy. Be sure to seek out the statue of "Young Hemingway" standing near the railroad tracks in the tree-laden Pennsylvania Park for a selfie with this internationally recognized writer.

For a stellar meal and an unparalleled wine list, make reservations at Chandler's. Tucked in a courtyard behind Symons General Store, it is the hottest place in town for lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch. The popular awesome coffee cocktail served at Chandler's and other Petoskey-area restaurants is the perfect autumn treat, with its fiery preparation just as wonderful as the cinnamon aroma and bold alcohol-infused coffee flavor.

Around the corner, Stafford's Perry Hotel has

been welcoming overnight guests since 1899 and is the city's only turn-of-the-century resort property still in operation. Breakfast is served in the landmark H.O. Rose Dining Room, where the melt-in-your-mouth house-made pecan rolls are only overshadowed by the colorful hues and views of Little Traverse Bay. After a day of leaf-peeping, enjoy the relaxing lower-level Noggin Room, featuring a tasty pub menu and live local entertainment on select nights.

Tunnel Vision

Traveling north on M-119 out of Harbor Springs toward Cross Village is one of the most picturesque drives in America known as the "Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route." The narrow, winding two-lane road meanders slowly beneath branches lush with a kaleidoscope of leaves woven together to create a canopy effect. Glimpses of rocky cliffs and Lake Michigan to the west, sometimes within a stone's throw of the road, add to the driving excitement.

Pond Hill Farm is one of the first agritourism destinations to hit along the way, with its cafe, winery, brewery, and market, as well as family-friendly seasonal activities such as pumpkin bowling, hayrides, and bonfires. Eight miles up the road, the bright red Good Hart General Store stands proudly surrounded by a fall splendor of color, offering an abundance of Michigan-made items, baked goods, and commemorative M-119 logoed items. The autumn route ends at the iconic Legs Inn restaurant in Cross Village, one of the state's must-visit family-owned eateries. Open seasonally, the mouth-watering Polish fare, manicured gardens, Lake Michigan views, rustic decor, and a northern-inspired gift shop are bustling as travelers get in one last visit before the changing of the seasons. ●