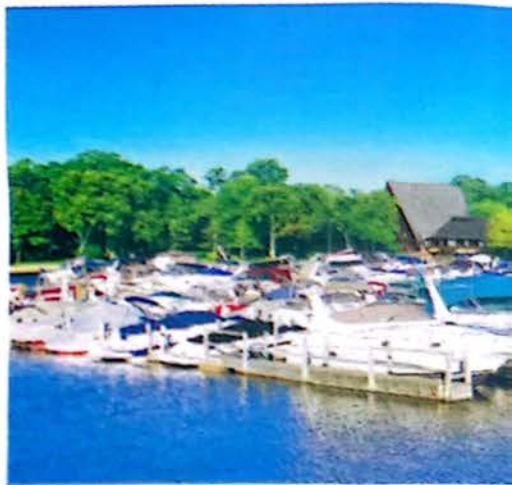


WEEKEND GETAWAY

ANGELA DANSBY



WISCONSIN VS. MICHIGAN

WEEKEND GETAWAY PLAY-OFFS PART TWO: WISCONSIN

Looking for a weekend away from the city? Check out the Wisconsin versus Michigan tourism play-offs... Both states score with lots of freshwater, beautiful coastlines, quaint towns, and spacious parks. Hmm, weekend jet setters, you decide.

LET'S GO, WISCO

Wisco, a cheesy nickname for the state, suits it quite well considering all of the cheese factories (www.cheesecountryheritage.com) and unusual community traditions. The state is home to a host of unique towns like the historic Swiss village of New Glarus and niche

organizations, such as the Mustard Museum (www.mustardmuseum.com) – “home of Poupon U” – in Mount Horeb.

LAKE GENEVA

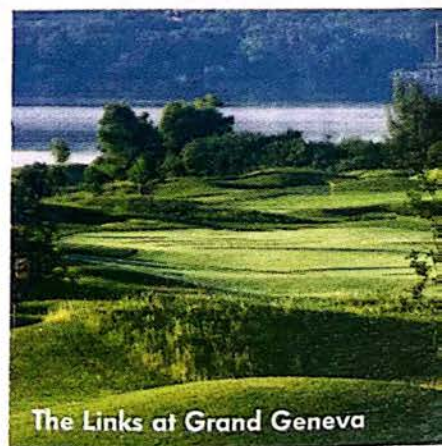
Formerly a getaway for Chicago mobsters, Lake Geneva has relics of its infamous past in local establishments. For example, the Watersedge Bed & Breakfast (www.watersedgebb.com) on Lake Como was once the home-away-from-home for Bugs Moran in the 1930s. Watersedge has a room named for him with a secret passageway and an old money counting table in its basement vault. The French Country Inn (www.french-countryinn.com) nearby was once a speak-easy and gambling casino. Today it has rooms with terrific views and an excellent restaurant (www.kirschs.com). Gilbert's (www.gilbert-srestaurant.com) in a century-old mansion is also a fine dining choice.

With a less colorful past but \$40 million facelift, the Abbey Resort and Fontana Spa (www.theabbeyresort.com) on Geneva Lake is the Midwest's largest resort spa with a private 407-slip marina and nine eating venues, including the new restaurant Porto. Parasailing and access to the nearby Abbey Springs golf course are also available. The Grand Geneva Resort (www.grandgeneva.com) also has a spa, many dining concepts, and tons of outdoor recreation, including horseback riding. The Links at Grand Geneva has 36 holes of top-rated championship golf. Another fine hotel option is the Interlaken Resort and Country Spa (www.interlakenresort.com) on Lake Como.

Lake Como, Geneva Lake, and Lake Delavan in the County all have good fishing and public beaches. The Board Shop (www.lakegenevaboardshop.com), has a professional water-skiing school. Hang-gliding (Freeflight Aviations, 920.728.2231), greyhound race betting



Spa Pool at The Abbey Resort

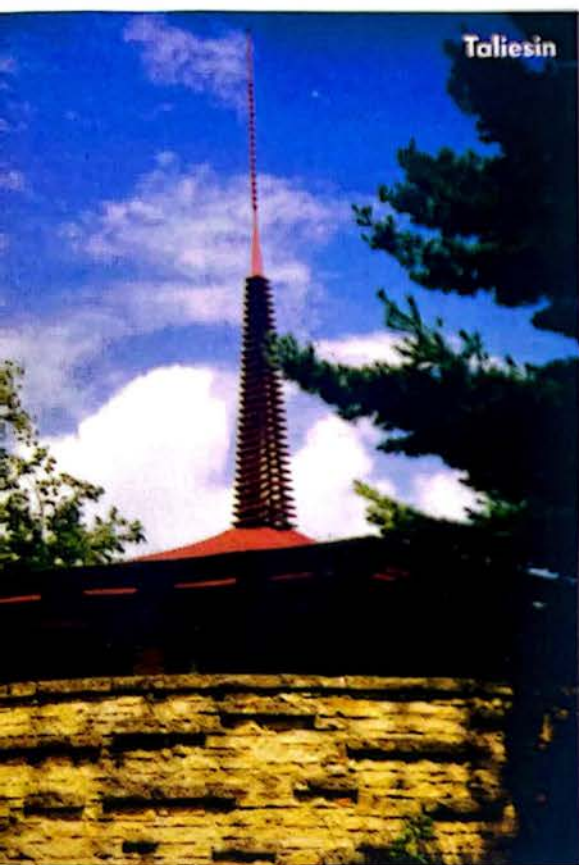


The Links at Grand Geneva

WEEKEND GETAWAY CONTINUED

(www.genevagreyhounds.com), and hot air ballooning (www.lakegenevaballoon.com) are also available. Car and motocross racing is at Lake Geneva Raceway (www.lakegenevaraceway.com).

"Wisco-esque" events are all summer long, including a Laura Ingalls Wilder Day (remember Little House on the Prairie? It's back with a vengeance!) and Civil War Encampment (and you thought the state was all about making cheese?). Events you might seriously want to go to include the Venetian Festival (Aug 17-21), with a boat parade, live music, and fireworks, as well as the Corn & Brat Fest (Aug 13-14). To really escape city life, check out the livestock at the 156th Annual Walworth County Fair (Aug 31-Sept 5). Details for these events are listed at www.lakegenevawi.com and www.visitwalworthcounty.com.



SPRING GREEN

One of the most beautiful areas in the entire Midwest with rolling hills; this spot was not flattened by the last ice age 10,000 years ago like most other areas around the Great Lakes. This small city about an hour west of Madison was home to architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Taliesin, his former 35,000 sq. ft. private residence (www.taliesinpreservation.org), may be toured through October along with the Hillside Studio that his protégés still run. Taliesin is a must see if you are in the area. Spring Green (www.springgreen.com) in general is artsy; it has as many art galleries as restaurants (though most of the time the art is much better than the food).

Another major cultural influence in Spring Green is the American Players Theater (www.americanplayers.org), which is ranked as one of the nation's best outdoor theaters with talent you wouldn't expect to find in the woods. You can picnic and buy food on the theater grounds before the shows. Shakespeare 'tis the favorite playwright here. Spring Green also has an annual juried art fair with all the talent of Chicago's Old Town Art Fair without the high prices (www.springgreenartfair.com).

WEEKEND GETAWAY CONTINUED

Shopping at Mineral Point's artist enclave and "trolling" the antique hub of Mt. Horeb (the wooden troll is its mascot) is worth half a day.

The underground caverns at Cave of the Mounds (www.caveofthemounds.com) are interesting if you've never seen a stalactite. Also, the House on the Rock (www.houseontherock.com) offers an absurd collection of antiquities in a house that is on a precarious rock shelf overlooking a valley. The owner made so much money off of this bizarre concept (only in Wisco!) that he opened a golf resort nearby. The House on the Rock Resort (www.houseontherock.com/html/resort.htm) is architecturally striking, offering luxury accommodations and 27 holes of championship golf.

Bob's Riverside, Inc. (www.bobsriverside.com) offers canoe and tube rentals to coast down the Wisconsin River. Spring Green has a good municipal golf course and Tower Hill State Park offers campsites. Camping without permits is allowed on all state-owned islands and shore lands.

Spring Green and the neighboring town of Plain have several Bed & Breakfasts. Recommended ones are the Hill Street B&B (Spring Green, www.hillstreetbb.com), Classic Charms (Plain, 608.546.2439), and Silver Star Country Inn (www.silverstarcountryinn.com). Restaurants with a local flair and good food include the Spring Green General Store (www.springgreengeneralstore.com) and Old Feed Mill (www.oldfeedmill.com) in nearby Mazomanie.

VILLAGE OF KOHLER

Factory tours have been in for years and you can be hot (literally, smoldering) at the Kohler Co. Factory (8:30 am weekdays only by advance reservation at 920.457.3699), where vitreous china (i.e., urinals and toilet bowls), and enameled cast iron plumbing products (i.e., bathroom faucets) are manufactured. Across the street at the Kohler Design Center is a 36,000-square-foot gallery of bathtubs, bidets, toilets, showers, and sinks. You are literally up to your eyeballs in these fixtures. Here, life is a toilet bowl full of cherries.

For real life use of these bathroom fixtures, with Kohler whirlpool baths in every room, stop by the American Club (www.destinationkohler.com), the only AAA Five Diamond resort in

the Midwest. This historic landmark features excellent restaurants and top-rated golf courses at Blackwolf Run and Whistling Straights, where the 2004 PGA Championship was held. Nearby is the moderately priced Inn on Woodlake with a private beach on a small lake. Both hotels give guests access to the Sports Core, a fitness center with a salon and tennis courts. The American Club also offers Kohler Waters Spa and River Wildlife, a 500-acre wilderness preserve with rustic lodging. Another resort option is the new Blue Harbor Resort (www.blueharborresort.com) in Sheboygan. It caters to all ages with a spa and water park.

Plenty of biking trails jettison out from the Village of Kohler, including the Old Plank Road Trail. This trail intersects the Kettle Moraine State Forest, which has over 60 miles of hiking trails, including a 33-mile segment on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Kettle Moraine is one of the best places for mountain biking near Chicago. Elkhart Lake nearby is great for water sports.

DEVIL'S LAKE

Devil's Lake (www.devilslakewisconsin.com) in Baraboo is the Lake Tahoe of the Midwest. It is also home to the only decent outdoor rock climbing within driving distance of Chicago. Red rock cliffs surround the lake, offering great scenery for climbers and hikers. The Chicago Mountaineering Club (www.cmcwebsite.org) has several rock climbing trips there each summer.

At lake level are picnicking, beachcombing, and motor-less boating (no gas motors are allowed on the lake). Campgrounds are on the north shore with a mountain bike trail. Below lake level is scuba diving. Three Little Devils (www.3littledevils.com) near the north entrance of Devil's Lake State Park (608.356.8301) is a scuba outfitter and school.

The rock formations of the nearby Wisconsin Dells (www.dells.com) can best be seen by boat on the Wisconsin River. The River's Edge, Lake Delton Water Sports, and Holiday Shores Resort in the Dells rent boats on the river. Sept 2-5 will



Wisconsin Dells

WEEKEND GETAWAY CONTINUED

feature the Baraboo River Rendezvous, a reenactment of the pre-1840 fur trade era (again, only in Wisco!).

Recommended places to stay are the Devil's Head Resort (www.devils-head.com), Rustic Ridge Cabins (www.rusticridgecabins.com), Kalahari (www.kalahariresort.com) and Wilderness (www.wildernessresort.com) spa resorts, the new Inn at Wawanesee Point (www.innatwawanesee.com), and Gollmar Guesthouse (www.gollmar.com). Monk's Bar & Grill is rumored to have the best burgers in the area. More information is at www.baraboo.com.

DOOR COUNTY

Where do fish boils, fruit wineries, freshwater beaches, and one of the last remaining outdoor movie theaters converge? Let your feet take you to the tip of Wisco's right finger... Door County (www.doorcounty.com) stretches from Sturgeon Bay to Gills Rock. Dotting the

coastline in between are charming villages and towns, such as Fish Creek and Sister Bay.



Only a four to six hour drive from Chicago (depending how far north on the finger you go), White Fish Dunes State Park offers large sand dunes and great beaches on Lake Michigan. Peninsula State Park has Nicolet Bay Beach on Green Bay, which is supposedly warmer than the lake.

Just about any outdoor activity that exists, including kiteboarding, is available in Door County. Scuba diving is popular because of the region's rocky shores and shipwrecks around the bay. Shoreline Charters (www.theshorelineresort.com) in Gills Rock provides scuba charters. Wisconsin Waterwings (www.parasailrides.com) in Ephraim offers parasailing. For a chill-out kinda night, see a movie at the Skyway Drive-in Theater (920.854.9938) between Ephraim and Fish Creek.

WEEKEND GETAWAY CONTINUED



Fish Creek has the greatest variety of shopping, drinking, and eating in the area. If you like Frozen Custard then you must check out Not Licked Yet; the place is a gold mine.

You cannot come to Door County and not experience a fish boil – the Scandinavian settlers' tradition of cooking the local

catch in a giant cauldron over an open fire. Good fish boils are at the Square Rigger Galley (www.squareriggerlodge.com), White Gull Inn (www.whitegullinn.com), and Old Post Office Restaurant (www.edge-waterresort.com). Get wrecked at Shipwrecked micro-brewery (www.shipwreckedmicrobrew.com) or try local fruit wine. Tastings and tours are offered by Door County Peninsula Winery (www.dcwine.com), Stone's Throw Winery (www.stonethrowwinery.com), Simon Creek Vineyard (www.simoncreekvineyard.com), and Orchard Country Winery (www.orchardcountry.com). Stone's Throw will have "Ribfest and Blues" on July 16, Paul Cebal and the Milwaukeeans on Aug 6, and a "Grape Stomp" like Italian villagers used to do on Sept 17 (fortunately, the feet-pressed grape juice will likely not be made into wine). The Peninsula Winery will feature Big Mouth and the Power Tool Horns on July 16, The Orphans on Aug 20, and the Kevin Crocker Jazz Quartet on Sept 24.

As of June 25, Sturgeon Bay will have a farmer's market each Saturday. Other noteworthy events are the Breeze Annual Windsurfing Regatta July 2-4, a juried art show in Ellison Bay July 23-24, and a Cherry Fest in Jacksonport on Aug 6.

Recommended places to stay include the Blacksmith Inn (www.theblacksmithinn.com), Glidden Lodge Beach Resort (www.gliddenlodge.com), Westwood Shores (www.westwood-shores.net), and Hillside Inn (www.visitephraim.com). **scene**