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GROUP TRAVEL

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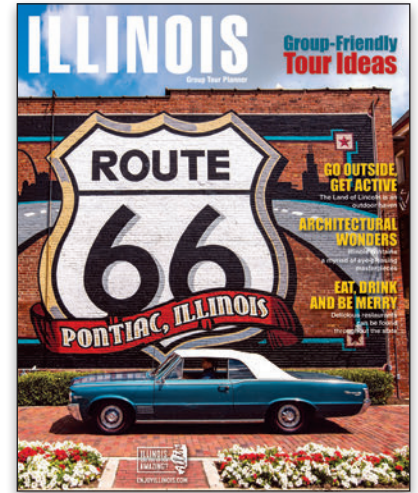
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in Rome



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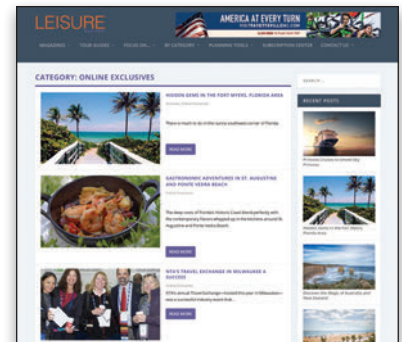


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ON THE COVER:
Photo by Steve Weinik,
Mural Arts Philadelphia

Small Groups, Big Profits

I analyze copious amounts of data in an effort to gauge how the travel industry at-large is influencing our readers. Hotel group occupancy trends and airline profits are robust and destination arrival statistics are causing popular European destinations to tap the breaks on tourism.

While the data above paints a picture of current traveler intentions, I also look at the meteoric rise in home sharing, the significant spike in new tour and activity companies and downsizing of buses – all of which paint a clear picture that the group travel sector is getting smaller. Note I said smaller, not shrinking. While the group industry is growing in volume, group sizes are getting noticeably smaller.

You can see it in the policies of our largest tour companies where brands like Globus and Mayflower allow as few as six passengers to qualify as a group. You hear directly from sales executives like Barbara Norton from Goway whose group department of twenty-two handles thousands of pied pipers and their travelers. In an interview on page 11, Barbara states, "A lot of our customized groups fall into the 10-to-15-passenger range."

Still, some of us live in an alternate universe. A tour company executive I spoke with recently scoffed at the small group trend, stating they were more difficult to operate and that profits weren't nearly that of a 55-passenger group. Both these statements might be true, but neither of them accurately portrays what consumers are telling us they want.



SMALL GROUPS NO LONGER A TREND?

While some of us long for the days where four dozen strangers had no trouble hopping on a 10-day bus tour to Florida, today's industry is more likely to see 20 friends and family creating their own custom itinerary to the same destination, shaving a few days off and adding customization that suits their particular interest. This is the electricity that's charging our sector.

Small groups are special because built within them are unique opportunities that aren't typically possible for individuals or large packs.

The best type of small group excursions are those led by passionate individuals who care deeply about the subject matter. Take that into consideration as you're looking for new markets. Perhaps you have an affinity or hidden passion you'd like to explore further? It can be the basis of an entirely new trajectory for you and your business.

Certainly, large and small groups can coexist in this space, but big opportunities lie in small groups. **LGT**

Happy Traveling,

Jeff Gayduk
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Single-Destination Trips Becoming a Popular Choice

Perhaps you've been planning trips that run around a lot, often visiting one key city in each of three different countries, all in a week. This may sound like a popular choice, with folks convinced they're going to get a lot for their money.

But, in truth, on a trip of this nature, much of the time is spent packing and unpacking, watching changing landscapes from the window of the motorcoach as you whiz from one town to another. On the other hand, you might decide to headquarter your group in one city — let's take Amsterdam, for example — and then plan daily trips and activities for the coming week. It's an easy city to get around and 89 percent of the residents speak English.

Your group of tour members could settle in, unpack their suitcases, familiarize themselves with the property and then sample a typical Dutch breakfast in the dining room. After check-in, you could give them a few hours to catch up on their sleep after an all-night flight and then plan a first

day welcome dinner party wherein you (and all your tour members) would attend the welcome dinner and get to know each other.

On the second day, you might schedule a drive around the city, orienting your tour members as to "what's where" in relation to their hotel. Luckily, you'll find the city an easy one to get around in. You might wish to intersperse the drive with a canal cruise part of the way.

For the rest of the week, you could schedule day trips to different points of interest in the city or nearby. Certainly, you'll want to include an in-depth visit to the world-famous Rijksmuseum with its Dutch art and history from the Middle Ages to the present, including the works of Rembrandt, Vermeer and Frans Hals. Other must-sees include the Anne Frank House, where Anne and her family hid from the Nazis in the attic during World War II; the Van Gogh Museum and the famed Keukenhof Gardens, with its 800 varieties of tulips in the spring.

You will also want to include a day's visit to nearby Rotterdam, the Netherlands'

second-largest city with the world's largest port, the massive Europort facility and the nearby children's village of Kinderdijk with its collection of 18th-century windmills — a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The advantages of a single core city destination in this type of tour structure are many. Here are a few of them:

1. The group gets to feel comfortable with the host city, their hotel and their local guide(s).
2. Tour members who may have limited energy can opt in or out of certain activities. Your senior members may find this a boon if they have limited strength and can rest and keep up their energy for the rest of the day or for the evening.
3. Members can unpack, hang up their clothes and not just live out of a suitcase. They will get to know the hotel personnel — their room maid, the dining room servers and others. They will also get to know the neighborhood — where the nearest pharmacy is, their favorite café, etc.
4. The trip can be tailored to suit the interests of a particular market. What may be of interest to seniors may not satisfy a group of high school students or vice versa.

In short, when you first plan the trip, you can shape the trip to what you perceive as appropriate activities for your participants. But as you move along, you might reschedule some events as they are appropriate to the interests, age, health and activity level of your participants.

The above strategy in planning can often produce a more meaningful trip for various types of clientele. Just be sure you provide equal activities all the way around so no one feels you cancelled the one thing they really wanted to do and paid for. **LGT**



Marty is a Certified Travel Counselor (CTC) with a long history in the travel/tourism industry. She has been a tour operator, worldwide trip leader, college tourism instructor and textbook author. Her consulting firm is Sarbey Associates (sarbeyassociates.com)

Josh Duhamel
UNDERSTUDY



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Tour Experts Share Their Insight on GROUP TRAVEL TRENDS

Buoyed by a strong economy and a rising stream of Americans entering their prime travel years, the tour business continues to see record growth. We asked three leading group tour companies to share what's driving their success, how they've innovated their products and divulge what's guiding their business into 2020.

STEVE BORN

Chief Marketing Officer
Globus Family of Brands

Our four brands — Globus, Cosmos, Avalon and Monograms — are all competitively positioned in the market, resulting in lots of choices for group travelers. Here are a few of the trends we are seeing and how we've positioned our business to meet the demand of changing customer interests:

A NEW VIEW OF A FAMILIAR DESTINATION

With so many American travelers having experienced destinations like Britain and Italy in some form, there's a huge demand for those wanting to return via a tour, but with a completely different experience of the destination beyond the tried-and-true cities. We've built new product lines around these destinations, Undiscovered Italy and Undiscovered Britain, which are a wide selection of Globus and Cosmos tours built completely around the idea of exploring each country's lesser-known towns, villages and hamlets.

PERSONALIZE ME!

More than ever before, travelers want the control to personalize their experience, both in terms of how they shape their vacation package and what they do once they're



there. We've introduced "Your Way" travel both for Avalon and Monograms, providing the ability to choose the length and structure of the cruise and independent package. For Avalon, we offer Avalon Choice, providing our guests with a choice of included excursions on each cruise, from classic to active to discovery (local encounter) experiences. And for all brands, we offer the ability to pre-purchase optional excursions pre-trip or on-trip, allowing them to select from a huge range of add-on experiences beyond all that's included.

Also, we've introduced handy travel apps for each brand — Globus, Cosmos, Monograms and Avalon — that gives all of our travelers the ability to tailor their adventures in destination.

ENDLESS SUMMER — EXTENDING THE TRAVEL SEASON

We've seen dramatic growth and interest in off-peak travel to Europe. The value (40 percent savings vs. high-season, on average), absence of crowds, temperate weather and unique view of a destination during the winter months

“More than ever before, travelers want the control to personalize their experience, both in terms of how they shape their vacation package and what they do once they're there.”

are big drivers. And with more and more Americans finding flexibility in their work schedules, it's easier to get away any time

of year. We have an entire product line, Escapes by Globus, dedicated to this off-season travel.

GROUPS INCREASINGLY VENTURING OUT

Most of our groups comprise seasoned travelers, looking to their group leader to make a recommendation for that "next" destination — beyond the familiar. Popularity of emerging destinations like Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, exotics and our undiscovered tour series in Italy and Britain show that a pre-formed group is a perfect way to take that next step in travel. Along with our consumer patterns, there's an increased demand for flexibility and independence among our groups. The fast-rising growth in our Monograms business, as well as the emerging popularity of Cosmos Lite (independent touring), is showing that the market wants more of that balance between the support that a tour provides with a high degree of independence when at their destination.

BARBARA NORTON

VP Groups & Special Events Goway Travel

Goway is a big company and our group business has grown by leaps and bounds over the last few years. We have 22 in our group department now and all we do is customize groups. I've been with Goway for 35 years and I started as a one-person office, so we've grown a lot!

GROUP SIZES TRENDING

A group of 40 rarely happens now; a lot of our customized groups fall into the 10-to-15-passenger range. In the last couple of years, we've seen a lot more family, multi-generational and also celebrity groups. Another one of the bigger trends is themed groups.



We work with a lot of women's-only groups, singles groups, faith-based and more active travelers. They want to be out walking, playing golf, really into the whole experiential realm. Our customers want to see the major sites and have some meals included, but then free time and open evenings to do their own thing. The key is having a good balance in the itinerary, both with included features and free time.

We are also seeing trends in lodging where customers want uniqueness, so boutique-style accommodations instead of the big American box-style hotels.

BOOKING TRENDS

We are seeing 8 to 12 months as the typical booking cycle, but popular destinations are filling up fast. We have groups booking for '21 and '22, and some already in the '22-'23 season for South Africa, France and parts in Europe. If groups don't book early, they won't get the space, especially if they want a specific activity or hotel.

Other popular destinations include the Mediterranean countries like Spain, Portugal, Italy, Greece and Croatia. We've also witnessed a big pick-up in the Middle East.

BOOMERS DEMAND ACTIVITIES

In the next 5 to 10 years, the baby boomers will be fully moving into retirement. That is such a huge market to draw on because they are more affluent, they will have the time and want to travel. They are also more active, so they don't want to be sitting back on that coach bus all day. It's just ripe for beautiful customized itineraries for groups.

I always say group travel is really group therapy because you get to learn from each other. My first group I ever traveled with was a Contiki trip to Europe in 1980. In 2019, four of us from that trip are all

“Our customers want to see the major sites and have some meals included, but then free time and open evenings to do their own thing.”

getting together in South Africa. That is the positivity of group travel. Somebody else can solve the problems — you don't have to worry about your luggage, your safety — all that is taken care of. Just feed me, show me around and tell me what to do, I'm happy.

NISH PATEL

President Mayflower Cruises & Tours

Mayflower Tours was purchased last fall by the Scenic Group. The transition has been very positive and employees have been enjoying the new office. But as far as day-to-day, there's no change here. We have a new owner who has given us free range to continue doing business. The biggest difference is that we

don't have to look for river cruise ships for our customers—we have access to 22-plus ships all over the world.

WHAT'S POPULAR?

The interest in river cruising has always been there; it is the fastest growing segment in this industry. We have been growing 20 to 25 percent on the segment year-over-year prior to the acquisition and now we are growing 60 to 70 percent. The Rhine and Danube are still the most popular itineraries. Our uniqueness in Egypt and Croatia with small ships is phenomenal. Egypt has always been on peoples' bucket lists and now with safety concerns being lower and the price point good, it's a good time to go. Croatia is doing extremely well partially because we cruise on a yacht, and not too many people have a yacht in Croatia.

Iceland has been our No. 1 destination outside of river cruising and Greece is doing phenomenally well. Italy has done well. East Africa is gaining momentum.



Domestically, our top sellers include New England where we're looking at 20 to 30 buses every year. Charleston and Savannah sell very well and we have some unique itineraries throughout Yellowstone National Park.

GROUP BENNIES

We are deep into the group business. If you are promoting a group and you get six or more people then you get special group treatment. Plus, our Navigators Club loyalty program rewards group leaders based on their volume. Our top producers went to Egypt last year; this year we are going to India. Our top groups are still traveling with an average of 35 to 40 people per departure, especially in the bank business. It's similar looking into the chamber business and park districts — anywhere we can find a pied piper!

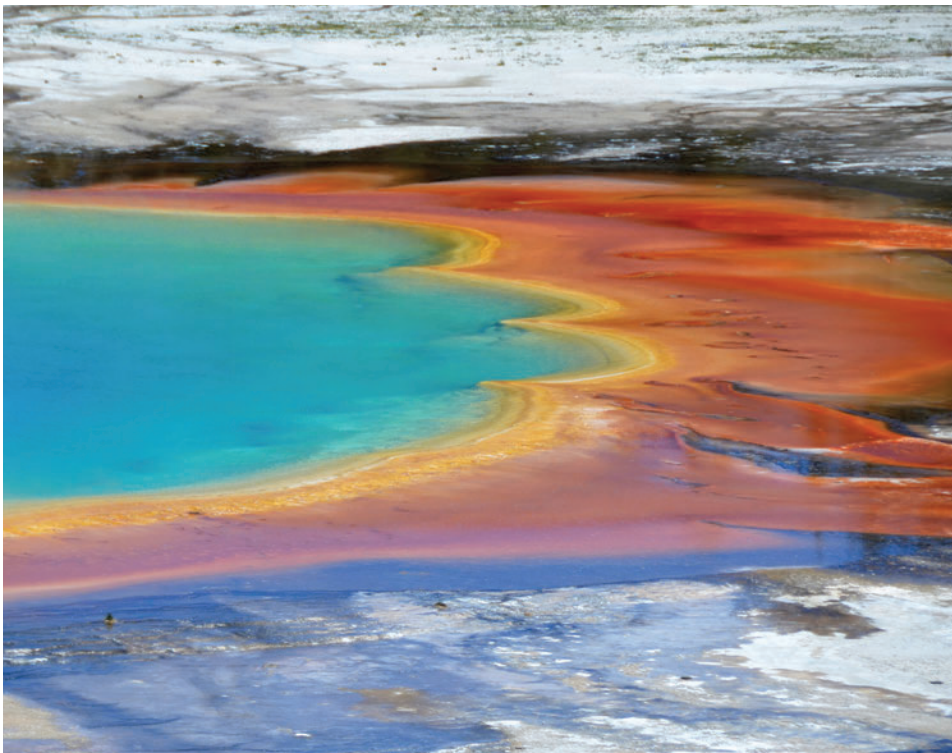
“We are seeing a big change in passenger demographics. We are getting into the 55-to-60 age range compared to the typical 68-to-72 range.”

CHANGING TRAVELERS

Our travelers have changed in a couple of ways. First of all, as we grow more into the river cruise business, we are getting travelers that are spending about \$6,500 per person. When they get off the ship, they're looking at other programs that we have, whether it's a domestic air tour or Africa or Japan. It has increased our international tours, which now represent about 60 percent of our business.

We are seeing a big change in passenger demographics. We are getting into the 55-to-60 age range compared to the typical 68-to-72 range. We are looking at more active programs to support this.

Our 2020 business is superb. We have an anomaly with Oberammergau as it's once in 10 years and it's happening in 2020, so we have quite a few people booked on that. We are anticipating a massive growth. **LGT**



Yellowstone National Park

Celestyal Cruises Offers New Itineraries • Greece and Beyond

Celestyal Cruises, the main homeporting cruise operator in Greece and the preeminent line serving the Greek Islands and Mediterranean, has extended the season through December with new 2019 and 2020 itineraries. It is a first step in the line's goal to offer cruises year-round.

The new seven-night "Eclectic Aegean" itinerary from Piraeus (the port for Athens), with six departures from October 21 through November 25, includes an overnight stay in Istanbul and calls at Volos, Greece (for excursions to the mountaintop monasteries of Meteora) and Canakkale, Turkey (for Troy and Gallipoli). The cruise will also visit Heraklion and Santorini and, during its call at Mykonos, will depart at 2 a.m. so guests can enjoy the island's nightlife. "Eclectic Aegean" also will be offered in spring and fall of 2020. Celestyal Cruises also has announced the launch of its seven-night "Three Continents" cruises, with five sailings in December 2019. From Piraeus the cruise calls at Alexandria and Port Said, Egypt; Ashdod, Israel; Kusadasi (for Ephesus), Turkey; Limassol, Cyprus; and the Greek island of Rhodes. The same itinerary in 2020 will be available from February 29 through March 28 and from November 7 through December 26, 2020. (celestyalcruises.com)



Celestyal Cruises

New Istanbul Airport • Turkey

After several delays, the new Istanbul Airport has opened. Replacing Ataturk Airport, it is expected to handle 200 million passengers a year when all phases are

completed (90 million initially), making it the busiest airport in the world. The airport, the world's largest under one roof, will boast more than 400 retail shops, the world's largest duty-free shopping complex and Europe's largest parking lot. Another superlative: the new airport will be the world's largest flight point, serving over 350 destinations worldwide. The terminal's overall design borrows elements of art and architecture from mosques, Turkish baths and other historic structures. The futuristic-looking flight control tower is inspired by the tulip, a symbol of Istanbul and an important reference in Turkish and Islamic culture. Beginning to sprout up around the airport, Istanbul Airport City will feature office space, hotels, private residences, shopping, arts centers and a trade show area. The center of Istanbul is about 20 miles away.

Grand New Museum • Egypt

The long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum, one of the largest museums in the world, is expected to open in 2020. The \$1 billion complex, located outside of Cairo, will showcase some of the country's most precious relics and 7,000 years of history using the latest technology. Of the more than 100,000 ancient Egyptian artifacts, some 3,500 belong to the tomb of King Tutankhamen. More than 20,000 items have never been shown before, including archaeological discoveries from recent decades and monumental pieces too large for the present Egyptian Museum in central Cairo's Tahrir Square. Some galleries will be six stories high. The glass-fronted building offers sweeping panoramas of the Giza plateau and Great Pyramids, which stand just over a mile away. Besides exhibition galleries, the complex will include restaurants, cafes and shops. The museum was first announced in 1992 and initially scheduled to open in 2012. (gem.gov.eg)

Spa Resort Renovation • Mexico

Palace Resorts announced the completion of a multimillion-dollar renovation of Le

Blanc Spa Resort Cancun, the brand's flagship property and one of Cancun's top all-inclusive resorts as designated by TripAdvisor for multiple years in a row. The leading luxury adults-only, AAA Five Diamond Awarded resort recently reopened after extensive enhancements to its interiors and exteriors, including a completely redesigned lobby, upgrades to its meeting space, well-appointed new designer guest suites, redefined restaurants with exciting new gourmet dining menu options and newly decorated common spaces including bars and lounges. The opulent beachfront property is located on an enclave between the Nichupte Lagoon and the glistening Caribbean Sea in Cancun, Mexico. The resort is consistently recognized as one of the world's top all-inclusive resorts. In addition to new renovations, the hotel also features traditional facilities and over-the-top amenities that Le Blanc Spa Resorts is known for including — an award-winning 31,000-square-foot full-service spa with 19 treatment rooms, a hydrotherapy facility, a fitness center, plunge pools, gourmet specialty cuisine, butler service and more than 8,115 square feet of meeting space. (leblancsparesorts.com/en)

Bauhaus Centenary

The neighboring German federal states of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus movement, the most important architecture and design school of the early 20th century. Featuring a combination of glass, steel and concrete, the trend toward modernism in the decades after 1923 had its roots in the region. Joining together to promote "Bauhausland," the states are featuring Bauhaus-designed buildings to visit, Bauhaus hotels and restaurants, and Bauhaus-themed drives in cities such as Weimar, Dornburg, Jena, Dessau, Halle and Magdeburg. The new Bauhaus Museum Weimar opened in April, and the Bauhaus Museum Dessau opens in September. (bauhaus-entdecken.de/en, bauhaus.visit-thuringia.com)

INT'L

MEDITERRANEAN

Ports of Call

Shore excursions spotlight vibrant
cultures and historical treasures
in Southern Europe

By Randy Mink



THE notion of waking up almost every morning in a new city or country energizes those of us who cruise with the destination in mind. We can't wait to get off the ship and start exploring, knowing we have only seven or eight hours to see what we can see. Whether we prefer to wander independently or take a ship-arranged shore excursion, our goal is to make the most of every second in port. That urge to soak it all in tends to be especially strong in the Mediterranean, which abounds with iconic sights.

Cruising affords the luxury of visiting multiple countries without the hassles of plane or bus travel. You unpack just once and the ship becomes your floating home for a week or two. And since the ship does most of its traveling at night, you have full days to take in the urban hot spots and archaeological sites—spending your time sightseeing, shopping and just lingering at cafes to watch the world go by.

In turnaround ports—cities where the sailing begins or ends—most cruise lines offer pre- and post-cruise hotel packages. For those flying in and out the same day, the line also may offer a city-overview tour on day of embarkation or disembarkation—just after you arrive at the airport or before the flight home.

Here is a sampling of popular ports that show up on Mediterranean cruise itineraries:

Barcelona, Spain. The southern end of Las Ramblas, one of Europe's best-known promenades for people-watching, is just a 10-minute walk from the cruise terminal in Spain's largest port. The color-splashed pedestrian drag, with flower stalls, outdoor cafes, mimes and musicians, runs through the heart of the Old City, pulsing with an endless flow of humanity. Not far from the tree-lined thoroughfare is the atmospheric Gothic Quarter with its labyrinth of

winding medieval streets and the huge Cathedral of Barcelona.

Many ship-organized excursions include La Sagrada Familia, an unfinished church that is considered the masterpiece of visionary Catalan architect Antoni Gaudi, who spent most of his life in Barcelona. He worked on the flamboyant landmark, famous for its splendid spires and stained-glass windows, from 1882 until his death in 1926. Another creative genius, 20th century artist Pablo Picasso, lived in the city during his formative years (ages 14-21), and many of his early works are enshrined in the Picasso Museum, which is housed in five connecting Gothic palaces in the La Ribera neighborhood. Montjuic Mountain, a scenic stop on city tours, affords panoramic views and is home to the stadium from the 1992 Olympic Games that Barcelona hosted.

Gibraltar. A geographical oddity, this British colony attached to the southern



The cruise port in Kusadasi, Turkey, is just steps from downtown shops and restaurants.



Princess Cruises

The medieval walled city of Dubrovnik on Croatia's Adriatic coast

coast of Spain commands a strategic location on the narrow strait that connects the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean—and separates Europe from Africa. Its chief claim to fame is the Rock of Gibraltar. In fact, Gibraltar is often referred to as simply “The Rock.”

The territory's only town has many reminders of Mother England, from fish 'n' chip eateries and traditional pubs to bright red phone booths, mailboxes and double-decker buses. Gibraltar's real sightseeing highlights are found on the upper parts of the Rock, a nature preserve. The summit's observation terrace, reachable by taxi or cable car, offers views in all directions. And everyone wants to get close-up pictures of the resident Barbary macaques (a species of tailless monkey) perched on rocks, railings or cannons. Beware—they will snatch food from your pocket or purse.

Marseille, France. France's second-largest city is a virtual melting pot of peoples and cultures. Many tours cruise down the Corniche President J.F. Kennedy, a scenic seaside boulevard with stunning views of the coast's craggy cliffs, beaches and nearby islands.

Some shore excursions take you to the city's highest point, where you'll find the

spectacularly situated Basilica Notre-Dame de la Garde. The square bell tower of the neo-Byzantine church supports a copper-and-gilded gold statue of the Virgin Mary that looks out over Marseille. Colorful mosaics decorate the interior cupolas.

In the Old Port (Vieux-Port), the city's main harbor, working fishermen mingle with the younger crowd that frequents the fashionable bars, restaurants and theaters that have revitalized this part of town. Overseen by two massive forts, Fort St-Nicolas and Fort St-Jean, this is a great place to grab a bite at a waterfront cafe. Just offshore is the rocky island occupied by Chateau d'If, France's Alcatraz. It was a prison made famous as the setting for *The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas.

Marseille is also the gateway to Provence. Rather than see the city, some cruise passengers opt for tours to the countryside around Arles and Avignon, immortalized in the canvases of Van Gogh, Cezanne, Matisse and Picasso. Avignon is home to the Palace of the Popes, the residence of nine popes from 1309 to 1378 during their exile from Rome.

Civitavecchia, Italy. This port city may not be a household name, but Rome is.

Many Mediterranean cruises start and/or end in this jumping-off point for the Eternal City, a 1½-hour bus ride away. Rome makes for a great pre- or post-cruise stay, and you really do need more than one day to do the city justice.

Cruise lines' shore excursions feature the highlights of ancient Rome—the Colosseum, Pantheon and ruins of the Roman Forum—and may offer the chance to toss a coin in the Trevi Fountain, stroll the Piazza Navona and climb the Spanish Steps. A trip to Rome, of course, is not complete without a peek inside the Baroque sanctuary of St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in Christendom, or walking across St. Peter's Square, where the faithful come to see the pope every Sunday. Many tours include the Vatican Museums and Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel. Holland America Line offers a tour that visits filming locations used in *Roman Holiday*, the 1953 romantic comedy starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck.

Besides Rome, tours from Civitavecchia also explore the Italian countryside. Princess Cruises, for example, offers an excursion to the Umbrian hilltop city of Orvieto, famous for its white wine and 13th century cathedral. Other choices include Lake Bracciano and Tuscia wine country, and the medieval village of Tuscania with olive oil tasting at a family-owned farm.

Dubrovnik, Croatia. Compact and car-free, the medieval walled Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with cobbled streets, ancient stone buildings and fortified ramparts rising above orange-tiled roofs. Despite heavy damage from the war for independence from Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, this historic quarter has been restored to its pre-war beauty. The problem these days is the crush of cruise passengers who invade the popular town. To limit their impact, Dubrovnik now imposes a limit of two ship arrivals a day.

Exploring the Old Town, visitors discover a wealth of art and artifacts in the Franciscan and Dominican monasteries, Rector's Palace and 1673 Cathedral. The pharmacy in the Franciscan Monastery, dating back to 1318, is said to be the oldest working apothecary in Europe.

Film crews have captured the splendor of Dubrovnik, long known as the Pearl of the Adriatic, and surrounding area in *Game of Thrones*, *Star Wars* and *Robin Hood*. Some shore excursions visit the nearby seaside villages of Cavtat, Ston and Trsteno.

Piraeus, Greece. The gateway to Athens, a rather grimy place, is one of the Mediterranean's busiest passenger ports and the launching pad for cruises to the Greek Islands. Central Athens is about a half-hour's drive from Piraeus.

Most of the main sights in Athens, a sprawling, congested metropolis of 4.5 million, can be seen in a day. Cruise passengers make a beeline for the Acropolis, a hilltop where the Parthenon and other ruins of other 5th century B.C. buildings from Greece's Golden Age inspire awe. The Acropolis Museum stands at the foot of the hill. Also just below the Acropolis is the Plaka, an Old Town district

with narrow pedestrian streets full of tourist shops and tavernas.

Other Athens highlights include the Temple of Olympian Zeus; Old Olympic Stadium, host of the first modern Olympics in 1896; National Archeological Museum, which boasts the world's largest collection of ancient Greek art; and changing of the guard ceremony at the Parliament Building on the city's main square.

Kusadasi, Turkey. This Aegean port on the western coast of Turkey, a regular stop on the Eastern Mediterranean/Greek Islands circuit, serves as the stepping stone to the ruins of Ephesus, one of the most completely excavated Greco-Roman cities from antiquity. Shore excursions give passengers plenty of time to walk the ancient site's colonnaded streets and prowl around the amphitheater. Everyone wants to frame the perfect photo of the Celsus Library's magnificent two-story facade, which one guidebook compares to

a "grandiose film set left behind after the shooting of a Roman spectacular."

Often included in Ephesus excursions is the nearby House of the Virgin Mary, a Catholic pilgrimage site. A tiny church stands on the 1st century foundation of the home where Mary, according to legend, spent her final days after being brought to Ephesus by St. John the Apostle.

Happily for passengers arriving in Kusadasi, the town offers much to see and do just minutes from the cruise-ship docks. Minutes away by foot lies the idyllic little castle on Pigeon Island, which is connected to the coastal road by a causeway lined with tour boats. Walk from the cruise terminal in the opposite direction and the souvenir bazaars of Old Town await with carpets, jewelry, Gucci and Louis Vuitton handbag knockoffs, and "genuine fake watches." Shop shelves contain onyx items, hookahs, fezzes, and ceramic bowls and plates in Turkish geometric designs. **TGT**



The Celsus Library wows crowds at Ephesus, an easy drive from Kusadasi.

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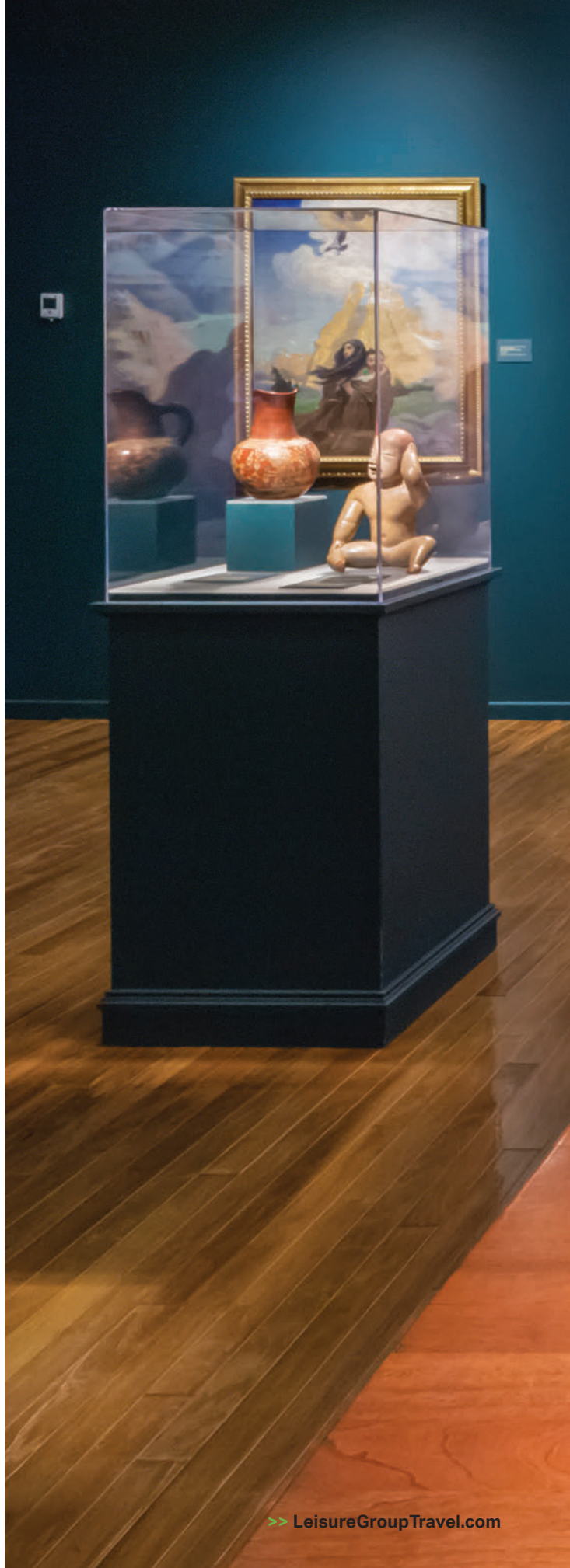
By Sue Arko

The American cowboy created a reputation and iconic lifestyle that has been glamorized in countless works of art, books and music. Museums of Western art bring this lore to life. So, saddle up and get ready for an adventure when visiting the following museums where world-class art collections meet historical exhibits.

GILCREASE MUSEUM

The Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, commonly known as Gilcrease Museum, houses the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of art and artifacts of the American West, including unparalleled collections of Native American art and material. This museum, owned by the City of Tulsa, also houses one of the country's most extensive collections of rare books, documents, maps and unpublished material related to the history of North America.

"A visit to the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa opens the door for groups to American history and art," said Todd Stallbaumer, consumer and trade marketing director for the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department. "While touring the facility, groups have the opportunity to see the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of art and artifacts of the American West. A stop in the Helmerich Center for American Research turns you into the archivist for America's vast history."





The Gilcrease Museum houses the world's largest collection of art and artifacts of the American West.

SID RICHARDSON MUSEUM

Located in historic Sundance Square in Fort Worth, Texas, the Sid Richardson Museum has one of the most significant private collections in the United States of paintings by Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, Oscar E. Berninghaus, Charles F. Browne, Edwin W. Deming and William Gilbert Gaul,

among others. This personal collection of legendary Texas oilman and philanthropist Sid W. Richardson captures the romance and ruggedness of the western United States in the late 1800s, a time when most Americans had little firsthand knowledge of the frontier.

The museum is free and open daily, except for major holidays. A variety of

programs are offered for groups, from lectures and in-depth engagements with the collection to movies and studio activities. Docent-led tours are free and available by appointment.

BRINTON MUSEUM

The Brinton Museum is located in the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains on the historic 620-acre Quarter Circle A Ranch near Big Horn, Wyoming. Conveniently situated between Yellowstone and the Black Hills, it offers an authentic view into the life and lifestyle of a Western gentleman and art collector who was a friend of many of the most celebrated 19th- and 20th-century Western artists. It houses one of the most significant and extensive Western and American Art collections in the Rocky Mountain West.

The historic Brinton Ranch House, built in 1892 and expanded by the Brintons to accommodate their extensive collections, is surrounded by the well-kept grounds, gardens and outbuildings such as a carriage barn, saddle barn, milk house, and Little Goose Creek Lodge. The Forrest E. Mars, Jr. Building now includes three floors featuring five galleries, a museum store, and the Brinton Bistro, which offers delicious food and picturesque, 180-degree views of the Bighorn Mountains.

The museum is closed in the winter months and group tours must be scheduled in advance.

C.M. RUSSELL MUSEUM

With an extensive schedule of workshops, classes and tours, the C.M. Russell Museum is a hub of Western art located in Great Falls, Montana. It contains the art, artifacts and archival materials associated with Charles Marion Russell and other significant Western artists. The museum is nationally accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

The museum opened in 1930, when the artist's log cabin studio and gallery addition opened as the Russell Memorial. Today, the



The Brinton Museum showcases one of the most significant Western and American art collections in the Rocky Mountain West.

C.M. Russell Museum Complex fills an entire city block and encompasses 65,000 square feet of exhibition galleries and educational programming spaces. The museum complex includes the Russells' original house and studio, a National Historic Landmark, the Frederic G. and Ginger K. Renner Research Center, the Candace and Jim Fish, Sr. Discovery Gallery and the Charlie Russell Riders Outdoor Sculpture Garden.

The museum offers scheduled group tours which can be docent-led and customized upon request, focusing on a comprehensive overview of the entire museum collection or an in-depth look at one specific exhibition or body of artworks or objects.

DENVER ART MUSEUM

The Petrie Institute of Western American Art governs the Western American art

collection at the Denver Art Museum, which encompasses two centuries of paintings, sculptures and works on paper related to the West. Currently, the north building is under renovation and the Western American Art galleries are closed. However, groups can still view select modernist works from the collection on view in the Dietler Gallery. Additionally, the cross-departmental exhibition *Stampede: Animals in Art*, includes works from the Western American art collection. The anticipated reopening of all spaces in the north building is 2021.

DESERT CABALLEROS WESTERN MUSEUM

Located in the heart of historic Wickenburg, Arizona, the Desert Caballeros Western Museum houses a world-renowned

collection of Western fine art and historic exhibits. Core to the museum collection are prized works of George Catlin, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran, Frederic Remington, Cowboy Artists of America and Taos Society of Artists. Works by Bill Owen, Maynard Dixon, Alan Houser, Mirna Harrison and more offer an enriching contemporary presentation.

In addition to the art collections, groups can enjoy life-scale recreations of old 1905 Wickenburg and experience ranch life of the early settlers and real Wickenburg dude ranches. They can also discover local gold mining history and learn about the American Indian tribes of the Southwest by examining their tools and crafts.

These museums highlight the cultural legacy of the American West by providing a glimpse of a strong, independent and romantic Western heritage. **LGT**



Brinton Museum

Tony Hochstetler

Art Museum Plans New Home in Santa Ana • California

The Orange County Museum of Art just opened its new temporary space at South Coast Plaza Village in Santa Ana. Admission is free. OCMAEXPAND-SANTA ANA is the name of the museum's interim residency of a former retail space as it builds its new home a few blocks away at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The new permanent home is slated to open in 2021. (ocma.net)

Disney's Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge Opens • California

The much-anticipated Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge park opened in late May at the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim.

Galaxy's Edge is considered one of Disneyland's most ambitious, complex and immersive areas of the theme park as it brings Star Wars-themed rides, stores and foods to the park.

On 14 acres of the grungy planet Batuu, guests can build their own droids and lightsabers, interact with aliens and climb into the cockpit of the massive Millennium Falcon — and get into a dogfight with the enemy Tie Fighters.



Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge

Wine Tour Offers Ghostly Glimpse of History • California

In honor of its history as one of Napa Valley's few remaining Ghost Wineries, Flora Springs Winery in Napa Valley is offering monthly paranormal ghost winery tours where guests interact with the spirits who inhabit the 19th century stone building and caves where the winery continues to make its

wine. Flora Springs' Sixteen Spirits Historical Ghost Winery Tour & Tasting is offered one Sunday a month tour through October at the winery's estate in St. Helena, California. The two-hour tour, led by professional paranormal investigators from Napa City Ghosts & Legends, is accompanied by a tasting of Flora Springs wines, including its Ghost Winery Malbec. (florasprings.com)

New Art Museum Coming to San Antonio • Texas

Ruby City, a new contemporary art museum in San Antonio, will open in late fall 2019. The space is named for its crimson coloring and shimmering facade and will house the late Linda Pace's personal collection of more than 800 paintings, sculptures, installations and video works. Admission to Ruby City will be free. (lindapacefoundation.org)

Las Vegas to Open Entertainment Destination • Nevada

AREA15, Las Vegas' new immersive entertainment, retail and dining destination opening this December, unveils 40,000 square feet of unique event space within a wholly reimagined world of art, technology and design. Space will be available for group event bookings of all sizes for any occasion beginning in January 2020. Located just seven minutes from the Las Vegas Strip, AREA15 is an experiential retail and entertainment complex offering live events, immersive activations, art installations and much more. The complex will attract locals and tourists of all ages seeking an ever-changing landscape of new and unique experiences. Anchor tenant, Meow Wolf, will create interactive art activations to transport audiences of all ages into fantastic realms of story, exploration and discovery.

New Exhibition Opens in San Diego • California

Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego has

opened Seadragons & Seahorses, a new permanent exhibition that celebrates the care and conservation of these unique creatures. Seadragons & Seahorses is the largest indoor aquarium addition since the aquarium's opening in 1992 and will be home to Weedy and Leafy Seadragons, as well as several species of seahorses and pipefish. The centerpiece of the exhibition will be one of the largest seadragon habitats in the world. The 18-foot-wide, 9-foot-tall exhibit will hold 5,375 gallons of water — equivalent to 70 bathtubs. More than being a stunning display, the habitat has been designed to create an ideal environment to breed seadragons. Birch Aquarium hopes to be the first aquarium to successfully breed Leafy Seadragons in captivity. (aquarium.ucsd.edu)



Donut Tour Expands to Seattle • Washington

The Underground Donut Tour, founded four years ago in Chicago, has just started offering tours in Seattle. Visiting four of Seattle's best donut shops, the walking tour includes the history of each location, with commentary on sights along the route, including the Seattle Monorail, Belltown, the Space Needle and Pike Place Market, one of the country's oldest farmers' markets. Locations on the tour include Top Pot Doughnuts and Dahlia Bakery. The Underground Donut Tour is also available in Philadelphia, New York City and Portland, Oregon. Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$15 for kids 10 and under. (undergrounddonoutour.com)

EXQUISITE ART CAN BE FOUND OUTSIDE

The East Coast is home to an array of exceptional street murals

By Jason Paha

Street art enthusiasts looking to revel in some of the finest craftsmanship this country has to offer should venture to the East Coast, home to an impressive number of public artistry. Here are some remarkable street art locations groups can visit, where they will be immersed in colors and creativity.

Philadelphia, PA

More than 15,000 people visit Philadelphia annually to tour one of the world's largest outdoor galleries and learn why the city has been dubbed the "mural capital of the world." Many of these murals have been collaborated through Mural Arts Philadelphia, the nation's largest public art program. For more than 30 years, Mural Arts Philadelphia has unified artists and communities as nearly 4,000 artworks have been created in public spaces. The city offers mural tours that enable visitors to get a glimpse into the stories behind the Mural Arts collection. Public trolley, train, Segway and walking tours feature guides who provide visitors with a behind-the-scenes look at the city's thousands of works of public art.

Mural Arts
Philadelphia

Steve Weirnik, Mural Arts Philadelphia



Hudson County, New Jersey

Hudson County, in New Jersey, boasts an impressive outdoor art gallery thanks to a mural arts program in which local, national and international artists have joined with property owners to create a brilliant display. Hudson County's Jersey City Mural Tour allows groups to walk or ride around the city, viewing a variety of murals by neighborhood. The tour shows where local and world-renowned artists take their canvases to the streets, helping to highlight the diverse culture of the county.

Hudson
County's
Jersey City
Mural Tour

Hudson County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs/Tourism Development



Baltimore
Mural
Program

Asha Holmes

Baltimore, Maryland

The Baltimore Mural Program was created in 1975 to help make the city's neighborhoods more appealing while also enabling local artists to flaunt their talents. Working with the artists, the Baltimore Office of Promotion and The Arts coordinates and directs this ongoing program which has produced more than 250 murals across the city. These murals have added vibrancy to neighborhoods once marred by vacant lots and crumbling buildings and show how street art can make a positive impact on a community. In addition to beautifying the city, Baltimore's street art has opened up a forum for discussion about public art, featuring numerous events and community gatherings that bring residents together.

Our Everyday
Heroes by
muralist
Jon Souza

The Bronx, New York

The New York City Mural Arts Project aims to connect people with serious mental illness to peers and artists in an effort to create murals about mental health. The project's architects work with community-based organizations, artists, those living with a mental health condition and the community to promote mental health and awareness and break down stigmas. Since 2016, the program has created six large-scale mental health murals in the Bronx, Brooklyn and Manhattan and will add new murals in Brooklyn and Staten Island.

Brooklyn, New York

Brooklyn has long been known as a street art haven and one of its most popular street art displays is the Bushwick Collective, located in the city's Bushwick neighborhood. This collection of street art and graffiti stretches across several blocks of industrial buildings and attracts a variety of artists both locally, nationally and internationally. Conceived by Bushwick native Joe Ficalora in 2011, the Bushwick Collective transformed a once gloomy neighborhood into a lively tourist destination. Free walking tours are offered where groups can learn about the history of the artists whose work graces walls in Bushwick and across Brooklyn. **IGT**

Street art in
Brooklyn,
New York



Will Ragazzino for the NYC Mural Arts Project



Jason Paha

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GROUPS GET

REGAL

IN DELAWARE

What would it be like to live in another time? It's a curious thought. There's something magical and otherworldly about the past, especially when it comes to the lives of high society and royalty. In the modern age, we can only imagine what that world was like. But there are ways to get a better glimpse of it, even if just for a moment.

Nestled in the rolling hills of Delaware's **Chateau Country** are four immaculate estates of the du Pont family, each holding their own special story and unique charm, says Michael Chesney, director of communications, Delaware Division of Small Business. These historical gems allow visitors

With immaculate architecture and historic foundations, the du Pont mansions transport groups to a different era

By Vanessa Day

to travel back in time, introducing them to figures of American royalty and—thanks to a new exhibition held at the Winterthur Mansion—some British royalty, too. Tour groups in Delaware will feel regal walking the grounds of these majestic homes and eyeing elegant costumes from the Emmy award-winning series *The Crown*.

WINTERTHUR AND THE CROWN

The hit Netflix show, *The Crown*, has captured the hearts of viewers all over the world. Telling a dramatized history of England's Queen Elizabeth II, the series has ignited a deep-seeded interest in the royal family, especially in the United States. Now an extraordinary exhibit dedicated to the series' fashion has opened at **Winterthur Museum and Garden**, one of the four du Pont mansions open to the public.

Costuming The Crown (running until January 5, 2020) not only gives visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the major role costume design plays to re-create history, but it also features 40 iconic costumes from the series on display in the majestic halls of

Winterthur. Groups can examine the works of award-winning designers Michele Clapton and Jane Petrie, including Queen Elizabeth's dazzling gold coronation robe and Princess Margaret's sophisticated wedding dress.

If these costumes aren't enough to make groups feel royal, then the Winterthur home certainly will. Regarded as one of the most beautiful historic homes in the country, Winterthur features 175 elegantly furnished rooms and 90,000 pieces of antique decorative art. Be sure to take a stroll through the stunning garden, filled with carefully curated plants, tranquil water features and rich greenery.

Tour groups can work directly with the Winterthur staff to organize a visit set around a specific theme or focus, says Chesney, allowing them to get the most of their experience at the estate.

THE ROYAL TREATMENT IN DELAWARE

While studying the intricately designed outfits may make one feel queenly, the *Costuming The Crown* exhibition is only the beginning of a group's stately visit to Delaware. There are many fine experiences to pamper groups like royalty.

Discover the origins of the famous du Pont family at the **Hagley Museum and Library**, where their story begins. The museum, located along the Brandywine River, is where the family first settled and opened their black powder manufacturing business in 1802. Groups can tour the restored mills, check out historic machinery, watch a turbine bring the iron roll mills to life, and stroll through the du Pont family home and gardens.

Make a visit to the **Delaware Art Museum** to peruse an array of national and international works of art. The museum was originally founded to honor local American artist Howard Pyle but has since expanded its works and exhibitions to showcase many more artists, mediums and time periods. In fact, it houses the largest collection of British Pre-Raphaelite Art outside of the United Kingdom. Guided group tours of the museum are available with many topics of focus from which to choose.

Groups should not miss the **Nemours Estate**, the former home of Alfred I. du

Pont. Situated on 220 landscaped acres, the late 18th-century-French-style home is said to have been inspired by the Palace of Versailles. The estate (open May to December) features exceptional rugs, intricate antique tapestries, stunning oil paintings and a brilliant sculptured garden.

Groups can relax in Old World luxury at the **Hotel du Pont**, a legendary guesthouse that features elegant restaurants, a theater and boutique shops. Many world leaders, U.S. presidents and first ladies have stayed here, earning it a reputation as one of the premier Delaware hotels. Guests can begin the day at The Green Room, Hotel du Pont's top dining room featuring traditional French cuisine. Groups of 15 or more can enjoy a personal hot buffet to prepare them for a full day of sightseeing. Complete the royal experience with High Tea in the Christina Room, where groups can sit in a sophisticated setting sipping a range of tea blends inspired by the du Pont estates and munching on delicious scones and pastries.

Make room in the itinerary for a visit to the **Montchanin Village**, named after the grandmother of the founder of DuPont Gunpowder Company and comprising 11

restored buildings dating back to 1800. After strolling around this charming village, dine on fresh, seasonal Northeastern cuisine at **Krazy Kat's Restaurant**, where the walls are adorned with paintings of felines dressed in their finest.

PLANNING A REGAL GROUP TRIP TO DELAWARE

When organizing a group tour in Delaware, the royal treatment starts well before you arrive. "The Delaware Tourism Office provides a variety of one-on-one support to group tour organizers while they are planning," says Chesney. This includes "customized itineraries, free welcome gifts through the Delaware Motorcoach Rewards Program, digital/print marketing materials and statewide familiarization tours." The team at the tourism office delivers elite service, extensive destination knowledge and useful guidance wherever it's needed.

The noble world may seem distant, especially the lives of the British Royal Family. But thanks to Delaware's grand du Pont mansions, charming old towns and the new *Costuming The Crown* exhibit, the realm of majesties is well within reach. **TGT**



Costuming The Crown gives visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the costumes in the hit Netflix show *The Crown*.

Winterthur Mansion

GSMD announces plans for 400th Anniversary events in 2020 • Massachusetts

Representatives of four nations gathered at the headquarters of American Ancestors (the New England Historic Genealogical Society) in Boston recently to announce plans for the 400th commemoration of the Mayflower voyage. The General Society of Mayflower Descendants (GSMD) joined with organizations from the United Kingdom, United States, Wampanoag Nation and the Netherlands to share the events that will be taking place on both sides of the Atlantic in 2020. Anticipating the 400th anniversary of the voyage of the Mayflower in 2020, American Ancestors and New England Historic Genealogical Society will play a major role in its national and international commemoration. GSMD has many plans for 2020, starting with participation in an event that will be witnessed by an estimated

50 million people worldwide, the Rose Bowl Parade on January 1, 2020. There will also be commemorative celebrations in Provincetown, Plymouth and Boston in 2020. (plymouth400inc.org)

Underground Donut tour expanding to the East Coast • New York

The Underground Donut, Chicago's original doughnut tour, is expanding beyond the Windy City to New York City. The Underground Donut Tour has been running for nearly four years in Chicago and has become one of the most popular food tours in Chicago and will now show off popular locales in NYC. "New York is such a fantastic food city and has always been on our radar. We're so excited to launch this tour and share the donut love that people in Chicago have been feeling for years," said Jeff Woelker,

founder of the Underground Donut Tour. The tour will consist of walking between four of the best doughnut shops in New York and will share the history of each location, local sights and history along the route including the Flatiron Building, Empire State Building, One World Trade Center and Greenwich Village. Guests will be able to enjoy a slew of samples of the best doughnuts at each location. (undergrounddonuttour.com)



Exhibition coming to Philadelphia • Pennsylvania

The Barnes Foundation announced it will host the exhibition, *I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like: The Art of Bill Viola*, beginning June 30 and running until September 15 in Philadelphia. The exhibition brings together a selection of the artist's major pieces dating from 1976 to 2009, including the rarely seen large-scale installations *He Weeps for You* (1976), *Pneuma* (1994/2009), and *Ascension* (2000), as well as smaller screen-based works. On view in the Barnes's Roberts Gallery, the exhibition shows how Viola has redefined the moving image with a compelling and distinctive oeuvre that challenges the senses. Home to one of the world's finest collections of Impressionist, post-Impressionist and early modern paintings, the Barnes brings together renowned masterworks alongside ancient, medieval, Renaissance and non-Western art. (barnesfoundation.org)

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Tour Guide IOWA

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Greetings!

The Hawkeye State boasts bountiful urban adventures, beautiful performing arts venues and agritourism attractions that showcase the state's artisans and farmers. Leisure Group Travel is proud to showcase all the state has to offer in our 2019 edition of the Iowa Tour Guide. Created in conjunction with the Iowa Group Travel Association (IGTA), the guide offers numerous ideas for tour planners tasked with creating an unforgettable Midwestern itinerary. At 16 pages, this year's guide is our biggest and best yet, filled with Iowa's best group-friendly locales.

Learn about Iowa's thriving cities in "Urban Adventures," which highlights six of the state's most cosmopolitan destinations. Enjoy craft beer and hip nightclubs in Des Moines, admire classic Frank Lloyd Wright architecture in Mason City and enjoy farm-to-table meals in reimagined industrial spaces in Dubuque. These cities are also populated with "Iowa makers" who create everything from fine art to exquisite wine. In "Made in Iowa," we explore opportunities to meet these makers in their studios, farms or factories and buy their products firsthand. Whether you're enjoying farm-fresh creations at Jefferson County Ciderworks, admiring beautiful sculptures at Isabel Bloom or embarking on a Black Hawk County quilt barn tour, you'll find an authentic Iowa creation to enjoy.

Also in this edition is "Remarkable Arts & Music Venues in Iowa," which shines the spotlight on preserved historic theaters and vibrant live entertainment programs throughout the state. Whether your group wants to soak in the magnificent detail of the Paramount Theatre or relive rock 'n' roll history at the Surf Ballroom, Iowa has a venue for you. In "What's New from IGTA," we highlight some of IGTA's newest members, who range from the agritourist-friendly Hansen's Dairy to the quirky and colorful Traer Shaker Gallery. And since nearby Omaha is hosting ABA Marketplace 2020, we are providing a FAM preview for travel professionals staying afterward to experience "Hollywood in the Heartland" across Iowa.

We hope you enjoy the 2019 Iowa Tour Guide and know that IGTA is committed to creating an authentic and comprehensive Iowa group tour experience.

Thanks for reading,



4 IOWA'S URBAN ADVENTURES

These six cities boast entertainment, nightlife and fine dining in historic urban settings

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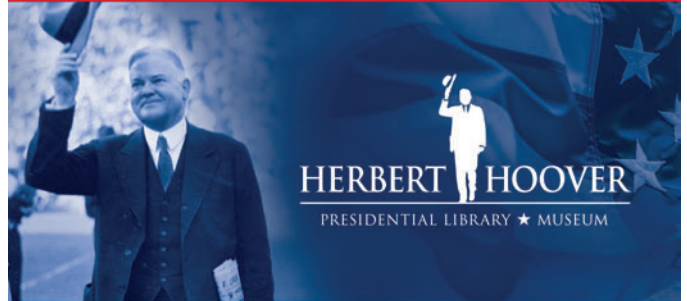
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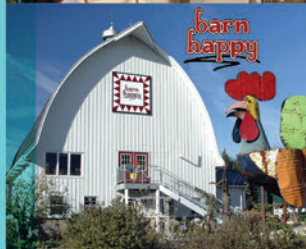
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Iowa's URBAN Adventures

These 6 cities boast entertainment, nightlife and fine dining in historic urban settings



Iowa is world-renowned for its beautiful prairies, plentiful agriculture and charming small towns, but large cities offer just as much adventure. World-class dining, live entertainment and museums await visitors who explore these thriving metropolitan areas that blend urban sophistication with Midwestern hospitality.

1. DES MOINES

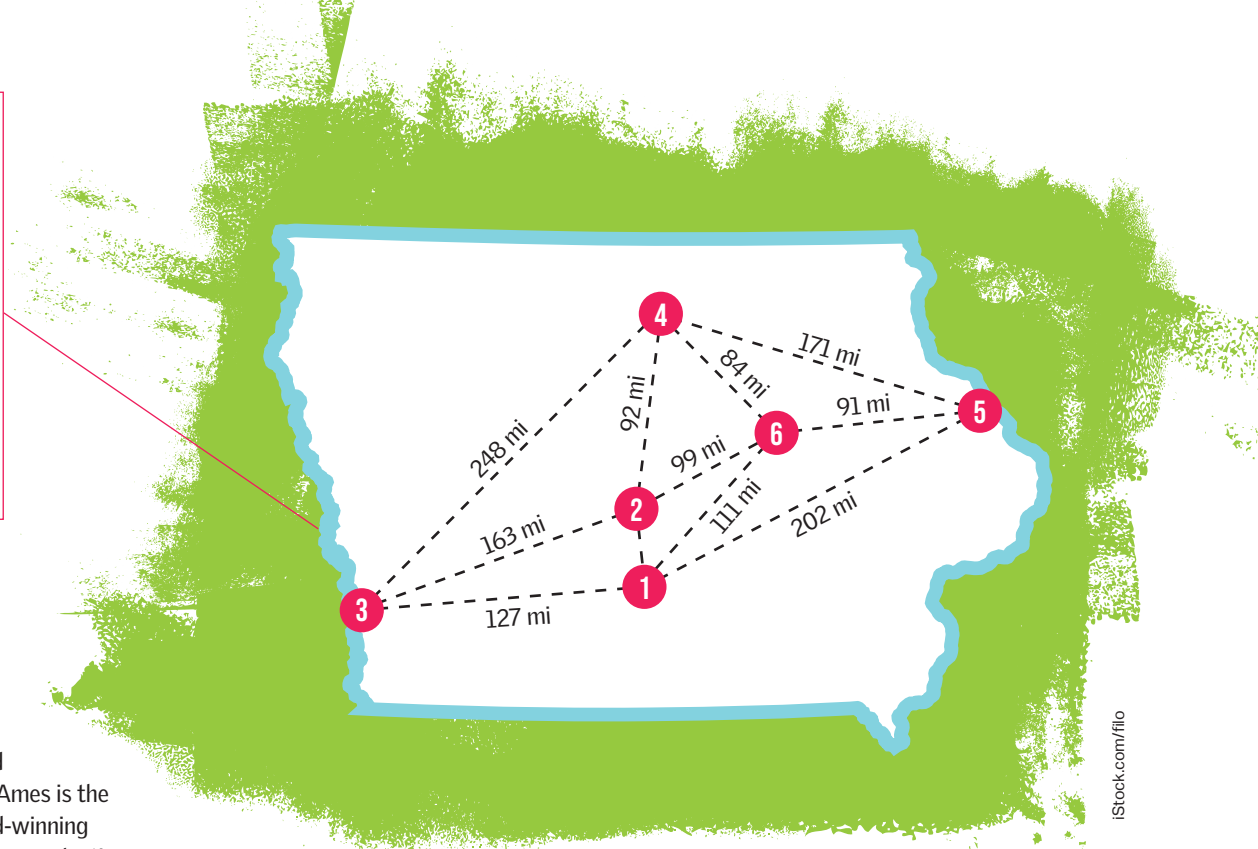
Iowa's largest city and state capital is an urban playground teeming with nightlife, dining, live entertainment and shopping for every budget. An evening in the **Historic East Village** will dispel any notion of Iowa as unadventurous; situated around the gold-domed State Capitol Building, this district is populated with historic facades that house trendy nightclubs like the **Lime Lounge**, craft brew pubs like **Peace Tree Brewery** and the retro arcade **Up-Down**. Group members

interested in history can embark on a tour of the **State Capitol**, explore the **State Historical Museum** or learn about the first-generation skyscrapers on Locust Street. Admire the entire skyline from **Principal Park**—home of the AAA Iowa Cubs—and enjoy a comprehensive baseball experience at a generous group rate.

Ranked second in the nation, the **Downtown Farmers Market** consists of over 300 vendors every Saturday from May to October along 4th Street. This free attraction offers live entertainment, free samples

from friendly farmers and an opportunity to explore Des Moines' thriving downtown. One block away is the **Science Center of Iowa**, one of the state's premier museums and home to a 50-foot planetarium, six-story IMAX screen and innovative hands-on exhibits that appeal to groups of all ages. Locally sourced food is plentiful in Des Moines' dining scene, which features creative farm-to-table dishes at **HoQ**, hearty brunch at **Americana** and scrumptious desserts at **Molly's Cupcakes**.

- 1 DES MOINES
- 2 AMES
- 3 COUNCIL BLUFFS
- 4 MASON CITY
- 5 DUBUQUE
- 6 WATERLOO



2. AMES

An innovative college town and thriving culinary community, Ames is the perfect city to enjoy an award-winning meal, catch exceptional theater productions or listen to a world-renowned speaker.

Iowa State University—the state's largest college—attracts scientists, authors and athletes from across the world to make Ames one of the most innovative communities in the Midwest. Admire **Memorial Union's** Greek-influenced architecture, watch thrilling Cyclones athletics or embark on a walk to admire one of the largest public art collections in the nation. Sites on campus available for free tours include the **Brunnier Art Museum** (which houses an extensive collection of American decorative arts), the **Farm House Museum** (which honors 19th century Iowa history) and the peaceful **Anderson Sculpture Garden**.

Green-thumbed guests will want to explore **Reiman Gardens**, a 17-acre property that includes a tropical plant conservatory, butterfly garden and perennial displays. East of campus is the **Main Street Cultural District**: a thoroughfare lined with public sculptures and populated by more than 50 locally owned specialty stores, art galleries and restaurants. Groups can purchase paintings by local artists at the **Octagon Center for the Arts**, watch Broadway-caliber musicals at the **Ames City Auditorium** and sample delicious craft beer at **Torrent Brewing Company**.

3. COUNCIL BLUFFS

Located on the shores of the Missouri River across from downtown Omaha, Council Bluffs was a crucial transportation hub during America's westward expansion. Steamboats, locomotives and wagon trains embarking on the Mormon Trail all passed through this pioneer town, which served as the eastern terminus for America's first transcontinental railroad. That transportation heritage is celebrated at the **Union Pacific Railroad Museum**, which chronicles the history of the Union Pacific Railroad Company with interactive exhibits and video game technology. Further history abounds at the

General Dodge Home, a lavish 14-room Victorian mansion built by Civil War veteran and railway industrialist Grenville Dodge, and the **Lewis & Clark Monument Scenic Overlook**. The Corps of Discovery's meeting with the local Otoe and Missouri tribes gave Council Bluffs its name, and you can recreate their view at **Narrows River Park**.

The city was also an important stopping point for Mormon travelers. It was here that Brigham Young was sustained as president by the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1846, and a replica of the **Kanesville Tabernacle** where that historic vote took place is open for tours.

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4. MASON CITY

Architecture buffs and Broadway fans will want to spend ample time exploring Mason City, home of *The Music Man* composer Meredith Willson and the largest concentration of Prairie School buildings in Iowa. The Prairie School style—which altered English Arts & Craft design with overhanging eaves and stark geometry—was made famous by Frank Lloyd Wright, and several of his buildings are available to visit. Begin at the **Stockman House & Interpretive Center**, which offers tours to explain Wright's career arc and the home's original Arts & Craft furnishings, and join a Prairie School tour through the **Rock Crest-Rock Glen Historic District**. Visitors can also stay at the **Historic Park Inn Hotel**, a boutique lodging option with 27 rooms and the only remaining hotel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Hollywood history comes to life at **Music Man Square**, an indoor 1912 streetscape that includes an ice cream parlor, gift shop and sets that recreate the Warner Bros. film production of *The Music Man*. An interactive museum highlights Meredith Willson memorabilia, and groups can visit his restored 1895 Queen Anne boyhood home. Another treasured collection can be found at the **Charles H. MacNider Art Museum**, which houses a collection of over 500 marionettes and puppets created by Mason City native Bil Baird.

5. DUBUQUE

Distinct from the prairies that constitute most of the state, northeastern Iowa's driftless area is a compelling landscape of rocky hills formed by ancient melting glaciers. In the heart of this region along the Mississippi River is Dubuque, a city of Beaux-Arts architecture, diverse dining and stunning river views. Begin with a ride on the **Fenelon Place Elevator** to admire Iowa's oldest city. This 296-foot-long cable car has been deemed "the world's shortest and steepest railroad" and provides scenic views of the Port of Dubuque. Group members leery of heights can explore the **Cable Car Square District**, which consists of 16 local shops and boutiques. The riverfront is where visitors will find the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** (a Smithsonian affiliate filled with hands-on exhibits), **Dubuques' American Lady** (a riverboat that offers lunch and dinner cruises) and **Stone Cliff Winery**, which offers tastings and live music in a restored brewery building.

Further inland in the shadow of the elaborate Beaux-Arts county courthouse is the **Millwork District**. This rejuvenated industrial neighborhood is now populated with hip coffee shops, craft breweries and farm-to-table restaurants to satisfy every taste. Highlights include **Inspire Café**, which hosts authentic English afternoon tea, and **7 Hills Brewing Company**, a welcoming taproom and brew pub that serves a "stout float" served with ice cream. Farm-to-table advocates will want to dine at **Brazen Open Kitchen & Bar**, which features an open kitchen and dishes prepared without freezers.

6. WATERLOO

Visitors to this riverside city will immediately be drawn to the **RiverLoop Amphitheatre and Arts Mall**. This steel-framed band shell hosts live music, cultural dance events and film screenings next door to the **Waterloo Center for the Arts**, which rotates exhibits to spotlight Midwestern artists. Art-lovers will also enjoy the **Hearst Center for the Arts**—a permanent sculpture garden—and the **Oster Regent Theatre** in Cedar Falls, a 1910 building that produces musicals and dramas throughout the year.

Groups seeking an outdoor adventure should spend time at the **Cedar Valley Arboretum & Botanic Gardens**, which includes 40 acres of butterfly meadows, rose gardens and fruit orchards. To learn about the bravery and sacrifice of Iowa's military veterans, pay a visit to the **Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum**, which includes over 35 interactive exhibits and an electronic Wall of Honor. Tours are also available at the **Rensselaer Russell House Museum**, an 1861 brick structure that allows visitors to step into the Victorian era with authentic family heirlooms and furniture.

Also in Waterloo is the **John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum**, which explores the developments in agricultural technology throughout American history. The museum, which opened in 2014 on the site of the very first John Deere tractor factory, traces the company's growth over time and engages guests through rare artifacts and interactive features. ■



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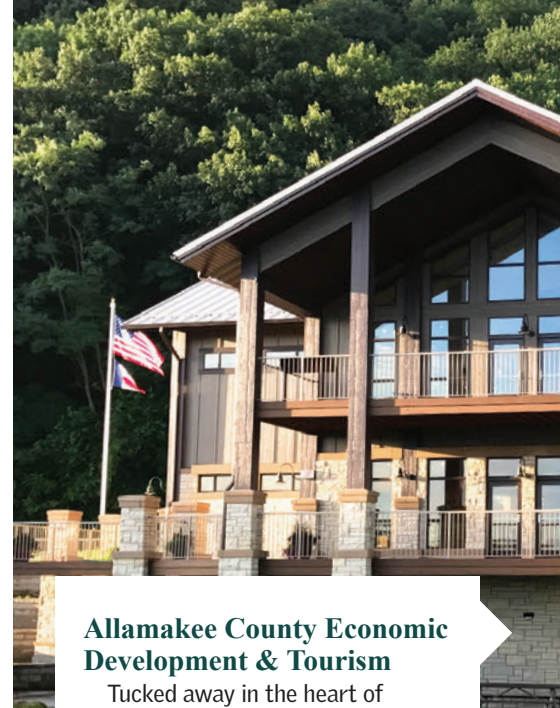


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WHAT'S New FROM IGTA

Meet some of the Iowa Group Travel Association's newest members

IGTA is constantly expanding its membership to promote the best DMOs, attractions and hotels in the state. Some of this year's newest members include relaxing Driftless Region escapes, quirky museums and welcoming hotels that can accommodate groups of various sizes.



Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism

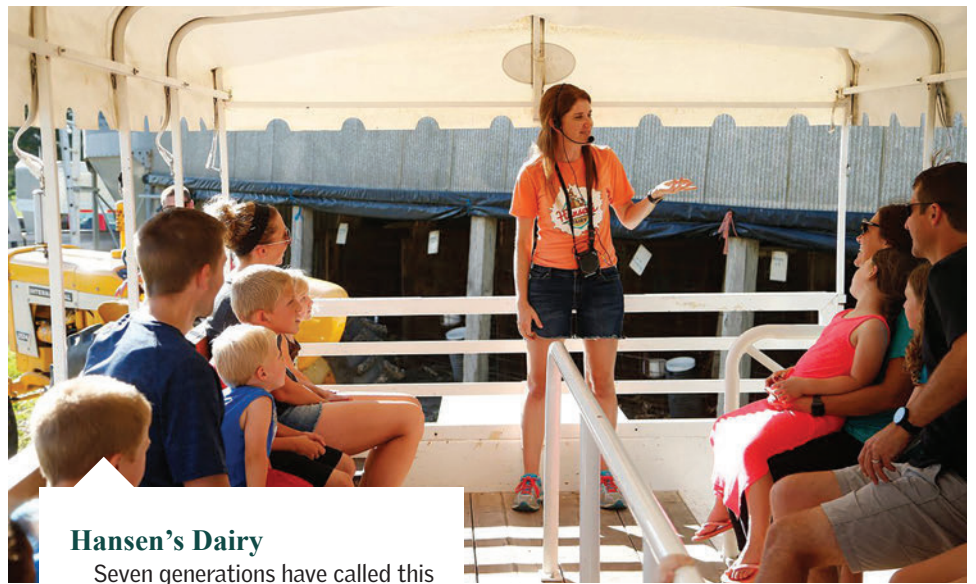
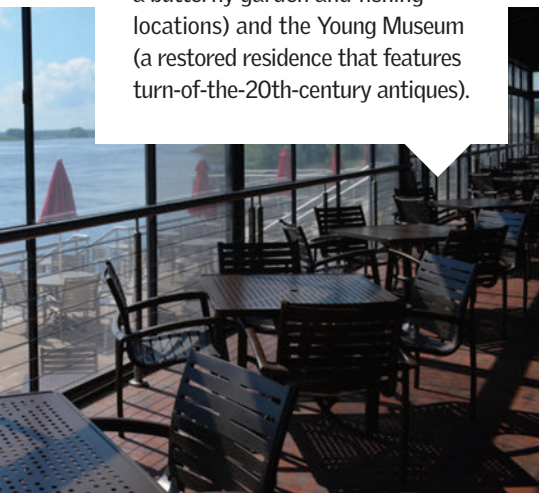
Tucked away in the heart of northeast Iowa, this serene county features meandering trout streams, rugged sandstone bluffs and springs that will especially appeal to nature-lovers. Groups will want time to explore the Effigy Mounds National Monument, the only national monument in Iowa. Hundreds of mounds, many shaped like animals, dot a landscape intersected by hiking trails, peaceful marshland and the Yellow River. Other stunning nature areas for exploration include Yellow River State Forest, the Driftless Area Scenic Byway and Black Hawk Bridge, which offers uninhibited views of the majestic Mississippi River. The region's newest attraction is the Driftless Region Education & Visitor Center.





Baymont Inn & Suites (Bellevue)

Welcoming hospitality and spectacular views of the Mississippi River await guests at this exceptional hotel. Guests will enjoy free Wi-Fi and breakfast in addition to an indoor pool, a fitness room, guest laundry and a 24-hour market kiosk with items for purchase. The property welcomes groups and offers two meeting rooms: a 550-square-foot conference room and the 3,500-square-foot Riverfront Event Center, which can accommodate 50 to 350 guests. Local attractions include River Ridge Brewing, the South Bluff Nature Center (which features a butterfly garden and fishing locations) and the Young Museum (a restored residence that features turn-of-the-20th-century antiques).



Hansen's Dairy

Seven generations have called this Hudson farm home since 1864, and the creamery continues to produce high-quality butter, ice cream and milk on-site. The family is happy to welcome groups for a tour of the property, which includes a behind-the-scenes look at the milking and bottling processes. You can also meet and feed the dairy's mascots: a pack of playful kangaroos. Tours conclude at the Tour Center, a monolithic concrete dome that serves fresh ice cream and chocolate milk for famished visitors. The center is available for event rental and can seat up to 90 guests with a full kitchen, restrooms and AV capability.

Visit Muscatine

Surrounded by river bluffs and rolling hills, this charming city in eastern Iowa has been at the crossroads of history for centuries. Mark Twain wrote of its unique sunsets, abolitionists developed Underground Railroad stops here and Al Capone used the city's secret tunnels during the peak of his mob power. Today, visitors can appreciate the Muscatine Art Gallery (a restored Edwardian mansion that showcases the decorative arts), the Environmental Learning Center (85 acres of pristine prairie land that contains fishing ponds and an arboretum) and beautiful Mississippi River views along the Great River Road. ■

Traer Shaker Gallery

The Midwest's largest salt and pepper shaker gallery is a pure slice of Americana and houses over 16,000 sets of shakers, nesters and condiment containers to admire. The collection is the lifelong passion of Ruth Rasmussen, who has been collecting the ceramic keepsakes since 1946. Themed areas focus on famous politicians, the 50 American states and farm animals, and Rasmussen's most-prized pair depicts Princess Diana and Prince Charles. Other highlights include a collection of ornate beer steins, a shaker shaped like Grant Wood's famous *American Gothic* painting and a sports section with shakers shaped like bowling pins and famous football players.



Made in Iowa

Sample and purchase exceptional wine, beer
and art created by the state's finest makers



Looking for an authentic Iowa gift to bring back home or want to sample some of the Midwest's finest wines? Iowa studios and farms are overflowing with handmade pieces of art, small-batch craft beer and fresh-picked produce to pique the interest of any palate.

Brewing

America's craft beer boom has also flourished in Iowa, where brewers have easy access to grains and fresh water to create award-winning brews for every taste. Located just outside of Ames on a 40-acre, family-owned farm, **Alluvial Brewing Company** allows visitors to sample spring ales and lagers while walking through preserved wetlands and

vegetable rows. Continue west to the nearby city of Boone, home of the **Boone Valley Brewing Company**. Favorites in this intimate pub include the Roxie Irish Red and Halligan Porter for those who prefer their brews on the sweet side. A nearby agritourism adventure awaits at **Jefferson County Ciderworks**, which owns over 700 heirloom apple trees to create tasty creations that integrate flavors like lavender, orange and hibiscus.

Large groups can rent the immense, multistory taproom at **Toppling Goliath**, Decorah's premier culinary attraction and the only place to enjoy signature creations like the Pseudo Sue Pale Ale and Golden Nugget IPA on tap. For live music in a more intimate pub atmosphere, head to **Franklin Street Brewing** in Manchester, which serves IPAs and blonde ales that won prizes at the Iowa State Fair. Other charming craft breweries include **Albia Brewing Company** (which also serves fresh wood-fired pizzas), **River Ridge Brewing Company** (which boasts gorgeous views of the Mississippi River) and **Peace Tree Brewing** (located in the heart of Des Moines' hip East Village neighborhood).

Wine

Iowa's fertile soil produces wines that rival California for variety and quality at a fraction of the cost, and groups can embark on wine trail adventures and vineyard tours without the tourism congestion of northern California. Begin your wine excursion at **Prairie Moon Winery** in Ames, which features a spacious tasting room to sample the signature Honey Moon red (a juicy semisweet red made with locally sourced Concord grapes). Personalized visits can be arranged at **Barrel Head Winery**, a family-run farm outside Dubuque where members of the Burns family can lead a walking tour of the grounds before offering samples of Dry Tomcat champagne and Sweet Cranberry fruit wine.

Cedar Valley Winery, housed in a charming red barn and featuring peaceful views of the surrounding vineyards, offers tours and tastings of its French and American hybrid varietals in the town of Batavia. Offerings include the Vignoles white, Chambourcin red and Foch rosé for easy drinking. One of Iowa's more unique wine

experiences is **Corning Winery's** floating tasting room, where visitors walk on a gangplank to reach a nautically inspired space that includes an aquarium on the floor.

Crafts

Black Hawk County, which encompasses Waterloo and Cedar Falls, is the site of over 25 barn quilts, exquisite folk art designs painted on barns or homes by local families. Embark on a self-guided tour to see as many homes as you'd like, and most families are glad to explain their art with advanced notice. A similar itinerary awaits in **Clayton County**—home to 30 barn quilt designs to admire. Located in downtown Winterset, the **Iowa Quilt Museum** rotates its exhibits every three months to showcase quilting history and creations of local artists, who are sometimes on hand to discuss their work.

More idiosyncratic art can be found throughout the state, such as the elaborate creations at **Matchstick Marvels**. Gladbrook craftsman Patrick Acton has constructed over 70 pieces entirely from wooden matchsticks that resemble the U.S. Capitol, Notre Dame Cathedral and Challenger spacecraft. By appointment, visitors can also see the elaborate woodcarving creations of **Jack Becker** in Dyersville. Highlights include the largest carved clock in Iowa, elaborate chessboards and replicas of the Twelve Apostles. Isabel Bloom was a Davenport-

based artist who became internationally renowned for her concrete sculptures of animals and young children. Learn about her legacy and purchase a sculpture for yourself on a 45-minute tour of the museum and workshop, where you can witness sculptors shaping and firing the elaborate figures.

The Amana Colonies (seven closely united villages originally founded by German Lutherans) feature artisan shops that sell wine, baked goods and—most notably—furniture. Crafted using 19th century methods with painstaking detail, these beautiful pieces are available for sale at businesses such as the **Amana Furniture & Clock Shop**.

Farms

For a thorough agritourism experience, stay for **Cinnamon Ridge's** Farm to Table event, an evening of food, drink and education provided by the friendly Cinnamon Ridge farmers. Groups will dine on white tablecloths outside the farmhouse and can sample local produce, ride farm equipment and chat with local growers between courses.

Groups can also emulate Iowa artisans themselves with a visit to **Three Pines Farm** in Black Hawk County. A variety of cooking and crafting classes are offered at an 1865 farmstead where friendly fifth-generation farmers can teach visitors how to basket-weave, stitch a necktie or bake a homemade pie in a state-of-the-art kitchen. ■



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VENUES IN IOWA

CONCERTS, OPERA HOUSES AND MUCH MORE TO EXPERIENCE IN IOWA

The Hawkeye State offers much more for group travelers than just rolling plains and fertile corn harvests. Iowa provides numerous spots dedicated to lovers of the arts and a music scene that will offer your group a unique, memorable experience.



PARAMOUNT THEATRE, CEDAR RAPIDS

The theater, built in the 1920s, seats 1,690 guests and is one out of 300 movie palaces still standing in the United States. Over the years the prominent feature of the historical theater has been the "Mighty" Wurlitzer organ, which was used for many forms of entertainment through generations of performers. Today the Paramount is a home to Orchestra Iowa and the Cedar Rapids Area Theater Organ Society. Annual dance recitals, concerts and Broadway Series are hosted. Groups can enjoy guided tours that reveal backstage and hidden corridors while also getting to stand on the same stage as greats like Willie Nelson and B.B King.



SURF BALLROOM & MUSEUM, CLEAR LAKE

The Surf Ballroom is largely associated with the event known as "The Day the Music Died" after rock stars Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens had their last performance during the "Winter Dance Party Tour" and, immediately leaving, died in a plane crash. The Surf got its name from the dance floor that closely resembled a 50's ocean-style dance club. The hand-painted art on the walls illustrates palm trees, surf waves, lighthouses and sailboats. The bamboo furniture and island décor create a feeling as if you're dancing under a sky full of stars. The property includes a Wall of Fame that commemorates all of the famous artists who have performed there, a museum of memorabilia and a souvenir shop.



ENGLERT CIVIC THEATRE, IOWA CITY

Previously a livery stable where horses were kept, this theater was built in 1912 and was able to seat 1,071 people. In 1999, the theater was closed after 88 years of a mixture of live theater and movie showings. It reopened in 2004 and has flourished as a live performance theater. Today, Iowa City's historic theater shines a light on local performers and traveling tour performances. Year-round, musicians, comedians, dancers and actors each tell a different story with their art. The theater's event series include the Witching Hour (a festival dedicated to the unusual and unexplained) and the Mission Creek Festival (the Midwest's premier independent literary gathering).



DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

The Des Moines Civic Center staged its first show in 1979 and has since been a hotspot destination for travelers and locals alike. Capable of seating 2,744 people, it is Iowa's largest performing arts center. The building and grounds are used for Broadway shows, ballets and concerts. If your group is interested in renting a venue, Des Moines Performing Arts offers the Civic Center, outdoor space in Cowles Commons or balcony lounges. Along with providing space for a private event, the Performing Arts Center offers tours for groups of eight or more at a venue of your choice.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE, DUBUQUE

Built in 1890, this opera house is considered a "national treasure." It is home to the largest stage in Dubuque and is the last standing opera house in town. In the past the Grand has witnessed countless famous actors, musicians and choreographers.

From *Mary Poppins* to *The Addams Family*, there's something for every member of your group. The Grand offers group rates for parties of 12 or more attending a performance together, and theater rental for concerts, recitals, weddings or corporate events. ■

Iowa FUN FACTS




- The Red Delicious apple was developed in Iowa. Jesse Hiatt, a farmer in Madison County, entered his "Hawkeye" apple in a fruit fair, where it was catapulted to America's favorite apple.
- Iowa boasts the nation's highest literacy rate (over 99%). From creative writing at the University of Iowa to Laura Ingalls Wilder history in Burr Oak, the state is teeming with literary attractions.
- There are more golf courses per capita in Iowa than any other state. Over 440 private and public courses are available for a tee time bookings for groups seeking a fairway escape.
- Snake Alley in Burlington has been declared the "Most Crookedest Street in the World." Visitors can ascend the 275-foot-long road that was designed by German immigrants who modeled the walkway after the winding vineyard paths of the Old County.

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Day 1

Depart from Omaha for the city of Clarinda, home of the **Glenn Miller Birthplace Home & Museum**. Visitors will learn about the famous bandleader's childhood, rise to stardom, service in World War II and musical legacy. Continue to Corning to tour **Johnny Carson's Birthplace**. Visitors will walk through a house that recreates 1920s Midwestern life with authentic furnishings and artifacts from *The Tonight Show* host's television career. After enjoying a gourmet sandwich at Primrose Restaurant, groups will stop in Winterset to experience the **Boyhood Home of John Wayne Historical Site**. The modest four-room home has been restored to its 1907 appearance, and the new adjacent museum displays posters, costumes and scripts from the movie star's many Western films. Your day will conclude with dinner at the **Des Moines Social Club**, an innovative entertainment space housed in a renovated art deco firehouse.

Burger at the **Surf District Rock 'n' Roll Grill** (a family-owned restaurant that honors legends of rock with memorabilia, live music and a soda fountain-inspired menu). The nearby **Surf Ballroom** is where Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper performed their final concert before tragically dying in a plane crash. Visitors will admire the Wall of Fame, walk across the famous dance floor and learn about early rock history from a tour guide. Today's final stop is Mason City, which has the largest collection of Frank Lloyd Wright-designed buildings in Iowa. *The Music Man* composer Meredith Willson grew up here, and groups will tour his childhood home and venture to **Music Man Square** (an indoor streetscape that recreates the musical's film adaptation). Guests will enjoy dinner at the **Historic Park Inn**, a beautifully preserved example of Prairie School architecture and the only surviving Frank Lloyd Wright-designed hotel.

Day 2

After breakfast at the hotel, travel to Gladbrook for a tour of **Matchstick Marvels**. Local craftsman Patrick Acton has used over six million wooden matchsticks to create miniature detailed replicas of famous structures like the International Space Station and Hogwarts from the Harry Potter book and film series. Your next stop is Clear Lake, where you will enjoy a Big Bopper

Day 3

Begin your morning in Dyersville and the **Field of Dreams Movie Site**, where you'll feel as if you've walked into the 1989 Kevin Costner film. Continue east for magnificent water views at the **National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium** in Dubuque. The 10-acre Smithsonian affiliate spotlights the animals, cultures and ecosystems of rivers from Lake Itasca to the Gulf of Mexico. Your motorcoach tour will conclude at the Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids.



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DYERSVILLE, IOWA



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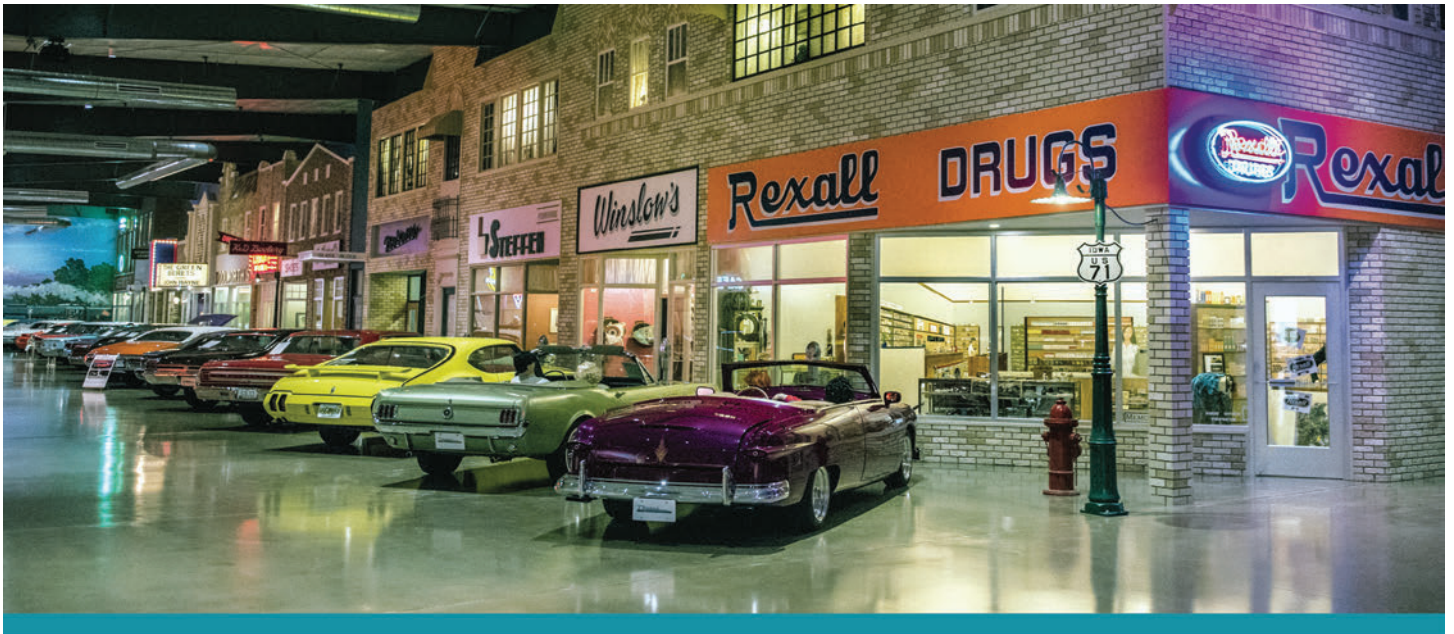
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MIDWEST MARKETPLACE THRIVES IN GALENA

The sixth annual trade show brought tour operators and Midwestern attractions together



By Miles Dobis

Independent tour operators and representatives from over 100 CVBs, attractions and hotels gathered in Galena, Illinois this April for the sixth annual Circle Wisconsin Midwest Marketplace. The event welcomed travel professionals from Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, South & North Dakota, Minnesota and Michigan for three days of industry connection.

Circle Wisconsin, a membership-based organization that promotes statewide tourism, hosted the event for the first time out of the state of Wisconsin at the Eagle Ridge Golf Resort & Spa in Galena. The campus includes stunning views of Lake Galena, 63 holes of golf and spacious villas and guest rooms that housed a majority of the marketplace's attendees.

"Members and attendees were very satisfied with the venue this year," said Circle Wisconsin Executive Director Wendy Dobrzynski. "Eagle Ridge allowed people to stay in traditional guest rooms, villas or in Galena itself, so there were numerous options for how people could enjoy the marketplace." "Although the event was hosted in a city just over the Wisconsin border, it gave us as an opportunity to highlight the beauty and attractions of the Mississippi River Road and Driftless Region of Wisconsin and the neighboring states."

Midwest Marketplace was established in 2014 with the goal of establishing a smaller



Forward Photography

Deanne Cunningham from North Dakota Tourism and Grace Ward Theodore from Roosevelt Medora Foundation attend Midwest Marketplace.

and more manageable trade event with a distinct emphasis on the Upper Midwest. "We wanted to develop a showcase for regions and attractions that sometimes lack proper promotion and enthusiasm at other shows,"

said Dobrzynski. "A more specific Midwestern regional focus benefits the buyers and sellers who are already nearby geographically."

Dobrzynski believes Midwest Marketplace's goal to match every tour operator and every attraction for at least one meeting gives it an advantage. Tour operators were encouraged to roam freely throughout the sales floor and take breaks to stay fresh. Buyers and sellers were matched for six-minute appointment sessions for a total of nearly 3,000 one-on-one meetings. Unlike many trade shows, Midwest Marketplace encourages a casual and contained atmosphere, with the entire sales floor fit into one ballroom. Tour operators were encouraged to socialize freely in between sessions, enjoy a variety of refreshments and visit a convenience station outside the hall that featured free pharmaceutical and office supplies.

"This is easily the best show to attend for a city of my size," said Visit Oshkosh Sales Director Cathy Cluff. "The focus on Midwestern operators and time between



Forward Photography

Daniel Jacobsen from Heritage Corridor CVB and Katelynn Venner with Star Destinations sit for one-on-one sessions in Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa's ballroom.



Midwest Marketplace promotes long-lasting connections with more appointments.

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Daniel O'Donnell



Oak Ridge Boys



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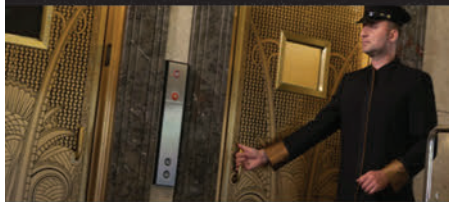
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sessions to take notes really shows that Circle Wisconsin is trying to make this as worthwhile as possible."

Taylor Rheinheimer, sales director for Blue Gate Theater in Shipshewana, agrees. "This is my first time attending Midwest Marketplace, and I absolutely couldn't recommend it enough," she said. "The six-minute appointment structure, the relatively small size and rest time between sessions all made this extremely worthwhile. Anyone located in the Midwest should consider it."

Dobrzynski and her team excelled at evening activities that showcased the Galena area and its signature attractions. Conference-goers were able to explore downtown Galena on Sunday evening and patronize restaurants and stores that stayed open late to showcase the district. The evening began at the DeSoto House Hotel, a Victorian-style building that dates back to 1855 and famously hosted an Abraham Lincoln campaign stop. Local wineries, brewers and distilleries offered free samples to attendees, and costumed Civil

War reenactors mingled and offered photo opportunities.

"We really wanted to spotlight the Mississippi River and Driftless Regions along with Galena's heritage and the wealth of potential group-friendly offerings in the area," said Dobrzynski.

With another well-received Midwest Marketplace in the books, Dobrzynski sees no end in sight for Circle Wisconsin's

expansion and the Marketplace's success. "The membership base is growing at a steady annual rate, and the positive feedback this year was encouraging for future events," she said.

The 2020 Circle Wisconsin Midwest Marketplace is set for April 19-21 at the Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center in Oshkosh. Registration will open in fall of 2019. **IGT**



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Northwoods and Lake Superior, Wisconsin

Surprises in Wisconsin's Northwoods and Lake Superior

Day 1

Start your tour in Wausau with a visit to the **Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum**. This museum celebrates wildlife through art and is internationally known for its yearly *Birds In Art* exhibition each fall. Continue north to the Minocqua Area, which is the hub of the Northwoods.

The **Minocqua Area** features supper clubs, shopping, cafes, ice cream stands, outfitters, real lumberjack shows, the oldest amateur ski show in the United States, museums, and gaming.

Day 2

As you travel north and west toward Lake Superior, enjoy the beauty that is the Northwoods of Wisconsin. Before exploring the lake region, stop at the **Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center and Natural History Museum**. Here, you can learn about the cultural and natural history of this vibrant area. Head north again, to the town of Bayfield, to board the **Madeline Island Ferry** that will take you to the only inhabited island of the Apostle Islands.

Enjoy a tour and learn about the history and the daily life on this island in one of the Great Lakes. Tonight, stay at **Legendary Waters Resort and Casino** and enjoy the sunset.

Day 3

Stop at the tip of Wisconsin for a nice photo opportunity before heading south to Superior. In Superior, you'll visit the **Richard Bong Veterans Historical Center**. Richard Bong, a World War II pilot, is considered the "Ace of Aces" and is from the area. The museum highlights Bong's career along with a restored P-38 Lightning plane. Afterward, enjoy a tour of **Fairlawn Mansion**, a Queen Anne Victorian home built in 1891, featuring a four-story turret complete with widow's watch overlooking the bay. Fairlawn Mansion is a well-recognized landmark in Superior. In summer, gardens dot the expansive lawns with traditional flower varieties, such as peony, rose, hydrangea and lily. Begin your journey south to the town of Spooner and enjoy an evening dinner aboard the **Wisconsin Great Northern Railroad train**.

Day 4

This morning, stop at **Spooner Fish Hatchery** in Spooner, the largest fish hatchery in the state. It is also known as the world's largest hatchery of muskie, producing up to 2.5 million small muskie a year. Before beginning your travels home, a stop at the 150-plus year-old **Leinenkugel's brewery** is a must. The brewery is considered the 7th oldest in the U.S. and the oldest operating business in Chippewa Falls.

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The holiday season in Northern Indiana Amish Country is filled with fun, food and festive traditions. Feel the warmth from friendly Amish businesses as they invite you into their homes for a peek into the window of their unique world.

Amish Country, Northern Indiana

An Amish Country Christmas

Day 1

Craft Elkhart is the place to find unique handmade pieces of art from local and global craftsmen. Featured glass blowing artist Beau Kyle will share his passion for glass blowing while bringing art to life in front of your eyes. An option is available to participate and make your own blown glass piece of art to take home under Beau's careful instruction and supervision.

Stroll through a winter wonderland at **Linton's Enchanted Gardens Holiday Village** where the scent of fresh pine and mulled cider fill the air. Linton's offers 50,000 square feet of spectacular seasonal displays including 100 themed trees that feature more than 10,000 unique ornaments. There's something for everyone on your list making your holiday shopping.

Wellfield Botanic Gardens' Winter Wonderland Holiday Lights will transport you to a magical setting of lights, sound and beauty. This event is perfect for families to enjoy during the holiday season. Featuring professional light displays accentuating the natural beauty of Wellfield, the 1/2-mile Promenade Pathway is aglow with color and texture, framing the garden spaces, as you've never seen them before!

Another fun stop is the **Blue Gate Dinner & Theatre** featuring Daniel O'Donnell's *Christmas & More* experience performing December 8th through the 14th, or the **Amish Acres Family Style Threshers Dinner & Round Barn Theatre** production of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Day 2

Savor a delicious breakfast at your host hotel and

meet your guide. Then, get ready to stuff your stocking with treats and trinkets from one-of-a-kind Amish businesses on the **Stocking Stuffer Tour of Amish Country Back Roads**. Choose your stops on this customizable experience and we'll supply the Christmas stocking. Included in your day is **Holiday Cookie Baking Demo & Tasting**, plus **Haystack Lunch** on an Amish family farm.

After a festive day of touring you'll be ready to dine on traditional family recipes either buffet or family style at **Das Dutchman Essenhaus Dinner & Theatre**. Following dinner, take your seat in Heritage Hall for the holiday themed *Flight 1225* production.

Day 3

Delight this morning in the **Tour of Trees and Christmas Shopping in the Essenhaus Village Shops**. Roam the exquisitely decorated grounds and shop until you drop at the village shops.

A local Amish family, Glendon and Kathy Yoder and their children, welcome you to their **Country Camel Farm**. Learn the facts about camels while petting and feeding them. Using white, silver and gold yarn and led by **The Fiber 6** art expert, you'll make a **Christmas Star God's Eye Mandela Ornament**. After a fun experience, **Nelson's Catering** will provide lunch.

Depart for home with Christmas gifts and fond memories of Northern Indiana's Amish Country.

For those who wish to extend their stay, add a day filled with Christmas harp music, Christmas card uncycling, shopping, a Living Nativity experience and light displays. There's plenty of great dining available, too.

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McHenry County, Illinois

Discover McHenry County Mysteries

Day 1

Your adventure begins on the charming **Woodstock Square**, home of one of Illinois' best farmer's markets and the filming location of the classic 1993 film *Groundhog Day*. The first stop is a tour of the **Woodstock Opera House**, built in 1889. Many famous faces have gotten their start there. You will have time to explore and shop the many small businesses that call Woodstock home.

Hungry? Your group will find its way to the **Public House of Woodstock** located inside of the Woodstock Old Courthouse. Sit in old jail cells and enjoy a soup and sandwich lunch. Don't miss a picture at the bar. This is where Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell toasted to world peace in *Groundhog Day*.

Hop back on the bus and make your way to the **Illinois Railway Museum**. Nestled on the western side of McHenry County, it's North America's largest operating demonstration railroad. Volunteers who restore, dispatch and run the trains down the tracks run this museum.

Wrap up the day with dinner at the **Crystal Lake Rib House**. This family-owned rib joint has been serving authentic BBQ in large portions for more than 30 years. They are always excited for groups to stop by and enjoy a hearty dinner with a side of friendly service.

Now it's time to head to the hotel and check in for the night. McHenry County has a variety of accommodating, comfortable hotels that will suit your group's needs.

Day 2

Breakfast at your hotel before making your way to the country's largest auto museum, **Volo Auto**

Museum. Whether your group is filled with car buffs or antique lovers, this 35-acre destination will keep them engaged for hours.

Tucked away just off of IL-Route 14, overlooking the town of Fox River Grove is the unique and majestic **Bettendorf Castle**. Built by Theodore "Teddy" Bettendorf after immigrating to America from Luxembourg in 1931, this gem is a hand-built masterpiece. The owners will give an in-depth grounds tour of their castle where your group can explore and ask questions as they please.

To wrap up your fun-filled day, head to **Port Edward Restaurant** for a classy dinner along the Fox River. This is a local favorite that has been offering seafood for more than 50 years and has been named one of the most unique dining locations in the country. To add to the uniqueness, **Potts & Pans Steelband** can be hired to entertain your group with the sounds of the islands.

Day 3

The unbelievable **Sanfilippo Estate** is a must-see when visiting McHenry County. The Sanfilippo family calls this home, but open their doors to group tours to explore their elaborate collection of automated music machines, a European Salon Carousel and 8,000-pipe Wurlitzer Theatre Organ. The collection is unlike anything you have seen before and may ever see anywhere else. This is a three-hour docent lead tour, so make sure to leave plenty of time in your schedule for this stop.

Before you hit the road to head home, don't miss a stop at **Brunch Café**. The variety of menu items will leave everyone in your group full and happy.



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Behind Quincy's aesthetic beauty lies a layer of astounding elements revealing colorful characters. Tour magnificent homes along the Maine Street Mile, enjoying culinary and libation specialties.

Quincy, Illinois

Enjoy an Architecture Tour in Quincy

Day 1

Enjoy breakfast and a tour of the **All Wars Museum** on the grounds of the first veterans home in Illinois, once home to Albert Cashier, aka Jennie Rodgers. Cashier was born a female who disguised herself as a man to fight in the Civil War. Her case is one of the most famous of its kind as she continued to adopt a male identity thereafter.

With an entertaining step-on guide, pause at the **Birthplace of Mary Astor**, an acclaimed Hollywood starlet known for her crowning role in *The Maltese Falcon* with Humphrey Bogart. Next, tour the **Monckton Mansion**, rumored for mob activity, ghosts, basement vaults and elaborate underground tunnels.

Make a stop at **Underbrink's Bakery** in John Mahoney's (of *Frasier* fame) old college stomping grounds. Savor heavenly angel food cupcakes during a behind-the-scenes tour of this 1929 German bakery.

The intrigue continues as stories of Michael Swango, James B. Stewart and other characters are revealed along the **Off the Record Tour**. Swango, known as the "Doctor of Death," is believed to be linked to 60 deaths. Stewart, a Pulitzer Prize winner, was a Quincy contemporary of Swango and wrote the unsettling story of his life.

With a nod to the historically colorful downtown, lunch at **The Red Light Bar & Grill**, formerly the State Savings & Loan complete with original vaults.

Tour the caverns of **Dick Brothers Brewery**, once larger than Anheuser-Busch. Legend claims a Dick family member died in a vat of beer, and his ghost (Sudsy) haunts the halls of the former brewery.

In Nauvoo, visit the **Jonathan Browning Home & Gun Shop** of American inventor and friend of Abraham Lincoln. Indulge in the Hotel Nauvoo buffet, which

serves fried chicken and the inn's famous wild rice dressing and monstrous homemade cinnamon rolls.

Day 2

Bacon and a Bloody Mary for breakfast? Yes, please! Enjoy a fresh farm-to-table experience at **Thyme Square Café**, in the former Busy Bee Mercantile building. The chefs cure and smoke local meat and own the distinction of being the only artisan bread bakers in a 100-mile radius.

Head south a block to embark on the **Maine Street Mile**, beginning at Quincy's first public library, which is now the History Museum overlooking historic Washington Park. Absorb the stunning stained-glass gallery and area historical exhibits, then peruse the park to see **Lincoln Storyboards** and the **Sixth Lincoln-Douglas Debate Site**. Continue past the sleek 1962 **St. Boniface Church**, the first mass site of Father Tolton in 1886.

Approach 16th and Maine as the street opens wide to expose what National Geographic claimed "one of 10 most architecturally-significant corners in the U.S." Tour the 20,000-square-foot **Quincy Museum**, formerly the Newcomb Stillwell mansion, with 14-carat gold woodwork.

Break for a swanky lunch at **Boodalu Steakhouse**, before enjoying **private home tours** in the East End Historic District. See three stunning homes from a selection of 18, via tours conducted by the homeowners.

Shop vintage and boutique stores along Maine before retiring to **The Patio Restaurant** downtown. Sip a retro Grasshopper to channel the restaurant's mid-century origins home of the fabulous two-inch-thick pork chop.



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Twin Cities Attraction • Minnesota

The Minnesota Vikings Museum has opened at the football team's training facility in Eagan. Featuring a 360-degree video theater, interactive exhibits and hundreds of artifacts, it chronicles significant moments in franchise history in a sparkling, 14,000-square-foot space that is part of Twin Cities Orthopedics Performance Center. Located just south of TCO Stadium and adjacent to the Vikings Locker Room Store, the museum features exhibits on the evolution of the team's logo and uniforms, permanent home venues and the accomplishments of players and coaches over the years. (vikings.com/fans/vikings-museum)

Delta Queen Steamboat to Resume River Voyages • Missouri

New owners of the historic Delta Queen Steamboat, based in Kimmswick, Missouri,

plan to resume overnight voyages on inland waterways in 2020. Leah Ann Ingram, vice president and chief operating officer of the Delta Queen Steamboat Company, said, "The Delta Queen is an American icon that offers a nostalgic experience unlike any other vessel. Since 2010, restoring and returning her to overnight service has been our mission." After the paddlewheeler undergoes an extensive renovation at a shipyard in Houma, Louisiana, themed voyages will operate on the Mississippi, Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland, Kanawha and Arkansas rivers. (deltaqueen.com)

Auto Museum Opens • Kansas

The Midwest Dream Car Collection has opened in Manhattan, Kansas. On display are roadsters from the early 20th century, classics from the 1950s and '60s, and a variety of muscle cars and exotics. The

collection includes custom-made, matching 1966 Mustang convertibles that belonged to singing duo Sonny and Cher. Among the exotics are Ferraris and a 2014 Lamborghini once owned by former racing driver Mario Andretti. (midwestdreamcarcollection.org)

Woodstock Turns 50 at Rock & Roll Hall of Fame • Ohio

Woodstock at 50 will celebrate the highlights and impact of the historic Woodstock music festival that took place over one rainy three-day weekend in August 1969. In the late 1960s, music became the counterculture's most significant cultural expression, and Woodstock became its touchstone. Groups and artists such as Jefferson Airplane, Sly & The Family Stone, The Who, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix and many others defined the new sound. (rockhall.com)



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New Addition to Cincinnati Museum Center • Ohio

The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center is the latest addition to the Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal. Video interviews with local survivors, activated by touch screens, recall heartbreaking scenes of violence, deportation, family separation, public humiliation, and life in Auschwitz and other concentration camps. Black-and-white film footage chronicles the rise of Nazism in Germany, Nuremberg Trials and other historical events. Artifacts include family photos, letters, official documents and Nazi paraphernalia. (holocaustandhumanity.org, cincymuseum.org)



Holocaust & Humanity Center

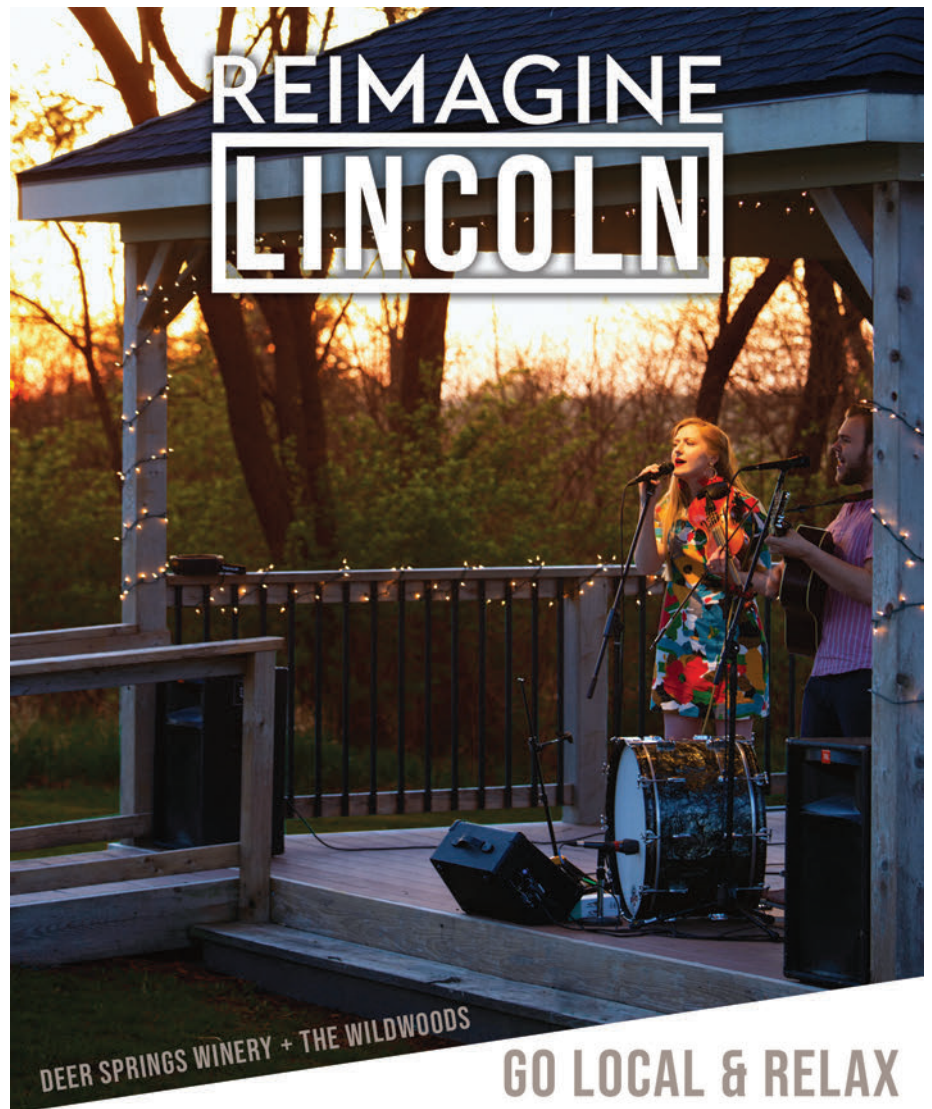
Chicago's South Side Awaits Obama Center • Illinois

The Obama Presidential Center is expected to open in 2021 in historic Jackson Park on the South Side of Chicago, not far from where Barack and Michelle Obama lived and where the first lady grew up. Expected to attract up to 760,000 annual visitors, it will include three buildings—a museum, forum and library—that will form a campus surrounding a public plaza for performances, markets and fairs. There will be play areas, walking paths and even a sledding hill. The museum's lower floors will house exhibitions that tell the Obamas' story within the context of civil rights, African-American, Chicago and United States history. The top floor of the four-sided tower will be free and open to the public, featuring an observation space with views of Lake Michigan and Jackson Park. (obama.org/the-center)

Chicago Museum to Feature Wearable Technology • Illinois

Wired to Wear, an expansive exhibition dedicated to the future of wearable technology, is running through May 2020 at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. Guests will learn how merging technology into clothing will transform what we wear into devices that will make us healthier, stronger

and smarter. The exhibit brings together more than 100 artifacts from around the world, created by innovators including Born Just Right, Google, Quantum XPR, Gravity Industries, Nike and Microsoft. Examples include a customizable digital backpack, an airbag for cyclists and a jet suit that can travel at more than 30 miles per hour and ascend to 12,000 feet. (msichicago.org)



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Minnesota

Explore Minnesota's History, Heritage

Day 1

Begin your Duluth visit with a tour of the 1908 **Glesheen Mansion**, a 30-room mansion on the shores of Lake Superior with 12 acres of gardens. Guided tours share stories of the historic Congdon Estate, which housed one of Minnesota's most influential families. Glesheen Mansion is the most visited house museum in the Midwest.

Visit the **Great Lakes Aquarium** and discover species primarily found in the Great Lakes Basin, along with exhibits showcasing native animals in their habitat. Educational programs are available to learn more about river otters, regional birds and freshwater fish.

Day 2

There's no better way to see Duluth and Lake Superior than on the **North Shore Scenic Railroad**. The popular 90-minute Duluth Zephyr travels through downtown and along Lake Superior. Or, enjoy a full day adventure beginning with the **Two Harbors Turn** route featuring a scenic ride and layover in beautiful Two Harbors for lunch, shopping, sightseeing and admission to the **Lake Superior Railroad Museum**. The museum features 23 locomotives and more than 40 additional displays of train cars, each a significant part of Minnesota's iron ore industry.

Another option is to meet your coach in Two Harbors for a short drive to **Gooseberry Falls State Park** to experience the thunderous roar of the upper, middle and lower falls.

Day 3

Visit the **International Wolf Center** in Ely for a close encounter with the resident wolf pack as they play, eat, sleep and tussle. Staff naturalists guide you through educational programs, activities or customized program content to discover the wolf/prey relationship. Downtown Ely is perfect for lunch on your own with time to visit the city's one-of-a-kind shops and galleries.

The **North American Bear Center** contains live black bears in their natural habitat with indoor and outdoor viewing areas. More than 50 video exhibits of wild Minnesota bears and a variety of daily programs shed light on bear behavior.

Day 4

Enjoy breakfast and check out before departing on a picturesque ride to Hibbing. Housed in the **Greyhound Bus Museum** are 13 historic buses. The story is told of Carl Wickman and Andrew "Bus Andy" Anderson who started their own bus service in 1914. Pictorial displays, artifacts, memorabilia, audiovisual presentations and a video tell how a two-mile route grew into the largest bus company in the world.

You can then travel to Grand Rapids for lunch at more than a dozen restaurants.

Authentic recreations of history from 1900 can be found at the **Forest History Center**. Visit Northwood No. 1, a white pine logging camp where you can meet the cook, clerk, blacksmith and lumberjacks. Continue your visit with a 1934 Forest Service patrolman and get a bird's eye view from atop the 100-foot fire tower.

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South Bend Mishawaka is a treasure trove of cultural collectives, fun festivals and glorious gatherings. With vibrant entertainment options, it is an all-encompassing family friendly destination with activities for kids and adults alike. Whether for a weekend or a week, plan your family getaway to South Bend Mishawaka and expect to be treated to the best of Indiana hospitality.

East Race Waterway

Located in the heart of downtown South Bend, the **East Race Waterway** is a unique recreational facility. As the first artificial whitewater course in North America, its rapids will challenge any adventure seeker. The waterway is approximately 1,900 feet long with a total fall of about 12 feet depending on the flow of the river. The banks of the waterway offer more than five total miles of paved and lighted walking and running paths along the scenic St. Joseph River.

Edge Adventures Aerial Park

Edge Adventures South Bend – Rum Village Park is one part of a 160-acre park that will fill your day with adventure. Situated a mere 15 minutes from **Notre Dame's** campus, this park is filled with treetop trails ranging from 16 feet to 60 feet in the air.

Participants choose their own self-guided course and engage in a combination of obstacles and zip lines as they maneuver their way through different trails.

Four Winds Field

Four Winds Field in downtown South Bend is home to the South Bend Cubs, a Class-A minor league baseball team affiliated with the Chicago Cubs. Built in 1987, Four Winds Field has won numerous awards including Ballpark Digest's Best Ballpark in 2017 and Ballpark Renovation of the Year in 2012.

Indoor Fun

Fun for the young and old at heart, **Strikes & Spares Entertainment Center** is where the family can go bowling, go-karting and play mini-golf. There is also a gaming arcade, bumper cars and an inflatable area with a bounce house, obstacle course and mega slide. With special promotions offered every day, enjoy bonus rounds of bowling and free go-kart rides. **Sky Zone** in Mishawaka is an indoor trampoline park. Visitors can experience the weightlessness of bouncing on a trampoline, flipping and landing in a pit filled with 10,000 foam cubes. Sky Zone is a fabulous place to host parties, from team building to birthdays, and are renowned for

providing amazing workouts and healthy fun.

Potawatomi Zoo

With around 500 "wild" residents on its 23 acres, **Potawatomi Zoo** is the oldest zoo in Indiana. With a humble beginning as a duck pond, the zoo houses animals, birds and reptiles. Come see the African lion, giant anteater, amur leopard, American flamingo, barn owl and African crowned crane and black tree monitor, among other species. Other attractions at the zoo include the Zoo Train, Endangered Species Carousel and Zoo Farm Feeding Area.

Featured Hotels and Facilities

The Inn at Saint Mary's – a boutique hotel on the campus of Saint Mary's College with an Innjoy Café inside serving Starbucks coffee.

Hilton Garden Inn – located next door to the Inn at Saint Mary's featuring a Bistro 933 restaurant serving cooked-to-order breakfast and dinner. **Gillespie Conference Center** – 15,000 square feet of flexible meeting and special event space.

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Devotion? Determination?

Ohio has IT!

A group of dedicated DMOs and suppliers has turned Ohio Has It! into a productive force in the group travel business

By Dave Bodle

Imagine the chagrin suppliers might feel if suddenly their state announces it will be dissolving its group sales efforts. It happened in Ohio in the spring of 2010, less than a year before ABA Marketplace was set to take place. Instead of letting Ohio's group offerings fade into the background, a planning committee of five got to work.

The initial goal was to organize a membership so Ohio would be represented at the 2011 ABA Marketplace. The committee's target was 25 members, a goal they accomplished in that first year, where almost 50 members joined. Tiffany Gerber, group tour coordinator at Holmes County C.O.C. & Tourism Bureau and original Ohio Has It! committee member, said, "We went from exceeding our first-year goal of 25 partners and a booth at the 2011 ABA Marketplace to taking appointments at multiple shows."

The importance of Ohio Has It! is stated by Roger Dudley, director of tourism sales at Experience Columbus and president of Ohio has It! "Currently, the state does not have a group sales person," Dudley said. "We are a

membership organization filling that void and keeping Ohio relevant in the tour and travel marketplace. We attend national and niche trade shows to gather leads for our members and talk with operators regarding their needs and how Ohio Has It! can fulfill them."

There are tremendous benefits to individual members. "The existence of Ohio Has It! allows members an awesome opportunity to expand our reach and message," said Sharrona Burns, senior director of sales for the Rock & Roll



"The existence of Ohio Has It! allows members an awesome opportunity to expand our reach and message."


— Sharrona Burns, senior director of sales for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame

Hall of Fame. "Many of the shows we're unable to budget, but our partnership and collaboration allows us to be represented."

From the beginning, membership grew quickly as word spread and then stayed steady between 100 to 120 members. As the organization gets ready for its 10th anniversary in 2020, membership has risen to 140 because of members coming on with multiple properties, including the Ohio History Connection and hotel management companies.

Along with a membership growth, Ohio Has It! has gone from having a booth on the 2011 ABA Marketplace floor to regularly taking appointments at NTA Travel Exchange and ABA Marketplace. The organization has become a familiar face at Heartland Showcase, Tap Dance, SYTA and various group leader and regional shows based on location and budget.

In addition to trade shows, the organization maintains an informative website, produces an Ohio Has It! guide and occasionally will be seen in print advertising.

To begin your Ohio tour planning, visit Ohio Has It! online for itinerary ideas and member details. ohiohasit.com 

HIT THE RAILS IN OHIO

ADVENTURERS CAN SAVOR
HISTORIC TRAIN RIDES ALL ACROSS
THE BUCKEYE STATE



By Kathy Nolan

Ohio's famous Wright Brothers may have invented the first airplane, but passenger rail also played an important role in the region's fascinating history. Experience a rolling rendezvous with nature and national treasures on a vintage rail excursion. The nostalgic appeal of train travel has always interested urban adventurers, but these themed tours will also inspire them. Book your tickets to ride and keep your group

on track with authentic and alluring rail adventures in the Buckeye State.

Prepare to be transported in Cincinnati as delightfully smooth a cappella sounds from the Queen City Sisters fill the air when you step on board the historic Cincinnati Dinner Train, taking you back to another era. Indulge in a three-hour culinary excursion on the New York Central 447 dining car, authentically and beautifully restored to exact specs from 1947 with comfortable seating for 48 passengers. Relax with a classic cocktail

and enjoy an elegant four-course gourmet dinner while traveling 25 miles along a historic route. Take another step back and enter the Oasis Tavern lounge car for a glass of port and a few more retro favorites from the entertaining trio.

Reserve one to four historic dining cars for a private event, accommodating up to 160 attendees. The host suggests encouraging guests to dress in 1940s period clothing to simulate a pampered evening on an authentic rail excursion. The Cincinnati Dinner Train will add



Robert George

Visitors can travel through a lovely valley on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad.



Robert George

EXPERIENCE A ROLLING RENDEZVOUS WITH NATURE AND NATIONAL TREASURES ON A VINTAGE RAIL EXCURSION.

the 1937 Silver Fountain, a rear-end rounded observation dining car, to the list of attractions in late 2019 (cincinnati-railway.com/dinnertrain).

Ohio's Friendliest Train Robbery on the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway features a

horseback heist, reenacted by costumed bandits. The train crew distributes fake money for role-playing passengers before departure. Just like Jesse James and his gang, the bad guys stop the train and collect the counterfeit cash at gunpoint. Don't worry, though. Rumor has it, there is a new sheriff in town. Four robbery trains are scheduled to depart from the Nelsonville Depot in 2019 for two-hour excursions (hvsry.org).

Plan your Grape Escape in Independence. Climb aboard the Grape Escape train for an enjoyable evening of wine tasting as you wind down while weaving through 33,000 acres of Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Sip five vintage samples and travel through the scenic valley on a two-hour ride on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. Guests learn about featured wines, which are sampled in a commemorative CVSR tasting glass and paired with delicious appetizers. Various seating options are available for adults 21 and up. Custom group rates are available for 20 to 70 passengers on historic train cars (cvsr.org/grape-escape).

Travel the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail where, from 1827 to 1913, mules pulled canal boats laden with passengers and goods up and down the historic Ohio & Erie Canal. The train can be flagged down at any of the boarding stations by waving both arms over your head (one arm is just a friendly wave to the engineer).



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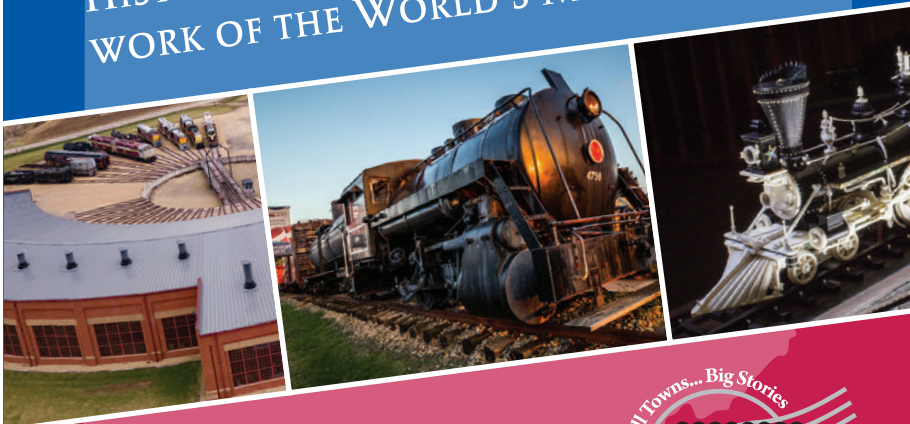
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OHIO TOUR IDEAS



Lorain and West Virginia Railway

Book your spirited group on one of many themed excursions, like the Bourbon Train. The Lebanon Mason Monroe Railroad offers historic train rides departing from downtown Lebanon. Ride in vintage railroad passenger cars hauled behind a hard-working diesel locomotive. The premium tasting experience includes seating in an exclusive deluxe car, samples of local spirits and a presentation from the featured distillery. Themed adult events last 90 minutes. Boarding begins an hour early so guests may enjoy early access to the tavern car (lebanonrr.com/bourbon).

Get ready to rock and roll in Wellington. The Lorain and West Virginia Railway introduces a new themed event in July. Rockabilly at the Railroad includes a rollicking ride, retro food and 60s dance music. Attendees are encouraged to dress in vintage attire and arrive in classic cars. Tickets go on sale 30-60 days prior to events and prices vary (lwwry.org).

The 1948 Ohio Railway Museum is one of America's oldest railroad museums and home to the Ohio Public Service Interurban Car No. 21, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Designed to educate through displays and demonstrations, the museum offers a glimpse of railroading's past through exhibits, static displays of steam engines and rides on an authentic Pullman passenger car. The museum is open May-December (ohiorailwaymuseum.org). **IGT**



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Fort Laurens, in Bolivar, is the site of Ohio's only Revolutionary War fort.



Celebrate OHIO'S MILITARY SPIRIT

Take a pilgrimage and learn about the state's proud patriotic history

By Kathy Nolan

With historic forts, heroic leaders and humbling stories, Ohio's proud patriotic legacy helps visitors understand centuries of conflict and hopefully find healing resolution. Monuments and museums pay homage to the independent American spirit, providing a glimpse into the lives of those who sacrificed so much to build better lives for so many others.

From first sight, the **National Veterans Memorial and Museum** impresses visitors with the importance of what lies within the awe-inspiring Columbus attraction. The iconic arch was constructed from 28 million pounds of concrete, with a spiral processional that ascends to a rooftop sanctuary, symbolizing the veteran experience. Guests embark on a narrative journey, following exhibitions focused on

the soldier, sailor, airman, Marine, Coast Guardsman and their families.

Individual stories and shared experiences are communicated through personal artifacts, quotes, letters, imagery and powerful films, using actual veteran voices telling their unique story. The interactive museum includes a Share Your Story booth where visitors can also share their personal history. Anchored by elm trees, a 2.5-acre memorial grove was



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designed for contemplation and reflection. Featuring three cascades of water and a reflecting pool, guests can pause in a peaceful space to remember and recognize the service and sacrifice of American veterans. The NVMM welcomes groups of 10 or more for both guided tours and self-guided visits with a 20 percent discounted admission rate, a dedicated entrance and other group privileges.

Continue your patriotic pilgrimage in Columbus exploring more military marvels at the **Ohio History Center**. The Follow the Flag exhibit features 10 authentic Civil War battle flags that have been conserved, accompanied by stories of those who lived through America's epic war, delivered in their own words. As designated caretaker of the battle flags collection, the Ohio History Connection continues to raise funds to conserve 400-plus Civil War flags, many with significant damage. In a 45-minute Follow the Flag tour, visitors participate in an exclusive experience. The battle flag case is unlocked, offering frontline access that brings participants close enough to smell the battlefield.

"Bring the whole family for a fun, interactive day filled with exhibits exploring everything from life in the 1950s to extinct and endangered Ohio species to an exquisite collection of restored Civil War battle flags," said Savannah Johnson, public relations coordinator for the Ohio History Connection. "Included in admission is our new exhibit, Ohio-Champion of Sports, which features over 70 stories and 35 oral histories that cover more than 25 sports ranging from baseball, football and basketball to roller derby, skateboarding and e-gaming."

Visitors can also experience the "Great War" in a new way, through a special World War I display at the Ohio History Center. View military uniforms and weapons, patriotic pins and other souvenirs that troops and volunteers brought home from Europe. Through documents and images from archival collections, see how the imagery of war changed, contrasting the bleakness of mud-splattered battlefields with the bright and vibrant posters found at home. In honor of the commemoration of the United States' entry into World War I, the Ohio History Center will host special 45-minute group tours.

Fort Laurens, in Bolivar, is the site of




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Ohio's only Revolutionary War fort and was built as a wilderness outpost. Visitors can tour a museum that tells the fascinating story of frontier soldiers. Americans completed the construction of Fort Laurens — named after Henry Laurens, president of the Continental Congress — in 1778. The fort was erected to serve three purposes: Americans hoped to use the fort as a base to attack the British garrison located at Detroit; the fort was intended to deter American Indians loyal to the British from conducting raids against American settlers in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania; and the fort offered protection to the neutral Christians of Delaware, with intentions to persuade them to forsake neutrality and join the cause of the Patriots. In total, 21 soldiers lost their lives at Fort Laurens before it was abandoned in 1779. The Tomb of the Unknown Patriot of the American Revolution pays homage to the unknown defenders of the fort.

Fort Meigs, in Perrysburg, marks the turning point in the western theater of war for American forces during the War of 1812. Your group can learn about the famous conflict at one of America's largest reconstructed log forts. Explore blockhouses, artillery batteries, a quartermaster's building and numerous maneuvers used by troops to defend the fort from British cannon fire. Learn about Ohio's role in the war at this National Historic Landmark through soldiers' letters and diaries, uniforms and weapons located in the adjacent museum and visitors center.

The **Grant Boyhood Home** in Georgetown housed Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president of the United States. From 1823, when the future leader was 1 year old, until 1839, when he left to attend West Point, Ulysses S. Grant lived in this historic structure. Preservationists bought and restored the home in 1977 and eventually donated the National Historic Landmark to the State

of Ohio in 2002. A multi-year \$1.4 million restoration of the home was completed in 2013. The house museum has dedicated rooms filled with Grant memorabilia and an additional wing provides more exhibit space. Tours include a field trip to the two-room school attended by Ulysses, built in 1829. Walk a little farther in Grant's footsteps and visit the birthplace of the famous Civil War general in nearby Point Pleasant.

Buffington Island Battlefield Memorial Park is a four-acre site commemorating the location of the only significant Civil War battle fought on Ohio soil in 1863. On the morning of July 19, Union troops cornered General John Hunt Morgan and his men as Confederates tried to cross the Ohio River. While Union troops dealt a heavy blow to Morgan's men and resources, General Morgan escaped after losing nearly half his men. Major Daniel McCook, patriarch of the fighting McCook family, was mortally wounded in the Ohio battle. **IGT**

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WITH SO MANY ARTISANS IN THE SOUTHEAST, IT MAKES SENSE TO FILL YOUR ITINERARY WITH A VISIT TO A GALLERY

By Dave Bodle

The memory of a trip often survives in the souvenir purchased. When we were younger, it might have been a T-shirt from our first concert. As we grew and matured, it was frequently something that was crafted in the destinations we visited. For today's group travelers, there's no better spot to buy local memories than the craft community.

FOLK ART CENTER ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Home to the Southern Highland Craft Guild, the Folk Art Center showcases the finest in traditional and contemporary crafts from the region. Seasonally, visitors can spend time with guild members as they demonstrate and talk about their craft. View the work of more than 300 artisans, many with offerings in the first-floor shop. Move up the quilt-lined ramp to experience the vibrant exhibitions in the Main Gallery, Focus Gallery and permanent collection. Although a visit to the center should be on every Asheville itinerary regardless of the year, 2019 is the 72nd anniversary of the Craft Fair of the Southern Highlands. Filling much of the U.S. Cellular Center in downtown Asheville, makers will display a wide variety of crafts. Mark your calendar for July 18-21 and again October 17-20. southernhighlandguild.org/folk-art-center/

FLORIDA CRAFTART ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

Formerly known as Florida Craftsmen, the organization was founded in 1951 and in 2014 became Florida CraftArt. In the Fine Craft Gallery, 250 of Florida's most talented craft artists display fine jewelry, clay, glass, ornaments and much more. New work arrives every week, so regardless of how many times you visit, there are always fresh offerings on display. In the Exhibition Gallery, seven curated shows are presented annually. In addition, educational programs, lectures, docent-led tours and workshops are available during the year. Plan your visit around any event, but allow time for shopping in the 2,500-square-foot retail gallery. floridacraftart.org

**OZARK FOLK CENTER STATE PARK
MOUNTAIN VIEW, ARKANSAS**

Combining crafts and regional music is not uncommon as they both have significant local importance. Arkansas has taken this grouping to a new level by bringing them together in a state park complete with lodging and dining. That's exactly what you will find at Ozark Folk Center State Park, which preserves the crafts and music of the Ozarks. In the Craft Village, as many as 24 artisans create, demonstrate and sell their goods during the season. Each crafter has their own shop with a wide variety of products, from stained glass and pottery to jewelry, quilts and much more available for purchase. Music fills Thursday through Saturday evenings as the 1,000-seat theater hosts live Ozark Mountain Music concerts. Those looking to enjoy a fine meal can visit the Skillet Restaurant, which is popular with groups and features a Southern country menu. arkansasstateparks.com/parks/ozark-folk-center-state-park/craft-village



The Ozark Folk Center State Park preserves the crafts and music of the Ozarks.

Casey Crocker

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The Southwest Virginia Cultural Center and Marketplace has become the hub to the area's craft, music, food, history and culture. In the home to the Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, visitors can listen to musicians play at regular concerts. Like the best of southwest Virginia music, The Gallery showcases the best of regional crafts. Here, you will discover an eclectic collection of items from the area's most talented artisans. All types of media are presented, resulting in everything from home décor to fashion jewelry. Visitors will be sure to find something that delights them. Groups are welcome and there's an onsite restaurant and meeting space available. swvculturalcenter.com

**GREAT SMOKY ARTS & CRAFTS COMMUNITY
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There are plenty of reasons to visit the Smoky Mountains area, from outdoor activities and scenic beauty to live entertainment and exciting attractions. Visitors and groups in the know "Do the Loop." This eight-mile loop takes you to more than 100 artists and craftsmen. With so many artisans, you can expect a wide assortment of offerings from watercolors and ceramics to stuffed bears. Carvers, weavers, silversmiths and dozens of additional artisans demonstrate their talents to visitors every day. In many cases, the shops' exteriors are a work of art providing an almost festive appearance. Twice yearly, the shopping opportunities extend to Gatlinburg's downtown. From November 26 through December 8, the Gatlinburg Convention Center will host dozens of booths featuring handcrafted gifts, perfect for the holiday season. Watch for dates of the annual four-day Easter Craft Show in 2020.

gatlinburgcrafts.com



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Mississippi has rich music, art and literature history. Governor Bill Waller believed crafts to be on that same platform and in 1973 began the development of the Craftsmen's Guild of Mississippi. For more than 45 years, the governor's insight was proven to be correct. Today, the guild has grown to more than 350 artisans, 80 percent of whom are from Mississippi. "To market" is an important part of the guild's mission and in 2007, it moved to its 20,000-square-foot headquarters, which has since been renamed the William Lowe "Bill" Waller, Sr. Craft Center. The gallery showcases member artisans' works from traditional folk items to more contemporary works. With each purchase, a biography of the craftsman who created the piece is included. craftsmensguildofms.org/galleries/gallery-at-the-ms-craft-center/



Dale Chihuly
Sapphire Star, 2010
9½ x 9½ x 9½'
The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, installed 2017
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Savannah - Historic and Hip

Day 1

Get to know **Savannah** by experiencing a city tour, either on an open-air trolley or with one of our highly trained step-on-guides. The tour lasts about 2 hours and will acquaint your group with our genteel Southern beauty. It will also give them a sample of the attractions they may want to explore later on their own. Be sure to stop at the awe-inspiring **Cathedral of St. John the Baptist** along the tour route. The Cathedral's interior boasts stunning murals, stained-glass windows and an impressive altar. It's free and worth it.

Savannah's past is exhibited by the many house museums and cultural centers in the area. Visit the birthplace of **Juliette Gordon Low**, founder of the **Girl Scouts**, the 1818 **Owens-Thomas House**, generally considered to be one of America's finest examples of English Regency architecture and featuring one of the few intact slave quarters in America.

Your group covered a lot of ground on their first day and they may want to have a casual bite to eat before retiring for the evening. Savannah's historic **River Street** has all types of casual and upscale dining options.

Day 2

Just 20 minutes from Savannah lies **Tybee Island**, "Savannah's beach," a uniquely charmed island offering a change of pace and taste. While there, take your group to the **Tybee Light Station**. Dating back to 1773, the lighthouse is one of America's most complete historic light stations. After the lighthouse, take the group to the nearby **Fort Pulaski National**

Monument. Built in 1829, the fort, which was at one time under the command of Robert E. Lee, surrendered after a 30-hour siege by Union forces.

Your guests will enjoy Savannah so much they'll want to take a piece of their experience home with them. Whether it's making body scrubs and bath salts, or fashioning your own Savannah-themed pillow, plank, or frame, there are lots of opportunities to create a lasting memory. That evening, dine aboard the **Savannah Riverboat's Georgia Queen**. Enjoy traditional Southern cuisine as you take a leisurely trip along the Savannah River, or book a Monday Night Gospel Dinner Cruise, always a crowd favorite!

Day 3

Start the day exploring **Wormsloe Plantation**, one of six sites in the **Moon River District**. Here groups can learn about early colonial life while getting hands-on experience making cloth or corn husk dolls that they can take as mementos, or even join an active archeological dig! Your visit to Wormsloe commences with the 1.3-mile drive down a live oak-canopied lane. Need a little afternoon sweet treat? Your group can take a mini cooking class at Chef Darin's Kitchen and make southern specialties such as pralines and shrimp and grits.

Located only minutes from historic downtown Savannah, the **National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force** marks the location where the Eighth Air Force was activated in 1942. The 90,000-square-foot museum is dedicated to preserving the history and stories of the mighty Eighth, the "greatest air armada of all time."

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Bodies Human exhibition returns to Myrtle Beach • South Carolina

An eye-opening and educational exhibition comprising actual human bodies and organs will make its return to Myrtle Beach. Known as the most sensational exhibition of our time, *BODIES HUMAN: Anatomy in Motion* will be on display at Broadway at the Beach this coming summer through September 29, with the option of extending the exhibition based on demand.

BODIES HUMAN: Anatomy in Motion exposes the inner workings of human anatomy by presenting actual human specimens, anatomical displays, reproductions of historic anatomical artwork and much more. By presenting an artful, compelling and dignified environment, guests will connect with the human artifacts on a personal level that will help them to better understand their

own bodies. The exhibit includes more than 100 specimens including organs and full bodies. Advanced tickets are on sale now at bodiesmyrtle.com.

Exhibit Salutes Mother-Daughter Duo • Tennessee

In an exhibit running through July 14, the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville takes a fresh look at the story of The Judds—mother Naomi and daughter Wynonna—using rare artifacts, original manuscripts, unpublished photos and keepsake costumes. *The Judds: Dream Chasers* follows the popular duo from their mother-and-child beginnings as Diana Judd and daughter Christina Ciminella to their chart-topping career peak as one of the most successful duos in country music history. In the 1980s and early '90s, the Judds scored 20 Top Ten hits, including

14 No. 1s. They won five Grammys, nine CMA awards and seven ACM awards. (countrymusichalloffame.org)

Carnival brings new cruises to Cuba in 2020 • Virginia

Carnival, a Miami-based cruise line, has announced new cruises to the Bahamas and Cuba that will deploy from downtown Norfolk in 2020. The two ships, Carnival Radiance and Carnival Sunrise, will undergo renovations to prepare for their voyage. Renovations include upgrades to the onboard experience, new dining at Big Chicken – Shaquille O'Neal's Las Vegas based restaurant, and more. The Carnival Radiance will offer one six-night and one five-night cruise to the Bahamas as well as two seven-day trips to Havana, Cuba. The Sunrise, formerly the Carnival Triumph, will offer one six-night and two five-night cruises to the Bahamas. (visitnorfolk.com)

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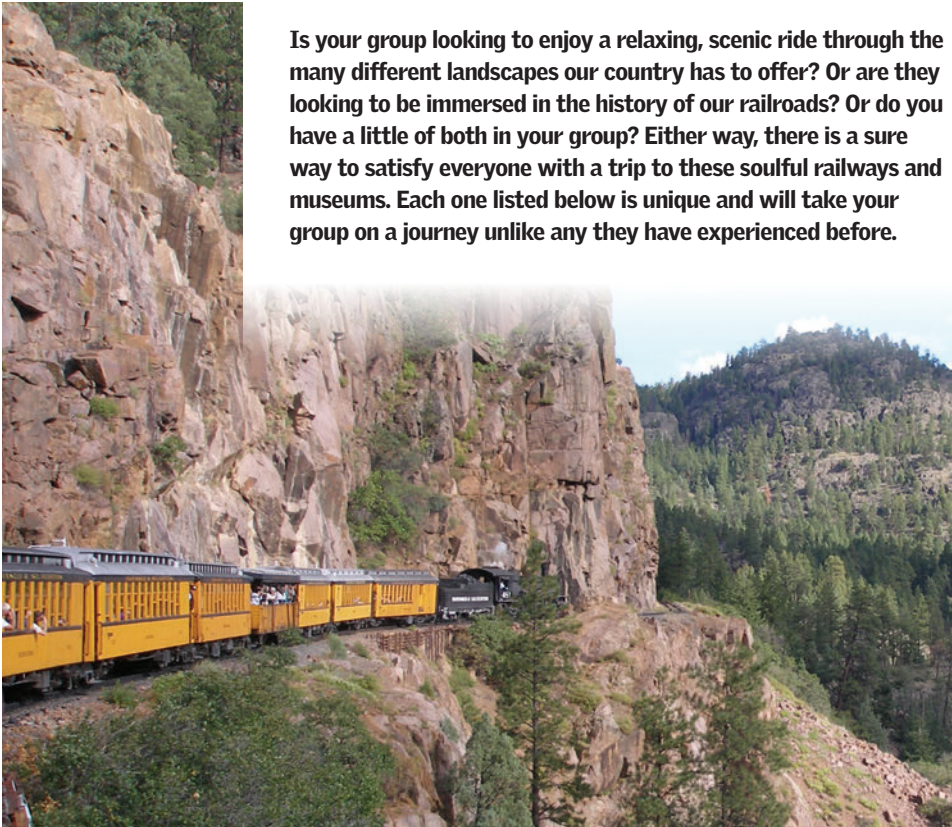
TourSmokies.com to Provide Group Tours • Tennessee

U.S. Tours and Smoky Mountain Resorts Receptive have merged their Smoky mountain portfolios to form TourSmokies.com. Dollywood, World Choice Investments and all affiliated theaters, Ripley's Attractions of the Smokies, Titanic Museum and Circle Events have joined as marketing partners. New packages and events will be developed that work to make the partners' products prevalent and direct group traffic to each member. Exclusively TourSmokies.com will provide group tours for the National Quartet Convention September 23-29, 2019. (TourSmokies.com)

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Bluegrass Railroad Museum • Versailles, Kentucky

The Bluegrass Scenic Railroad and Museum operates a 90-minute train ride weekends through the rolling central Kentucky countryside past thoroughbred horse farms to the Kentucky river. Air-conditioned first-class cars and exciting open-air cars are available. In addition to train rides every weekend, the museum maintains an outdoor collection of historic railroad locomotives and railcars and an indoor museum of railroad artifacts. The museum, model train layouts, and gift shop are open noon to 4 p.m. weekends. (bluegrassrailroad.com)

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MidContinent.org
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The Cumbres & Toltec, located in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado, is run by coal-fired steam locomotives that worked the original Denver & Rio Grande Western Route. Get a glimpse into the past by enjoying the scenery of the authentic West. Trips run from Memorial Day weekend to mid-October. Your group can choose from full-day, half-day, sunset and sunset dinner trips. (cumbrestoltec.com)

Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad • Peninsula, Ohio

Climb aboard at Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and experience all that Ohio's only national park has to offer. Located between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio, the train operates a variety of excursions year-round. Take in views of eagle nests and the Cuyahoga River as you travel through Cuyahoga Valley National Park. The all-day pass allows you to hop off at surrounding stations and explore local shops, restaurants and museums or hike the trails. (cvsr.org)



COME PLAY IN OUR YARD

Location of the original Gulf, Colorado, and Santa Fe Passenger Union Depot in Downtown Galveston, TX. The museum features five acres, including 50 pieces of rolling stock, models trains, and numerous exhibits.

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Delaware & Ulster Railroad • Arkville, New York

A trip aboard the Delaware & Ulster Railroad is scenic train ride in the Western Catskill Mountains that leaves you with lasting memories. The dining cars can be the crowning jewel to your visit, with full course luncheons with all the care of the Golden Age of Railroading. Menu options change with the season and the time of day, and the railroad can accommodate special requests. The trains operate early spring to December. Groups are welcome. (durr.org)



Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railway • Durango, Colorado

Your adventure begins with a journey back in time to the Wild West, through some of the most breathtaking scenery the Rockies has to offer, the wilderness of the San Juan Mountains. You'll board a coal-fired steam-powered train and travel past cascading creeks and waterfalls through towering virgin pine forests. Bring your camera because the train winds its way onto the "highline," a famous section along the face of high cliffs. Your destination is the historic mining town of Silverton, nestled amid rugged peaks. (durangotrain.com)

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www.BluegrassRailroad.com
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Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Railroad • Elkins, West Virginia

Gather in West Virginia's mountain highlands in 2019 for an unforgettable journey by rail. Historic trains depart from three depots in West Virginia's eastern mountains. Experience the world-famous Cass Scenic Railroad in Cass or depart in Elkins for a ride on the popular New Tygart Flyer or Cheat Mountain Salamander trains. The railroad offers more than nine train options during the April to December season. Group bookings are now taking place for 2020 where tour planners can save big. (mountainrail.com)



Galveston Railroad Museum • Galveston, Texas

The Galveston Railroad Museum has an array of unique exhibits showcasing railroad history. The 1932 Peoples Gallery/Depot was an active passenger depot until 1967 and highlights railroad events from the past. An exhibit on the Panama Railway explains how oceans were connected by rail. The museum also has a collection of approximately 40 historic train cars and engines outside, with 10 of the cars being open for the public to climb in and explore. (galvestonrrmuseum.org)



Mid-Continent Railway Museum • North Freedom, Wisconsin

Mid-Continent Railway Museum takes passengers on a 55-minute, 7-mile roundtrip excursion through rural south-central Wisconsin. Uniformed conductors collect tickets and share the history of the railroad and century-old passenger cars during the ride. Onboard dining is also available on select dates. Before or after the ride, visitors can explore the museum filled with dozens of restored locomotives and railcars, most dating to the early 1900s. Bus parking and a free picnic shelter are available. (midcontinent.org)

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Mount Washington Cog Railway • Mount Washington, New Hampshire

Enjoy scenic train rides to the summit of Mount Washington, the highest peak in the Northeast, on the World's First Mountain-Climbing Cog Railway train. The Mount Washington Cog Railway is located in scenic Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in the heart of the Mount Washington area and the White Mountains of New Hampshire. On historic steam engines and modern biodiesel locomotives, join us for a journey of a lifetime and climb aboard the Mount Washington Cog Railway. (thecog.com)

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Experience the most scenic ride in North America on a historic steam train. Travel along granite cliff walls, past waterfalls and majestic peaks en route to the high alpine mining town of historic Silverton. Located in the popular U.S. Grand Circle area; Durango, Colorado is near Mesa Verde National Park, Moab, UT and the Grand Canyon National Park.

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www.DurangoTrain.com | cwhitley@durangotrain.com

Carrie Whitley
 Director of Travel Trade Sales, American Heritage Railways
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Background photo by Bryan Burton



To the Moon: Mt. Washington's Cog Railway

Who says trains can't go uphill? Mount Washington's Cog Railway has been doing it for 150 years.

The view from the top of Mount Washington has always been worth a visit. On a clear day, you can see the Atlantic Ocean on one side and Canada on the other. But the Mount's elevation – at 6,288 feet it's the Northeast's highest peak – and its reputation for rapid-onset bad weather make the trek daunting.

Since proverbially, trains cannot go uphill, running a rail line to the top of the Mount and back down again may not seem like a viable solution, but in 1869, Sylvester Marsh designed and built a cog railway that became the world's first mountain-scaling train ride. Some scoffed, saying that one might as well build a railway to the moon. But they were quickly proved wrong, as the mighty rack-and-pinion track system provided more than enough grip to haul the locomotive and all its cars upward.

And the Mount Washington Cog Railway is still going strong today.

The Cog Railway Experience

The Cog, as it's affectionately known, is one of New Hampshire's top tourist draws. It can simultaneously deliver stunning scenery, an interesting living-history lesson, and an unforgettable experience.

Your group's three-hour Cog journey starts with a custom-built coach. It takes about an hour to reach the peak of Mount Washington; on your way up, you'll travel through a verdant landscape of forest and rolling hills.

At the summit, there's an hour break where guests can (weather permitting) take in views reaching across five states. There's also a chance to visit the restored **Tip Top House**, an 1853 hiker's lodging, and grab a snack. Visitors can also explore the surrounding state park and learn more about the railway at the **Sherman Adams Visitors Center**.

After an hour, the train begins its approximately 3,500-foot descent back to Marshfield Base Station at the foot of the mountain. This is where you'll find the free interactive **Cog Railway Museum**; young engineers-to-be and older engineers-at-heart will enjoy "driving" the train via the train simulator; everyone in the group will enjoy seeing the Emmy-winning documentary, *Climbing to the Clouds*, which tells more of the railway's rich history.

Once you've experienced the mountain, the museum, and the movie, there's the gift shop. Groups can select unique and memorable toys, books, clothes, and other souvenirs to remind them of their trip.

Events Celebrating the Cog's 150th

If you subtract 1869 from 2019, you get 150. That's right, the Cog has been taking visitors up and down Mount Washington for 150 years.

Everyone is invited to get tickets to the **150th Anniversary Celebration** on June 22. It starts at 5 p.m. and includes presentations about the Cog's history, fireworks, and food. Availability is limited, though, so be sure to check the Cog's website (thecog.com) for more info.

Although not directly related to the Cog's 150th Anniversary, this year's **4th Annual Railway to the Moon Steampunk Festival** will also draw groups interested in the world of Steampunk. With its Victorian feel and its reliance on steam power, it's no surprise that Mount Washington hosts one of New England's premier Steampunk festivals. This free event will be held on August 17 and 18 and will feature vendors, live performances, and lots of intriguing regalia.

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⚙️ **Anniversary Gala Party - June 22**- A celebration of epic proportions! Limited availability- tickets available for purchase online.

⚙️ **Family Day - July 3**- In celebration of the day The Cog opened for business to the summit in 1869, there will be bbq, balloons, lawn games, and a fireworks finale. Visit thecog.com/events for details.

⚙️ **4th Annual "Railway To The Moon" Steampunk Fest - August 17/18**

Voted "Best NH Festival" in 2017, A melding of Jules Verne sci-fi, Victorian Era & Wild West, this festival is pure fun and a celebration of railway inventor Sylvester Marsh and his spirit of invention & creativity. Free event. Visit railwaytothemoon.com for festival details.

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Growing Old Gracefully in the Tour Business

Recently, we went to a celebratory centennial party for a hospitality tour company. Getting into that unique and “exclusive” club of a hundred-plus years of history is not for the faint of heart. It takes decades, and generations, to achieve such a lofty position in a tough and competitive market.

How does a company get to the top, age-wise, and yet stay focused throughout the process? These companies have all been told over and over that what they are doing is not relevant and they should do things the traditional way. That is the faulty reasoning that keeps companies from reaching the years needed for a centennial birthday party.

There are many pros and cons in this unscientific summary but these five traits seem to be integral for living to a ripe old corporate age.

Those companies who have inbred **QUALITY SERVICE** into their DNA. It will be interesting to watch how GM, Ford, IBM and the like will survive and thrive through

the upcoming years. When they have been treating their clients with respect, their chances are above average to weather any storm. It will be interesting if United Airlines, which is approaching the magical age, can survive the average ratings lately with their handling of travelers.

It is interesting to see the number of **FAMILY COMPANIES** that are on the golden list. Nordstrom comes immediately to mind, with their employees known for delivering orders that someone needs right away, to showing a passion in protecting the family name.

TRAINING is an ongoing event for successful companies and companies like (here we go again) Nordstrom lead the way. Tom Nordstrom said it best when asked who trained their employees. He answered, “Their parents.”

To successfully survive, the company needs to have the best **QUALITY**, deliver the highest **VALUE** or sell at the lowest **PRICE** imaginable. **QUALITY-VALUE-PRICE**.

Those who **STAY IN THEIR LANE** have the best chances of getting to the century mark. They do not want to be something that they are not.

So, that’s it in a nutshell ... and remember the key words **LEADERSHIP- LOYALTY- TALENT**. Thanks for listening and “may the wind be at your back.” **LGT**



John and Mary Stachnik are the former owners of Mayflower Tours, a tour business they ran from 1979-2018.

In 2012, John was presented the Lifetime Achievement Award by the United States Tour Operators Association. Mary Stachnik raised two children while heading the sales department at Mayflower, which became a major force in the travel industry. Mary was twice named to Travel Agent magazine’s list of the top 100 women in the travel business.

John and Mary worked together and successfully survived (married 53 years). They make their home in Florida and Illinois.

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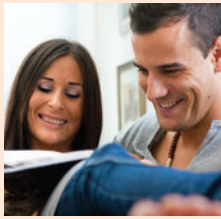
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