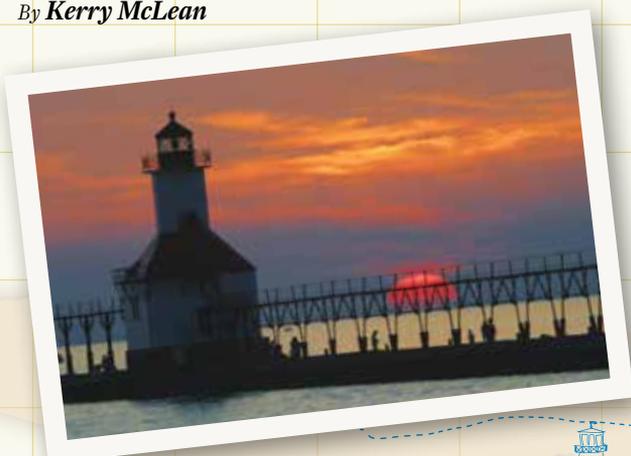


TRAVELING MICHIGAN, BREWERY BY BREWERY

FOLLOW THE BEER TRAIL AND DISCOVER GREAT BREWS, FOOD, AND LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

By Kerry McLean



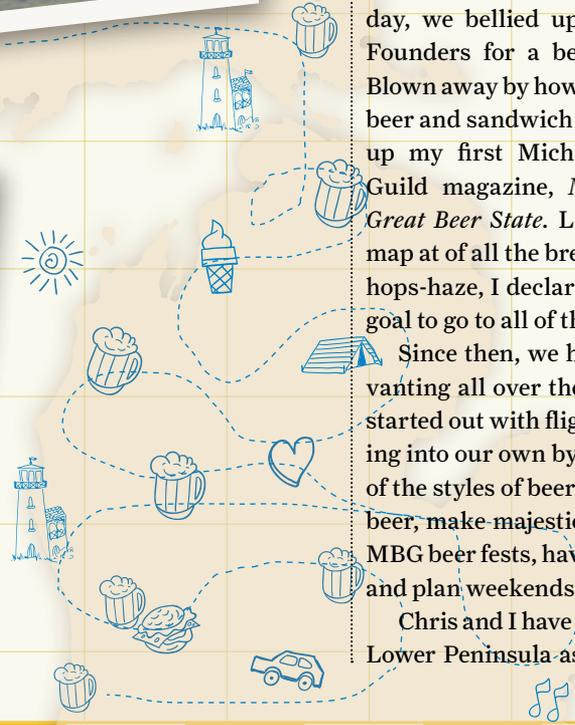
Beer has always been a good thing in my life. I had my first glass of beer during a high school summer trip to Germany, and it was love at first sip. However, it wasn't until a couple of years ago that my love for Michigan beer truly took root.

My husband, Chris, and I had ventured from our home in Lansing to Grand Rapids for a long weekend. We had been frequenters of Bell's, New Holland, and Michigan Brewing Company, and knew we were overdue to expand our fermented horizons.

About halfway through our day, we bellied up to the bar at Founders for a beer and lunch. Blown away by how great both my beer and sandwich were, I picked up my first Michigan Brewers Guild magazine, *Michigan: The Great Beer State*. Looking at the map at all the breweries and under a bit of a hops-haze, I declared to Chris that we should make it a goal to go to all of them. The idea stuck.

Since then, we have spent every free weekend gallivanting all over the Mitten in search of great beer. We started out with flights of trusted standbys, slowly coming into our own by understanding and appreciating all of the styles of beer that were presented to us. We cellar beer, make majestic pretzelaces and beer checklists for MBG beer fests, have beer-themed dinners with friends, and plan weekends around breweries and beer releases.

Chris and I have officially visited every brewery in the Lower Peninsula—as of last year's guild magazine (U.P.,



Photographs clockwise, from top right: Jennifer Martinez (Biercamp); courtesy White Flame Brewing Co.; courtesy Kerry McLean; courtesy Round Barn Winery; and Travel Michigan



Fortunately, we live in a state that does not lack for exciting things to do in between beer drinking.



we're working on it!) and look forward to all of the new ones opening this year.

Along the way, it became clear that being a Michigan beer lover is about more than the bold, unique, and clean beer that I'm drinking. "Finding the source," as Chris puts it, has led us to adventures that we would have otherwise missed. With every beer, I learn more about our state, its people, and the plethora of fun it has to offer. I'm not just a beer geek; I'm a Michigan geek.

ADVENTURES IN FOOD

Since I'm a person who thinks with her stomach, let's talk about how delicious the food in this state is first. Chris and I have become well-versed

in the world of brewery and post-brewery munchies and are happy to lend advice to anyone traveling to a new town. While seeking beer in Detroit, we have fallen in love with Korean sliders from Green Dot Stables or anything baked at Avalon International Breads. My favorite hot dog in Michigan is at Yesterdog in Grand Rapids. While on the west side, I'm also going to want duck confit nachos from Brewery Vivant in GR.

Whenever someone tells me they are headed to Traverse City, I sing the praises of Moomers ice cream, breakfast at Frenchies, and fancy dinners at Trattoria Stella. A mention of Ann Arbor makes my mouth water for smoked meaty goodness from Biercamp, and I don't think I'll ever be able to think about Lake Superior Brewing in Grand Marais without dreaming of their Parmesan garlic popcorn. I could rave on and on about the incredible food in our breweries, from a pretzel bun slider trio at Petoskey

Page 20, clockwise from top right: Jerky "smokesticks" at Biercamp in Ann Arbor; Andy Steenbergen (left) and Bill White at White Flame Brewing Co.; Kerry and Chris McLean; St. Joseph Pier sunset; and pizza at Round Barn Brewery and Public House. This page, clockwise from top: Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore; Detroit Institute of Arts; hiking in the U.P.; and Trattoria Stella in Traverse City.

Brewing to Arcadia and Short's that have entire menus of perfection. I find something new, delicious, and impressive to savor every weekend.

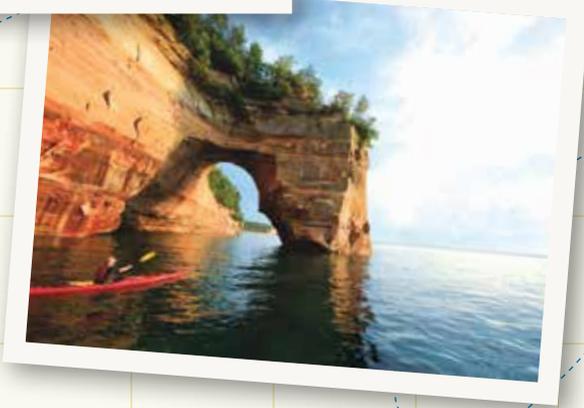
EXPLORE AS YOU GO

After eating all that food, we inevitably need a breather. Fortunately, we live in a state that does not lack for exciting things to do in between beer drinking. For Chris and I, our plan for the long weekend to hit up the U.P. Fall Beer Festival and go to a chunk

Photographs courtesy of Traverse City Convention and Visitors Bureau (dunes and Trattoria Stella); and Travel Michigan (DIA and U.P. hiking)



With every sip, remember that it comes from a place in our state that has something fantastic for you to experience.



Clockwise, from top: Downtown Ann Arbor; Comerica Park in downtown Detroit; kayaking in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore; and the scenic Tunnel of Trees along M-119 north of Harbor Springs.

of the U.P. breweries turned into a spectacular trip along Pictured Rocks, with a hike into Au Sable Light Station and gasps of “I can’t believe we’re still in Michigan!” at Miners Castle and The Log Slide. We have sauntered through the Heidelberg Project and Grand River Creative Corridor in Detroit with our mouths agape at the beauty being created in some impoverished areas. We have strolled the marinas in the precious town of Harbor Springs, and driven through the Tunnel of Trees for the first time after hanging out at Beards Brewery and Petoskey Brewing.

We have spent many Saturday and Sunday mornings running against backdrops like the Sleeping Bear Dunes, old mining trails in Ishpeming, or the Spirit of Detroit. A trip to the tri-city area of Bay City, Saginaw, and Midland taught us about the Tall Ships celebration and what (I hear) is the best fireworks show in our state. ArtPrize in Grand Rapids is all the more fun with a Founders-inspired Artist Black IPA in your hand. A concert at The Ark in Ann Arbor only sounds better after enjoying some great beer from nearby breweries.

BEER PEOPLE ARE THE BEST

At the end of the day, the thing that continuously makes me fall in love with both Michigan and its beer are the people. Every time I set foot in a brewery, I am overwhelmed by how friendly, knowledgeable, and easygoing the people who represent Michigan beer are. I will never forget going to Odd Side

Ales for the second time, after about two months away, and having Erik Frederiksen (maybe the greatest bartender ever?) look at Chris and me and greet us by name. I will return repeatedly for that kind of service alone.

I sing the praises of so many of you fine folks — from Ryan, the Resident Beer Geek at Right Brain, who made me a birthday slideshow, to Wiggs at Dark Horse for answering countless questions about the brewing process, to Bill and Andy at White Flame for humoring me with a Nutella-style beer after I harassed them on Facebook to brew one, to Mattwater somehow always remembering me, and being OK with giving me a huge hug — it’s a world of happy, friendly people. We have also found so many other people like us who are passionate about Michigan, its beer, and people.

We’ve made genuine friends through brewery tours or chance encounters at breweries and events — people we invite over for dinner and who have made huge impacts on our lives. To beer drinkers who haven’t taken the time to find the source of your beer, do it. You will fall even more in love with your favorite Michigan beer.

So pick up that beer of yours. With every sip, remember that it comes from a place in our state that has something fantastic for you to experience. Get out there and explore. I’m sure I’ll run into you along the way! 🍷

Kerry McLean is a Michigan Brewers Guild Enthusiast and a dedicated supporter of MiBeer.