



Text size:

'Round the lake in a green circle

Digg

submit

HOME DELIVERY

ADVERTISE WITH US



CHICAGO WEATHER

TRAFFIC/COMMUTE

LOCAL NEWS

NATION/WORLD

SPORTS

BUSINESS

POLITICS/ELECTIONS

REPORTS & DATA

DEATHS

OPINIONS

COLUMNISTS

BLOGS

ENTERTAINMENT

TRAVEL

LIVING

LIGHTER SIDE

VIDEO/PHOTOS

SHOPPING

CARS

JOBS

REAL ESTATE

APARTMENTS

MORE CLASSIFIEDS

NEWSLETTER/ALERTS

NEWS TOOLS

CONTACT US

ABOUT US

In search of eco-conscious sleeps and eats

By Cliff Terry | Special to the Tribune
November 9, 2008

Green is the hot color these days, and not just in home building, organic food and recycling.

The Midwest travel industry is quietly going green—so my wife, Pat, and I decided to rent a hybrid (we don't own a car) and circle Lake Michigan, staying as close to the lake as possible while checking out environmentally friendly hotels, resorts and eateries.

Finding "certified" accommodations was easy, thanks to Green Lodging Michigan and Travel Green Wisconsin, but the auto was a non-starter. One company wanted to charge \$799 a week for a hybrid, another much less, but its one hybrid was unavailable. We ended up getting decent mileage (27 miles per gallon) with a conventional [Hyundai Sonata](#).

Heading up the Michigan coast, we stopped in Frankfort, 55 miles west of Traverse City, to stay at the Betsie Bay Inn, which was built in the late 19th Century, burned down twice and was rebuilt. Leslie Perkins, with her husband, Geoff, bought the inn in 2005.

Ads by Google

2 Rules To A Flat Stomach
I Cut Down 12lbs Of Stomach Fat Every 2 Weeks
By Obeying This Rule!
www.JillsNewBody.com

Hybrid Cars
Learn How Ford is Defining the American Hybrid.
Ford. Drive one.
FordVehicles.com

Budget Rent-A-Hybrid-Car
Use Budget For Hybrid Cars Rent a fuel-efficient hybrid today!
Budget.com/Rent-Hybrid-Vehicles

Green Hotel Products
Sustainable Products and Services Supporting Hotel Sustainability
www.EcoGreenHotel.com

Organic Living in Chicago
Find organic products and services in Chicago with Ideal Bite
www.idealbite.com

When the couple first looked at the hotel, she recalled, "It was like Miss Havisham in 'Great Expectations.' Remember her sitting in her wedding dress, covered with cobwebs?"

Right away, the native Scotswoman wanted to establish it as a green hotel, and the Betsie Bay was certified in 2007 by Green Lodging Michigan. Among its conservation steps, the inn serves local food as much as possible (much from small organic farms), which reduces the "carbon footprint" because less transportation is required. The Betsie Bay Inn has 17 rooms and a restaurant highlighting (not unexpectedly) Scottish fare.

Our next stop was the family-owned Crystal Mountain Resort, which started in 1956 as a community ski area. Jim MacInnes, president and general manager, used to develop renewable-energy power plants in

California. In 1985 he arrived at Crystal Mountain, about 20 miles southeast of Frankfort, and one of the first environmental initiatives was buying wind credits. This is a program through which it pays more than the standard electrical rate to power its high-speed chairlift in order to promote wind energy elsewhere in the country.

"There are two main initiatives we try to promote," MacInnes said. "The first is a healthy lifestyle for our staff and guests, which is why we're building a new spa. The second is energy and resource conservation. We're doing it because we think it's really important for the planet.

"In our new spa, we're putting in extra, non-toxic insulation as a huge energy saver. And we've had good success with installing compact fluorescent lights throughout the resort. We've saved more than 4 million kilowatt-hours and will save hundreds of thousands of dollars."

The resort offers year-round outdoor recreation, including four nine-hole golf courses, tennis, downhill and cross-country skiing, mountain biking and hiking. For dining, its restaurant offers such local food (some organic) as blueberries, asparagus and corn and

INNS & RESORTS DIRECTORY
Advertising Supplement

Plan a Winter getaway to a resort, charming inn or bed and breakfast

- Search locations
- Find travel deals

What would you skip for a trip?

"I'd dine out less often."
— Laura Piper, Naperville, IL.

With prices this low you won't have to give up anything!

APPLE VACATIONS.com SuperSale! >

Tell us & win a FREE vacation! >

DO AS I DO... & you'll be the Biggest Loser!

- Lose Weight
- Feel Great

Start Today >

Jillian Michaels, trainer on TV's *Biggest Loser*

Today's Hot Deals Thursday, 11/13/08

- \$99 & up -- Fly to Mexico or Jamaica from Chicago (e/w)*

has added vegetarian meals.

From there we were off to the 1899 Stafford's Perry Hotel in Petoskey, about 100 miles north, in the upper Lower Peninsula. "It was made out of yellow brick, and it was not built for efficiency," said David Marvin, business manager of Stafford's Hospitality Inc. "One of our favorite lines is: "If we can turn a 109-year-old yellow brick building 'green,' anybody can do it."

"One of my employees said he had seen a flier about Green Lodging Michigan being better for the environment. I told him we'd explore it. At the time I was driving a big SUV, and, of course, some people kidded me."

Green Lodging had a list of 100 ways hotels could be more energy efficient and reduce environmental impact, and the Perry was already doing 59 of them, such as recycling and using low-flow faucets. One simple way the hotel lessens environmental impact is turning off computers at the end of the day, Marvin said. One study reported that one computer left on throughout the night costs an extra \$110 a year on your electric bill.

Later, crossing over to Michigan's Upper Peninsula via the Mackinac Bridge, we briefly switched lakes, taking a Lake Superior cruise (out of Munising, Mich.) along the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, site of marvelous colored, layered sandstone cliffs

Heading into Wisconsin, we sought out the Blacksmith Inn on the Shore in Baileys Harbor, Door County. Containing seven guest rooms, the inn originally was a private house, finished in 1912, next to the still-extant blacksmith shop. Today Joan Holliday, a former inn manager, and her husband, Bryan Nelson, own the Blacksmith, as well as the Harbor House, which they built in 2000, and the newest acquisition, the Orchard House.

The Blacksmith Inn, part of Travel Green Wisconsin's pilot program, was certified in spring 2006. "We've never used pesticides on the property, we've always used organic fertilizer and we've bought locally where we can," she said. "We also find products that come in reusable containers, such as milk in glass bottles. And we bought a [Toyota Prius](#)—50 percent less gas right off the bat."

November and December, as expected, are quieter times. "There certainly aren't as many entertainment options," Holliday noted, adding with a laugh, "So we always suggest to people that it's good to be a self-entertainment personality in the winter time. And a lot of guests who come that time of year want exactly that—to decompress a little bit. Sleep in, read that book, go for a hike."

The last destination before Chicago was just north of Kohler, where in 2003 Craig Harms, Dave Platz and Brian Grimm purchased a run-down brick farmhouse and later launched the seven-acre Restoration Gardens, now specializing in rare and unique plants and shrubs. In September 2007, the owners opened the Brickhouse Bistro, the only restaurant in Sheboygan County with its own vegetable and fruit garden.

Restoration Gardens and Brickhouse Bistro were certified by Travel Green Wisconsin this past summer. "We already had been composting coffee grounds, eggshells, kitchen scraps in the bistro and changed fixtures, appliances and windows," Harms recalled. "Probably our most important Travel Green score resulted from using local produce and growing our own produce."

The bistro also is proud of belonging to Slow Food, USA (www.slowfoodusa.org), which, Harms said with a laugh, does not emphasize tardy service. It focuses on small-scale food production that results in high quality and taste as food is grown and harvested with methods that have a positive impact on ecosystems and biodiversity.

"The basic premise is people slowing down and enjoying their meals and getting away from all the deep-fried and high-fat food," he said. "We're trying to push that everyone should be enjoying their meal and not just *inhaling* it."

Harms added that he and his partners had known each other for years and all had been in the landscape business. "Our wives all work at other jobs," he noted, then laughs again. "They make the *real* money, and we're allowed to come here and play every day."

[E-mail](#) [Share](#) [Print](#) [Reprint](#)

Related topic galleries: [Hotels and Accommodations](#), [Prius](#), [Ecosystems](#), [Toyota](#), [Hotel and Accommodation Industry](#), [Conservation](#), [Personal Service](#)

[All topics](#)

Get the latest from the new Breaking News Center, combining the newsgathering resources of the Tribune, WGN-TV, CLTV and WGN Radio.

- **\$485 & up -- Last Minute Fall All-Inclusive Jamaica Getaways***
Air Jamaica Vacations
- **\$271 & up -- Fly to Europe from Chicago (each way)***
Lufthansa
- **\$125 & up -- Chicago Flight Deals Over Next 30 Days (R/T)***
Orbitz

Listed by Travelzoo. *Some taxes, fees additional

Popular stories

MOST VIEWED	MOST E-MAILED	HOT TOPICS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travelers enjoying tower airtails 2. Savannah and Charleston 3. 10 famous volcanoes 4. 'Round the lake in a green circle 5. Register fingerprints, skip passport lines <p>more most viewed</p>		

CHICAGO top jobs

- Research Programmer
- univ of IL
- Office Manager
- Suburban Ad agency
- CNA Supervisors
- Tech Center/ DuPage
- Engineer & Designer
- ketchmark & Assoc
- HR Generalist
- GENERAL CONTRACTOR

[View all Top Jobs](#)

Search Chicago jobs

[All Chicago jobs](#)
[Post resume](#)
[Post a job](#)

powered by **careerbuilder**

Your chicagotribune.com Diggs

[Upcoming](#) [Popular](#)

Where should you eat at O'Hare?



Eco Friendly Baby Wipes

Safe For Your Baby, Safe For The Environment! Educate Yourself Today
SeventhGeneration.com/Baby-Wipes

Fun Ways To Go Green

Find Easy Ways to Green Your Life Articles, Pics, Tips, Ideas & More!
Ecologue.com

Avis Rent-A-(Green)-Car

Go Green: Avis Eco-Friendly Rentals Rent a fuel-efficient hybrid today!
www.Avis.com/Hybrid-Cars

Green Cleaners Work

Earth Friendly Products. Free Coupons & Newsletter.
www.ecos.com

Reusable Green Bags

Recycled - Eco-Friendly Bags Green bags for all Businesses
www.IdeaNewConcepts.com



Our complete guide to the airport
Test your O'Hare knowledge

Public records search

Divorce cases, arrests, evictions,
license suspensions, tax liens



My best shot



Your travel photos
[Chicago city scenes](#) • [More galleries](#)

Read all 7 comments »

Name

Comments

Type the numbers you see in the image on the right:



Please note by clicking on "Post Comment" you acknowledge that you have read the [Terms of Service](#) and the comment you are posting is in compliance with such terms. **Be polite.** Inappropriate posts may be removed by the moderator. [Send us your feedback](#).

[Related News from the Web](#)

Powered by Topix.net