

Getaways

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downstream to your left, the 18th-century covered bridge upstream to your right. In summer and fall, when the Bavarian rooftops still poke through a tent of trees, visitors wander in and out of craftshops, taste-test at the St. Julian Winery and eat the famous Zehnder family chicken dinner at either Zehnder's or the Bavarian Inn across the street.

The chicken dinner is the biggest draw in winter, when snow turns Frankenmuth into a storybook town. The carillon rings out from the Bavarian Inn, making tinkling musical sounds across the parking lot to the snowcapped covered bridge. Sunday diners leave their cold breath on the frigid January air and stamp their feet against the cold as they watch the Pied Piper leading his little carved children round and round the Glockenspiel Tower.

For more information, contact the Frankenmuth Chamber of Commerce, 635 S. Main St., Frankenmuth, Mich. 48734.

HOMESTEAD

Some resorts require warm dry weather or ski hills covered with winter snow to satisfy pleasure seekers. You'll find both things in season at the Homestead, the condominium complex tucked into its own wilderness of trees near Glen Arbor, its beach pressed dune-to-dune against the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore. What is nice about this popular Michigan resort is that it's just as much fun, for the right kind of vacationer, in off-season weather.

The last time I was there it was raining, dripping through the bright forest all around

us and hitting the shake roofs of the condominiums. The two blue wooden rocking chairs on my small deck were empty. We sat in our living room, reading the Sunday newspaper delivered to our door about 8:30 a.m. It was still too warm then to use the fireplace, but the coffee was brewing in the kitchen, making a nice homey sound.

That was a one-bedroom condo, but a large ladder rose from the living room to a loft with twin beds, a great boon for families with children. Our condo was in The Village, a wooded setting near the recreation center. I haven't toured the other condos but I have seen them from the outside.

The units at the mouth of the Crystal River, where it empties into Lake Michigan, are popular places to sit on an outdoor deck and watch the kids fishing or climbing over the sand dunes. The units high up on the ridge line rise out of dense trees; from the top units you can see the lake through the tree tops. Hawk's Ridge is literally built facing the ski hills.

On a rainy fall day you can enjoy a cozy closed-in feeling, curled up with a book by the fire. In clear cool weather, you can explore the funky nearby villages or climb the dunes in the National Lakeshore. In winter, it is ski and apres-ski time, combined with out-of-season visits to restaurants in Leland and other Leelanau Peninsula places.

The Homestead is for travelers who might, in another age, have rented an upscale second home, a classy cottage with a maid perhaps. It is for people who like to combine comfort with a wilderness setting, and don't need or want glitz. These privately owned condominiums of various sizes can be rented by the day, week or month.

For more information, contact The Homestead, Wood Ridge Road, Glen Arbor, Mich. 49636.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Christopher Columbus established his first New World settlement on the island of Hispaniola, but most of us in the Western Hemisphere have never been there. Snowbirds fly south to Florida and to the Bahamas but only the knowing traveler has discovered Casa de Campo or the 500-year-old restored buildings of the city of Santo Domingo. Margaret Zellers, author of Fielding's Caribbean, calls Casa de Campo the most complete resort in the Caribbean, and I have never seen anything that proved her wrong.

Most people ride the resort van 81 miles from the airport at Santo Domingo to Casa de Campo, but you can also fly into the private air strip, with a good view of the 7000-acre resort. From the air you can see it all below: red roofed casitas, villas and condos, golf and tennis villas, a small sand beach, a polo field and a crazy Mediterranean "village" called Altos de Chavon set incongruously on a nearby cliff.

Casa De Campo was built by the late founding president of Gulf & Western, which was established in a nearby sugar mill. He lured famous people from around the world to build houses there, and hired an Italian movie set designer to built Altos de Chavon as an artist's village. It is now the Caribbean campus of Parson's School of Design, but most resort visitors enjoy it for its boutiques and restaurants.

You can dance in the disco on a transparent floor built over live coral or dine to the strumming of guitar players who wander mariachi-style through a cliff-top dining room. Frank Sinatra opened the 5,000-seat outdoor amphitheater at Altos de Chavon, a great place for concerts.

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