Cruise the Great Lakes for summer sun, fall color

Vacationers from all across the nation set their sights on new waters during the summer cruise season. Michigan's Great Lakes have become the destina-tion of choice for many travel-ers looking for a cruise experi-ence to satisfy their desire for interesting yet local ports-of-call.

call.

Audouwide people are being attracted to the Great Lakes, said Chris Conlin, president of Ann Arbor-based Conlin Truvel, which sells chartered cruises through the lakes via the Great Lakes Cruise Company, a division of Conlin Travel. It is an area we (Michigan residents) take for granted, but others view as an up and coming destination.

According to Conlin, the idea

According to Conlin, the idea for the Great Lakes Cruise Company originated in 1997 when he and his father Tom Conlin – founder of Conlin Travel – read an article about a German ship sailing the lakes with only German passengers. —It can be said that the German travel read the Great Lakes as far as cruises go, Conlin said.

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The father-son team of Conlin Travel, which has been creating unique experiences for

XMY COLUMBUS

■ Sept. 4-11, Voyage of Discovery, Toronto to Port Huron.

■ Sept. 11-17, Voyage of Discovery, Port Huron to

Sept. 17-23, Voyage of Discovery, Port Huron to Port Huron

■ Sept. 23-27, Voyage of Discovery, Port Huron to Port Huron.

GEORGIAN CLIPPER

Cruising the "Sixth" Great Lake-Parry Sound to Parry Sound, Aug. 22-28, Aug. 28-

■ To book a reservation call (88B) 891-0203

the sophisticated traveler all over the world since 1958, decided to extend the compa-ny's repertoire to include offer-ings on the Great Lukes based on the growing popularity of this inland cruise destination.

"It's an opportunity for many people to see a part of the world that's right in their backyard," Conlin said. "It's very conven-

ient."

Now entering its fourth season, the Great Lakes Cruise
Company - which bills itself as
the only truel company in the
world to specialize in Great
Lakes cruises - offers three distinctive cruise ships sailing a
variety of exciting itineraries.
All three ships are foreignowned and provide a unique
cultural experience in addition
to the natural lure of the Great
Lakes.

"What people find fascinating is that it's a foreign ship, with a foreign crew, sailing in mostly American waters," Conlin said, referring to the experience of cruising on one of the vessels his company charters.

THE SHIPS

The MV Columbus, the largest of the three ships chartered by the Great Lakes Cruise Company, makes its way to the Great Lakes during the summer eason after having spent the reast of the year sailing abroad. Built in 1997 and modeled after Germany's finest luxury ships, the vessel was designed specifically to accommodate the locks of the Great Lakes.



Well on its way to claiming four-star status, the MV Columbus accommodates 420 passengers and offers a variety of cloquent facilities including a large restaurant, a founge for dancing and special events, and a Palm Garden with a bar. Flying under the flag of the Bahamas, this ship boasts an international crew with a distinctive German flavor.

The LeLevant is a top-of-the-line, five-star vessel that travels to all five Great Lakes. Built in France in 1998 and flying the French flag, this French luxury yacht was constructed for year-round travel in the Western Hemisphere, but was designed specifically for navigating inland seas. The LeLevant is equipped to take passengers to secluded coves, remote coast-lines and hidden tributaries larger cruise ships are forced to bypass.

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Accommodating a maximum of 95 guests, the LeLevant is serviced by a primarily French crew and offers fine French cuisine. Passengers enjoy spacious private cabins, which are all suites, as well as a variety of public areas including the Grand Salon, a verandah restaurant, a wood-paneled library, a gymnasium, and an outdoor pool and har.
The Georgian Clipper is the first and only Canadian-registered cruise ship in over 30 years to ply the waters of Georgian Bay – often referred

to as the "sixth Great Lake" -and the world-famous North Channel, Sailing just off the coast, this vessel is almost always in sight of land, offering passengers the unique opportu-nity to view both Canadian and American visue. Small enough to venture where larger slips cannot, the Georgian Clipper accommo-dates 18 passengers and offers relaxing toyages, first-class facilities with outdoor and indoor lounging and fine

lacities with outdoor and indoor lounging and fine French-Canadian cuisine. According to Conlin, cruises on the Great Lakes offer numerous benefits distinctly different from those of occan-

different from those of oceangoing cruises.

He explained that many people looking for an itinerary
experience often find the ship
to be the destination on oceangoing cruises, while he says the
area is the destination for Great
Lakes cruises.

Conflia also noted that a
cruise is a unique way to see the
Great Lakes and surrounding
shorelines as never before.

"Many people have experienced the lakes from the shore,
but it's a completely different
experience from the water,"
Conflia said, noting that many
cruises keep passengers willin
sight of land at all times.
On-board features offered by
the Great Lakes Cruise

Company include carefully selected enrichment lecture and expert tour guides dedicated to helping passengers truly understand and appreciate the vast beauty and history of the Great Lakes, Shore excursions are also

understand and appreciate the understand and appreciate the wast beauty and history of the Great Lakes.

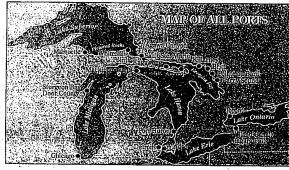
Shore excursions are also a popular attraction of Great Lakes cruises, and Conlin's company offers a veritable list of intriguing destinations.

According to Conlin, a favorite excursion is the trip to Manitoulin Island where passengers witness an Indian powwow performed by members of the First Nation Offibway tribe.

At the Sault Ste. Marie porto-feall, cruisers get the unique-experience of rising some 23 feet to the level of Lake Superior as they pass through the Soo Locks. Also at this destination, passengers have the opportunity to venture deep into the forests of the Canadian Shield, passing through awesome granite rock formations while they ride on the Algoma Railroad.

Hikes, historical tours and special trips to well-known tourist attractions such as Niagara Falls and Mackinac Island help round out the Great Lakes Cruise Company's extensive list of shore excursions. These destinations, combined with the natural beauty and allure of the Great Lakes, are what makes cruising on the fundad each omercomm net I option.

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The map shows Great Lakes Cruise Company's ports of call.

