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one-of-a-kind traveler

Undiscovered treasures in southwest Ontario

CHATHAM, ONTARIO: Travel professionals from both sides of the border gathered here recently to explore the little-known travel attractions available in southwest Ontario.

Representatives of 40 Ontario travel destinations held a "show-and-tell" marketplace for American Automobile Association travel counselors from throughout Michigan. They met at Wheels Inn.

It's always difficult to describe the Wheels Inn to anyone who hasn't been there: a one-acre atrium full of kids playing ping-pong and putt-putt golf; a fine fitness club for adults; a high-rise motel; a convention center; and lots of good eating and drinking places.

That's factual enough, but it doesn't describe the hospitality provided by the Bradley family, owners of Wheels Inn, or their happy, hard-working staff.

Some of the travel attractions featured at Wheels Inn during the marketplace are places you already know about, although you may not have explored the many interesting things to do in Sarnia, Windsor, London and Stratford.

Some were totally unexpected treasures worthy of a weekend trip from Detroit. The small town of St. Marys near Stratford has a tiny bed and breakfast place called Westover Park Guest House, on 19 acres of parkland overlooking the Thames River.

George and Elva Holm and their family produce the finest pewter artifacts that I have ever seen at the Touchmark nearby in St. Marys.

YOU MAY ALSO be unaware of the newest Stratford attraction, Stratford Summer Music, held daily July 3 through August 29 in various buildings throughout the city.

Featured performers this summer include Roberta Peters, Odette, Sarah Vaughan, Dizzy Gillespie, J.S. Bach and such fascinating musical productions as "A Court Entertainment of Franz Joseph Haydn" and "Twelfth Night Blues." For information, call toll-free 1-800-265-0932.

Another interesting weekend could be planned for the town of Ingersoll with visits to the Ingersoll Cheese Factory Museum and a good meal at the Elm Hurst, one of those pillared and porticoed Victorian homes.

If you only have time for a day trip, visit Uncle Tom's Cabin in Dresden and the oil museum attractions around Petrolia, both on the Ontario side of the St. Clair River.

UNCLE TOM'S Cabin is a privately owned group of restored buildings established in the 19th century



Iris Jones
contributing travel editor

by escaped slave Josiah Henson. He is known to the world as Uncle Tom because he was the basis for that character in the novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

The property includes a gift shop, small museum, the restored two-story house in which Henson lived and one of the two-story homes which once lined streets in this area, serving as temporary homes for runaway slaves.

The colony functioned for 30 years as a home and training ground for runaway slaves until the emancipation of slaves in the United States after the Civil War.

Oil Country is north of Dresden on Highway 21 in Oil Springs and Petrolia. The Oil Museum of Canada, on the site of the first commercial oil well in North America, is just outside of Oil Springs.

It includes a county-owned museum and several working oil pumps powered by "jerker lines," a simple, efficient system peculiar to this area. A single power source moves long, narrow boards across an oilfield from one pump to another, allowing oil to be pumped from the shallow oil fields here.

A few miles north, in the attractive small village of Petrolia, you can walk on wooden sidewalks through a working oil field, where the jerker lines are very visible.

THE INNS of Ontario have always been very popular among people from Michigan, especially the Ben Miller Inn in Goderich and the Little Inn in Bayfield. If you haven't been here already, be sure to add the Wheels Inn in Chatham to your list.

Mid-week package rates at Wheels are under \$25 Canadian per person per night double occupancy, two nights minimum, including many of the sports facilities. Tennis, racquetball, squash and bowling are extra. Call 1-519-351-1100.

Remember, you automatically earn an extra 20 percent when you convert American to Canadian dollars. For information, contact Tourism Canada at 563-8686 in Detroit or the Ontario Ministry of Tourism at 1-519-252-8386.



Atrium of the Wheels Inn in Chatham

Uncle Tom's Cabin in Dresden.

photos by MICKY JONES

British theater on tour

"Globe to Globe," an eight-day theater tour in Britain, has been announced by The Understudies, the women's committee for Wayne State University theater.

The tour, Aug. 6-15, will include stops in London, Brighton, Winchester, Chichester, Bath, Stratford and Oxford, and theater performances in London, at the Chichester Festival and at the Stratford-upon-Avon Festival.

The tour is designed to provide a holiday in Britain for people with an interest in the theater and in Shakespeare. It is sponsored by the committee, which includes 65 Detroit-area women who support the theater at WSU, including its newest project, the reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on the Detroit riverfront.

Secondary purpose of the tour is to widen interest in and support for the Globe project. A tax-deductible contribution of \$100 of the tour charge will be given to the project.

A brochure with information about the tour is available by writing to The Understudies, Wayne State University Theatre, Detroit, 48202, or by calling 577-3010.

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