

photos by MICKY JONES

One way to enjoy fall in Michigan: Taking in the sunset over Port Huron at Port Austin.

# Golden Michigan

## Fall a busy time for state's tourism



Michigan has risen to eighth place among the nation's most popular travel destinations.



Fall's a good time to get out the rod and reel at spots such as Highland Recreation Area.

By Iris Jones  
special writer

Q: While my friends are all jogging and biking and running through life, I would like to enjoy a lazy weekend in Michigan sometime before Thanksgiving. No tourist stuff; we just want to explore, take some pictures, taste a little wine, maybe go fishing. Any ideas?

J.K.,  
Plymouth

A: Give me three hours to answer your question, and we might scratch the surface of fall in Michigan!

If you only have Saturday and Sunday, limit yourself to a half day's drive, which rules out the Upper Peninsula. Book ahead in color season.

Check a resort close to home such as the St. Clair Inn in St. Clair, only an hour's drive away. You can get a room in the historic inn or a more rustic apartment in their annex next door.

WATCH THE SHIPS go by on the St. Clair River. Take a tiny car ferry across to the Canadian side and return via the Bluewater Bridge. Find the night life you need in Port Huron.

Or go to the top of the Thumb and try Port Austin's Garfield Inn, built in 1830 and beautifully restored. President James A. Garfield once made a speech supporting Ulysses S. Grant from the balcony.

The Garfield is on the national list of historic places, but its real value is to people just like you, people who like to meander. The bathrooms are down the hall, but they are just as beautiful as the bedrooms with their four-poster beds. Explore the lake area by day, join the crowd at the huge mahogany bar and in the lovely dining room at night.

If the Garfield is full, try the Lake Street Manor across the street. Both will cost you about \$65 a night for two, including breakfast.

IF THAT'S too pricey, head west for one of the dozens of bed-and-breakfast places on the Leelanau

Peninsula and down the shoreline of Lake Michigan.

Or head northwest for the Terrace Inn run by Pat and Mary Lou Barbour in the famous Bay View colony just outside of Petoskey. You will find yourself amid three-story Victorian houses with gingerbread porches.

The Inn has just received permission to stay open all winter for the first time. Summer activities are over but you will find lots of exploring to do in the Petoskey/Harbor Springs area. The Inn costs \$50 a night for two.

Q: Is it too late to fish in Lake Michigan?

A: I spent a lot of time talking to fishing boat captains in Grand Haven recently, and they all told me the same thing. Some of the best fishing is late October and early November as long as you don't want to catch the big ones.

There are not so many other boats to contend with. What you are catching is really next year's salmon, so they are only four or five pounds instead of the 10- and 15-pounders you could catch in summer.

That's the good news. The bad news, according to Joe Wolff of Southfield, captain of the Ginger

Brandy Two out of Manistee and president of the Michigan Charter Boat Association, the weather is so unpredictable in fall that it may stop you from going out.

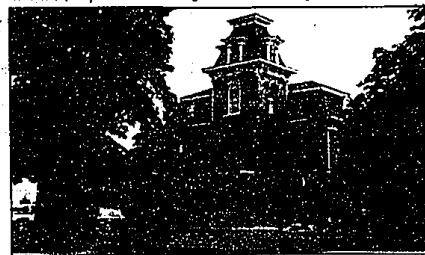
"We missed 12 charter days in August because of the weather, and so far I've missed a full week in October," Wolff said. "The fish are out there, but we can't tell you even a day ahead whether the weather will allow us to go out."

IF YOU DON'T want to take that chance, Wolff recommends river fishing, which is available in some places year-round. You can catch steelhead in the rivers too; they stay in the rivers all winter.

Capt. Emil Dean's James R sails the rivers of western Michigan late into the fall. Dick Rang's drift boat operates all winter in the AuSable River. So does Chuck Knipchild's covered riverboat on the St. Joseph River.

The walleye are running in Lake Erie, the St. Clair River and Saginaw Bay through October.

Of course, we're not talking a string on the end of a pole here, we're talking money. The average big charter boat on one of the Great Lakes will cost you \$70 to \$90 a person a day, with a four-person minimum. River fishing, such as walleye fishing on Lake St. Clair, will cost \$40 to \$50 a day.



Port Austin's Garfield Inn, built in 1830, is on the national list of historic places.

## Events make for a colorful fall

Michigan has just completed its most successful travel summer on record.

The state has risen to eighth place among the nation's most popular travel destinations, according to the U.S. Travel Data Center. The first seven, in order, are: California, Florida, New York, Texas, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Illinois.

So join with all the out-of-state tourists and plug into some of the things going on in Michigan this fall:

- Frost the pumpkin in style. Grand Traverse Resort Village in Acme is offering a Halloween package that includes a Halloween ball, supervised trick-or-treat activities for the kids, breakfast or lunch on Saturday, plus Sunday brunch and a dinner one evening, all for \$100 to \$120 per person for two nights.
- Play a little music. An Old

Town Jazz Festival will be Friday through Sunday, Oct. 30-31 and Nov. 1, at Sugar Loaf Resort in Cedar, near Traverse City. Four professional bands play Friday. If you're an amateur musician, you can join the fun during Saturday's open jam session.

- Buy one more antique you don't need at the Country Peddler Show on Saturday, Oct. 31, and Sunday, Nov. 1, in Mason. Ninety professional crafts makers and "country merchants" will be winding down an eight-city Michigan tour.

- Stroll the Ann Arbor Winter Fair on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 7-8.

- Watch the Bands of America National Championships on Friday

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and Saturday, Nov. 13-14, at the Pontiac Silverdome, where America's top 50 high school marching bands will be competing.

- Finally, why not get away with murder or at least be the sleuth who solves it? ATS Travel (843-7954) will sponsor Murder at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island Thursday through Sunday.