

DIY Door County

NEXT TRIP, TAKE HOME SOMETHING MORE THAN MEMORIES

BY J. ERIC ECKARD

Heading to Door County

this fall? Skip the state parks, leave out the lighthouse tours and create your own destination experience. Whether you want to get your hands a little dirty or get the creative juices flowing, these activities are great for couples and families.

Get artsy

Twelve years ago, Cy Turnbladh opened his barn in Fish Creek to would-be maestros. Turnbladh started small with his Hands On Art Studio, offering ceramics

painting. Since then, the “art farm” campus has expanded to three buildings where visitors can arc weld, throw pottery, make mosaics or fuse glass into decorative bowls or plates. 3655 Peninsula Players Road, Fish Creek; 920.868.9311; handsonartstudio.com.

Fruit foraging

Once the planet’s biggest cherry producer (earning the moniker Cherryland USA in the first half of the 20th century), Door County now grows up to 13 million pounds of cherries annually and ranks fourth among U.S. producers. With six farms that feature pick-your-own activities, visitors harvest a huge chunk of those cherries.

Carrie Viste, whose family runs Orchard Country Winery and Market in Fish Creek, provides a few insider tips: A ripe cherry’s pit comes off with the fruit, mornings are the best time to pick, and come a little later in the season for the best pickin’s. Harvest lasts from mid-July to the first week in August. 9187 Highway 42, Fish Creek; 920.868.3479; orchardcountry.com.

One of the many farms where visitors pick their own apples, Cherry Lane Orchards in Sturgeon Bay takes it a step further: hand-grind your own cider. 7525 Cherry Lane, Sturgeon Bay; 920.856.6864; cherrylaneorchards.com.



Bill Hosner, an internationally recognized instructor from Traverse City, Michigan, conducts a *plein air* figure class on the grounds of the Peninsula School of Art.

Farm fun

For 44 years, Door County has been home to 40 acres of a “Living Museum of Rural America.” To most, it’s simply The Farm. Located in Sturgeon Bay, The Farm features barns, silos, kilns and a woodshed. Oh, and don’t forget the animals: horses, cows, donkeys, pigs, peacocks and of course, goats. Feed baby goats or grab a stool and squeeze your own milk. 920.743.6666; thefarmindoorcounty.com.

Wax works

Visitors as young as 2 can create wonders in wax with the low-tech aromatic candle-making process at the six-color dipping station at Candleworks of Door County in Sturgeon Bay. Dippers dunk a white tapered candle into colored wax to create a multi-hued masterpiece. Themes range from patriotic to Packers green and gold. 5789 Highway 42, Sturgeon Bay; 920.746.2125; candleworksdc.com.

Cooking nooks

From day classes to weekend getaways, Door County’s three culinary schools offer a wide range of instruction on the art of cuisine, from bread making to homemade pizza – all focusing on locally grown fare.

Savory Spoon, housed in a 130-year-old

schoolhouse in Ellison Bay, features classes on southwestern seafood dishes and picnic food for summer outings – not cold cuts and chips, but tomato-and-blue-cheese tartlets and mojito bars. 12042 Highway 42, Ellison Bay; 920.854.6600; savoryspoon.com. The Inn at Kristopher’s in Sister Bay holds class in the fall and winter months. Themed weekends include cuisines from France, Italy and the California wine country. 10716 N. Bay Shore Dr., Sister Bay; 920.854.9419; innatkristofers.com. Ferry across Porte des Morts,

or Death’s Door, to the Washington Hotel’s culinary school on Washington Island, where students learn to make pasta or take a three-day bread making class. 354 Range Line Road, Washington Island; 920.847.2169; thewashingtonhotel.com.

Express yourself

Inspire your inner muse. The Peninsula School of Art features one- to five-day classes on sculpture, ceramics, watercolor, drawing and printmaking. 3900 County F, Fish Creek; 920.868.3455; peninsulaartschool.com. Offerings at Sievers School of Fiber Art on Washington Island include woodworking, basketry, quilting, weaving and knitting. Jackson Harbor Road, Washington Island; 920.847.2264; sieversschool.com. The Clearing Folk School offers one- or two-day workshops and weeklong courses on writing, quilting, birding, wood carving, poetry, rustic furniture making and music. 12171 Garrett Bay Road, Ellison Bay; 920.854.4088; theclearing.org **WR**

J. Eric Eckard is a freelance writer based in North Carolina. He covers travel, golf and the outdoors and is a frequent traveler to Wisconsin.