

OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

Tourism pros make most of 'Explore Ozaukee' challenge

Last month we challenged our Ozaukee County Tourism board members to visit a place they've never been in Ozaukee County — specifically somewhere outside of their own community — and report back on their experience! Here's what they had to say:

Cori Rice Kaminsky, White Rice Advertising

Walking down the narrow staircase toward the "Third Class Passengers Only" sign perfectly sets the stage for the atmosphere of the Steerage Dining Saloon, a comfy welcoming restaurant nestled along Port Washington's iconic Main Street. The interior is perfect — reminiscent of the hull of a ship, with wooden booths and low tables, a long perfectly appointed bar, nautical decor and weathered faces smiling at you from antique frames.

Our waitress was delightful, and young enough that the bartender walked our drinks out to our table, which we found charming. We started with two signature cocktails and an order of the ale-steamed mussels, which were served in a delicious buttery sauce with toast points (mmmmmm!). Being my first time there, I asked if they had a signature dish — and interestingly the "signature dish" is a globally inspired weekly special. This week was Switzerland: pork cordon bleu (pork loin stuffed with smoked ham and Gruyère cheese) with garlic mashed potatoes. Sold!

My husband, Rob, opted for the 1853 Platter, a panko-encrusted cod with steak fries. Both were delicious, flavorful and perfect for the warm rustic atmosphere of the Steerage Saloon. We'll definitely be back — we loved the atmosphere, and there's a whole menu of hot sandwiches calling our names!

Marjie Tomter, Treasures of Oz

I set out to explore a place I used to frequent in pre-pandemic times, but was now under new ownership. Docksider Deli in Port Washington. I went with a friend, who had never been there. We were absolutely delighted.

What makes Docksider so wonderful you ask? Friendly staff, beautiful views of the harbor and downtown Port, lots of interesting items on the menu, very affordable prices and quite a few vegetarian options. Best thing was that they make all of their food FROM SCRATCH ... yes, and they are good at it.



Submitted photo

Melissa Wraalstad's dog, Jack, enjoyed the scenery at Harrington Beach State Park.

We tried three of their soups — fabulous, chocked full of meat and veggies in tasty broth. A cup with a little bread would make a perfect lunch. The grilled cheese sandwich was wonderful, as was their veggie quesadilla. Best summary quote from my friend: "I have had chicken chowder before but this IS BETTER!" We will be going back, often.

Melissa Wraalstad, Wisconsin Museum of Quilt & Fiber Arts

I checked out Harrington Beach State Park in Belgium. This beautiful park, created out of an old limestone quarry, features well-maintained (dog friendly!) trails with the soft roar from Lake Michigan providing a soundtrack. It was the perfect way for both me and my dog Jack to enjoy a nice afternoon outside.

Pam King, Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce

Our staff ventured to Cedarburg one Friday afternoon to visit two wonderful specialty shops. Our first stop was Olive Sprig. I had never been there and was blown away by the amazing variety of olive oils, balsamics, vinegars and specialty oils. In addition, the kitchen gadgets, cooking utensils and serving pieces will make the Olive Sprig one of my new gift buying destinations! The shop is lovely, spacious and airy and the staff was very welcoming and knowledgeable.

Elizabeth Mueller, Grafton Area Chamber of Commerce

Pam and I continued the adven-

ture by traveling south to Fran-nie's Market, a quaint stop where the owner Sarah prides herself on stocking her shelves with truly unique quality products, grown and created in Wisconsin and the Midwest. Her mission when opening in November 2020 was to be a go-to market with a wide assortment of jarred pickles, preserves, spices, pottery, aged cheeses, hand crafted charcuterie boards and rolling pins.

On top of an extensive list of products, Sarah offers charcuterie classes and terrarium building workshops. We loved learning about Sarah's dream and how it has come to fruition in Cedarburg.

Tara Williams, Belgium Area Chamber of Commerce

I know, I know, how have I not been to Wayne's Drive-In in Cedarburg before? What an awesome Ozaukee gem this is. My 9-year old daughter and I popped by for dinner and both left with silly grins plastered all over our faces.

Wayne's did not disappoint. From the happy-go-lucky twangs of 50s rock 'n roll belting out of the juke box (hmm, was there even a juke box? I feel like there had to be one somewhere, right?!) to the cheery tie-dye uniforms sported by the smiling staff to the brightly decorated walls and ruby red diner stools, this place took us back to a land before our time, which felt innocent, refreshing and above all, fun.

I decided "the diet can start tomorrow" and went with staff recommendations of a mushroom Swiss burger, a Two Brothers rot

beer and Wayne's famous chocolate shake. My daughter opted for the kids meal, selecting the all-American hot dog, tater tots and a State Fair Lemonade, with a scoop of hometown favorite Cedar Crest ice cream's Pirate's Bounty for dessert. The food was made to order fairly quickly, and was delish! The meals were hot and perfectly prepared and my shake was thick, rich and full of chocolatey goodness — just what I had been craving. My daughter gave Wayne's five stars and I agreed. We can't wait to return this summer when Wayne's "rounds up for Mel's Charities" May through July!

Maggie Dobson, Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce

The Ozaukee County area is known for some special, tucked away restaurants and Juice's Ghost Town in Grafton is no exception! We were lucky enough to spend an evening there for a friend's birthday. It's good to note that Ghost Town has a couple of private rooms that can be rented for small parties or other events.

The prime rib was top notch and all the sides were, too — we especially loved the baked French onion soup. I've heard great things about the Friday fish fry, and we can't wait to go back for a Sunday bloody Mary!

Housed in an early-20th century building, we came in as "newbies" and felt like we were part of the family after we spent the dinner hour. Juice's Ghost Town is a great option for a high-quality meal in a unique and fun atmosphere!

Kathy Tank, Port Washington Tourism Council

My husband, Rick, and I had a chance to try Foxtown Brewing's beer at a festival in Cedarburg last year, which was delicious. We decided that we definitely needed to visit the restaurant and brewery in Mequon, to see all they had to offer. On a day we both were off, we headed there for lunch. We had never been here before, and boy, that was certainly our loss! Who knew that we would not only get excellent craft beer and great food, but an unexpected side dish of amazing history.

The building itself is very cool; it had previously been a brewery in the mid 1800s. There are still beer caves underneath that you can tour. We did not do the tour this time, but we definitely will in the future.

As for the food, we had heard that the cheese curds were a must. They are beer-battered with Foxtown's own beer, and offered some unique seasonings ...we savored every cheesy bite. Rick had the shrimp tacos (a Friday specialty) and I had the buffalo chicken sandwich. Tasty and filling, there was no room for dessert, unfortunately.

We liked that they locally source as much of the menu items that they can — and even list them on the menu. We were told that they feature live music in the summer on their extensive patio area, so in addition to wanting to try more varieties of beer, and other menu items, we have even more incentive to go back. (I know I won't be able to wait too long to have those cheese curds again!)



Submitted photo

Tara, left, and daughter Megan Williams enjoy the lemonade, ice cream and other fare at Wayne's Drive-In in Cedarburg.