

Historic GALENA

*A wonderful blend of natural beauty, quaint shops and lodging,
and plenty of activities for all ages,
make this an ideal weekend destination*

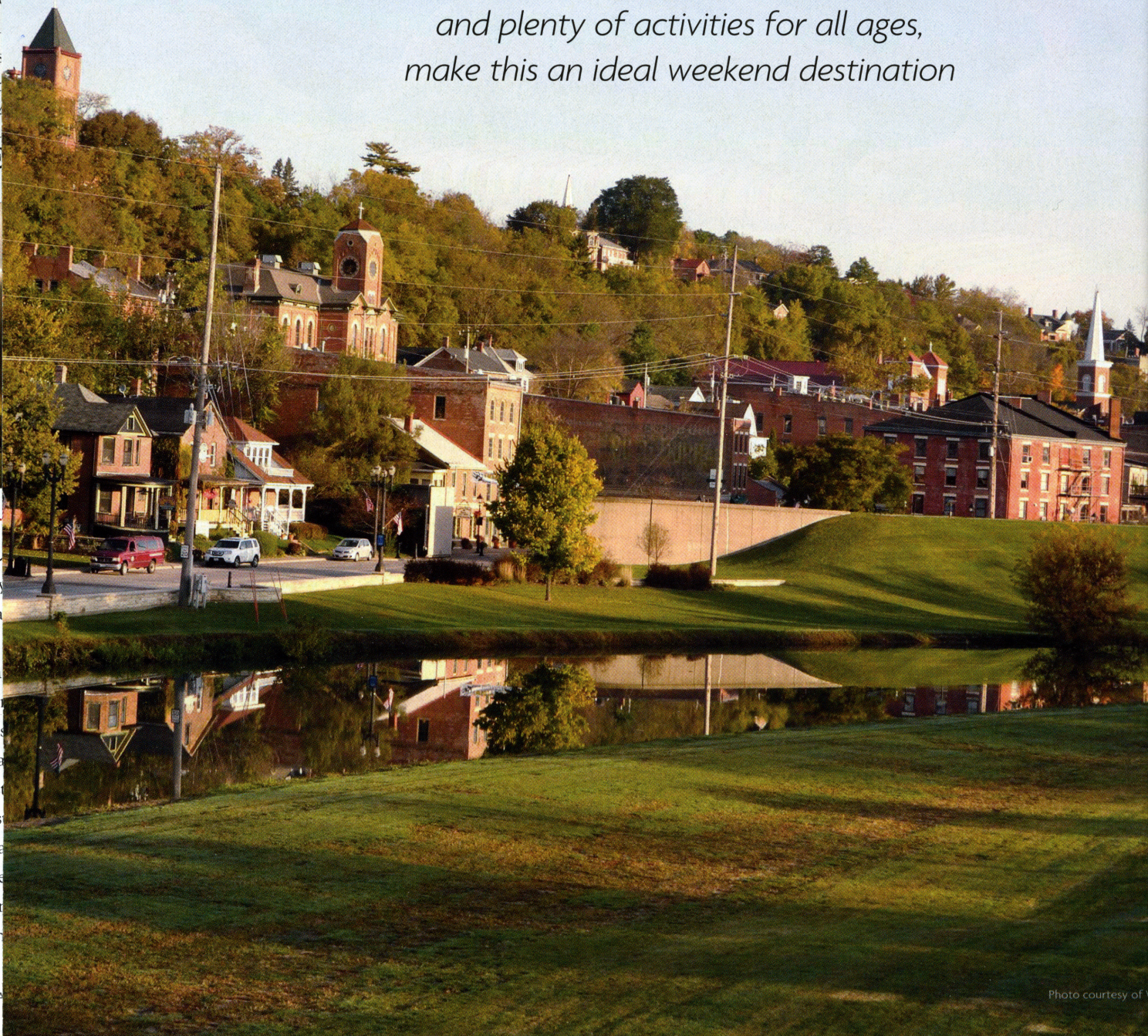




Photo by Robert Keeling, courtesy of Visit Galena

Galena's historic Main Street features a myriad of distinctive shops and the surrounding area boasts quiet, meandering streams and beautiful rolling hills and fields.

A cluster of women gathers around one end of the bar in a winery's tasting room. They chat, sip Cabernet, laugh and share memories. Girlfriend getaways are big in Galena, which provides plenty of places for females to bond.

And they are a natural progression for this northwest Illinois community that has drawn visitors for generations. Couples come for romantic weekends, holding hands over a candlelight dinner before retiring to a cozy inn or bed and breakfast. Years later they bring the kids to splash in a resort pool. Then it's adult time. The guys get together for a golf outing, and the gals divide their day between the links and boutiques along Galena's beckoning Main Street.

Galena's generational appeal endures, keeping visitors coming back for new discoveries. Spas, tours, gardens, wineries, historic homes, festivals – there's far too much to take in on one visit. Better yet, there's always something new.

HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE

Galena's stunning 19th-century architecture caught the attention of preservationists in the 1960s and set the city on a path to become a premier visitor destination. Mansions of the merchants, lawyers and steamboat captains who benefitted from Galena's lead mining boom – at a time when Galena's population dwarfed that of Chicago – were lovingly restored. About 85 percent of these structures appear on the National Register of Historic Places. Some operate as museums, some as bed and breakfasts, such as Bernadine's Stillman Inn housed in an 1858 mansion. Others remain private residences open during the tour of historic homes, September 24 and 25.

In 1865, citizens of Galena gave a stately mansion to local boy-made-good, Ulysses S. Grant, in thanks for his



Photo courtesy of Visit Galena



Photo courtesy of Eagle Ridge Resort

service in the Civil War. While residing there, Grant was elected the 18th U.S. president. Now a state historic site, the Grant home contains some of the family's furnishings. The DeSoto House, dating from 1855, was Grant's presidential campaign headquarters and continues to operate as a hotel — the oldest in Illinois — with 55 Victorian-style rooms. Grant artifacts are on display at the Old Market House, erected in 1846 with 12 stalls rented to vendors. The city council met in chambers upstairs; criminals and roughians paced two jail cells in the basement.

Galena's oldest residence, constructed in 1826 by Irish immigrant John Dowling, served as a trading post selling goods to lead miners. Have a look inside the Dowling House and get a discount on a tour of The Belvedere, built 1857 and the largest historic home in Galena. Along with period furnishings, it displays such oddities as items from the estate of showman Liberace and green velvet drapes from the set of *Gone with*



Photo by Katherine Rodeghier

The 3.5-acre Linmar Gardens offers a peaceful respite from the hustle and bustle of downtown.

the Wind, the very same that Scarlett O'Hara pulled down to make a dress to visit Rhett Butler in jail.

Pick up a self-guided walking tour brochure at the Old Train Depot Visitor Center and get a feel for Galena history and

its Greek Revival, Italianate, Gothic Revival and Queen Anne architecture. On Saturday mornings, May through October, the historical society gives Main Street walking tours. Don't want to walk? Two companies operate trolley tours to major attractions.

If the supernatural piques your interest, get goose bumps on night-time ghost tours by two companies that walk you through spooky sites and regale you with tales of Galena's history and haunts.

VINEYARDS AND GARDENS

Mix history with some liquid libation with Iowa Wine Tours. Though it's based in nearby Dubuque, Iowa, its most popular tour starts and ends in Galena with stops at three area wineries for tours and tastings, plus lunch in town. While you can visit the wineries on your own, it's nice to have a designated driver who knows the back roads and the back stories of Galena's past.

The vineyards — small, family-run affairs —

grow in the Midwest's Driftless Zone, a geologic region untouched by the last advance of Ice Age glaciers. Unlike most of the Midwest, pancaked by immense sheets of ice, the farmland around Galena rolls, its roads a roller coaster of dips and curves.

Occupying the high ground near Elizabeth is Massbach Ridge Winery, which produces about 2,000 cases a year, corking one bottle at a time. Rocky Waters Winery sits on a bluff with a panoramic view of the hills around Hanover. Purchase some wine, cheese and crackers in the winery and have an impromptu picnic at one of the tables outside.

When Rocky Waters' owners built the winery, they moved their living quarters upstairs and now rent their former log home to guests. With three bedrooms that allow sleeping space for 10 and its own stocked lake — not to mention a winery down the road — it's a cozy retreat for families and groups.

You can also rent the two-bedroom farmhouse or the one-bedroom suite above the tasting room at Galena Cellars rural vineyard, six miles from its shop and tasting room on Galena's Main Street. Galena's oldest winery — and the second largest in Illinois — Galena Cellars boasts 40 award-winning wines. It recently purchased an old troop carrier and plans to use it to shuttle visitors between its shop and vineyard.

Nurture your love of growing things at Linmar Gardens, perched on Prospect Street above downtown Galena. Chicago advertising executive Harold Martin purchased the 3.5-acre property and its 1853 brick home as a weekend retreat. In 1984 he retired there to paint and contemplate. With no plan to turn his land into a show garden, he walked out his back door one day and simply began planting.

Tours show off hostas, viburnums, conifers, grasses and daylilies. Annual and perennial flowers are scattered around flowing brooks, ponds, two gazebos, 14 sculptures and a 20-foot waterfall. A replica of a mine is cut into a limestone wall and a sunken garden has been built on the ruins of one of the first African-American churches in

Illinois. Order a catered lunch and combine a tour with a picnic in the garden.

GOLF AND OUTDOOR FUN FOR ALL AGES

If your interest in vegetation runs more toward fairways and greens, check out the 63 holes of golf on the four courses at Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa. Start off easy with the nine-hole, par 34 East Course and build up to The General, which *Golf Digest* has ranked in its top 100 U.S. courses. With an elevation of 250 feet, The General offers views of three states.

If you'd rather enjoy the view from



Photo by Katherine Rodeghier

Spikes Bar, at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa, offers a great view of the surrounding countryside.

above, book a hot air balloon ride. Galena On the Fly launches at sunrise and sunset, weather permitting.

Looking for an outdoor activity you can do with your kids? Go hiking or biking on the 6-mile Galena River Trail that winds from north of town to the Mississippi backwaters. Or rent canoes or kayaks from Fever River Outfitters for a paddle on the Galena River; maps and shuttle service provided.

Chestnut Mountain Resort is best known for downhill skiing, but you can mimic the experience in summer on its Alpine Slide.



Photo by Katherine Rodeghier



Photo by Katherine Rodeghier



Photo courtesy of Galena Cellars Winery

Sample from numerous award-winning vintages at Galena Cellars Winery or tour the vineyards on your own or with a friend.

Ride an individual sled on wheels down a curvy hard-surface track and feel the exhilaration of gliding 2,050 feet down to the banks of the Mississippi River.

Chestnut Mountain's new owners have been remodeling the 120-room resort and recently added a deck to the Sunset Grill with a magnificent view of the river. The menu's been upgraded, too.

EATING AND DRINKING

In downtown Galena, a couple of new spots to drink and dine have popped up in the last few years. In June, Miss Kitty's Grape Escape moved to bigger digs and continues to serve wine, martinis, mimosas and Bloody Marys, along with live music. Last summer marked the opening of Galena's only brewpub, Galena Brewing Company. Its craft beers are brewed on-site with six on tap, including Fever River Ale and Miner's Treasure. Take a tour of the brewery, munch on some tapas or order off a menu of sandwiches, salads and kids' fare.

Catch the bandwagon of the local foods movement at One Eleven Main, where Chef

Ryan Boughton partners with Midwest farmers and food purveyors who supply the produce, meats, fish and dairy products for his inspired dishes. Boughton goes to such great lengths to control the quality of ingredients that he travels to farms for a first-hand look at their operation. The result is a menu featuring entrées such as a stuffed pork loin made with Iowa pork, stuffed with Mindoro bleu cheese, a Hogback Haven Farm maple demi glaze, Door County cherries, potatoes and seasonal vegetables. The restaurant honors local growers by displaying black-and-white photos of its purveyors, capturing them during their day-to-day work in their shops and fields. Even the picture frames are local, made by an artist from the area using wood from his own property.

If Italian cuisine is your thing, two of Galena's established restaurants remain popular with locals and repeat visitors. Fried Green Tomatoes has the standard Italian fare you'd expect, plus novel dishes such as pork osso buco and lobster ravioli. The signature dish, fried green tomatoes, are breaded,

sautéed in olive oil, sprinkled with cheese and served as an appetizer.

Vinny Vanucchi's "Little Italy" is a family-run restaurant using recipes handed down for five generations. Choose from four dining areas, among them a family trattoria with checkered tablecloths, a bistro and, in summer, the outdoor Cappuccino Garden.

If your ethnicity is Irish — or you just enjoy the craic of the Emerald Isle — stop by Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub and Grill, named after the owner's grandfather, a Sligo man. The pub was designed and hand-crafted in Ireland, shipped to Galena and installed in the 75-room Irish Cottage Boutique Hotel. Enjoy Irish entertainment while you try shepherd's pie, Paddy's stew, fish and chips or standard American fare, such as steaks, salads and burgers.

The view at Spikes Bar and Grill, which sits near the entrance of Eagle Ridge Resort just off U.S. Route 20, may be the best in the Galena area. Huge floor-to-ceiling windows overlook a golf course and rolling countryside. The casual dining room features Midwestern cuisine.

SPAS AND SHOPPING

Ready to indulge yourself? Visit one of Galena's full-service spas or ask your hotel or B&B about in-room spa services.

Stonedrift Spa at Eagle Ridge Resort has treatments for both men and women, including facials, massages, manicures, pedicures and body treatments. Book the Glacier Glow, a full-body scrub, or couples can try the side-by-side Swedish massages and a private soak in a tub for two.

Engage in some retail therapy, always a popular pastime in Galena, where about 100 downtown shops and galleries sell antiques, apparel, home goods, accessories, art, specialty foods and confections, gift items and a hodgepodge of merchandise.

Fitting squarely into the hodgepodge category is Poopsie's, a Galena institution for 18 years. This summer it moved into larger quarters on Main Street with two former

employees taking the helm from owners who retired. Whimsical gifts, toys, jewelry and cards fill the shelves along with plenty of items you'll pick up and ask, "What the heck is this, and what do I do with it?"

The Galena Canning Company, where you can taste before you buy some of its jams, jellies, salsas and sauces, expanded this summer with a second store across Main Street. Chef Ivo's hot sauces attract lots of attention with names such as Booty Burner, Hell's Inferno and Pure Death, made from ghost pepper, the hottest pepper in the world.

At La Vie en Rose you can buy items for your garden and home. La Provençale sells table linens, fabrics, soaps and pottery from Provence. At Galena Beads you can make a bracelet, browse a huge inventory of made-in-Galena bead jewelry and take its "Beads, Wine & Chocolate" workshop.

Artsy types will want to check out Hello Galena, where more than 50 artists sell and demonstrate their work, and Artists' Annex, which is part of a three-building complex with Abe's Spring Street Guest House and Stone House Pottery & Gallery. Potter and sculptor Charles Fach gives free demos on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Sign up for a "Glaze and Graze" workshop and decorate and glaze your own three-piece place setting on Friday nights. Fach fires it in time for you to use your new dishes on Saturday night during a catered candlelight dinner in the vaulted stone chamber behind the pottery.

Pick up an original piece of art at Carl Johnson's Gallery. A Joliet/Chicago native, Johnson earned his bachelor of fine arts at the University of Illinois-Champaign and worked as a graphic designer in Chicago and Hinsdale. He's had a gallery on Main Street in Galena since 1972 where, in addition to his paintings, you can buy his book on Galena architecture, now in its third edition.

For more information on lodging, dining, shopping and activities in Galena, visit www.galena.org or call 877 464-2536. ■