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The buzz? That's Buffalo they're talking about. My Buffalo. The Unexpected Buffalo. Lonely Planet, The New York Times, Travel & Leisure, CNN—all the media biggies and bloggers—they can't stop talking about Buffalo. Singing our praises even. TBH, I'm kind of basking in the buzz and feeling all the feels.

It's so great to see people discover what I've known all along—Buffalo is one cool city.

So, here's my pitch: **come and see what everybody's talking about. But hurry,** I'm betting Buffalo won't be unexpected much longer.

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BUFFALO 2.0

BY DOUG WALLACE

A REVITALIZED QUEEN CITY REVEALS A COSMOPOLITAN CHARACTER STILL WRAPPED UP IN GOOD OLD-FASHIONED HOSPITALITY
There’s a live band in full swing on the veranda of InnBuffalo Off Elmwood. The lawn is filled with onlookers sipping their beers; the kids all wave streamers in time to the music. The annual Porchfest — one giant street party in the Elmwood Village — is the welcoming committee, my first impression of Buffalo.

Hello, everybody!

Skirting all the excitement at the front, we sidle through the side door to check in. The walls of this former mansion, built in 1898, mute the party with a soothing calm that only a turn-of-the-century ambience can evoke. All silk damask walls, stained glass, hand-painted ceilings, and gleaming oak, this is just one of several mansions lining the streets here, holdovers from a simpler time, the architecture doggedly outliving the past.

Buffalo, we soon discover, is filled with this kind of renewal; older properties not just rising to their former polished glory but surpassing it. It’s like a quiet revival is taking place. Historic office towers are getting a new lease on life downtown, growing communities entice newcomers, once derelict parts of town are now the talk of the town.

continued on page 4
A
rchitectural revolution is nothing new to this city of 260,000. Iconic American architect Frank Lloyd Wright got that ball rolling more than a century ago, designing in Buffalo with his unique vision. Seven of Wright’s masterworks still stand in and around the city, including the newly revitalized Martin House Complex, a profound example of how the legendary architect was ahead of his time.

After the Martin House, we decide to spend the whole day in the Delaware Park area. We hit the shops and cafés on Hertel Avenue, have a picnic near the Rose Garden, then wander into the Burchfield Penney Art Center, an enormous and bright space dedicated to art and artists from the Buffalo Niagara region, historic and contemporary. A series of patchwork-quilt portraits by Jack Edson from nearby Hamburg is paralyzingly beautiful.

Even more art can be found around the corner in the public spaces of the Hotel Henry Urban Resort & Conference Center, a boutique hotel, part of the redevelopment of the Romanesque-style buildings that once served as the Buffalo State Asylum. The modern experience here, set within heritage environs, underlines Buffalo’s commitment to the adaptive reuse of its historic assets.

Buildings and galleries aren’t the only players in Buffalo’s new act. The re-development of Canalside, to the tune of $300 million, has created a home for more than 1,000 events year-round, from kids’ programs and concerts to charity runs. In winter, skate on the massive ice rink or go ice biking. Kayak or boat in the summer. The Outer Harbor has miles of bike trails, lakefront parks, fishing, and more cruising; chances are good that a visit to Buffalo will see you on, around or in the waterfront at some point.

With all this activity comes an appetite, of course. Happily, Buffalo has that covered, and with more than just chicken wings, (although you would be remiss not to try them). Gabriel’s Gate, a stop on the Buffalo Wing Trail, is a highlight of our trip. I follow a Bloody Mary and plate of wings with a nice, long nap. At the other end of the scale, the intimate Las Puertas delivers a delicious take on modern Mexican cuisine, blending classic French techniques with traditional Mexican ingredients and flavors. Somewhere in the middle, you will find eateries like Toutant, a casual Southern Louisiana gem, where a traditional jambalaya is so melt-in-your-mouth perfect I want to crawl into it.

Buffalo’s diversions don’t end with the restaurants, either. Post-dinner, the entertainment value is high for night owls, thanks to venues like Nietzsche’s with its broad range of live music, comedy acts, and burlesque shows. It’s not just a local favorite, but also a well-regarded stop on the regional and national touring circuits. The bars and nightclubs of the West Chippewa Street strip swing on the weekends, most until 4 a.m., and the LGBTQ scene is robust and raucous in all the right places, the cluster of watering holes on Allen and Franklin streets all part of one big happy family.

I find Buffalo’s friendly factor the golden thread woven through its laneways and boulevards, neatly tying everything and everyone together. People are quick with a simple nod—in store lineups, on street corners, bellying up to the bar, wherever you are. It’s a warm, welcoming gesture in a cosmopolitan city that acts like a small town. When you realize that you are part of the community, even though you don’t live here, you’ll begin planning your next trip before this one is even over.
WHAT TO DO.
WHERE TO EAT.
FROM THOSE WHO KNOW.

Here it is. The 101 on Buffalo. In the words of the people who live, work and play in the City of Good Neighbors. Buffalo 101 is the introduction to all things Buffalo – the insider’s perspective you need if you want to live like a local while you’re in the BUF.
I could understand why Wright considered the Martin House his “opus” and kept a copy of its plans above his drafting table for the rest of his career. It’s that impressive.

Next, we took a trip to nearly-never-built Wright buildings at the Fontana Boathouse and the Filling Station. The boathouse was designed in 1905 for a site in Madison, Wisconsin. It wasn’t constructed until 2007, right on Buffalo’s Black Rock Canal and is now home to the West Side Rowing Club. Standing on the balcony, overlooking the water, with a view of the historic Peace Bridge, I couldn’t help but feel like we were on a ship ourselves. Soon we were at the Buffalo Transportation Pierce Arrow Museum to see the Filling Station,
Discovering Frank Lloyd Wright’s Buffalo in one inspiring day

When Tom Roberts leads tours through Frank Lloyd Wright's Martin House Complex, the memories of his childhood hijinks more than 60 years ago often come flooding back.

Roberts, 74, has been a docent at the National Historic Landmark for nearly 25 years, starting at a time when the restoration of Wright's Prairie-style masterwork was in its infancy. But his Martin House memories date back decades earlier to the 1950s, when his daily walk to St. Mark’s Elementary School took him past the property.

The Martin family had abandoned the complex more than 15 years earlier, and the house and surrounding property were “overgrown, neglected and vacant,” Roberts said. But even in its deteriorated state, the complex fascinated the young Roberts.

“I always had a physical response to it. It just drew your attention, sort of like a magnet,” Roberts said. “I thought it was a real monumental building that stuck out in the neighborhood. It was unlike anything else. It was mysterious.”

Roberts remembers the intricate woodwork in the upstairs apartment in the carriage house, and the missing windows where Wright’s signature art glass once was. But he and his friends never lingered long there. To avoid getting caught, they’d sometimes jump through a second-floor window and climb down a tree.

“We had to keep it low key so we wouldn’t attract attention,” Roberts said. “Sometimes we’d run through and keep moving to make sure we weren’t stopped. I remember vividly being up there and someone coming after us.”

Decades later, Roberts and his wife, Mary, became Martin House Restoration Corporation volunteers. Mary eventually worked her way up to become the complex’s current executive director, while Tom, a retired attorney, is one of its longest-serving docents. Last summer, the Martin House finished its quarter-century, $52 million restoration project, one of the most ambitious of its kind in the United States.

“It’s a lot more fun entering the property now than when I was 10,” Roberts said. “It’s amazing that it got restored.”  – BRIAN HAYDEN
American architecture and Buffalo grew up together. That’s why the city is home to an unrivaled variety of remarkable buildings and public spaces. The intricate ornament of Louis Sullivan’s Guaranty Building, the elegant Art Deco energy of John J. Wade’s Buffalo City Hall, the grand residential commission that vaulted Frank Lloyd Wright to international fame, Eero and Eliel Saarinen’s stunning concert hall — they all stand together within Frederick Law Olmsted’s astonishing system of parks and parkways.

It’s a city that treasures its past even as it looks toward a bright future, and for people who love American architecture, it’s a museum without roof or walls. It’s a place that will surprise you and one you won’t soon forget.
Meet the Chefs Who Are Bringing Dishes from Around the World to Buffalo

At the Niagara Café, the cooks prepare all the items on the menu by “ojo” — or eye. A pinch of this spice to flavor the café’s signature rotisserie chicken. A dash of that seasoning to round out the 400 to 500 pastelillos — crispy, crunchy fried pockets filled with steaming hot chicken or beef — handmade each day. And the guidance and know-how of a family that has held onto closely guarded recipes for generations.

Maria takes great pride in the café’s evolution into a neighborhood institution over the last 28 years — an accomplishment rooted in its commitment to quality. “We hear, ‘Oh my God, this tastes just the way my mother used to make it,’” Maria said. “We cook the way our mothers cooked. And you can sit here and enjoy it the way you would at home.”

Maria Hernandez and her husband, Raul, have been on-site at the café almost every day since they introduced Buffalo’s Lower West Side to their Puerto Rican cuisine in 1992. They live right in the neighborhood that continues to serve as the hub of Buffalo’s Puerto Rican population. Their team of family members and veteran staff know how to make the menu’s specialties by memory, from the tostones and maduros (fried and sweet plaintains) to the pasteles (green bananas grated and seasoned and served with pork).

It helps that Maria Hernandez and her husband, Raul, have been on-site at the café almost every day since they introduced Buffalo’s Lower West Side to their Puerto Rican cuisine in 1992. They live right in the neighborhood that continues to serve as the hub of Buffalo’s Puerto Rican population. Their team of family members and veteran staff know how to make the menu’s specialties by memory, from the tostones and maduros (fried and sweet plaintains) to the pasteles (green bananas grated and seasoned and served with pork).

Freddy J’s

It’s standing room only at Freddy J’s, as customers have filled all eight seats along the counter, chowing down on specialties like fried chicken and red velvet waffles. Behind the counter, owner Fred Daniel chats and jokes with his patrons as pots of rice, macaroni and cheese and collard greens simmer on the six-burner stovetop behind him.

Immigrants have long been Buffalo’s lifelblood and central to its identity.

In recent decades, new arrivals from all over the world have started restaurants and shared dishes from their native lands, helping to expand Buffalo’s culinary palate. Here are the stories of a few of the chefs who are contributing to Buffalo’s multicultural menu.

Niagara Cafe

At the Niagara Café, the cooks prepare all the items on the menu by “ojo” — or eye. A pinch of this spice to flavor the café’s signature rotisserie chicken. A dash of that seasoning to round out the 400 to 500 pastelillos — crispy, crunchy fried pockets filled with steaming hot chicken or beef — handmade each day. And the guidance and know-how of a family that has held onto closely guarded recipes for generations.
Blues music plays in the background as Daniel’s customers eat. “I got the blues since my baby left me,” Daniel croons, then laughs, as do his customers. His menu is a mix of soul food, barbeque and Liberian influences — from the seasoned fish to the collard greens cooked with onions — flavors he picked up from watching his grandmother cook on the family farm in Liberia.

“The ingredients she used, luckily I can find in Buffalo,” he said. “You want people to say, ‘I can only get that flavor at Freddy J’s.’”

Daniel is just getting started on Grant Street. An enclosed patio for additional customer seating at Freddy J’s is in the works. And he plans to open a 50-seat blues bar — The Blue Note — in a building next door later this year.

“You want the customer to feel that we are part of Buffalo and that Buffalo is a part of us,” Daniel added. “In this city, we are all one. When a customer comes in here, I want them to feel that warmth.”

195 Grant St., Buffalo
facebook.com/freddyjsongrant

The Falafel Bar

While The Falafel Bar’s menu options — like spanakopita, shawarma, and baba ganoush — originated in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean, the staff preparing the dishes hail from around the world.

Owner Oded Rauvenpoor has hired more than 30 refugees over the years from Iraq, Burma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries across the globe.

“When you come from a family of refugees, you learn you have to help others,” he said.

Rauvenpoor, 49, grew up in Israel, the son of a Libyan mother and Iranian father whose families each relocated there when they were children. His menu reflects his heritage, from the Iranian red bean soup that was a staple of Friday night dinners growing up, to the Libyan street food known as brik (dough stuffed with boiled mashed potatoes, parsley, cinnamon and salt and pepper) and Israeli chopped salad.

Rauvenpoor moved to America when he was 25, training at the French Culinary Institute in New York, then relocating to Buffalo nearly 20 years ago to raise his family. He first introduced falafel at his restaurant — and opened The Falafel Bar — after refugees resettled from the Iraq war began asking for the specialty. The Falafel Bar now has two locations — including a recently opened stall inside the EXPO Food Market downtown — and a food truck.

After growing up in a family who came from foreign lands, then moving to another country himself, Rauvenpoor has ultimately found a home in Buffalo — and seeks to extend that sense of home to the staff he hires.

“We’re what Buffalo is all about,” he said. “Buffalo is so inviting and so progressive in respecting other people.”

3545 Sheridan Dr., Amherst
thefalafelbar.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
Lin Restaurant

Memories and images of Burma adorn the walls of Lin Restaurant in the city’s Riverside neighborhood. Replicas of thatched roofs extend over most of the tables. A mural of fishermen in straw hats boating on Inle Lake lines the back wall. And a wall-sized photograph of children walking through a refugee camp surrounds the restaurant’s exit door.

“Burmese people ask me, ‘Why do you put that picture there?’” owner Khin Maung Soe said. “Every day it reminds me that we came from there. We can show our customers where we’ve been.”

As a teenager in 1988, the Burmese army forced Khin and his family from their home, part of a persecution of the Karen ethnic group. They fled to the Burma/Thailand border; Khin spent years working at restaurants throughout Thailand before settling in a United Nations Refugee Camp in 2002 for six years.

He moved to the United States in 2008 in New York City, then to Buffalo after a friend told him that rent was cheaper here. Khin saved his money working as a dishwasher and other odd jobs and opened his first grocery store on Grant Street in 2010, followed by the current restaurant and store in 2014.

Khin’s Lin Restaurant and the adjacent Lin Asian Market have become a linchpin in Buffalo’s growing Burmese community. Lin Restaurant serves several dozen Burmese and Thai specialties, from the crispy tea leaf salad and a creamy, savory chicken and coconut noodle soup to biryani (rice cooked with Burmese spices, raisins, green peas and cashews) and mango sticky rice for dessert.

Khin prepares the restaurant’s specialties, some of which are longstanding family recipes, the way they would be made in Burma; most dishes range from $9 to $15. Running a restaurant and grocery store keeps him working every day of the week, sometimes up to 12 hours a day.

Khin hopes his story — from arriving in Buffalo with little money to operating two successful businesses just a decade later — can inspire other Burmese who have moved here of the opportunities that exist. He teaches cooking classes at a nearby community center.

“When I arrived here, I became free. I got a new life. I could realize my dream.”

927 Tonawanda St., Buffalo
linrestaurant.com

———

Victor Parra Gonzalez is the head chef/owner of Las Puertas, 385 Rhode Island St. in the Five Points neighborhood on Buffalo’s West Side.

BALLYHOO
It’s a relaxed ambiance with only a few things on the menu, but boy, do they have it right here. My go-to is short rib and kimchi sausage, and during the summer me and my kiddo make a point to stop by and grab a huge cookie ice cream sandwich.
211 South Park Ave., Buffalo
buffaloballyhoo.com

BILLY CLUB
Billy Club has quickly become a favorite for me and my team. Nestled in Allentown, Jake and Dan have made a place that most people would only dream of having in their neighborhood. Chef Nate Beardsley, who I have learned so much from, cooks food that makes you happy, which is so hard to do these days.
228 Allen St., Buffalo
billyclubbuffalo.com

CANTINA LOCO
We love this one because it allows me to share my child’s Mexican-American culture. Chef Mike Andrzejewski has always cared about flavor regardless of the style of food he chooses to cook and it’s fun to see my child wonder how it’s possible to get that much flavor out of something as simple as vegetables.
191 Allen St., Buffalo
cantinaloco.com

HOME TASTE
Home Taste is the best for authentic Chinese food. It’s one of those places in town that we’re likely to go to more than once a week. There are so many delicious options on the menu that you can go in, pick a random dish on the menu, and “boom,” be mesmerized with something totally new with such intense flavor.
3106 Delaware Ave., Kenmore
716-322-0088

WAXLIGHT BAR A VIN
The level of talent alone is mind-blowing — each co-owner of Waxlight has such an accomplished career. They are cooking in a league of their own and their drink and wine menu is expertly paired with the food. This place has certainly marked a new wave of energy in the hospitality industry here in Buffalo.
27 Chandler St., Buffalo
waxlightbaravin.com
The Pearl Street Family of Companies

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PEARLSTREETFAMILY.COM

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- Lafayette Brewing Co.
- Lofts on Pearl
- Pearl Street Catering
- Brawler’s Back alley Deli & Bar
BUFFALO’S FOOD ICONS

Here are the faces behind the dishes that belong in our Food Hall of Fame

BY ARTHUR BOVINO

Cup-and-char pepperoni topped pizza, beef on weck, peanut sticks, wings — you can argue favorites but you can’t debate that Bocce, Charlie the Butcher, Paula’s, and Nine-Eleven Tavern are icons of Buffalo’s food scene. These are the chefs behind the institutions that have made Buffalo-style food famous.

JIM PACCIOTTI
BOCCE CLUB PIZZA

People think of Bocce as synonymous with Buffalo pizza, but its origins as a club whose bartender invented its pizza using an oven found in the basement didn’t make it a shoo-in for icon status. And it’s faced trials along the way. “I was a wreck when Domino’s was going to open 27 units,” said owner Jim Pacciotti.

For those who’ve been hiding under overturned cup-and-char pepperoni for decades, Bocce’s Bailey location was opened in 1959 by Dino Pacciotti. As Buddy’s is in Detroit to all other practitioners of that style, so Bocce is to the shops around the Queen City serving Buffalo-style pizza, a medium-thick pie with sweet sauce, more mozzarella than you need (and almost as much as you actually want), and crispy-curled pepperoni cups.

“The idea of the cheese going out to the edge was to be something different,” Dino’s son Jim said. “My father believed you should have a bite of cheese with every bite of pizza, even at the end of the slice.”

4174 Bailey Ave., Amherst
1614 Hopkins Rd., East Amherst
bocceclubpizza.com

Charlie the Butcher

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4174 Bailey Ave., Amherst
1614 Hopkins Rd., East Amherst
bocceclubpizza.com
MARK GRESS
NINE-ELEVEN TAVERN
Regarded by some as serving Buffalo’s best wings, Nine-Eleven Tavern is something of a conundrum, inescrutable and impervious to being rushed. Part of that is lack of windows and the clubhouse feel inside. Part is the no-nonsense demeanor of owner Mark Gress. And part is the nature and size of the kitchen. “It’s a shoebox,” Gress said. “I’ve got two fryers, a charbroiler, a stove, and that’s it.”

Gress took over the bar (said to have been called Salty’s Soda Shop during Prohibition) in the early ’80s, and 363 days a year, he’s a one-man show. “I clean, I sweep, I mop, I do all the ordering, and I’m the only one in the kitchen.”

He’s also militant about the time it takes to fry wings and presents them in a manner a fine dining restaurant would be proud of. “I make all my sauce hot, alright?” Gress says with a tone that’s a likable mix of gruff, defiant, and charming. Not only that but in contrast to how many operators make sauce, “I use clarified butter,” Gress says. “It’s more expensive, but the flavor difference is obvious.”

11 Bloomfield Ave., Buffalo
716-825-9939

PAULA HUBER
PAULA’S DONUTS
For nearly 25 years, if anyone has seen Buffalonians at their earliest (and perhaps not their best), before coffee or consciousness, and welcomed them without judgment, it’s been Paula’s Donuts. And Paula’s has done it sweetly, offering a leg up on the day with more than 50 different doughnuts in six categories (glazed, jelly, Bavarian, angel cream, filled, and unfilled). The force behind the donuts? Paula Huber.

A former Dunkin’ franchisee, Paula Huber and husband Chuck went indie in 1996, taking over a Dickie’s Donuts whose bad rep she said took dedication, endurance, and stripping the cases daily to overcome. Paula, who began the business at 41, started out working 19-hour days. “I’d bake, do counter...My mother used to say, ‘I’d be dead if I were you!’” But Paula figured, “if I’m gonna kill myself, we might as well just do it for ourselves!”

Paula doesn’t do everything anymore — she has help. And the hard work paid off. Paula’s is an icon — one that gives back too. “Whatever’s left, we donate,” Paula said. “We work with seniors and women’s groups, and Buffalo City Mission.”

2319 Sheridan Dr., Tonawanda
8560 Main St., Clarence
936 Union Rd., West Seneca
paulasdonuts.com

CHARLIE ROESCH
CHARLIE THE BUTCHER
In Buffalo, Charlie the Butcher is synonymous with beef on weck, but you may not know how far back, and how high in the halls of power these horseradish-spiced wheels turn.

Started in 1914 as an outdoor wholesale meat market, Charlie the Butcher was launched by Charles Roesch (sounds like “fresh”), grandfather of today’s “Charlie.” The OG Charlie went on to become mayor of Buffalo from 1930 to 1934, after which he left politics, opened a butcher shop in the Broadway Market and passed away from an infection suffered from banging his leg on a butcher’s block.

Mayor Roesch’s son Charles took over through 1987, but it’s his son Charles J. who made the “Charlie the Butcher” personality so iconic in Buffalo today. He’s the Charlie who opened a restaurant kiosk in 1984 (where he started wearing the now well-known embroidered apron) and took over the company with his wife in 1987. Credit him for the Charlie the Butcher packaged roast beef available in grocery stores, and most of the expansion.

15
Buffalo’s corner taverns have been perfecting the chicken wing since it was invented at the legendary Anchor Bar in 1964. Secret recipes, historic charm and Buffalo-style hospitality make the BUFFALO WING TRAIL an experience to be savored. COME TO BUFFALO TO TASTE THE DELICIOUS DOZEN. The wet naps are on us.
Enjoy a variety of choices from our Award Winning Menu
• Fresh Hand Breaded Chicken Tenders & Boneless Wings
• Hot & Juicy Beef on Weck
• Expanded Menu of Burgers, Salads & Wraps
• Hot Fresh Cheesy Pizza

Winner of the prestigious James Beard Award

THE REAL STORY

On March 4th, 1964, Dominic Bellissimo was tending bar at the now-famous Anchor Bar Restaurant in Buffalo, NY. Late that evening, a group of Dominic’s friends arrived at the bar with ravenous appetites. Dominic asked his mother, Teresa, to prepare something for his friends to eat.

They looked like chicken wings, a part of the chicken that usually went into the stock pot for soup. Teresa had deep fried the wings and flavored them with a secret sauce. The wings were an instant hit and it didn’t take long for people to flock to the bar to experience their new taste sensation. From that evening on, Buffalo Wings became a regular part of the menu at the Anchor Bar.

The phenomenon created in 1964 by Teresa Bellissimo has spread across the globe. Although many have tried to duplicate the Buffalo wing, the closely guarded secret recipe is what makes Frank & Teresa’s the proclaimed “Best Wings in the World.”

Teressa Bellissimo

Our World-Famous Wing Sauce is available in supermarkets, our restaurants or at AnchorBar.com

WE SHIP OUR ORIGINAL WINGS ACROSS THE COUNTRY!
Visit AnchorBar.com for ordering information.
the Queen City has seen a recent surge of homegrown breweries and brewpubs.

There are now more than 35 beer makers around the region, reinvigorating once-bustling waterfronts, revitalizing old buildings and giving growing neighborhoods gathering places brimming with conversation, great beer and civic pride. These locally grown breweries offer a bonanza of beer, so much so that it’s tough to chart a course. Luckily, we’ve done the hard work of creating a trio of tasty beer trails to help you explore Buffalo by the pint.

**THIS WAY TO IPA**

Start hopping around at Thin Man Brewery’s original location (492 Elmwood Ave., 716-923-4100; thinmanbrewery.com), in Buffalo’s historic Elmwood Village, and their forward-thinking, hop-focused beers. Climb aboard the hazy IPA train with the smooth Trial By Wombat, which contains flaked oats and Australia’s melony, peachy Galaxy hops, or try the fruity and lightly dank Bliss double IPA.

Resist the urge to order a second glass and decamp to downtown Buffalo’s Big Ditch Brewing Company (55 East Huron St., bigditchbrewing.com). It’s a former Verizon service center reborn as a bright, bi-level restaurant that can’t make enough Hayburner, an unfiltered, grapefruit-scented IPA with gripping bitterness.

Old Buffalo rubs shoulders with new Buffalo amid the towering grain silos of the Old First Ward, where you’ll find the massive second outpost of Resurgence Brewing Company (55 Chicago St., resurgencebrewing.com). The industrial-sleek space, outfitted with chandeliers, offers seating feet from the gleaming fermentation tanks. Start with the cloudy Cosmic Truth, which packs a huge tropical punch into a beer that’s about as strong as a light lager (just 4.3 percent ABV).
Prior to Prohibition, Buffalo had 29 breweries, and Iroquois Brewing continued to fill local mugs with high-quality lager until 1971. Today’s breweries are also adept at making quenching lagers and pilsners, plus traditional styles that sing with well-sauced chicken wings. They’re done exceptionally well at Old First Ward Brewing (73 Hamburg St., genemccarthys.com) where head brewer Bryan Kirchmyer turns out hugely flavorful, banana-scented hefeweizens and so-good-you’ll-sigh German lagers that are cold-aged for up to 12 weeks, including an unfiltered kellerbier. When the weather’s swell, we recommend enjoying a few on the patio.

Your next goal is Beltline Brewery & Kitchen (545 Swan St., belt-linebrewing.com). It takes its name from the hard-working train line that ferried locals and freight around Buffalo in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Now, the namesake is a sunny, window-filled brewpub with a vegan-friendly kitchen that focuses on “good, clean craft beer,” according to head brewer Erik Greiner, including the brewery’s best seller: a German-style kölsch brewed with honey.

Here’s your next stop: Flying Bison Brewing Company (840 Seneca St., flyingbisonbrewing.com). Located a half mile east, it’s the city’s first production brewery since Iroquois Brewing shuttered. Owner and brewer Tim Herzog does solid by the classics, which you can taste-test by the flight. Go for Rusty Chain, an Austrian-inspired amber lager that’s one of Buffalo’s more popular beers; the baby-soft Buffalo Kölsch 716; and Larkin Lager, a German-style Munich helles that gets its crispness from 40 days of cold aging.

Lastly, make hay to the welcoming Community Beer Works (520 Seventh St., communitybeerworks.com), started in 2012 by a collective of local home-brewers. Over the years, CBW has grown from a wee system that couldn’t supply enough beer for a kegger to a 20-barrel system—that’s nearly 5,000 pints per batch—turning out crowd-pleasers, none looming larger than the Whale. It’s a toasty brown ale that recalls toffee and coffee, a chameleon for all seasons.

Buffalo’s breweries excel in innovation, noodling on new fermentations and flavor combinations, casting curious eyes to desserts, fruits, funky yeast strains and elsewhere to create beers that, in the best possible way, broaden the boundaries of good taste.

Align your compasses and head about 30 minutes southeast of Buffalo to the handsome village of East Aurora, home to 42 North Brewing Company (25 Pine St., 42northbrewing.com). Sit in the warm, rustic taproom and sip crazy-good sour ales. There’s the piña colada–inspired Gose Colada; Blueberry Crumble Pie Gose; and Halt, Who Gose There?, fermented with a quartet of Norwegian yeast strains and packed with raspberries and blueberries.

Next, beeline back into town to bend elbows at Labatt Brew House (79 Perry St., labattusa.com/brewhouse), the Canadian company’s first American innovation brewery. Inside the 3,000-square-foot space, carved out of a warehouse built in 1919, you’ll find a ten-barrel pilot system pumping out experimental beers such as a lavender-infused saison, a pale ale packed with spruce tips and gingerbread ale that recalls Christmas cookies.

Now that you’ve worked up an appetite, stop at the landmark 1895 Dun Building, the city’s first steel-framed high-rise, where the basement contains the izakaya-style Sato Brewpub (110 Pearl St., 716-248-1436; satorestaurantgroup.com). At the Japanese-influenced concept, married couple Joshua and Satomi Smith pair pan-fried gyoza with steaming bowls of rich ramen, grilled chicken skewers called yakitori (trust us, try the skin and heart) and house-brewed beers that look (far) east for inspiration. Grab Bento, a cream ale made with miso, and the J-POP series of sour ales flavored with fruits such as yuzu, a zesty Japanese citrus.
In the 20 years since JoAnn Falletta first stepped on to the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra podium as its music director, the orchestra has achieved a new level of national and international prominence. The BPO has become one of the leading recording orchestras for Naxos and returned twice to Carnegie Hall. In 2018, the orchestra made their first international tour in three decades. Hailed as a “leading force for the music of our time” for her work as a conductor, recording artist, audience builder, champion of American composers and communicator, Falletta is revered and beloved by the citizens of Buffalo and fans of the BPO. In 2020, the orchestra has an ambitious schedule of performances at Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo’s world-renowned concert hall, and the JoAnn Falletta International Guitar Concerto Competition will bring the world’s greatest classical guitarists to Buffalo once again.

» bpo.org

Oh man, what an awesome venue! **Sportsmen’s Tavern** is the real deal. A true Buffalo institution. It’s the kind of honky-tonk you’d find in a place like Austin, Texas. Super nice bartenders. Affordable drinks. Friendly crowd. Great local and national bands. And there’s not a bad seat in the house. Definitely, one of the best places to hear live music in Buffalo.

VIBRANT NIGHTLIFE
VisitBuffaloNiagara.com/nightlife
VBN: What’s going on right now in Buffalo’s craft cocktail scene that gets you excited?

Threat: We’ve seen a huge rise in interest in non-alcoholic cocktails — cocktails with the same level of finesse and complexity that go into any of our house cocktails. It’s an exciting new category of focus that gives us the opportunity to get creative with our specialty ingredients, many of which often share comparable qualities with those of a spirited cocktail. It allows our guests to feel like they are not missing out or compromising their own personal preferences.

VBN: How does our cocktail scene fit into the broader transformation of Buffalo?

Threat: The collaborative spirit between our bar and a number of local farms, businesses and artisans. In addition to what goes into our drinks, such as a variety of locally-produced spirits or local seasonal produce, Buffalo’s offerings can be seen in the art on our walls, the glasses on our shelves and in the spirit of our ambience.

VBN: Why is food and drink such an important part of the Buffalo visitor experience?

Threat: Buffalo is special because it literally has something for everyone. We know our culture here, people outside of Buffalo haven’t caught up yet.

VBN: Besides Marble & Rye, where are some of your favorite places to grab a nightcap?


VBN: What’s your favorite cocktail to mix up for guests?

Threat: The Bearded Lady. It’s a base of Blanco tequila with Sfumato. It has nostalgic flavors from the concord grape shrub that we make in house. The drink comes across as layered and textural with a pleasant tartness and smoke. TRY IT.

VBN: What’s your favorite thing about bartending?

Threat: Obviously, the guest. Every person that comes in has a special and unique story about something, so it’s always refreshing when a guest shares their experiences with you. I’ve been told that I have a very “calming” aura, so sometimes people overshare (laughs).

VBN: Do you get many out-of-towners coming into the restaurant?

Threat: We get a pretty good number, actually. Business trips and even more vacations to Buffalo, which is nice.
There’s a reason why the Bills and Sabres just celebrated their 60th and 50th anniversaries of football and hockey in Buffalo: their obsessed, passionate, circle-the-wagons fans. And then there are the Buffalo superfans, two fanatics who take rooting to the next level, showing up early, staying until the last minute of play, and never missing a game. They stick by their teams — and their city — through good times and bad, never wavering in their support. They’re the embodiment of the excitement and enthusiasm visitors will find when they come to Buffalo for a game. Meet Anna “Momzie” Szczepanski and Ken “Pinto Ron” Johnson.
It’s several hours before kickoff just down the road from New Era Field, and Ken “Pinto Ron” Johnson is tailgating much as he has for the previous 421 Buffalo Bills games.

Johnson, who has not missed a Bills game since 1994, arrives before 7 a.m. each game day in “Hammer’s Lot” on Abbott Road to prep for one of the most renowned tailgates in the National Football League. The tailgate’s centerpiece is his 1980 red Ford Pinto that earned Ken his nickname (A news story once mistakenly called him “Ron” and the name stuck).

By 9 a.m., as fans filter into the lot, Pinto Ron and his family and friends have turned the hood of the Pinto into a massive grill. There’s bacon sizzling on a saw, a pancake cooking on a shovel, cocktail wieners boiling inside a hubcap, Buffalo wings frying inside an old army helmet and sausage links grilling on a rake. And then there’s Johnson’s friend, “Pizza Pete,” slinging pies from the inside of a filing cabinet.

At 11:30 a.m., spectators have gathered to witness “The Ketchup Opening Ceremony.” Johnson’s friends used to squirt ketchup on his hamburger bun from a distance; when one misfire landed ketchup on his arm and hilarity ensued, they decided to make him the target instead, standing on top of a van and covering him with condiments before every game.

Johnson quickly cleans up and never lets his tailgate get in the way of watching the Bills; tailgating is “just a bonus.” He spends tailgate mornings with a beer in hand mingling with friends and posing for selfies with strangers. More than 50 of his friends park in the lot with him on any given Sunday, and hundreds more visitors stop by just to say hello — motivation for Johnson, a software developer from Rochester, to keep the tailgate going.

“If you do something dumb enough and stupid enough for long enough, eventually you’ll become known for it,” Johnson said. “The key is persistence.”
Just before the puck drop at KeyBank Center, some of the Buffalo Sabres’ youngest fans stand next to the rink alongside one of the oldest, clamoring behind the plexiglass to see their favorite players warming up.

Standing next to them, quietly watching the players dart and scramble around the ice, is 95-year-old Anna Szczepanski of Cheektowaga, or, as she’s better known around the arena, “Momzie.” While the children soon returned to their seats around the arena for the game, “Momzie” was already at her front row seat, the same one she’s had for almost every Sabres home game since the arena opened in 1996.

In fact, Szczepanski has been in the same row and section to cheer on the team since Oct. 15, 1970, the night the Sabres made their debut at Memorial Auditorium, their home before they moved to KeyBank Center. She’s only missed a handful of games since, and always arrives early to see the team warm up.

A lot has happened in those 2,000 home games that she’s been a front row witness to – Stanley Cup finals, the reign of The French Connection, the “fog game” at The Aud. In those 50 years, Szczepanski has befriended referees who have supplied her with nearly 40 game pucks and players like center Sam Reinhart, who has given her two of his sticks.

“She’s had more boyfriends than Hugh Hefner had girlfriends,” quipped her son, Dave, who joins her at the games. “She’s like a mother to everybody.”

In 2019, the Sabres honored her as their fan of the year, and provided her with a customized number one jersey with her nickname, “Momzie,” which came from her son’s friends who consider her their matriarch. The honor was a defining moment for Szczepanski, a Buffalo native who has stuck with the team – and her city – through thick and thin.

“You’ve got to support them to have a team,” she said. “No matter how they play, you support them.”
That’s right, I still lace ‘em up when the mood strikes. But mostly I’m a fan these days. You can find me in the parking lot at New Era Field for every Bills game, cheering the Sabres from my seats in the KeyBank Center during hockey season, enjoying some fun in the sun at Sahlen Field when the Bisons are at bat, and vibing on the college hoops action at Alumni Arena at UB when the Bulls take the court. And the Bandits. Don’t forget lacrosse. It’s quick on its feet and lots of fun. Just like me.
Step into Asbury Hall @ Babeville and find downtown’s most angelic venue, set inside a converted 19th century Gothic Revival-style church. Catch a touring show inside the lower bowl of the historic Town Ballroom, then shuffle across the street to the Tralf for blues, jazz or the spirit of Prince—who famously played a surprise set in the place in 2002. Pack into Mohawk Place for genuine rock club grit, or find the city’s answer to Austin, Texas within the alt-country, honky tonk confines of Sportsmen’s Tavern. Walk up to a collaborative evening within the Colored Musicians Club; stroll in and get situated within the jazz-infused ambiance of Pausa Art House; or head to bohemian cool of Nietzsche’s, whose exterior artwork states its position quite clearly: Without music, life would be a mistake.

BUFFALO'S MUSIC IS ITS HEARTBEAT, AND EVERY NIGHT, IT'S UNLEASHED TO ILLUMINATE THIS ONCE-HERALDED CITY OF LIGHT.

BY MICHAEL FARRELL

BUFFALO HAS ITS SCENE—BUT IT ALSO HAS A SOUND.

It’s the gritty guitar chords of a city always grinding, with fledgling musicians flicking strings through punk sets or intricate progressions in the corners of dive bars and dance halls. It’s the drum thump of an ethnically diverse population, packed together in rock clubs once host to jazz greats, alt rock gods and every performer in between. It’s the amplified exuberance of a region still rising from the ashes of its Rust Belt past, but now blooming from the artistic fervor that’s always kept it pulsating.

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SEARCHING FOR THE SOUND OF BUFFALO

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Rick James found his funk on these streets. The Goo Goo Dolls went from sweat-drenched local club shows to eventual pop radio stardom. Snapcase’s homegrown snarl influenced every fledgling hardcore act for decades — including fellow Buffalonians Every Time I Die, who tore up local spots before rising to a now flagship act of its genre. Ani DiFranco, Willie Nile and Weezer’s Patrick Wilson grew up here; and before its swirling jams moved summer festivals, Aqueous, Moe. and Soulive were born on these blocks.

But the venues and lineage are only part of the sound. The rest lies in the region’s ongoing need for that beat, and how it reverberates from musician to resident across all corners of Western New York.

Tireless local artists. Visiting Canadian quartets. Hip-hop poets and purveyors of glittering synth pop. Their rhythms roll through venues small and large, suburban or city. In the winter, it echoes between frost-covered windows of neighborhood taverns and intimate enclaves. In the summer, it moves into every park, headlines every waterfront festival, and entertains thousands, seven nights a week.

Regardless of season, it’s always a working-class communal experience, shared by locals who’ve lived it, and visitors who want to check the pulse of this city. And with every song or sold-out show, that vibrancy is here — and it’s the sound of Buffalo.

Buffalo’s music heritage runs deep.
There’s a long tradition here of festivals and outdoor concerts bringing together fans who enjoy the energy and excitement of live performances. Here are six reasons to make a musical trip to Buffalo in 2020.

1. BUFFALO PORCHFEST
The quaint porches of the Elmwood Village neighborhood become the stages for local musicians at Porchfest. This biannual grassroots music festival allows visitors to walk or bike from porch to porch sampling the music of dozens of local artists. It’s music on the go! Free.
May 30, 2020 » buffaloporchfest.org

2. STRAWBERRY MOON FESTIVAL AT ARTPARK
The Strawberry Moon Festival links amazing musical performances to the culture and history of the indigenous peoples that called the lands surrounding Artpark home. Dance competitions, performing arts showcases and a traditional drum procession are just the start at this weekend-long festival.
June 27-28, 2020 » artpark.net

3. COBBLESTONE LIVE
Entering its fourth year, Cobblestone Live has become downtown Buffalo’s signature summer music festival. Filling the streets of the Cobblestone District with local vendors, eats and music lovers, the festival features big names and talented local acts rocking out on four stages.
July 31-August 1, 2020 » cobblestonelive.com

4. PAPPY MARTIN LEGACY MASTEN JAZZ FESTIVAL
Over the course of two weekends in July, the Pappy Martin Legacy Masten Jazz Festival, held at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park features the local, national and international artists who carry jazz traditions forward. For more than 20 years, these free concerts have celebrated the memory of local jazz legend James “Pappy” Martin. Free.
July 2020 » pmljazz.com

5. MUSIC IS ART
Goo Goo Dolls bassist Robby Takac founded this all-day, multi-genre festival, which is part concert, part bazaar, street fair, art gallery and all fun! Music Is Art celebrates Year 18 at the urban sports and entertainment complex that is Buffalo RiverWorks. Free.
September 12, 2020 » musicisart.org

6. BORDERLAND MUSIC + ARTS FESTIVAL
Experience some of the biggest names in folk, alt-country and Americana alongside the impeccable skill of local craftsmen and women on the historic grounds of Knox Farm State Park.
September 19-20, 2020 » borderlandfestival.com

- DREW BROWN

For a complete calendar of events, go to VisitBuffaloNiagara.com/music-events
“Few places in America measure up to the waters around Buffalo, for variety and quality of fishing. Within a few minutes’ drive of the bustling downtown, fishermen can work the sprawling Lake Erie waterfront for smallmouth bass and walleyes; fish in the picturesque Niagara River for smallies, walleyes, trout and salmon; or tap nearby Lake Ontario for the same species. The proximity of these three diverse waterways affords Buffalo-area anglers the opportunity to catch fish in virtually any weather 12 months of the year.”

- OUTDOOR LIFE
5 FANTASTIC HIKES AROUND BUFFALO

ETERNAL FLAME AT CHESTNUT RIDGE
Chestnut Ridge Rd., Orchard Park
Tucked away inside Erie County’s largest park is one of the most extraordinary geological features in Western New York — the Eternal Flame. The natural gas leak flickering behind a waterfall is accessible via a short trek up a ravine trail. Reaching it feels like finding a treasure at the end of a quest.

KNOX FARM STATE PARK
437 Buffalo Rd., East Aurora
More than 600 acres of rolling meadows and forested trails await visitors just outside the village of East Aurora. The Knox family’s former country estate offers a bucolic landscape and plenty of hiking opportunities — a rare chance for the public to walk through a piece of countryside that previously functioned as a farm.

TIFFT NATURE PRESERVE
1200 Fuhrmann Blvd., Buffalo
This former landfill turned nature preserve near Buffalo’s waterfront invites bird watchers, hikers and urban explorers to observe native wildlife just minutes from downtown. The preserve — composed of wetlands and expansive forests — features hiking trails and viewing platforms that offer views of the city’s towering grain silos in the distance.

ERIE COUNTY FOREST
Genesee Rd. between Warner Gulf and Mehm Rds., East Concord
This is one of the best-kept hiking secrets in Western New York. Several miles of trails criss-cross hundreds of acres of sloping, wooded terrain featuring a babbling brook and a still-functioning sugar shack that produces maple syrup seasonally. Trails run on either side of Genesee Road.

LECHWORTH STATE PARK
1 Letchworth State Park, Castile
The park’s nickname — “The Grand Canyon of the East” — underscores the lasting impression it leaves with visitors. The Genesee River cuts through a deep gorge and cliffs hundreds of feet high, producing sweeping vistas that are particularly stunning during fall foliage season. The most popular hike in the park — and a must for first-time visitors — straddles the gorge’s rim and connects three cataracts, the park’s Lower, Middle and Upper Falls.

By Brian Hayden
Birdwatching in the Buf
Buffalo Niagara is a Globally Significant Bird Area

BY JAY BURNEY

Nature has endowed the Buffalo Niagara region with abundance. Our lakes, rivers, shorelines, forests, fields and massive day and night sky vistas are treasures. Our location in the upper Great Lakes, at the convergence of Lake Erie, the Niagara River, and the Buffalo River, and at an international border offer visitors multifaceted ecotourism opportunities. Some of the more popular vantage points include Tifft Nature Preserve, Times Beach Nature Preserve and Buckhorn Island State Park.

The Niagara River strait, which runs 36 miles from Buffalo to Fort Niagara, has been designated a Globally Significant Important Bird Area. This internationally-recognized designation was awarded because of the year-round presence of birds and other wildlife in the area. The same designation has been awarded to the Galapagos, Yellowstone National Park, and the Florida Everglades. Buffalo Niagara is a world-class birding area.

Birdwatching can be done year-round in the Buffalo Niagara region, but springtime offers a wealth of opportunities. The annual spring migration of neo-tropical songbirds inundates the region. These colorful and energetic visitors come from winter roosts as far away as the Amazon as they move north to begin new families and life cycles.

The birds that visit, travel through, and live in our region help create and sustain the critical biodiversity of the Amazon basin to the arctic and all points in between. This makes the Buffalo Niagara region critical to the health and well-being of our entire planet and the human and biodiverse species that define it.
So, this is where the Buffalo now roam. Upright. On paddleboards. On the Buffalo River. Pretty cool, right? FYI, that’s RiverWorks over my shoulder. It’s this awesome new place in the heart of Buffalo’s waterfront where I love to catch some sun on their enormous patio, grab a burger and a beer, maybe do some rock climbing and get this: you can actually zipline between those grain silos. First of its kind. Kind of like me.
Buffalo’s Botanical Gardens

CELEBRATING 120 YEARS OF NATURAL BEAUTY

"The Botanical Gardens in Buffalo are a real gem to discover. Plan to spend about two hours seeing a very large variety of plants, trees, flowers, and cacti. The optional, free audio tour handheld electronic devices make the self-guided much more interesting. Many varieties were in bloom and the quiet and calm atmosphere allows you to fully connect with nature. I recommend you shut off your cell phone just to be sure you can focus on the natural beauty.

buffalogardens.com

– JAMES B., RALEIGH, NC ON TRIP ADVISOR / OCTOBER 2018
Thanks to an army of fanatically devoted (and freakishly friendly) gardeners, Buffalo’s green scene is second to none. You’re cordially invited to celebrate a season of color, light, and life with us, one yard at a time. Because in this town, if the flowers are open, the gardens probably are, too.

In 2020, Buffalo’s garden touring season features six weeks of great garden getaways!

For all the dirt, go to VisitBuffaloNiagara.com/gardens
NIAGARA GORGE DISCOVERY CENTER » This is the perfect spot to get oriented and learn about the geology, ecology and history of the Falls and the surrounding region. It also serves as the trailhead for an easy hike on the Great Gorge Railway Trail that follows the route of a trolley line that once ran along the bottom of the gorge from Niagara Falls to Lewiston. Today, it’s the easiest way to descend into the canyon cut by the Niagara River over the last 10,000 years. niagarafallsstatepark.com

NIAGARA FALLS UNDERGROUND RAILROAD HERITAGE CENTER Through multimedia displays, a recreation of the Cataract House Hotel dining room, historic artifacts, beautiful illustrations and a short film, the Heritage Center tells the true stories of the heroic Americans who fought for freedom and justice on the bluffs overlooking the Niagara Gorge. niagarafallsundergroundrailroad.org

WHIRLPOOL STATE PARK » A spectacular view of Devil’s Hole — a deep, bowl-shaped basin hundreds of feet below — is the appetizer here. The main course is the hike that takes you to the bottom of the gorge and along the class five rapids of the Niagara River. This is one of the region’s hiding-in-plain-sight gems, a chance to sit down alongside the roaring cataract and enjoy the natural Niagara that most visitors to the Falls overlook. A warning: this is a hike for the hale and hearty. parks.ny.gov/parks/105

DEVIL’S HOLE STATE PARK » Devil’s Hole is adjacent to Whirlpool State Park and shares many of the same trails and views. If you’re up for a longer, more challenging hike along the roaring Niagara River, descend to the gorge floor at Devil’s Hole, climb back up via the Whirlpool State Park stairs and return to your car along the gorge rim to complete the loop. Allow two hours. parks.ny.gov/parks/42

NIAGARA POWER VISTA » Science can be fun. Education can be engaging. These are the lessons you’ll drive away with after a stop at the recently renovated Niagara Power Vista. Operated by the New York Power Authority, the Power Vista is an interactive experience that tells the story of the harnessing of hydroelectricity — a story that’s more dramatic than you might think — in a family-friendly way. Parking and admission are FREE! nypa.gov

Exploring the NIAGARA SCENIC PARKWAY

Fast or Slow, this Route is the Way to Go

BY ED HEALY

T’S ONE OF THE GREAT AMERICAN RIDES — a scenic 15-mile stretch of highway that packs more punch than roads ten times as long. Skirting the edge of the Niagara River as it rushes from the Falls to its rendezvous with Lake Ontario, the Niagara Scenic Parkway makes for a delightful diversion of a couple hours or several days of exploration. If you’d like to leave the driving to someone else, climb aboard the new Discover Niagara Shuttle; it’s a free, hop on, hop off bus that stops at 17 sites along the Parkway.

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LEWISTON » Stop at this charming village dating from 1818 for lunch, dinner or a snack. For lunch, try Water Street Landing. On a fine summer day, there’s no better place to take in the views of the lower Niagara River. (The Freedom Crossing Monument is nearby and worth a small detour). At dinnertime, try Carmelo’s, an upscale Italian restaurant that’s long been considered one of the region’s finest. For a treat, the go-to stop is Hibbard’s, a classic roadside stand that’s been serving to-die-for frozen custard since 1939.

ARTPARK » This is a great place for a picnic, surrounded by stunning views and playful public art. But if your timing is right, the best reason to stop at this New York State Park devoted to the arts is a concert, performance or festival. Artpark hosts dozens of special events each season, ranging from the fantastically whimsical Fairy House Festival to more mainstream concerts by the likes of Vampire Weekend, Trombone Shorty and the B-52s.

STELLA NIAGARA PRESERVE » With 29 acres and more than a quarter mile of shoreline, the Stella Niagara Preserve is a place of natural serenity and the largest privately-owned, undeveloped tract of land along the Niagara River. Acquired by the Western New York Land Conservancy in 2015, the property is being returned to its natural condition and provides walking trails, fishing access and a place to put a kayak into the slower moving waters of the lower Niagara River.

FORT NIAGARA STATE PARK » Located at the confluence of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, Fort Niagara State Park preserves and interprets the history that happened here and helped determine the fate of the North American continent. You’ll find living history exhibits, reenactors, musket demonstrations, and the historic quarters where French, British and American soldiers lived and worked from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The French and Indian War Encampment held every July is one of the highlights of the Fort’s annual calendar.

RHEA ANNA

CHANGING CURRENTS

Maid of the Mist Capt. Kaitlynn McHenry is ready for whatever the mighty Niagara throws at her

“Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would end up working for Maid of the Mist,” Kaitlynn McHenry says of her job with the legendary fleet of Niagara Falls tour boats. McHenry grew up in the nearby Rochester suburbs, but didn’t step aboard a Maid of the Mist boat until she was in her twenties. “I loved the trip and was wildly impressed with the captain’s skill. Little did I know I would be a part of it one day.” Last year, McHenry became the first female captain in the 174-year history of the Maid of the Mist. “I enjoy my special little place in local history,” she says, “but I would much rather be known for being a skilled captain.” Here’s McHenry’s close-up view of the Maid of the Mist experience.

VBN: What do you enjoy most about your job?
McHenry: I love the uniqueness of Niagara Falls. Passengers travel thousands of miles to be here and see this. They are struck with wonder and awe when experiencing the Horseshoe Falls. As we pull through the first blast of spray, the screams of joy and excitement always make me smile. I watch people have a once in a lifetime experience every half hour!

VBN: What’s the biggest challenge of your job?
McHenry: The constantly changing currents of the river mean you are always on your toes. Conditions can change completely in the span of even an hour and you have to be ready for whatever the mighty Niagara throws at you.

VBN: What’s it like when your office is one of the wonders of the world?
McHenry: I have a spectacular view! I know just how lucky I am to see the Falls up close and personal every day. When I’m not at the helm, I find myself taking it in like a tourist. The grandeur of it all is never lost on me.

VBN: Does all the beauty you’re surrounded by ever get distracting?
McHenry: In all honesty, it is the exact opposite. The job distracts us from the beauty. When we are at the helm it is our job to focus solely on navigation, currents, maneuvering, and all aspects of safety. Without that the guests wouldn’t be able to enjoy the falls in all its wonder. We are tuned in to the vessel and the task at hand in order to allow our passengers to fully revel in the power and majesty of the Falls.
What do you do when you’ve got a Wonder of the World right in your own backyard? Take your visiting friends there, of course. Niagara Falls is 20 minutes from downtown Buffalo, which means I’ve spent a fair amount of time at the Cave of the Winds and at the prow of the Maid of the Mist. It NEVER gets old!
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WHAT’S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

EXPLORE & MORE –
THE RALPH C. WILSON JR. CHILDREN’S MUSEUM
Buffalo’s waterfront was once a center of shipping and industry — a rough and tumble place of docks and deckhands who helped make Buffalo a 19th century boom-town. After decades of decline and neglect, Buffalo’s 21st century waterfront has been reborn as a family friendly hot spot. This transformation from desolate to destination over the last decade has added all sorts of ways to soak up some fun and sun with the kids.

Canalside, the jewel in our waterfront crown, has seen the most dramatic transformation thanks to the opening of Explore & More – The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Children’s Museum. And don’t let the word “museum” fool you. There’s nothing stuffy about this interactive, family experience. The kids will be busy marveling at the multi-story waterfall, sliding in their socks on the play ice rink and climbing through the fully ADA-compliant indoor tree-house. The museum pays tribute to the city’s sports teams, historic waterways, architecture, legacy of innovation and what it means to be a neighbor in the “City of Good Neighbors.”

A comeback of a different sort is taking place right across the street from Explore & More with the return of the restored Buffalo Heritage Carousel to Canalside. Built in 1924 in nearby North Tonawanda, the carousel spent 60 years in storage before returning to Western New York where it has been refurbished by a legion of volunteer artisans. It’s scheduled to resume making children happy — powered entirely by solar energy — in mid-summer 2020.

In the spirit of “what goes around, comes around,” Buffalo’s Naval Park is home to three decommissioned World War II-era ships — the USS Little Rock, a guided missile cruiser, the USS The Sullivans, a destroyer, and the submarine USS Croaker — as well as a museum’s worth of smaller vessels, vehicles, military artifacts, equipment and exhibits. Daily tours allow visitors to experience the stories of the sailors who manned these ships in the service of their country.

exploreandmore.org / buffaloheritagecarousel.org / buffalonavalpark.org
Around here, fun runs on water! Buffalo’s waterfront is now home to kayakers, paddle boarders, boaters, water bikers and partygoers because the best way to enjoy the water is to be ON the water. Test your balance coasting down the Buffalo River atop a stand-up paddleboard. Use some pedal power aboard a water bike. Admire Buffalo’s repurposed grain silos on a Buffalo River History Tour. Lay your eyes on a breathtaking Buffalo sunset with an evening sail on the Spirit of Buffalo. And new in 2020, the Big Kahuna makes a big splash as it takes partygoers for a tropical themed ride on the river.

Get your sea legs ready for some fun in the sun this summer!
explore & more

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-TRIP ADVISOR REVIEW

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I love NY
There’s bison at the Buffalo Zoo, so yeah, I feel right at home here. And while I love visiting my pals, I always get a huge kick out of feeding the giraffes. Man, they can’t get enough lettuce. But my favorites have got to be the polar bears. Luna and Sakari always put on an amazing show in their cool pool. #AnimalLover

GOLDEN MUMMIES OF EGYPT
BY DREW BROWN

Run, don’t walk like an Egyptian, to the Golden Mummies of Egypt at the Buffalo Museum of Science! Glittering, gilded and enigmatic, this world-class exhibit of Egyptological treasures kicked off its international tour in Buffalo through June 21, 2020. Using enhanced technology, you’ll be one of the first to see what mysteries are unraveled beneath these golden sarcophagi. Don’t miss it!

sciencebuff.org
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NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY.

NY Power Authority
The real story of a Buffalo winter occurs after the national news cameras that showed up to cover a snowfall have left — on the morning after a storm. After we brush ourselves off and dig ourselves out, we’re out ice biking, skiing, snowshoeing and enjoying winter again. It’s in our DNA.

Here are a few suggestions for making the most of Buffalo’s snowy season.

THE ICE AT CANALSIDE
The hub of the city’s winter experience lies on the frozen replica of the Erie Canal that flows through Buffalo’s waterfront. From ice skating and curling, to ice bowling, ice bumper cars and the Ice Bikes of Buffalo – fitted with stainless-steel frames that allow for seamless pedaling – the Ice at Canalside keeps the waterfront abuzz with activity all winter long.

buffalowaterfront.com/canalside

THE FROZEN FALLS
Winter transforms Niagara Falls State Park. Freezing mist coats the surrounding trees, creating an icy winter wonderland to walk through. During especially cold winters, the falls themselves appear to freeze, a sight best seen from the Cave of the Winds. For only $7, an elevator takes tourists to the bottom of the Niagara Gorge for spectacular views at the base of the ice-encased falls.

niagarafallsstatepark.com

TOBAGGANING AT CHESTNUT RIDGE COUNTY PARK
Chestnut Ridge – Erie County’s largest park – operates one of the last remaining toboggan chutes in the United States. The chutes that sit atop one of the largest sledding hills in the area (with sweeping views of downtown Buffalo and New Era Field) date back to the 1930s. After plunging down the hill, head to the park’s lodge for a cup of hot cocoa by its roaring fireplace.

erie.gov/parks

CORNER TAVERNS
Anthony Bourdain once described Buffalo’s corner taverns as “cold and harsh outside, warm and hospitable inside.” These pubs can take the edge off any winter night. Some of our favorites include Founding Father’s, The Place, Ulrich’s, Allen Street Hardware, Essex Street Pub and Rohall’s Corner.

visitbuffaloniagara.com/corner-taverns
C’mon out, the weather’s fine! Easy for a guy who’s covered in fur from head to toe to say, right? So, wear a parka already and join me for some winter fun in the BUF. We’ve got the snow and the skiing, tubing and tobogganing that goes with it at places like Kissing Bridge, Chestnut Ridge and Sprague Brook Park. And if staying warm is more your thing, we’ve got chestnuts roasting on an open fire just for you.
While the jewel in Buffalo’s cultural crown — the Albright-Knox Art Gallery — is closed until 2022 for a $165 million renovation and expansion that will add 30,000 square feet for displaying special exhibitions and the museum’s world-renowned art collection, Buffalo’s deep bench of eclectic art organizations should keep any art lover happily engaged.

For starters, the new AK Northland, an open industrial space on Buffalo’s East Side, provides room for large-scale installations and interactive art of the sort more typically experienced in international exhibitions like the Florence Biennale, Art Basel, or MASS MoCA.

No art-enthusiast should miss the Burchfield Penney Art Center (BPAC), an 84,000 square-foot museum dedicated to the art of Western New York, including nationally notable artists, and the largest public collection by famed American watercolorist Charles Burchfield. Works from the collection are in continuous rotation, so no two visits are alike. On the second Fridays of every month, the BPAC hosts happy hours, performances, concerts, screenings, and other events.

The Burchfield is just one of many exciting opportunities in a city known for its vibrant art community. Founded in 1974, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center continues to present art, media, and music that challenges and extends traditional boundaries.

Hallwalls is located in a Gothic Revival church, renovated by singer-songwriter Ani DiFranco and renamed Babeville.

CEPA is a 44-year-old internationally recognized arts center focusing on photography and photo-related arts. Located in the historic Market Arcade Complex, the center is known for expanding the limits of image making. CEPA also operates Big Orbit Gallery, a multidisciplinary contemporary space on Buffalo’s burgeoning West Side, which features innovative art installations. In the same building as CEPA, Squeaky Wheel Film & Media Art Center continues its 35-year legacy of innovation with films, video, and new media installations.

Thanks to its mission to provide affordable studio space, Buffalo Arts Studio is not only a first-rate gallery, but also a colony of working artists. Gallery visitors can view artists as they work. Every fourth Friday, the gallery extends its hours for public artist receptions.

UB Anderson Gallery is housed in an elegantly remodeled former public school in the University Heights neighborhood. Originally established by David Anderson, son of noted New York gallerist Martha Jackson, it was later donated to the University at Buffalo (UB), along with a collection of 1,200 modernist works by noted artists. UB now operates it as a museum with changing exhibitions.
Buffalo’s walls rock. Seriously. We’ve got walls painted by some of the greatest street artists in the world. Louise Jones, Logan Hicks, Eduardo Kobra, Felipe Pantone, Shantell Martin. When it comes to walls covered in paint, these guys are the best there is. And we’ve got more artists coming every year who are leaving behind some mind-blowing murals. So, if you’re climbing the walls, come to Buffalo and stare at our walls.

UB Art Gallery, on the university’s North Campus, mounts thought-provoking exhibitions by national artists. Further north, a scenic 30-minute drive from Buffalo takes you to the Castellani Museum on the campus of Niagara University near Niagara Falls, with its rotating collection of regional and national art, including works by Helen Frankenthaler, Georges Rouault, William DeKooning, Keith Haring, and Pablo Picasso.

There’s also an evolving selection of smaller commercial and nonprofit art spaces to satisfy every taste, including Art Dialogue Gallery (traditional and modern), Benjaman Gallery (historical to contemporary), BICA (edgy contemporary), tiny Box Gallery (experimental), The Corridors Gallery at Hotel Henry (contemporary, in a historical setting), Eleven Twenty Projects (contemporary), El Museo (eclectic), Evolution (pop surrealism), Indigo Art (contemporary), Nina Freudenheim (modern and contemporary) and Pine Apple Company (lowbrow).
They come from across the United States and Canada. From the four corners of the globe. From as near as Burlington, Ontario and as far away as Beijing. They are young families, couples without kids, ex-pats, cultural tourists, festival lovers and Bills fans. Some travel in groups and others prefer going solo. In a world of travel options, they all found their way to Buffalo. Here are two of their stories.

FRANK AND TONI GUY » BALTIMORE, MD
Spotted at National Buffalo Wing Festival

“We came up to Buffalo for a birthday party and to visit some friends, we just heard about this wing festival and so it’s our first time here,” says Toni. “These wings are from Gabriel’s Gate. I got the spicy barbecue, and Toni got Italian. We are really enjoying this festival, it’s very laid-back and family-friendly,” says Frank. When asked what else was on their travel itinerary Frank says “We did Niagara Falls this morning, we took a helicopter ride over the falls.” The couple’s plans were open for the rest of their trip but they wanted to check out the shores of Lake Erie. “Buffalo is pretty cool, it’s a very calm city, not as fast as Baltimore.”

“I’m off to find a wing that is a perfect 10,” says Frank.

HONGPEI HUAMEI, YIHUAN & CHENXUAN LIU AND XIAOXIA CHEN » BEIJING, CHINA
Spotted at Italian Heritage Festival

“This is so good,” she said. “Niagara Falls was wonderful and then we just found this festival when we came to downtown,” she added. “Buffalo,” Hongpei observed, “is quiet, clean and so beautiful. Beijing has too many people and traffic. The food here is so good and yesterday we found an Asian market and that made us so happy.”

The rest of their Buffalo itinerary included Canalside and the Central Terminal. “The boys will like looking at the battleships at Canalside.” When asked how he had heard about Buffalo, Hongpei answered, “My friend in Beijing went to U.B. and he talked about the historic architecture.”

As the group headed off to enjoy the rest of their stay, Hongpei offered a friendly goodbye, “Buffalo is wonderful,” he said.
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BUFFALO'S RICH AND VARIED THEATER SCENE tends to be overshadowed by the glitz and glamour of the touring Broadway shows at Shea’s Buffalo Theatre. When Hamilton is in town it’s hard to focus on anything but the hip-hop founding fathers. Lovers of live performance, though, would do well to look at the 20-plus theaters around town that are producing a dazzling array of entertainment. There’s children’s theater, Jewish theater, gay theater, theater featuring people of color, musicals, comedies and the work of the Immortal Bard every summer at Shakespeare in Delaware Park. Here’s a sampling of a few of Buffalo’s notable theater companies to pique your curiosity.

THE IRISH CLASSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

The adage “not a bad seat in the house” fits downtown’s Irish Classical Theatre Company at the Andrews Theatre to a T. Three rows of seats surround the main stage in this black box, theater-in-the-round, making the venue one of the most intimate in Buffalo. Dublin native Vincent O’Neill founded the company with his late brother Chris more than 30 years ago. The ICTC continues to showcase the work of renowned Irish playwrights like William Butler Yeats and Oscar Wilde as well as a broader selection of shows from Shakespeare to the present day. Stop for a pint of Guinness and to chat with the actors at the theater’s adjacent bar after the show.

625 Main St., Buffalo • irishclassical.com
THE KAVINOKY THEATRE

One of Buffalo’s oldest and most charming theaters is tucked away inside a college campus on the city’s Lower West Side. The Kavinoky Theatre just celebrated 40 seasons of performances inside a turn-of-the-century auditorium at D’Youville College. The auditorium, which was restored in recent decades and exudes Victorian charm, provides the perfect backdrop for the Kavinoky’s more contemporary productions – from To Kill a Mockingbird to The Bridges of Madison County and Hairspray.

320 Porter Ave., Buffalo • kavinokytheatre.com

MUSICALFARE THEATRE

True to its name, MusicalFare celebrates modern musical theater and classic popular music. Located on the grounds of Daemen College in suburban Amherst, MusicalFare has been a pillar of Buffalo’s vibrant theater scene for 30 years, developing and producing world premiere musicals, re-imagined classical musicals and regional premieres. Its cabaret space features regional and national cabaret artists singing the best of the great American songbook. MusicalFare has also been a co-producer and partner with Shea’s Performing Arts Center in bringing theater back to Shea’s 710 Theatre in downtown Buffalo.

4380 Main St., Amherst • musicalfare.com

ROAD LESS TRAVELED PRODUCTIONS

If truth be told, this company did a fair amount of traveling over the course of its 15 years before landing in its new digs on Main Street near Lafayette Square in 2018. Now comfortably at home for the long term, RLTP’s eclectic mix of new and notable works by regional and national playwrights is attracting a new generation of theatergoers to downtown Buffalo. RLTP is a member of the National New Play Network and its American Master Series allows it to bring the best and brightest theater talent to Buffalo to practice their craft. If you’re interested in new and exciting voices in theater, a RLTP production will not disappoint.

456 Main Street, Buffalo • roadlesstraveledproductions.org

TORN SPACE THEATER

Whether it’s a show in the shadow of towering grain silos or a play in the auditorium of an 1890s Polish social club, Torn Space uses Buffalo as a backdrop like no other theater company. Torn Space stages avant-garde shows at the Adam Mickiewicz Library and Dramatic Circle on Buffalo’s East Side, which dates to 1896 and features a bar that serves Polish brews like Tyskie and Zwyiec where patrons congregate afterward. In the summer, the stage shifts to the grounds of Silo City, a group of waterfront grain silos that have been re-purposed as the setting for theatrical performances. This unique venue allows Buffalo to become one of the players in Torn Space’s cutting edge shows that leave a lasting impression.

612 Fillmore Ave., Buffalo • tornspacetheater.com

UJIMA THEATRE COMPANY

Ujima is another mainstay of the local theater scene that found a new home in recent years. After years on Elmwood Avenue, Ujima moved to the former School 77 on the city’s West Side in 2019. Ujima’s storytelling focuses on the lives of African Americans, people of color and other underrepresented and marginalized communities in contemporary America. While the theater emphasizes socially-aware productions that are intended to engage and energize, they also like to have fun. As the theater website declares, “all stories, no matter how dire, are uplifting, honest themes featuring plenty of laughter, music and dance.”

29 Plymouth Ave., Buffalo • ujimacoins.org

Learn more about Buffalo’s theater scene at visitbuffaloniagara.com/theater
Shakespeare in Delaware Park was founded in 1976 as a summer apprenticeship program for theatre students from SUNY Buffalo to work alongside professional actors. The high-quality productions were so well received by the community that the program expanded and grew into the beloved professional theatre company and Buffalo summer tradition that it is today. It is now the second oldest and one of the largest outdoor Shakespeare companies in the country, playing each year to over 40,000 people from more than 23 states and Ontario, Canada.

shakespeareindelawarepark.org

Shea’s Buffalo – the only surviving Tiffany-designed theater – was the crowning achievement of impresario Michael Shea. Built in 1926, it originally served as a movie house affiliated with Paramount Pictures with “an acre of seats.” It would later stage vaudeville shows and play host to the likes of the Marx Brothers, Frank Sinatra, George Burns, and Bob Hope. As tastes changed and audiences moved on to other forms of entertainment, the theater faced demolition in the late 1970s. It was saved by a group of concerned citizens calling themselves The Friends of Buffalo Theatre. Since that time, more than $30 million in restoration work has been completed, all by volunteers. Today, Shea’s Broadway Season is one of the most successful in the United States, attracting tens of thousands of visitors to Buffalo’s Theater District. sheas.org
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» 55
The Buffalo History Museum honors 100 years since the passage and ratification of the 19th Amendment with a new exhibit, Emblem of Equality: Woman Suffrage in Western New York. The new exhibit explores Buffalo’s connection to the movement and features local stories and perspectives that chronicle the struggle for equality at the ballot box. Emblem of Equality runs through August 2020.

buffalohistory.org
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PRESIDENTIAL DESTINATION

Buffalo is rife with presidential history. Millard Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States, was from nearby East Aurora. Grover Cleveland, the only man to serve two non-consecutive terms as President, making him the 22nd and 24th President, served as Sheriff of Erie County and Mayor of Buffalo before ascending to the highest office in the land. After the assassination of President McKinley at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt, then Vice President, took the oath of office at Buffalo’s Wilcox Mansion, now the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site. If the election of 2020 has you thinking about the Presidency and the men who have occupied that office, Buffalo is a must-see presidential destination.

– Ed Healy

This place is my jam! I’m a huge music fan and the history that happened here is epic. Back in the day John Coltrane played here. Duke Ellington. Miles Davis. The museum is incredibly well done, but it’s the jams that happen upstairs that make the Colored Musicians Club an awesome experience. Stop by, have a drink and be a part of history.
The Buffalo Transportation Pierce-Arrow Museum
263 Michigan at 201 Seneca - Downtown Buffalo, NY 14203
pierce-arrow.com

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See: pierce-arrow.com

Group guided tours (for 30 or more) by appointment.
A city’s strength can be measured through its neighborhoods and Buffalo certainly flexes its muscles with the diversity of different districts. Each neighborhood has a certain vibe to it, an infectious personality and unique characteristics that can only be found there, and not across town or in another city. They’re compelling to explore and offer a window into the city’s personality. But most importantly, they have some kick-a** places to grab a drink, a bite and a memento from your travels. It’s a beautiful day in these four Buffalo area neighborhoods. Start exploring today. 

visitbuffaloniagara.com/neighbourhoods

Elmwood Village

Imagine a neighborhood where visitors linger at open-air cafes and browse farmer’s market vendors on a tree-lined parkway in the summer. In winter they gather at cozy coffeehouses and pubs. Picture a district where “independently-owned” and “artisanal” are the descriptors used for retailers instead of “chain” and “franchise”. That’s Buffalo’s Elmwood Village.

elmwoodvillage.org

SIP

THIN MAN BREWERY

Beer aficionado Mike Shatzel opened Elmwood’s first brewery in 2016 and he continues to serve up innovative beers like Burning Money and Pills Mafia. And while the suds may be the main event, don’t sleep on Thin Man’s exceptional food menu.

492 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo
thinmanbrewery.com

FORTY THIEVES KITCHEN & BAR

Stop in for a beer or a cocktail off the bourbon-based menu at this laid-back watering hole.

727 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo / 40thievesbuffalo.com

SATO

The city’s go-lo location for scratch-made Japanese food and sake. The upscale yet casual vibe is the perfect backdrop for a night out.

739 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo / satorestaurantgroup.com

SHOP

SHOPCRAFT

An artisan collective that represents a community of over 30 artists who sell their local, handmade goods in Buffalo’s premier shopping district.

773 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo / buffaloshopcraft.com

TALKING LEAVES BOOKS

Browse the shelves for both a bestseller or classic at Buffalo’s oldest independent bookstore.

951 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo / tleavesbooks.com

ANNA GRACE

Flirty and feminine women’s clothing and accessories, from small independent designers to larger established brands, makes this a must visit for every fashionable lady.

799 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo / annagraceshop.com
**Hertel Avenue**

Few Buffalo neighborhoods capture the city’s exciting rebirth quite like Hertel Avenue. An influx of new bars, restaurants and shops complement the neighborhood’s established eateries and long-tenured businesses. This mix of old and new is making Hertel the neighborhood of choice for a 20- and 30-something crowd of locals and visitors. [her tel-ave.com](http://her tel-ave.com)

**SHOP**

**CONE FIVE GALLERY**
Offers some of the most elegant, unique and handmade giftware and jewelry around. Delight yourself with a visit on your next shopping visit along Hertel. » 1508 Hertel Ave., Buffalo / cone fivepottery.com

**AGORIE HEADWEAR**
Everything old is cool again at this headwear shop looking to make hats your favorite fashion accessory in 2020. 1434 Hertel Ave., Buffalo / 716-834-4287

**REVOLVER RECORDS**
LPs are back and bigger than ever at this record shop that features rock, jazz, hip hop and soul albums, as well as turntables, speakers and music-related gifts. 1451 Hertel Ave., Buffalo / revolverrecordsinc.com

**SIP**

**THE LITTLE CLUB**
This newcomer to Hertel prides itself on introducing patrons to wines from lesser-known regions and strips the pretention out of wine drinking with their “come as you are” mentality. » 1197 Hertel Ave., Buffalo / the littleclub.bar

**MÉS QUE**
Look into Més Que at any hour and you’re likely to find jersey-clad soccer fans cheering on teams from around the world. » 1420 Hertel Ave., Buffalo / mesque.com

**LLOYD TACO FACTORY**
Buffalo’s original food truck earned their rep slinging creative tacos, but don’t underestimate their crafty cocktails, like the Snozzberry Mule and Nautical Disaster, to pair with your Dirty South Taco. 1503 Hertel Ave., Buffalo / whereslloyd.com

**SAVOR**

**JE NE SAIS QUOI**
Soul food classics like fried catfish, mac and cheese and collard greens. Don’t miss owner Gwen Ingram’s housemade peach cobbler. 1673 Hertel Ave., Buffalo jenesaisquoibuffalo.com

**KOSTAS**
A Buffalo classic for over 40 years. The food coming out of the kitchen is spot-on, featuring all your favorite Greek classics. 1561 Hertel Ave., Buffalo kostasfamilyrestaurant.com

**LAKE EFFECT ICE CREAM**
One of the most amazing ice cream experiences in town. Indecisive customers don’t have to settle on just one flavor when they can indulge in the “Flight of Five.” 1900 Hertel Ave., Buffalo lakeeffecticecream.com

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**AN INSIDERS GUIDE TO THE WEST SIDE**

We sat down with Ba Zan Lin, senior program officer at the Community Foundation of Greater Buffalo and co-chair of the Buffalo Burmese Water Festival, to see why he’s happy to call Buffalo’s West Side home.

**VBN: What are your favorite West Side stops? Lin:** If it’s a morning walk, I’ll head straight to 100 Acres at [Hotel Henry](http://Hotel Henry). The restaurant there is impressive, but that cute little cafe within the walls of the hotel is what I love most. Their quiche is my absolute favorite. Plus, the views of the gorgeous [Richardson Olmsted Campus](http://Richardson Olmsted Campus) are quite lovely! As an important Underground Railroad site, [Broderick Park](http://Broderick Park) makes me reflect on the sacrifices many people made to better the world. And chatting with people from at least a few dozen different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds gives me good vibes.

**VBN: Where do you like to sit down for a meal? Lin:** The [West Side Bazaar](http://West Side Bazaar) (25 Grant St.) is one of my favorite spots in the neighborhood. Whether you want to have a good hearty meal or a few small snacks while browsing super trendy international fashion, the Bazaar is the go-to joint! A bowl of Japanese udon or Rakhaing Mutee will warm your heart in cold winter months, while spicy Thai seafood salad or yummy bubble tea will freshen up your warm summer days.

When I’m craving a good pastelillo or a juicy, well-seasoned rotisserie chicken, I’ll make a pilgrimage to [Niagara Cafe](http://Niagara Cafe) (525 Niagara St.). It’s a no-frills, home-style atmosphere that allows me to relax and enjoy the best Puerto Rican food in town.

**VBN: What’s your favorite way to celebrate on the West Side? Lin:** It would have to be the Buffalo Burmese Water Festival and [Taste of Diversity](http://Taste of Diversity). For those of us who left our first homes — due to civil war, political unrest, or other unspeakable reasons — the Water Festival and the Taste give a new meaning in our lives. I know I am biased here, as I am one of the lead organizers, but these two festivals are the epitome of Buffalo’s welcoming nature.
**AN INSIDERS GUIDE TO EAST AURORA**

**VANESSA FROST**

East Aurora’s legacy of craftsmanship weaves its way into every visitor experience. The spirit of the Roycroft Campus – birthplace of the American Arts and Crafts Movement – is alive and well throughout the village. We met up with resident Vanessa Frost, owner of MuseJar, an art supply shop and event studio in the heart of the village, to pick her brain about how she spends her days in EA.

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**VBN: It’s time to eat. What places are your current favorites?**

Frost: **Left Coast Taco** (603 Oakwood Ave.) is one of my go-tos. Everything they prepare is so simple, yet so delicious. I can build my own vegan tacos and they’re amazing. For dinner, I’m getting the black bean burger with the works at **189 Public House** (189 Main St.). It’s a flavor bomb.

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**VBN: The night is winding down and you need a night cap. Where are you heading?**

Frost: **The Riley House** (644 Oakwood Ave.) creates amazing specialty cocktails and they have a large collection of mezcal. **42 North Brewing Co.** (25 Pine St.) currently makes a half kombucha, half gose concoction that I’m in love with. Their outdoor area with an outside stage and fire pit is a plus, too. **Aurora Brew Works** (191 Main St.) is a combo beer store/bar that has everything to satisfy all your weird beer and cider cravings.

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ROYCROFT INN, KNOX FARM STATE PARK AND 189 PUBLIC HOUSE BY DREW BROWN. BORDERLAND MUSIC + ARTS FESTIVAL BY BORDERLAND FESTIVAL.
**VBN: You have a chance for some R&R. What’s on your to-do list?**

**Frost:** Knox Farm State Park (437 Buffalo Rd.) is a classic spot for an easy hike through the woods. It’s a wonderful spot year-round. For a weekend getaway, the Roycroft Inn (36 S. Grove St.) is a lovely date spot. Get a seat on the best front porch around or soak up live music at the cozy bar.

**VBN: What are your favorite East Aurora traditions?**

**Frost:** The Elm Street Holiday Market (December) is a magical outdoor vendor market featuring local artisans, activities, and much more. In the warmer months, Music Fest (June) is a full day filled with music. The Sidewalk Sale (July) shuts down our charming Main Street to traffic for a huge vendor market. It’s quintessential EA summer. Borderland Music + Arts Festival (September) features an internationally known line-up in an epic environment. It’s an amazing experience all around.

Woodworkers, book makers and metal smiths once called this leafy campus of buildings in the heart of East Aurora home more than a century ago. The spirit of creativity at the Roycroft Campus, one of the centers of the American Arts and Crafts Movement, is alive and well thanks to a multi-year restoration that has brought it back to life.

Visitors can learn about the Roycroft and its visionary founder, Elbert Hubbard, at its recently opened museum; master the craft of jewelry making, letterpress printing and other skills in a variety of regularly scheduled classes; tour the campus buildings, including its restored power house, print shop and chapel; and browse for guild-certified Roycroft artisan goods at the Copper Shop gift shop. The Roycroft is deeply woven into the fabric, history and personality of East Aurora, and no visit to the village is complete without a stop at the campus. – **BRIAN HAYDEN**
The village where America’s Arts and Crafts movement began over a century ago continues to embrace a creative vibe today. Located 20 minutes from downtown Buffalo, East Aurora is full of distinctive attractions, including the only house built by a U.S. president with his own hands, to a family-owned 5 & 10 store and a variety of cafes, boutiques and restaurants. It’s easy to see why so many visitors spend an entire day or a weekend in the village.

For a video tour, go to VisitBuffaloNiagara.com/East-Aurora
Elmwood Village is one of Buffalo’s coolest neighborhoods. It’s the perfect place to walk and gawk – there are great old houses, all kinds of shops, patios where you can grab a beer or a cup of coffee, awesome restaurants serving everything from tacos to Thai. And the people watching is always off the charts. Join me the next time you’re in the BUF. I’m the tall dark furry guy on the left.
TEMPORARY BUFFALONIAN

SEVEN ENTICING AIRBNBS

The rise of Airbnb has led to a revolution of non-conventional bookings for accommodations around the world. In the Buffalo metro, there are more than three hundred Airbnb options for places to lay one’s traveling head. These accommodations offer a range of amenities, from spectacular views to walkable neighborhoods, proximity to restaurants and other attractions, as well as a chance to step inside some of Buffalo’s historic homes. According to Airbnb.com, Buffalo listings have “An average of 4.8 out of 5 stars.” That’s excellent news for travelers focusing on becoming temporary Buffalonians.
THE GRIFFON:  
Perfect for groups of friends

Originally known as The Wattles Mansion, this stunning 6,000 square foot house on Richmond Avenue is now called The Griffon by owners Tom and Alice Eoannou in recognition of the hand-carved griffon (half lion, half eagle) that appears at the base of the home’s grand wooden staircase. With seven bedrooms, and five and a half baths, the Griffon sleeps up to 16 guests. Every square foot of it is incredible, with some fun flourishes like a first-floor poolroom featuring a table with royal blue felt, a second-floor sitting room with leather furniture, and an elegant bridal suite with a clawfoot tub.

LOFTS AT 42 NORTH:  
Perfect for beer lovers

There’s a hint of hops in the air throughout these impeccably designed and decorated units adjacent to 42North Brewery Co. in the lovely village of East Aurora. Hostess Catherine loves to show off the bottling area of the brewery, visible from a second-floor overlook (the complimentary laundry is nearby). Each room is outfitted with a growler that can be filled with any type of beer available in their taproom, and in-room refrigerators have samples of 42North beers. A number of excellent restaurants along East Aurora’s Main Street are minutes away, as is Vidler’s five-and-dime and The Roycroft Campus.

LIGHT-FILLED WEST SIDE APARTMENT:  
Perfect for solo travelers

Hostess Christine has accented the rooms in this quiet, charming apartment with pops of red and colorful pillows inviting relaxation. She’s designed the space to be washed in light and there are skylights throughout, one of which opens over a desk in the living room. The apartment is perfect for a single guest or a couple. There’s also a well-outfitted kitchen for travelers who like to cook their own meals. But it’s just as tempting, given the convenient location, to skip the stove and head straight to Elmwood Avenue to visit one of the nearby coffee shops and restaurants.

LARKINVILLE LOFT:  
Perfect for festival fans

This perfect nest on Emslie Street - named Larkinville Loft by host Dan – is in the heart of all the fun happenings and restaurants, breweries and bars found throughout the emerging Larkinville neighborhood. This uniquely-shaped private space has parking right outside the door, along with a Jacuzzi tub, fully-equipped kitchen, and a washer and dryer. Dan thoughtfully provides guests with umbrellas, an iron, and lots of tourism information. On the living room wall he invites guests to put a pin on the world map marking where they’re from: people have come from far and wide to become temporary residents of Larkinville.

LUXURY ON THE LAKE:  
Perfect for family reunions

The Luxury Lakefront Home known as “Cloudbreak” is jaw-droppingly gorgeous. Located on a winding road off Old Lake Shore Road with spectacular views of Lake Erie and Eighteen-Mile Creek, it’s hard to believe you’re only 20 minutes from downtown Buffalo. A basket of fruit and wine welcomes guests as well as a binder teeming with menus, maps, and notes on cultural attractions. The floor-to-ceiling windows facing the lake show off the small pond on the property and the lovely seating area featuring a grill and outdoor fireplace. With five bedrooms, the house can sleep up to a dozen guests.

ELMWOOD KING:  
Perfect for romantic getaways

The Elmwood King with Master Suite is a comfortable, handsome Airbnb. Standout details of the three-bedroom apartment located on a tree-lined block in the Elmwood Village include original artwork in each room, a dramatic king bedroom and a semi-industrial kitchen. Artwork is tagged with prices and is for sale. “I have a little Zagat-type guide made by me with listings of all my favorite things to do so people will explore Elmwood Village,” host Domenic says. “I love to send guests to Black Sheep, The Dapper Goose, Marble and Rye, and Dobutsu.”

STEPS FROM DOWNTOWN:  
Perfect for nightlife lovers

Perched at the edge of Buffalo’s Allentown neighborhood this one-bedroom apartment that can sleep up to four guests is a short walk to Allen Street, Chippewa Street, and Elmwood Avenue. Host Kenneth calls the decorating style “Mid-century eclectic” and says couples who want to enjoy nearby nightlife are his most frequent guests. A chalkboard in the kitchen, labeled “Eat Your Way through Buffalo,” lists recommended restaurants for pizza, wings, beer, and breakfast. Guests also receive a promo code to hop on a bike and experience Buffalo Bike Tours, an easy way to experience all the city has to offer.

For info on these properties and more, go to visitbuffaloniagara.com/AirBnB
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SUMMER IS GARDEN TOURING SEASON IN BUFFALO –

the sweet spot in our calendar when hundreds of Buffalonians place a sign at the curb inviting one and all to stop and smell their flowers. There’s no better time to get to know our city, its surrounding suburbs and the welcoming people who live here.

Not only is Buffalo home to the largest free garden walk in the entire country – Garden Walk Buffalo – we’re also the site of 15 other walks and tours. On top of that, there are 70 gardens to visit on Thursdays and Fridays that are part of Gardens Buffalo Niagara’s annual Open Gardens event.

Of all the flower spotting options available in our region, Open Gardens may be my favorite. Open Gardens is the lesser known, unassuming sibling of the older, more acclaimed Garden Walk Buffalo. Garden Walk tends to get all the attention, but Open Gardens is doing its best to prove that it’s just as worthy of the attention of serious flower fans. While Garden Walk attracts tens of thousands of visitors to Buffalo over the course of the last weekend in July every year, Open Gardens is low key, modest, more of a small dinner party that’s perfect for sharing a glass of wine with one of Buffalo’s famously friendly gardeners.

The element of surprise is what keeps my wife and I going back to Open Gardens. A modestly landscaped Hamburg front yard disguises the fact that an overwhelming floral display – complete with an extensive model railroad and a shed outfitted to resemble a train station – lies out back. Then there’s the backyard on Delaware Road in Tonawanda that’s a farm, garden and wildlife habitat all rolled into one lush landscape. Sometimes the surprises come in the form of an outdoor bar that wouldn’t be out of place in Key West or a Japanese garden that would make a visitor from Tokyo feel right at home. Buffalo’s gardens are quirky, creative and bear the mark of each gardener’s artistic muse.

Buffalo’s moveable feast of flowers is unique to Buffalo. In fact, between all the walks and open gardens there may be no greater concentration of private gardens open to the public. Other cities send delegations to find out exactly how we do it. And visitors admit it would be nearly impossible to do what we do so well; an out-of-town guest experiencing Garden Walk for the first time once turned to me and said, “We couldn’t do this where I’m from. People just wouldn’t open up their yards to complete strangers.” In that case, welcome to the City of Good Neighbors.

Ed Healy is the Vice President of Marketing at Visit Buffalo Niagara
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