

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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MWL LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

THERE ARE THE TRIPS YOU TAKE—and then there are places that stay with you.

Late last summer, as the season began its quiet turn toward fall, my family headed north to Mackinac Island in Michigan. Three days. Two tween girls. One island where cars are replaced by bicycles and horses, and time seems to loosen its grip.

From the moment we stepped off the ferry, island life invited us to slow down. Mission Point Resort became our base camp, with sunrises worth waking for, a lawn expansive enough to feel private, and a family suite that allowed space for both independence and reconnection.

With no traffic and no honking, the rhythm shifts. We biked the island's 8.2-mile loop, Lake Huron revealing itself in new shades of blue at every turn. We also rode horses along wooded trails, climbed to Fort Mackinac for sweeping views, tried our hand at making fudge, and painted along the shoreline guided by a local artist. One evening ended at the resort's on-site fine-dining restaurant, Chianti, where a thoughtful farm-to-ferry menu—including an elevated take on apple pie—proved that even kids can appreciate a beautifully prepared meal.

Somewhere between the ferry rides and that final bike loop, I was reminded that the most extraordinary experiences are rooted in connection. It's a thread that runs through many of this year's Best of the Midwest award winners. Connection to a place. Connection to the foods we eat. Connection to one another.



My family traveled to Michigan's legendary Mackinac Island last year. (Those Adirondack chairs at Mission Point Resort are already calling me back!) Visit the island in June to see its famous lilacs in bloom.

Mackinac Island embodies that spirit effortlessly, especially in the more mellow shoulder seasons of spring and fall. And it also reflects much of what makes travel in the Midwest so rewarding—hospitality without pretense, history that still breathes, creativity flourishing in unexpected corners.

As we unveil this year's Best of the Midwest honorees (page 46), I think of places like Mission Point—destinations that don't just host you but capture you. Experiences that aren't loud but are lasting.

As summer wound to its inevitable close, I watched my daughters race ahead on their bikes, laughing the entire way. I resisted the urge to document it. Some places deserve that. And some places deserve to be recognized for the way they help us live a little fuller, together.

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MWL SPRING 2026

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With no traffic and no honking, the rhythm shifts. We biked the island's 6.5-mile loop, Lake Huron revealing itself in new shades of blue at every turn. We also rode horses along wooded trails, climbed to Fort Mackinac for sweeping views, tried our hand at making fudge, and painted along the shoreline guided by a local artist. One evening ended at the resort's on-site fine-dining restaurant, Chianti, where a thoughtful farm-to-ferry menu—including an elevated take on apple pie—proved that even kids can appreciate a beautifully prepared meal.

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