



FLASHON STUDIO

# Milwaukee Rising

Emerging from Chicago's shadow, Milwaukee is no longer just the city of fests and wursts.

Often eclipsed by swaggering Chicago, Milwaukee's charms are easy to miss. It's more a patchwork of neighborhoods than a big city, but it's worth the attention. The former industrial powerhouse is rebuilding from the bottom up, the outside in, rejuvenating commerce and culture while retaining its Victorian look. ("We didn't have the money to tear things down and start from scratch," one native told me.) Take a weekend to wander and sample the specialties of Milwaukee's urban renaissance.

## [HISTORIC THIRD WARD]

Start in the Historic Third Ward, perched on a peninsular patch south of downtown along the Milwaukee River. The artfully restored 19th-century warehouses hum with art galleries, fashion and vintage boutiques, bistros, bars, and brewpubs. The Milwaukee Public Market (400 N. Water St., 414-336-1111, milwaukeepublic

market.org), open since 2005, houses a wine bar and shop, coffee roaster/cafe, Middle Eastern deli, specialty grocer, and a spice shop stocked with wares, including a few teas from local merchant Rishi Tea, North America's leading importer of organic loose-leaf tea.

During Gallery Night and Day, a quarterly event, this small 10-square-block enclave is packed as shoppers rove through its galleries, restaurants, and shops. There are plenty of high-end shopping offerings here, but if you're up for a bargain, check out Goodwill's flagship enterprise, Retique.

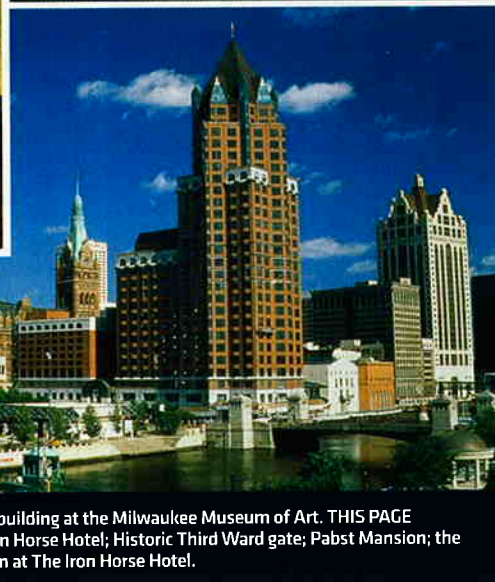
The Historic Third Ward is also home to the one-of-a-kind Eisner Museum of Advertising and Design (208 N. Water St., 414-847-3290, eisnermuseum.org), featuring exhibits that cover the history of marketing and advertising design. Nearby, the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (273 E. Erie St., 414-847-3200, miad.edu) shows up-and-coming artists in its gallery.

## [EAST TOWN]

East Town's lakeside walk, near parks and high-rise condos, is a good example of the amenities *AARP* magazine raved about when it named Milwaukee one of the five best cities in which to live (and retire) in 2007. This downtown area is also home to a variety of cultural hot spots. In summer, everyone flocks to jazz concerts in Cathedral Square Park. Year-round, residents and visitors head to the Milwaukee Art Museum, with its stunning Santiago Calatrava building and works by Degas, Renoir, O'Keeffe, Miró, Arbus, Sander, and others. Discovery World (a hands-on science museum and aquarium) and the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts are also nearby.

## [WESTOWN]

Just the other side of the Milwaukee River, in Westown, the golden Usinger's Sausage sign (1030 N. Old World 3rd St., 414-276-9105, usingers.com) is easily spotted from the pretty Hoan Bridge.



OPPOSITE PAGE: The "winged" Calatrava building at the Milwaukee Museum of Art. THIS PAGE (clockwise from top left): Smyth at The Iron Horse Hotel; Historic Third Ward gate; Pabst Mansion; the riverscape in downtown Milwaukee; a room at The Iron Horse Hotel.

HISTORIC THIRD WARD, PABST MANSION AND SKYLINE PHOTOS COURTESY GREATER MILWAUKEE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU; PHOTOS COURTESY OF IRON HORSE HOTEL

There's often a line out the door of this white-tiled store that sells more than 70 different German sausages, including 10 different bratwursts, 20 liver sausages, and several blood sausages. Next door, the Wisconsin Cheese Mart (1048 N. Old World 3rd St., 888-482-7700, wisconsincheesemart.com) proffers the pride of the state, with a huge selection of farmstead and artisan fare. Along with bandaged Cheddars are hard-to-find cheeses such as the much-sought Pleasant Ridge Reserve and Marieke Gouda. The Cheese Mart's bar hosts local cheese and craft beer events.

#### [THE PABST MANSION]

This former home of Captain Frederick Pabst (2000 Wisconsin Ave. W., 414-931-0808, pabstmansion.com) is a museum and shrine to Blue Ribbon drinkers

everywhere. The epitome of America's Gilded Age, it boasts splendid original furnishings, elaborate wall coverings, handcrafted wood, stained glass, rare art, and defines the 1890s as the "Pabst Decade." Its Wisconsin Avenue neighbors, with manicured lawns and soaring views of Lake Michigan and the city, give a sense of how the other half lived and still lives today.

#### [BRADY STREET]

Once an Italian and Polish parish, Brady Street has evolved into a funky, kind of disheveled bohemian quarter without changing its low-slung architecture or quirky independence. The main drag is lined with coffeeshouses, nightclubs, and antique shops. Around Humboldt Avenue North, Peter Sciortino's Bakery (now in its 62nd year) and Glorioso's

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## TRAVEL

Specialty Food Center (selling great olive oil, prosciutto, and Parm at terrific prices) bespeak the community's strong Italian presence. But everything from Ethiopian eateries to Irish pubs now round out the ethnic mix. Where the Historic Third Ward feels gentrified, Brady is edgier and eclectic.

### [WALKER'S POINT]

The Walker's Point neighborhood is one of Milwaukee's best-kept secrets.



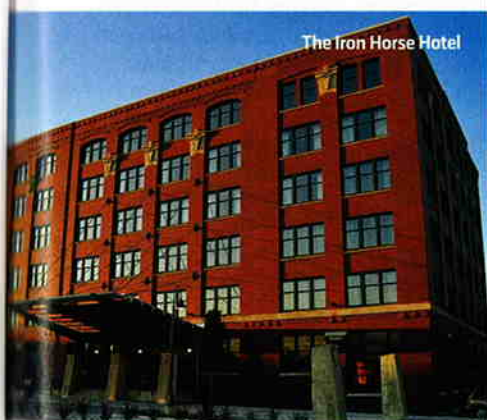
## MILWAUKEE STRATEGIES

**GETTING THERE:** Five-plus hours down I-94, a pleasant morning on Amtrak's Empire Builder, or one of an array of Delta, AirTran, and Midwest Airlines flights make Milwaukee a quick and inexpensive getaway.

**LODGING:** In a 100-year-old warehouse across the river from the Harley Davidson Museum, **The Iron Horse Hotel** (500 W. Florida St., 414-374-4766, [theironhorsehotel.com](http://theironhorsehotel.com)) mirrors Harley's macho-chic aesthetic. Named for the nearby rail yards, it's one of the most luxurious hotels in the city, with an informal but accommodating staff. Its lobby of hemlock and rough brick is appointed with vintage bikes and soft, buttery leather furniture. Its restaurants were the talk of the city last year. The Iron Horse offers bikers special amenities, such as big hooks for heavy leathers and strategically placed benches for boots and helmets. But anyone will appreciate its plush appointments and furnishings, as well as the professional, friendly service.

**DINING:** The city's establishments reflect Milwaukee's German and Italian past, ethnic present, and the whims of young, innovative chefs. Find classic German fare at **Karl Ratzsch's** (320 E. Mason St., 414-276-2720, [karlratzsch.com](http://karlratzsch.com)), a downtown landmark serving sauerbraten and Usinger's sausage. **Mader's** (1041 N. Old World Third St., 414-271-1377, [madersrestaurant.com](http://madersrestaurant.com)), in Westtown, is a formal German establishment. **Mimma's Cafe** (1307 E. Brady St., 414-271-7337, [mimmas.com](http://mimmas.com)) in the Brady Street neighborhood sparked an interest in northern Italian. In The Iron Horse Hotel, **Smyth**, a handsome American restaurant, features sturdy Wisconsin specialties with an

Upstart chefs dish out innovative food in tiny, elegant eateries (see Dining section, below). Not since Al Capone made moonshine in his Brookfield basement has Wisconsin distilled its own spirits. Here the Great Lakes Distillery (616 W. Virginia St., 414-431-8683, greatlakesdistillery.com) crafts wheat and malt into Rehorst vodka and gin, and makes artisan brandy (Kirschwasser, eau-de-vie, and grappa) and botanical absinthe. The distillery offers tours and tastings through the week.



The Iron Horse Hotel

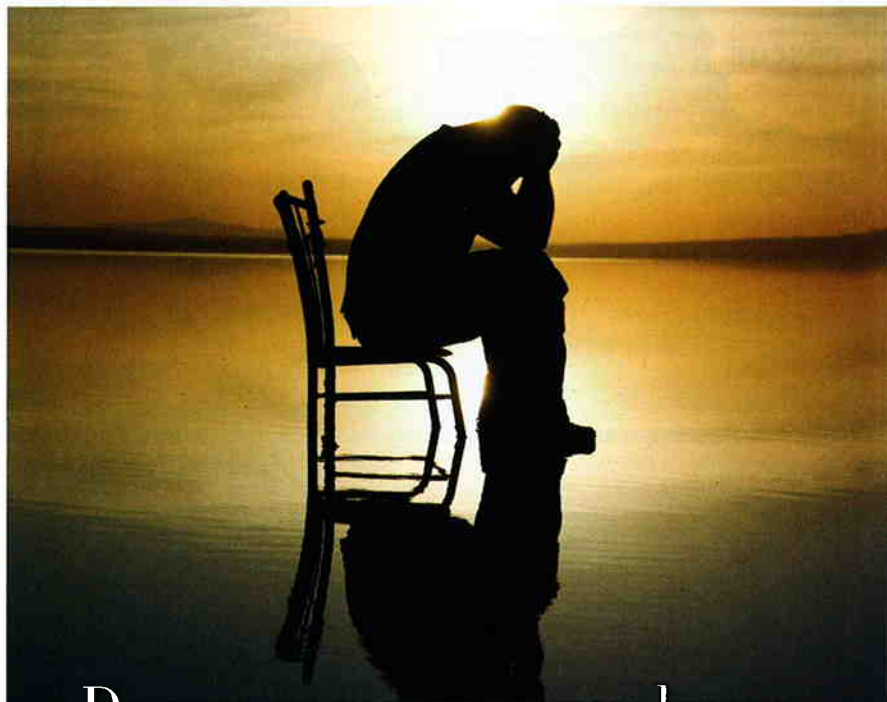
upscale twist. **Branded**, the hotel's bar, dishes up Kobe sliders and DLTs made with local duck confit. **Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro** (3133 Newberry Blvd. E., 414-962-6300, lakeparkbistro.com), in a refurbished Art Deco city park building, serves classic French with soaring lake views. **Crazy Water** (839 S. 2nd St., 414-645-2606, crazywaterrestaurant.com), in Walker's Point, showcases chef Peggy Magister's persistence and wit with innovative, local ingredients. **Roots** (1818 N. Hubbard St., 414-374-8480, rootsmilwaukee.com), a farmer-and-chef-owned collaboration, sits in Brewer's Hill overlooking the river and a necklace of city lights. **Chez Jacques** (1022 S. 1st St., 414-672-1040, chezjacques.com), the place for crepes on Sundays, also serves casual French six nights a week in Walker's Point. **Riviera Maya** (2258 Kinnickinnic Ave. S., 414-294-4848, riviera-maya-milwaukee.com) offers a fresh, eclectic mix of South and Central American specialties with a long list of drinks—and it's cheap.

**Nightlife:** For dancing, **Hot Water Night Club** and **Wherehouse** (818 S. Water St., 414-383-7593, hotwatermilwaukee.com) host live bands and give free salsa lessons on their two spacious dance floors.

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TRAVEL

**[THE LATIN QUARTER]**

Spiced with nightclubs, taco joints, and *panaderias*, this area near the river and I-94 can be a little spotty, but its unkempt storefronts are interspersed with wonderfully bright finds. Look for authentic Central American and Mexican restaurants, such as Botanas (816 S. 5th St., 414-672-3755, botanasrestaurant.com), as well as supermarkets stocked with exotic fruits, vegetables, moles, and homemade tortillas. Buy a refreshing *paleta* (ice pop) on the street, or shop for Latin music instruments and CDs at E & J Record Shop (1242 Cesar E. Chavez Drive S., 414-383-6002).

**[HOME OF THE HARLEY]**

Not far from the Latin Quarter, the Harley-Davidson Museum (400 W. Canal St., 1-877-436-8738) emerges like an oasis in a sea of vacant land off downtown. It's grey and red, a fortress of ingenuity, framed by a park of prairie grass and native flowers. Its galleries honor more than 100 years of the Milwaukee-made bike with photos, ads, trophies, videos, and interactive displays. Upstairs a chronological procession of motorcycles runs the building's length.

**[BREWER'S HILL]**

From the ashes of Schlitz, Blatz, and Pabst rise Lakefront, Water Street, Stonefly, Milwaukee Ale House, and Sprecher microbreweries. Lakefront Brewery (1872 N. Commerce St., 414-372-8800, lakefrontbrewery.com), in the emerging Brewer's Hill area near the river, makes lagers, bocks, ales, stouts, and pilsners, and was the first out with certified organic and gluten-free brews. You don't have to wait to taste, since beer is served before the tour of this historic building, which has been renovated with state-of-the-art green technology. On Friday, Lakefront puts on a Wisconsin fish fry in the Palm Garden, an authentic beer hall. ▲

*Beth Dooley is Mpls.St.Paul Magazine's restaurant critic and a frequent travel contributor.*