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Northeastern Group Tour

SUMMER 2010

m a g a z i n e

Living simply

From religious traditions to life on the farm, the simple life has never looked better

Lake of the Ozarks

The Shakers of New England

Lancaster County

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PERIODICAL

Off the Beaten Path



Photo: Iowa Division of Tourism

Shopping is a favorite pastime of Amana Colony visitors.

Authentic experiences

Groups find a handcrafted escape at the Amana Colonies

While things may seem turbulent now, this isn't the first time the world has experienced troubled times. In the 1840s, a group of faithful people left persecution and an economic depression in Germany seeking religious freedom in America. This group, later to be the founders of the Amana Colonies, left a legacy of authenticity that can still be felt today.

These historical villages in the scenic Iowa River Valley are now a charming and welcoming place to spend some time away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. The Amana Colonies are easy to reach, just five miles from Interstate 80 and close to Iowa City and Cedar Rapids.

Many groups are drawn by the excellent food, welcoming hospitality, and fine shopping opportunities. A wide array of experiences beyond that can be enjoyed – tour planners might be surprised by how many things can be packed into an itinerary. The staff of the Amana Colonies Convention and Visitors Bureau can help with the plans and step-on guide arrangements.

Whether groups are looking for a sampler tour or a specialized getaway, they'll find a welcoming retreat off the beaten path of I-80. At the National Historic Landmark, groups will have the chance to shop for antiques, watch artisans at work, and tour Iowa's only working woolen mill. The villages are also home to nature trails, live theater performances, group-friendly restaurants and accommodations, golf, and plenty of places to experience German heritage.

Bavarian traditions

When German emigrants left their home country, many brought with them specialized knowledge and skills. The earliest residents of the Amana Colonies brought their wine-making and brewing acumen with them, quickly planting vineyards, hops, and barley. Each village had a winery, while most had a brewery.

Today, groups can connect with this tradition as they visit Iowa's oldest microbrewery or one of the wineries. Many of the Old World skills and methods are employed to craft award-winning brews and vintages.

The Millstream Brewing Co., across from the woolen mill in Amana, has gathered many awards for its creations. Schild Brau Amber, German pilsners, stout, and others are reminiscent of the best of Bavaria. Old-time sodas and specialty soft drinks are crafted on-site as well. Groups are welcome to stop in for samples, do some shopping, and linger in the outdoor Biergarten.

Many of the brews are on tap at restaurants throughout the Amana Colonies, and Millstream is the official beer of the Oktoberfest celebration. The fun-filled event, next scheduled for Oct. 1-3, 2010, will include a parade, live music, dancing, and German-style cuisine.

Amana's wineries also welcome groups for tastings and tours. The Ackerman Winery, run by third- and fourth-generation colony winemakers, offers a walking tour as well as a sample bar. Its two gift shops, the winery and the Heritage Wine and Cheese Haus, are located in buildings on Main Street in Amana.

Many of the local wineries are represented at Collectively Iowa. The store, located next to the Amana Meat Shop, features various vintages along with handcrafted items, music created by Iowa artisans, and interesting gift ideas. The smokehouse, which traces its roots back to the earliest days of the Amana Colonies, uses Old World recipes to produce bacon, smoked hams, and other savory items. Items can be shipped to addresses around America. Other nearby shops sell quality, locally made goods. •

Amana Colonies Visitors Center and CVB
622 46th Ave.
Amana, IA 52203
1-800-579-2294
(319) 622-7622
www.AmanaColonies.com

Itinerary: Iowa



Radiance Dairy, an organic, grass-based dairy near Fairfield, offers group tours.

Fabulous Fairfield

Day One

Lunch is at one of Fairfield's unique restaurants featuring international cuisine.

Visit Harper Brush for a manufacturing tour. This 100-year-old company develops products of the highest quality to help their customers accomplish cleaning tasks more thoroughly and efficiently. This tour will let groups see broom-making up close.

Go to Maharishi University of Management and take the Sustainable Living tour. Travelers will visit the Argiro Student Center, the first higher education student center to be green certified with its numerous examples of energy efficient principles. Students study traditional subjects but also cultivate their creative potential from within. All of the students and faculty practice Transcendental Meditation® to develop their inner potential.

Take a tour of Abundance Ecovillage, a place where living is completely off the grid. The village's design and energy and water use, as well as gardening, farming, waste recycling, and landscaping are done in a way that is in tune with natural law.

Stop at Overland Sheepskin Co. to shop and visit and feed the llamas.

Enjoy your choice of Thai, Mediterranean, or Indian cuisine.

This evening, take in a show at the Stephen Sondheim Center for the Performing Arts.

Day Two

Start with coffee at one of Fairfield's many coffee shops.

Visit Radiance Dairy, an eco-friendly organic grass-based dairy farm with an on-site bottling and cheese-making facility. Take a ride in a hayrack out to meet the Jersey cows and enjoy a delicious organic ice cream treat. The cows are raised without the use of antibiotics, and the feed and pasture is also managed organically without the use of chemicals.

Head to Creative Edge for a manufacturing tour. The company produces intricate marble and stone flooring for customers around the world, including Disney World. The stone is cut using a water jet system and then assembled like giant stone jigsaw puzzles.

Lunch is at The Raj Health Spa, where the group will enjoy a vegetarian buffet. On an education tour of The Raj, discover a time tested and effective system of prevention-oriented natural health care. Purification treatments help remove the damaging effects of stress, fatigue, impurities, and environmental toxins, thereby stimulating the body's natural rejuvenating abilities.

On a driving tour of Vedic City, view homes and buildings of Vedic architecture and view the Vedic Observatory, a 1.5-acre open-air collection of masonry sundials. The observatory displays the whole structure of the universe along with the movements of the sun, the planets, and the stars.

Take a manufacturing tour of Bovard Studio, an award-winning provider of stained glass services. The company specializes in new design as well as repair of vintage stained glass windows.

If it's the first Friday of the month, enjoy the award-winning 1st Fridays Art Walk, a fusion of art, entertainment, food, and fun.

Day Three

Explore other attractions in Southeast Iowa, such as the American Gothic House in Eldon, famous as the backdrop of Grant Wood's 1930 painting, or the Villages of Van Buren County, where life is a bit slower. •

Fairfield CVB
200 N. Main
Fairfield, IA 52556
(641) 472-2828
www.travelfairfieldiowa.com

A country estate

Brucemore, a center for arts and culture, celebrates 100 years of its formal garden

Brucemore, the Queen Anne-style mansion in the heart of Cedar Rapids, served as the home to three prominent families in the late 19th and 20th centuries who used the estate as a center for culture and the arts. Now it is a National Trust for Historic Preservation site, and the mansion and gardens are open for tours.

Caroline Sinclair, the widow of pioneer industrialist T.M. Sinclair, had the mansion built between 1884 and 1886. Brucemore's second owner, George Bruce Douglas, added several buildings, moved the entrance to the south side, and upgraded the interior. Brucemore eventually became the home of Douglas' oldest daughter, Margaret Douglas Hall, who bequeathed it to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The name Brucemore is a combination of Douglas' middle name and an allusion to the moors of Scotland.

Thousands visit Brucemore each year for estate tours, musical events, fine arts performances, holiday celebrations, historic landscape tours, and garden walks. Brucemore's mission is to engage the public in the history, traditions, and ongoing preservation of Brucemore.

The basic visitor experience is the guided tour of the mansion. The interpretive period is from 1915 to 1925 during the Douglas years. In addition to discussing the families, guides incorporate such themes as the experiences of servants, technology, arts and music, and life on a country estate.

The carriage house is where groups will find the Visitor Center, the Brucemore Museum Store, and exhibitions.

Garden milestone

Brucemore is celebrating the 100th anniversary of its formal garden in 2010 by means of a series of programs called 100 Years and Counting.

Not only are the formal gardens the centerpiece of the 26-acre estate, but they are also the work of O.C. Simonds, a leader in the regional prairie landscape movement in early 1900s. Brucemore's



Brucemore celebrates the 100th anniversary of its formal garden in 2010.


landscape is one of the few remaining intact residential designs by Simonds, who helped bring recognition to the new field of landscape architecture at the turn of the 20th century.

Touring

Interpretive guided mansion tours are offered March through December, Tuesday through Saturday, and on Sunday on the hour and last approximately 50 minutes. To make a reservation for groups of more than 10, planners can call the Brucemore office; special group rates are available.


A number of specialty tours are offered throughout the year, including the Nooks and Crannies tour, a behind-the-scenes mansion tour, in May and October; the View from Back Stairs, a mansion tour from the servants' perspective, in April; Brucemore in Bloom, formal garden tours led by Brucemore gardeners, in June; four seasonal landscape hikes highlighting the grounds and the changing seasons; and historic neighborhood and landscape tours in May.

Brucemore
(319) 362-7375
www.brucemore.org




Where your experience starts


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