

Small Michigan Village Reinvents Itself as a Walkable Wine Destination

Manitou Beach is launching an ambitious effort to become Michigan's premiere wine tasting destination.

MANITOU BEACH, MI, UNITED STATES, July 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Four wineries. Four local boutiques. One walkable lakeside village. [Manitou Beach](#)

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Manitou Beach Village is launching an ambitious effort to become Michigan's premiere wine tasting destination by combining wineries, shopping, and small-town hospitality into a tourism experience.”

David Gajda

Village is launching an ambitious effort to become Michigan's premiere [wine](#) tasting destination by combining award-winning wineries, boutique shopping, and small-town hospitality into a tourism experience inspired by California wine country.

The initiative is designed to increase tourism, encourage overnight stays, support local retailers and restaurants, and further establish the Irish Hills region as one of Michigan's premier leisure destinations.

The first three wine tasting rooms have officially opened, with one additional locations currently in the approval process. Rather than replacing existing retailers, each winery has partnered with an established boutique, creating a unique experience where visitors can shop, relax with a glass of wine, and explore the village on foot.

Chateau Fontaine Winery has partnered with Ang & Co. Boutique, while Brengman Brothers Winery has opened its tasting room at Devils Lakeview Living and Amoritas Winery is open inside/outside Manitou Beach Boathouse Art Gallery. Additional a tasting room featuring Cherry Creek Cellars is expected to open in the coming weeks.

The concept was developed by local entrepreneurs David Gajda and Jose Malagon after visiting Santa Ynez, California, where boutique shopping and wine tasting combine to create a thriving tourism destination.

“We weren't trying to build another tasting room,” said David Gajda. “We wanted to create an experience where people could spend an afternoon or an entire weekend walking from boutique to boutique, discovering Michigan wines, shopping, dining, and enjoying everything Manitou Beach has to offer. We understand this is a first of its kind in the state of Michigan”

Three of the participating wineries are from Michigan's renowned Leelanau Peninsula wine region, while Cherry Creek Cellars represents [Lenawee County](#)'s growing wine industry.

"This is only Phase One," said Jose Malagon. "Our vision is to continue adding wineries, outdoor entertainment, special events, and wine tours that begin and end in the village, making Manitou Beach, Michigan's premier small-town wine destination."

Doug and Laura Matthies, owners of Chateau Fontaine Winery, said, "When we visited Manitou Beach, we immediately saw the potential. The village has incredible energy, beautiful shops, and a welcoming atmosphere. We knew Chateau Fontaine wanted to be part of what is happening here."

The wine tasting initiative is the latest step in the ongoing revitalization of Manitou Beach Village, where entrepreneurs, local government, tourism organizations, wineries, and business owners have worked together to attract new investment, renovate historic properties, expand shopping and dining opportunities, and create year-round experiences that draw visitors from across Michigan and beyond.

The project represents nearly two years of planning and collaboration. Gajda credited Jim and Linda Neill for introducing the wineries, Rollin Township Supervisor Michael Clark and the Rollin Township Board for their unanimous support, Patrick Farver of Lenawee Now, and Justin Gifford of Visit Lenawee for their assistance throughout the Michigan Liquor Control Commission process.

Cindy Hubbell, CEO of the Irish Hills Regional Chamber of Commerce, said, "The new wine tasting experience complements the village's restaurants, boutiques, lodging, and year-round events, giving visitors another reason to spend an afternoon or an entire weekend discovering Manitou Beach and the Irish Hills. Manitou Beach is an easy day trip (under an hour drive) for Detroit, Toledo and Ann Arbor metro areas which represent a population over 5 million residents."

Visitors can stroll the village, enjoy wine tastings, shop locally owned boutiques, dine at area restaurants, stay overnight, and experience the charm that is transforming Manitou Beach into one of Michigan's most exciting emerging destinations.

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