



Beyond the Bratwurst

A culinary tour to an unlikely destination

By Michael and Jean Muckian

Summer is a great time to take a Wisconsin culinary tour, and it's high time you set your GPS for Sheboygan, where one of the state's least likely markets has blossomed as home to some of the area's best dining.

The one-time industrial city is legally known as America's Bratwurst Capital, an honor it celebrates annually the first weekend of August. Though the city's Miesfeld's Meat Market still sells 1.8 million brats each year (including a regular shipment to Madison's The Old Fashioned), Sheboygan's downtown is also home to some impressive restaurants.

Margaux Bistro & Wine Bar (821 N. 8th St.) offers a continental menu long on substance and creativity. Chef/owner Rob Hurrie cut his teeth at the nearby

American Club in Kohler, the state's only five-star resort, and mixes his knowledge with a renewed appreciation for organic foods (much of which are grown on a farm owned by Hurrie). On the menu, Bacon Mac-and-Cheese, made with white truffle oil and crisp prosciutto ham, sits side by side with Caramelized Sea Scallops, served with roasted fennel, creamed leeks and lemon carrot coulis. And the choices just get better from there.

Amid newer development along the Sheboygan River, Lino Ristorante Italiano (422 S. Pier Dr.) raises the bar for Italian restaurants everywhere. Owner Lino Autiero and Chef Marco Rossi, both from Italy's Amalfi coast, bring new sophistication to traditional cuisine. The lightly breaded calamari is superbly done, while the risotto with

white truffle oil is succulent and flavorful. And we couldn't rave enough about the grilled walleye with mussels in a tomato-spinach broth or the tender Osso Bucco.

Located in between are four restaurants and an organic grocery store owned by Chef Stefano Viglietti: Trattoria Stefano (522 S. 8th St.), Il Ritrovo (515 S. 8th St.), The Duke of Devon English Pub & Eatery (739 Riverfront Dr.) and Field to Fork Café and Grocery (511 S. 8th St.). Trattoria Stefano serves classic Italian dishes based on those Viglietti experienced in Florence, Italy. Il Ritrovo is one of only three Wisconsin members of the *Associazione Verace Pizza Napoletana*, the international group dedicated to preserving and promoting Neapolitan-style pizza. (Madison's Café Porta Alba is also a member.) Duke of Devon is an authentic English pub and Field to Fork combines an Italian and organic market with a restaurant, both tethered by a devotion to local, sustainable food.

Sheboygan has proved there is culinary life beyond the bratwurst, and there is no better time than summer to experience it. Visit visitsheboygan.com.



Doing Brats Right

Madison's The Old Fashioned Tavern & Restaurant does its bratwurst Sheboygan style. Check out No. 32 on the restaurant's menu:

Sheboygan's grand champion Miesfeld Market double bratwurst with raw onions, pickles and brown mustard on a buttered Highway Bakery hard roll.

No ketchup, no sauerkraut, no pre-boiling. The folks at Miesfeld's would be proud. Visit theoldfashioned.com.

→ Sip, Swirl, Slurp and Spit

Certified sommelier Jaclyn Stuart, who runs Margaux Wine School at the Sheboygan restaurant of the same name suggests eight steps to a perfect wine tasting:

1. **See.** Note color, clarity and other visual values.
2. **Swirl.** Rotate your wine in the glass to aerate it and bring out more flavors.
3. **Sniff.** Inhale the aroma with your mouth slightly open for a fuller experience.
4. **Sip.** Does the flavor match the aroma?
5. **Slurp.** It sounds rude, but it helps enhance the flavors.
6. **Swish.** Move the wine in your mouth to cover all the taste buds.
7. **Spit or swallow.** It's your choice.
8. **Savor.** How well does the wine finish?

Visit dinemargaux.com.



Photos courtesy of Margaux Bistro & Wine Bar (top left) and Miesfeld's Meat Market (blow left)