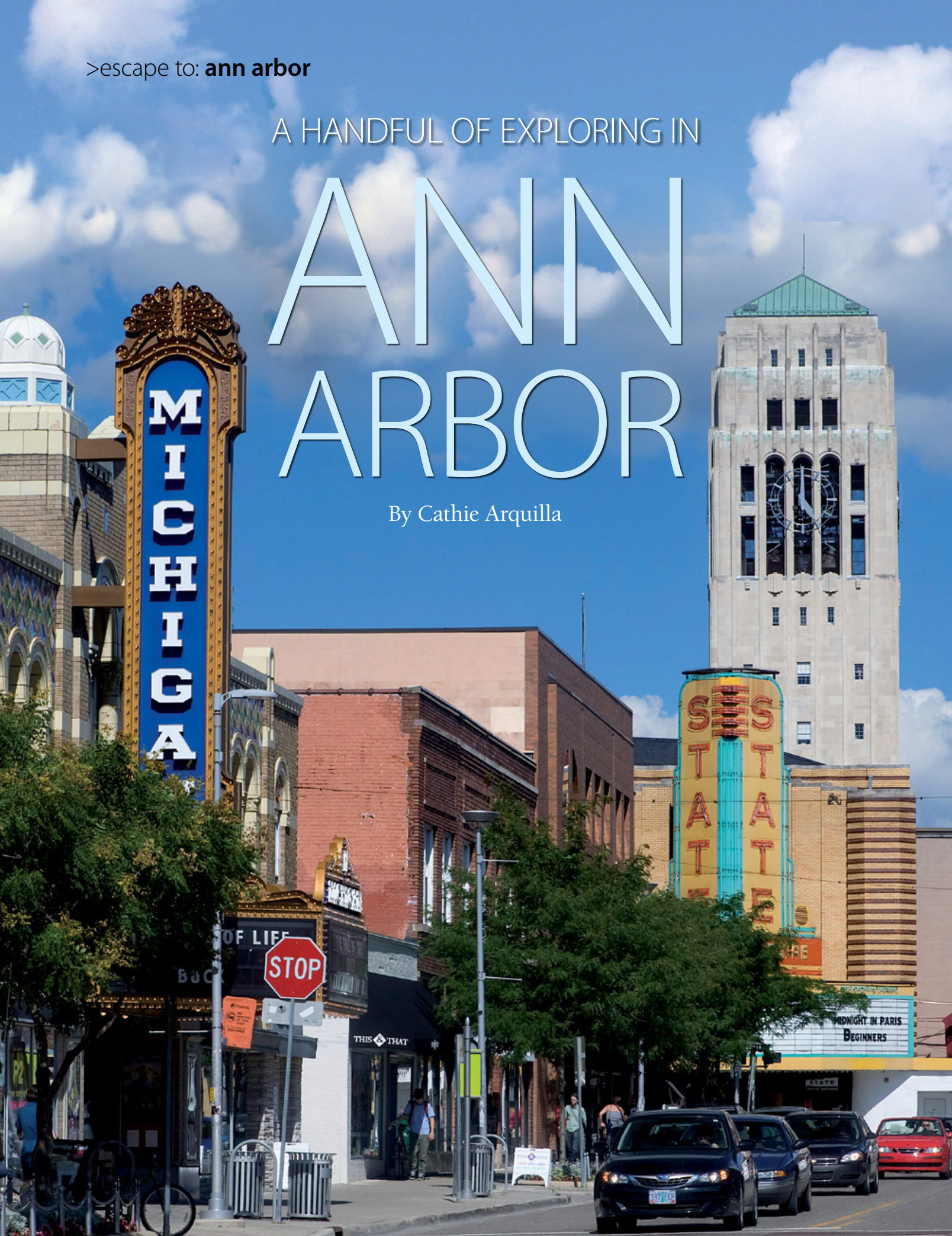


A HANDFUL OF EXPLORING IN

ANN ARBOR

By Cathie Arquilla

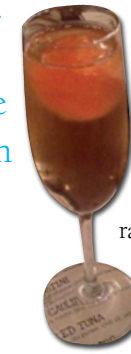


Michigan natives, sometimes called Michiganders, often hold up their left hands with fingers together, thumbs apart, and point, using their right hands, to the location they're trying to describe in Michigan. It's a useful show and tell, but at first I couldn't quite understand why people were doing it! I didn't know the shape of Michigan that well and what about the whole Upper Peninsula? By the way, *those* residents are sometimes called Yoopers and the Yoopers call the lower Michigan dwellers Trolls!

Hold up your left hand as described and point to your lower thumb knuckle. That's Detroit. Then move your finger across your thumb knuckle and that's Ann Arbor, a perfect *Travelgirl* escape!

HEART YOUR EATING

Still on the hand, between your pinky and ring finger is the Grand Traverse Bay. Your pinky is the Leelanau Peninsula and there lies Michigan wine country. Taste and learn about Michigan's wines at **VinBar**. These wines are becoming known and respected nationally. Try the dry rose by M. Lawrence called SEX. Sip it draped over this sleek bar. You'll feel sexy.



I would go back to **Mezzevino**, where Evolving Eos was the name of my sparkling cocktail with an Aperol infused ice sphere. I'd order the roasted cauliflower again too — the cumin yogurt, pine nuts, raisins and white wine vinaigrette dressed up this boring vegetable for success.

Mezzevino's concept of shared food and wine is rather unique. Bottles of wine are brought to the table and you only pay for the wine drunk. The hope is that patrons will try several wines and shared plates, experiencing different flavors and textures that echo Mediterranean countries, but are uniquely their own.

Note: I discovered a spice here called *muhammara* from Syria used in a lamb kabob rub.

Chef Alex Young looks like a wiry, rough, redneck farmer. But he has a city swagger too, or is it a slouch? He comes to Ann Arbor by way of New York City's China Grill (10 years), which explains the swagger. As part owner of **Zingerman's Roadhouse**, he brings "full flavored, traditionally made, regional cuisine" to the table. When asked about buying ingredients locally, he says, "It's super, *super* important. We want to know exactly what is going on in the food. We have relationships with hundreds of purveyors" — his own chef's garden being one of them.

This is American food, folks, but it isn't folksy. Chef Young becomes an educator when discussing the concept of American foodways, a scholarly term for our attitudes, practices and history around food. He has done a ton of research on the subject and incorporates the idea into his menus.

As for accolades, Young has won a James Beard Award, and Alton Brown of Food Network named his macaroni and cheese Best Comfort Food in America (2009).

Don't miss the mac, but also take a big crunchy bite out of the buttermilk fried chicken — the best ever, travelgirls! And I must mention the Roadhouse Donut Sundae: a housemade Dutch donut, bourbon-caramel sauce, vanilla gelato, peanuts, housemade whipped cream and a cherry. 'Nuf said.

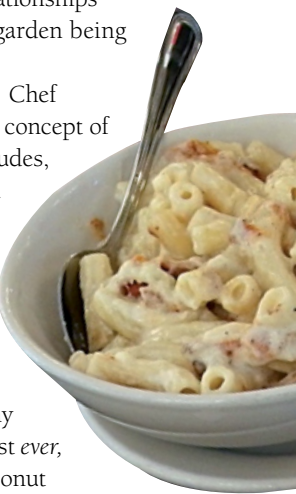


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Chef Danny Van of **Taste Kitchen** doesn't seem to want to label his food other than to say it's eclectic, global cuisine using local ingredients. The menu changes daily and leans in the direction of light fare. Fish and vegetables reign. Van reminded me of a younger, fitter Buddha. His eyes were sparkly and amused, but he seemed shy and is probably more comfortable in the kitchen, creating.



It's better if you're a carnivore at **Grange Kitchen and Bar**. Chef Brandon Johns likes to use the whole animal, lesser-known cuts, and lesser-known animals! He makes his own sausage. (Like a street hotdog, I think it's better not to know what goes into a Grange sausage.)

Eating at Grange calls for an adventurous spirit. The grilled Elk with turnips and sautéed kale was wintery-warm and savory, but surprisingly light. Buratta is everywhere these days, but Chef Johns paired it with pickled shaved beats. Non-meat eaters need not feel shunned at Grange, however. Both the ricotta mushroom ravioli and the pan-seared trout with spaghetti squash are fab choices.



BOP DOWNTOWN:

Ann Arbor's downtown scene is energetic. It's bohemian and sophisticated as well as very accessible in both its personality and location.

At The **Peaceable Kingdom**, both art gallery and gift shop, discover the works of Chris Roberts-Antieu. Her colorful paintings with zero perspective are curious in an American Folk Art kind of way. When describing her work she says, "My work is about joy. It's about the mysterious origin of joy and the wonder of childhood." This store is filled with



really fun, quirky stuff.

Literati Bookstore (and café): "Real Books. Real People. Real Bookstore." That is what their bookmark/business card reads. It's almost comical because it states the obvious, but with so

much of today's book browsing done online, it's a pleasure to walk into this hip store and see real books and real people in a real store!

DEAR GOLDEN VINTAGE CLOTHING STORE IS NICELY MERCHANDISED, FEMININE AND ROMANTIC, MINUS THE MUSTY SMELL!



Dear **Golden Vintage** clothing store is nicely merchandised, feminine and romantic, minus the musty smell!

A repurposed collection of factory/warehouses that was part of the original village of Ann Arbor is now **The Kerrytown Market & Shops**.

You could poke around forever at **16 Hands** on the ground floor, but leave yourself time for tasting at **Fustini's**, a mecca for artisanal olive oils and balsamic vinegars upstairs. Plan ahead and you could drop in on one of Fustini's cooking classes.

Like most warehouses, The Market just keeps going: It's a parade of shops, restaurants and takeout, and it hosts an outdoor greenmarket on weekends. The Kindfest, an annual, outdoor holiday market held in December, is storybook.

If you're feeling arty, wonder into **WSG Gallery**, a 16 member, artist-owned gallery. Each artist has a job and a stake in the business. Sculptor Norma Penchansky-Glasser explores motion and dance in her bronzes. Takeshi Takahara's intaglio and woodcut paintings capture the imagination. They're airy, mystical and fresh; I'm saving up for one!

Every bop requires a "cuppa," but you can get far more than that at Lisa McDonald's **TeaHaus**. McDonald is a Colorado native who spent 14 years in Germany where she became a tea sommelier. She is one of the few tea sommeliers in America, certainly the only one in Ann Arbor, and she can school you on tea! Take advantage of TeaHaus's tastings and



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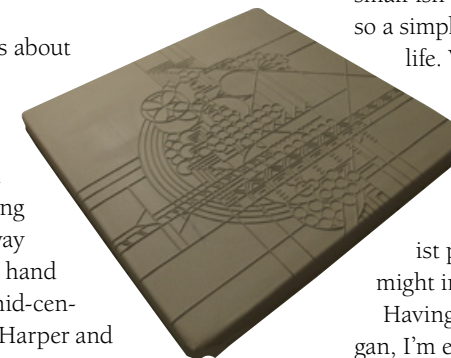
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pairings. Tea, and we're talking the good stuff here, is in every item on the menu and the front shop has tea and tea paraphernalia galore.

Fun fact: Lingia, a region of Darjeeling has a very short picking season — only 10 days. The leaves are picked earlier, giving them less time to ripen. It's a "first flush" tea and considered the "Champagne of teas." You drink this with no milk or sugar and it marries well with a simple goat cheese drizzled with tea syrup.

You can plan an entire girlfriend getaway to Ann Arbor without a car. The places mentioned previously are within walking distance of a brand new Residence Inn. However, if you do have wheels and you want to explore further, check out these "only in Ann Arbor" add-ons:

1. **Motawi Tileworks:** It takes about five days to make one tile, and the factory outputs about 1,000 artisanal handmade tiles per day. Here, you can see and learn about the entire process of making a tile from its clay stage all the way through to glazing (each color is hand painted) and firing. They have mid-century designs along with Charlie Harper and Frank Lloyd Wright licensing.



2. **Zingerman's Creamery:** Now I know how buratta is made. It's a mozzarella cheese cream pocket! The mozzarella is flattened like a pancake, pressed into a cup, then cream is



poured into the cup and the whole thing is wrapped up and tied. It's like a creamy, gooey cheese water balloon! Don't skimp on your take-away cheese purchase here. Whether cow or goat, this cheese is altogether a different animal than what you'll find at your local grocery store. Make a point of meeting Chief Cheese Maker and owner/partner Aubrey Thomason. She'll happily tell you how Zingerman's Creamery does cheese.



GOING TO THIS SMALL-ISH MUSEUM TAKES YOU TO THE HEART OF THE UM CAMPUS, SO A SIMPLE WALK ABOUT THE EXTERIOR GIVES YOU A FEEL FOR CAMPUS LIFE.

3. **University of Michigan Museum of Art:** Going to this small-ish museum takes you to the heart of the UM campus, so a simple walk about the exterior gives you a feel for campus life. With more than 19,000 works (not all on display!) collected in the last 150 years, there is an eyeeful of

art spanning several centuries and continents. Yes, co-eds are studying art here, but I overheard a German language class practicing their speaking skills in describing an early 19th-century impressionist painting. If you need to get out of the weather, and you might in Michigan, it's a therapeutic place to wander.

Having discovered Ann Arbor on "the hand" that is Michigan, I'm eager to learn more about this state. Many of my Midwestern stereotypes were blown to pieces and some, validated. The Michiganders I met seemed honest, friendly, appreciative of the land, calm and decidedly authentic. The type of people you'd like to encounter on any escape.

For more information: www.VisitAnnArbor.org

Opposite page clockwise from top left: Taste Kitchen's interior; furs at Dear Golden Vintage; Kerrytown Historic Market and Farmers Market signs; "Catching Fireflies" painting by Chris Roberts-Antieu; pork skin ramen with radish slaw at Grange; raspberry goat cheese desert at Taste Kitchen. This page clockwise from top: TeaHaus; University of Michigan Museum of Art; cheese from Zingerman's Creamery; An unglazed tile from Motawi Tileworks.