



BUCHANAN, MICHIGAN

Just east of Harbor Country, a sleepy town reinvigorated by Chicagoans lures antique hunters, wine lovers, and botanical barnstormers **BY JAN PARR**



HARBOR COUNTRY, that group of small Michigan towns along the lake, has for decades been a close-by

getaway for Chicagoans. Now there is a new option a little farther inland: **Buchanan**. Set amid rolling hills and vineyards and featuring a wide range of architectural styles, this charming old mill town has a tiny shopping district recently redeveloped by several Chicagoans and ex-Chicagoans. They have awakened this sleepy burg, transforming it into a magnet for home décor shoppers. As it turns out, Buchanan is also a great place to sample world-class wine, eat good food, and revel in the fall colors.

Alan Robandt and **Thomas Jolly Home & Garden**, two well-known Chicago antique dealers, were the pioneering businesses in town. In his Buchanan outlet, Jolly (who still has a store on Kinzie Street near the Merchandise Mart) offers English country antiques and 20th-century pieces suited for vacation homes. Robandt's shop is filled

with vintage and antique furniture and accessories with a slight industrial edge. But man can't live on vintage alone, so there is also **Front**, a delightful shop packed with fun modern accessories from Marimekko, Alessi, Kartell, Iittala, Taschen, Votivo, and more. Think bright colors and bold shapes.

As for nonshopping attractions, **Pears Mill** (121 S. Oak St.; open Saturdays through Labor Day) is a functioning 1850s water-powered Greek Revival gristmill along McCoy Creek. Housed in a midcentury Prairie-style building, the three galleries of the **Buchanan Art Center** (117 W. Front St.; 269-697-4005) display work by local artists.

Hungry? For such a small town, there are lots of dining options. Situated inside a 1947 soda fountain store, the newly opened **Buchanan Sweet Shop** offers ice cream and panini, while nearby, the similarly named **Sweeties Sweet Shop** has sandwiches, popcorn, and candy. Set in a lovely restored bank building with original mosaic tile, marble walls, and soaring glass windows, **Union Coffee House** serves up arabica coffee and loose tea, along with sandwiches, salads, and baked goods. For a more substantial menu—barbecue, steaks, salmon, sandwiches, salads—try **Wheatberry Restaurant & Tavern**. For breakfast, locals recommend the **Back Door Cafe**, where I've had excellent asparagus omelets in the spring.

You could spend several hours in the shops, galleries, and restaurants here, but you will want to get out and enjoy the autumn scenery. In nearby **Niles**, the **Fernwood Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve**

(269-695-6491) has lots of maple, tulip, sassafras, and sycamore trees for looking at wonderful fall colors on foot; the Doris and Dick Richards Ecology Trail leads to a viewing dock on the St. Joseph River. Keep going on the little-traveled Wilderness Trail if you are feeling energetic (though none of the trails are very long or strenuous). Lunch at Fernwood's café is a treat (salads, panini, soup, shrimp artichoke pizza), especially if you can eat on the deck or terrace. The **Autumn Air Festival** (October 2nd and 3rd) features children's activities, food, and live music in the garden.

Wine lovers will want to check out the September 11th tour of Buchanan's **Avonlea Vineyard**.



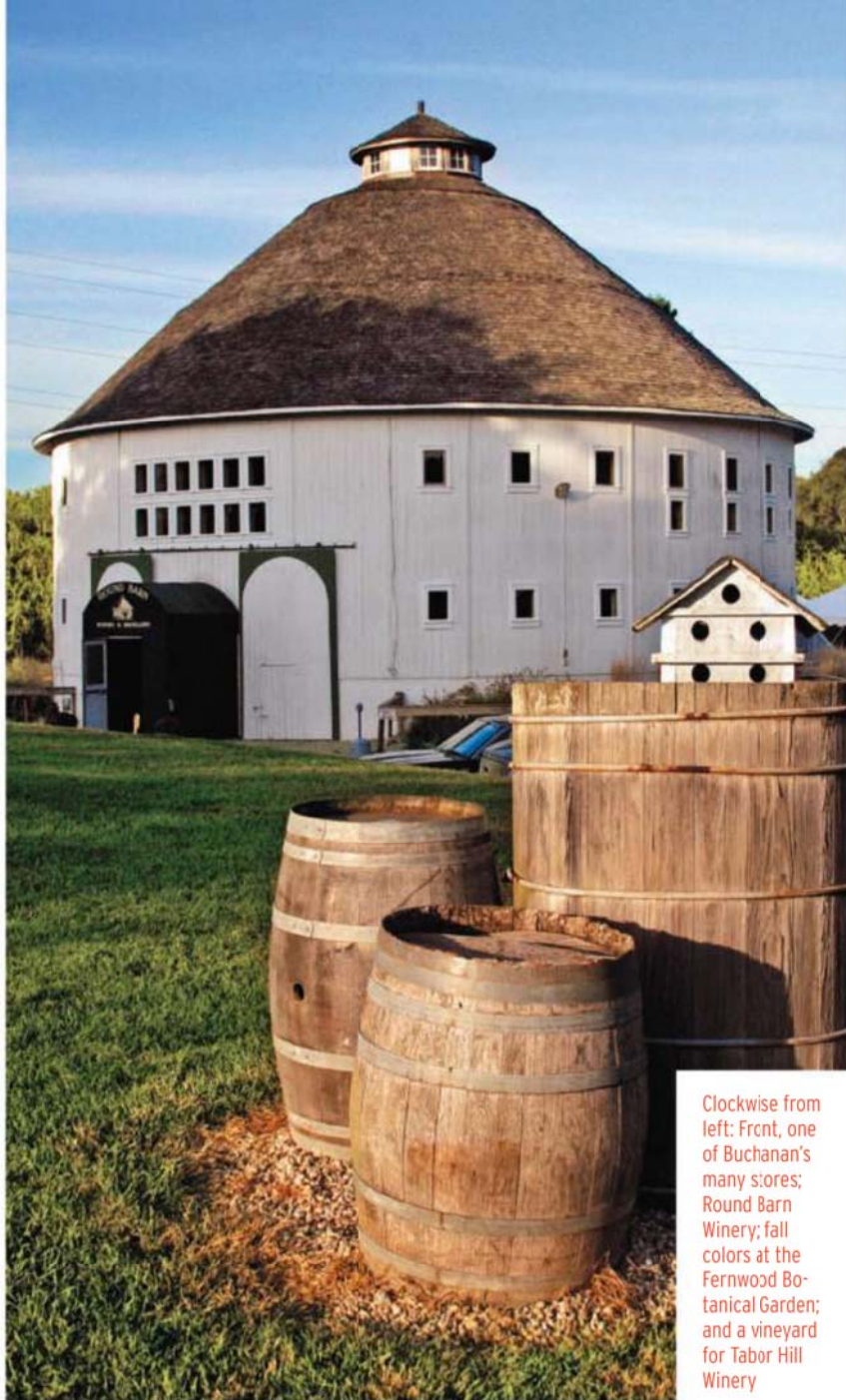
ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW BANNEKER. PHOTOGRAPHY: (FRONT) TATE GUNNERSON. (ROUND BARN WINERY) JIM PHOTOGRAPHY. (TARBOR HILL) © JEFF GREENBERG/ALAMY. (FERNWOOD BOTANICAL GARDENS) PHIL DEVORE



TIP

The Three Oaks Spokes Bicycle Club has mapped out 16 self-guided cycling routes (from 5 to 60 miles) that take riders through Harbor Country, up to Warren Dunes State Park, and into the area around Buchanan. Pick up the guide at the Dewey Cannon Trading Company in Three Oaks (3 Dewey Cannon Ave.; 269-756-3361).





Clockwise from left: Frnt, one of Buchanan's many stores; Round Barn Winery; fall colors at the Fernwood Botanical Garden; and a vineyard for Tabor Hill Winery



DETAILS

Unless otherwise noted, all addresses are in Buchanan.

LODGING

Gordon Beach Inn
16220 Lakeshore Rd.,
Union Pier; 269-469-
0800, gordonbeach
inn.com

Inn at Union Pier
9708 Berrien St.,
Union Pier; 269-469-
4700, innatunion
pier.com

Marina Grand Resort
600 W. Water St., New
Buffalo; 269-469-9900,
marinagrandresort.com

SHOPPING

Alan Robandt 114 E.
Front St.; 312-560-7482

Front 207 E. Front St.;
269-695-0230

**Thomas Jolly Home
& Garden** 107 E. Front
St.; 312-595-0018

WINING & DINING

Back Door Cafe 115 N.
Red Bud Trail; 269-
695-1332

**The Buchanan Sweet
Shop** 205 E. Front St.;
269-695-5533

Round Barn Winery
10983 Hills Rd.,
Baroda; 800-716-9463,
roundbarnwinery.com

Sweeties Sweet Shop
259 E. Front St.;
269-695-3337

**Tabor Hill Winery
& Restaurant** 185
Mount Tabor Rd.; 800-
283-3363, taborhill.com

Union Coffee House
115 E. Front St.; 269-
449-1820, unioncoffee
house.com

**Wheatberry Rest-
aurant & Tavern**
15212 N. Red Bud
Trail; 269-697-0043,
wheatberrytavern
.com

**Wyncroft Winery/
Avonlea Vineyard**
269-409-1855,
wyncroftwine.com

