

Door County by Land Sea and Air
By Patty Kobus

Wouldn't it be lovely to have a slice of heaven on Earth? Well, that's just what we Miata lovers got to enjoy starting on Thursday, Aug. 24 at the Somerset Inn, Ephraim, Wisconsin. Beginning with a cookout on the spacious, outdoor kitchen patio, we grilled, drank, ate, laughed, ate more and had a wonderful reunion with members new and old. The lovely glass marbled fire pit surrounded by comfy Adirondack chairs added an element of coziness and ease for us to savor. We finally turned in with full tummies and happy hearts.

Friday dawned cool and overcast, but the mighty Miata groups were enthused to begin the dining service. Our group left at 9:15, a reasonable hour indeed, and discovered rolling hills with pretty homes just off Hwy 42 which absorbs most tourist traffic. Alone on our little roads we found greenery of all shades, sheered walls of arbor vitae protecting the privacy of a lovely manse, outcrops with caves, wheelbarrow planters overflowing with colorful, happy flowers, tree canopied lanes, alpacas lolling about and a beautiful Moonlight Bay, one of the longest on our route. Being on the snaky, multi-curvy part of Hwy 42 leading to the Washington Island Car Ferry was our zoom, zoom time, much loved! Whee! The sun peeked out, the sky turned aqua blue; and all was right with the world as we pulled into the Shipwreck Restaurant in Egg Harbor for a delicious lunch with ample sitting room and acoustics that allowed for pleasant conversations. Perfect. Although our pre-planned sunset boat tour was cancelled due to serious stormy weather that started minutes after our 5:30 scheduled boarding time, back at the Somerset, we gathered inside to huddle and chat, appreciating a truly perfect slice of heaven.

Thank you to Jane and Dennis Schmidt and Ginger and Brian Carney for being the angels who made this a special time for us all.

Door County by Land, Sea & Sky
Saturday, Aug. 26th: Free Day and By Sky
by Marcy Hotz

Because Friday's Sunset Cruise had been canceled due to chilly, rainy weather, Jane was able to pull together a next-day cruise for the group. So after a filling and chatty breakfast at the Somerset Inn, Jim and I donned our jackets and umbrellas – just in case – and drove to the cruise ticket booth in Sister Bay to get our tickets.

Unfortunately this cruise had similarly been canceled, but I hadn't noticed on my phone the text they had sent out.

Oh well, that gave us the better part of a day to do whatever we wanted, since the organizers wisely gave participants that opportunity. We first strolled through Al Johnson's gift shop across the street from the boat ticket booth and found a cute set of magnets: cat butts – for Jim's sister, the Cat Lady.

Following that, we drove to Hands-On Art Studio in Fish Creek where we made a glass wind chime. It took us about 2 hours to complete: you pick 7 pieces of clear glass, then glue a design using various colors of smaller glass pieces to each of the 7 bases. The glued pieces are fired in a kiln overnight and the instructor strings the 7 fused pieces to a pre-formed metal piece with a hook for hanging. It was great fun and gave us a beautiful hand-made souvenir to take home.

We stopped at the Main Street Market in Egg Harbor and picked up a bottle of Montepulciano to enjoy after the day's activities, and by then we had worked up an appetite for lunch. We found a newer restaurant, Mezzanine, stopped for a glass of wine and shared a fabulous charcuterie board. There is rooftop dining there, but because it was still a bit cool, we opted for indoors. This restaurant gets a 5-star rating in my book!!

We drove around a bit looking for the Northern Lights Theater (this is the Sky part) in Fish Creek where we would enjoy a play later that evening. From there we went back to the motel to change clothes and rest a bit before going to dinner. We had early reservations due to our 7:30 play and wanted to not rush through dinner. We were still kind of full from the charcuterie board, but managed to stretch our dinner out for 2 hours at the Carrington Restaurant at the Landmark Resort in Egg Harbor before heading off to Northern Lights, about 15 minutes away.

In the lobby, before the play began, I asked several people what they did with their free day:

- Brian C took a 4-hour nap. When he went to sleep it was raining; when he woke it was sunny.
- Toni T, Ginger C and Lynn B went to a pop-up fiber arts show at the Town Hall in Baileys Harbor. They had lunch at a food truck in Lauerbach's Orchard in Ephram. Toni and Jim T had dinner at Chop in Sister Bay.
- Barb and Ed T drove Leg 3, an optional drive along the Bay shoreline where there are many large homes which I would call mansions. They had dinner at Sip, an unusual restaurant in Ephraim, not far from the Sommerset. They enjoyed the spinach-artichoke dip there. They went shopping for souvenirs for the Wisconsin party in Arizona.

- Henry and Laura N went to Peninsula State Park, had lunch at the Cornerstone Bar & Grill in Baileys Harbor and dinner at Summer Kitchen in Ephraim.
- Ron and Paula B had dinner at Summer Kitchen as well.
- Jim & Peg W Drove through Peninsula State Park, where they went to the beach and up the tower. They also went to Anderson Dock in Ephraim and viewed the graffiti art there. They also went to the Maritime Museum up in Ellison Bay.
- Tom and ML C spent the day antique shopping and bought a metal dragon. They also stopped at a bar to watch the Packer game, then back to the Sommerset. They met up with the rest of us at the Northern Lights Theater.

The play, *Guys and Does*, is a whimsical excursion into the world of Wisconsin deer-hunting. We joined Fritz and Duane as they traveled Up Nort' to get away from it all, with a little male bonding and a surprising magical encounter with two white deer – a buck (with one missing antler) and a doe! It was cute, silly and fun. The music and songs were quite funny. Everyone enjoyed it.

Sunday morning we said our goodbyes and went to the Chef's Hat for breakfast. We went back to Hands-On Art Studio to pick up our wind chime which had not yet been strung. So we took the opportunity to drive through Peninsula State Park and saw the beauty and sights that everyone had been talking about. The aforementioned tower is 60 feet high with the top observation deck sitting 253 feet above Green Bay. There are 100 steps to climb to get to the top of the tower, or visitors can enjoy an 850-foot, fully-accessible canopy walk that winds above the tree line to the top of the tower. In the park, we saw lots of tent campers, bike riders, hikers, picturesque shoreline, winding roads and plenty to keep us oohing and aahing. Before we finished the drive, our instructor at Hands-On called to let us know our wind chime was complete.

Leaving a Miata weekend is always bittersweet: we love the rides, the food, the fun, the camaraderie to the extent that we want it to continue. Alas, we bid Door County a fond farewell until the next time.

Many thanks and kudos to Jane & Denny Schmidt and Brian & Ginger Carney for pulling together a fantastic, well-planned and executed weekend!