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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOLD STARS ACROSS THE BOARD FOR WISCONSIN'S TOURISM INDUSTRY

MADISON, Wis. (Feb. 14, 2013) – Remember what it felt like to receive a “gold star” from your teacher? Just this past year alone, Wisconsin’s travel industry has been racking up gold stars like nobody’s business. From award-winning spas and hotels, to towns ranked best for raising a family, to award winning breweries, Wisconsin is no doubt the teacher’s pet – and that’s not a bad thing for travelers this year. In a state that never ceases to impress, here are some of the awards Wisconsin has earned in 2012 to the present.

APPRECIATING THE ARTS

Wisconsin really knows how to put on a show. We’re talking theater arts, performances, museum exhibits, the whole shebang. Milwaukee was recognized for this and has been named one of America’s “**Top 12 ArtPlaces in 2013**” by ArtPlace, a public-private coalition of major foundations and the National Endowment for the Arts. So, what does it take to be a top “ArtPlace?” The 12 winning cities were judged on having combined arts, artists and venues with local businesses and restaurants to create a walkable lifestyle and vibrant city. Also topping the list were New York City’s Manhattan Valley and Los Angeles’ Central Hollywood. Not bad if we do say so ourselves.

THE LAP OF LUXURY

Wisconsin’s hospitality industry has always been top notch. Our resorts, hotels and spas are some of the best in the nation. But it doesn’t hurt to be reminded of that every once and a while.

The [American Club Resort in Kohler](#) has racked up quite a few awards in the past year. It was named to *Travel + Leisure*’s “**World’s Best Hotels**” for 2013 and the “**Best Resort in Wisconsin**” by *U.S. News and World Report* among other awards. *Travel + Leisure* listed the resort as the “Midwest’s most deluxe resort and spa” pointing to its rich history with the nearby Kohler Company. In other



*A guest suite at The American Club Resort
Photo courtesy of Kohler Co.*

words, yes the restrooms in each room at the American Club Resort *are* impressive, dare we say “world’s best.”

[The Iron Horse Hotel](#) and the [Pfister Hotel](#) in Milwaukee made *Condé Nast Traveler’s* list of **“Top 25 Hotels in the Midwest in 2012.”** *Condé Nast* boasted Iron Horse’s cool, sleek design with modern rooms and original art, club chairs with “tattoo-inspired” upholstery and a “modern art museum” feel. The Pfister’s polar opposite vibe received reader praise for its Victorian elegance and grandiose architecture. Can’t decide your personal style? Treat yourself to a stay at each for the best of both worlds.

Whether you travel to the state’s largest city, or a small quaint lakeside town, you’ll find comfort and luxury. [The Osthoff Resort](#) in Elkhart Lake was voted to not one, but two readers choice lists in 2012. It made *Travel + Leisure’s* list for one of **“America’s Best Lake Hotels”** and *Condé Nast Traveler’s* readers choice awards, where it landed the No. 1 spot for **“Top Resort in the Midwest.”** Pretty impressive for a town whose population is less than 1,000. And the [Aspira Spa](#) at The Osthoff Resort was rated the **“No. 1 Spa in Wisconsin”** by *Milwaukee Magazine*.

Wisconsin’s accolades stretch from resorts to bed and breakfasts. [Victorian Dreams Bed and Breakfast](#) in Lodi earned a **“Guest Favorite Award for 2012”** by BnB Finder.com, a leading online B&B directory. The guest favorite award is based on independent reviews posted to the site. Guests boasted about the Victorian Dreams’ delicious breakfast and rooms, and for a B&B that’s only two years old, that’s a pretty big achievement.

[Sundara Spa](#) in the Wisconsin Dells is celebrating their 10th anniversary this year with some big recognition. The spa was named to SpaFinder.com’s list of **“30 Hot Spas in North America,”** the **“No. 5 Destination Spa in the World”** by a *Travel + Leisure* readers poll and the No. 14 **“Top Spa in North America for 2012”** by *Condé Nast Traveler*. The resort was in the rankings with spas across the continent including those in California, Quebec and Mexico. Spafinder.com noted Sundara’s boutique-style inn, organic-style architecture and new Tranquility Garden for mediation and reflection. All we have to say to that is “Om.”

LIFE IN A RANKED CITY

Wisconsin’s cities have a culture worth celebrating. Some are perfect for families, and as we’ve discovered, the British – who knew?

Milwaukee and Madison are the state’s two largest cities, and both recently topped MSN’s list of **“10 Coolest Cities in the Midwest.”** Milwaukee, referred to as “Chicago’s little sister” (we like to think, cooler sister) was recognized for its chic boutique hotels, galleries and the country’s oldest bowling alley, the Holler House. Madison was listed as a cultural epicenter perfect for foodies, outdoor adventurers and art enthusiasts.

Madison was also named by *Men’s Health Magazine* as a **“Top 10 City for Men to Live In”** for 2013. *Men’s Health* ranked winners on 38 factors including air quality, unemployment, commute times and health. The city is known for its bike-friendly downtown and University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. And since bikes account for fresher air, lower commute times and a healthier lifestyle, it’s a no-brainer that Madison is a great city to live in.

As for raising families, Appleton has an award to boast about. MSN.com’s Real Estate page listed the **“10 Best Cities to Raise a Family”** and praised Appleton for its great community and “Newcomers Club,” which sponsors play groups, potlucks, and family outings. MSN also

mentioned the city's "stellar" public schools and dozens of parks. (This is the part where everyone raised in Appleton goes, "Obviously!")

And when it comes to a more unique honor, this year Mineral Point takes the cake, or should we say crumpet. *BBC America* named Mineral Point to its list of "[Top 10 Most British Towns in America](#)." So, what put Mineral Point on the Brit List? One word: Figgyhobbin. This beef and raisin pasty is traditionally a Cornwall specialty and has made its way to Mineral Point. The town was settled in 1827 by some Cornish chaps, who eventually brought more families from Britain, which contributed to the culture that's present today. We think that's brilliant.

WISCONSIN SPORTS ARE (A HOLE-IN-ONE, A TOUCHDOWN, TOTALLY GNARLY)

Wisconsin offers something for every type of sports enthusiast out there. So it's exciting for our state when we're recognized for not just one sport in particular, but dozens all across the board.

Starting with golf, Wisconsin has accrued honors for its top courses. [Grand Geneva Resort](#) was ranked as one of the "[2012 Top 10 Northern U.S. Golf Resorts](#)" by *Condé Nast Traveler*. Home to 36 holes of championship golf, the courses are impeccably maintained and the Highlands course was designed by Jack Nicklaus and Pete Dye.

The American Club Resort in Kohler also made the *Condé Nast* list with Grand Geneva, as well as *Golf Digest's* list of "[America's 100 Greatest Public Golf Courses](#)." The magazine included [Whistling Straights and Blackwolf Run](#) on the list. And of the 100 courses mentioned, Whistling Straights took the No. 2 spot. *Golf Digest* boasted the Lake Michigan shoreline and called the course iconic. So while a No. 2 rank is not technically a hole-in-one, it's a birdie and we are just fine with that.

Moving on to football, two Wisconsin cities have scored big. *USA Today* named Madison the "[Best College Football Town](#)." More than 50,000 readers voted for Madison bringing it to this No. 1 spot. Football bloggers boasted about the surrounding neighborhoods that give game day a cozy feeling. And the smell of brats, cheese curds and beer just elevates the coziness.

Green Bay made *Away.com's* list of "[America's Best Five Football Towns](#)." This comes as a huge honor when you think about the criteria for this list. The first being, which cities have football engrained into the lives of the town; where it's in the air they breathe. And secondly, which towns are an equally intriguing destination with enough to offer for non-football fans and families. Green Bay topped this list for its nearly 100-year football history, Hall of Fame and Museum and of course, the famed cheesehead foam hat.



*Tailgating at a Green Bay Packers game
Photo courtesy of Brian Malloy*

For the true outdoor enthusiast, the next few awards are for you. The city of Appleton was named the "[Best Town for Sportsmen in 2012](#)" by *Outdoor Life*. With a 170-year old history of trappers and fur traders to the area, the city is known for its abundant wildlife. Today whitetail deer draw outdoorsmen, along with amazing fishing opportunities on Lake Winnebago and the Fox River.

Located west of Madison, the town of Fitchburg was named a [Bronze Level Bicycling Friendly Community](#) by the League of American Bicyclists in 2012. Fitchburg is positioned to embrace the urban cycling culture. Four of Wisconsin's finest trails make their way through town

– the Capital City State Trail, Badger State Trail, Military Ridge State Trail and Cannonball State Trail.

Cowabunga in the Dairy State. In late 2012, Sheboygan was named one of “[Eight Places to Surf the Perfect Wave, Without an Ocean](#)” by *The Discovery Channel*. The list profiled eight destinations around the world to hang ten sans saltwater including the Amazon River, the Seven Ghosts title bore in Indonesia and the Qianting River near the East China Sea. Rad, bro.

TOP HOPS IN WISCONSIN

Everyone knows Wisconsin is proud of its brewing history; after all, brewing started here in 1835, 13 years before Wisconsin even became a state. Today our craft and microbreweries consistently capture awards at beer festivals across the nation.

Milwaukee is no stranger to this. The original home of beer giants like Miller, Pabst, Schlitz, and Blatz, the city was named to the list of “[Top 10 Beer Cities in the World](#)” by *USA Today* and named “[Bar City of the Year](#)” by *Esquire Magazine*. But it’s not just the beer giants that make Milwaukee great. Check out micro-breweries like Lakefront Brewery where you’ll get a tour, tastes and souvenir pint glass.

Heading further up the state in Chippewa Falls, you’ll find another historic brewery tucked into the Northwoods of Wisconsin – Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co. In late 2012, [Leinenkugel's](#) was named to *Trip Advisor's* list of “[Top 10 American Brewery Tours](#).” The tour is known for blending tradition with innovation as travelers learn about five generations of the Leinenkugel family while guided through the bottling factory.

And, we have to give a toast to [3 Sheeps Brewing](#) in Sheboygan, which was named “Brewery to Watch” at the 2012 “[Great Taste Midwest Beer Festival](#),” the “[Best New Brewery in Wisconsin](#)” by Ratebeer.com and a [fan favorite](#) at the Kohler Festival of Beer. We can’t wait to see and taste what’s to come.

OCEANIC-LIKE WISCONSIN BEACHES

If you thought you had to travel to the Atlantic or Pacific coasts for white, sandy and pristine beaches, think again. In 2012 *Travel Channel* came up with their list of the “[Top Midwest Beaches](#)” and not one, but four Wisconsin beaches made the list.

[Bradford Beach](#) in Milwaukee was commended for its plentiful array of volleyball courts for league play and pick-up games. Not to mention, room to stretch out and enjoy the lake views and build a sand castle or two. Stop by the new tiki bar for a cool drink or maybe some cheese curds from a food court (it is Wisconsin, after all).

[Kohler-Andrae State Park](#) made the list for its beautiful sand dunes. Far enough away from city life, yet easy to get to (Sheboygan is only 50 miles away from Milwaukee) it’s the perfect place to become “one” with Mother Nature. With 1,000 acres of beach and forest, it’s also a prime camping area.

[Point Beach State Forest in Two Rivers](#) made *Travel Channel's* list for its sand dunes and the Rawley Point Lighthouse, which has been operated by the U.S. Coast Guard since 1853. Nearby the beach is the Mariners Trail, a seven-mile hard-surfaced recreational trail running along Lake Michigan. It connects Manitowoc and Two Rivers and is the longest continuous scenic view of Lake Michigan in Wisconsin.

And we can't forget about [North Beach in Racine](#) which made not only the *Travel Channel* list, but was also rated one of "[51 Great American Beaches](#)" by *USA Today*. North Beach has 2,500 feet of shoreline for all types of beach goers. *USA Today* also was impressed with the fort-like Kids Cove outdoor playground, not to mention all the bonuses like music concerts and pro-volleyball tournaments.



*North Beach in Racine
Photo courtesy of Real Racine*

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