



"The Newspaper That Cares About Rural Life"

Country Market

The Country Today SECTION

Crawling for art



Dried flowers and plants hang from the rafters at Monches Farm, a longtime host of the Monches Artisans Holiday Tour.

Southeastern Wisconsin holiday tour expected to draw hundreds of visitors

MONCHES — A movable feast for the eyes will unfold next month in this tiny community on the Washington-Waukesha county line.

The town nestled in the Kettle Moraine hills is preparing to host its 27th Monches Artisans Holiday Tour.

Twelve locations will host open houses, including pottery makers near Hartford and an old-time pub near North Lake.

In addition, several dozen crafters and artisans will display their wares at the Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Church in Monches.

Hours for the Dec. 4-5 tour will be 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For those wanting a jump-start, several tour hosts will be open for "Sneak Peak Friday" from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A bake sale, lunch and raffle will be Saturday only, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., in the parish hall at Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Church.

Several farms with alpacas, sheep and nursery stock will join crafters, who will open their galleries, shops, inns and a church to visitors kicking off the holiday season with a day trip to the area.

The Monches Artisans Holiday Tour began 27 years ago with just two businesses hosting an event featuring finely crafted artwork inspired by the local landscape. Several miles to the northeast is the majestic Holy Hill, which attracts thousands of visitors annually.

"It's really become a tradition for people kicking off the holiday season," said Zannah Crowe, a horticulturist at Monches Farm, one of the open house hosts. "It's a drive-your-own art tour. Many of the locations are open at other times, but others are open to the public only during the tour."

Because the Kettle Moraine region has become an artists' enclave, the idea of a holiday tour to enhance marketing has gained currency over the years.

Many more crafters would like to become part of the tour but organizers have kept the number of participants to about a dozen for efficiencies.

"The tour allows us to get together with a number of enti-



Above: Luci Williams of Sheeping Beauty Fibre Arts in Monches will participate for the first time as a host for the Monches Artisans Holiday Tour. Visitors will see how wool from Icelandic sheep is turned into crafted items.

Right: Employing a variety of metals, sculptor Paul Bobrowitz of Colgate will feature metal artwork displayed on 6 acres during the Monches Artisans Holiday Tour Dec. 4-5.

If you go

What: 27th annual Monches Artisans Holiday Tour.

When: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, and Sunday, Dec. 5. "Sneak Peak" from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 3, at some tour locations.

Information: www.monchesfarm.com; www.lakesfineart.com; 262-966-2787; or 262-966-1804.

ties and advertise as a group," Crowe said. "We can get our name out as part of the event in a way not normally possible as individuals."

By creating an event with a dozen participants within a 10-minute driving range, the event draws people into the region that might not necessar-



ily make the trip for just one occasion, she said.

"But we want to keep it manageable so that it doesn't become a chore rather than an adventure," she said.

Maps are provided at local businesses.

"People see the tour as an event rather than a single destination," Crowe said. "Our visitors come from Milwaukee, Madison, Chicago and other parts of the Midwest."

First-time host Luci Williams of Sheeping Beauty Fibre Arts raises Icelandic sheep for the wool that she transforms into soft and comfy pieces.

Even though her farmhouse has a collection of valuable looms and spinning wheels, she'll have room cleared for what could be hundreds of visitors parading through her home.

She doesn't know what to expect but looks forward to company.

Williams conducts fiber classes and workshops in weaving, spinning, knitting, rug hooking and basketry in her home. Her husband plans to construct a workshop in the 1895 barn.

Outside, four recently shorn Icelandic sheep were working

Tour hosts

- Monches Farm, 5890 Monches Road, Colgate.
- Krauski Art Glass, W302 N9493 Highway E, Monches.
- Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, W320 N9583 O'Neil Road, Monches.
- Sheeping Beauty Fibre Arts, W297 N9588 Hartley Road, Monches.
- Bobrowitz Spectacular Sculpture, N93 W29174 Woodchuck Way, Colgate.
- Monches Road Studio and Gallery, 5668 Monches Road, Colgate.
- Cold Spring Inn and Vineyard, 1033 Plat Road, Hubertus.
- Lee Curtes Pottery, 5899 Shannon Road, Hartford.
- Daley's Pleasant Hill Farm, 4970 Pleasant Hill Road, Richfield.
- Hanson's Pub, N76 W3134 Highway VV, North Lake.
- Town Hall Library, N76 W31429 Highway VV, North Lake.
- Lakes Fine Art and Perren Photography, N76 W31428 Highway VV, North Lake.

at growing their winter coats of fine wool.

"I will be selling more and more wool as we get more critters," Williams said.

On Woodchuck Way, Paul Bobrowitz has a 6-acre permanent display of metal sculptures he's wrought mainly from recycled materials.

The driveway leading to the home he shares with his wife, Sandy, is lined with pieces of all sorts in a delightful combination of whimsy and imagination.

The yard is open from dawn to dusk, but Bobrowitz said he's seen vehicles drive in at dark with occupants using flashlights to see the display.

He's been a tour host for 20 years, so he knows what's in store, with provisions made for ample parking in the neighborhood.

"If the weather's good, people will come from as far as Chicago," Bobrowitz said.

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