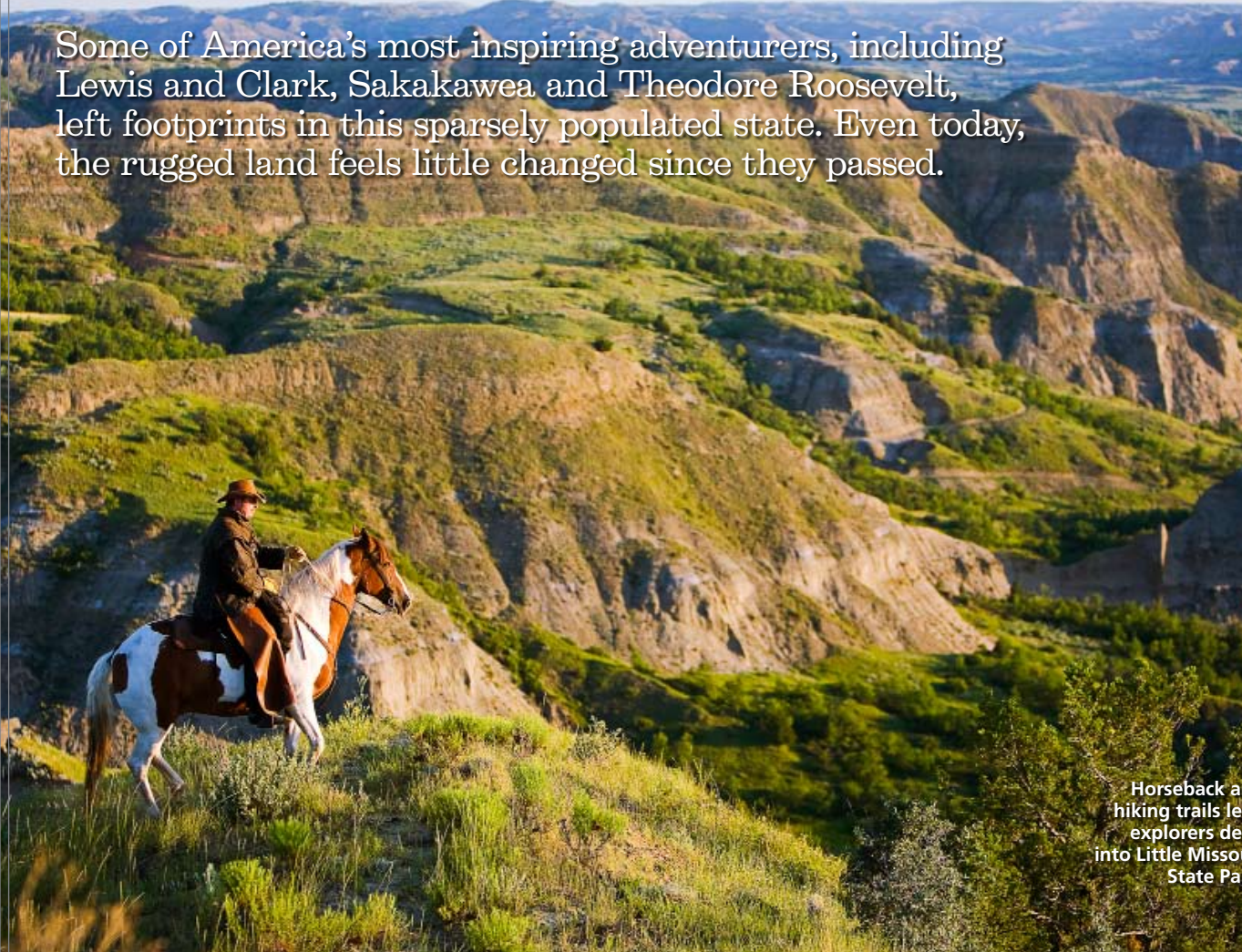


North Dakota

Some of America's most inspiring adventurers, including Lewis and Clark, Sakakawea and Theodore Roosevelt, left footprints in this sparsely populated state. Even today, the rugged land feels little changed since they passed.



Horseback and hiking trails lead explorers deep into Little Missouri State Park.

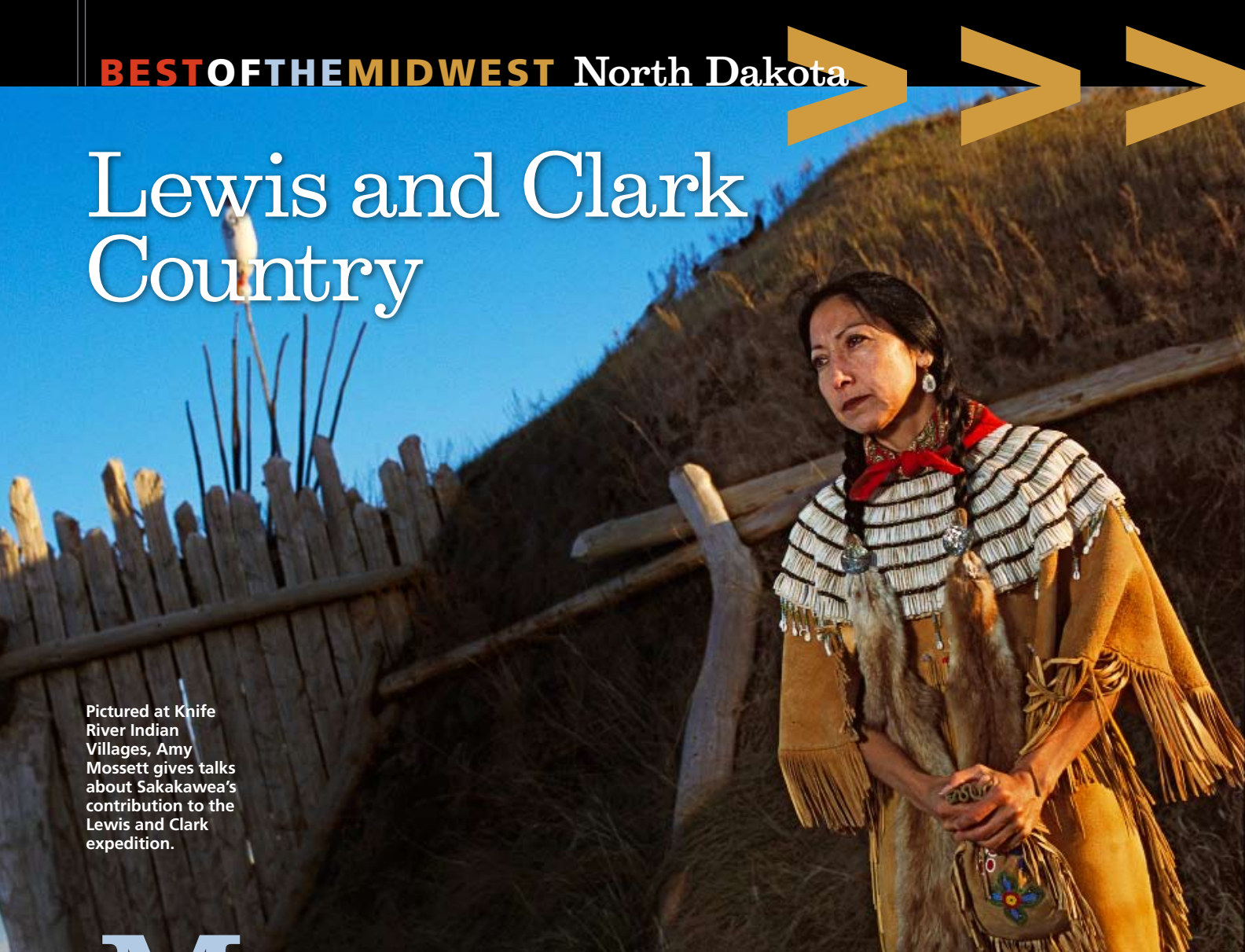
Top draws: Ralph Engelstad Arena, Grand Forks (483,796 annual visitors; 1.1 million bricks and 13,154 concert seats). 2. Theodore Roosevelt National Park (456,588 annual visitors; 70,000 acres and 100 miles of trails). 3. National Buffalo Museum and Prairie Winds Gift Shop in Jamestown, 97 miles west of Fargo (20,000 annual visitors; 30 buffalo including three albino buffalo). (Numbers from North Dakota tourism.)

Our favorites: **For rhubarb wine:** Maple River Winery in Casselton, 24 miles west of Fargo, makes wines, jams, jellies and fruit spreads entirely from locally grown fruits. **For the sweetest potato chip:** Carol Widman's Candy Company in Grand Forks covers its signature "chipper" in chocolate (milk, dark or white), almond bark or peanut butter. **For a horseback ride:**

Trails in Little Missouri State Park wind along buttes and through deep valleys. **For a day at the beach:** White beach sands line a roped-off swimming area on Lake Renwick in Cavalier's Icelandic State Park. **For Old West landscapes:** The three units of Theodore Roosevelt National Park protect the ruggedly beautiful country that drew the 26th president to the state again and again. **For colorful inspiration:** Some 150,000 annuals bloom across 2,300 acres in the International Peace Garden along the Canadian border. **For a day at the movies:** Fargo Theatre, a redone historic movie palace, shows first-run films, classics and documentaries.

For more on North Dakota, visit MIDWESTLIVING.COM

Lewis and Clark Country



Pictured at Knife River Indian Villages, Amy Mossett gives talks about Sakakawea's contribution to the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark spent more of their epic journey in North Dakota than in any other state. Near Bismarck, the state capital, and neighboring Mandan, travelers can follow their path along the Missouri River to country that feels largely undiscovered. Through this little-traveled, lightly populated landscape, the trail leads to fascinating remnants of great Native American cities. At Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park south of Mandan, a cluster of reconstructed earth lodges offers a glimpse of On-a-Slant Indian Village, once an important Mandan settlement, and a museum displays toys, beadwork and other artifacts found on the site. Trails lead to grassy mounds that are reminders of earth lodges that housed about 3,000 people (including Sakakawea, who became the expedition's guide) at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site just north of Stanton on the Missouri River. A reconstruction of Fort Mandan, the log compound where the group spent the winter of 1804-05, brings the journey to life. Just as evocative, though, is the river itself—as wild in spots as when the explorers followed it into the unknown.

TRAVEL GUIDE

For area information: **North Dakota Office of Tourism** (800/435-5663; ndtourism.com).

Worth Noting The young Native American woman who joined the Lewis and Clark expedition often is called "Sacagawea." North Dakotans, especially descendants of the tribes she lived with, say her name actually was "Sakakawea."

BISMARCK

North Dakota's appealing capital (population: 58,000) stands along the Missouri River, across from smaller neighboring Mandan. For information:

Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau (800/767-3555; bismarckmandanvcv.com).

What to Do Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park Knowledgeable guides lead tours

of re-created Mandan earth lodges on the site of the original village (seven miles south of Mandan). Costumed interpreters deftly playing the roles of soldiers lead tours of the neighboring replica of Fort Abraham Lincoln, Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's last command post (701/667-6340; fortlincoln.com).

Five Nations Art Depot A project of Fort Abraham Lincoln, this former train station houses the works of 200 area Native American artists and crafters (701/663-4663; fortlincoln.com).

Lewis and Clark Riverboat This vintage-look paddle wheeler departs from Bismarck for excursions on the Missouri River. Order a glass of wine and enjoy the sunset on summer evening cruises (701/255-4233; lewisandclarkriverboat.com).

PHOTOGRAPH: JASON LINDSEY

Chief Lookings' Village Historic Site The original sites of earth lodges rumple this bluff-top patch of prairie commanding a magnificent view of the Missouri River. It's hard to imagine that the vista once included villages where 6,000 to 7,000 Native Americans lived (701/222-6455).

Where to Eat Kroll's Diner Along with generic cheeseburgers, fries and malts, this sleek and shiny Mandan cafe serves dishes that German-Russians brought to the surrounding plains, such as *fleischkuechle*, a seasoned hamburger patty wrapped in pastry dough and deep-fried (701/667-0940).

Pirogue Grille This intimate downtown restaurant offers the sort of upscale, urban vibe you'd expect to find in a larger city. The long wine list pairs with a seasonal menu rich with locally produced foods. The Dakota Farms steak with bourbon-mustard sauce leads a lineup of excellent choices (701/223-3770; piroguegrille.com).

WASHBURN

This town of 1,400 is a base for exploring Missouri River history (38 miles north of Bismarck). For information:

Washburn Convention and Visitor Bureau (888/462-8530; washburnnd.com).

What to Do Badlands Trail Rides Near Little Missouri State Park, this outfitter offers guided horseback rides, plus a campground with five cabins for rent (701/764-8000; badlandstrailrides.com).

Cross Ranch State Park Age-old cottonwoods sway above this state park, which extends seven miles along one of the last free-flowing, undeveloped stretches of the Missouri River (10 miles south of Washburn). The 589-acre park opened 20 years ago adjacent to the 6,000-acre Cross Ranch Nature Preserve, where buffalo roam the upland prairie. You can boat, fish, swim and camp at the park; canoes and kayaks also are for rent. A network of 15 miles of hiking trails leads into the nature preserve for wildlife watching. Visitor-center programs trace

PHOTOGRAPHS: BOB STEFKO

the area's Native American and natural history (701/794-3731; ndparks.com/parks/crsp.htm).

Killdeer Mountain Four Bears Scenic Byway The byway, 64 miles on State-22, follows the Missouri River Valley through country that is part forest-capped mountains and part arid badlands. Grazing horses look down from striated buttes showing eons of mountain building and erosion. Highlights include Little Missouri State Park and Medicine Hole, with a moderately challenging one-mile hike to one of North Dakota's few caves. Native American tribes attribute healing powers to the cave's air (701/328-5357; ndparks.com).

Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site Explore a reconstructed, furnished Hidatsa earth lodge, 15 miles of trails and a museum (22 miles west of Washburn). One trail passes the remains of the village where Sakakawea lived when Lewis and Clark arrived (701/745-3300; nps.gov/knri).

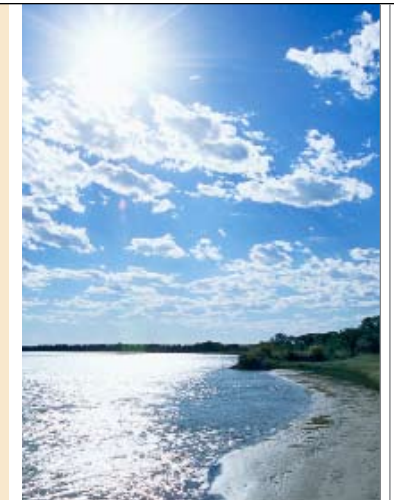
Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center/Fort Mandan Historic Site In Washburn, stop first at this striking new building that holds fascinating exhibits about the expedition and the area's

history. Then, continue to a replica of the fort, authentically reconstructed with 800 cottonwood logs, where the explorers weathered the winter of 1804-05 (877/462-8535; fortmandan.com).

Little Missouri State Park This park protects some of the state's most dramatic scenery known by the Sioux as *mako shika* (where the land breaks). Horse riders and backpackers can get into spectacular backcountry on 48 miles of trails (701/794-3731; ndparks.com).

Where to Stay Knife River Ranch Vacations The Wanner family manages this 8,000-acre spread 40 miles west of Washburn. Rustic cabins with porches look out on the Knife River, a Missouri tributary, next to the lodge and across from the horse barn with 25 horses. Guests can take trail rides or paddle the river. But mostly they work with the horses and cattle and help with ranch chores. From \$100 (701/983-4521; kniferiverranch.com).

Missouri River Lodge In nearby Stanton, this 2,000-acre ranch retreat and hunting lodge offers comfortable rooms and trails. From \$75 (877/480-3498; moriverlodge.com).



STRETCHES OF the Missouri River still resemble the waterway that Lewis and Clark traveled in central North Dakota. Canoeists and kayakers can explore these quiet waters on trips with Matah Adventures. Guides recount river history and point out important sites to paddlers on their one- to six-day trips. The Mandan-based outfitter also offers canoe and kayak rentals and expert route-planning help (701/663-0054; matahadventures.net).



Custer shared this house at Fort Abraham Lincoln with his wife, Elizabeth.

Wild West



Development hasn't touched North Dakota's rugged western landscape.

ast Theodore Roosevelt National Park sweeps across the state's western reaches, a swath of buttes and canyons as rugged as the man himself. Spreading along the Little Missouri River north from I-94 and the Old West town of Medora, the park divides into two big units (70 miles apart) and a smaller third unit with the site of Roosevelt's Elkhorn Ranch. In the two main sections, bison graze and prairie dogs chatter beside roads that link one scenic turnout after another.

Medora (24 miles east of the Montana line) has about 100 residents in the winter. In summer, the town swells with thousands of visitors who come to see the national park and indulge in cowboy fantasies. Along the main street, boardwalks link reconstructed and restored buildings including the 1884 Rough Riders Hotel, where Roosevelt once stayed. A new \$2 million interpretive center tells the story of the Marquis de Mores, the town founder.

TRAVEL GUIDE

Where to Start Medora Information Center (701/623-4829; medorand.com). **Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation** (800/633-6721; medora.com).

Worth Noting Many restaurants, lodgings and attractions in Medora are only open during the summer months. A notable exception is Theodore Roosevelt National Park, which stays open year-round. The park's more accessible South Unit, which borders Interstate-94 and Medora, sees much heavier traffic than the more isolated North Unit, but the scenery is spectacular in both.

What to Do Chateau de Mores State Historic Site The 26-room, 1883 mansion built by the Marquis de Mores, an entrepreneurial French aristocrat who hoped to find his fortune in the Dakota Territory, overlooks Medora. His business failed, but the town he named for his wife, Medora, prospered. A new

interpretive center tells his story (701/623-4355; history.nd.gov).

Dakota Cyclery Mountain Bike Adventures Early May through October, this Medora outfitter offers bike rentals, service and sales; shuttle service; and guided mountain-bike tours on the 100-plus-mile Maah Daah Hey Trail (888/321-1218; dakotacyclery.com).

Medora Musical A two-hour Western musical plays nightly in Medora during the summer (800/633-6721; medora.com).

North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame In Medora, an interpretive center tells the stories of Native Americans, ranchers and rodeo riders (701/623-2000; northdakotacowboy.com).

Theodore Roosevelt National Park Enter the south unit at the Medora Visitor Center, which includes a museum, theater and Roosevelt's Maltese Cross Cabin. A 36-mile scenic drive loops past interpretive signs explaining

the park's historical and natural features. In the north unit (50 miles north of I-94 on US-85), a 14-mile paved route starts at the North Unit Visitor Center. More than 100 miles of hiking trails explore both units (701/623-4466; nps.gov/thro).

Where to Eat Pitchfork Fondue Dinner Cowboy cooks impale steaks 10 at a time and

plunge them into 400-degree cooking oil. Then, the slabs of beef are served with home-style fixings (800/633-6721; medora.com/attractions/fondue.html).

Where to Stay Rough Riders Hotel In Medora, the eight-room historic inn is scheduled to reopen in 2009 after a complete renovation. From \$159 (800/633-6721; medora.com).



In the summer months, Cowboy Lyle teaches visitors about cowboy lore and culture in Medora.

PHOTOGRAPHS: JASON LINDSEY

Fargo



A rooftop garden provides city views at Hotel Donaldson.

N

orth Dakota's largest urban area, and the unofficial capital of the Red River Valley (with a metro population of 195,000), has evolved into an entertaining city. Renovations in the last five years or so have breathed vitality into a downtown large enough to offer a lot to do, but small enough that you can walk just about anywhere. The vibe is artsy, somewhat upscale and even a little youthful. There are plenty of places to eat and an interesting smattering of shops, especially across from the funky Fargo Theatre.

The 1926 Art Deco-style Fargo Theatre advertises art-house movies, live performances and concerts on its landmark marquee. A grand Wurlitzer organ inside adds to the retro allure. Most shows don't sell out the theater's 870 seats, but national television cameras did converge here for Oscar night in 1997, when the darkly funny film *Fargo* was nominated for seven Academy Awards.

In the heart of downtown, the Plains Art Museum occupies a century-old former International Harvester showroom and warehouse. Hailed by critics as a truly innovative repurposing of a historic structure, the museum displays works by regional and national artists.

PHOTOGRAPHS: BOB STEFKO

TRAVEL GUIDE

Where to Start Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau (800/235-7654; fargomoorhead.org).

Worth Noting River Keepers, a nonprofit organization, is working hard to make sure people do more than drive over the Red River. Their pontoon rides are a great way to learn about this important water route and to simply sit back and enjoy the outdoors in the middle of the city. Lindenwood Park along the river also looks wonderful, with lovely campsites near the river's oxbow, plus bike rentals.

What to Do Bonanzaville USA At this 15-acre historic village in West Fargo, visitors can experience life as it was on the huge "bonanza" farms that ruled the prairies in the late 1800s. Period artifacts and furnishings fill more than 40 buildings, including a schoolhouse, train depot and creamery (800/700-5317; bonanzaville.com).

Fargo Theatre A grand movie palace advertises indie films and art-house movies. Now showing: the annual Art Film series through May 2009 (701/239-8385; fargotheatre.org).

Heritage Hjemkomst Center A peaked tent roof provides space for a Viking ship replica, the museum's centerpiece in Moorhead, Minnesota (218/299-5511; hjemkomst-center.com).

Plains Art Museum The collection includes regional, folk and contemporary art (701/232-3821; plainsart.org).

Scheels This huge, two-story flagship store offers rides on a 1953 indoor Ferris wheel as

well as sports-related clothing and gear (701/298-2918; scheelssports.com).

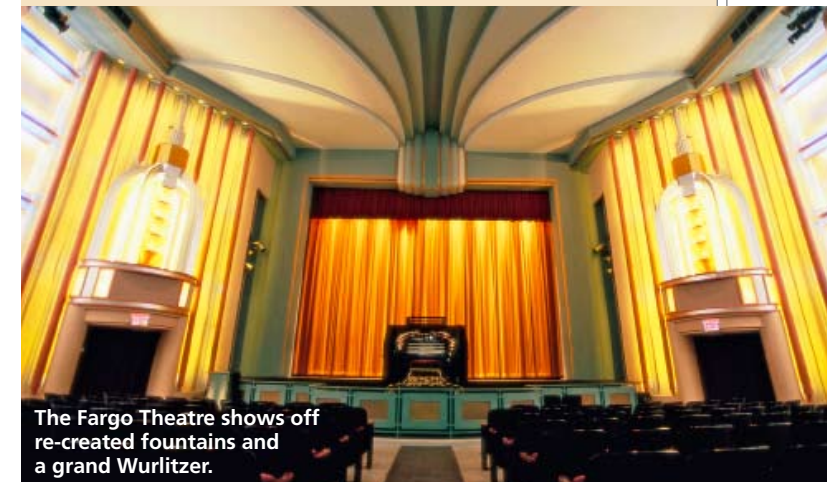
Where to Eat Cafe Aladdin This laid-back spot has a nice offering of specialty grocery food items, too. Try the savory sampler plate with spinach pie (*spanakopita*), falafel, Baba Ghannuj and hummus, stuffed vine leaves, plus fried vegetables. (701/232-4200).

Cafe Muse No filling or even butter is needed to enjoy the still-warm olive bread baked Tuesdays by Green Market Catering for this eatery at the Plains Art Museum. Bread flavors rotate daily (701/232-3821).

Monte's Downtown This classic offers a sophisticated atmosphere with martinis and tempting entrees such as macadamia-crust halibut and scallops wrapped with wild-boar bacon (701/526-0149; montesdowntown.com).

Nichole's Fine Pastry Fine chocolates and artful fruit tarts will sing a siren song, but it's the creative gelatos that offer the ultimate temptation on a sticky summer day (701/232-6430).

Where to Stay Hotel Donaldson The handsome, three-story, corner brick building was built by the Fargo Odd Fellows Lodge in 1894. In 2003, local entrepreneur Karen Stoker transformed the forlorn building into 17 luxurious rooms and added the first-floor HoDo Lounge and Restaurant. Works by local artists appear throughout the hotel, and a cozy, third-floor library features books by regional authors. From \$189 (888/478-8768; hoteldonaldson.com).



The Fargo Theatre shows off re-created fountains and a grand Wurlitzer.

More great destinations across the state.



BOTTINEAU

From this northern community of 2,300, visitors explore the Turtle Mountains. For information: **Bottineau Chamber of Commerce** (800/735-6932; bottineau.com).

What to Do International Peace Garden Straddling the border, the gardens, wilderness, campsites and trails celebrate peace between two neighboring nations (888/432-6733; peacegarden.com).

Turtle Mountain State Scenic Byway A stone's throw from Canada, the 53-mile route (State-43) twists and climbs west from tiny St. Johns past farmsteads, recreation areas, woods and lakes before descending into the foothills for prairie views. Plan to detour four miles north to the International Peace Garden. The lakes and woods of Lake Metigoshe State Park make it a popular stop. You can fish, swim, canoe, bird-watch, hike, camp, join summer naturalist programs and visit the Outdoor Learning Center. West of the park, trails for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking lead into 7,700-acre Turtle Mountain State Forest, North Dakota's largest. Deer and moose roam woods around Strawberry Lake, which has a beach and campground (800/735-6932; turtlemountains.org).

DEVILS LAKE

This northeastern community of 8,000 serves as a base for North Dakota's largest natural lake. For information: **Devils**

Lake Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (800/233-8048; devilslakend.com).

What to Do Devils Lake Amid the wetlands, woods and grasslands of northeastern North Dakota's prairie pothole region, the state's largest natural lake sprawls across Ramsey County (90 miles west of Grand Forks). Fishing ranks as the prime pastime at the 130,000-acre lake, where anglers reel in perch, walleye, pike and bass—often record catches. There's a fishing tournament almost every weekend. **Grahams Island State Park** and **Black Tiger Bay State Recreation Area** provide boaters lake access. You also can camp and hike in the wooded

state park (701/766-4015; ndparks.com). Herds of bison, elk and deer graze at **Sullys Hill National Game Preserve**; some 250 kinds of birds, including bald eagles, have been spotted. Visitors can take a four-mile drive and walk the mile-long nature trail (701/766-4272; fws.gov/refuges). To the south, plan to tour 26 original buildings at Fort Totten State Historic Site. This 1867 military outpost is the largest and best preserved from the Dakota-frontier era.

GRAND FORKS

Grand Forks extends along both sides of the Red River to form a 100,000-strong metro area with East Grand Forks, Minnesota. For information: **Greater Grand Forks Convention and Visitors Bureau** (800/866-4566; visitgrandforks.com).

What to Do North Dakota Museum of Art Browse a respected collection of contemporary art (701/777-4195; ndmoa.com).

Where to Eat Sander's 1907 Local specialties such as king salmon with "prairie sauce" and barbecued buffalo ribs have gained a loyal following for this

downtown restaurant (701/746-8970; sanders1907.com).

Whitey's Cafe and Lounge A downtown mainstay for more than 80 years, with a 1950s Art Deco interior, spacious bar area and a full menu of steaks, seafood, salads and sandwiches (218/773-1831; whiteyscafe.com).

Where to Stay 511 Reeves Located in a historic district within walking distance of downtown, this antiques-filled bed and breakfast occupies a 1901 home. From \$99 (701/775-3585; bbonline.com/nd/511reeves).

Hilton Garden Inn A full-service hotel next door to the University of North Dakota and Engelstad Arena. From \$85 (701/775-6000; grandforksund.stayhgi.com).

MINOT

This town of 35,000 hosts Norsk Hostfest, hailed as the world's largest Scandinavian festival. For information: **Minot Convention and Visitors Bureau** (800/264-2626; visitminot.org).

What to Do Chocolatopia In the historic downtown district, chocoholics will fall in love with the melt-in-your-mouth fudge and turtles (701/838-5516; mychocolatopia.com).

Flower displays and four 100-foot pillars highlight the International Peace Garden near Bottineau.



PHOTOGRAPH: RICK TAYLOR

Home Sweet Home Girlfriends, mothers and daughters will love shopping in this 1899 Victorian home filled with gift baskets, crafts, antiques and collectibles (701/852-5604; ndgifts.com). For salvaged treasures, try **The House Next Door**. Yep, it's next door (701/852-5625).

Norsk Hostfest Set for September 29–October 3, 2009, this festival celebrates Scandinavian foods, crafts and entertainment (701/852-2368; hostfest.com).

Pointe of View Winery The state's first winery specializes in fruit wines (701/839-5505; powinery.com).

Where to Eat 10 North Main In a restored downtown building, this restaurant's upscale menu features elk and bison steaks (701/837-1010; goodfoodnicedrinks.com).

Where to Stay Grand International Inn This nicely remodeled motel has a big indoor pool and a good restaurant. From \$99 (800/735-4493; internationalinn.com).

Inside Ticket

George Catlin, the famed painter who depicted Plains Indians, set up his studio in one of the bastions of Williston's Fort Union, a national historic site. The rectangular gun ports still frame views of the Missouri River and prairie.

WATFORD CITY

This friendly ranching center (population: 1,375) and its redeveloped downtown serve as the northern gateway to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the Maah Daah Hey Trail. For information: **Mackenzie County Visitors Center** (800/701-2804; 4eyes.net).

What to Do Long X Trading Post and Visitor Center

A fascinating local museum tells the stories of the area's oil fields, pioneer women and North Dakota's last lynching. Marvel at the giant 60 million-year-old petrified tree stump, six feet in diameter and weighing 17,000 pounds (800/701-2804; 4eyes.net).

Where to Stay Old School Bed and Breakfast

In a converted 1915 school building in tiny Arnegard (population: 103), this inn, especially the old library, will bring back memories for Boomers. And the redo of high-ceilinged former classrooms added whirlpool tubs and plush beds. From \$85 (701/586-3595; oldschoolbb.com).

Roosevelt Inn and Suites

This nicely decorated, locally owned hotel caters to families (indoor pool and continental breakfast) as well as cyclists and other outdoorsy types with bargain rates and spacious suites. Pet friendly, add an additional \$10 per night. From \$65 (800/887-9170; rooseveltinn.com).

Where to Eat Outlaws Bar and Grill

Start your meal with signature gunpowder shrimp, then order perfectly prepared hand-cut steaks at this Western-themed restaurant (701/842-6859; outlawsbarngill.com).

WILLISTON

Frontier-era historic sites attract visitors to this Missouri River town (population: 15,000) near the Montana state line. For information: **Williston Convention and Visitors Bureau** (800/615-9041; willistonndtourism.com).

What to Do Fort Buford State Historic Site

The commander's Victorian cottage stands alone as if it's keeping vigil, the only remaining witness to July 19, 1881, when a Sioux party crowded into the parlor to watch their great Chief Sitting Bull surrender. Visitors also can tour a replica of the fort's 1870s barracks lined with narrow bunks like ones where soldiers slept in pairs, head to foot. A buffalo coat like the ones the army issued for four men to share hangs on a peg beside the rough wool jackets the soldiers wore winter and summer (701/572-9034; history.nd.gov).

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site

The imposing white house at Fort Union, where the head merchant lived, looks strangely grand against the landscape, like a



BIRDERS COME to Lund's Landing Lodge, 23 miles east of Williston, to follow four bluebird nesting box trails and taste from-scratch Juneberry pie, a tradition made from wild berries that flourish along the area's prairie valleys. Owner Analene Torgerson (above) relishes serving slices to people who remember picking berries as children. "I love to watch that first bite," Analene says. "I see the memories on their faces." From \$65 (701/568-3474; lundslanding.com).

suburban mansion built expressly to outshine its neighbors. That's exactly what it was. Traders built it in 1828 to impress area tribes (701/572-9083; nps.gov/fous/).

Missouri-Yellowstone Confluence Interpretive Center

This new center provides an overview of the rivers and their history; walk along the banks (701/572-9034).

Where to Stay Missouri River Breaks Lodge

Twenty miles northeast of Williston, Darroll and Joanie Myers built this new log lodge with a stunning view of the Missouri River and filled it with their collections and ornate European antiques. Some of the plush rooms have expansive whirlpool tubs. Adjacent cabins offer more solitude. From \$250 (866/859-7778; mrbldge.com).

Reconstructed Fort Union, 25 miles southwest of Williston, was one of the longest-running fur-trading sites.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JASON LINDSEY