

Finger Lakes Study Tour 2016 – Summary

Day 1 – Monday, April 4, 2016

We depart Simcoe in Norfolk County at 5:00 a.m. Hopefully our border crossing at Fort Erie goes smoothly so we can meet all of our hosts on time.

Hammondsport

Hammondsport (population 731) is nestled at the southern tip of Keuka Lake and voted "Coolest Small Town in America" by readers of Budget Travel. It is home to a winery which was designated U.S. Bonded Winery No.1 in 1860. The village is referred to as "The Cradle of Aviation" and is home to The Glenn H. Curtiss Museum, dedicated to the memory of the pioneer aviator. We will learn about how the village has leveraged the New York State Main Street Grant Program, ongoing waterfront revitalization, and the conversion of a historic winery into the Finger Lakes Boating Museum.

ACYC Sunny Point

We will visit Sunny Point, an extension of the Arts Centre of Yates County. Located on Keuka Lake, this unique lakefront property was bequeathed to ACYC from the estate of Dr. Annie Smith. Here, artists have an opportunity to fully experience the inspirational impact of the Finger Lakes. Artists stay at and use the Sunny Point facilities for a week. This lakeside cottage can provide accommodations for up to eight individuals, is offered on an "as available basis" and includes linens and a full kitchen.

Milly's Pantry

In Penn Yan (population 5,200), we will have lunch at Milly's Pantry, a social enterprise that utilizes a café and retail store to raise funds to feed impoverished youth. Penn Yan is a town situated on the eastern "Y" tip of Keuka Lake. The town is County seat for Yates County, which has the largest Old Order Mennonites settlement, still using horse-and-buggy, in the state of New York.

Finger Lakes Economic Development Center

In Penn Yan, we will also meet the CEO of the Finger Lakes Economic Development Center (FLEDC). Recently, FLEDC was selected by the International Economic Development Council as one of seven "highest performing EDOs" in the world. We will learn about some of the projects underway in town and across Yates County, and see progress on some hotel development that was discussed during last year's tour.

Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard

Located near Seneca Lake, Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard winery operation is contained within a 90-year-old scissor-trussed barn. Their winemaking processes pay homage to the ancient winemaking tradition and winemaking history of the founder of the winery, Hermann J. Wiemer, who emigrated to America in the 1960s. The winery crafts wines in very small lots utilizing up to 25 different fermentation tanks to isolate vineyard sections to best showcase the varietal's characteristics. The winery produces about 14,000 cases each year. The winery has been recognized for the last 5 years as one of the world's Top 100 Estates by Wine & Spirits Magazine. Wine Spectator listed the winery on the top 100 Wines in the world in 2010. Critics and connoisseurs consistently mention Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard as the top Riesling producer in the US.

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Shtayburne Farm

Shtayburne Farm is a family-owned working dairy farm with over four generations of experience in dairy farming. The family controls every aspect of their cheese creations – from growing the crops, milking the cows and processing and packaging the cheese. All of their cheese is made with fresh pasteurized milk. The farm sells 15 blends of Cheddar and Monterey Jack, and all aged cheddar is hand waxed. Shtayburne Farm also produces maple syrup, tapping 500 trees.

Corning

Corning (population 11,000) is known as America’s Crystal City due to its connection to Corning Inc. and the glass industry. We will pass by the Corning Museum of Glass and head to the Gaffer District, a vibrant downtown district, where the storefront occupancy rate averages 92%. Market Street boasts 91 upper-story living spaces, with more in development. Corning was named “One of the 15 Most Beautiful Town Squares in America” (Travel & Leisure Magazine, 2013) and “Most Fun Small Town in America” (Rand McNally Best of the Road, 2013). Historic Market Street was named one of the “Top Great Places in America” (American Planning Association, 2013). We will have time to walk this downtown district and explore the shops.

The Three Birds

We will dine at Three Birds Restaurant, where the chef gathers fresh ingredients such as local organic produce, prime and Kobe beef and wild-caught seafood, then assembles them *a la minute*.

Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel

After dinner, we check into the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, a Four-Diamond AAA-rated award-winning hotel located on Seneca Lake.

Rooster Fish Brewing

In the evening, you will tour Rooster Fish Brewing, the local craft brewery that is also one of New York State’s first official farm breweries. Rooster Fish Brewing supports local growers and producers by using locally grown hops, fresh Seneca Lake water, and local organic malts.

Day 2 – Tuesday, April 5, 2016

Watkins Glen Revitalization

We eat breakfast early at Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel. The bus departs at 8:00 a.m. As we leave Watkins Glen (population 1,800), we will learn about redevelopment projects such as Watkins Brewery, which is being renovated into seasonal townhome rentals with boat access and scenic lake views. Watkins Glen is also known for its “Fridays on Franklin” events, an opportunity to sample local wine and craft beer while strolling the streets of the town.

Ithaca

We will visit four interesting places in Ithaca (population 30,000), home of Cornell University. Students have influence on local government here. In 2004, 20-year-old Cornell student Gayraud Townsend was sworn in as alderman of city council. He was the first black male to be elected to the council and was then the youngest African American to be elected to office in the U.S. In 2011, Cornell undergraduate Svante Myrick was elected as the youngest mayor of the City of Ithaca.

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GreenStar Natural Foods Market

GreenStar is a cooperative food market created by its members 45 years ago to successfully operate stores with a triple bottom line: profit, people and the planet as their primary concerns. The organization also established GreenStar Community Projects, a non-profit affiliate helping to create a system of regional food sustainability. The store carries the city's largest selection of local, raw, gluten free, vegan, paleo friendly, organic and "Food Justice Certified" produce.

Ports of New York Winery

Ports of New York is a small artisanal urban winery where *Meleau* (pronounced "mellow") specialty wines are produced. All Vinifera grapes are grown on the east shore of Seneca Lake. These wines belong to a category of fine Port vinification method wines. After the fermentation is stopped with the addition of grape spirit, these wines are aged for a minimum of 4 years. Meleau wines can be aged beyond one's lifetime in a wine cellar and once opened, 6 months recorked.

Ithaca Commons Revitalization

Ithaca Commons is a four-block pedestrian shopping area with over 100 shops, restaurants, street vendors and street entertainers, adjacent to Cornell University and Ithaca College. The Downtown Ithaca Alliance is a not-for-profit organization charged with the revitalization, development, promotion and management of downtown Ithaca. Over the last two years, Ithaca Commons underwent a massive upgrade, and we will learn all about it.

Coltivare

We will enjoy lunch at Coltivare. The front end of this professional restaurant serves locally sourced food and beverages, most of which come from TC3 Farm. Both Coltivare and TC3 Farm are part of the "Farm to Bistro Program" of Tompkins Cortland Community College. The kitchen is managed by professionals, although students have opportunities to intern and job shadow. The majority of space at Coltivare is dedicated to the educational mission of the College. There is a teaching kitchen that mirrors the main kitchen; a teaching amphitheater specially designed for wine education; and space for students to observe daily restaurant functions.

Myer Farm Distillers

Myer Farm Distillers is one of New York State's new "Farm Distillery" businesses, using certified organic grain from the farm (the largest and oldest currently operating organic farm in the Northeast U.S.). Myer Farm Distillers make award-winning vodka, whisky and gin.

Three Brothers Winery

Three Brothers Wineries and Estates, near Geneva, have three wineries and a microbrewery all on one site. Guests can tour the Estate and enjoy each uniquely themed tasting room: Stony Lonesome Wine Cellars ("traditional vinifera wines from dry Riesling to Bourbon-aged Barbara and the ever-popular semi-sweet Chambourcin"), Passion Feet Wine Barn ("refreshingly delicious wines and the famous Wine Slushie"), Bagg Dare Wine Company ("bayou tasting ... accessible by an old dirt walking path ... sweet wine"), and War Horse Brewing Company ("Hard Cider, Custom Ales, Lagers and Seasonal Beers to our *house-made* Sodas"). We only have a few minutes, so pick your poison.

Winewagen Tours at Lake Drum Brewery

Winewagen Tours is a business as small as a Volkswagen bus and as big as the Finger Lakes region, operated by Zach and Laura Cutlip. The Winewagen is a 1971 Volkswagen Westfalia renovated for comfort while keeping the integrity of the aging bus experience. Learn about this successful small business as we visit Lake Drum craft brewery, a new stop in Geneva.

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Geneva Revitalization

We will meet the director of the Office of Neighbourhood Initiatives of the City of Geneva (population 14,000). This office provides place-based revitalization programs focused on neighborhood and community development strategies. Between 2007 and 2015, there was a 60% increase in occupied storefronts here. In 2015, the National Civic League chose Geneva as one of ten cities from across the country to receive its annual All-America City Award. The City has also set up the Geneva Neighborhood Resource Center, the one-stop-shop for information to help residents become more active, involved and connected their city.

Cornell Ag & Food Tech Park a.k.a. “The Technology Farm”

We will tour the main building of the Cornell Agriculture & Food Technology Park, which focuses on incubating food, agriculture and bio-based technology companies. At full build-out, the 72-acre “Technology Farm” will comprise about 375,000 sq. ft. for research, development and light production. Among their tenants: Cheribundi (makes sour cherry juice for consumer and sports team markets), Stony Brook Wholehearted Foods (makes culinary oils from pumpkin and squash seeds), Vintrinsic (software development for wine sector), Empire Cider Company (hard ciders).

New York Wine & Culinary Centre

We will enjoy dinner in Canandaigua (population 10,500) at The New York Wine & Culinary Center. Located on the Canandaigua Lake Pier, The Center showcases NY State’s dynamic agriculture, wine, craft beer and food industries. The Center’s state-of-the-art facility features a hands-on kitchen, demonstration theater, tasting room, private dining room, culinary boutique, and locally-sourced restaurant, the Upstairs Bistro. The Center was a dream in 2002 shared by Constellation Brands, Wegmans Food Markets, Rochester Institute of Technology, and the New York Wine and Grape Foundation. Those groups came together with a common goal – to create a gateway for the people of New York and from around the world to experience New York agriculture and viticulture.

Back to Norfolk County

Depending on our border crossing, we will be back in Norfolk County around 11 p.m. on Day 2.

Register now for this tour at

<http://www.norfolktourism.ca/study-tour>