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2006 Lodging Guide

by Keith E. Morge

Galena, Illinois, has always been an attraction for tours, and The Irish Cottage makes it even easier to choose to stay in the area. With 77 rooms, shops and the town of Galena only miles from your hotel, come in and experience Old-World Ireland flavor and hospitality. GLEN SANDERSON.



Lodging is a major concern on all tours. Regardless of where you plan your tour, you will want to include lodging that offers your ideal combination of price, amenities and location. The suggestions below may offer just the right choice for your next tour.

The Irish Cottage Galena, Illinois

From the moment you enter the lobby of The Irish Cottage, you know there is something very special about this newest addition

to Galena's accommodations. You are not carrying a passport, and you have not endured a grueling trans-Atlantic flight, yet you are instantly convinced you have landed on the Emerald Isle.

The essence of the "ould sod" is evoked at every turn in this unique hotel, from the gentle lilt in the voices at the front desk to the frothy pint of Guinness drawn in Frank O'Dowd's Irish Pub. Everything about this 77-room inn mirrors the homeland of its owners.

Jack Coulter of County Dublin and Basil Conroy of County Kildare came to America in the 1980s and after brief stays in Chicago and New York, the two first cousins settled in Galena to operate three popular area restaurants. A few years ago, Coulter and Conroy fell in love with a plot of land at Galena's east edge, overlooking what reminded them of a magical valley from their youth, County Wicklow's Valley of Glendalough.

Thus was born their dream to bring to Galena a hotel and pub that would be totally

Irish in concept, flavor and design: and “bring it” they did. Portions of the hotel were hand-crafted in Ireland and shipped to Galena for assembly by master Irish craftsmen, and several of the hotel staff members are Irish imports as well. The two entrepreneurs built a contemporary luxury hotel that is as Celtic as it gets in America, and a true labor of love for its owners.

Each beautifully-appointed guest room is named for one of Ireland’s 32 counties and decorated with watercolors of that county by artist Roisin O’Shea herself of County Waterford. All rooms and suites have wonderful amenities and select suites sport valley views and various combinations of fireplaces, double whirlpools, microwaves, refrigerators and wet/dry bars. Nightly rates range from \$89 to \$209 and include breakfast.

If you have ever visited Ireland, Frank O’Dowd’s Irish Pub will bring it all back to you. The menu boasts traditional pub fare such as fish and chips, shepherd’s pie, Irish stew and steamed mussels. To wash it all down, they have a long list of imported brews and spirits, including Irish coffee. Other features of The Irish Cottage include the King Lir indoor pool and fitness center, Kathleen Leonard’s Celtic Gift Shop, the Blarney Stone Banquet Room and the Wild Clover, a full-service day spa.

Located on the east edge of Galena’s National Register Historic District, The Irish



The Quad Cities newest hotel opened its doors in 2005. Since then, Stoney Creek has been hosting groups with 140 rooms in the heart of downtown Moline. Come relax and enjoy a stay in the great North Woods, or as close as you can get without being there. STONEY CREEK INN.

Cottage is a mere five-minute drive from 100-plus specialty shops, galleries, restaurants and historic sites. Bus parking is either in front or in back of the hotel in their parking lot, and complimentary passes are on a group-to-group basis. For reservations and further infor-

mation log onto www.TheIrishCottage.com or phone (866) 284-7474.



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Colonial Resort and Spa

Gananoque, 1000 Islands, Canada

The Colonial Resort and Spa has specialized in offering all-inclusive, multi-night group packages to the motorcoach market for more than 30 years. Every overnight group is personally greeted with a punch-catered welcome upon arrival, and assistance with check-in is provided.

The Colonial Resort and Spa is situated on 10 landscaped acres within the town of Gananoque, in the heart of the Canadian 1,000 Islands. The region has been a tourism mecca for cruising the world-famous 1,000 Islands for more than 100 years. Originally the exclusive playground of the extremely wealthy in the late 1800s, today the islands are visited and enjoyed by many thousands each year. The property specializes in offering group packages directed at the motorcoach tour market. Packages include meals, accommodations, attractions, step-on guides and evening entertainment.

Package duration can last from one to five nights. Famous as an island cruising venue, the region additionally sports a plethora of exciting attractions ideally suited to the group market. Historic forts, blockhouses, museums, mansions and canal systems, wineries, live theater, their new 1,000 Islands Casino, and historic Kingston nominated as one of Canada's most beautiful waterfront cities. Canada's capitol of Ottawa is a must see inclusion on many of their packages with the country's Parliament Building and Governor General's Home, Rideau Hall, topping the list of places to visit on their guided Ottawa city tour. As an established motorcoach venue, the 1,000 Islands and Eastern Ontario have it all.

Colonial Resort and Spa's 10 acres offer a host of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. Comprised of 54 modern rooms all on the ground floor with full amenities, the majority are non-smoking rooms and a number of them are wheelchair accessible. A separate building, the centerpiece of the property, contains the main reception area and gift shop, the Colonial and Highlander dining rooms, and the Harp and Heather Pub. Indoor recreational facilities at Colonial include pool steam room, sauna and whirlpool, gym and spa and the indoor Serenity Garden. The spacious grounds offer strolling paths with traditional gazebos to relax and watch the world go by during your stay. Outdoor activities include pool, shuffleboard and horseshoes, bocce ball, croquet or park benches to just sit and enjoy.

The resort can accommodate two motorcoach groups at one time, and their parking lot has bus access for up to six coaches. Driver and escort are complimentary guests with a minimum of 40 paying passengers. Group rates for all-inclusive group packages start at \$68 per person (U.S. funds). Reservations



One of the most famous roads in American history is Route 66. The Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center in Springfield, Illinois, is the oldest hotel in Illinois along this famous thoroughway. It sports 114 rooms, a memorabilia museum, and closeness to attractions such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. ROUTE 66 HOTEL.

must be made in advance with a deposit of \$400 required. Payment in full is due 30 days prior to your arrival.

Colonial Resort is directly accessible from Highway 401 exit 645 eastbound and exit 648 westbound. For your stay in a great play to play, phone (800) 267-9497 or (613) 382-3226 and find them on the Web at www.1000islandtours.com

Stoney Creek Inn

Moline, Illinois

Nestled next to the Mississippi River, the newest addition to the Quad Cities area lodging market opened its doors on October 31, 2005. Stoney Creek Inn, a Northwood's themed hotel with 140 rooms, is located in downtown Moline, two blocks from John Deere Commons.

The hotel itself is an attraction. The idea that became Stoney Creek Inn first rose from a desire to make sure guests were refreshed when they said goodbye, with the hope that their experience would prompt many return visits. The founders set about creating an atmosphere, attitude and commitment similar to the atmosphere found in our Nation's Northwoods – warm and cozy with a touch of home comfort, plus the fun and peace of mind that comes from relaxing in the wilderness.

Motorcoach groups are welcome at Stoney Creek. In addition to being on the Mississippi River, the hotel is within walking distance of John Deere Pavilion, the Deere Collector's Center and The Mark arena. Within a short drive, the hotel is conveniently located close to Celebration Cruise Lines offering Mississippi River cruises as well as many other attractions and events.

Packages for motorcoach groups include attractive group rates, beginning at \$41.04 per person based on double occupancy. With 20 or more paid guest rooms, escorts are offered complimentary accommodations and drivers are offered a discounted rate on their rooms. All groups are greeted warmly with a welcome reception of punch and cookies. Baggage charges are \$3 per person, and additional amenities at the hotel include an expansive front canopy with plenty of clearance for arriving motorcoaches, an expanded and complimentary continental breakfast with 24-hour coffee, guest laundry facilities, indoor and outdoor pool, Backwater Jack's Saloon, fitness facilities and the Northwoods Gift Shop. The hotel does not feature a restaurant, but can arrange a catered meal on site.

The hotel requires full payment upon departure and advance reservations are required at least 30 days in advance. Ample motorcoach parking is available on site in the parking lot, located on the east side of the hotel off 18th and Second Avenue in Moline. They encourage buses to park on the far east side of the main lot. For more information, contact Stoney Creek Inn's sales manager at (309) 743-0101.

Holiday Inn Everett

Everett, Washington

Welcome to Snohomish County's newest premier hotel. The beautiful new Holiday Inn in downtown Everett, Washington offers 243 well-appointed rooms and suites and is perfect for group tours. Groups can enjoy a delicious meal at the Pine Street Grille or stop by their espresso bar, featuring Fidalgo Bay Coffee.

The hotel also provides a first-class lounge, indoor pool and spa, and free parking in their parking lot on the corner of Pine Street and

Pacific Avenue. Complimentary rooms are based on availability, are offered to groups with 25 or more paid rooms, and may include incentives such as restaurant and lounge coupons. Group reservations and payment for catering services must be made in advance. The Seattle Premium Outlets shopping center is open year-round, and is less than 10 miles from the Holiday Inn, Downtown Everett. The Pine Street Grille is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and offers room service for hotel overnight guests. Pine Street Grill's menu features many specialty items including pasta, fresh seafood, steaks and prime rib.

Upon request a hotel representative will greet your group and provide information on local attractions, restaurants and other items of interest. An outside guide service or member of the local chamber of commerce may be able to provide step-on service. Drop-off and pick-up area for the hotel is on the street in front, or in the designated area in the hotel parking lot. The bus entrance would be the second, or south, entrance of the parking lot on Pine Street. For group bookings, contact the sales department at (425) 259-3905 or visit the Web at www.hieverett.com.

**Route 66 Hotel
and Conference Center**
Springfield, Illinois

Take a nostalgic trip to the past that you will not soon forget. The Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center, located in Springfield, Illinois is the perfect place for the tour that wants to experience a mini-museum with an unusual array of vehicles, signs and articles from the US 66 road-traveling era.

"Built in 1959 as the first Holiday Inn on Route 66, the hotel has gone through numerous changes over the years and has recently gone through a beautiful, all-encompassing renovation," stated Marc Evans, director of sales and marketing.

The Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center has 114 guest rooms including four jacuzzi suites and four executive suites with an outdoor pool and all amenities in the rooms. Many attractions, such as the new Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and other Lincoln historical sites, mean that Springfield is no longer just a day trip. These days, you and your guests can stay as long as you like.

The uniquely designed Route 66 Hotel and Conference Center is a locally owned hotel on historic Illinois Route 66, just off interstates 55/72 at the South Sixth Street exit. Bus parking is in the back parking lot and drop-off and pick-up are at the front door. Driver and escort are always complimentary guests with each full motorcoach of paid rooms. Special rates apply for groups of 10 or more. For


more information visit the Web site, www.rt66hotel.com and take a virtual tour. Phone them at (888) 707-8366.

Alex Johnson Hotel
Rapid City, South Dakota

First open for business in 1928, the Alex Johnson Hotel is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is celebrating its 78th anniversary. The hotel was built by Alex Carlton Johnson, who was vice president of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad at that time. His goal was to build a "Showplace of the West" for passengers traveling on his trains. Alex as also a great friend and admirer of the local people, the Lakota Sioux. Because

of this friendship and respect, he incorporated the Native American culture throughout his property. This is still evident today from the moment you walk into the lobby.

Looking up notice the rafters, hand painted in replica of Native American beadwork. Of note also are the "one of a kind" chandelier that hangs from the rafters, made of Native American war spears, and the plaster Indian heads that support the beams. The fireplace is very unique, made of stone native to the area, with the center stone picked particularly for its likeness of a buffalo's head. The mantel above the fireplace is decorated with brands of the local ranchers, some of which may still be in use today, passed down through generations.



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Stafford's Perry Hotel Petoskey, Michigan

On display in the archives are photos of how the hotel and Rapid City looked years ago. The Alex Johnson encourages tour guests to pick up a "Walking Tour" brochure upon arrival, and explore their interesting property. The hotel's 143 rooms are unique, and while renovations have been made throughout the years, they have been careful to preserve the charm and elegance of days gone by. While at the hotel, enjoy dining at the Landmark Restaurant, specializing in local wild game entrees such as buffalo, pheasant, elk and trout. Stop in at Paddy O'Neill's Pub and Video Lottery Casino for a quick bite or a refreshing beverage, and remember to visit the Alex Mercantile which features the works of many local, Native American artists, a wide selection of jewelry and of course, souvenirs.

There are many different things to see and do within walking distance of the hotel. Numerous shops are located in historical downtown buildings, including everything from arts and crafts and country stores to a Native American art museum and gift shop. The Elks Theatre is directly across the street from the hotel. The theater is an old-fashioned movie theater, complete with balcony seating. The Dahl Fine Arts Museum is just around the corner, and presents many traveling art shows. The Rushmore Plaza Civic Center is only a few blocks walk away through Memorial Park with its lovely rose gardens and Rapid Creek running through it. A bit further is the new Journey Museum, which is a state-of-the-art, hands-on, self-guided tour of the history, romance and evolution of the Black Hills and its people.

The Alex Johnson Hotel is centrally located little more than a scenic hours' drive to attractions such as Mount Rushmore National Park, Deadwood, Crazy Horse Memorial, Custer State Park, and the Black Hills or Badlands and makes an easy "hub and spoke" base. Tour groups are greeted in the lobby with a short history of the hotel while they enjoy complimentary cheese, crackers and punch. Key packets are given to the tour director and guests are encouraged to use the coupons enclosed in them for the various outlets. Motorcoach parking is just one block from the hotel at the corner of Columbus and Sixth Streets.

Rates vary by season, driver's rates are available, and one room is complimentary for every 20 rooms paid. Dinners are available, and driver and escort are complimentary with the group. A deposit of \$1,000 is required 90 days prior to your arrival while the balance is due with your rooming list 30 days prior to your stay. Contact them at (800) 888-2539 or direct at (605) 348-2539. Visit the Alex Johnson Hotel on the Web at www.alexjohnson.com.

Little Traverse Bay, Michigan is often thought of as one of the most beautiful resort areas in the entire world. Their area is the home of the million dollar sunset, miles of sandy beaches, an array of water sports on both Lake Michigan and local inland lakes, excellent summer weather, four distinct seasons with corresponding activities, exclusive shopping and many casinos. As a group tour stop, they do not lack anything.

A wonderful portion of that excellence is Stafford's Perry Hotel in downtown Petoskey, Michigan. This 79-room hotel was built in 1899 as one of 20 original luxury hotels in the area. Stafford's Perry Hotel is the only one of its time still in operation. Experience the grandeur of a by-gone era without giving up the comforts of this modern age. Overlooking Lake Michigan, the Perry Hotel proudly symbolizes the early 1900s when northern Michigan's tourism was just beginning.

Come for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a Sunday brunch at the H.O. Rose Dining Room on site. Renovated in 2003, if you have not seen the H.O. Rose lately, you are missing a lot. The elegance and flair of this dining venue is carried over to the Rose Garden Veranda for seasonal dining in a more casual setting, and the Noggin Room Pub on site offers live entertainment with a casual dining environment. All of these areas have been kept in wonderful presentation and should not be missed during your stay. In addition to in-house dining are Stafford's Weathervane Restaurant in Charlevoix and the Pier Restaurant in Harbor Springs. Both offer exceptional waterfront dining.

All of Stafford's properties are conveniently located around the beautiful Little Traverse Bay area. Their location allows for easy day trips to Macinaw Island, Leelanau Peninsula, Traverse City and the Upper Peninsula. Stafford's Perry Hotel requires 30 days notice of your stay, and the group escort is complimentary while the driver is offered current corporate rates. A \$500 non-refundable deposit is required when your reservation is confirmed, and final payment is due on departure. Buses may park at the Perry Hotel in the parking lot, or across the street in the city parking area. To reserve your time at Perry, phone (800) 737-1899 or visit www.staffords.com.

The Hotels of Colonial Williamsburg Williamsburg, Virginia

Transport your groups to another time and place by traveling just two and one-half hours south of Washington, D.C. Stepping into Colonial Williamsburg's 301-acre historic area makes it easy to imagine what it was like to share the streets of Williamsburg with Thomas

Jefferson, George Washington, James Madison and other founding fathers. Guests become part of a vibrant 18th-century society full of impassioned citizens, talented performers, and limitless possibilities. A Colonial Williamsburg admission ticket is a passport to explore our historic buildings, tour our museums, and see tradespeople ply their skills in a variety of interactive exhibitions.

Embark on a revolutionary adventure and become an active participant in critical moments on America's road to independence, through their "Revolutionary City," a dynamic, two-hour, afternoon event designed to reflect Williamsburg's role in one of America's defining historical periods. Specially discounted length of stay tickets are available for our hotel guests.

When your group stays at the official, on-site Colonial Williamsburg Hotels, they are steps away from everything Colonial Williamsburg has to offer. They can enjoy memorable dining at the nine on-site restaurants, including four historic dining taverns. Close by at the 26 shops of Colonial Williamsburg and more than 40 boutiques, stores, and restaurants at Merchants Square. Imagine, so much for your group to do, within walking distance or a shuttle ride away. Complimentary shuttle service is available to Colonial Williamsburg hotel guests from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

Bus drivers receive a special complimentary pass for admission. Special rates for bus drivers are offered at the Governor's Inn, though the bus driver's name must be indicated on the rooming list to receive the appropriate room rate. The Woodlands Inn and Suites (\$99-\$129 plus tax) and the Williamsburg Lodge (\$179-\$229 plus tax) are also on the property.

Complimentary motorcoach parking is available at the Group Arrivals Building near the visitor center, and at the nearby full-service maintenance facility. The group block rate is applicable for all other Colonial Williamsburg hotels. Complimentary rooms are one per 25 paid rooms. A \$500 initial deposit is required to hold reservations, and there is a 72-hour guarantee policy for confirmation of meals and tickets. Pricing is available by contacting the group sales manager at (888) 293-5627 or visit online at www.ColonialWilliamsburg.com for a truly revolutionary trip. □

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