



JOSHLANTZ

No matter how many places we travel to hunt or fish, the list of dream destinations never seems to get any shorter. We travel when and where we can, but outdoor plans and passions are too often trumped by our thinning wallets or the thickening storylines of our daily lives.

Thank goodness we have some truly exceptional outdoor destinations within a day's drive. Ashland, Wisconsin is one of these places.

I had edited some film from Ashland, but had never actually visited the little Lake Superior city prior to last month's Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers (AGLOW) conference. I spent a week there and soon learned what I'd been missing.

The City of Ashland is an easy and scenic nine-hour drive from Northern Indiana and is best-known, perhaps, for its outstanding fishing.

Ashland is located on Chequamegon Bay (pronounced SHE-WAH-ME-GONE), a shallow arm of Lake Superior protected by the picturesque Apostle Islands. The bay's habitat and forage are

ideal for growing trophy smallmouth bass and walleye, as well as supporting sporty brown trout and other visiting salmonid species.

But Ashland anglers don't live by the bay alone.

Diversity is one of the characteristics of any true angling hotspot. When it comes to fishing, it is certainly good to have a backup plan. And Ashland has them in spades.

Many of the world's best muskie waters are found within an hour's drive of Ashland, so when the wind kicks up on the bay, anglers simply change gears and cast for a different kind of trophy. These same inland lakes and flowages offer exceptional opportunities for bass, walleye pike, sturgeon and panfish as well. Finally, many of the area's streams and rivers support populations of native trout, while others host seasonal runs of Lake Superior steelhead and salmon. Bring your own boat, or book in advance with one of the area's quality fishing guides. You can't go wrong here.

When *Outdoor Life* named Ashland, Wisconsin number 27 in its list of the 200 best towns in America for hunters and fishermen a couple months ago, their decision wasn't based on fishing alone. Their formula took hunting opportunities into consideration as well, along with a variety of factors contributing to an overall high quality-of-life.

Those considering Ashland as a hunting destination will find ample opportunities for ruffed

grouse, woodcock, whitetail deer, wild turkey, waterfowl and black bear on over one million acres of public ground. And should you decide you need them, the Ashland area supports a healthy stable of experienced hunting guides who will help put you on the game.

People often make the difference in our decision-making and the quality of our outdoor experiences, and it is no exaggeration when I say that everyone I met in Ashland was simply fantastic.

The AmericInn Hotel and Conference Center served as our headquarters at the AGLOW conference, and I recommend it to anyone coming to Ashland. The rooms are clean and reasonably priced and they have a nice continental breakfast (including biscuits and gravy), but the view is the main attraction. The AmericInn sits right on the bay, so make sure to request a lakeside room when making your reservation. Bringing your kids along? The AmericInn has an awesome little indoor waterpark that will keep them happy and occupied for hours.

Todd Chingo, general manager at the AmericInn is also a prolific bear hunting guide. Todd can get you those extra pillows you need or put you within bow range of a trophy bruin. Your choice!

If you need some help on the fishing front, renown fishing guide, Capt. Roger LaPenter and his wife Carolyn have their shingle hung out just steps from the AmericInn. Their shop, Anglers All, will provide you with everything you need to make the absolute most of your time on the water. Roger guides on the Chequamegon Bay for trophy smallmouth bass and a variety of inland lakes and flowages for muskies and other species. He is a fly fishing specialist, but uses all manner of tackle.

While I've only just returned from Ashland, I'm already making plans to return. Mary, Maribeth and JoAnn at the Ashland Area Chamber of Commerce helped me make the most of my first visit to the Ashland area and they'll do the same for you. Visit them at www.visitashland.com or call 1-800-284-9484. Reach Roger and Carolyn LaPenter at Anglers All at 715-682-5754 or visit www.anglersallwisconsin.com. For reservations at the AmericInn of Ashland, call 715-682-9950, or visit them online at www.ashlandspashland.com.

Ashland, WI a "Superior" Sporting Destination



Spoiled for life. . . Hobie Cat Company's Fishing Products Manager, Morgan Promnitz, holds a Chequamegon Bay smallmouth bass pushing seven-pounds -- his first smallmouth ever. Photo by Josh Lantz.

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THIS MONTHS ANSWERS FROM PUZZLE ON PAGE 6

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