

GOING **ON** FAITH

THE MAGAZINE FOR FAITH-BASED TRAVEL PLANNERS

VOL. 17 - NO. 2

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2014

PADUCAH PATHWAYS

MISSOURI
LEGENDS & LEGACIES

PEACEFUL
RETREATS

LANDMARK
DESTINATIONS

SOUTHWEST

TRAVEL

GUIDE



THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE?

Could a place like Paducah, Kentucky, really be the center of the universe?

I grew up making frequent trips to Paducah, a modest-size town situated at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee rivers in the southwestern tip of Kentucky. My mother was born and raised in Paducah, and most of her family still lives there, so we visited a lot.

When I was a child, I had a difficult time appreciating Paducah. It seemed at the time to be inhabited mostly by “old people” – or so I thought, because much of our time there was spent visiting Mom’s elderly relatives. One aspect of the trip I always looked forward to, though, was spending an afternoon at Noble Park, where a collection of carnival-style amusement rides offered endless entertainment. Somewhere along the way, however, those rides were removed.

It was during my teen years that my mother developed the odd habit of calling Paducah “the center of the universe.” I was never sure why she started doing that, although I think some of her hometown friends called it that as well. I never paid it much attention; teenage boys, after all, are known to ignore a hefty amount of what their mothers say.

Once I reached adulthood, my trips to Paducah diminished some in frequency. We may visit every other year for Thanksgiving or make a special trip for a family wedding

there. The sad irony is that although I am able to visit Paducah less, I have begun to appreciate Paducah much more.

It started with trips to Starnes, a hole-in-the-wall barbecue joint that is one of the best examples of the region’s distinctive style of hickory-smoked pulled pork. The restaurant has become a de rigeur stop for any trip I make to Paducah and has helped me savor this ancestral hometown in a whole new way.

My growing appreciation for Paducah isn’t just about food, though. The city has been growing, too, and making a name for itself in the arts. As Eliza Myers reports in her feature story “Color and ‘Cue” (page 16), Paducah has developed a thriving arts scene. It is a national leader in quilting and fiber arts, but is also home to dozens of other artists working in different media. That growing arts scene has garnered national attention and international awards, including a designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Craft and Folk Art.

I’m proud of the destination Paducah has become. Even though I’ve never lived in the city, I feel connected to it, and I’m thrilled to see it come into its own.

The bigger question remains, though: Is Paducah the center of the universe?

For me, it’s the center of the barbecue universe. And for many fiber artists and aficionados, it’s the center of the quilting universe.

In a sense, then, it appears that my mother was right. Just don’t tell her you heard me say it.

TRAVEL
SNAPSHOT

COLOR & R

CUE



All photos by Eliza Myers, except where noted

ART & CUISINE

ARE ON THE RISE IN PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

by ELIZA MYERS

The heavenly smell of smoked meat greets me as I walk into bbQ and More. After hearing of Paducah, Kentucky's, famous barbecue scene, I am eager to sample some local barbecue for myself.

The restaurant's menu offers intriguing twists. Instead of the traditional sandwich, I order the barbecue quesadillas and barbecue nachos. The unexpected combinations of flavors prove savory and satisfying. As I eat, I learn that instead of a signature barbecue sauce, Paducah is known for how the meat is cooked: low and slow.

This Paducah restaurant and boutique specializes in smoked meat. The owners host the yearly Barbecue On the River, and owner Susie Coiner described how the nonprofit festival has grown from a small event into a three-day meat extravaganza that raises thousands of dollars for worthy causes. This September will mark its 20th anniversary.

"We call ourselves small-business incubators," says Coiner. "We have local barbecue sauces for sample and sale. We can host dinners or lunches here. We can also customize crafts for groups to make and take home."

Combining barbecue with art? This fun additional surprise is one of many I'll discover in Paducah. The river town revels in the unexpected with a thriving art scene, a preserved history and a strong sense of culture.

DOWN BY THE RIVER

With a full and happy stomach, I explore historic downtown Paducah. Architecturally impressive brick buildings and walkways line the streets to connect me with its past as a bustling river port. Now, eclectic shops — antique stores, jewelers, bakeries — and restaurants fill the 19th-century buildings.

"We're at the hub of several waterways," says Laura Schaumburg, marketing director for Paducah Convention and Visitors Bureau. "Everything kind of points to Paducah. Our river location has really shaped our culture and heritage."

At the Grace Episcopal Church of Paducah, I admire the 1873 church's slate roof and stained-glass windows. The building's interior is even more striking, with a gorgeous dark-wood ceiling and early-20th-century altar tiles.

"The wooden Gothic Revival architecture meant the church to look like a ship turned upside down," says Libby Wade, church rector. "That is because the ship is a symbol of the church."

Wade also points out the 17th-century Bible, the early-20th-century Moravian tiles and other historic aspects of the church.

Later, I pass colorful flood-wall murals depicting important moments in Paducah's history before reaching the historic brick building that houses the River Discovery Center.

"We are at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers in

Paducah's oldest building," says E.J. Abell, director of education for the center. "It was built in 1843 as a bank. We have an excavation exhibit showing the building's root cellar and what pieces found tell about what happened here 150 years ago."

As I walk past a collection of model steamboats, wildlife habitat exhibits and a model depicting how quickly floods form, music stations help set the mood by playing traditional songs once sung by steamboat crews.

I try my hand at captaining a ship at the center's simulator. When I rock the wheel back and forth, the giant screen makes the motion of the water so convincing that I almost forget I am standing on solid ground.

At Shandies, I enjoy a hearty meal in a building full of character before heading to the Carson Center to watch "Million Dollar Quartet." I leave with the music of Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash still playing in my head after the feel-good show.

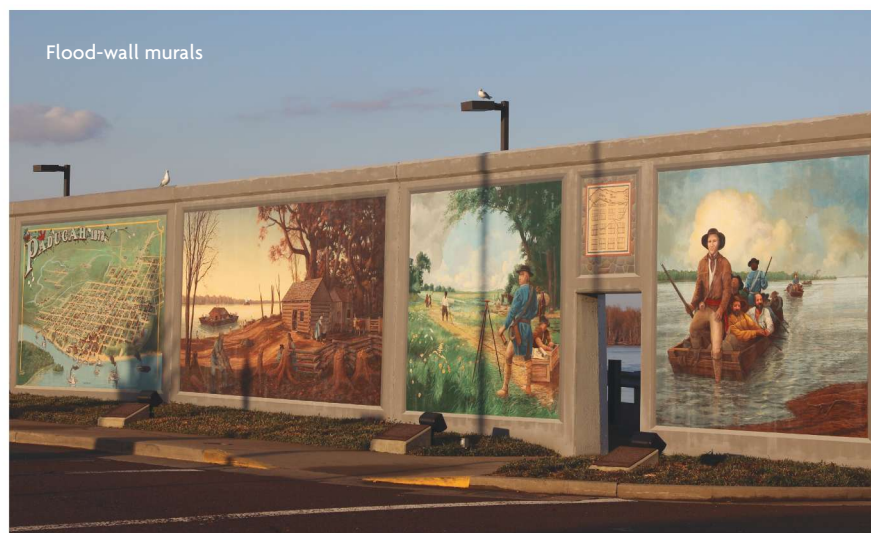
The 1,806-seat performing arts center presents touring Broadway productions, as well as the center's Family Series and faith-based Myre Series.

"For our Myre Series, we go out of our way to make the tickets more affordable than they would normally be," says Brian Laczko, executive director of the Carson Center. "We wanted those who normally didn't have the money to have a way of being here. Our faith-based shows have done rather well thus far."

A YAK TO WELCOME YOU

A giant red yak drew my attention to the Yeiser Art Center in downtown Paducah. The statue plays an important part in the branding of the art center, the purpose of which is to nurture artists, both local and otherwise.

"We help artists make a living," says Joshua White, executive director.



Opposite page, clockwise from top: An art project groups can participate in at Kijisa Housman Studio; "Birds of a Different Color" quilt by Caryl Bryer Fallert; stained-glass window from Grace Episcopal Church of Paducah.

“We teach them how to price their work and sell it. We carry as many Paducah-specific products as we can.”

I browse some of the local artwork in the center’s gift shop, which displays a variety of art mediums, among them clay flowers, jewelry and handmade kites. Inside the gallery, the center hosts art shows throughout the year, such as the Teen Spirit Exhibition, the Yeiser Members’ Show and the Fantastic Fibers Show.

The Fantastic Fibers Show attracts artists and visitors from all over the world, as it takes place during Paducah’s popular Quilt Week in April. The week brings 30,000 international and domestic quilters for contests, lectures and other special events celebrating the modern quilter.

The town’s connection with quilting and other art mediums has earned Paducah the designation of UNESCO Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art, the world’s seventh city with that distinction.

After the Yeiser Art Center, I enter the site that helped garner Paducah so much international quilting attention: the National Quilt Museum. With my scarce knowledge of quilting, I start my tour not sure what to expect. Walking in, I am struck by the remarkably detailed designs the quilters have produced from a canvas of fabric.

“We are a national art museum where everything we have is made out of fiber,” says Frank Bennett, CEO of the museum. “Most of what we have is from professional artists. It is like any other art form, except that quilters have much more patience than any of us ever have.”

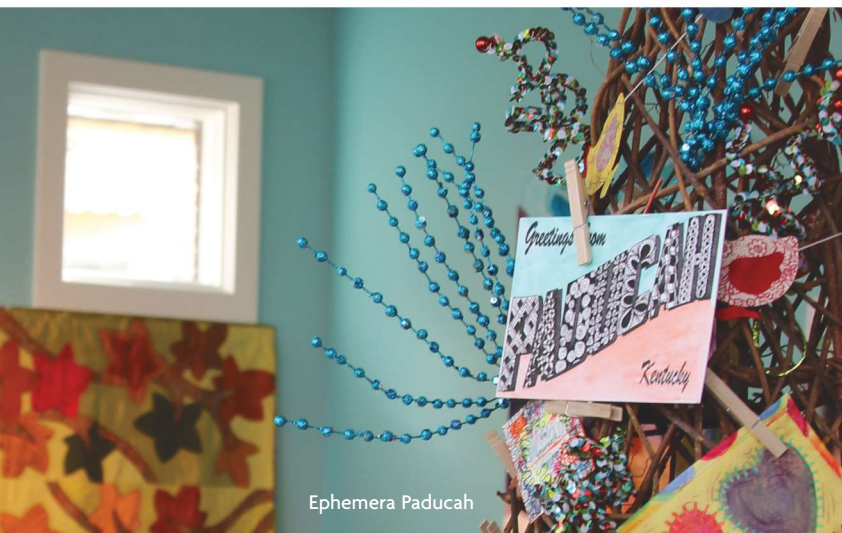
Shocked by their multiple layers and the depth of design, I examine the creations to try to understand how the painting-like quilts were made. Caryl Bryer Fallert’s vibrantly colored works especially draw my eye for their appear-



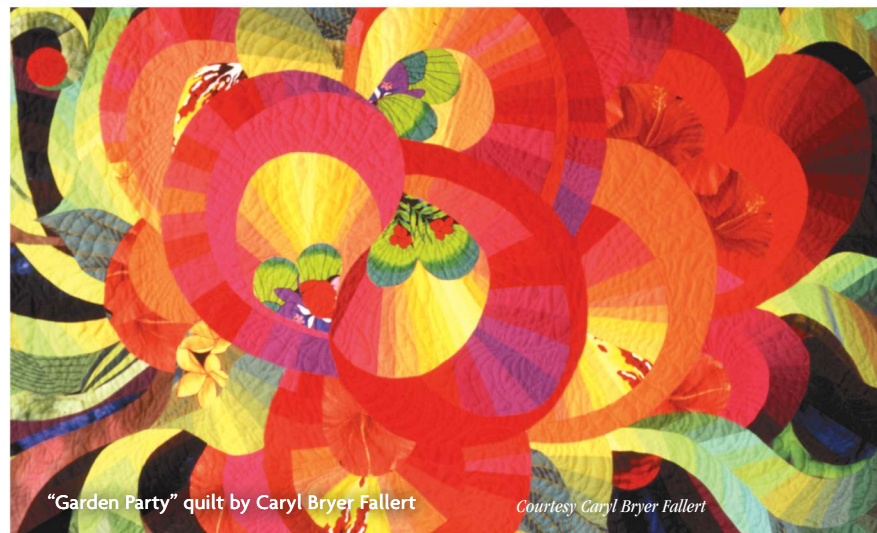
“Corona #2: Solar Eclipse”
quilt by Caryl Bryer Fallert



bbQ and More



Ephemera Paducah



“Garden Party” quilt by Caryl Bryer Fallert

Courtesy: Caryl Bryer Fallert

ance of movement.

"A lot of people come here knowing little about quilting," says Bennett. "In the main galleries, we show different styles and types of quilting to introduce them to the art form. A lot of what make the difference in quilting is the balance. It's very mathematical."

Having left the museum to dine on New Orleans-style seafood at Whaler's Catch, I reflect on the disparity between the typical quilts sewn by grandmothers I had expected and the museum's professional works of art.

ACCESSIBLE ART

With an excited grin, Kijisa Housman ushers me into her art studio where she sells her work and offers art classes.

"My whole mantra is accessible art," says Housman. "That has evolved into more decorative works as well as art classes. I want people to come into the studio and leave feeling good about art. Art is all about connecting."

While I look around in her authentically busy studio space, she recounts how she started as a classically trained artist before morphing into someone passionate about spreading the love of art to others.

Though I have trouble cutting in a straight line, she assures me her pressed photo craft will give me no trouble. Using a copy of a historic photo of downtown Paducah, I rub the image onto another sheet of paper using Citra Solv. The result produces what appears to be a historic sepia-toned postcard of Paducah. I proudly sign my incredibly easy craft.

"There is something that is being created here every day," says Housman. "I think that's the neat part. Groups can come and be part of an artist's space. It's time with an artist."

Kijisa Housman Studios turns out to be only one of many artist studios in Paducah's LowerTown Arts District. The 26-square-block area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. I pass by potters, jewelers and bookbinders on my way to Ephemera.

Unlike the typical art shop, many of Ephemera's products come from local flea markets and yard sales. Kristin Williams, proprietor, scours thrift shops for salvaged items, such as buttons, keys and old photos, to inspire creative art crafts. However, Ephemera's focus is on art classes and workshops.

"It's fun to watch groups creating art," says Williams. "At a certain point, their 6-year-old concentration kicks in, and they get immersed in the process."

Groups of up to 56 people can participate in creating crafts as easy as Christmas gift tags and as intricate as sewing a block of quilt art. Williams has also helped groups craft a sign with their favorite Bible verse.

"My love is mixed media," says Williams. "It has lots of layers with paint and different elements in the work. My goal is to not be pigeon-holed."

No one would accuse Williams of limiting herself, just as Paducah refuses to be a typical Kentucky river town.

RESEARCHING *your* TRIP

PADUCAH CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

800-723-8224

www.paducah.travel

the JOY of faith, and travel



Touring with Globus or Cosmos on a faith-based journey means we take care of all the planning and navigating for you, leaving you to explore the roots of your faith, walk in the footsteps of your spiritual leaders, and have your most cherished beliefs come to life. From Ireland, Italy, Poland, Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal to Greece, Israel and Jordan, you can discover the world's most sacred sites while savoring the unique culture around them. Your only task is to experience the joy in each destination!

POPULAR FEATURED VACATIONS:

GLOBUS®

Journey Through the Holy Land

9 DAYS FROM \$2,376,
land only per person

Tel Aviv · Sea of Galilee ·
Jerusalem

COSMOS®

Holy Land Discovery

9 DAYS FROM \$1,519,
land only per person

Tel Aviv · Haifa · Nazareth ·
Jerusalem

To book a religious vacation you can have faith in,
visit GlobusFaith.com, or call 866.821.2752.



JOURNEYS YOU
CAN BELIEVE IN