

Be a tourist in your own backyard

Ozaukee County through a camera lens

As summer gives way to autumn, many of us are thrilled by the opportunity to wrap our hands around a pumpkin spice latte, pull on a favorite cozy sweater and crunch through the fallen leaves. But none of that can compare to the pure joy outdoor photographers experience in the fall months.

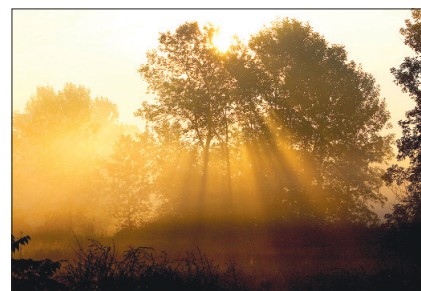
Autumn is far and away the most photogenic of seasons, especially in Wisconsin: the once-monochromatic landscape turns a hundred shades of red, brown and yellow; functional buildings and bridges become chic rustic backdrops; and rising morning mist gives even the most tranquil body of water an otherworldly feel.



breathtaking sunset, turn around and look east as well!" he continues. "Often, people are so focused on photograph-

ing the setting sun that they forget to turn around and see the vibrant colors that same sunset is splashing onto the opposite sky – many great shots come from the east during sunset hour!"

For Mequon photographer Dan Rice, the golden hours are immediately after sunrise or just before sunset – when the filtered light offers a wonderful soft, warm quality and the sun lingers low in



Dan Rice

Morning mist, Saukville



Sarah Fitting

Lion's Den Park, Grafton



Sarah Fitting

Cedar Creek Settlement, Cedarburg

With its abundance of waterways, rural vistas, old bridges, historic buildings and coastal views, Ozaukee County is as alluring as any county a photographer will find. Several local photographers shared with us some of their favorite Ozaukee County spots to shoot as summer yields to fall.

Cedarburg portrait photographer Sarah Fitting relishes a good fall family photo shoot. "Not just because of the beautiful colors we're gifted with," she explains, "although that's part of it. But with fall comes softer lighting that flatters every skin tone, so every photo takes on a warm, golden hue that doesn't require light kits and reflectors. Rustic barns, wood piles and old bridges take on a nostalgic, romantic feel, and falling leaves, acorns and fall flowers keep little hands busy and help families avoid stiff, stilted poses."

Fitting shoots all over the country, but many local families prefer to stay in their hometowns, to lend a personal touch to their photos.

"When choosing locations for a shoot, think about what a certain location means to your family," says Fitting. "Find a place that makes your photo personal and creates more feelings within the images, like an area in town you frequent or the patio of your favorite coffee shop. Sometimes just the hint of a familiar place is enough."

Among her favorite spots in Cedarburg are the bridge, creek and waterfall in Cedar Creek Park; the rustic old buildings of Cedar Creek Settlement and the Ozaukee Interurban Bridge. Port Washington also offers great landmarks for family photos, including the Port Washington harbor and lighthouse, or the textured, storied buildings of the historic downtown.

"Lion's Den Park in Grafton and the beach at Harrington State Park are both personal favorites," says Fitting. "Both lend a coastal feeling to family portraits without having to travel more than a few minutes from home."

Zach Hall of Zach Hall Photography specializes in landscape photography, and agrees with the allure of Lake Michigan. "Harrington Beach State Park should be near the top of the list for any photographer who enjoys water and

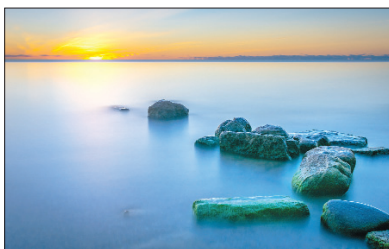
long exposure style photography," he says. "With endless beaches, twisted driftwood and beautiful rocks, a photographer will never run out of new angles to try."

Lion's Den Gorge is another of Hall's favorite spots. "With breathtaking views from atop the bluffs and a lake that sometimes resembles an ocean," says Hall, "the beauty is spectacular."

But Hall is quick to point out that there's more to photography than the iconic views everyone enjoys; in fact, he tries to avoid them.

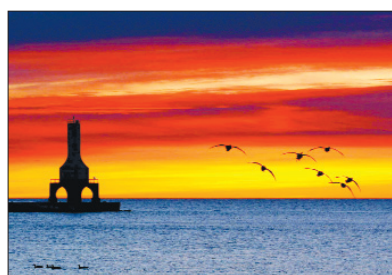
"Don't forget to explore uncharted territories," he advises. "Many times, a great image is staring you straight in the face; you just need to see it from a unique perspective. At Lion's Den, take the many steps down to see the small creek that flows out into Lake Michigan. At Tendick Park in the town of Saukville, the grassy fields, ponds and wooden paths create a landscape that can be very large or very intimate – it's whatever you truly want to make it, which is why it's one of my favorite spots in Ozaukee County."

"If you are fortunate enough to witness a



Zach Hall

Harrington Beach State Park, Belgium



Dan Rice

Sunrise, Port Washington

profoundly romantic vision of a silhouette. "Autumn is a great time to shoot against the sun," he explains. "Backlighting turns colors bright and vibrant, reveals the structures of solid objects and filters light through translucent ones. Look for an uncluttered landscape and position the subject between you and the sun. The dramatic contrast between a light sky and dark subject is always a winner."

While professional photographers rarely venture out without their equipment, most of us travel lightly, but are fortunate to have cell phones capable of taking high quality photos. Here are some tips from the pros for getting the most out of your cell phone camera as you're out and about in Ozaukee County.

"In my opinion, the single most important aspect of a good photo is framing," says Rice. "A well-balanced and well-composed photo draws the viewer in. Rather than centering the subject, offset it to one side or another. And take time to set your focus," he adds. "Tap the screen of your phone to focus the camera on your subject. Some phones even have a portrait mode, which reduces the depth of field so your subject is sharp and the background is soft."

"When you're photographing people," advises Fitting, "make sure the sun falls evenly on everyone. Avoid having someone in the sun and someone in the shade in the same photo, or the mottled light caused by sun coming through the leaves. For the best light, photograph people in open shade with your subjects facing the sun."



Zach Hall

Tendick Park, Saukville

the sky. "Watch the weather," Rice advises. "Cold nights followed by warm days create the ideal conditions for morning mist and fog. Atmospheric conditions like storms on the coasts, or events like volcanoes, can create interesting sunrises and sunsets as far inland as the Midwest. If you pick your spot, set your alarm and give yourself plenty of time to watch and wait, you'll be rewarded with some of the most spectacular sights Mother Nature has to offer."

One of Rice's favorite spots is the Port Washington harbor. "Amazing sunrises and sunsets, tall masted ships, piers, breakwaters, lighthouses, the moon over the water ... how can a photographer go wrong?"

Rice is a self-proclaimed sucker for the fall. "Autumn is a great time to shoot against the sun," he explains. "Backlighting turns colors bright and vibrant, reveals the structures of solid objects and filters light through translucent ones. Look for an uncluttered landscape and position the subject between you and the sun. The dramatic contrast between a light sky and dark subject is always a winner."

"Find a different perspective," says Hall. "Taking photos from a unique, unexpected angle will not only be fun, but it will make for a much more pleasing image that stands out from the rest. Take your time to really embrace a location. If it's large, figure out what smaller details you like about the scene and start there. Once you realize what you like and build your composition around it, the image will come together much more naturally. Have fun and don't be afraid to fail – you learn the most from the mistakes you make!"

For more information about what Ozaukee County has to offer, visit the Ozaukee Tourism website at www.ozaukee-tourism.com.