



From far left: The Minton-Capehart Federal Building; the Florida Tropical House; the First Wayne Street United Methodist Church; the Roofless Church.

ROAD TRIP

MIDWEST MODERN

The Hoosier State is a surprising gold mine for great 20th-century architecture and design. *by Rima Suqi*

THE MIDWEST has a lot to offer architecture fans and, as a journalist who grew up in Chicago, I thought I had a good handle on what was where. That is, until I was asked to create a single-state road trip of greatest hits and surprises. Chicago and the environs were an obvious choice; Wisconsin was another, for all things Frank Lloyd Wright; and Michigan made sense because of the iconic names that were affiliated with Cranbrook and Herman Miller. And yet Indiana won. It's a state that is often overlooked for design. My itinerary started and ended in Chicago and traversed the state in a boot-shaped route.

I began by driving two hours to West Lafayette, home of Purdue University, where I encountered a bright turquoise gate that marked the entrance to Samara,

one of the most complete Frank Lloyd Wright houses in the country. The home, commissioned by a Purdue professor and his wife, dates from 1956. The furnishings, lighting, tableware, linens, even the couple's stationery were designed or specified by Wright himself.

Then on to Indianapolis, through Butler University's campus, which has several modernist buildings, including a library by Minoru Yamasaki, architect of the original World Trade Center towers. It's also home to Clowes Memorial Hall, a theater housed in a Brutalist building by John Johansen and Evans Woolen III, who are credited with introducing Brutalism to this city. Woolen also designed the Minton-Capehart Federal building, which has a mural by Milton Glaser installed along its exterior.

There's so much interesting architecture in Indy that it could easily warrant a dedicated trip. A-listers Deborah Berke, Kevin Roche, and Michael Graves have realized buildings there. Other notable structures are a testament to history, from the Madam Walker Legacy Center (former headquarters of Madam CJ Walker hair-care and beauty products—the subject of a recent Netflix series—and now a cultural and community center) to Crispus Attucks High School (the first public high school for African Americans).

Indianapolis set the tone for what came next—a quick stop in Evansville to see a 550-square-foot house by Wright protégé William Wesley Peters—before continuing on to New Harmony. This small town perched next to the Wabash River is the unlikely location of an interdenominational church designed by Philip Johnson and an athenaeum by Richard Meier. Johnson's 1960 Roofless Church sits on a serene site accessed through gilded-bronze gates by French sculptor Jacques Lipchitz. Across the street is a park, dedicated to theologian Paul Tillich, that was created by Zion & Breen, known for their work on MoMA's sculpture garden. Meier's postmodern 1979 athenaeum stands in contrast at the end of the street.

The next morning I set off for Columbus, considered to be the state's archi-

tectural mecca. The town is an anomaly because it has more than 90 buildings and public artworks by renowned architects and artists, despite the lack of a major university or museum that would normally commission or fund such projects. But Columbus did have J. Irwin Miller, an executive at Cummins, a diesel-engine manufacturer, with a company foundation that funded public buildings provided they were designed by notable architects.

That initiative set off a wave of mid-century development, resulting in a city hall designed by Charles Bassett, a library by I. M. Pei, a fire station by Robert Venturi, and churches by Harry Weese and Eliel Saarinen. There's so much eye candy that, during non-pandemic times, the city offers tours of all this and more (columbus.in.us), including J. Irwin and Xenia Miller's legendary home by architect Eero Saarinen.

The final day of my journey started with a detour to the town of Versailles (pronounced ver-sales). Its large Art Deco-style Tyson Methodist Church was built in 1937 by the cofounder of Walgreens. Then, on to Fort Wayne. It's home to Concordia Theological Seminary, a 191-acre campus that Eero Saarinen laid out like a German village with a church as the focal point. The Arts United Center, Louis Kahn's only building in the Midwest, is a boxy brick structure in the middle of town with a facelike façade that was allegedly not intentional. Two churches in town are worth seeing: the triangular Kramer Chapel and the Brutalist First Wayne Street United Methodist Church.

My final stop was Beverly Shores, a resort town on Lake Michigan. It's the location of five homes purchased by a developer who'd spotted them at the 1933 World's Fair in Chicago. They're all landmarks, located on the same block, and include the bright pink Florida Tropical House and the octagonal House of Tomorrow. It seems Indiana was always looking toward the future.



From left: The Castle Hill Inn in Newport, Rhode Island; cruising the Chesapeake on one of the Inn at Perry Cabin's yachts.

GETAWAYS

EASTERN PROMISES

Easy escapes along the Atlantic coast, from Maryland to Maine.

RHODE ISLAND

Once a private club, the **Preserve** (cabins from \$435; thepreserveri.com) in Richmond, Rhode Island, has opened up its rustic-luxe cabins on 3,500 acres to guests looking for an adult summer-camp vibe. There are fly- and ice-fishing ponds and more than 100 miles of hiking and riding trails. At **Castle Hill Inn** (rooms from \$595; castlehillinn.com), a Newport classic that occupies the 1874 Agassiz Mansion, the room to get is one of the cottages, just steps from Collins Beach. Don't miss socially distant cocktails on the lawn, which offers great views. And for a dose of historic downtown Newport, the **Vanderbilt** (rooms from \$357; aubergeresorts.com) has 33 rooms in its 1909 building, along with a fantastic rooftop bar

overlooking the harbor.

The hotel is one stop on a new bespoke New England driving itinerary from Auberge Resorts, travel company Black Tomato, and Mercedes-Benz that takes guests to two other Auberge hotels: **Mayflower Inn & Spa** in Connecticut and **White Barn Inn & Spa** in Maine (from \$5,890 per person; blacktomato.com). — Hannah Belpert

MARYLAND

On Maryland's Eastern Shore, the **Inn at Perry Cabin** (rooms from \$379; innatperrycabin.com) is a sanctuary in the historic town of St. Michael's. The property is ideally set up for today's travelers, with English-style gardens to stroll and plenty of places to sit by the water's edge, along with a new dining greenhouse with one table, where the

chef's three-course meal showcases regional seafood and produce. It's the perfect segue to the inn's signature experience, a private sunset cruise on the Miles River aboard one of its two sailing yachts. — Leah Rudolfo

MAINE

Maine has become a place of pilgrimage for artisanal wares, like Swans Island Company blankets and Windsor Chair-makers furniture. Base yourself in Camden at the Relais & Châteaux **Camden Harbour Inn** (rooms from \$236; camdenharbourinn.com), where the eclectic and modern interiors contrast beautifully with the traditional 1800s mansion. The inn also allows guests to select artworks from local galleries to live with in their rooms before deciding whether to take them home. — Annie Davidson