



MKElifestyle®

BEST OF GREATER MKE 2020

Milwaukee is in the midst of a season unlike any in our collective memory as we reassess, reconfigure, reaffirm and reinvigorate who we are as a city and a region. So is there really any better time to spotlight and celebrate the good things, great people and places, and amazing experiences this area has to offer?

In the pages that follow, you'll find a host of them, nominated and chosen as the best of the best by you, our readers. People, places and organizations with whom we are thrilled to connect and reconnect as we continue to make a careful, responsible return to the myriad, vibrant lifestyles Milwaukee is known for.

We encourage you to thumb through these pages for an instant uplift. And we congratulate our winners and top vote-getters — and thank each and every one of you who voted.

BY LORI ACKEN AND NICOLE BELL | PHOTOS BY LAURA DIERBECK

FOOD & DRINK



Best Old Fashioned
The Stillery

BEST BRUNCH

BLUE'S EGG

Though its Shorewood location shuttered in April to make room for a new concept, Black Shoe Hospitality's revered breakfast and brunch spot on 76th Street in Wauwatosa still satisfies with high-quality, wholesome, regionally sourced options for every a.m. appetite — loads of which are also available for curbside takeout.

RUNNERS-UP:

Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro
Uncle Wolfie's Breakfast Tavern

BEST SPLURGE

HARBOR HOUSE

Whether it's a celebration or a night to indulge, Harbor House offers New England-style seafood right here in Milwaukee. Take in the views of Milwaukee Art Museum and Lake Michigan, and soak in the sun on the seasonal outdoor patio while enjoying fresh fish, oysters and an array of other seafood and specialty dishes.

RUNNERS-UP:

Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro
Eddie Martini's

BEST CONFECTIONARY OR CANDY SHOP

AMY'S CANDY KITCHEN

If you're able to make an excursion to Cedarburg without popping into Amy's for an eat-it-on-the-spot gourmet caramel apple, you have far more willpower than we do. And if you're looking for your first excuse to visit the 'burg, look no further than these legendary, award-winning beauties, plus other drool-worthy candies made onsite. You can also buy them online.

RUNNERS-UP:

Indulgence Chocolatiers
Kehr's Candies

BEST OLD FASHIONED

THE STILLERY

Patrons who head to Richfield's The Stillery for a taste of Wisconsin's favorite cocktail are pleased to find four different takes on the classic drink. And if you'd prefer to sip one from the comfort of your own home, The Stillery also offers to-go kits featuring each



of the old fashioned, plus a blackberry mule, the fruity Raspberry Deliciousness and even a kiddie cocktail for your mini mixologists.

RUNNERS-UP:

Bryant's Cocktail Lounge
Camp Bar

BEST TAPROOM

THIRD SPACE BREWING

Just west of the Historic Third Ward in the flourishing Menomonee Valley, Third Space offers both a place to comfortably gather and a rotating roster of expertly crafted, inventively named and truly delicious brews to please the most discriminating beer drinker. Get your favorites to go with curbside pickup too.

RUNNERS-UP:

City Lights Brewing Co.
Black Husky Brewing

BEST HAPPY HOUR

MASON STREET GRILL

Drop by this upscale Milwaukee favorite weekdays between 4-7 p.m. for its popular happy hour. Offering a huge selection of beer and wine, elegant specialty cocktails and delicious bar snacks, Mason Street Grill is the perfect spot for after-work drinks with coworkers or a meetup with your family or friends.

RUNNERS-UP:

Art*Bar
JB's on 41



BEST BEER GARDEN

ESTABROOK BEER GARDEN

Not just Milwaukee's first post-Prohibition outdoor beer garden, but America's, too, Estabrook — on the banks of the Milwaukee River and centrally located to Milwaukee's North Shore suburbs — draws brew fans from all over for its authentic German beers and beer-garden atmosphere. Order a platter-size pretzel to help soak up the barley and hops.

RUNNERS-UP:

Whitnall Beer Garden
South Shore Terrace Kitchen
& Beer Garden

BEST BAKERY

SIMMA'S BAKERY

Dessert lovers enjoy perusing the sweet treats in the cases of Simma's. This Wauwatosa-based bakery offers an array of confections to satisfy any sweet tooth, from cupcakes and cheesecakes to cookies and pastries, and much more. And if you're celebrating a special occasion, Simma's creates cakes as beautiful as they are delicious for all occasions.

RUNNERS-UP:

Peter Sciortino Bakery
Cranky Al's

BEST FOOD TRUCK

THAT TACO GUY

Food trucks aren't just a downtown MKE thing, as proven by Eli and Andrea Acosta's North Shore favorite. That Taco Guy features authentic eats from Eli's Puerto Rican heritage and Andrea's Mexican heritage, plus a take-home treat called Texas Candy, a spicy-sweet candied jalapeno relish from a family recipe that could become an obsession for fans of bold flavor.

RUNNERS-UP:

Gouda Girls
Meat on the Street

BEST DELI

BENJI'S DELI & RESTAURANT

Carnivores flock to Benji's Deli & Restaurant for their famed corned beef, which stars in Reubens, omelets, hash and more. But with such a vast menu of true deli favorites, you can't go wrong with any of the comforting options. With two locations in Fox Point and Shorewood, Benji's Deli & Restaurant offers dine-in, carryout and catering.

RUNNERS-UP:

Sendik's Food Market
Larry's Market



Best Food Truck
That Taco Guy

BEST FRENCH FRIES

CAFÉ HOLLANDER

Whether you're the sort of fry obsessive who believes there's no such thing as a bad French fry, or the kind who believes that fries are an art form no cardboard container can do justice, a paper cone of Café Hollander's famous frites with a side of their sophisticated sauces is a sure bet. COVID have you wary of sharing? Then now's the perfect time to secure an order all for yourself.

RUNNERS-UP:

Culver's
North Avenue Grill

BEST APPETIZERS

ELSA'S ON THE PARK

You can't go wrong with anything on the menu at Elsa's On The Park, but regulars know that gathering for drinks and apps at this downtown favorite sets the stage for a fine evening out. Or if you're dining in, order scrumptious starters — from flatbread cheese crisps and shrimp cocktail to nachos and grilled vegetables — to start your meal, or combine a few to make your own entrée.

RUNNERS-UP:

DanDan
Snack Boys

BEST SPORTS BAR

STENY'S

There's a good reason that this Walker's Point institution, just north of the Allen Bradley clock tower, is the stuff of Milwaukee legend. As much fun to visit now as it was when you were a carefree

Best Lake
Country Dining
Palmer's
Steakhouse



college kid, this quintessential Brew City tavern features more than a dozen hi-def screens (including a massive 10-footer), plus game-time specials, free popcorn, shuffleboard, a pressure-free trivia night and shuttles to sports and entertainment events throughout the city.

RUNNERS-UP:

Endter's Sports Grill
Broken Bat Brewing Company

BEST STEAK

FIVE O'CLOCK STEAKHOUSE

Family owned since 1946, Five O'Clock Steakhouse offers mouthwatering steaks and seafood, and a wine and cocktail list tailored to its luxurious menu. After dinner, enjoy a nightcap — and, on Fridays, live music — in the restaurant's historic Alley Cat Lounge.

RUNNERS-UP:

Mr. B's — A Bartolotta Steakhouse
Farmstead

BEST LAKE COUNTRY DINING

PALMER'S STEAKHOUSE

Is it just us, or does a steak or some surf-and-turf just seem to taste better in a true Wisconsin supper club atmosphere? Palmer's owner and cook Jerry Arenas has been in the industry since he was a teen and knows how to keep diners from Lake Country and beyond coming back for more of his comfortably upscale atmosphere and comfortingly traditional menu.

RUNNERS-UP:

Golden Mast Inn
Artisan 179

ARTS & CULTURE

BEST PERFORMING ARTS VENUE

MARCUS PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

You could almost hear local theater lovers' collective sigh of relief that Lin-Manuel Miranda's beloved "Hamilton" made its Milwaukee debut before COVID-19 descended. Though the 2020-2021 performance season remains in limbo, the Marcus Center's ambitious new CEO Kendra Whitlock Ingram and an ongoing facilities refresh keep it poised for an impressive new chapter.

RUNNERS-UP:

Milwaukee Repertory Theater
Broadway Theater Center

BEST PAINT AND SIP STUDIO

GLAZE

Thiensville's glaze is the perfect spot for a fun afternoon of crafting, no matter your skill level. Whether you're painting pottery or wine glasses, fusing glass, or working with raw clay, glaze is great for birthdays, girls' nights, date night, a bridal or baby shower, or just a fun, creative afternoon. Top it off with a scoop of ice cream or other tasty snacks at Purple Frog, housed in glaze's front room.

RUNNERS-UP:

Splash Studio
SIP

BEST FEST, BEST LIVE MUSIC VENUE

SUMMERFEST (DUAL WINNER)

A moment of silence for Milwaukee's world-renowned music festival, which was cancelled for the first time in its 53-year history as crowd safety and suspended touring schedules made even a modified fest impossible. Meantime, it's probably a good bet that those annoying friends who wax philosophical about taking a year or two off from 'festing are rethinking that one extra-hard right now.

RUNNERS-UP FOR BEST FEST:

Irish Fest
Festa Italiana

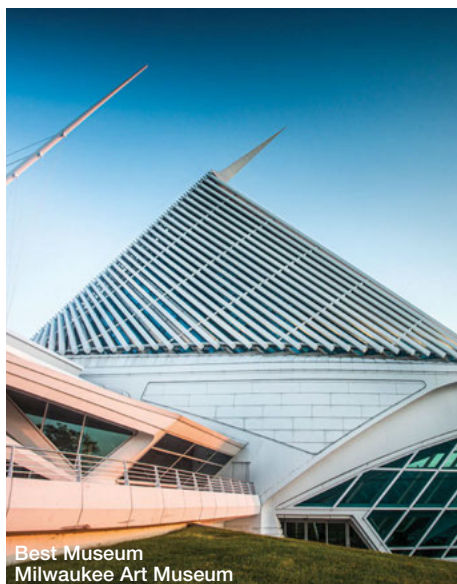
RUNNERS-UP FOR BEST LIVE MUSIC VENUE:

Turner Hall Ballroom
Back Room @ Colectivo

BEST MUSEUM

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Whether you're taking in the Calatrava addition's massive sculptural wings and stunning architecture while strolling the lakefront or spending the day immersing



Best Museum
Milwaukee Art Museum



BEST BAND OR MUSICIAN

PAT MCCURDY

Hey Paddy, play a song for me! Since 1977, singer/songwriter Pat McCurdy has traveled the Midwest with his guitar and sometimes a band, delighting fans with his feel-good, party-time tunes and rollicking, interactive sets. Check his schedule at patmccurdy.com to see if he's coming to a venue near you or streaming a virtual concert.

RUNNERS-UP:

Jayne Taylor
Platinum

BEST DANCE CLUB

VICTOR'S ON VAN BUREN

While this Lower East Side fixture is perhaps not for everyone, if you want a tried-and-true party spot with DJs, dancing and no intimidating hipness quotient, you really can't beat Victor's. The atmosphere

is retro, the crowd spans generations and the food is tasty if you want to fill up before you toss down some drinks and get your groove on.

RUNNERS-UP:

Mad Planet
Lucid Light Lounge

BEST THEATER GROUP

MILWAUKEE REPERTORY THEATER

Long a source of engrossing entertainment, education and civil engagement via its spectacular productions, Milwaukee Repertory Theater will launch its planned, 11-show 2020-21 season in late October. Given the unpredictability of the pandemic, the schedule and productions are subject to change, but Rep fans know well that a world-class, thought-provoking evening is always in store.

RUNNERS-UP:

First Stage Children's Theater
Skylight Music Theater



Best Theater Group
Milwaukee Repertory Theater's "Hedwig
and the Angry Inch" (January 28 – March 8,
2020.) L-R: Matt Rodin, Bethany Thomas and
Patrick Morrow. / Photo by Michael Brosilow.



yourself in world-class art, the Milwaukee Art Museum is an art lover's paradise inside and out. And though they're virtual right now, MAM is also home to inspired events and gatherings, including Art In Bloom, MAM After Dark and Lakefront Festival of Art.

RUNNERS-UP:

Discovery World Science and Technology Museum
Harley-Davidson Museum

BEST OUTDOOR MUSIC VENUE OR SERIES

CEDARBURG SUMMER SOUNDS

Year after year, music lovers spend Friday nights at Cedarburg Summer Sounds, enjoying live music and warm summer evenings with family and friends. Though the 2020 season has fallen victim to the pandemic, the organization is keeping the spirit of Summer Sounds alive with the Make MKE Cozy blanket campaign to help the homeless community, and the popular Neighbor of the Night program. Find out more on their Facebook page.

RUNNERS-UP:

Chill on the Hill
Washington Park Wednesdays

BEST HISTORIC SITE

OLD WORLD WISCONSIN

Hard to imagine a kid in Southeast Wisconsin who didn't make at least one field trip to Eagle to get their Laura Ingalls or Almanzo Wilder on and learn the ways of Wisconsin's 19th century settlers. And then chaperone their own kids' excursion to do the same a generation later. Delightfully rustic and hands-on, this living museum is a fine, tech-free escape for all ages — and a unique Christmas destination too.

RUNNERS-UP:

Pabst Mansion
Villa Terrace

BEST OPEN MIC NIGHT

CEDARBURG CULTURAL CENTER — BLUEBURG CAFE

Cedarburg Cultural Center's Blueburg Cafe is a favored venue for many artists in the area and patrons eager to support local live music. Though COVID put a hold on shared spaces and gatherings, the show must go on, so artists have since shifted to playing virtual "Live From the Living Room" shows to keep the music playing.

RUNNERS-UP:

The Cheel — Summer Sundays
Rounding Third Bar & Grill

BEST RADIO STATION

88NINE RADIO MILWAUKEE

Equal parts radio station and community advocate — and 100 percent Milwaukee — the nonprofit, listener- and donor-supported 88Nine is an MKE must-know regardless of your musical taste. Though its broadcasts are reliable one-stop shopping for great new music, its website is also home to inspiring Milwaukee-centric stories, community news and the latest information on how to be a more involved citizen.

RUNNERS-UP:

WKLH 96.5
News/Talk WISN 1130



Photo courtesy of Cedarburg Summer Sounds



Best Historic Site
Old World Wisconsin

Photo courtesy of Old World Wisconsin



Best Radio Station
88Nine Radio Milwaukee

Photo courtesy of 88Nine Radio

SHOPPING & STYLE

BEST WOMEN'S BOUTIQUE

FAYE'S

For nearly 30 years, Faye's has been helping women refresh and rethink their wardrobes and count themselves among the most confident, fashionable women in the Milwaukee area and beyond. With two locations — in Mequon's East Towne Square Mall and Brookfield's Galleria West — and a passionate staff, Faye's brings distinctive trends to Cream City fashionistas.

RUNNERS-UP:

Lela Boutique
SHOP

BEST MEN'S SHOP

HARLEYS CO.

Truly local menswear stores featuring big-city labels and fashion-forward styles that still speak to Milwaukee's upscale, laid-back vibe are increasingly rare. Having recently moved from its longtime Shorewood location to the more centralized Historic Third Ward, Harleys still proudly offers the same personalized service and amenities, along with quality clothing, shoes and accessories that generations of stylish MKE men have come to count on.

RUNNERS-UP:

Mark Berman & Son
MILWORKS

BEST SHOE STORE

STAN'S FIT FOR YOUR FEET

First opened in 1950 as Stan's Bootery, this beloved, family-owned shoe store offers a long list of quality, comfortable shoe brands for men, women and children, plus attentive customer service you won't find in the big box stores, ensuring that you walk out with shoes that look, fit and

feel terrific. The store has since been rebranded to Stan's Fit For Your Feet and expanded to three locations in Brookfield, Glendale and Greenfield.

RUNNERS-UP:

Allen Edmonds
Goody Two Shooz (Now Closed)

BEST PLACE FOR ACCESSORIES

ACCESS BOUTIQUE

Its Cedarburg location is no more, but accessory obsessives can still find the perfect jewelry, handbags, scarves and more at Access' store on Broadway St. in the Historic Third Ward. Best of all, Access accessories are an affordable and stylish giant step up from big-box, cookie-cutter costume jewelry, so you can get the perfect add-ons for every outfit that will last this season and beyond.

RUNNERS-UP:

The Last Detail Ltd.
Mark Berman & Son

BEST JEWELRY DESIGNER

A TRIO JEWELRY

Named for their multipronged mission of custom jewelry design, manufacturing and repair, and artistic expression, Third Ward jewelry design studio A Trio Jewelry specializes in creating jaw-dropping one-of-a-kind pieces, as well as in-house collections and an assortment of vintage jewelry. Fifth-generation jewelry designer Amy Bern and her husband Noah are dedicated to a creative and fun design process and making their customers feel like family.

RUNNERS-UP:

East Towne Jewelers
Birds Tail



Best Locally-owned Bookstore
Boswell Book Company

BEST SPA AND BEST SALON

NEROLI SALON & SPA (DUAL WINNER)

With six locations throughout the region, and nearly 30 years in the business of looking and feeling good, Neroli is the pamperer of choice for generations of Milwaukee-area men and women. Featuring Aveda products and a nature-based, holistic approach to mind-body wellness, Neroli turns luxury into a self-care necessity.

RUNNERS-UP FOR BEST SPA:

Pfister Well Spa + Salon
Anton's Salon & Medspa

RUNNERS-UP FOR BEST SALON:

Spargo Salon & Spa
Cutting Group

BEST LOCALLY-OWNED BOOKSTORE

BOSWELL BOOK COMPANY

One silver lining of the COVID quarantine has been the additional time for bibliophiles to indulge in their favorite pastime. Throughout the pandemic, Boswell Book Company has offered curbside pickup and shipping to keep book lovers supplied, and though book clubs and author events

Best Jewelry Designer
A Trio Jewelry



Best Bridal Boutique
Miss Ruby Boutique



have been canceled, some may be revived as virtual events, so stay up to date at boswellbooks.com.

RUNNERS-UP:
Downtown Books
Little Read Book

BEST MALL

MAYFAIR MALL

Once a destination not just for its store selection, but its fish-filled indoor stream and a giant ice rink that let mom and dad shop while the kids happily skated, the 62-year-old Mayfair's central-to-everything location, expansive AMC movie theater and the state's only Nordstrom, Crate & Barrel and The Container Store garner it the highest sales of any Wisconsin

mall, according to Shopping Center Business magazine.

RUNNERS-UP:
The Corners of Brookfield
Brookfield Square

BEST EYEWEAR SHOP

WARBY PARKER THIRD WARD

From reading glasses to sunglasses and every prescription in between, the walls of Warby Parker in the Historic Third Ward are full of great, affordable choices, making it easy to find the perfect pair for you. To make it even easier in uncertain times, head to warbyparker.com to pick out your top five frames and have them sent to your house to try on in the comfort of your home.

RUNNERS-UP:
Eye Candy & Eye Candy Kids
Optix on Downer

BEST FASHION DESIGNER

ELENA VELEZ

Dividing her time between Brew City and the Big Apple, Velez honed her skills at Manhattan's Parsons School of Design and debuted her 2018 thesis collection at both New York Fashion Week and London Fashion Week. True to her Milwaukee roots, Velez — who boasts a ship captain mom — designs for women who prefer a functional and powerful approach to femininity, including pop stars like Halsey and Arianna Grande.

RUNNERS-UP:
Lupita Murillo
Cindy Hein

BEST SPECIAL OCCASION WEAR

GIGI MKE BOUTIQUE

Whether it's a wedding, a reunion or you just want to all get dressed up and hit the town, explore the racks of stunning formal and evening attire from premier designers — plus jewelry and accessories to complete the look — at Gigi MKE Boutique in Walker's Point. Their welcoming staff makes finding the perfect formal attire for your event and personality an exciting experience.

RUNNERS-UP:
The Brass Rooster Hat Co.
The Hen House

BEST BRIDAL BOUTIQUE

MISS RUBY BOUTIQUE

Forget what you might think you know about wedding dress shopping — fluorescent lighting, impersonal service, communal fitting rooms and racks and racks of cookie-cutter frocks. Miss Ruby offers an intimate, appointment-only experience, ensuring a truly personalized, unrushed excursion centered on an appealingly priced, well-curated selection of gowns, bridesmaid dresses and accessories.

RUNNERS-UP:
Gigi MKE Boutique
Bliss Bridal



SERVICES



Best Lighting
BBC Lighting

BEST LIGHTING

BBC LIGHTING

Lighting can enhance a room's overall design and even serve as a focal point, which is why homeowners and renovators alike enjoy perusing the BBC Lighting showroom, open by appointment only as of press time. From sconces to chandeliers, lamps to outdoor lighting and every lighting need in between, BBC has the right lighting option for your home and your style.

RUNNERS-UP:

Fringe Home Furnishings
McNabb & Risley Fine Furniture and Interior Design

BEST FLOORING

KERNS CARPET ONE FLOOR & HOME

Milwaukee's hometown flooring source has been in business since 1935, amassing a wealth of product and installation expertise that is second to none. Factor in convenient locations in Mequon and Brookfield, top-quality brands, a true family-business atmosphere and a thorough understanding of the region's wide-ranging home styles and homeowner tastes, and you have a modern shopping experience with old-fashioned attention to customer needs.

RUNNERS-UP:

Carpet Town
Nonn's Kitchen Bath & Flooring

BEST HOME ACCESSORIES BOUTIQUE, BEST FURNITURE STORE

BILTRITE FURNITURE-LEATHER-MATTRESSES (DUAL WINNER)

Proudly serving the Milwaukee area for over 90 years, family-owned and operated BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattresses understands the wants and needs of their loyal and growing clientele and happily assists them find the perfect furniture and most comfortable mattress. With the help of a dedicated and well-trained staff and a huge selection of affordable, durable and custom-created furniture, you're sure to just find what you need to make your house your home.

HOME ACCESSORIES BOUTIQUE RUNNERS-UP:

McNabb & Risley Fine Furniture and Interior Design
Fringe Home Furnishings

FURNITURE STORE RUNNERS-UP:

Colder's
McNabb & Risley Fine Furniture and Interior Design

BEST HOME CONSTRUCTION

VICTORY HOMES OF WISCONSIN

If quarantine has left you intent on an upgrade, Victory Homes of Wisconsin — part of a multipronged homebuilding and buying parent company that serves Waukesha, Milwaukee,

Washington and Ozaukee counties — has offered award-winning, custom homebuilding with a personalized touch for more than 15 years.

RUNNERS-UP:

Perthel Homes
Demlang Builders

BEST REMODELER

VICTORY RENOVATIONS

From a room-by-room renovation to a complete home remodel, homeowners are in good hands with Victory Renovations. Part of The Victory Companies, Victory Renovations' devoted staff can transform any home or room to help people fall in love with their living spaces all over again.

RUNNERS-UP:

Timber Innovations
Design Tech Remodeling

BEST INTERIOR DESIGN SERVICE

FRINGE HOME FURNISHINGS

Know what you like in home décor, but don't know how to bring your vision to life? Or do you feel like a refresh is in order, but you have no idea where to even begin? With more than 50 years of combined, residential interior design experience, Whitefish Bay's Fringe is a trusted source throughout metro Milwaukee for crafting quality rooms that cater to homeowners' unique tastes over trends.

RUNNERS-UP:

McNabb & Risley Fine Furniture and Interior Design
Deep River Partners

Best Flooring
Kerns Carpet One
Floor & Home





BEST EVENT SPACE

BEST PLACE AT THE HISTORIC PABST BREWERY

Located in the heart of the former Pabst Brewery, Best Place was restored to its former glory after businessman and beer lover Jim Haertel purchased it in 2001. This charming and historic building is a great gathering spot, and a nostalgic step back through time that's perfect for a classic wedding, reunion, party or other special event.

RUNNERS-UP:

The Cooperage
St. James 1868

BEST CATERING

BARTOLOTTA CATERING & EVENTS

No matter the size or swank of your gathering, Bartolotta Catering & Events will ensure that your guests are still talking about their VIP treatment and the memorable tastes long after they've gone home. Bartolotta also has you covered if you need the perfect venue, too, courtesy of nearly three decades in the local hospitality business.

RUNNERS-UP:

Larry's Market
Tall Guy and a Grill Catering

BEST PET BOARDING

CENTRAL BARK DOGGY DAY CARE

It can be hard to find the perfect person to care for your furry family member when you head to work or out of town. But even the pickiest dog parents trust the devoted

staff at Central Bark Doggy Day Care. With locations all across Wisconsin, Central Bark offers day care, pet boarding and a pet salon as well as training and dog walking too.

RUNNERS-UP:

Countryair Kennels
Barkin' Up Hickory

BEST SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

SAINT JOHN'S ON THE LAKE

Offering lakeside living, housing options for every need and lifestyle, and plenty of enrichment opportunities — plus a walkable location that puts Lake Michigan and the East Side's amenities just steps away, Saint John's has helped seniors thrive for more than 150 years.

RUNNERS-UP:

Heritage Senior Living
Ovation Communities

BEST TRAVEL AGENCY

FOX WORLD TRAVEL

For business or for pleasure, Fox World Travel makes it easy and exciting to plan your next adventure. And though COVID has made getting away more challenging, Fox agents are up-to-date on all travel restrictions and are ready to help adventurers resume their passion for travel safely and comfortably.

RUNNERS-UP:

Bayside Travel
Lisa Hoppe Travel Consulting

BEST NONPROFIT

URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER

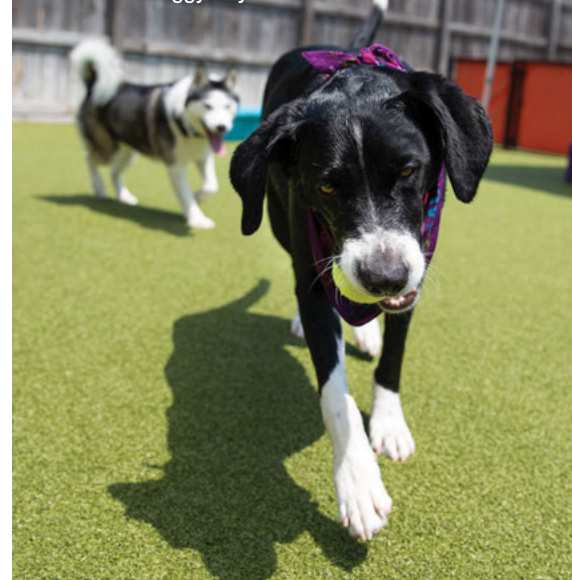
The pandemic's restrictions left many of us newly appreciative of nature — in our own backyards and the parks, trails and lakefront expanses that allow us to safely escape our homes and embrace the change of seasons. Urban Ecology Center's three branches teach the joy of the outdoors and a lifelong appreciation for creating and sustaining natural spaces to children who live in urban settings.

RUNNERS-UP:

Literacy Services of Wisconsin
Ignite the Spirit Fund Milwaukee



Best Pet Boarding
Central Bark Doggy Day Care



Best Event Space
Best Place at the Historic
Pabst Brewery



Photo courtesy of Best Place at the Historic Pabst Brewery

PEOPLE

BEST ATTORNEY

MACGILLIS WIEMER LLC

Their person-to-person approach to providing clients with legal guidance means MacGillis Wiemer LLC clients feel comfortable trusting their needs to the firm's experienced attorneys. With locations in Milwaukee and Hartford, MacGillis Wiemer offers legal representation for cases such as personal injury, family law, employment law and more.

RUNNERS-UP:

John A. Herbers - Reinhart Boerner Van Dueren
Dan Adams - Adams Law Group

BEST COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

SISTER MACCANON BROWN

Among Milwaukee's most revered voices for peace, racial and economic equity, and the rights of the homeless, Brown humbly resisted efforts to name Center Street's MacCanon Brown Homeless Sanctuary in honor of that fine legacy. But she continues to work tirelessly to unite the community to make Milwaukee a national role model for how a city serves its most disadvantaged citizens.

RUNNERS-UP:

Joe Flick
Christine Neumann-Ortiz

BEST PHILANTHROPIST

LYNDE B. UIHLEIN

Born in Milwaukee to a philanthropist mother and part of Milwaukee's best-known philanthropic family, Lynde B. Uihlein has long supported efforts to improve racial and gender equality, the environment, education and the arts. Uihlein founded the nonprofit Brico Fund in 1990 and the community-supported agriculture project "The Afterglow Farm" north of Milwaukee.

RUNNERS-UP:

Daniel Bader
Katie Heil

BEST POLITICIAN

MAYOR TOM BARRETT

Milwaukee's newly re-elected, five-term mayor faces his most challenging tenure yet as the city navigates the ongoing health and economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrations for racial equity and against police brutality in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, and widespread calls for across-the-board civic change. In a June statement, Barrett called for his city "to take specific actions to examine and transform America's policing system."

RUNNERS-UP:

Ron Johnson
Gwen Moore

BEST MIXOLOGIST

BRYANT'S COCKTAIL LOUNGE TEAM

There are no drink menus at Bryant's Cocktail Lounge, but patrons will surely always find exactly what they are looking for in the perfect libation. With over 450 cocktails available, the expert bartenders at Bryant's can make magic of whatever flavors you're craving, even if you can only explain that by color or texture.

RUNNERS-UP:

Dawn - The Packing House
Brandon Reyes - Bittercube Bar & Bazaar

BEST REAL ESTATE AGENT

JULIE CLARKE, REALTY EXECUTIVES

Brookfield-based Clarke earns consistently high marks from clients throughout Milwaukee and its surrounding counties for tailoring the buying and selling process to each client's needs, budget and experience level — from million-dollar condos and lakefront properties to cozy starter homes.

RUNNERS-UP:

Jon Frost - Frost Realty
Mary Beth Waite - Cornerstone Realtors

BEST DJ

DJ SHAWNA

Former professional basketball player Shawna Nicols — better known as DJ Shawna — delights crowds with her upbeat music and ebullient personality. The official DJ for the Milwaukee Bucks, DJ Shawna also started the #DareToBe movement and clothing line to motivate people to be their best selves and never give up on their dreams.

RUNNERS-UP:

DJ Goose
Downtown Harrison

BEST STAGE PERFORMER AND TV PERSONALITY

JOHN MCGIVERN

As beloved as they come in his Milwaukee hometown and throughout Wisconsin, McGivern has warmed stage audiences' hearts for nearly four decades in plays, standup comedy routines and deeply personal one-man shows performed locally and across the U.S. McGivern can also help you get to know the Cheese State better via his charming Wisconsin PBS travelogue, "Around the Corner with John McGivern."

STAGE PERFORMER RUNNERS-UP:

Laura Gordon
Lex Allen

TV PERSONALITY RUNNERS-UP:

Joyce Garbaciak
Molly Fay



Best Community Advocate
Sister MacCanon Brown



Best DJ
DJ Shawna



BEST SPORTS FIGURE

GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO

The 2019-20 NBA season may have been halted this past spring due to COVID, but Bucks fans are eager to see adored superstar forward Giannis Antetokounmpo on their screens again as the NBA is back to finish the season and see if the Bucks can land their first championship in almost 50 years.

RUNNERS-UP:

Christian Yelich
Aaron Rodgers

BEST AUTHOR

JOHN GURDA

Milwaukee writer and historian John Gurda has written 22 books about his home city, including histories of Cream City's neighborhoods and industries, bodies of water, places of worship and more. His book "The Making of Milwaukee" was even the basis for an Emmy-award winning documentary series that aired on Milwaukee Public Television in 2006. You can also catch him on fellow Best Of winner John McGivern's "Around the Corner with John McGivern."

RUNNERS-UP:

Lauren Fox
Lesley Kagan

BEST MURALIST

MAURICIO RAMIREZ

Ramirez — who divides his time between Milwaukee, Chicago and Albuquerque, but calls Milwaukee home — has brightened the city with multiple grand-scale works of art whose hallmarks are their saturated colors and messages of community and cultural pride. His latest work, "Frontline Heroes" — located near the intersection of 6th and Lincoln streets — honors medical workers' tireless fight against the novel coronavirus.

RUNNERS-UP:

Jeremy Novy
Bigshot Robot

BEST RESTAURATEUR

PAUL BARTOLOTTA

With two James Beard Awards and a recent nomination for a third for Outstanding Restaurateur, Chef Paul Bartolotta — who also owns and co-founded The Bartolotta Restaurants — brings a taste of culinary cuisines from across the world to Milwaukee in each of Bartolotta's 17 spectacular restaurants, carrying on the legacy he shaped with his late brother Joe.

RUNNERS-UP:

Omar Shaikh
Dan Jacobs and Dan Van Rite **MKE**

Best Muralist
Mauricio Ramirez

