



More attractions in Grafton with Spring openings

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GRAFTON - Spring is a unique time of year in Grafton because so many small shops open for the season, adding even more attractions to this vibrant riverside town. Many of the larger establishments remain open all year such as The Loading Dock, Aeries Winery, The Third Chute, and the Grafton Winery. But if you walk down Main Street, you will find that many of the small businesses have re-opened their doors for the 2018 tourist season.

Small businesses play an important part in this bustling tourist town. The vitality of the scenic community of Grafton is enhanced by the many small shops and eating establishments on Main Street. Whether it's fudge or ice cream, jewelry, art, or handmade wood furniture, Grafton has it covered with a variety of small eclectic and wide-ranging businesses. A weekend stroll along Main Street will pique the interests of tourists looking for that unique one-of-a-kind gift or specialty flavor.

Starting at the east end of town, the Fudge Shop will be one of your first stops for a cup of flavorful coffee and a sweet treat. Next you can get your fortune told at the Palm Reader, followed by a stop at Buena Vista Art, one of the most unique artisan shops in Illinois. Buena Vista features a broad array of jewelry and eye-catching lamps made from vintage parts and all "crafted in Grafton" by a local artist.

Your next stop might be the Amish Furniture Store or the two-story Harrison's Gifts, followed by a sandwich or ice cream sundae at The Whole Scoop. On the opposite side of the street is the old time Ruebel Saloon, built in 1879. The bar inside is a piece of history from the 1904 World's Fair.

Then you might step into the colorful Peace of Quiche, a "café with a cause" where your purchase in the gift shop will help support such charitable efforts as fair trade, women's shelters, and braille literacy for children.

After enjoying a sweeping view of the Illinois and Mississippi rivers from the Peace of Quiche deck, your stroll would take you to The Wood Artisan, a custom clock shop. Next is Knotty by Nature, featuring a large and varied collection of furniture, wood carvings, and distinctive wood pieces that can be used for everything from shelving to table tops.

The next section of Grafton features many of the well-known bars, wineries, and eateries, including the harbor-side Oyster Bar and the Grafton Pub. You can also browse for trendy clothes or an interesting bottle of wine at Jeni J's.

From there, you might rent a bicycle from the self-serve station in front of the Beach House, one of the many lodging options. Your bike ride will take you along the Illinois River and to even more places to eat at the west end of town, such as Drifters' Eats and Drinks. If you are feeling vigorous, you can ride all the way to the beautiful Pere Marquette State Park.

"The larger Grafton organizations are like our anchors," said Jamie Clayton, President of the Grafton Chamber of Commerce, "and the smaller shops round out the experience for visitors who are looking for a variety of attractions."

For more information and a map of all the Grafton shops, see www.enjoygrafton.com. The town is fully open, full of life, and waiting for you to wander!