SOUTH BASS ISLAND

TOUR 1

VINTAGE VILLAGE

(1.6 miles)

1. The Island Park
(also known as
De Rivera Park)
2. The Carriage House
3. The Schlitz Ice House
4. The Crescent Tavern
5. The Round House
6. The Park Hotel
7. The Country House
8. Frosty's
9. The Colonial
10. The Kite Shop
11. Heritage Antiques/
   The Lone Willow
12. The Town Hall
13. The Blacksmith Shop
14. Tony's Place
15. The Put-in-Bay School
16. The Gascoyne
    House
17. Saint Paul's
    Episcopal Church
18. Mother of Sorrows
    Catholic Church
19. The Idolor House
20. Ted's Tackle Shop
21. The Wharf Side
    (The Yacht Shop)
22. The Doller Colonial
    House
23. The Doller Villa
24. The Crew's Nest
25. The Dodge House
26. The Put-in-Bay
    Yacht Club
27. The Warren Cottage
TOUR ONE

Vintage Village

(1.6 MILES)

Considerable dispute exists about the origin of the name “Put-in-Bay.” Some say it derives from “pudding bay,” an epithet applied to the harbor by early visitors because it was soft-bottomed and shaped like a pudding bag. Others claim the name was given to the inlet by early navigators who considered it the best place to “put in” between Buffalo and the Detroit River. Whatever the source of its name, the harbor village, which celebrated its centennial in 1977, today offers an interesting array of historical architecture, as well as a glimpse at the growth of a resort community that has hosted promenading ladies and gentlemen, suntanned boaters, and local entrepreneurs who developed the tourist trade.

Delaware Avenue

1. The Island Park (officially known as De Rivera Park). We begin this three-part tour by strolling through the Delaware Avenue commercial district, which is the heart of Put-in-Bay village. At the center of this district is Island Park, which is also known as De Rivera Park after the man who was the father of the Bass Island wine industry. This cool, shady grove has provided a resting place for summer visitors since de Rivera deeded it to the public in 1866. At the west end of Island Park stands the pyramid-shaped Cannonball Monument, which marks the former gravesite of six naval officers who died in 1813 during the Battle of Lake Erie. The park offers a charming view of the harbor; it also features a refreshing rubble-and-fieldstone fountain and a double-faced cast-iron street clock made by Boston’s famous E. Howard Company. Adjoining the park is Harbour Square, which opened for business in June of 1986 as a collection of shops. Each shop has its own architectural design which reflects the type of business. For
example, Stonehenge, which sells gifts from England, has a brick front, and Sundae’s, an ice cream store, has stained glass windows in its store front. There are many other businesses within the square, including the Chamber of Commerce.

2. The Carriage House. On the south side of Delaware Avenue, east of Island Park, stands a simple frame structure with a Gothic peaked roof; it was built about 1905 by John Brick and first housed a saloon. Later the building became part of the E and K (Engel and Krudwig) Winery, of Sandusky, Ohio, and after that, the home of the Put-in-Bay Golf Club. Today this large commercial edifice houses a gift shop.
3. The Schlitz Ice House. Across Delaware Avenue from the Carriage House is the turn-of-the-century ice house that once supplied the island’s hotels. The building was purchased by the Schlitz Brewing Company in 1913, when they acquired the nearby Beebe House hotel, which later was destroyed by fire. The thick sawdust-insulated walls of the structure made it especially efficient. It was used to store the ice, cut in blocks from the frozen bay in winter, until it was needed during the summer. On the roof, the headhouse is still visible; it once contained the pulley that hauled huge blocks of ice through the access doors that run up the front of the building. It now houses a gift shop.

4. The Crescent Tavern. Crossing Delaware Avenue once again, we see the hotel built in 1871 by Great Lakes sea captain Rear Admiral J. J. Hunker and his wife, Mary. Hunker was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who distinguished himself in the
Ice Cutting

Spanish-American War by capturing Cuba’s Nipe Bay in 1898. After the Hunkers’ ownership, the structure was known as Ward’s Summer Resort and later, the Detroit House. In the early 1920s, it became the Crescent Hotel and was operated by retired actor T. B. Alexander and his wife, Edith Brown Alexander, the granddaughter of John Brown of Harpers Ferry fame. After exterior and interior renovation, it was reopened as the Crescent Tavern in 1981. The ornate roofline brackets and narrow windows make this building an excellent example of the Italianate style of architecture, which flourished in the Bass Islands between 1860 and 1890.

The Crescent Tavern
5. The Round House. Continuing west along Delaware Avenue we come to the Round House. Some say it was originally built in Toledo and reassembled in Put-in-Bay in 1873; others maintain it was built on the island. Perfectly round with a circumference of 150 feet, the structure first housed the Columbia Restaurant in 1873. For many years after it opened, island residents would gather on the front steps yearly at summer’s end to pose for a group portrait; this traditional photograph came to be known as the “Mossback Picture” because the islanders were called “mossbackers” for living on a “rock.” The tradition was revived in 1982. The Round House remains one of the island’s most popular night spots.

6. The Park Hotel. Next door to the Round House is the Park Hotel, originally the Deutsches Hotel, built at about the same time and by the same person, “Round House” Smith. One of the oldest continuously operating hotels in Ohio, it is the last hotel still operating in the village’s commercial area. The hotel consists of an eastern portion that was constructed in 1873 and connects with the Round House, and a western addition that more than doubled the hotel’s size when it was built in 1887. The tall corner tower at the building’s west end and its wrap-around porch are typical of the Italian Villa architectural style seen in many island structures, but
the sloping mansard roof and narrow dormer windows give it a Second French Empire flavor, as well. Also of interest is the original lobby, which features outstanding nineteenth-century etched- and stained-glass windows. In the courtyard sits a gleaming antique popcorn wagon made in Oldtown, Maine, in 1909.

7. The Country House. Moving along the avenue we arrive at a building called the Country House, formerly the Gill House, the Bon-Air, the Central Hotel, the Smith Hotel, and the Hotel Oelschlager. It was operated as a hotel by various proprietors for about two decades after 1885 and is now a gift shop. Like the Crescent Tavern, it is Italianate in style, with narrow windows and roof brackets. Its ornate, rounded cornice and molded windows once overlooked a broad front porch. Inside the building is a finely carved staircase and extensive ornamental woodwork known as fretwork.

View of Main Street in 1906
8. **Frosty's.** Adjacent to the Country House is the only brick commercial structure in Put-in-Bay's business district. It was built in 1913 by Karl Oelschlager, to house the Oelschlager's Dry Goods Store. It has served as a dry goods store, a gift shop, and an ice cream parlor; it is now a pizza shop that is popular with island tourists. The interior offers a nostalgic atmosphere with its original hardwood floors and floral-design pressed-tin ceiling.

9. **The Colonial.** The original building at the corner of Delaware and Catawba avenues was for some 80 years perhaps the most recognizable of Put-in-Bay's architectural offerings. Monumental in scale, the Colonial was built by island promoters in 1905 and originally housed a bowling alley, a restaurant, a bar, and a second-floor dance hall boasting 18,000 square feet of open space. Its architectural features included the unusual domed and rounded corner pavilion and the broad porch. The building was destroyed by fire on May 27, 1988, and reopened twelve months later. The rebuilt Colonial, like the original, houses the Beer Barrel Saloon, along with a restaurant and shops. Its architecture, however, is post-modern with Art Deco influences.

**Catawba Avenue**

10. **The Kite Shop.** The next leg of the Vintage Village tour takes us through the commercial district and residential area of Catawba
Avenue. First we see an 1870 structure that originally housed a shoe-repair shop and a store run by Chris Doller, the brother of South Bass Island’s wealthy mayor, Valentine Doller. The structure that once housed Chris Doller’s shop is now a residence and gift shop. Its architecture shows an interesting blend of simple Greek Revival lines and decorative Italianate molding.

11. Heritage Antiques / The Lone Willow. The next stop on Catawba Avenue is at an antique and gift shop that was built about 1880 as the Schiele Building; for many years, its upper floor served as the meeting hall of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, or I.O.O.F. The local I.O.O.F. order called themselves the Lone Willow Chapter because the building faced the Island Park burial site of the six British and American naval officers killed in the Battle of Lake Erie. The building is a simple frame structure with an unusual second-story central window in the Queen Anne style. Above this, the ornate cornice with its diagonal and vertical board patterns is characteristic of the Stick Style of architectural design popular in the 1880s and 1890s.

12. The Town Hall. Constructed in 1887 at a cost of $10,127 by local builder George Gascoyne, this is one of the few brick buildings on the Bass Islands. It was erected on land donated to

The Walkersdorfer Building
the village by the wealthy Valentine Doller; the structure originally housed a jail in its basement, police and fire departments on its first floor, and a stage and basketball facility in its upper story. Today it is still the home of the local police department, and community events are held on the second floor; the fire department is now housed in the building next door. The Town Hall was once marked by a large wooden open belfry, which no longer graces the southern tower. The building’s original decorative slate roof remains and is worth noting.

13. The Blacksmith Shop. This was South Bass Island’s first service station. Built in 1911 by William Kunzler, this village shop also offered automobile repair. For many years, the building was allowed to fall into disrepair until it was purchased in 1968, restored, and opened as a gift shop and museum of South Bass artifacts and memorabilia. The structure is unusual because its entire front is covered with stamped tin resembling decorative brick.
A Put-in-Bay tour bus in front of the school, 1920s

14. Tony's Place. Located next door to the Blacksmith Shop, this building has housed a bar or restaurant ever since its construction at the turn of the century. Architecturally it is a simple frame structure, but the Dutch "shaped gable" on the building's upper face is an interesting feature.

15. The Put-in-Bay School. Crossing the street at the corner of Concord Avenue, we see the schoolhouse designed by G. E. Scott and constructed by J. A. Feick, of Sandusky. Built in 1921 after a special bond issue was passed by local citizens in 1919, the schoolhouse originally contained ten rooms and was considered quite modern for its time. The school still serves the islanders' educational needs. It is simple in design, with stone relieving the monotony of its brick wall surfaces.

16. The Gascoyne House. Across the street from the school is the home of prominent island citizen and local builder George Gascoyne. He was the designer of the village’s Town Hall, the island’s leading contractor, and served the community as councilman, fire chief, and postmaster at various times. His house is surprisingly modest in style and proportion and offers little hint that its builder designed some of the island's most stylish buildings. This building currently houses a tourist home called Lake Erie Islands House.
17. Saint Paul's Episcopal Church. At the corner of Catawba and Lake View avenues stands Saint Paul's Church, built in 1865 on land donated by José de Rivera. Jay Cooke, another wealthy philanthropist who at one time owned Gibraltar Island, underwrote the building's cost. The church continues to serve the area. The frame structure is symmetrical in plan and Gothic in design, with a steep roof line and pointed windows; its vertically ribbed exterior walls are typical of the board-and-batten style of Gothic architecture.

18. Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church. Across Catawba is Saint Paul's Catholic counterpart, which in 1927 replaced a simpler, smaller-frame Catholic church that had been built about 1875. The present structure was designed by the Reverend Joseph Maerder, a church pastor who used an airplane to travel around the islands to conduct Sunday services. The Reverend Maerder’s design was based on a similar building in Lombardy, Italy, and his plans were executed by architect Howard Gorman. The church is Romanesque in style, constructed of Kelleys Island limestone, and

The original Catholic Church
features a lovely Florentine marble altar. Above its main entrance is a delicate rose window.

19. Idlor House. After crossing Catawba again, we see another of George Gascoyne’s designs. The structure dates from 1875 and is considered one of his finest residential buildings. Erected for storekeeper and dockmaster Clinton Idlor, the building’s bracketed roofline, carved porch woodwork, and bay window make it a fine example of Italianate architecture. Inside, decorative woodwork and the original wallpaper are of interest.

Bayview Avenue

20. Ted’s Tackle Shop. Retracing our steps along Catawba Avenue, we begin the third and final part of our Vintage Village tour. As we stroll westward on Bayview Avenue, we enjoy breathtaking views of the harbor while discovering more about island history and the enterprising Valentine Doller. At the corner of Catawba and Bayview is a structure built by him in 1873. He originally opened the building as a saloon, store, and post office (he was island postmaster from 1860 to 1876), and his name graces the building’s façade. Soon afterward Clinton Idlor kept shop here, from 1876 to 1892. The structure is another example of the Italianate architectural style so popular in the islands, and
although its walls have recently been covered with aluminum siding, it displays the bracketed roof parapet typical of the Italianate design. The Doller Building previously housed the Corner Store and now houses Reflections. The Corner Store is currently located south of Tony’s Place and the Put-in-Bay School (see Tour 1, Stops 14 and 15).

21. The Wharf Side (also known as the Yacht Shop). Across the street on the waterfront stands another Doller structure. The frame portion of this building was a part of Doller’s boathouse and dock. In its heyday, about 1872, Doller’s dock was often crowded by
steamboats. Raised and remodeled in 1986, the Yacht Shop effectively ties the old and new buildings together without damaging the area’s historical appeal.

22. The Doller Colonial House. Behind the commercial building on the corner of Bayview and Catawba stands a white Colonial Revival style residence. Doller and his wife had six daughters, five of whom never married, and this house was built by some of the Doller daughters in 1932. The unusual rounded canopy over the main door is an interesting feature.

23. The Doller Villa. Next door to the Doller Colonial House is the spectacular private residence built by Valentine Doller about 1870. Valentine, a clever and successful tourist-industry entrepreneur, bought José de Rivera’s remaining island holdings when de Rivera went bankrupt in the 1880s. The mansion bears some resemblance to Inselruhe, another grand home, which we shall see in Tour 3. Doller lived here until his death in 1901. Like Inselruhe, and the Park Hotel seen earlier, the house is an example of Italian Villa architecture, typified by its large, octagonal corner tower. Other interesting details include the tower’s iron cresting or railing, and the home’s broad wrap-around porch. The brick portion of the Doller Villa was added later to the original frame structure.

24. The Crew’s Nest. Located at the corner of Bayview and Victory avenues, this building and the private residence just to its
east were both built about 1875 and recall the picket-fence days of nineteenth-century Put-in-Bay. The Crew’s Nest, formerly the Eagle Cottage Hotel and the Friendly Inn, was remodeled and became a private club in 1971; the bedside night tables from the old hotel are now used in the club’s downstairs bar. The club and the residence, with their roof brackets and broad porches, are typical of the island’s Italianate cottage design.

25. **The Dodge House.** On the opposite corner of Victory Avenue stands the home built about 1870 by Captain Elliot Dodge; the finely preserved residence remains in the Dodge family. Considered by many as one of the best examples of Italianate architecture on the islands, it has a broad wrap-around veranda and decorative moldings around its windows and doors.

26. **The Put-in-Bay Yacht Club.** Situated at the spot where Bayview Avenue begins to curve to the southwest, this edifice was constructed in 1924. The Yacht Club, however, traces its existence to 1886. Covered with stucco and sporting large,
curving arches, the building shows the influence of Spanish-style architecture. The club annually hosts the Inter-Lake Yachting Association Regatta.

27. The Warren Cottage. This is one of four cottages beyond the Yacht Club that typify the work of skilled "cottage carpenters" of the late 1800s. The Warren residence, also known as La Rosa, was built about 1893. The board-and-batten and circular woodwork on its front gable are unique; the steep roof and vertical design of the front gable recall Saint Paul's Church.