

## path of discovery

BY RICH WARREN

**THERE'S NOTHING I LIKE BETTER THAN POINTING MY CAR** down an Ohio road and seeing where it goes, making serendipitous discoveries along the way. In eastern Ohio, where I grew up, I look for roads that connect the many quaint small towns. I-77 is a convenient choice, easily traversing the rolling forested hills polka dotted by meadows and pastures, with rambling rivers cutting their way through scenic valleys.

I started a recent trip in Marietta, where so much of Ohio's history began. I love its brick streets, quaint downtown shops and tidy 19th-century homes lining the Muskingum and Ohio rivers — it's like a journey to yesteryear. I adore boat rides, and there's nothing better than a cruise on the Valley Gem to be carried back to the era when sternwheelers plied these waters. I grabbed a quick lunch at the Marietta Brewing Company, marveling at the towering beer kettles in the front windows that produce the craft ales and IPAs served there.

Farther north, Cambridge is another one of my favorite stops. The more than 10,000 glittering glass and crystal objects on display at the National Museum of Cambridge Glass are a feast for the eyes, whereas the trays of homemade baked goods at Kennedy's Bakery, family-owned since 1925, are a literal feast. I drove the long tree-lined road to the lodge at nearby Salt Fork State Park, but some day I aspire to stay in one of the cabins beside the tranquil lake. My favorite way to explore the park is hiking along the 19 miles of nearly deserted trails through the woods, the crunch of leaves underfoot and the sound of birdsong serving as balm for the soul.

Of course, I always stop in my hometown of New Philadelphia with its classic domed courthouse and Civil War



monument overlooking the quaint downtown square. I've always been moved by the story of the Moravian missionaries who settled here among the Delaware Indians — as children, my cousins and I played in the reproductions of Ohio's first school and church the missionaries constructed at Schoenbrunn Village. As an adult, I enjoy their powerfully depicted story at the outdoor drama *Trumpet in the Land*.

I finished my weekend getaway in Canton. I combined a history lesson with elevating my heart rate by climbing the 108 stairs to the McKinley Memorial, burial site of the 25th president. I loved the McKinley Presidential Library and Museum next door — it's a delightful hodgepodge of McKinley artifacts (including Ida McKinley's diamond tiara) with a planetarium and even a dinosaur display. I always enjoy a nostalgic meal at Bender's Tavern in downtown Canton, where the marble and paneled walls and tin ceiling seem to whisper the countless conversations that have taken place there for nearly a century.

*Columbus-based writer Rich Warren has been writing about Ohio for two decades and never stops making new discoveries.*

ABOVE: Sip on an IPA at Marietta Brewing Company. PICTURED: Climb the 108 stairs to see McKinley Memorial, where the nation's 25th president is buried.