

Indiana University's Sample Gates,
Bloomington, Ind.

PHOTO: JACKIE SHECKLER FINCH

Bloomington

Experience art, history and wine in southern Indiana

By Jackie Sheckler Finch

When night spreads its velvet cloak over Bloomington, Indiana, and stars shine their brightest, it's easy to see how composer Hoagy Carmichael was inspired to write his lovely classic, "Stardust."

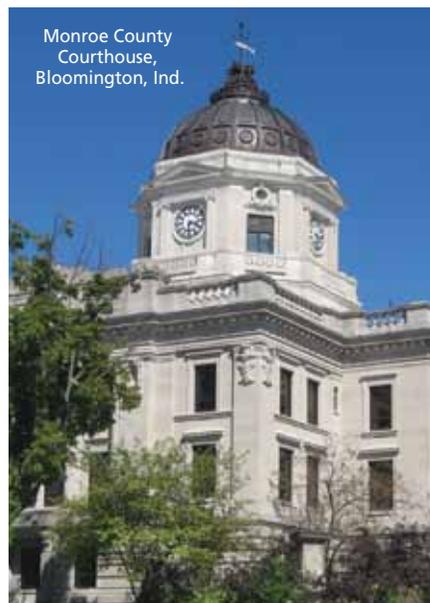
The story goes that Carmichael — who was born in Bloomington and attended Indiana University (IU) — was taking an evening stroll around the campus in 1927 when the starry night sparked his imagination. Hurrying to an old piano in the Book Nook, Carmichael composed the popular tune. Today, visitors can see Carmichael's gravesite at Rose Hill Cemetery and his statue seated at a piano on the IU campus.

"People are often surprised when they visit

Bloomington and see what all we have to offer," said Erin Erdmann, director of convention sales and travel media for Visit Bloomington. "They don't

know about the Hoagy story and so many other stories here in Bloomington."

Tucked among the rolling hills of southern Indiana, Bloomington is a pleasant combination of cosmopolitan charm and small-town Hoosier hospitality. From Tibetan monks to Big Ten sports, from the state's largest man-made lake to historic limestone buildings, Bloomington is a favorite with group tours. Offering a vibrant art scene, natural beauty, one-of-a-kind shops and eclectic restaurants, Bloomington has attractions that visitors may not expect to find in Indiana.



Monroe County
Courthouse,
Bloomington, Ind.

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Indiana University

Founded in 1824 as the first college west of the Alleghenies, IU offers top-notch attractions like the Mathers Museum of World Culture, IU Art Museum, Lilly Library, Kinsey Institute Gallery and IU Opera Theater, said to be acoustically perfect. Among its treasures, the Lilly Library has a vast collection of first editions, letters and other material relating to Edgar Allen Poe, including a lock of Poe's hair that he sent in a love letter to his fiancé. It is believed to be the only surviving piece of Poe's hair, cut while he was still alive.

With its local limestone architecture and shady trees, the university campus is recognized as one of the five most beautiful collegiate campuses in the country by Thomas A. Gaines' book *The Campus as a Work of Art*. Take a limestone tour of the campus and look for a special formula carved into the Chemistry building where the key ingredient for fluoride toothpaste was discovered.

Visit Assembly Hall to see the NCAA National Champion and Big Ten Champion banners that Hoosier basketball teams have won over the years. Nearby is Armstrong Stadium, where the annual Little 500 Bicycle Race takes place every spring. The race was immortalized in the 1979 movie *Breaking Away*, filmed in Bloomington and featuring a hunky, young Dennis Quaid.

sand mandala. Take a tour and watch a monk turn the Kalachakra or "Wheel of Time," the most revered of all Buddhist rituals because it is dedicated to creating world peace and harmony.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF VISIT INDIANA

Lake Monroe

Bordered by state forests to the north and east, Bloomington is also home to Lake Monroe. With more than 12,500 acres of water, Lake Monroe is the state's largest man-made lake and a major recreational playground. Opened to the public in 1965, the lake has Fourwinds Resort and Marina along with boat rentals, hiking trails, picnic areas, a swimming beach and a campground. A native Hoosier rock musician, John Mellencamp resides on the shore of the lake. Rent a pontoon and watch a marvelous sunset over Lake Monroe.

Oliver Winery

The oldest and largest winery in Indiana, Oliver Winery is located just north of Bloomington on State Road 37 and was listed in the *Wall Street Journal* among 12 wineries to visit in the U.S. Founded in 1972, the winery truly got its start in the basement of the Oliver family's Bloomington home where IU law professor William W. Oliver made wine from grapes stomped by his own and neighborhood children.

The traditional post-and-beam-style tasting room is surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens and limestone sculptures. The on-site picnic grounds feature a shimmering pond, sunny meadow and wooded hillside. Oliver welcomes group tours and can arrange special lunches and wine tastings. 🍷

Visit Bloomington

800-800-0037

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Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center

Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center was founded in the late 1970s by Thubten Norbu, the Dalai Lama's brother, who was an IU professor. The Dalai Lama has visited Bloomington five times and has an apartment always ready for him at the center. Open to the public, the center features traditional Buddhist temples, colorful scrolls and a permanent