

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Southwest Wisconsin – The Driftless Area

Dates:	Orientation meeting Friday, October 9, 2026. Riding Saturday, October 10 – Sunday, October 18, with departure after the last day's 37-mi ride on Sunday, Oct 18 (lodging last night excluded).
Leaders:	Jim Bethell and Scott MacCormack; SAGs: Martha MacCormack and Deb Raudins
Miles:	356 miles and 15,850 vertical feet of climbing; 8 riding days and 1 rest day
Rating:	Intermediate https://www.heartcycle.org/tour-ratings
Riders:	28
Price:	\$2,400 (double occupancy). \$600 due at registration. Balance due by July 11, 2026. Single supplement \$3,600. Check with the tour leader for availability.
Cancellation:	Standard cancellation policy

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

OVERVIEW

Please join us on this brand-new tour for HeartCycle in this beautiful area of Southwest Wisconsin, known as the Driftless Area because ice did not cover the region during the last Ice Age. Experience the historic bike trails, lightly traveled roads, and scenic vistas, and cycle along the picturesque shores of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers.

Highlights will have us cycling through

- towns and villages such as Baraboo, home to many circus acts;
- La Crosse, once home to Old Style Brewing, still operating as City Brewing and home to the World's Largest 6-Pack;
- Spring Green where many buildings and structures were designed by the famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright; and
- celebrated bike trails such as the Elroy-Sparta Trail, La Crosse River State Trail, and the 400 State Trail.



Because we'll be riding on stone-dust bike trails in addition to paved roads, 28-mm tires (at a minimum) are strongly recommended; the best options are 32- or 35-mm. Fenders are also a good idea if the trails are wet. Wisconsin state law mandates front and rear lights in the bike trail tunnels.

This tour starts and ends in Middleton, WI, a suburb of Madison. We'll stay at the Hilton Garden Inn, which has an onsite restaurant and can be reached by Uber or Lyft from Dane County Airport MSN for around \$40 a carload. Airlines include American, Breeze, Delta, Frontier, Sun Country, and United.

ITINERARY

Day 0: Friday, October 9, 2026

Orientation meeting at the Hilton Garden Inn, 1801 Deming Way, Middleton, WI 53562

Day 1: Saturday, October 10

Middleton to Reedsburg

54 miles and 2885 feet of elevation gain

The first day's ride will take us from the west side of Madison, north to Lake Wisconsin where we will cross on the Merrimac Ferry, through Devils Lake State Park, Baraboo, and to Reedsburg where we will spend the night at the Voyageur Inn and Conference Center. <https://voyageur-inn.com/>

Day 2: Sunday, October 11
Reedsburg to Sparta

58 miles and 1765 feet of elevation gain

We'll be on bike trails for most of this day, starting with the 400 State and continuing onto the Elroy-Sparta, the first Rail-to-Trail conversion in the US. This former Chicago and Northwestern Railroad line passes through three tunnels,



which will require front and rear lights on our way to the Country Inn and Suites by Radison. <https://www.choicehotels.com/wisconsin/sparta/country-inn-suites-hotels/wi358>

Day 3: Monday, October 12
Sparta to La Crosse

30 miles and 429 feet of elevation gain

Today's very short ride will give you ample time to enjoy the sites of La Crosse, spend time at Riverside Park along the Mississippi, visit the International Friendship Gardens, or sample the handful of breweries in the downtown area where we will be staying at the Hampton Inn.

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/lscdohx-hampton-suites-la-crosse-downtown/>

Day 4: Tuesday, October 13
La Crosse to Prairie Du Chien

60 miles and 1668 feet of elevation gain

We'll ride south along the Mississippi River all day following the Great River Rd to our next river town destination, Prairie Du Chien. Located just north of the confluence of the Mississippi and Wisconsin Rivers, Prairie Du Chien is the oldest European settlement on the upper Mississippi, established in 1840. We'll stay overnight at the River District Hotel. <https://riverdistricthotel.com/>



Prairie du Chien, WI Great River Road

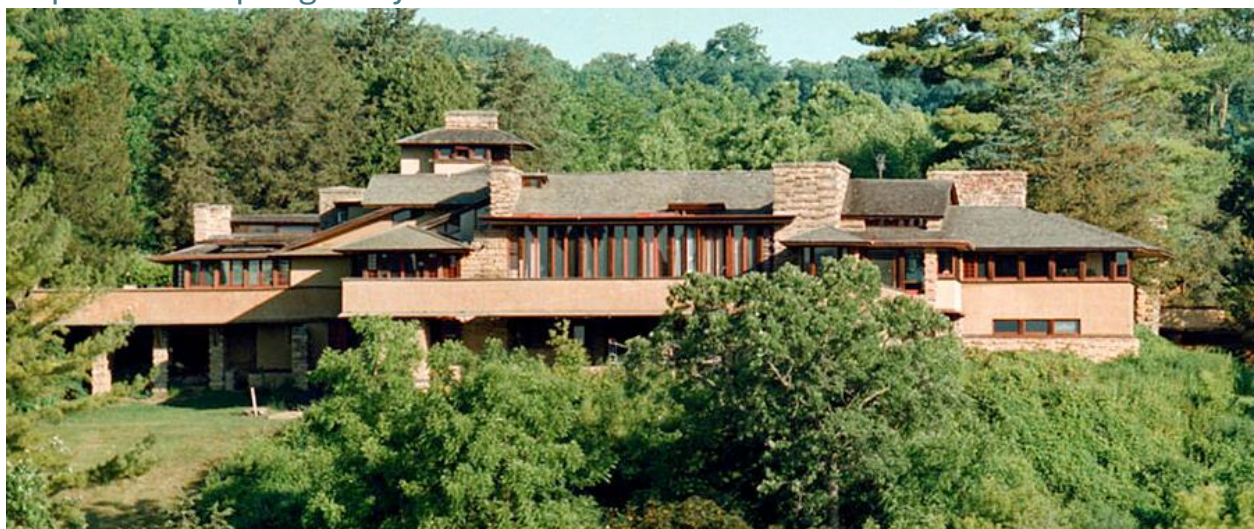
Day 5: Wednesday, October 14

Prairie Du Chien to Spring Green

72 miles and 2572 feet of elevation gain

Today, we will traverse both sides of the Wisconsin River, traveling east to our destination of Spring Green, a unique river town with an amazing sense of tranquility, best known for architect Frank Lloyd Wright's estate Taliesin and related tourism. We'll spend 2 nights at The Spring Valley Inn.

<https://www.springvalleyinn.com/>



Taliesin | Spring Green

Day 6: Thursday, October 15

Rest day in Spring Green

You can explore the Frank Lloyd Wright properties or the Village of Spring Green, take a boat ride down the Wisconsin River, whatever you like.

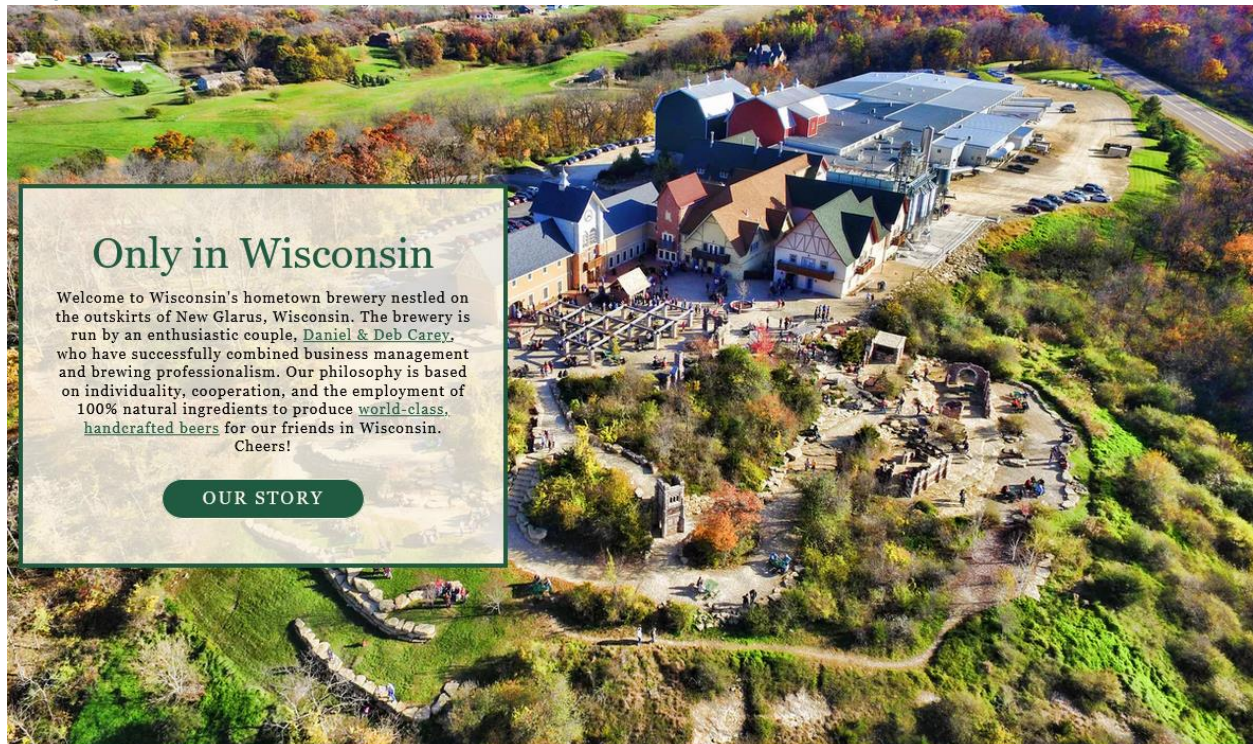
Day 7: Friday, October 16

Spring Green to New Glarus

51 miles and 3157 feet of elevation gain

This day, we'll experience some challenging and rolling farmland south of the Wisconsin River on our way to the Swiss style village of New Glarus. Home to New Glarus Brewing, beer that you can only buy in Wisconsin. Try a Spotted Cow! You will find plenty to do in New Glarus, especially if you like to polka. We'll spend 2 nights at the Chalet Landhaus.

<https://www.chaletlandhaus.com/>



Day 8: Saturday, October 17

New Glarus loop – lollipop ride on the Sugar River and Badger State Trails

53 miles and 1532 feet of elevation gain

This adventure takes us on a loop to the south from New Glarus on two more of the great Wisconsin trails. This is considered an option day, so if you want to stay in town, feel free to do so. Download the New Glarus Visitors Guide from <https://www.swisstown.com/visitors-guide-request>.

Day 9: Sunday, October 18***New Glarus to Middleton***

35 miles and 1718 feet of elevation gain

Our last day's route takes us through Mt. Horeb (famous for trolls and mustard) on our way back to Middleton, in time for most to catch a flight back home the same day.

SPECIAL NOTES:

- For those traveling from the Denver metro area, the Sprinter will be available to transport bicycles. A lottery may be needed if the demand exceeds available space.
- Electric bicycles, please read the e-bike restrictions and guidelines on the HeartCycle website → Selecting a Tour and E-bike guidelines:
<https://www.heartcycle.org/selecting-a-tour>.

For more information contact:

Jim Bethell

bethell.jim@verizon.net

(518) 466-8490

Scott MacCormack

samaccormack@gmail.com

(720) 939-6099