



COURTESY VITO PALMSANO



COURTESY BILL JOHNSON

LEFT: The 14-acre Detroit Hart Plaza sits on the riverfront, making it a popular destination for special events. **CENTER:** Detroit's GM River Days festival spotlights Detroit's transformed Detroit International Riverfront. This year's festival takes place June 24 through 26th. **RIGHT:** Dogs love the 3 1/2-mile RiverWalk that links the Milliken State Park with the financial district.

DIGGIN' DETROIT

4 MOTOR CITY TIPS

- Learn about Detroit's history, culture, and rebirth; it'll make your trip. Show Me Detroit will take you and your dog on a private tour.

- Don't miss the iconic Detroit experiences that aren't dog friendly. Canine to Five will take care of your pooch while you take in a Detroit Tigers game, visit the Detroit Institute of Arts or the Motown Museum, or tour the Ford plant or Greenfield Village.

- Check the policies of the area's pet-friendly hotels. Many limit the size of dogs they accommodate.

- Don't plan to take your dog on Detroit's People Mover transit system. You need a car. They don't call it the Motor City for nothing.

Think of a place where you can do everything you love on vacation — a dog-friendly destination that offers a chance to explore the great outdoors, art, shopping, dining, and friendly people. I'll bet Detroit isn't the first place that comes to mind.

No longer all about abandoned animals and buildings, the "Comeback City" has become hip and exciting. In fact, its dog-friendly amenities and outdoor activities make Motown an ideal place for me to explore with my super social Golden Retriever, Duffy.

On the waterfront

Detroit capitalizes on one of its greatest assets: its riverfront location. The city developed a 3 1/2-mile, dog-friendly RiverWalk that links the financial district with the 31-acre Milliken State Park. Across the MacArthur Bridge east of the RiverWalk lies the aptly named Belle Isle, the Central Park of Detroit. People and their leashed dogs

may stroll Belle Isle's 982 acres that include the 125-foot high Scott Fountain and views of both the Detroit skyline and Canada across the river.

"Detroiters take great pride in their city and are eager to share it with visitors," said Liz Blondy, owner of Canine to Five, which provides a variety of doggie day-care, grooming, and canine-centric events in two Detroit-area locations. Getting out with dogs is a great way for visitors to meet the locals, she said. "Dogs are a natural icebreaker." The Riverfront Canine Club (led by Canine to Five staff) invites out-of-towners to join the riverfront "pack walks" every Sunday morning in the summer. And, Duffy and I can "sit and stay" at Drinking with Dogs, gatherings that Liz organizes where dogs and their owners convene on various restaurant and bar patios around town.

Eat, stay, shop

The action isn't all on the water, however. The city's many vacant buildings and storefronts have made Detroit a massive canvas for world-renowned street artists. For an art-centric dog walk, take the Dequindre Cut Greenway, a former railroad track now known for its urban art and graffiti. It



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In Motown, dogs are in the driver's seat.

BY TERRI PETERSON SMITH

runs from the riverfront to Detroit's Eastern Market, which comes alive with produce vendors and artisans on market days. Pets must avoid the market sheds, but the surrounding area makes a great place to walk, view giant murals, and grab a snack at a food truck. Check out the "bark-tique" there: 3 Dogs 1 Cat Urban Pet Shoppe.

Another surprise: Detroit has several leafy historic neighborhoods to explore with your pup. For example, I love the early 1900s mansions of Indian Village on the city's east side and the cobblestoned block of charming Victorian homes on West Canfield near Cass Avenue in Midtown. History meets hip in Cass/Canfield where visitors find an off-leash dog park, uber-trendy shops including Shinola flagship store (with luxury leather dog leashes and collars), Third Man Vinyl (owned by Detroit-born rocker Jack White), and others that all welcome dogs. Don't miss Cass Corridog, another pet shop where a Good Boy cookie made a tasty souvenir for Duffy.

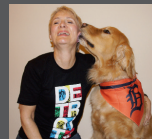
Finally, if shopping is your bag, you and your pooch should take a drive to the The Mall at Partridge Creek in nearby Clinton Township, where the entire open-air mall caters to shoppers with dogs in tow.



COURTESY TERRI PETERSON SMITH



COURTESY CANINE TO FIVE



Travel writer Terri Peterson Smith works in Minneapolis with her travel companion, Duffy, sleeping under the desk. She's the author of the award-winning book *Off The Beaten Page: The Best Trips for Lit Lovers, Book Clubs, and Girls on Getaways* (Chicago Review Press). Learn more about Terri at terri.petersonsmith.com.

TOP: Find luxury pet accessories in stores like Shinola Detroit. BOTTOM: Get a yummy house-baked Good Boy (or Girl) cookie for your dog at Detroit's Cass Corridog.