



Off, Off Broadway's Hot Spots

>> LITTLE TRIP

Okoboji, Iowa



Broadway favorites, such as last year's production of "Nunsense," are a hallmark of Stephens College Okoboji Summer Theatre.

Photo Courtesy of Stephens College

Theater buffs with a taste for lake resorts will find a perfect pairing of drama and adventure in the Great Lakes region of Iowa, an eight-hour drive northwest of Columbia. Five glacier-carved lakes surround the town of Okoboji, creating a resort destination ideal for water sports fans. Days filled with boating, fishing, sailing, water skiing and swimming are capped off with an evening of entertainment at the Stephens College Okoboji Summer Theatre.

Now in its 52nd year, Boji summer-stock productions are staffed by Stephens students in their final summer of a three-year Bachelor of Fine Arts program. This season includes nine plays of weeklong runs, including June's performances of "A ... My Name is Alice," "Almost, Maine" and "Brighton Beach Memoirs." Guest artists work with the students in the productions; this summer's guests are Stephens alumni Peggy Friesen, an actress from Kansas City who will be performing in "Hay Fever" on Broadway, and actress/singer Becca Ayers, who recently appeared in the Dallas Theatre Center's world premiere of "Sarah, Plain and Tall." A full schedule and ticket information are at www.stephens.edu/news/stephensevents/okoboji.

Arrowhead Resort & Conference Center offers full amenities for a stay in the lake region. Rates run \$179 to \$269. Visit www.arrowwood-okoboji.com for details. ■

>> BIG TRIP

Solvang, California



Performances of the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts draw crowds to Solvang all summer long.

Photo Courtesy of Solvang Theaterfest

Looking for some drama in your summer vacation? Head out to Solvang, the picturesque little Danish village with the big stage.

Tucked away in the Santa Ynez Valley amid Santa Barbara wine country, the quaint Danish enclave of Old World buildings, thatched roofs and windmills has been called one of the 10 most beautiful towns in the United States. The pedestrian-friendly, European-style village boasts dozens of Danish pastry shops and restaurants, wine-tasting rooms and more than 150 one-of-a-kind shops.

Solvang may look familiar to movie buffs. The wine cult classic "Sideways" was filmed here. More than 70 wineries are in the area.

Aptly named — Solvang means "sunny field" — the village is also home to the 700-seat open-air Solvang Festival Theater, where the only professional resident theater company on the Central Coast offers up world-class theatrical productions under the stars. This season will include performances of "Les Miserables," "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," "The Music Man" and "The Spitfire Grill." Details and a schedule are at www.solvangtheaterfest.org.

The four-star Inn at Petersen Village is an oasis of casual elegance and quiet ambience. Rates run \$335 to \$400. Wine-tasting packages and Theaterfest packages are available. Visit www.peterseninnc.com. ■