

TRAVEL

Kansas City, More than BBQ and Blues



By Sherry Jackson
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

BBQ and Blues may be what put Kansas City, Missouri on the map and yes, the city certainly does have its share of great BBQ joints and jazz clubs. But this town is passionate about the arts with a vibrant arts culture, world-class museums and a robust performing arts center. I recently spent a couple of days touring the city and was truly amazed at this gem of in the middle of the U.S.

Our first stop was the Steamboat Arabia, KC's number one tourist attraction. The "King Tut's Tomb of the Missouri River" is a museum hous-

wanted to share it with everyone. "The greatest thing is the story it tells about 1856", says Bob. The museum now houses one of the largest collections of pre-civil war artifacts along with huge collections of amazingly



preserved Chinese silks, dishware, guns and many other precious items.

Next up was Union Station. Built in 1914 and located in the Crown Center area downtown, this 850,000 square foot train

during the 1980's and was almost demolished until it was renovated in 1999. Today it's a prominent destination for cultural and entertainment with restaurants, shops, a planetarium, performing and movie theaters and both permanent and traveling museum exhibits. And, you can even still catch a train here.

The Kemper Art Museum is KC's contemporary art museum with local and world renowned pieces by artists such as Georgia O'Keefe and Chirlay. Free to the public, the museum gets more than 130,000 visitors each year. The onsite Café Sebastienne is a local favorite lunch spot where you can be surrounded by 110 panels of art while eating from the locally sourced and fresh seasonal menu.

Another stop that is well worth the time is The Nelson-Atkins Museum. It's considered to be one of America's finest art museums. It's best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. It's also free (some special exhibits are ticketed) and can be found by the huge shuttlecock out front. There is an outdoor sculpture park with over 30 pieces and is home to the nation's largest collection of monumental bronze sculptures by Henry Moore.

The American Jazz Museum at 18th and Vine is in the heart of the African community. Locals say that "Jazz was born in New Orleans but was raised in Kansas City." In the 1930's there were over 100 jazz clubs in Kansas

City alone. This museum is the only museum on the world that is solely dedicated to the preservation and advancement of jazz. The adjacent Blue Room has been named one of the 16 top jazz clubs in the world and features live Jazz music attracting world-class performers.

The National World War One Museum is worth a walk through as well. This National Historic Landmark opened in 1926 and depicts an era

peace in 1919. All the nations involved, reflecting both the battlefield and the home front, are represented.

Be sure to check out a show at the Kauffman Performing Arts Center. Built to look like an 18th century opera house, it's the largest glass and cable enclosed structure in the world. The Kansas City Ballet, Kansas City Symphony, Lyric Opera and UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance all use the Kauffman for their performances. Or, during April through October take in a show at the outdoor Starlight Theater which was built in 1950 and still has the original light towers.

You're sure to have worked up an appetite and Fiorella's Jack Stack BBQ is the "highest-rated BBQ in the country" according to Zagat. Their BBQ is hickory smoked and is the only place to get Crown Prime Beef Ribs. Be sure to try the burnt ends (meat cut from the ends of smoked brisket) that Kansas City is famous for.

If that's not enough to keep you busy, consider taking a day trip outside of the city. In Weston, Missouri you are greeted

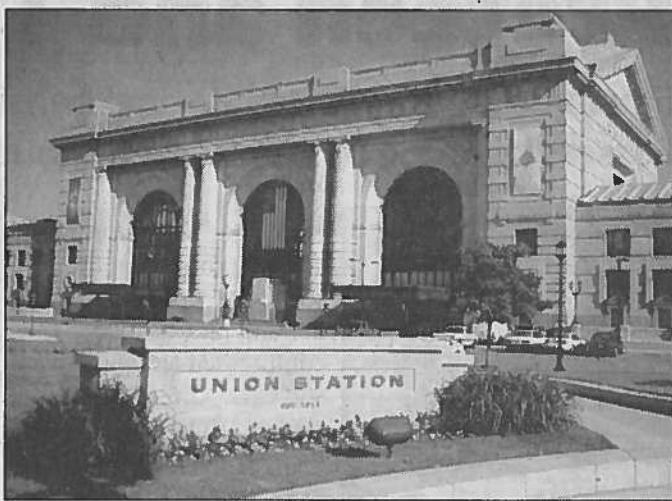


Photo by Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association

whose catch phrase, "the buck stops here", was his guiding philosophy. His presidency took him through World War II, the beginning of NATO and the Cold War. You can

great frontier trails and there are several historical sites in the city. The best way to learn about the history is on a covered wagon tour with Pioneer Trails Adventures. The



tour the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum as well as the Truman Home which was where Harry S

tour will even lead you over the very same wagon ruts that the pioneer wagons carved out when making their journey.

Kansas City is considered to be "the Heart of America" as it is situated within 250 miles of both the population and geographic centers of the country and with its rich history and \$9 billion renaissance, is definitely worthy of a visit. ■



ing a huge collection of artifacts from the steamboat that sunk in 1856 when it was carrying over 200 tons of cargo and passengers in route from Sioux City to Logan, Nebraska. It was a legend for many years with tales of the Arabia carrying gold and other treasures and countless people tried to locate the lost ship. It was finally found in 1988, 132 years after it sank. It was 45-feet underground in a corn field, when Bob and Flo Hawley found it. They decided to dig it up, even though Flo was "a little nervous to "dig a boat out

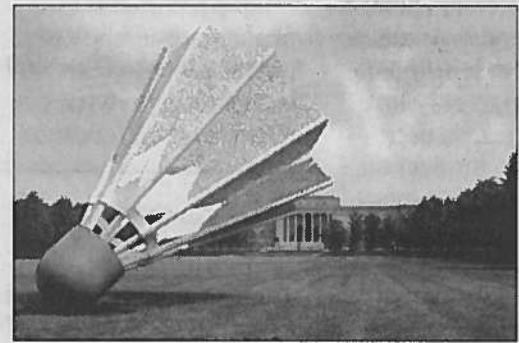


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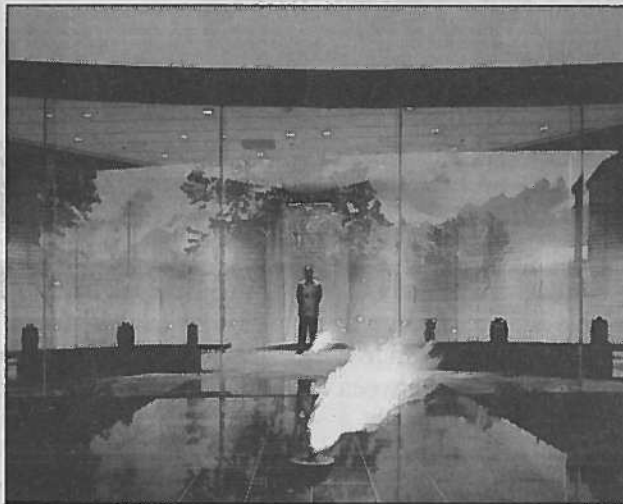


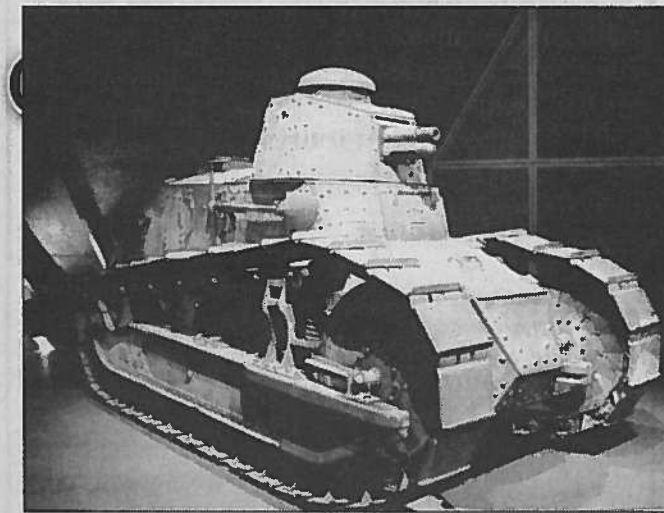
Photo by Kansas City Convention & Visitors Association

by rolling hills, pastures and farmlands. This small town celebrated its 175th birthday in 2012 and at the Main Street Galleria you can still get a cherry coke at the old-fashioned soda fountain and then stroll through the shops. Or grab a beer and a bite to eat at the Weston Brewing Company which also gives tours of their underground laagering cellars that were built in 1842. The Weston Red Barn Farm does barnyard tours, tractor rides and tours of their apple orchard. Be sure to peruse their onsite country store for tasty take-home treats.

In nearby Independence, Missouri you can get a glimpse into the life

Truman and his wife returned to after their time in the White House. Independence was also the last stopping point during the pioneer days before embarking on one of the,

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