



Jewel of Detroit,  
Ode to Belle Isle

Belle Isle, what can we say about Detroit's very own island other than iconic. The 982-acre island park sitting between Michigan and Canada is a getaway for nature and beach lovers, meeting spots for family reunions and gatherings, hangouts for car clubs, or just a place to escape.

Home to the first of its kind, the Belle Isle aquarium, a free and cool place to learn about Michigan's water ecosystem and more, the beautiful James Scott Memorial Fountain [messy story but that's the name], the Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory, and the only marble lighthouse in America, and so much more. A spot for all ages, the capsule of stories our island creates live on from generation to generation.

Ask anybody that really grew up in the city (which no i did not) the giant slide was a BIG deal. The speed at which one could go down was crazy just a few years ago, but historically it's something most Detroiters and Metro Detroiters like me, have done at least once in their lifetime.



city view from the isle



Despite the island not being found by Black people, it has become a place for refuge for us. We host our family reunions there. When the weather warms, we swarm there just to be outside at all times of the day. We mentioned it in an article earlier where we spoke with Ian, he shared his thoughts on using the space for more than just hanging out, things like hiking, running or biking, which not only is good for fun, but physical and mental health purposes—and something you see Black people doing more of each summer. He and Catie walked and talked for quite a bit of time and the things he shared you can discover on Belle Isle are things we don't even consider, it's literally its own entity.

Speaking of Black people occupying space, there was once a small beach club that my friend Rose started after feeling a bit excluded while attending a non-Black club. They'd meet early mornings, work, chat, meditate with coffee and just chill. Unfortunately life lived and she no longer meets, but it's a sign of one of those efforts to bring people like us together on the Isle.

I have my own memories, from hosting small events in honor of a book I once released, to pulling up and chilling with my friends, or going to sit quietly and think. It was also the first aquarium I took my son too before he could even understand what he was looking at. Now, he's been there several times. Learning to skip rocks, dance in the grass, and ride his scooter. It's really a magical place where we all go to grow up, because there's something in the air.

Despite its purity, there are messy stories from the past including riots, political and developer disagreements. Including the current discussion of making it a true private island and community meant for the rich—a concept nearly everyone is against because Belle Isle is for the people.

Speaking of, here's the rest of the article, sunsets, nature and memories on Detroit's Jewel.





conservatory





her water broke, hey Havi





the big ass fountain





stuff we don't even pay attention to





# nature





# baby's first aquarium





pure

