



This oil painting, “From Bridge Square - 1999,” beautifully illustrates Northfield. Says artist Marsha Kolstad Morrill Kitchel: “The town center of Northfield, is a study in intersecting lines and architectural beauty. This Minnesota cityscape depicts its Norman Rockwell atmosphere and carefully maintained architecture from the 1800s.”

## A stroll along Northfield’s Riverwalk

TUCKED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE of southern Minnesota sits the historic town of Northfield. The Cannon River gently weaves through the picturesque downtown. The rustic stone walk, that skirts the river’s edge, has become a scenic venue for a lively artists’ and farmers’ market each Saturday. The welcoming, family-friendly event called Riverwalk Market Fair draws out-of-town visitors as well as local patrons to explore the many sights, sounds, and tastes of the region.

Market goers can shop for a variety of fine art and fresh foods – from ceramics, paintings, and pottery to artisan breads, pastries, and organic fruits and vegetables – while musicians add to the ambiance on the casual Saturday morning stroll.

Northfield has long been known for its artist town lure. Numerous galleries, theaters, art centers with exhibits and art-related shops dot the town. Another mainstay in the Northfield area is the sustainable farming community – Market Fair blends the best of these worlds.

Riverwalk Market Fair Co-Founder Dean Kjerland expresses the vision of the market, “We are about local fine artists as entrepreneurs and local growers and producers as part of our local foodshed. We have united these major people, assets and a remarkable riverwalk infrastructure accenting the Cannon River’s course through the center of our town. Adding strolling buskers-style performing artists, and the neighboring shops and eateries of

the historic downtown, creates a unique public space.”

### FINE ART AND FRESH FOOD

For artist Marsha Kolstad Morrill Kitchel, Market Fair offered a chance to take a passion and make it a career. “I’ve exhibited paintings for decades and watch for opportunities, but the bulk of my paintings had never been seen by a large number of people – that all changed last summer,” says Kitchel. She’s excited to be back again this season with several new oil and pastel portraits and landscapes.

For Red Barn Farm of Northfield, “Our involvement in Riverwalk Market Fair last year gave our farm exposure and we were able to promote our garden products to the community,” shares owner

Tammy Winter. Tammy and Patrick Winter use their garden vegetables to prepare fresh and canned salsas, hot and sweet jellies, BBQ sauces and other specialty sauces in addition to offering fresh produce and free-range eggs at the market.

They hope the farm-to-table concept becomes more prominent here in the Midwest.

"Eating fresh, pesticide-free produce is so important. We want people to rethink the way they purchase produce," says Tammy Winter. She believes buying fresh foods locally benefits people's health and the local food infrastructure.

What sustains a community? Riverwalk Market Fair Co-Founder Gail Jones Hansen replies, "Ultimately, it is helping each other lead healthy, meaningful lives, linked by much more than geography. I love Market Fair because it plays a small role in bringing this community together around positive things – things that sustain us – good food and good art, in equal measure. It represents so many facets of our community, and invites us to celebrate that diversity for a few hours each Saturday."

### **MORE SITES AND SOUNDS**

Another favorite spot along the Cannon River is the Archer House River Inn, a grand 4-story French Second Empire inn that offers 36 newly renovated guest rooms and suites as well as a unique collection of restaurants and shops.

Northfield is also home to St. Olaf and Carleton colleges which provide outstanding arts and cultural events throughout the year – many open to the general public for a nominal fee. In August, the Bridge Chamber Music Festival will perform a series of concerts with a repertoire inspired by composer greats including



The four-story Archer House River Inn (above) is a beautifully restored attraction along the Cannon River. Try one of the 36 renovated rooms (below) for a night or visit some of the unique shops or restaurants.



Brahms, Mozart and Schubert to name a few; the concerts are held at various halls and music venues at the colleges.

The quaint, small-town appeal of Northfield attracts many to its unique setting and interesting array of things to do. Make a weekend out of it and experience them all. ▶

### **FYI**

For more information on the places and events in this article, visit the following websites:

- [www.riverwalkmarketfair.org](http://www.riverwalkmarketfair.org)
- [www.mkmkstudios.com](http://www.mkmkstudios.com)
- [www.redbarnfarmofnorthfield.com](http://www.redbarnfarmofnorthfield.com)
- [www.archerhouse.com](http://www.archerhouse.com)
- [www.bridgechamber.org](http://www.bridgechamber.org)