



# Fill 'er Up: The Glory Days of Wisconsin Gas Stations (Places Along the Way)

*Jim Draeger, Mark Speltz*

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Step back to the day when a visit to the gas station meant service with a smile, a wash of the windshield, and the cheerful question, "Fill 'er up?" Since their unremarkable beginnings as cheap shacks and curbside pumps at the dawn of the automobile age, gas stations have taken many forms and worn many guises: castles, cottages and teepees, Art Deco and Streamline Moderne, clad with wood, stucco, or gleaming porcelain in seemingly infinite variety.

The companion volume to the Wisconsin Public Television documentary of the same name, *Fill 'er Up: The Glory Days of Wisconsin Gas Stations* visits 60 Wisconsin gas stations that are still standing today and chronicles the history of these humble yet ubiquitous buildings. The book tells the larger story of the gas station's place in automobile culture and its evolution in tandem with American history, as well as the stories of the individuals influenced by the gas stations in their lives.

*Fill 'er Up* provides a glimpse into the glory days of gas stations, when full service and free oil changes were the rule and the local station was a gathering place for neighbors. More importantly, *Fill 'er Up* links the past and the present, showing why gas stations should be preserved and envisioning what place these historic structures can have in the 21st century and beyond.

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