



## State of Mind

Welcome to the Wisconsin collective.

BY JENNA KASHOU

**S**potting a Wisconsinite in the airport is a cinch. We wear our pride on our sleeves, hands and heads. We're obsessively self-referential. But why? ¶ "Communities are tied together by a collective consciousness," says Cary Costello, an associate professor of sociology at UW-Milwaukee. That bond is "made into reality by special items," such as totem poles, sacred objects, flags or, in Wisconsin, T-shirts. The totemic may be "just a piece of fabric, nothing special about it," he says, "but it's a symbol of a group's shared commitment to one another." ¶ And Wisconsin's commitment is fierce. "Collective consciousness is always thought to be strongest when people have the most in common," he says. "We live in a place where people settle in, or they come back to have children." ¶ These sacred symbols celebrate a Midwestern state genuinely fond of itself.

### WISKULLSIN T-SHIRT / \$25.99

Started in 2008 by two friends needing a T-shirt for a rugby match, Wiskullsin resonates with the city's edgier shadow-self. It boasts hats, undies, hoodies and what "should have been our first product: the Wiskullsin skateboard," says owner Joe Wisniewski (top). Buy at [wiskullsin.bigcartel.com](http://wiskullsin.bigcartel.com).

### WISCONSIN NECKLACES / \$55

Stevie Koerner admires Wisconsin from afar by cutting state-shaped necklaces from 99.9 percent pure silver. The Chicagoan says she appreciates Milwaukee's down-to-earth character. Hence the heart. Welcome, Stevie, to the collective consciousness. Buy at [imakeshinythings.com](http://imakeshinythings.com).



### MESSENGER BAGS & KEY CHAINS / \$80 and \$8-\$16

Milwaukee native Paul Isaac Dobratz has lived all over the city and takes his inspiration from its diversity. His label, Crispin Style, makes brightly colored leather, Wisconsin-centric key chains and vinyl messenger bags styled like baseball jerseys. Find his designs at ReThreads, 2943 N. Humboldt Blvd., and Luv Unlimited, 2649 S. Kinnickinnic Ave.



### SOUVENIR BANDANA / \$18

Headband, gift wrap, wall hanging – you decide. Local graphic designer Hannah Jablonski devised this '50s-throwback bandana that serves as a hand-drawn map of the city's lakefront (not to scale). Buy at [hanmademilwaukee.com](http://hanmademilwaukee.com).

### CITY OF THE FUTURE T-SHIRT / \$20

Fred Gillich, the artist behind the brands MilRockee, Too Much Metal and Too Much Rock for One Hand, crafts attire that's "optimistic and something my friends could be proud to wear while traveling." Smart, pioneering Milwaukee is exploding, he says. Purchase at Too Much Metal, 207 E. Buffalo St., or at [smacdesign.com](http://smacdesign.com).



### CUTTING BOARDS / \$20-\$30

Carver Al Petrie, owner of Faraway Farms in Manitowoc, crafts these food-safe boards out of cherry, maple and oak. "Wisconsin has a unique shape, and it brings out nice grains in the wood," he says. Buy at [wisconsinmade.com](http://wisconsinmade.com).



### WISCONSIN TATTOOS \$60-\$75, on average

Artists at Atomic Tattoos on North Avenue estimate they've inked more than 100 Wisconsin-themed tattoos in recent years. Grammy winner Justin Vernon (of Bon Iver, pictured) has an outline of the state on his upper chest. Tim Cigelske, running coach and Marquette PR specialist, has a similar design on his right bicep. "It helps when I'm traveling, and I can show people exactly where I'm from by pointing it out on my bicep," he says. Mark yourself at Atomic Tattoo, 1507 E. North Ave.

### MADE IN WISCONSIN ONESIES / \$12

Badger State baby pride? Indeed. Madisonian Rosy Hawbaker screen-prints these infant staples with hilarious flair. Buy at [etsy.com/shop/recreativecrafts](http://etsy.com/shop/recreativecrafts).



### CREAM CITY SPEAKS POSTER / \$30

Like a ransom note, this collage was pieced together from nearly 5,000 magazine, menu and brochure clippings. Artist Jennifer Lockwood says it took about 3,000 hours to assemble an image resembling the city's skyline. "Each person or place in the city is like a little brick or cobblestone," she says. "Without that person or thing, Milwaukee wouldn't be as great as it is." Buy at [wisconline.com](http://wisconline.com).

