High-flying Joyride

YANKEE AIR MUSEUM
BELLEVILLE, MICHIGAN

See Ann Arbor’s fall colors from above in one of four vintage aircraft at the Yankee Air Museum, located in nearby Belleville. The loud and fast World War II B-25 Yankee Warrior is known as the “hotrod of the fleet” and is the only one of its kind still flying.

Sit in the back and you can climb through the narrow chamber over the bomb bay, sliding yourself hand-over-hand for a look through the plane’s plexiglass nose. Or, fly in the open-cockpit Waco biplane, the C-47 “Hairless Joe” or the B-17 “Yankee Lady” for great views of this pretty college town and photos ops of the University of Michigan’s “Big House,” the largest football stadium in the country.

Afterward, tour the hangers of the Yankee Air Museum to admire nearly a dozen static aircraft on display. You’ll also learn about the real Rosie the Riveter, Rose Will Monroe, who worked on the assembly line of what was then the largest factory in the world. At the height of production, 42,000 employees (half women, and receiving equal pay for equal work) produced a B-24 Liberator here every 55 minutes. Rosie and her colleagues ensured that each of the bomber’s 300,000 rivets was secure.

Sit in the pilot’s seat of a KC-135 and see what it takes to fly a plane. There are plenty of hands-on activities to choose from at various exhibits and at the Exploration Station where kids can design their own airplane.

— Johanna Read