

Baroda, India, meets Baroda, Michigan

By LOUISE WREGG - HP Staff Writer

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Don Campbell / HP staff Three couples from Baroda, India, listen as Rick Moersch, co-owner of the recently opened Round Barn Brewery and Public House, and Baroda Village Clerk Tina Boehm (in back) lead a tour Friday in downtown Baroda.

BARODA - Three couples originally from Baroda, India, visited Baroda, Michigan, Friday afternoon, touring the recently opened Round Barn Brewery & Public House at 9151 First St., along with several wineries.

Other than the name, the two Barodas have little in common. The one in India has a population of 1.7 million, while the Michigan Baroda boasts a population of 873.

"It's a big difference between the two Barodas," said Mike Shah, who was with his wife, Sue Shah.

And he said 1.7 million people in a city is small for India. He said Mumbai (formerly Bombay) has a population of 12 million, and New Delhi, 17 million.

All three couples have lived in the Chicago area for many years, and most of the six are retired. The three couples also share the last name of Shah, even though they are only distantly related.

Niranjan Shah said he became interested in touring Michigan's Baroda while he was surfing the Internet trying to purchase something from India's Baroda a little more than a year ago.

The three couples have among them eight children and 11 grandchildren, with two of the children and three of the grandchildren living in Baroda, India. The rest are scattered across the United States.

"The main exportable item in India is the human being ... because there are so many people," Niranjan Shah joked.

Rick Moersch, co-owner of the Round Barn Brewery and Public House, gave the couples a tour of the business, including a behind-the-scenes look at how the beer is brewed. He opened the establishment July 26 with his two sons, Christian and Matthew Moersch.