



PHOTOGRAPHS: (MCCORMICK TEA, PORCH) JOHN NOLTNER; (RITTENHOUSE) KEVIN J. MIYAZAKI/REDUX; (ALEXANDER) JAY WILDE

In these 25 B&Bs, you won't find small beds, shared baths, frumpy decor or overzealous innkeepers. What you will find: luxurious linens, expertly prepared food, exquisitely maintained properties and modern amenities. (Not to mention hosts who balance gracious hospitality with a respect for privacy.) They also offer a variety of settings, whether you're looking for historic homes, foodie flourishes, urban neighborhoods or countryside views.



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TIMELESS TREASURES

Estates
with
history

These mansions represent some of the Midwest's finest architecture and most engaging history lessons. But the amenities prove they're not museums.

1 McCormick House Inn

Hayward, Wisconsin A refined British sensibility and traditional English breakfasts stand out in a North Woods town known for its fishing. At this 1887 Victorian, patrons enjoy pillow-top mattresses, Egyptian cotton sheets, original artwork in the rooms and an English-style garden. From \$145 (715/934-3339; mccormickhouseinn.com).

2 Old Rittenhouse Inn

Bayfield, Wisconsin Stately Queen Anne architecture meets modern amenities on a hill overlooking Lake Superior. The exquisitely plush guest rooms seem to go on forever, and the dining room infuses simple, seasonal dishes with sophisticated flavor. From \$140 (800/779-2129; rittenhouseinn.com).

3 Alexander Mansion Historic Bed and Breakfast

Winona, Minnesota CD players hide in phonographs at this 1886 Victorian mansion, run by innkeepers who welcome you graciously, cook amazing frittatas and disappear when you need one-on-one time. All five tasteful guest rooms in this Mississippi River town deliver sumptuous stays. From \$149

(507/474-4224; alexander mansionbb.com).

4 AG Thomson House Historic Bed and Breakfast

Duluth Wi-Fi, iPod docks, gas fireplaces and a hydromassage whirlpool tub outfit the restored 1909 Dutch Colonial. And the delicious French toast comes served with a Minnesota wild-rice patty. From \$189 (877/807-8077; thomsonhouse.biz).

5 Beiger Mansion

Mishawaka, Indiana A solarium, an outdoor pool and a workout room eventually pulled us away from the sleigh bed, layers of pillows and custom-made bathrobes at the Neoclassical limestone home. Eventually. From \$140 (800/437-0131; beigermansion.com).

6 Schenck Mansion Bed and Breakfast

Vevay, Indiana In a town that overlooks the Ohio River, a renovated 1874 mansion has four airy guest rooms; a three-room suite with a king-size sleigh bed, two fireplaces and a claw-foot tub; and a vineyard for strolling. Playful ghosts are said to haunt the home and sometimes appear in guests' photos. From \$150 (877/594-2876; schenckmansion.com).



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FOODIE FLOURISHES

In very
good
taste

The food at all our B&Bs is exceptional. But these destinations in particular revel in the opportunity to showcase culinary talents and local bounty.

1 Wickwood Inn Saugatuck, Michigan Owner Julee Rosso, coauthor of *The Silver Palate Cookbook*, treats her B&B guests to an abundant champagne brunch, playful afternoon sweets and an evening hors d'oeuvres buffet. From \$285 (800/385-1174; wickwoodinn.com).

2 Southmoreland on the Plaza Kansas City, Missouri A short walk from Country Club Plaza, Southmoreland's guests can sip strawberry-mango frappes on Saturday mornings before the breakfast. In summer, a barbecue breakfast includes molasses-brined pork chops and croissant French toast stuffed with grilled peaches. From \$135 (816/531-7979; southmoreland.com).

3 Chestnut Street Inn Sheffield, Illinois You won't know what's more stunning—the \$30 four-course dinner or that you found it in this little central Illinois town of 950. No matter. Just pace yourself as you sample huge fresh popovers, buttery-garlicky shrimp scampi, tender chicken

Parmesan covered in fresh buffalo mozzarella, and crème brûlée flavored with orange blossom water. From \$119 (800/537-1304; chestnut-inn.com).

4 Songbird Prairie Bed and Breakfast Valparaiso, Indiana Breakfasts start with plated decor of fresh-cut flowers and herbs from the garden—all to showcase glazed poached pears, fresh scones, French toast soufflé and Bananas Barbara, a not-as-sweet take on the classic bananas Foster dessert that's named for the owner. From \$199 (877/766-4273; songbirdprairie.com).

5 Vrooman Mansion Bloomington, Illinois Spend an evening in this 1869 home and imagine the visits from Eleanor Roosevelt and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan. The seasonal breakfast stuns: a menu of fresh fruit sprinkled with crystallized ginger, whole-grain waffles studded with pecans and eggs baked in a slew of herbs. From \$100 (877/346-6488; vroomanmansion.com).

PHOTOGRAPHS: (WICKWOOD) ED GOLICH; (SOUTHMORELAND) DOUGLAS SMITH; (CHESTNUT) COURTESY OF CHESTNUT STREET INN



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PHOTOGRAPHS: (CASTLE) HARLAND SCHUSTER; (FLEUR-DE-LYS) JASON DONNELLY

URBAN COMFORTS

Quiet amid the bustle

For travelers eager to explore cities, these homes offer finely honed, personalized service you just won't find at traditional hotels.

1 The Castle Inn Riverside

Wichita, Kansas An 1888 Scottish-looking castle along the Little Arkansas River has 14 distinctive rooms and suites, a 665-year-old fireplace and a rose garden. Guests can watch Riverfest from the porch—and get breakfast on weekends. From \$125 (800/580-1131; castleinnriverside.com).

2 Fleur-de-Lys Mansion

St. Louis Drink in the view of the historic neighborhood from the balcony hot tub at this 1913 Tudor Revival, or just unwind under a silk comforter. For breakfast, guests sink into eggs baked with Brie before walking to the lovely Tower Grove Park. From \$195 (888/693-3500; thefleurdelys.com).

3 J. Palen House

Cleveland Victorian decor meets huge baths with rain showers at this B&B on the West Side. The innkeeper seems to know exactly when guests want some attention and when they don't. From \$159 (216/664-0813; jpalenhouse.com).

4 Atwood House Bed and Breakfast

Lincoln, Nebraska Fresh-cut flowers, chocolates, bath salts and terry robes pamper couples looking for a getaway near the Haymarket, a lively

shopping and dining district in this capital city. In the morning, you'll get heart-shape cranberry muffins. From \$115 (800/884-6554; atwoodhouse.com).

5 Beall Mansion

Alton, Illinois A concierge e-mail when you book asks how you like your coffee. And a 24-hour chocolate buffet? We could get used to this kind of service (and to the huge bathrooms, many with whirlpools). From \$169 (866/843-2325; beallmansion.com).

6 Dakotah Rose Bed and Breakfast

Minot, North Dakota Away from the highways and the mall, the 1906 Dakotah Rose has leaded-glass windows and carefully inlaid hardwood floors—plus king beds, flat-screen TVs and spacious baths. For breakfast: peach French toast. From \$88 (701/838-3548; dakotahrose.com).

7 Harvey House Bed and Breakfast

Oak Park, Illinois Chic bunny touches inspired by the 1950s Jimmy Stewart film *Harvey* deck the three-story brick B&B 8 miles west of Chicago's Loop. Guests also enjoy in-room massages and luxe suites. From \$205 (708/848-6810; harveyhousebb.com).



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COUNTRY RESPITES

Lovely
pastoral
escapes

Warm hospitality, scenic vistas and hearty breakfasts draw travelers out of town for some much-needed peace and quiet.

1 Circle S Ranch and Country Inn

Lawrence, Kansas It looks like a rustic barn, but we know pioneers didn't have waffle-weave robes, double-sided fireplaces and facials. Still, we love the soothing porch rockers and the apricots picked from the owner's great-grandmother's tree. From \$150 (785/843-4124; circlesranch.com).

2 Journey Inn Maiden Rock, Wisconsin Set on 66 acres, this modern farmhouse uses solar heating, aromatherapy, local food and organic decor to create an Earth-friendly escape. Guests stay in four guest rooms and a two-bedroom cottage; weekend brunches feature a kale frittata and roasted potatoes. From \$165 (715/448-2424; journeyinn.net).

3 The Rooster's Nest Winchester, Ohio Set inside a tiny historic log cabin, Rooster's Nest uses roosters throughout its rustic interior. The patchwork quilts on the beds fit the area's Amish influence, and the breakfast, complete with raspberry-stuffed French toast, is a treat. From \$110 (877/386-3302; roostersnest.net).

4 Sweetgrass Cove Guesthouse and Bodywork Studio Grand Portage, Minnesota Active guests come to this Zen-like Lake Superior spot intending to hike and kayak. But

the Finnish sauna, hot tub and massages lull people into languid stays, fueled by hearty breakfasts, organic juices and fresh scones. From \$150 (866/475-2421; sweetgrasscove.com).

5 Buffalo Rock Lodge Keystone South Dakota

Guests gaze at Mount Rushmore as they nibble on garden-fresh veggies and bacon cooked with crushed pecans and brown sugar. The log cabin-style B&B with three guest rooms offers jetted tubs and a living room fireplace made of Black Hills stones. From \$150 (888/564-5634; buffalo-rock.net).

6 Copperstone Inn Rockton, Illinois Opened in 2008, this 1858 limestone home has blossomed into a sophisticated wonder, with guests enjoying a home theater, a you-pick apple orchard and hiking trails that weave through an oak grove. From \$199 (815/629-9999; copperstoneinn.com).

7 Honeybee Inn Bed and Breakfast Horicon, Wisconsin Bird-watchers visit Horicon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge, then come to this Victorian to relax on four-poster feather beds and in showers with wall-mounted jet sprays. If you skip breakfast for early-morning birding, get muffins to go. From \$139 (920/485-4855; honeybeeinn.com). **MAL**

