



Midwest Traveler®

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Once again this year we've done the thankless "work" of seeking out 10 of the area's most remarkable retreats. Lawn games and lounging at a remote lakeside lodge? Certainly, sir. Country comforts and a place to saddle up? Yes, ma'am. Stretch your sea legs out on the quarterdeck? Aye, aye, captain. It's time to gather up the binoculars and hiking boots—and that stack of magazines that's been waiting all summer—and start planning your next escape.



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BY ANN M. BAUER, TIM GIHRING, AND RACHEL HUTTON

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STOUT'S ISLAND LODGE

BIRCHWOOD, WISCONSIN / Chicago millionaire Frank D. Stout loved his island retreat so much, the story goes, that when he knew he was dying, he well-known race-car driver to speed him there, so he could take his last bre place that had given him so many fond memories. He didn't make it, passin nearby Rice Lake. But the Island of Happy Days, as he called it, is truly to c

In 1900, Stout inherited part of his father's lumber fortune and quickly beca the country's richest men. He acquired the 28-acre island in the middle of 1 Red Cedar Lake and spent \$1.5 million (in 1915 dollars) building a summer there in the fashion of the famous Adirondack camps, including cabins for h guest and servant quarters, a recreation hall, and a boathouse. (He also bu Tagalong Golf Course on the mainland, modeled after Scotland's St. Andrew courses and still open for play.) These log buildings—recognized by the Nati Historic Register—are still the heart of Stout's Island Lodge, and they're so anachronistic that guests may be moved to don white flannels and ties to p on the Great Lawn.

Within the main lodge, the shore lodge, and the surrounding cabins, there a 40 accommodations. The main lodge is something out of a Bavarian fairy ta wood, four-inch plank floors, and a vaulted ceiling crossed by heavy carved imported from Germany. Snowshoes, giant wooden skis, and a few taxiderr heads mix with old photographs of the Stout family at play. In the saloon, t wood and leather furniture of the Arts and Crafts Movement offers classic c relaxing with a brandy old-fashioned. Or two.

The cabins blend into the trees; dark-stained, their roofs green with moss, .

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to rise organically out of the ground. Railings are often made of sticks. Many cabins have screened porches and fireplaces and are furnished with antique including a canopy bed here and there; the newer ones have the carpet and wood décor of modern getaways. All, of course, are quiet—no cars, no inter only way to access the island is via the ferry that returns to the mainland o hour.

A tennis court, croquet lawn, and an assortment of kayaks, canoes, and boats available. For real solitude, wander the smaller, uninhabited island linked by bridge, a structure given to Stout by Andrew Carnegie. The boathouse boasts room with Ping-Pong, billiards, and the resort's only television. Stout used to office in this room overlooking the lake; stock prices received via telegraph scribbled on the walls. They've long since been painted over, but Stout's role remains, a reminder of the man whose idyllic retreat can now be yours. —T GIHRING

» **Stout's Island Lodge**, 2799 27th St., Birchwood, Wisconsin, 715-354-3 <http://www.stoutslodge.com/>

THE BUNKHOUSE

HOUSTON, MINNESOTA / "This was a fluke, actually," says Jim Schultz, the Bunkhouse at Silver Creek Ranch, just outside of Houston, about his for hospitality world. Fourteen years ago, Jim's wife, Marlene, was outside was windows when she was approached by a group of Wisconsin deer hunters w looking for a place to spend the night. Marlene offered them the small room to their indoor horse arena (which they'd been using to store tack and host meetings). And the Bunkhouse was born.

Since then, the Schultzes have upgraded from air mattresses to rustic log beds (made by Jim and a neighboring craftsman) that are covered with handmade (some made by Jim's mother). The utilitarian space has been transformed into a cabin that sleeps eight. The furnishings certainly don't scream luxury: a refrigerator and refrigerator, a cowboy hat hanging on the wall, a snapshot of Jim riding buffalo (of *Dances with Wolves* fame) in a local parade. But the digs themselves novel by design. Two large windows look directly into the horse arena, so the chairs can double as VIP box seats, and the adjacent concrete silo has been into a bedroom. The way the Schultzes see it, snorers can be quarantined, a dad can have some privacy, and a proper gentleman traveling with a group won't have to sleep in his truck.

The Bunkhouse primarily attracts equestrians, as the ranch is surrounded by of trails on 1,600 acres of hills and valleys that Jim refers to as the "mountain Minnesota." But it also draws deer and turkey hunters, bicyclists, snowmobilers, and small groups looking to rest up or horse around. "We've had everyone from newlyweds," Jim remarks.

Jim and Marlene are horse people. They own six horses and have space to spare paddock more than twice that number. A musty tack room in the barn holds up of the family's equine expertise: more than a hundred trophies earned at horse over the years. Unfortunately for novice riders, the Bunkhouse is strictly BY your own horse. ("Too many of those damned lawyers around," jokes Jim, who understands liability—he has a small legal practice in downtown Houston, where Marlene also works.)

The Bunkhouse isn't exactly a bed and breakfast—coffee, sarsaparilla, and jerky are more of a sunup snack. But repeat guests don't seem to mind. "A down in southern Minnesota," Jim hollers to a departing guest, "y'all come back! And they do. —RACHEL HUTTON

» **The Bunkhouse**, 501 S. Jefferson, Houston, 507-696-2000 or 507-696- (business hours), www.bluffcountry.com/bunkhouse.htm

THE COVINGTON INN

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA / There's a reason sailors tend to be small. Boats with six-foot ceilings, tight spiral staircases, beds tucked into crannies, and hallways in which even an average man's shoulders will brush both walls. T Covington is no exception.

The former towboat, now updated, spit-shined, and called the Covington In permanently moored off the main pier at Harriet Island in St. Paul. Fans of may be disappointed to learn that the No Wake Café, which shared the boat B&B and was run by the previous owners, is no more. Liz Miller, who served on-site innkeeper for two years before buying the Covington in early 2004, operates the place strictly as a B&B. But her breakfasts—baked French toast, caramel applesauce, bacon, fresh fruit, orange juice, and coffee—may make a bit easier to bear.

Small- to mid-size guests will be more than comfortable on the Covington. where breakfast is served and backgammon players converge around the fire has four small tables and shelves stocked with books such as *Moby-Dick* and *Twain's Mississippi*. Adjoining it is the Mates Quarters, where you can well see slightly drunken dockhands retiring for the evening. The furnishings are sparse; the bathroom offers guests the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to use a Puller commode—a miniature stainless steel toilet that retracts into a pocket in the

Claustrophobics may want to avoid the Riverview Suite downstairs, where they're on a platform enclosed on three sides and porthole windows provide the view. On the top deck, however, the Master's Quarters offers a nice vista as well as a bed, easy chairs, a private entrance to the deck, and a regulation-size toilet. The Pilot House Suite that most mariners would choose: two levels with a bedroom and a small sitting room at the very top of the boat, up a set of metal stairs you will find a comfy couch, a table for two, and the navigation controls.

The Covington is a unique experience—beloved by those who want to be lulled to sleep by the sound of lapping water. Events on nearby Harriet Island, such as A Taste of Minnesota, are a draw as well. And any time there are fireworks off, this is the place to be. They explode right over the boat—likely the Twirler's most authentic display of bombs bursting in midair. —ANN M. BAUER

» **The Covington Inn**, 100 Harriet Island Rd., B3, St. Paul, 651-292-1411
<http://www.covingtoninn.com/>

SWEETGRASS COVE GUESTHOUSE & BODYWORK STUDIO

GRAND PORTAGE, MINNESOTA / Rick Anderson loves a good squall. With the wooden house just 25 yards from the rocky shore of Lake Superior—his law giving way to the churning foam of three-foot waves—the proprietor of Sweet Grass Cove Guesthouse & Bodywork Studio takes to his outdoor hot tub when the Gitche-Gami rides in on snow and rain. "There's nothing like it," he says of the 104-degree water as the sky turns white around him.

That Anderson should revel in nature's violence is intriguing given the calm, spiritual nature of his combination bed and breakfast and massage spa. Sweet Grass Cove is a very private place, about 12 miles from the Canadian border and north of Grand Marais on scenic Highway 61; the only nearby settlement is Grand Portage, another mile or so up the road. This is the heart of the Grand Portage Reservation—more than 37,000 tribally owned acres and about 600 residents. Anderson is a member of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippew

parents live in Grand Marais), though for many years he traveled the world as an officer on a cruise ship and led tour groups before resettling here. Other than the eagles, and seagulls, you're likely to see only Anderson, his partner Richard Lucy, their gregarious Irish terrier. "She was kind of a hothouse flower at first," says Anderson. "Now she's a real rez dog."

Anderson never liked the forced camaraderie of many bed and breakfasts, and Sweetgrass emphasizes solitude. No sign marks the driveway, and no more guests are accommodated at a time, staying in a private wing of the house that feels like a separate cottage. Anderson, rather than come through the house, carries breakfast across the deck to your table.

The guest quarters include a living room decorated with acquisitions from Anderson's travels—Iranian rugs, a Buddha on the windowsill—with a seven-foot window and organic coffee ready to percolate, and a stack of *National Geographics* on the staircase leads to a cozy sleeping nook lofted in the house's quiet wing. A table is where Anderson sets up his massage table if you're game (an hour for \$50). Sweetgrass also offers a sea-salt body scrub and herbal wrap. Guests typically come for the quiet works—the silence, the nature, and the mini-spa experience. "It's a place where, if you want to, you can feel transformed," Anderson says.

Sweetgrass contradicts the notion that luxury means sleek and swank. In the backyard, a classic wood-fueled Finnish sauna stands a few feet from the house on a wooden deck. It is almost rustic and almost chic—*rustchic*. Anderson's breakfasts include scones, a fruit plate, and waffles covered in strawberries. He also offers dinner, which is guaranteed to be the best for miles around—fresh lake fish and asparagus, garnished with rosemary cut from his own herb garden.

As dusk falls, Anderson brings some fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies. "Let me tell you, you're going to get a storm tonight!" he notes gleefully.

The hot tub is all yours. —TIM GIHRING

» **Sweetgrass Cove Guesthouse & Bodywork Studio**, 6880 E. Hwy. 61, Portage, 218-475-2421 or 866-475-2421, <http://www.sweetgrasscove.com>

THE GUEST HOUSE AT THE VAN DUSEN MANSION

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA / Don't be fooled by the urban street corner where the Van Dusen Mansion sits. Walk inside the gates and through the massive doors at 1900 LaSalle and it's a little like that moment in *The Wizard of Oz* when everything goes from black and white to color—only here, the movement is from the 21st century to the late 19th, and from city traffic and noise to a cool, clear

air. The Romanesque structure was built in 1892 as the home of grain elevator owner George Washington Van Dusen and his wife, Nancy. Since then, it's served as headquarters for Hamline University's law school and Horst Rechelbacher's cosmetology school. In the mid-1990s, it was slated for demolition, then saved at the eleventh hour by preservationists and declared a historic landmark.

Current owner and innkeeper Chris Viken has operated the Van Dusen since 2000 and kept its furnishings as true to period as possible. The main floor's three parlors feature stone fireplaces, tasseled hassocks, candelabras, and the Asian tapestries that were popular in 1890s home décor. There's a music room with an ornately carved piano and a grand piano. The dining room has a coffered ceiling and the sort of long covered table seen in Gothic films.

But there is none of the chilliness you might expect to find in a stone castle. The rooms are spotlessly clean, glowing with the light of squat lamps on polished

An enormous Caravaggio-style painting hangs over the central staircase. A silky moppet of a dog, accompanies newcomers as they take the grand

There are four guest suites at the Van Dusen, each named after one of the who worked on the restoration project and sporting his particular taste in d Timothy's Room, for instance, is decorated in apricot tones with cream-colored around the fireplace; a ceiling fan spins lazily in the oversized bathroom, a sitting room includes extra sleeping space. Michael's Room was inspired by Alhambra and features darker hues, reading lights over the bed, soft easy c pillars, and stone surrounding the double whirlpool bath.

Viken's husband, Earl Clausen, runs the event center, two separate building grounds. The Carriage House provides seating for up to 126; the newer, mc Grand Parlor can accommodate 200 for a sit-down dinner and up to 350 for casual reception.

But Viken and Clausen are careful to draw lines between their individual cor "It's important to me that we keep the event business separate from the gu house," she says. "People visit us from all over the world, and they want to history of the place. I know I'm still in awe, every day." —ANN M. BAUER

» **The Guest House at the Van Dusen Mansion**, 1900 LaSalle Ave., Mini 612-874-1900, <http://www.vandusencenter.com/>

HABBERSTAD HOUSE

LANESBORO, MINNESOTA / Considering that it's been a private residence and breakfast, a hospital, a nursing home, and a boarding house that shelter people, the Habberstad House is in excellent condition. Perhaps it's made of hardy stock as its Norwegian American namesake, Olaf Habberstad, co-own Scanlan-Habberstad Bank, who built the Queen Anne Victorian in 1897. It's a quaint residential neighborhood just south of downtown Lanesboro, two b Michael Scanlan's home, which also became a bed and breakfast.

The home's main floor has retained many original details: pocket doors, a h built-in buffet, tooled leather wall-coverings in the foyer and front stairway, woodwork (which at one time was covered with white paint, until a previous spent five years stripping it with a toothbrush).

Guest rooms upstairs give visitors the option of turning back the clock or liv present. Of the three period rooms, the Rose Suite, a two-room respite with hued walls that bring out the reddish tones of its Queen Ann cherry furnishi retains the most history. In the 1930s, when the Habberstad House served hospital, the suite was designated as the birthing room. In 2002, current hc Nancy and Dave Huisenga hosted a reunion for those who had been born at Habberstad. More than 100 people attended, and one of the doctors' daugh entertained the group with reminiscences of patients who paid their bills in potatoes, and cabbages.

The spacious third-floor Amish Suite is tucked into the home's peaked roofli ceiling and walls are covered with knotty pine. (Ironically, it's the only gues the house with a TV/VCR.) The bright Scandinavian Room has pine wainsco stained in traditional muted reds and blues, a two-person whirlpool, a balco overlooking the manicured gardens, and a stuffed nisse (an elf in Scandinav folklore) who keeps a watchful eye on things. The most modern accommodi found in the newly built Carriage House, a separate studio that resembles a loft with its galley kitchen, sleek contemporary living space, and minimalist décor.

No matter where guests choose to slumber, they'll awaken to the same deli scents of caramelized rhubarb French toast or Dutch apple pannekoeken—d breakfasts designed to stand the test of time. —RACHEL HUTTON

» **Habberstad House**, 706 S. Fillmore Ave., Lanesboro, 507-467-3560, <http://www.habberstadhouse.com/>

IMMIGRANT HOUSE

DULUTH, MINNESOTA / Linda Paulsen doesn't mind telling you that she h ghosts when she first moved into the 1890 Alfred E. McCordic House in the district of Duluth. She believes they were the McCordic kids. If they were si waiting for the house to come into good hands, well, that might explain why hasn't heard them since. She loves this big old house and knows more abou history and previous owners than many folks know about their own childrer

McCordic was a Canadian emigrant, which explains the name Paulsen has g bed and breakfast. He hired the same homebuilders known for constructing nearby Ellery House Bed and Breakfast and finished it with the finest touche day, including a Tiffany glass green-tiled fireplace in the living room. By the however, the house was in decline, and a few decades later a date with the ball was all but certain. The place was saved, however, and Paulsen has res historic feel with good taste, opting not for Victorian fluff but Arts and Craft simplicity.

Paulsen often hosts gatherings in the home ("If it's legal, moral, and a sma give me a call," she says). Two rooms are available for guests and a third, f blue-tiled fireplace, is nearing completion. The Turret Room is a favorite; a private patio offers views of Lake Superior and the Lift Bridge. Both rooms ; outfitted with antiques. Downstairs, a small library with glass bookshelves i browsing; guests can fight with Paulsen's two cats for a spot on an old leath chair or retreat to the sun porch out back and settle into wicker furniture.

Paulsen, who grew up on the Iron Range and lived for several years in Latir is a former nurse. "Running a B&B is kind of like nursing," she says. "You w to be comfortable and tended." In any case, breakfast is nothing like hospit it's Scandinavian style, featuring bread pudding with apples from her orchai pancakes, scrambled eggs, smoked salmon, and broiled asparagus.

You'd never guess, too, that a short walk through the alley leads to the hon garden, where deer forage and a small gazebo sits atop a hill. How strange woods in downtown Duluth—more ghosts from another time. —TIM GIHRIN

» **Immigrant House**, 2104 E. Superior St., Duluth, 877-724-3090 or 218- <http://www.immigranthouse.com/>

GOLDEN LANTERN INN

RED WING, MINNESOTA / This Tudor revival home, built in 1932 by J. R. then-president of Red Wing Shoe Company, displays the same master craft as the famously sturdy footwear. Stone cladding and decorative half-timber medieval European buildings. Inside, beautiful hardwoods are incorporated the home, most stunningly in a walnut staircase and oak-paneled library wi style furniture. Overall, the effect is simple and classic. Owners Pat and Gar McKenna, who bought the Golden Lantern a year ago, say they didn't want guests to feel as if they were walking into a place where they couldn't touc Comparing the Lantern to Victorian-style bed and breakfasts, Pat describes environment as being "more restful, not quite as busy."

Since many of the guest rooms are suites, the Golden Lantern is popular wi

who shy away from mingling in the living room or making small talk at the table, or those who may want a little more privacy when celebrating an anniversary or honeymoon. It's quite possible for guests to spend an entire weekend in the inn without feeling cramped in style or space—particularly in the aptly named F Suite, the most spacious and secluded room. Pat jokingly refers to it as the 'em in, check 'em out" suite—these may be the only times she sees the guests.

Visitors may have a full breakfast delivered to their room, but it's a shame not to sit at a small bistro table or the white wicker sofa and enjoy a morning meal in the inn's enclosed sun porch. Some of Pat and Gary's specialties include crepes, freshly baked muffins, and bananas Foster—as well as their chocolate cookies, which always receive rave reviews. A naturally experimental cook, Gary makes an extra effort to accommodate special diets, and his vegan dishes regularly have been winning accolades.

Fall colors are the town's biggest draw, but there are lovely hues in summer, too. Spring is right in the Lantern's backyard: orange flames flickering in the stone fire pit on the patio, green vines climbing the wooden fence, and tiny pink flowers in the garden. —RACHEL HUTTON

» **Golden Lantern Inn**, 721 East Ave., Red Wing, 888-288-3315, <http://www.goldenlantern.com/>

THE OUTING LODGE AT PINE POINT PARK

STILLWATER, MINNESOTA / Many resorts offer wooded trails, Georgian-style luxurious whirlpool tubs, and fabulous fare. But only the Outing Lodge at Pine Point Park has Carlota Estevez Gohlke—native of Argentina, accomplished scientist, amateur historian, and soft-spoken lady of the manor.

Pine Point was founded in 1858 as a "poor farm": a residence for widows and orphans, children and the indigent, elderly, and disabled. In the 1920s, wealthy patrons built a mammoth two-story brick edifice to house workers, and the property became a prosperous dairy farm. But in the post-New Deal 1950s, the poor farm was abandoned and its main building was used as a rest home for the next 20 years. In the 1980s, Stillwater developer Lee Gohlke discovered the abandoned structure adjacent to the more than 300-acre Pine Point Park—and converted it into a stylish B&B and conference center.

Some 15 years later, he met Carlota. She had come to the University of Minnesota in 1995 on a Fulbright scholarship to study the philosophy of science. A widow with two small children, she had managed to work on her master's degree and part-time job. But when she met Gohlke—entrepreneur, Mercedes-Benz collector, and half-scholarship student of the sciences—she soon changed course.

Today, Carlota manages the Outing Lodge, greeting guests, arranging wedding receptions, and designing theme rooms. The Bob Dylan suite features two bedrooms, a Jacuzzi bathtub, a queen-size log bed, and memorabilia of the folk singer. The Amelia Earhart is a smaller space with a four-poster canopy bed and sunroom. And in the Eva Peron, guests can lounge with a book about the former first lady of Argentina on the enclosed porch or in the double Jacuzzi.

The Outing Lodge is open for B&B business year-round, and it also hosts an average of 40 to 50 weddings, parties, and conferences each year. Upstairs, there is a book-lined library that comfortably seats up to 35 for conferences or small parties. The main level can be transformed to seat 100 or more. Downstairs, the public eating area has the feel of a turn-of-the-century English inn, with candelabra-shaped chandelier tables, and two stone fireplaces large enough for a small adult to walk inside. The Lodge employs two chefs and offers everything from stromboli made with house-

Gruyère to salmon in a light saffron beurre blanc.

But the most unusual thing about this particular Minnesota getaway—other exotic hostess—is that it is the site of the annual Seven Pines Symposium, a gathering of scholars in physics, history, and philosophy. You cannot book a room during symposia weeks (generally in late May or early June) because the Outing is for presenters, thinkers, students, and science writers. But visit any other time and you'll find the vapor of their discussions lingers in the old manse. Rent a suite, walk the trails, enjoy a whirlpool bath, enjoy a continental breakfast on the patio—and absorb the intellectual erudition that float through the air. —ANN M. BAUER

» **The Outing Lodge at Pine Point Park**, 11661 Myeron Rd., Stillwater, MN 55082-9747, <http://www.outinglodge.com/>

WHITELEY CREEK HOMESTEAD

BRainerd, MINNESOTA / Just a couple of miles outside Brainerd, a clawfoot bed frame, a rusty bed frame, and a multi-paneled window with one lonely pane of glass. Turn off Highway 210 for Whiteley Creek Homestead. Don't fret—the accommodations are *much* better maintained. The roadside rummage is just what give guests a sense of the homestead's comfortable country character.

Whiteley Creek consists of a ranch-style house, three cottages, a large garage yardful of antique tractors, trucks, and cars. In an area known for its lakes, the homestead instead sits on the banks of a creek, and despite the low whoosh of highway traffic competing with the sound of chirping birds, the site has an old-fashioned charm as familiar as the clap of a screen door.

Owner Adrienne Cahoon grew up nearby on 160 acres, with no running water and indoor plumbing. There were 12 children in the family, and her mother baked loaves of bread every other day and attended to a constant cycle of laundry. She keeps her mother's memory alive by whipping up chocolate zucchini cakes and hanging the bed sheets on the clothesline to give them that impossible-to-duplicate scent.

The two guest rooms in the house, furnished with twig headboards and handles that double as sink faucets, feel a little like they were formerly inhabited by those who have since headed off to college. Of the cottages, the best spot to stay is the Kitchen Window, a small barn that once housed two horses. It now contains a kitchen and sitting room on the ground floor and a bedroom/bath in the hayloft. For those who aren't phobic about short ceilings, or being able to see down through the gaps between floorboards, it's a great spot to tuck away and pretend to be living in pioneer days.

Breakfast, which often features vegetables and herbs picked straight from the garden, is served in a rehabilitated 1890s passenger train car decorated with mobiles of antique kitchen tools. Guests also like to gather on the wide screened porch on the back of the house to peruse the antique stoves, sewing machines, lanterns, and washing implements, or roast a few marshmallows in the cave fireplace after the sun has set. —RACHEL HUTTON

» **Whiteley Creek Homestead**, 12349 Whiteley Creek Tr., Brainerd, 218-838-1111, <http://www.whiteleycreek.com/> **MM**

Ann M. Bauer and **Tim Gihring** are senior writers and **Rachel Hutton** is a contributing editor for *Minnesota Monthly*.

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