

Introduction

To quote Dr. Seuss, "Oh the places you'll go!"

In the past forty years, this state has been blessed with the opening of hundreds of fine inns and bed-and-breakfast homes across both peninsulas. They come in all sizes and shapes and encompass a great variety from Queen Anne mansions to contemporary chic, urban oases to historic small-town getaways. They are tucked deep in forests and perch on islands. Some appeal to business travelers or families traveling with children. Some inspire romance. A few have everything you need for a remember-it-for-a-lifetime wedding. Several are homes built before Michigan women had the right to vote. One of my favorites was welcoming travelers before Michigan became a state!

They are as unique as snowflakes, and that, in part, is what makes them so appealing.

What they have in common is that they offer an *experience*. And they do that because you, the traveler, have said that's what you want. You say you want to make memories—good ones—of raising a glass of wine in front of a crackling fireplace, of four poster beds, sunsets and soaker tubs and perhaps a cat on your lap. You want to live, for a few days, like a lumber baron, a Victorian lady, a winemaker or a woodsman. You want to rekindle your love or get away with girlfriends, spend the day hiking, shop till you drop, dig deep into history or blow it all off with a glorious day at the beach. You want privacy or to meet other guests whose stories are as interesting as your own. You want good food and innkeepers who are warm and friendly and who happily introduce you to their corner of Michigan. And that is exactly what you'll find in these pages.

The most difficult part of this project was whittling down the list of inns for this edition from all the worthy options. To begin, I focused on inns with four rooms or more, though you will find a couple that are smaller. I looked for those incorporating environmentally friendly practices, and I asked about the ability to juggle diverse dietary needs of guests.

I looked for inns with on-site extras and discovered everything from restaurants and wineries to antique stores, spa services and great fish-

ing out the back door. The drawing card for some is their proximity to a hip urban area. For others, it's access to winter sports. One inn starred in a movie. A few are longtime favorites, and some simply grabbed me as soon as I walked through the door. And talk about architectural variety . . . from a nineteenth-century stagecoach stop to neoclassical, English Tudor to prairie style, French Normandy to contemporary log, I found it all.

Still, because of space, I had to leave out dozens that are absolutely top-notch. To help you find them, I've listed B&B associations and other resources at the end of the book.

I am occasionally asked why I include so much information about the innkeepers, and my answer, after so many years of meeting them, remains the same: in most cases, they are the heart and soul of an inn. At smaller B&Bs, it's often in their living room that you will spend the evening chatting with other guests and in their kitchen or dining room that you will continue conversations over morning coffee. An innkeeper gives a place its flavor and sets the mood.

Some innkeepers are accomplished artists, athletes or scholars. A few have had distinguished military careers. I have met some who are quiet and pensive and others who love to engage their guests in conversations that last long into the night. Generally, the smaller the inn the greater the presence of the innkeeper.

Innkeepers tell me many of their guests become friends. Guests tell me they visit an inn for the first time, usually, because of the amenities and location. They return because of the innkeepers.

Inns and B&Bs have become enormously popular, and some book rooms more than a year in advance. Whether you choose to make reservations online or by phone, do, always, make a reservation. Innkeepers will often ask when you plan to arrive, because they want to be there to greet you. If you're going to be late, please call to let them know your change of plans.

I happen to be a pick-up-the-phone-and-call traveler, and I recommend that method if you're going to a new lodging and you have questions or special requests. You can also ask about packages or special discounts that may not be on the inn's website. Here are some other things to consider when you talk to the innkeeper.

Bathrooms

Most inns these days have rooms with private baths. In fact, many of

the bathrooms include luxurious tubs, plush robes and lovely toiletries. Some lodgings have rooms with private baths, as well as a couple of rooms that share a bath or share separate mens' and womens' baths. Sometimes the baths are private but not attached. And a private bath might include a tub and shower or just one or the other. If it matters, ask what comes with your room.

Beds

These days, I see mostly queen- and king-size beds, twins and kings that can become twins. Occasionally I find antique bedsteads that are double-bed-size or even three-quarter. If the size of the bed matters to you, ask what's available.

Rates

The prices quoted here range from lowest rate at low season to highest rate at high season, for double occupancy. A wide range of room prices often indicates that the inn has rooms with a variety of amenities. If you are quoted a rate that is more than you want to spend, ask if a less expensive room is available. If you're celebrating, consider asking about extras that the inn might offer such as flowers, massage or private dining.

The rates here are meant only to give you an idea of prices. For exact rates at the time you plan to travel, check the website or call the innkeeper.

Getting together

Many inns and B&Bs offer a happy hour or social hour before dinner. It's an absolutely charming tradition, and innkeepers say that guests frequently end up going out to dinner together. Such fun! If you can arrive in time to attend, do.

The annex?

At some inns, new additions have been built onto the original structure or are freestanding elsewhere on the grounds. If you have a preference as to wing, floor or building, let the innkeeper know when you make a reservation.

Eating well

Food options . . . wow! We are a delightful nation of gluten-free, dairy-free, sugar-free, egg-free, vegetarian and vegan diners, and most innkeepers have become skilled at meeting our needs—with some notice. If you have dietary preferences, let them know when you make a reservation, and remind them when you check in.

Children

If you plan to travel with children, do mention them when you make a reservation. Many innkeepers limit their rooms to a maximum of two people, and some inns are simply not appropriate—or fun—for youngsters. If an innkeeper tells you his or her lodging is not suitable for kids, believe it and go elsewhere. Inns that welcome children, however, often have toys, cribs, rollaways and plenty of space where kids can be . . . kids.

Our other kids

Pets permitted? Not usually, though some inns will accept a small pet in a designated pet-friendly room. Pets in residence? Several, often to the delight of guests. I've heard stories of guests sending sympathy cards when they learned that a dog or cat they had become fond of at an inn passed away. If you have allergies, phobias, or pet peeves, ask the innkeepers if their pets are permitted in quarters shared by guests.

Staying connected . . . or not

Most inns offer Wi-Fi now, so I usually only mention it when it might seem incongruent. For example, you won't see a car on Mackinac Island, but you can get your e-mail there! Many inns have cable or satellite TV. Some innkeepers have put TVs in common areas only, and others eschew them altogether. If you need to be connected, ask about availability before you make a reservation.

Settling up

Payment options vary greatly at inns. Some are not set up to process credit-card payments, although they will accept them to secure your reservation. If you plan to pay with anything other than cash, ask about your options.

Thump in the night

In the midst of signing copies of my first novel, *Spirits & Wine*, a mystery with a ghost in it, it occurred to me to ask innkeepers about otherworldly guests who might be walking their halls. I am delighted to say there are several, including one who is, I am quite certain, a cat!

With a little help from my friends

I'm deeply grateful to my friends Marcelaine Lewis and Steve Wilson, and to my husband, Paul Collins—a triumvirate who visited several inns and reported back with all the details I would have looked for. Marcelaine has lived on the Keweenaw Peninsula for decades and covered two inns there. Steve's family has had a home on Bois Blanc Island since 1973, and he contributed to the narrative on Insel Haus. Paul has hunted, fished and camped in both peninsulas since he was a teenager, and he met with several innkeepers as he made his way across the state over the past two years. He has also been my go-to guy, editor of my first drafts, and the best cheerleader I can imagine. The assistance of these three resulted in a better book, with fascinating background information and observations I likely would have missed.

I am also grateful to my friend Cathy Russell, owner of the White Swan Inn and past president of the Michigan Lake to Lake Bed and Breakfast Association. Cathy was a terrific sounding board as I gathered information for this edition, and she pointed me toward several innkeepers I otherwise might not have met.

In the mid-1980s, I was an enthusiastic but shy writer with a great idea for a book, a signed contract with this publisher, and a lot of innkeepers to talk with. It was a scary proposition that required me to call strangers to tell them about a book called *Michigan's Town and Country Inns* that would feature inns and bed-and-breakfast homes across the state, and to convince them I knew what I was doing.

Stafford Smith and his lovely Bay View Inn already had a national reputation for fine accommodations and food by the time I started researching that first edition of the book. The inn was one of the few in Michigan featured in national guidebooks at the time. Stafford was hugely respected in the industry, and he was, to me, larger than life. I was nervous when I met him, and he put me completely at ease. He was kind and generous. He offered complimentary lodging while I did research in the area, and over the years he has spent hours answering my questions and encouraging my efforts. Stafford taught me about the

business of innkeeping by his gracious example, and I am very grateful to him.

I always intended this book to be, at its heart, a collection of stories. I want you to enjoy reading about these inns and learning about Michigan even if you never leave home, so I often ask innkeepers for anecdotes that I can share with you. Many are included here. They give an insider's look at this state's rich culture and history and a vision for its future that is being shaped, in part, by the innkeepers themselves. I am grateful to all of them for their openness, their generous offers of accommodations and their contagious love of people and innkeeping.

Sometimes things change. We update information as we get it, up to press time, but even as we put the final touches on this fifth edition, I can just about guarantee that somewhere an innkeeper is giving a prospective buyer a tour, and another is drawing up plans to add more rooms. Consider this book just a *taste* of all that Michigan has to offer in spectacular inns and bed-and-breakfast lodgings. Please use it as a springboard for your own tour of the state's back roads, blue roads and urban highways, and enjoy the adventure!

SUSAN NEWHOF

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