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Urban Guesthouses and B&Bs: A New Way to Experience Milwaukee

BY ERIN BLOODGOOD FEBRUARY 13, 2018 5:19 PM

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The Muse Gallery Guesthouse

The accommodation industry is shifting toward small cozy guesthouses and Milwaukee is picking up on the trend. When most of us imagine a bed and breakfast (B&B), we think of a remote cottage in the countryside, but Milwaukee has urban guesthouses and B&Bs that offer easy access to the city and a comfortable, welcoming place to rest your head at night. With the rise of the “sharing economy” through sites like Airbnb and Couchsurfing, people in the industry are realizing that travelers are looking for a “home away from home.”

Imagine for a moment that you are visiting a new city for a few days, and when you first arrive to your accommodation, you are greeted by a friendly face—the owner of the house. Rather than walking into a generic lobby, you enter what feels like home, with a personalized touch. You sit down in the common room with a warm cup of tea to have genuine conversation with the other guests, and suddenly this city doesn’t feel so strange.

As travelers, we are drawn to these small, unique businesses when looking for accommodations because we want a story. The structure and design of a guesthouse tells the story of its neighborhood, just as much as its owner does. By staying in a family-run guesthouse or B&B, you get the chance to meet the people who run it and see Milwaukee through their eyes. Not only will they reveal the hidden corners of Milwaukee, but they take the time to learn about you and your interests before suggesting the perfect outing. When traveling, the place where you stay should be as much a part of the experience as the rest of the city.

Milwaukee has six small, family-run guesthouses or B&Bs that are all notably unique. From Victorian-style bed and breakfasts to a guesthouse in the midst of flourishing

gardens and a cozy gallery space, each place adds a unique accent to the urban neighborhoods of this city.

Here they are in alphabetical order:



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Brumder Mansion

3046 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

414-342-9767 **Website**

The Brumder Mansion brings a different experience to the Concordia neighborhood. Built on Wisconsin Avenue in 1910 by George Brumder (1839-1910), the building has a theater in the basement and five bedrooms, most of which have a Jacuzzi and fireplace. Nine years ago, Tom and Julie Carr came from California, bought the Brumder Mansion and rebuilt the basement theater. Some guests come for romantic escapes in the bed and breakfast, while others come specifically for the theater.

“This isn’t a bed and breakfast; it’s a Hollywood set,” says Tom Carr. Stay a night during one of the performances, and you will be taken away into another world of fantasy and imaginary characters. The Brumder’s theater puts on four to five shows per year, made possible by production manager Amanda Hull, artistic director Tom Marks and Milwaukee Entertainment Group. Whether you are trying to solve a murder mystery or you are being swept up into the madness of the Hatter in Alice’s Wonderland, you won’t be bored. Don’t miss their upcoming shows including *Dancing with Hamlet*.



Kinn Guesthouse

2535 S Kinnickinnic Ave, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207

773-909-4947 **Website**

Originally from Chicago, Charles and Connie Bailey moved their family to Milwaukee in 2015 when they bought the Cream City brick building on Kinnickinnic Avenue in Bay View. After a year-and-a-half of restoring the building, the couple opened Kinn Guesthouse in March of 2017. The name Kinn comes from Charles' father and grandfather who ran the Drake hotels in Chicago and passed the trade down to him. The eight-room guesthouse has a chic modern feel with large windows in every room, making the rooms seem twice their actual size. All but one of the rooms and the spacious common area are on the second floor of the building, above the restaurant, Kindred.

Before you get to your room, you will be stopped by the stunning kitchen and living room space that is free for all the guests to use. Along with the deep-

cushioned couch, gallery wall and fully outfitted kitchen, the Baileys have a Nespresso machine, bottle of wine and popcorn waiting for their guests. “People care to live in a different way,” says Charles. “They want something that’s more cozy and comfortable and feels more like home than the big hotels.” If you stay at Kinn, you will most likely meet the charming couple and be treated to the Honey Pie pastries that they offer every weekend.

*Editor's Note: Kinn Guesthouse earned top honors in the 2017 Best of Milwaukee voting competition in the **Bed and Breakfast** category.*



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Manderley Bed and Breakfast

3026 W Wells St, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208 [414-459-1886](tel:414-459-1886) **Website**

For the last 17 years, Marie and Andrew Parker have been running Manderley Bed and Breakfast, making it the oldest running B&B in Milwaukee. Originally from the Milwaukee area, the couple decided to open the bed and breakfast once they discovered the

elaborate mansion on Wells Street in the Concordia neighborhood. “Even in its dilapidated condition, it had charm and appeal,” explains Andrew. After seven years of rebuilding the structure and designing the interior with hand-made stencils and hand-painted art, they finally opened their dream business. Because there were no other Milwaukee B&Bs at the time, the couple helped the city write the laws pertaining to bed and breakfasts, making Concordia the official Bed and Breakfast District of Milwaukee.

When you first walk up to the Manderley mansion, you will most likely be greeted by one of the friendly cats waiting for you on the porch. As you pass through the door into the house, you will be taken back in time to a Victorian era filled with old books, ornate wall décor and a warm fireplace. Andrew and Marie will make you feel right at home with friendly conversation over fresh breakfast from their backyard chicken coop and vegetable garden. There is no doubt these two are dedicated to their guests and to Milwaukee.



Muse Gallery Guesthouse

602 E Lincoln Ave, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207 [414-745-7735](tel:414-745-7735) **Website**

When you choose to stay at the Muse Gallery Guesthouse in the heart of Bay View, you may spend hours sitting and talking with Mary Ellen Hermann and Andrew Meechan—the owners of the place. The novelty of this guesthouse comes from the Milwaukee art hanging on its walls and the dedication the couple has for the local artists. All of the art changes quarterly, thanks to the curating of Renée “Luna” Bebeau. To see the work on display, stop in during one of their gallery events or during the Bay View Gallery Night.

As experienced travelers, Hermann and Meechan see the value in bed and breakfasts because of the well-traveled people they often meet in such places.

“When you have breakfast with them, you learn so many things, particularly the next two dozen places you want to go visit,” explains Mary Ellen. The guesthouse is meant to be an experience and a

welcoming place for travelers to relax and feel like they are part of the city.



5

Sanger House Gardens

1823 N Palmer St, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212 [414-640-6003](tel:414-640-6003) **Website**

While walking up the front stairs to the Sanger House Gardens through the lush greenery, you can look over the vast array of plants at the beautiful cityscape of Milwaukee. If you continue on the winding pathways through the arching branches and multitude of colors, you will reach the carriage house in the back of the garden. There is only one bedroom in this urban getaway, but it is a luxury space with two floors, kitchen, laundry machines and double doors that open to the gardens. Steve Bialk and Angela Duckert bought the Brewer's Hill property in 1985 and have been enhancing the gardens ever since.

About five years ago, they decided to start a wedding and event business in the space. Along with formal events, the couple has also hosted neighborhood garden clubs and participated in Doors Open Milwaukee 2017. After getting repeated requests for a guesthouse, Bialk and Duckert finally renovated the carriage house and opened the guesthouse last April. There is no breakfast included with your stay, but when you arrive, you'll get a personal tour of the gardens and personal suggestions for your Milwaukee stay. One of the best things about Sanger is that pets are allowed. It's a place where you get the best of both worlds: close proximity to the city and a hideaway amidst blooming flowers.



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Schuster Mansion Bed and Breakfast

3209 W Wells St, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208 [414-342-3210](tel:414-342-3210) [Website](#)

In that same Concordia neighborhood, you will find Schuster Mansion Bed and Breakfast, run by Rick and Laura Sue Mosier. They're known for their Victorian-style high tea and exceptional hospitality. If you want coffee or tea delivered to your room in the morning, a choice of breakfast from their menu that has not changed in 10 years and freshly-ironed sheets every night, then the Schuster Mansion is the place for you. As you wander through the halls of the mansion, you get lost in the relics adorning the walls and the hand-made decorations throughout the house. The attention to detail is unreal, even down to the shower curtain rings covered in fabric so they don't make a sound.

The moment you meet Rick and Laura Sue Mosier, you already feel like old friends. "It is so fun to meet people and learn about their lives and why they're here. We're part of people's lives," says Laura Sue. After talking with the couple for what could be hours, they will give you customized suggestions about the city based on your interests and their own secrets spots in Milwaukee.

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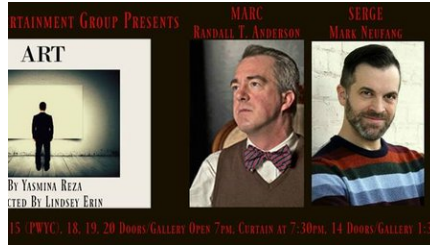
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