



Storybook Stays

Cozy up by a fireplace
and relax in the
inviting guest rooms
this winter at these
three dreamy inns

BY DIANNA STAMPFLER

PHOTO COURTESY OF C&C FRITZ PHOTOGRAPHY

PLAN IT!

Castle in the Country
castleinthecountry.com

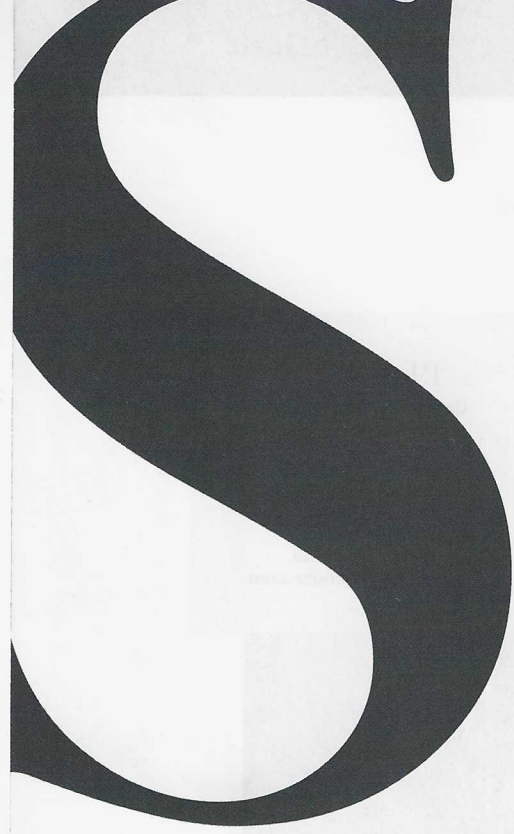
Henderson Castle
hendersoncastle.com

**The Historic
Webster House**
historicwebsterhouse.com



**Both pages,
clockwise from left:**
The Historic Webster
House in Bay City is
a treasured bed-and-
breakfast. The pretty
exterior of The Castle
in the Country is a
must-see. Henderson
Castle has shone
as a crown jewel of
the Kalamazoo
community since it was
completed in 1895.

HENDERSON CASTLE PHOTO COURTESY OF
WILLIAM DOLAK; CASTLE IN THE COUNTRY
PHOTO COURTESY OF CASTLE IN THE COUNTRY



nowy days make for magical getaways at Michigan's quaint fairytale inns.

CASTLE IN THE COUNTRY

Step into a cozy Victorian world at the Castle in the Country on the outskirts of Allegan, between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo. Just 30 miles from the Lake Michigan shoreline, this sprawling 65-acre estate includes the original 1906 former summer home of John H. and Caroline Wurtz, as well as a modern new farmhouse with an inviting sitting area, book nook, and spa.

Between the two buildings, 10 distinct guest rooms and suites pay homage to noble figures like Sir Lancelot, King Arthur, Lady Guinevere, and Romeo and Juliet. Each features a two-person jetted tub, king bed, and gas fireplace. The 600-square-foot Kingdom Suite boasts a wood-burning fireplace and a Jacuzzi in the separate seating area, while the private bath has a two-person shower with rainfall heads.

After a scratch-made breakfast, guests are encouraged to borrow snowshoes and enjoy a trek along the property's three-mile Enchanted Forest or venture to the nearby Allegan State Game Area, where designated trails are open for cross-country skiing, hiking, and even horseback riding.

The adjacent Fennville Farm Unit also provides great opportunities to see wildlife, including bald eagles and snowy owls. Private 40-minute horse-drawn sleigh rides through the serene countryside, reminiscent of days gone by, are available at Wild West Ranch in Fennville.

Back at the Castle, guest rooms invite quiet relaxation, reading, and napping, while the outdoor deck serves as a gathering place with a fire table to keep the chill at bay. For a more intimate experience, reserve a few hours in a temperature-controlled igloo, complete with a fireplace, romantic lighting, comfy seating, and blankets. The igloo is also stocked with local wine and a plentiful charcuterie board.

For something above and beyond, the Royal Treatment Package enhances any two-night stay with an in-room breakfast; a 60-minute on-site, full-body couple's massage; a picnic basket packed with snacks and a bottle of local wine; and a \$60 dinner voucher for a local restaurant such as Salt of the Earth in nearby Fennville. The spa is also open for stand-alone treatments, schedule permitting.

HENDERSON CASTLE

Perched on a hilltop overlooking downtown Kalamazoo, Henderson Castle has shone as a crown jewel of the community since it was completed in 1895. The 11,000-square-foot, 25-room Queen Anne style home was built for industrialist Frank Henderson and his wife, Mary, and was crafted from Lake Superior sandstone and brick.

The interior showcases a rich blend of bird's eye maple, mahogany, birch, American sycamore, and quartered oak, with adornments like lead and stained-glass windows, crystal chandeliers, and heated marble floors.

This iconic edifice now operates as an elegant 12-guest room boutique bed-and-breakfast, where romantic dreams become reality. Frank Henderson's private quarters in the south tower have been converted into the Italian Suite, featuring

antique furniture throughout the boudoir and adjoining sitting area, as well as a 13-head shower in the majestic lavatory.

Tucked into the third-floor turret, the Queen's Tower room features an antique bed discovered during castle renovations and an outdoor balcony with views of downtown. The exotic Tibetan Room is graced with a hand-painted tin ceiling inset with optic lights that gradually change color, and a hand-painted tile mural in the bathroom evokes an Asian vibe.

For a more private stay, the Cottage Suite B in the former carriage house includes a spacious seating area and whirlpool tub — ideal for a cold winter night.

Fine dining can be found in the French-inspired H Prime Chophouse, headed by Chef Francois Louis Moyet, who acquired the inn in 2011. Indulge on puff-pastry-wrapped imported French brie, caviar, and aged steaks drizzled with bearnaise, bordelaise, au poivre, or beurre blanc sauces.

Savory desserts such as crème brûlée or pot de crème are a decadent way to cap off the evening. Craft cocktails and an array of wines — including six made with estate-grown grapes — are available in the Spirits Lounge.

A variety of elevated experiences can be found within the castle walls. Moyet, who also has a degree in naturopathic medicine, offers calming Swedish massages and facials — utilizing an all-natural Henderson Castle skin care line — in the on-site Spa & Naturopathic Wellness Center. A new year-round swim spa, rooftop hot tub, and steam room are among the other rejuvenating amenities for guests.

“With its beautiful décor and historic charm, Henderson Castle is a great destination for a cozy winter getaway,” says Dana Wagner, director of marketing and communications at Discover Kalamazoo, the local visitors' bureau. “Each room is full of luxurious comfort, inviting you to step away into an enchanting world.”

Just a few minutes from the castle, downtown Kalamazoo is home to several museums, theaters, restaurants, breweries,



Left to right: Unique guest room adornments await those who book a stay at The Historic Webster House. The Historic Webster House gathering room welcomes visitors with vintage charm and a lovely fireplace. A cozy Henderson Castle guest room.



and distilleries, while those looking to spend time outside can explore the Lillian Anderson Arboretum, Kalamazoo Nature Center, or Kal-Haven Trail.

THE HISTORIC WEBSTER HOUSE
Civil War veteran, lawyer, and probate judge Thomas E. Webster commissioned the construction of his stately brick Bay City mansion in 1886. Today, it stands as a treasured bed-and-breakfast aptly named The Historic Webster House.

A regal ambience is noticeable throughout every level of this historic inn. The main floor common areas have been carefully restored with period wall coverings, custom draperies of Scalandre fabrics, and faux painting, which all complement the antique furniture and décor.

Anchored by an Eastlake fireplace, the welcoming parlor is a popular place to warm up with a cup of tea or a glass of wine on a chilly winter day. Bradbury and Bradbury custom wallpaper gives an Asian

flair to the breakfast room, where guests enjoy delicious meals every morning.

Each of the inn's six guest rooms is unique. The most distinctive in style, size, and location is The Keep Room — a five-room king suite that sprawls across the entire lower level. This retreat space has a massive, polished stone wall, an electric fireplace, and a private seating area, along with an impressive ensuite bath with a double-head rain shower, spa/dry sauna, and large two-person whirlpool tub.

"The Webster House is an elegant step back in time," says Susan Becker of nearby Freeland, who has made a staycation out of her four visits with her husband, Walter. "We keep going back because it's so close to home."

Each visit means the chance to experience a different room at the inn. "We've stayed in three different rooms, all gorgeous," Becker notes. "The Keep Room is our favorite; it's a luxurious retreat. We also like the breakfast in bed option, where it's brought right to your room."

Other guest spaces include The Webster Room, The Magistrate's Room, and The Judge's Chambers, all on the third floor, and The Signature two-room suite on the second floor, complete with a whirlpool soaking tub and infrared sauna.

With any room, there's the option to add spa services like a one-hour relaxation

massage, deep-tissue massage, hot stone massage, or aromatherapy treatments.

For those who want to explore the great outdoors, the nearby Chippewa Nature Center offers 19 miles of trails for hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Just 20 minutes west, the Canopy Walk at the Whiting Forest (adjacent to Midland's Dow Gardens) is not to be missed. Open year-round, this 1,400-foot elevated pathway is touted as the longest in the country. An additional three miles of trails, including 1.5 miles of ADA-accessible pathways, bridges, and boardwalks, makes this a popular destination no matter the season. If time permits, check out the Mid-century Modern home and studio of famed architect Alden B. Dow.

After a day of exploring, stop by Prost! Wine Bar & Charcuterie, which recently opened a location in downtown Bay City near the riverfront. In addition to fine wines, craft beers, and flavorful cocktails, the menu offers a diverse range of meats, cheeses, wraps, salads, small plates, and hearty entrées. Musicians play live several nights a week. ☞