

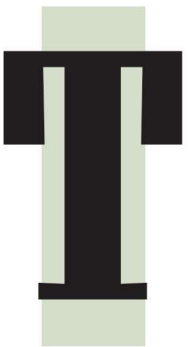


Ford House and Estate,  
Grosse Pointe Shores, Michigan

# OPENING THE DOOR

These historic homes of the Midwest offer glimpses of past elegance

BY DIANNA STAMPFLER



hroughout the United States, there are between 8,000 and 15,000 historic house museums, according to The Pew Charitable Trusts. Varying in style, these heritage sites provide a unique look at architectural design while also introducing visitors to the families who once lived behind their treasured walls.

For more than a century, the magnificent Glesheen Mansion has sat perched along 22 acres of Lake Superior shoreline in Duluth, Minnesota. Constructed between 1905 and 1908, the 27,000-square-foot Jacobethan revival-style main house encompasses five

floors with 39 rooms (15 bedrooms, 10 bathrooms), 15 fireplaces, a series of stained glass windows, a three-tiered Juliet balcony, and a lower-level billiards room. The estate, along with countless family belongings, was donated to the University of Minnesota in Duluth to be used as a museum in 1979.

Self-guided tours of this National Historic Landmark also include the formal gardens, a carriage house, and one of Lake Superior's last remaining boathouses. The "Classic Tour" features the lower, first, and second floors, while the "Full House Tour" also allows access to the fourth and fifth floors.

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Group tours for 10 or more people must be prearranged. During the summer season, visitors will enjoy Concerts at the Pier, as well as the relaxing Beer Garden.

Frank Lloyd Wright is one of America's most renowned architects, with a career that spanned 70 years and featured more than 1,000 designs—about 400 of which were actually built. A significant figure in the mid-century modern movement, Wright practiced organic architecture by incorporating nature and harmony with the environment in what he called the "Prairie Style." His 37,000-square-foot former home and studio, Taliesin, was built in 1911 on an 800-acre parcel near Spring Green, Wisconsin, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The self-guided 75-minute home tour is the most basic option for groups, while the four-hour "Estate Tour" includes a 1 1/2-mile walk around the entire property, stopping at the 100-seat 1903 Hillside Theater, which reopened last summer after a five-year, \$1.1 million restoration; Tan-Y-Deri house, constructed for Wright's sister; Midway Barn; and, finally, Taliesin itself. The River-view Terrace Cafe, a nonprofit restaurant, is open seasonally to showcase the property's on-site culinary program.

A 15th-century manor known as the King's House in Salisbury, England, was the regal vision for the modern-era Salisbury House in Des Moines, Iowa. A blend of Tudor, gothic, and Carolean style, the 22,500-square-foot, 42-room mansion boasts 17 bedrooms, 16 bathrooms, and five fireplaces, as well as a caretaker's cottage and manicured gardens set on an 11-acre estate. The price tag was around \$1.5 million for the house alone, plus another \$1.5 million for furnishings that include antique pieces, tapestries, rare books, fine art, and musical instruments.

The Iowa State Education Association used Salisbury House for its headquarters until 1998, when it was then converted into a museum listed with the National Register of Historic Places. Salisbury House & Gardens is open year-round for self-guided tours, as well as 75-minute docent-led tours. Private group tours can also be arranged with two weeks' notice.

One of Michigan's most esteemed historic dwellings is the former home of Edsel Ford (the only child born to Henry



Salisbury House,  
Des Moines, Iowa

and Clara Ford) and his family. Overlooking Lake St. Clair in Grosse Pointe Shores, the 30,000-square-foot mansion was inspired by the Cotswolds—a rural region in southwest England known for its pastures, rolling hills, and quaint villages with charming storybook cottages. Ivy grows classically along the sandstone exterior toward the limestone shingled roof of this 1928 home. Inside, the space is grand yet intimate, with staircases, fireplaces, antique wood paneling, and stained glass windows sourced from 14th-century English manors and halls.

Throughout the house's many rooms, the Fords' priceless antique and art collections are showcased. In addition to the house and manicured grounds, the estate features a powerhouse, gate lodge, pool house, and an endearing 2/3-scale playhouse built for the Fords' only daughter, Josephine. A guided tour of Ford House takes about 50 minutes, while there is no time limit for the self-guided tour. Group tours can be arranged with two weeks' notice. In addition to regular and seasonal tours, a series of lectures and events is held, including the

Outdoor Summer Concert Series, Art Fair, and EyesOn Design Car Show.

Each year, more than 650,000 people visit the enchanting Casa Loma castle and estate gardens in Toronto, Canada. The 200,000-square-foot, 98-room gothic revival chateau was constructed for local financier Sir Henry Pellatt between 1911 and 1914. Pellatt had a fascination with medieval design, and he filled his \$3.5 million home with secret passageways, hidden rooms, and concealed spaces accessible through cleverly hidden doors. The grand rooms are decorated with authentic period furnishings while the garage houses a collection of vintage vehicles. Climbing up the gothic tower affords breathtaking views of the Toronto skyline, while pristine gardens encompass more than half of the 8-acre estate. In addition to self-guided tours, guided group tours can be arranged with advanced notice. Casa Loma also features several eateries, including Liberty Caffe, BlueBlood Steakhouse (with a century-old wine cellar), and Don Alfonso 1890, located within the property's conservatory and featuring a McCausland stained glass ceiling. 📍