

Both pages, clockwise from left: It's all about pumpkins, gourds, and cornstalks at The Blue Mystique Inn come autumn. Chef Joshua Curtis develops recipes for intimate six- to eight-course meals, served not only to guests, but the public as well. A comfortable guest room welcomes after a day of sightseeing in nearby Manistique.

BOOK IT

BY
Dianna Stampfler

In the Heart of Manistique

The Blue Mystique Inn pampers guests in a luxurious setting, complete with seasonally focused breakfasts and chef-curated dinners

Manistique's newest boutique inn offers a true-blue experience.

Elizabeth Douglas has spent much of her career in the service industry, first as a salon and day spa owner, then providing recreational rentals for bikes, kayaks, and stand-up paddleboards. She now focuses her attention on creating a luxurious lodging experience at The Blue Mystique Inn.

Built in 1905, this classic 3,200-square-foot Colonial-style home operated as a bed-and-breakfast from 1984 until 2008, known as the Royal Rose Inn.

Douglas purchased the former vacation rental in January 2024 and quickly transformed it into her dream destination property, nestled in the heart of this charming coastal town.

"When the home came on the market, I knew I didn't want to run it as an Airbnb or vacation rental," says Douglas, who was raised in the Upper Peninsula. "I wanted a place where I could pamper people and cater to their needs."

The main floor common areas are meant for relaxation. A cozy sunroom boasts windows on three sides, allowing natural light to fill the space while offering neighborhood views. Both the sunroom and the living room — which flow into each other through two arched doorways — feature gas fireplaces that add warmth and ambience.

Indoor afternoons here are often spent reading, playing board games, or listening to vinyl records. Views of the Manistique



River, which flows into Lake Michigan, can be seen from the side porch, as well as from three rooms on the upper floors.

Five renovated guest rooms, each with their own private bath, are sprawled out along the second level. The Balcony Room, Garden Room, Reading Room, and Royal Rose Room are outfitted with queen beds. The larger Harbor View Room features a king bed plus a jetted tub and full shower. A third-floor penthouse is meant for couples traveling together who are willing to share a bath with those on the floor below. Throughout, luxury linens and artwork from local artists create a distinctive flair that sets each room apart from the others.

"The Blue Mystique Inn is our go-to when staying in Manistique," says Ann Price. She and her husband, Eric, work at Schoolcraft Memorial Hospital and commute from their home in Gladstone, 40 miles away.

"We've stayed at the inn two times, in two different rooms. We absolutely loved it each time," Price says. "If we work late or have events in Manistique, Elizabeth's place is our home away from home. She provides a warm and welcoming atmosphere, and a delicious breakfast. The Chef's Table is also an experience not to be missed."

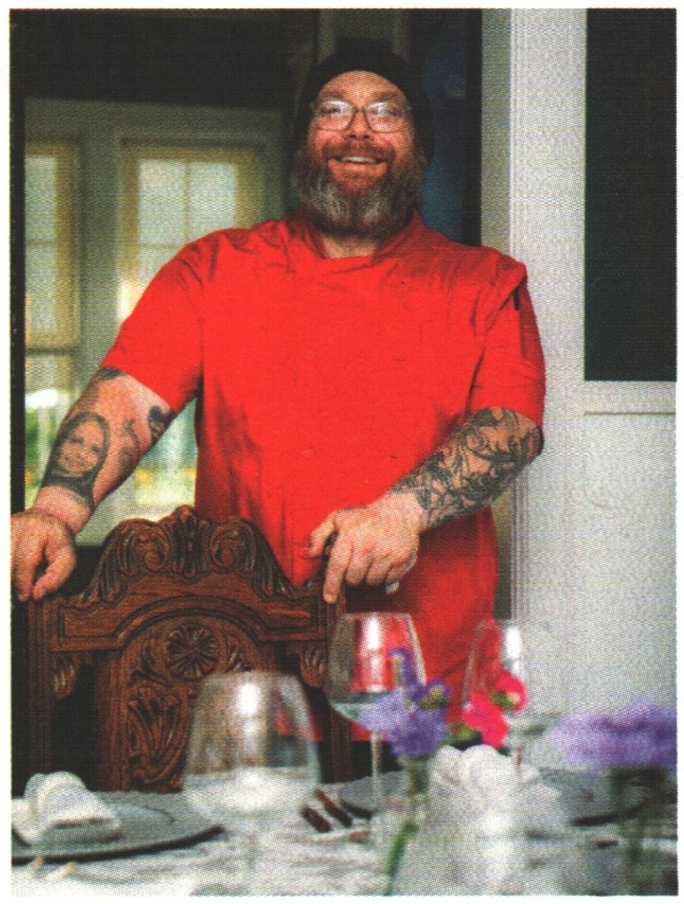
Each morning, Douglas prepares seasonally focused breakfasts, sourcing ingredients from the weekly farmers market at Triangle Park, just down the road from the inn. She also designs impressive charcuterie boards, usually featuring local smoked Lake Michigan whitefish and a selection of cheeses and other accoutrements.

The Chef's Table dinners, curated by Chef Joshua Curtis, have put The Blue Mystique on the map. Having honed his skills at various Wolfgang Puck restaurants around the country, Curtis uses this intimate culinary experience to share how he develops his recipes and selects his ingredients before whipping them together into the final, plated dishes.

"We started off small, offering dinner just to our guests, and the demand quickly grew," Douglas says. "We now offer this event to the public, Thursdays through Sundays."

The six- to eight-course meals, served in the inn's formal dining room, are limited to a maximum of 12 guests.

The Blue Mystique is open spring through autumn; the winter schedule is still to be determined. The fall color tour season has quickly become a favorite, with leaf-peepers heading off to sites such as Fayette State Park along the Garden Peninsula, Seul Choix Point Lighthouse in Gulliver, Kitch-iti-Kipi at Palms Book State Park, and the U.P.'s newest quirky attraction, Benny the Beard Fisher at Northland Outfitters in Germfask.



When it comes to exploring Manistique and the surrounding area, Douglas provides everything her guests may need. There are blankets to snuggle under while soaking up a sunrise or sunset on the deck, towels for a day at the beach, and bikes for pedaling around town to discover the various shops, such as Paper Mill Books, Bostique, and Michigan Made. It's this kind of care and attention to detail that guests are most appreciative of, and about which Douglas prides herself on offering.

The inn's guests may also notice a collection of top hats scattered around, which Douglas happily admits is a nod to her favorite movie, "Groundhog Day." Donning the hats during social time has become somewhat of a tradition, and it brings as much joy to Douglas as it does to her guests.

At the end of the day — or the stay — having a good time and slowing down to enjoy life is ultimately what The Blue Mystique Inn is all about.

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