

Healthful Hideaways

The Kerr House – Renewing Mind, Body and Spirit for 25 Years

By Petula Brown

Intimate. Personal. Elegant. Such accolades have distinguished The Kerr House (<http://www.thekerrhouse.com/>) as a preferred location to relax, refresh and rejuvenate. Twenty minutes south of the Toledo Airport, the retreat venue is poised to celebrate a quarter of a century serving as a bastion of health and wellness in the Midwest. With a maximum of eight guests afforded a variety of programs and services offered by two dozen staff members, The Kerr House is a cozy setting imbued with a rich history.

This history begins with the building of the Queen Ann Victorian manor in 1880 by B.F. and Ann Kerr. The three-year project concluded with a stylish, but sturdy structure. Walls three and four bricks thick and footers three feet thick provided a strong foundation for the white oak, red oak, cherry, butternut, hard rock maple, and ash woodwork that adorn the home. Fireplaces are accented with sculptured ceramic tiles, carvings, and mantles while bathrooms with marble sinks and copper bathtubs afford more elegance. A testament to the home's distinctive style is found in the Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio. An entry dated 1897 describes the home as "...one of the finest residences in this section of the country, a building modern and complete that would be a credit to any city. Crowning a beautiful hill, it commands a grand view overlooking the river and charming Maumee Valley."

After a century of ownership by the Kerr family, it was purchased by Laurie Hostetler, current director of The Kerr House, in 1977. By the 1900's, the house had major challenges, but it also had promise. "As I was turning a corner," describes Laurie, "I looked up and saw a gorgeous house on the hill. I stopped in the middle of the turn and stared at it. It looked like it was ready to fall down, but it was beautiful. I backed up and drove to the front of it and studied it. The wrap-around porch was falling apart. The steps were all askew. Weeds were overgrown. There were broken windows and windows that had been open for

years. The curtains at the windows were in shreds. It was obviously abandoned." After three years of structural renovations and program development activities, the 10,000 square-foot house was reborn as a health retreat in 1980.

Although envisioned initially as a site for yoga classes for area residents, Laurie broadened The Kerr House's offerings. In addition to yoga, guests can experience multiple-day respites that include massages, facials, body treatment and meals emphasizing natural foods. However, overnight guests can forgo planned activities to explore Grand Rapids' numerous parks and craft stores or relax within the house. Day visitors can choose from a selection of various services including body wraps, nail treatments and bodywork sessions. Regardless of how guests arrive at The Kerr House, they can leave restored with information on health and wellness techniques that can be applied back home. The Kerr House also offers apparel and skin care products to help clients recreate The Kerr House experience. As a destination for a healthful getaway, The Kerr House continues to receive recognition with national exposure on "Good Morning America" and highlights in Travel and Leisure magazine.

"The Kerr House is a warm, luxurious Victorian manor where guests immediately feel relaxed and comfortable." - *Destinationspagroup.com*

"The manor's location alongside a small canal of the Maumee River is perfect for an evening stroll that promotes the feeling of blissful lethargy that descends when you've been well and truly pampered." - *RudyMaxa.com*



The Kerr House in Grand Rapids, Ohio, was founded in 1980.

"Some say The Kerr House is the best spa in the country. It consistently ranks up there with more famous sun-filled getaways such as Canyon Ranch and the Golden Door. The touch that makes a weekend at The Kerr House so special, however, is the personal attention each guest receives." - *Quick Escapes: Detroit*

With a storied history that combines regal beginnings, laborious transformation and successful rebirth, The Kerr House serves as a living example of how, with the right resources and determination, dreams can be realized. Combined with the activities and services available at The Kerr House, guests are well-positioned physically, mentally and emotionally to make their dreams come true.

For more information, contact The Kerr House (Nonnagram@aol.com or call 419-832-1733).