

Grand Hotel

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fruit basket dominates the living room table under the shimmer of a blue and white crystal chandelier. If guests staying multiple nights choose, in the evening the executive chef or his assistant, waiters and a sommelier will come to the suite to prepare and serve a private dinner. If, however, the guests would rather socialize, they are welcome to have breakfast, lunch and dinner in the hotel dining room.

Interested in a get

together, but not up to meeting new people? The cottage's dining room and terrace offer enough space to accommodate a party of more than 50 people, should guests wish to invite a few friends.

Those desiring peace and quiet can sit on the plush white sitting room chairs with a book from the cottage library, which includes works by authors as varied as Plutarch, Louisa May Alcott and Sue Grafton. Horses pass below the cottage, which is built onto a small hill, and the only sound is the slow clipping of hooves.

Supposing the golfers on the course across the road get rowdy, however, and the golden silence is broken, the entire cottage is wired to a speaker system, all controlled by a single touch panel in the entertainment room. The entertainment room also houses a Sony Playstation and, like every other room in the cottage with the exception of the bathrooms, boasts a flatscreen TV and DVD player. Included in the package, of course, is a copy of the 1980s movie set on Mackinac Island, "Somewhere in Time."

The Masco Suite cottage was decorated by Carlton Varney, president of Dorothy Draper & Co. Inc. of New York. The style and colors are the same as those used throughout the hotel.

"(Varney) said he'd take every color of the garden and bring it inside the hotel," said Bob Tagatz, Grand Hotel resident historian and a specialist in wood frame hotels built by transportation companies. Tagatz explained that Varney decorated each room in the Masco suite, as well as each of the 385 rooms in the Grand Hotel, individually.

Varney's influence in the Masco Suite is evident in a wide variety of unique touches, from glasses overflowing with sticks of hard candy tucked in counter-top corners to carpet the color of a well-watered lawn to a Haitian hand-puppet display on one upstairs wall.

"His idea is to gift-wrap every room," Tagatz said, summing up Varney's theory that, given the choice between a gift wrapped in bright, colorful paper and ribbons and one covered in brown paper and string, anyone would chose the brightly wrapped present.



"We don't buy a pen, a pencil, a cocktail napkin that he doesn't approve or design," Tagatz said.

The hotel began renovating the cottage last November, and named it the Masco Suite in a gesture of gratitude to the Manoogian family, who have loaned art from their personal collection to the hotel for years.

"(The Manoogians) are wonderful neighbors," Tagatz said. "They live up the hill. Instead of loaning us a cup of sugar, they loaned us 54 American masterpieces."

The Masco suite is available on a nightly, weekly or monthly basis. During peak season rates are \$2,750 a night, \$17,500 a week or \$55,000 a month. During the shoulder season, rates are \$2,500 a night, \$15,000 a week or \$50,000 a month.



Record-Eagle/Melanie Tacoma

The dining room (top) and the kitchen (bottom) in the Grand Hotel's Masco Suite on Mackinac Island, which costs \$2,750 a night or \$55,000 a month in peak season.



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