

by andrea carter

Minnesota's Other Metros

From Native American culture to serene garden walks, these urban getaways enrich any visitor's stay.

IF YOU'RE A MINNESOTAN, the Twin Cities may be the first metropolis to come to mind when considering an urban getaway. However, there are a number of other notable cities in Minnesota that have their own unique flavor of metropolitan life—offering the same big-city amenities with a touch of small-town charm.

Cities such as Rochester, Mankato, St. Cloud, Duluth and the Moorhead area burst with history, entertainment and cultural pride. What's more, they're also a convenient distance from your own front door.

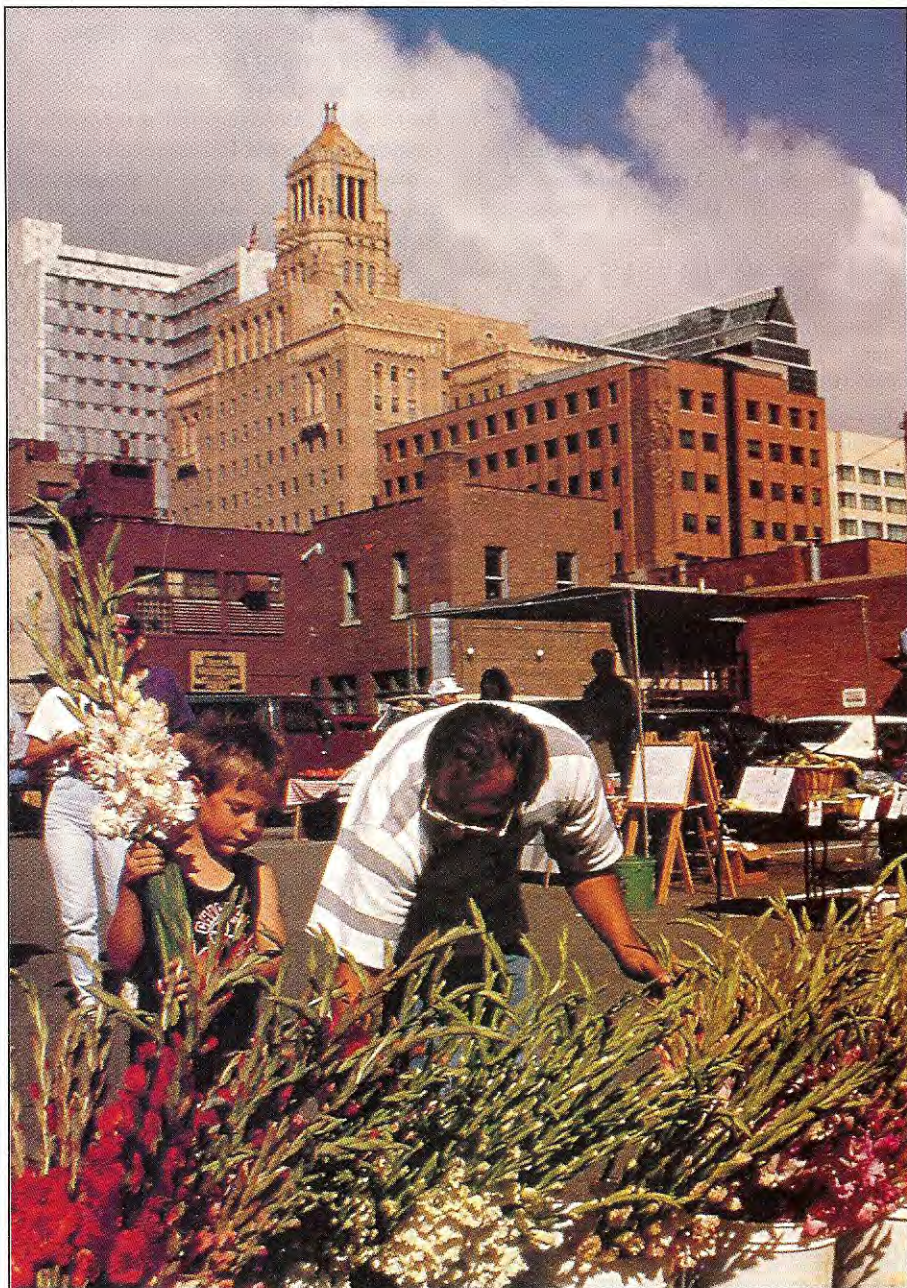
MORE THAN A MEDICAL MECCA

Rochester may be internationally known for its renowned Mayo Clinic, but it's the legacy behind this medical family that has blessed this city with a rich history. Nestled in the heart of the Zumbro River Valley, Rochester's industrial base is complemented by the breathtaking bluffs and hills of this glacier-carved region. Perhaps this area's landscaped beauty is one of the reasons the Mayo brothers saw a future in this community over a century ago.

While touring Rochester, you will inevitably be captivated by the evolution of the Mayo dynasty. The fascinating tales associated with the Mayo brothers are brought to life at the historic landmarks that still attract curious tourists and other visiting guests.

Mayowood, the family mansion built on a 3,000-acre estate in 1910, was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. Located on a wooded hillside with an incredible view of the river valley, this majestic home reflects the family's active social life. As frequent world travelers, the Mayos decorated their home with mementos of their journeys. More than 38 rooms are furnished in French, English, Spanish, German and American antiques. Guided tours of Mayowood are available throughout the year.

If you find the Mayowood estate tan-



ROCHESTER CVB

talizing, you may also want to stop at the Plummer House, consisting of an English Tudor mansion, water tower, greenhouse, garage and gazebo. Situated on a towering bluff overlooking the city, this estate was built in 1924 for Dr.

and Mrs. Henry Plummer. Tours of the Plummer House are available during the summer months.

Among Rochester's inviting hotels, the Kahler Plaza Hotel offers accommodations that will leave you feeling like



restaurant. Even if you're not a guest, this restaurant adds a delightful twist to fine dining. Each evening, the establishment's musical wait staff delivers "service with a song." Where else can you enjoy prime rib and live show tunes at such an affordable price?

For more information on Rochester's special events and attractions, contact

Minnesota's smaller metros keep pace with the Twin Cities offering visitors everything from a farmer's market in Rochester (far left) to fine dining at Duluth's Fitger's Inn. Tours of Rochester's historic Plummer House (below) and Fargo-Moorhead's Riverfront Days (bottom) top many visitors' lists.



the Rochester Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 634-8277.

EXPLORING THE CONFLICT

A rich Native American history sets the scene in Mankato—in fact, its name was derived from this culture, meaning "blue earth." Located in the beautiful Minnesota River Valley, this southern Minnesota metro blends its historical value and contemporary charm successfully—making it a city with a lot to offer to both visitors and residents.

Mankato is the site where the largest mass execution of Native Americans in American history took place. Thirty-eight U.S. Indians were hanged to end

the U.S.-Dakota Conflict in 1862 (Sioux Uprising). Today, you can take a self-guided tour of the sites of the conflict. Several life-sized stone sculptures have been erected at important sites in the community, and local artist Tom Miller is currently sculpting a five-ton buffalo at the site of the execution.

To take the Native American experience one step further, visit Mankato to witness the Mah-kato Traditional Wacipi Pow Wow, Sept. 20–23. Native Americans return to their ceremonial grounds in Land of Memories Park. Colorful costumes, traditional foods, crafts and ceremonial dancing will broaden your interest of this fascinating culture.

Another local attraction is the Mankato Civic Center and Arena, which just opened last year. The facility attracts big-name artists, sporting events, conventions and other celebrations, and there is always something exciting coming up on its calendar of events. Previous entertainers have included the Beach Boys, Kenny G and Brooks & Dunn, and the center has also hosted large national events such as the Ryders Ladies Skating Championship and the Globetrotters. Call (507) 389-3001 for current event information.

Although Mankato has a number of fun things to do, many people come in droves to shop at the River Hills Mall. This shopping mall has over 100 stores, four anchor stores and a carousel in its food court. Mankato also offers assorted specialty and antique shops.

After you've "shopped 'til you drop" in Mankato, don't just grab a bite of fast food. Try some of Mankato's unique eateries, such as Ruttles '50s Grill. You'll enjoy an outstanding burger surrounded by the nostalgia of the '50s era. Just select your favorite tune on the jukebox and you're set.

For more information on this city, contact the Mankato Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 657-4733.

AT THE CENTER OF ATTENTION

Central Minnesota's gem city is St. Cloud—glistening with natural beauty and various entertainment options.

This is the time of year to visit Munsinger/Clemens Gardens, an enchanting collage of public gardens displaying multicolored floral patterns and arrangements. In addition to the many sun-loving annuals and perennials, the park's splendor is enhanced with trees, rock-lined paths, a gazebo, a lily pond and a fountain.

royalty. Standard guest rooms feature amenities that will truly allow you to pamper yourself.

If you're staying at the Best Western/Soldiers Field, don't pass up an opportunity to have dinner at the First Class

**St. Cloud's Munsinger/
Clemens Gardens
flourishes with blossoms
of every kind and color.**

For a glimpse into St. Cloud's intricate history, make a quick stop at the Stearns County Heritage Center. This historic museum, located at the center of a 60-acre park with trails and a nature center, demonstrates the city's growth cycles and social trends. It also tells the story of how St. Cloud grew to become the anchor city of central Minnesota. You'll learn about everything from the Pan Motor Company (and its automobile legend founder, Samuel Pandolfo) to the area's prominent industries (granite, printing and lens manufacturing).

Perhaps one of St. Cloud's most unique specialties is its colorful nightlife. No matter what your taste, there's a place to suit you. With an extensive menu of dining choices, this metro's nightlife begins with a great meal. For atmosphere as exceptional as the food, sample the prime rib or seafood at Anton's Fish & Whiskey—a riverside speakeasy from the roaring 1920s. Another spot for dining at the river's edge is the Pirate's Cove, which also features riverboat dinner cruises on The Anne Bonny during the summer. D.B. Searles and O'Hara's Bro Brew Pub have an interesting history and remain popular stops for entertainment, food and drink.

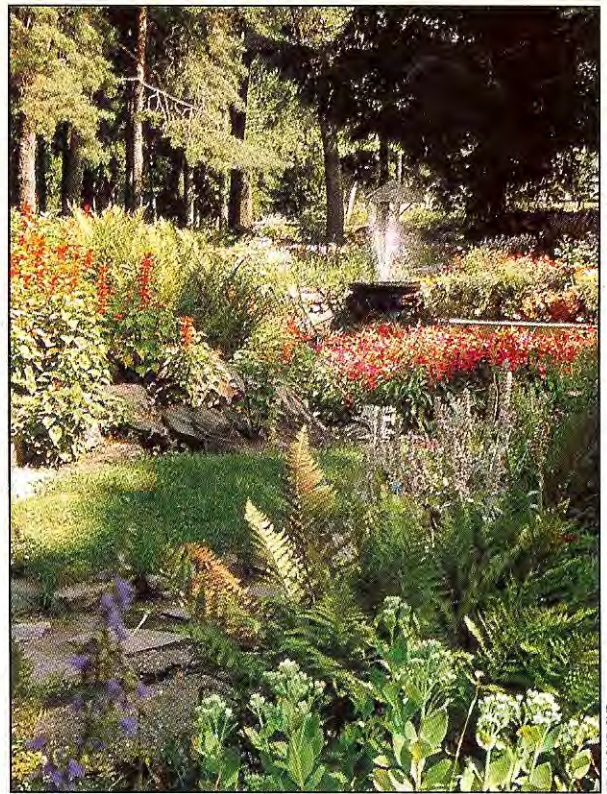
To satisfy the cappuccino craze that has swept the state, the Java Joint provides a great place to enjoy a late-night latte (or stop by Cyber Bean, a coffee shop that allows you to surf the Internet while you sip your mocha treat).

For more information on other St. Cloud attractions and special events, call the St. Cloud Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 264-2940.

**OVERLOOKING A
SUPERIOR VIEW**

Duluth is probably best known as the city that rests along the shores of the mammoth Lake Superior. From almost anywhere in this picturesque city, you can catch a striking view.

In this growing city, new attractions and developments have the streets



ST. CLOUD CVR

buzzing with excitement. Of course, some of the more traditional highlights, such as the Depot (a heritage/arts museum centered in a restored railroad station) and Glensheen (the regal 22-acre estate of Chester and Clara Congdon) continue to be solid draws for tourists and other visitors.

Canal Park is the latest area to expand, slowly developing into a delightful waterfront paradise. With the original Grandma's restaurant and Marine Museum at its core, Canal Park has spent the past 20 years evolving into a scenic wonderland. Among the cobblestone streets and wind-worn brick buildings, you'll find specialty shops, restaurants and hotels with an extraordinary view of the world-famous Aerial Lift Bridge.

THEATER IN THE ROUND

You won't want to pass up an opportunity to experience true adventure at the area's latest attraction—the Duluth OMNIMAX Theater. With 270 reclining seats and a huge 72-foot domed screen, this theater engulfs your entire line of vision—creating the illusion of actually being “in” the movie. To complete your visit to Canal Park, take a stroll down the Lake Walk path—leading you along the shore through four magnificent parks and sculpture gardens.

If you're overnighting in the area, Duluth offers several lodging properties. For a different twist, try Fitger's Inn. Once Fitger's Brewery, this century-old historic complex on Superior's shoreline, has been renovated and now incor-

porates the stylish Fitger's Inn, unique shops and three restaurants.

For more information on the ever-changing city of Duluth, contact the Duluth Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 438-5884 or (218) 722-4011.

LET THE FESTIVITIES BEGIN

At the Minnesota/North Dakota border, you'll find another “twin city” area that's as quaint as it is full of fun. The progressive cities of Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn., are joined at the hip to offer a double dose of history, culture and entertainment.

Known for its hospitality, Fargo-Moorhead could also be considered the region's capital of festivals. During the warmer months especially, Fargo-Moorhead abounds with a wide variety of festivals, shows, theme days and fairs. One of the more popular festivities is Riverfront Days, June 12–16. Hosted on various sites along the Red River, this special event features five nights of live music concerts, a canoe race, triathlon, children's events and much more.

The Scandinavian Hjemkomst Festival, June 26–30, is also a great time to visit Fargo-Moorhead. This festival highlights authentic dancing, entertainment and food. Visit the Heritage-Hjemkomst Interpretive Center, where you'll find photographs, recordings and a close-up look at an authentic Viking Ship, the Hjemkomst.

If you want to taste life as a pioneer, check out Bonanzaville, U.S.A. This Pioneer Village of Museums offers a nostalgic stroll back in time through a country school and church, log cabins, a general store and hotel. If you stroll through on Aug. 17–18, you'll see the village come to life during Pioneer Days at Bonanzaville.

Other popular festivals coming this summer include the Downtown Street Fair, River Jazz and the Western Minnesota Steam Thresher's Reunion. If a festival brings you to Fargo-Moorhead, you'll also want to make stops at the historic Fargo Theatre with its restored Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ, Trollwood Park and the uniquely-designed visitors center.

To find out more about northwestern Minnesota's “land of 10,000 festivals,” contact the Fargo-Moorhead Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 235-7654. ■

ANDREA CARTER is a staff writer for Home & Away's Minneapolis edition.