

THE WEBSTER HOUSE

A Unique and Historical Gem with Unexpected Treasures

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If you plan on dropping by Webster House for an ordinary lunch, you obviously haven't been there before. There is nothing ordinary about dining on fine cuisine and browsing for antiques in a historically significant venue. Built in 1885 as the Webster School, the Romanesque-style architecture greets you blocks before you actually arrive, its bell tower and weather vane guiding you to its location at 17th and Wyandotte. For those who don't know its history, stumbling across a castle-like building in the Crossroads District may take you by surprise. It did me when I first visited. I distinctly recall standing outside my car, looking up at the building and asking my friend, "What was this place?" Just a stone's throw from the Kauffman Center



for the Performing Arts, a modern display of ingenuity and clean lines, the Webster House is its architectural antithesis of sorts. With a dark red brick exterior and arches well-known in Medieval European design, the Webster House's school day history is still very much preserved. The building itself appears to greet all who enter and is to be taken seriously – a message particularly important for the children who once climbed its stairs and were expected to button their lips and open

their books. Thanks to significant restoration efforts starting in 2000 to bring the building back to its original charm, the Webster House is honored by inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. More than that, however, it is a source of pride for the Crossroads District and a beloved venue for locals and visitors alike. And, that's just the outside.

Inside the Webster House, the individual rooms of the former

school house are still full of life. Each room is a different treasure to explore; classic antiques, unique art work, jewelry, and china place settings are on display inviting you in to take a look. And by "take a look," I mean casually browse each room and forget about the fact that you had planned a quick lunch. You can't help but lose yourself in the fact that each room offers something different, and most importantly, not necessarily out of your price range. Rarely have I gone to the Webster



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House without buying something; my apple green tote and colorful beaded cuff bracelet are among my favorite finds there. Have I wanted to buy more? Absolutely, but the logistics of fitting an antique armoire into the back seat of my car has limited my purchase range. So, I limit myself to small things like the uniquely scented candles, and peruse the corner of the first floor devoted to all things baby because, well, I can't resist looking at all things baby. Especially if items fall into the super-soft-stuffed-animal category.



Ah, yes, after shopping your stomach reminds you that you actually came to the Webster House for its fabulous lunch or dinner menu. Armed with your purchases, you visit the second floor of the old school and are seated in one of the exquisite dining rooms, ready to peruse the menu. With farm-to-table ingredients from local vendors, the choice is about as difficult as the one you just faced on the first floor when you fell in love with two different chairs that would both be perfect in your living room.

Fresh basil and campanelle pasta. Mojita and coffee rubbed ribeye. Butter poached lobster roll. These are not ordinary options, and you secretly want to camp-out for a 24-hour period to sample more than one. You can always come back for Sunday brunch and try



the Deviled Eggs Five Ways (let's be honest, it just sounds like a fun culinary adventure), or the crème brulee French toast because any combination of dessert and breakfast food sounds heavenly and must be sampled.

A gem is valued both for its rarity and beauty; it is a bit of sparkle in an unexpected find. So describes the Webster House, a true gem for Kansas City by staying true to its historical origins and offering a unique opportunity for all who walk through its doors. The menu may call to you, but you'll leave with so much more.

